

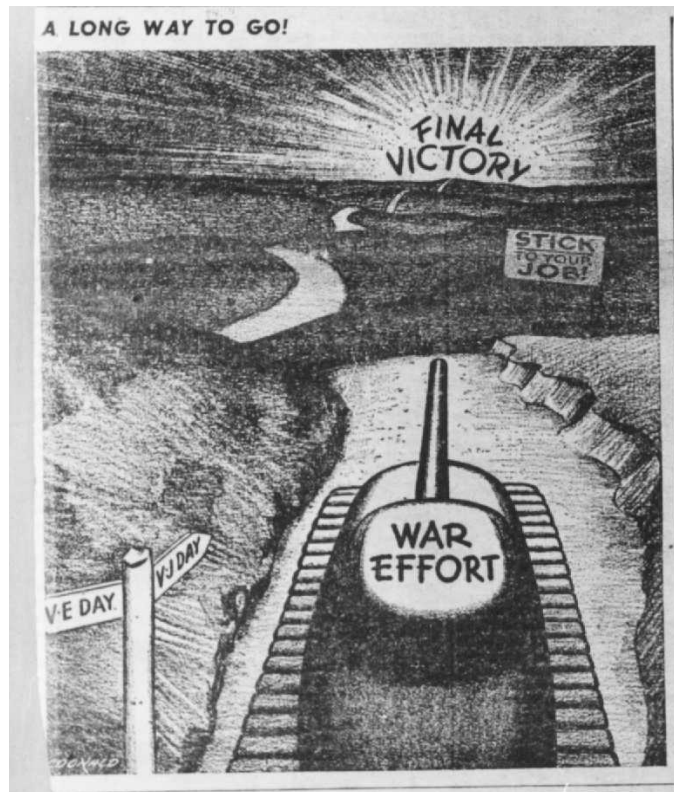
AN EXTRAORDINARY CENTURY FOR WOMEN



***WRIGHT-PATTERSON
AIR FORCE BASE
DURING WORLD WAR II***

***IT WAS A WOMAN'S WAR
TOO...***

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IT WAS A WOMAN'S WAR TOO...

**IN APPRECIATION OF THE MANY WOMEN WHO
SUPPORTED THE WORLD WAR II EFFORT
ON THE OCCASION OF
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
MARCH 2000**

FOREWORD

Prior to World War II, the maintenance and supply operation of the Fairfield Air Depot (FAD) at Patterson Field was modest in size, even though it supported the entire Air Corps. With the advent of World War II, Wright and Patterson Fields began a massive build-up to support the war effort. Close to \$2 million was allocated to renovated and new construction, including housing for military and civilian workers. Along with this extensive physical growth came an increase in the civilian and military work force. By 1940, the number of civilians at the FAD had doubled over the last decade to 1,013. By 1942, employment soared to 9,041, peaking in 1943 at 19,433.

Coupled with this increase came a change in the makeup of the work force itself. Prior to 1939, less than 10 percent of the depot employees were women. They were concentrated in office positions since women were prohibited from working in industrial areas. As the need for workers became critical in the early months of the war, women were drawn into the jobs previously restricted. By 1942, women worked side by side with men, as storekeepers, tug and truck drivers, and mechanics. By 1944, 50 percent of the depot work force was female. Many of them had been actively recruited by the Air Service Command to fill swing and graveyard shifts. Women not only came from the Dayton area, but also were recruited from the hills and towns of Appalachia.

In commemoration of Women's History Month, the Aeronautical Systems Center honored six women who came from these very hills of West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and North Carolina to do their part to defend freedom. Some worked directly on the base, serving in various jobs from administration to assembly line maintenance. Others worked in the private sector, supporting the war through the industrial base. All served with a devotion to hard work and unfailing allegiance to their country. This booklet recounts their stories as interviewed by Debbie Voss and Laura Romesburg, members of the Women's History Month committee.

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WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE DURING WORLD WAR II

In response to Hitler's aggression in Western Europe and the enormous buildup of the German war machine, President Roosevelt directed the immediate rearmament of U.S. forces, including thousands of aircraft. In contrast to the mere 5,500 airplanes authorized by Congress in 1939, production estimates called for an air force with over 50,000 aircraft.



President Roosevelt visits Wright Field in 1940

The support for this wartime requirement originated at Wright and Patterson Fields. At Wright Field, now Area B of Wright-Patterson AFB, the Materiel Command had responsibility for the planning, development of standards and specifications, issuance of requests for proposal, testing, evaluation, modifications, ordering, and coordinating production of all Army aircraft deployed worldwide. With war came a streamlined method of aircraft acquisition. Previously, the Materiel Command had acquired experimental models of aircraft, put them through a series of vigorous tests, and then ordered production models of those judged to be the best. To expedite the acquisition process, Materiel Center (under Materiel Command) ordered aircraft "off-the-shelf," still in the conceptual stage, and put them through accelerated testing at Wright Field.



Patterson Field during World War I

At Patterson Field, now Areas A and C, the Fairfield Air Depot was charged with maintaining and distributing the largest stockpile of war materiel ever acquired in U.S. history. The depot received, repaired, and shipped out aircraft around the clock to keep American forces armed both in the continental U.S. and overseas.



Patterson Field during World War II

IT WAS A WOMAN'S WAR TOO

The urgent need for wartime materiel dictated a surge in manpower and accelerated plans for new base construction. In 1938, the total workforce at both fields numbered a little over 2,400.



Assembly line

By 1941, the numbers had jumped to over 17,000. And by the peak years of the war, in mid-1944, there were nearly 50,000 military and civilians working at the two fields, including a workforce of 50 percent women at Patterson Field. By 1945, the total payroll of both Wright and Patterson Fields was \$13.5 million, 35 percent of Dayton's total industrial payroll.



Patterson Field *Postings*, 14 April 1944

Fairfield Air Depot at Patterson Field was one of the Army Air Forces' largest logistics centers before and during World War II. The depot shipped supplies and equipment inside the continental U.S. and overseas by air, rail, and sea. Addressing maintenance issues for both evolving aircraft at Wright Field, and fielded aircraft at Patterson Field, the depot pioneered advances in maintenance that provided the foundation of the modern logistics systems of today.



Women's Army Corps Supply School at Patterson Field

GLIMPSES OF PATTERSON AND WRIGHT FIELDS



Civilian war housing



POST OFFICE

F. A. S. C.



Supply Statistics "Area A" Women's Softball Team



Civilian Club on Patterson Field



Enlisted/Civilian Dance



Bob Hope and Francis Langford visit Wright and Patterson Fields



Teletype Unit



STATISTICAL CONTROL UNIT, 1945



Instrument repair shop



Rush hour at Wright Field



STELLA M. ABRAHAM



(Note: Please see Access Agreement at back of booklet)

Mrs. Abraham was recruited and came to WPAFB from southern Ohio. She spent most of her time packing parachutes. During the interview two of her grandchildren were present, Tim Howard and his sister, Diane Mingo. They assisted with the interview. At the time of the interview, Mrs. Abraham was 102 years old.



Parachute packing department

Howard: I'll try and help you remember. I've got some notes from Mike (Stella's son) if you get stuck on something.

Abraham: You see when I quit over there, it did not mean a thing to me, you know, and I never thought anything would come up that I would have to remember or know about...

Romesburg: This is Dec 8, 1999....I'd like to start out with you telling me a little about where you were born and raised and how you came to Dayton

Abraham: OK, you asked the questions and I'll try and answer them. I was born at Arbuckle West Virginia, and I stayed there until I was old enough to get out and work. They needed people up at the Air Force base. They needed help up there, and they came down to where I lived and they picked us up and took us up there. They bought a big van and they picked up several people to work at the base because they needed help, and they didn't have sufficient help to carry on.

Romesburg: How old were you then?

Abraham: I don't remember exactly how old I was but I was in my late 40's.

Howard: Mom, let's get back to when you were younger and were in school. But they didn't have any high school back then did they?

Abraham: No, they just went to the 8th grade and when they finished the 8th grade, they could teach school then.

Howard: Did you complete the 8th grade?

Abraham: Yes

Romesburg: After you completed 8th grade you could have turned around and taught school?

Abraham: Yes, that was the way it was then, but it is not that way anymore.

Howard: Was that in Arbuckle?

Abraham: Yes, in Arbuckle, West Virginia

Romesburg: What did you do prior to coming up to the base? What kind of work did you do?

Abraham: Well, my father was an older person, older than my mother. And I kept house for him. I had to look after him. Because he got up and walked in his sleep and stuff like that. And we could not leave him alone. And I stayed and took care of him.

Romesburg: So before you started packing parachutes at WPAFB, you had never done anything like that before?

Abraham: No I never did. I also cleaned houses for other people. You could pick up cleaning jobs. I was not living where they were any industrial jobs that you could get to do. And that was all you could find around there to do, just help somebody else.

Howard: Why don't you tell her about working in the store.

Abraham: Well, we had a little store, and I did work in that. It was a general store-it had everything. It was my father's store.

Mingo: Didn't your husband, Mike, who died in 1932 have a store?

Abraham: Well you see I never thought that I would have to remember all these things.

Romesburg: It was mentioned in an article or someone else that you had relatives in the Civil War?

Abraham: My father was in the Civil War. He fought for the Union side.

Romesburg: Do you remember what unit he was with? Or where he fought?

Abraham: No I do not remember that.

Howard: He did get a few metals along the way, didn't he?

Abraham: Oh yes, he had a box of metals.

Romesburg: Do you have those?

Abraham: No, I don't where they are at. When I quit keeping house for Daddy and he went to stay with my brother, well they took all them things with them and I don't know what they did with them.

Romesburg: Well, let's proceed to when you came up to Wright Field.

Abraham: Well, they needed help up there, so my son, he told me, "Mom I'm going out and sign up tomorrow to go up to Patterson Field.

Howard: This was then you were living in Colgrove, Ohio.

Abraham: Yes in Colgrove, Ohio.

Romesburg: When did you move there?

Abraham: Well, it's like I told you, they needed help up at the base and they came down to where I lived and they took us up there.

Mingo: Mom, why did you leave West Virginia? And move to Colgrove? You lived in Colgrove with Mike (her husband) on the farm. Did you leave WV because you got married?

Abraham: Yeah,

Mingo: And when they wanted you to work at the base, did they come to Colgrove?

Abraham: Yes, we came up to the base in 1943.

Romesburg: Now, did you work on Wright Field or Patterson Field?

Abraham: Patterson Field.

Romesburg: Do you remember where you worked at Patterson Field? Did you remember any kind of building number? Or location?

Abraham: There were building numbers, because we had to keep them in mind when we worked there. But I don't remember the number.

Romesburg: Was it near the flightline?

Abraham: Yes, it was near the flightline.

Romesburg: Now you were packing parachutes for who? For what organization?

Abraham: For Wright Field.

Romesburg: There were standard parachutes?

Abraham: Standard parachutes. A parachute looks like an umbrella when it's opened.

Romesburg: On the Wright Field side they were doing some experiments with parachutes. And developing new styles. Were you involved in that at all?

Abraham: I don't remember.

Romesburg: Can you describe what the organization was like that you worked in? How many people? Were there other women?

Abraham: Yes, there were. We took parachutes and straightened them out, got all the wrinkles out so they were nice.

Romesburg: Were these parachutes that were used at Wright Field? Or were they shipped for use elsewhere?

Abraham: No they were used here at Wright Field.

Romesburg: Where did the parachutes come from that were ready to be packed?

Abraham: I really don't know. They did not tell us where they came from. But I assume they were shipped there to Wright Field.

Howard: Mike told me that the parachutes that you packed came from everywhere. And you packed them and they went out to everywhere. You guys packed all kinds of types and they came in from everywhere.

Abraham: That's about right. My son (Mike) was younger than me. And he could remember more than me.

Howard: How did you learn to pack parachutes?

Abraham: They taught us to.

Howard: So the people at Wright-Patterson said that they were going to send you to a school to learn how to do this.

Abraham: They taught us right there in the building.

Howard: Was it like a week training or two or three months?

Abraham: Maybe a few weeks. Course it wasn't hard to learn how to pack parachutes. Because it is just like an umbrella. A large umbrella. And then you had to get (the cords) all together that goes from one stay to the other. And we had to get the cords straight too. The nylon that we used for the "umbrella" part of it. It was just like a large umbrella. When they are large like that they can get sort of messed up. And so we would straighten them out with our paddles. And when I quit they did not say to leave the paddles so I just brought them with me.

Romesburg: What kind of work surface did you pack the parachutes? Did you do it on big tables or on the floor?

Abraham: Oh we did it on tables, we would not put that on the floor. And we had some people there, that if the parachute could be mended, they mended it.

Romesburg: Can you remember how you folded, packed it?

Abraham: You know how you do if you were going to straighten out an umbrella. Well you just put them on the big table and straightened them out. When you got them all nice and straight, and then you would roll them up together like an umbrella.

Romesburg: How many would you do in a day. Was there a quota?

Abraham: We did quite a few in a day. I don't know how many. We just worked a normal shift and bring the parachutes to us and take them away. I don't know what they did with them after that.

Romesburg: What did you pack them into?

Abraham: Well, we called packing was just straightening them out and getting them ready to go. I don't know what they put them in.

Howard: Did you put them into a little sack?

Abraham: No, we just straightened them out and folded them. And then somebody else packed them. Maybe they inspected them after that, I don't know.

Romesburg: Did you enjoy it?

Abraham: Oh, yes.

Howard: What if you found one that you did not think should be rolled up?

Abraham: If it wasn't ready to pack, it wouldn't inspect it. I would tell them it wasn't safe for anyone to use. They never did say anything to me. There are lots of times they had people there that I did not know about, (like inspectors). They don't tell you everything, but they had people there looking on them parachutes because people had to jump out with them. And then they had to pull the ripcord and they had to open. That was part of the packing, assembling the ripcord with the harness. When anybody jumped out with a parachute, you had a ripcord to pull on and that made the parachute open up. And if it did not open up, why that guy's in trouble.

Romesburg: Did these parachutes have what they call a static line? Where the parachutes were automatically opened as they jumped out of the airplane.

Abraham: When I was doing it, that wasn't the case. They had to pull a ripcord.

Romesburg: So you weren't sure where these parachutes were going to be used?

Abraham: There was a big war going on. I don't know where they came from but they all ended up on Patterson Field. I understand there is no record to show women worked on Patterson Field, but I did.

Romesburg: Well I know that on the Patterson side, there were a lot of women working over there during World War II. And we have documents and pictures that prove that.

Howard: How many women worked in the shop?

Abraham: I expect there were. And we had some women who sat at sewing machines. And if the parachutes could be fixed, they sewed them on the machines.

Romesburg: Now when you looked at a parachute that was about to be packed, and you decided that there may be something wrong with it, what kinds of things might be wrong with it?

Abraham: Well there might be a hole in it, or something that I thought wasn't safe. And they didn't say anything to me but I told them that I wouldn't pack it. And that's the first time I worked at a place where I deliberately did not do what they told me to do.

Romesburg: And what did they say?

Abraham: They never say anything. I think the reason is that they did not say anything, was that they were afraid that I would go and tell somebody. But my word went.

Romesburg: What did they do then? Did they pass it on to someone else to pack?

Abraham: No, they called some people in to inspect it. To see why we didn't want to pack it.

Romesburg: Now, you came up here with your 16 year-old son, Mike And you just had the one child with you?

Abraham: Yes.

Romesburg: Many women working during that time I imagine had to find some kind of child care, but it does not sound like you had that problem.

Abraham: And Mike went to work there.

Howard: Mike went to training down there in Colgrove first. You and Mike went to a government training center in Colgrove to learn how to work with sheet metal. That's where you started with the government aspect of this. How long was the training? 6 weeks?

Abraham: Yes, I certainly remember that. I'll never forget that.

Romesburg: Was this a private or contracted industry that was supporting the government? Down in Colgrove?

Howard: Some how it was associated with the government according to my uncle but I am not sure whether the government came in and did the training or they had contractors come in and do the training. But it was government related.

Romesburg: And I take it you did not enjoy the sheet metal work?

Abraham: No I did not enjoy the sheet metal work.

Romesburg: Did your son continue with sheet metal?

Abraham: Well they wanted some people to work and he came in one day and said. " Mom, I'm going to sign up to go up to Patterson Field." I said , "well if you are going up there, I'm going too."

Romesburg: So what did he end up doing up here?

Abraham: Well, he did the same thing I did, worked on sheet metal.

Romesburg: How long did you do that?

Abraham: Maybe a month.

Romesburg: do you remember what you were working on? Did you actually apply sheet metal to an aircraft?

Abraham: No, I don't think so, they were just teaching us to do things like that.

Howard: Since they did not specify that you had to stay with sheet metal, Mike went on to work with electric motors. He went on to do electric motor repair until he quit the base.

Abraham: I'm 100 years old now and I can't remember all he did.

Romesburg: So then you stayed for how long? Up here? Working, packing parachutes.

Abraham: We were up there quite a while but I don't remember exactly how long.

Howard: About a year and a half to two years according to Mike.

Romesburg: What was it like being a women working at the base? Did you feel like you were treated well?

Abraham: We were respected and treated very well.

Romesburg: Could you go anywhere you wanted to on the base?

Abraham: We could go any place we wanted (needed) to go.

Romesburg: How did you get around? Did you have a car?

Abraham: Yes.

Howard: Did you live on base? Or did you live in Hebble homes the whole time?

Abraham: No, we lived in Hebble homes.



Stella in front of Hebble Homes

Howard: It was a housing area in Fairborn that looked like old barracks that were split in half, like duplexes. It was where the Fairborn government center is on Hebble. There was row after row of these.

Granddaughter: And they had the little houses on A Street. Like single family homes and the barracks-style duplexes.

Romesburg: Would you have any pictures of Patterson during that time, pictures of people you might have worked with?

Abraham: No.

Howard: Mike's got pictures.

Romesburg: Back to the parachute shop, do you remember what type of parachutes you packed? Did it have a specific model number or name?

Abraham: No, they might have had a model number, but I didn't know what it was.

Romesburg: Were they all the same design?

Abraham: Yes

Romesburg: There weren't any different designs that you could tell? Sizes or the way the umbrella (canopy) was made. You said they were all silk. Were they any parachutes that had a different type of harness?

Abraham: No, they all had the same harness. We had to tack the harness. I don't' know how they fastened the parachute to the harness, but they had to have a harness that they put their arms through and when they jumped out of the plane, the harness had a job to do too. And we had to tack them in accordance with the proper T.O. (technical order).

Romesburg: What was the harness made of?

Abraham: It was made out of something that was strong, but I don't know what it was called. I never thought about anyone asking me about it after all these years.

Howard: What was a T.O.?

Abraham: I didn't ask them. You tacked the harness to the T.O.

Romesburg: T.O. usually means technical order. I don't know if this was some paperwork or tag.

Abraham: No it was like a little jacket or something. This harness came over the shoulder and around like a little jacket you might say and you had to tack them in some places and you called it tacking them to the "TO."

Romesburg: And when you tacked them, what did you do exactly?

Abraham: You used a thread and needle and tacked them for each parachute that I packed.

Romesburg: So when they were used and the guy jumped out of the plane, they were detached?

Abraham: Yes, they were detached from the jacket like vest. It's been such a long time since I worked over there in the 1940's.

Romesburg: Do you remember such as your supervisor or boss?

Abraham: No but I might find something around the house.

Romesburg: There were some people that worked on parachutes over at the Wright Field. Do you remember any of these names, George Zelinkas?

Abraham: We had some bosses that worked over at Wright Field, but I don't remember the name.

Romesburg: How about Edward Hoffman? He was over on the Wright Field side, developing parachutes. But that was in the 1930's. He developed something called the triangle parachute.

Abraham: That sounds familiar. There was someone over there working on parachutes but I don't know if they ever came out (produced.)

Romesburg: What did you do after working on the base?

Abraham: I think I went into cashier business. I had a little restaurant business.

Howard: She was well known as the cashier at the Hasty Tasty Restaurant in Fairborn.

END OF INTERVIEW



EDITH R. CARLSON

(Note: Please see Access Agreement at back of booklet)

Mrs. Edith R. Carlson worked at Inland Manufacturing Company on East Third Street (near Abby Ave.) in Dayton making M-1 Carbine rifles.

Romesburg: Where were you born and raised? What did you do after high school? How did come to Dayton?

Carlson: I was born in Kenvir, Kentucky and went to school in Evarts, Kentucky. I came up to Dayton in 1943 and I was given a choice of working at Vandalia Airport or Inland Manufacturing Company. And the airport seemed too far so I chose Inland. I was such a naïve person, green from the hills of Kentucky, I decided that I could take the trolley out to Inland. So I got a job out there and had to have a physical. And they said I was only allowed to do light assembly because I only weighed 91 pounds. And then I was given the job on second shift, assembling bolts for the M-1 rifle. I also loaded cartridges in the cartridge containers (ammo boxes). I also cleaned the rifles out, but mainly I assembled the bolts, small bolts. And I guess that I was pretty good at it, just flying at this job, thinking how I had done 1000 of those things. This one older lady said to me, "Pardon me, but you need to slow down a little bit, you're killing the job." And we weren't on piece work either. But she just didn't want to have to keep up. And I was 18, and they took me under their wing, and they advised me about things. And they'd tell jokes and say, "oh no you can't hear this, you're too young."

Romesburg: How old were these old married ladies?

Carlson: Probably in their 30's. Old to an 18 year old. I worked at Inland to the war was over, doing all sorts of jobs. Learned first aid, very interesting place to work. They had great meals. The cooks in the kitchen were great. You could get a meal for 50 cents. I ate all my main meals there. I met a lot of nice people there.



Edith as young woman

Romesburg: Where was it located?

Carlson: On East Third Street near Abby Avenue, about halfway out on third west of downtown. I think it's still out there, still General Motors property. I don't know what else they did doing wartime, except assemble those rifles.

Romesburg: How long was your work day?

Carlson: 8 hours, that's all I remember working. Very few times I worked overtime. They had three shifts going, so there wasn't overtime.

Romesburg: Were you paid when you did work overtime?

Carlson: Oh, yes. Very little, but yes.

Romesburg: Was it a good paying job for its time?

Carlson: I think so. I was astounded the first pay check that I got. Here I'm from the hills of Kentucky, I don't have any money or anything, just enough to come up here and get a job. And my first paycheck was \$28.00. And rent was only \$3 and I spent \$3-4 on food. We were taking out bonds. Later I was making \$50 or 60 a week, which is a fortune back then.

Romesburg: How long did you work there?

Carlson: I worked there from 1943 and worked to the end of the war in 1945.

Romesburg: Then what did you do?

Carlson: I stayed in the area. But did not get married until later on when I was almost 22. My husband had an interesting career. He was transferred here working on planes, setting instruments, flying planes by the moon and the stars. He was in a group that was always sequestered. When they would move from one place to another, they had a private train that they would ride on. And go to wherever they were working on these planes. And then he ended up at Wright-Patterson. Then the war was over and he started working at Rike's Department Store and so did I. That's where we met. He was a civilian then. He was 18 at the time and was not drafted for World War II. He was drafted for a later war. Korea, I guess. But they didn't keep him on—he had two perforated ear drums. He was there 59 days. So he never did serve in the military per se. After

Rike's he worked for Dayton Power and Light. He was a foreman down in the service department.

Romesburg: When you quit Inland, did you quit or were you let go?

Carlson: We were just let go. It was the termination of our contract for making rifles. They did ask me to come back later on, but I didn't. Then I worked at Rike's Department Store in the office.

Romesburg: How long did you work there?

Carlson: 6 years in stenographic work. Not really doing shorthand, a lot of typing. At \$1 per hour. And then it was \$2 per hour by the time a quit.

Romesburg: At the manufacturing company, what was the ratio of men to women?

Carlson: There were many more women, some older men who couldn't pass physicals, couldn't qualify. Never any problem about harassment and sexual advances. Very circumspect, very well run place. There wasn't any problem about anything that I remember. Everybody was treated well and we had a doctor and nurse. If you had any problems, you could go to them. We were always treated very well. Very clean, kitchen was absolutely out of this world. These little short ladies in their little white uniforms, cooking all this delicious food, baking pies, hot biscuits and everything. And being from the hills of Kentucky, my mother had been a professional cook. So you ate all this good food there for 50 cents. That was my main meal. They really had good food. None of this automated stuff then. No fast food. They had two drive-ins in Dayton. One was on West Third and one was Whimpy's downtown.

Romesburg: When did you move to Fairborn?

Carlson: We moved to Fairborn in 1954. From Dayton, on 4th Street, and on Riverside Drive.

My second husband also had an interesting career, 22 years with the Air Force and 14 years with the AF Orientation Group. He was at the base 14 years, he set a record at there. He even went to Sweden and showed them how they were going to land them in on the moon. Wright-Patterson was the headquarters for AFOG.

END OF INTERVIEW



A crowd gathers in front of the Inland Manufacturing Division of General Motors on January 4, 1944. During World War II, the division made M-30 carbine rifles and on this day, the one-millionth rifle was made.



MARY A. COCCA

(Note: Please see Access Agreement at back of booklet)

Immediately after graduation from St. Joseph's High School in June 1943, Mrs. Mary A. Cocca was hired as a Federal Civil Service Clerk-Stenographer in the Medical Supply Office at Area C, Wright Field. Within a short time, she was reassigned to the Air Material Command Surgeon General's Division, Area A, as secretary to several medical doctors and an industrial engineer for four years or so. Thereafter, she was secretary to the chief of Base Services Division and later to the chief of Military Training Division.

Romesburg: Where were you born and raised

Cocca: I was born in Dover, Ohio and raised by parents who were both immigrants from the island of Sicily. They came to this country to live a better life, and, considering the handicaps, did extremely well. Since they did not speak the English language, it was difficult for them to learn it and, at the same time, adjust to the American ways of life. I remember when my mother became a citizen. I was the one chosen by her to go to the YMCA in Dover to help her with her homework. I remember the day when she had to go before the judge. There was a group of immigrants also there who were apprehensive, wondering how the judge was going to approach them. The judge was very compassionate. They all made the grade, and became citizens of the United States. My mother was just thrilled!

Romesburg: What brought them to Dover?

Cocca: My dad was actually here in this country with his brother. Remember, way back, there was a constant influx of immigrants from Italy and Sicily, who ventured across the ocean by boat, embarking in New York to settle in the rich land of America, land of plenty where there were many opportunities. Back in Sicily, there were orange groves, vineyards and olive groves. My mother's dad was a fisherman. But they came here because it was a land of opportunity, which was quite a contrast to the poverty that existed in their homeland. And so the two brothers were here. The one brother (my uncle) married my mother's sister. And later the other brother (my dad) married my mother. Their families knew each other. Since some of my parent's friends from Sicily already had immigrated to America and settled in Dover to work and raise their families, they did also. In many ways, this was good, because they helped and supported each other. It was in Dover's St. Joseph's Catholic Church that my parents were married, and, thereafter, raised their family in the home my father had purchased. I was the third child of their seven children. Even though they were strict disciplinarians, teaching us by example the virtuous ways of life, my parents were very proud of their family, and encouraged us to excel in all that we did. (I graduated from St. Joseph's High School as valedictorian.) It was my desire to be a nurse, but I knew my parents could not afford to send me to college. I realized how difficult it was for them to provide for their large family. So I excelled in shorthand and typing, knowing that jobs were plentiful in this area. Wright Field was seeking personnel with this experience.

Romesburg: So they came to the high school and recruited you?

Cocca: In a way, yes. Since the country was in the midst of World War II, our school was notified of the great demand that existed at Wright Field for typists and stenographers. I took advantage of the opportunity, passed the Federal Civil Service examination with flying colors, and was immediately hired as a clerk-stenographer, GS-2, in the Medical Supply office. Within a short time, I was transferred to Surgeon General's office and worked for several medical doctors and also an industrial engineer. Their job was to take care of any

medical, occupational, sanitary and industrial problems that existed at Wright Field and air bases under the Air Material Command.

Romesburg: What year would that have been?

Cocca: I began working in 1943 at the Medical Supply Office. About the middle of 1944, I was transferred to the Surgeon General's Office and worked there for several years until the commanding officer (General) left. I then transferred to the Base Services Division and was secretary to the Chief. When he was transferred overseas in 1949, I worked as secretary to the Chief of the Military Training Division. It was in December 1950 that I married, but continued working until March 1951 when I retired. So my employment at Wright Field was from June 1943 to March 1951. .

Romesburg: Do you remember the buildings where you worked?

Cocca: The Medical Supply Office was at Area C, Building 1, just inside the gate to the left. The other offices were all in Building 262, Headquarters Air Material Command.

Romesburg: Which did you enjoy the most?

Cocca: They were all very interesting. But the medical office (Surgeon General) held a special interest for me, as I was interested in the medical field. Since I had access to the medical library in the office, I became familiar (through research) with the many medical terms and their meaning.

Romesburg: What did you do for the industrial engineer?

Cocca: I was his secretary, took dictation, transcribed it and typed letters, reports, manuscripts, etc. The industrial engineer's responsibility was to maintain proper working conditions in the work force at the air bases under the Air Materiel Command. If there were problems, he would visit the site, investigate the problems and make recommendations to improve them. When he returned, he would

dictate his report to me and, upon completion, submitted it to his superior.

Romesburg: Was it industrial safety issue?

Cocca: Yes, safety issues that pertained to the workers, their manner of operation, equipment, work environment, etc. Romesburg: Do you feel that you were paid well for that time?

Cocca: Since it was my first job, I was happy with what I received, and I did budget well. However, the pay increases helped immensely.

Romesburg: How do you feel you were treated as a woman? Do you feel you were treated fairly?

Cocca: What happened in the medical office (Surgeon General) was interesting. Several medical doctors were like father figures to us girls, advising us wisely because we were young and vulnerable in many ways. There were always the "flirts", married or not, but we girls avoided them.

Romesburg: No one harassed you?

Cocca: Of course there were those "flirts" who, in today's world, would be in serious trouble, but we were sharp enough to avoid them. In those days, one did not report what is considered today as "harassment".

Romesburg: Tell me again what year you were married.

Cocca: I was married in December 1950

Romesburg: When you came from Dover, where did you live?

Cocca: When I first arrived, I lived in the civilian barracks with my older sister who was already working at Wright Field. Both the barracks and Hebble homes (located in the vicinity of Broad Street

and Hebble Avenue) were temporary housings, especially built to accommodate the tremendous influx of people from everywhere who were ready to assist in the crucial war effort. When Skyway Park homes were built, across from Headquarters Air Material Command, we left the barracks and moved there. (The land now belongs to Wright State University.)

Before too long, I moved into a large home in Dayton with five women, who also worked at Wright Field. We shared the living expenses and care of the home, such as, rent, food, preparation of meals, household cleaning and yard maintenance. The rent was \$120 per month, which was equally shared and really helped our budget. It was an educational experience in money management.

Romesburg: So then once you got married, you moved into a home.

Cocca: .We bought a little home at Crystal Lake, near Medway, Ohio on Queen Road, not too far from the lake. Since the homes in this area were "summer" homes, with lots of windows and no insulation, my husband and I nearly froze the first winter. So when spring arrived, he remodeled and insulated the home, making it warm and comfortable. As our family of four children grew, we built an addition to the house, doubling its size. It was in June, 1963, that we moved into our new home, built on three acres of farm land we purchased on Haddix Road, near Enon, Ohio. We all enjoyed the wide-open spaces of the country. With the help of the children, each year we planted a huge garden and canned the produce. There were more than a hundred trees, including an orchard, which we planted to enjoy its fruits, shade, and beauty.

Romesburg: I usually ask a question about training. It sounds like you received your secretarial training in high school.

Cocca: That is correct. I was an outstanding student. It was unfortunate that I did not have the opportunity to go to college, as I had desired. But, while working at Wright Field, I did attend the Dayton Art Institute, and also University of Dayton in the evening to further my education. My parents were great, in that they taught us

a lot about many things. They taught us to "do the best that you can in whatever you do". I never forgot that.

Romesburg: Once you got to the base, and started working were you given any additional training on what you were doing?

Cocca: No, it seemed like I just readily comprehended and remembered. I disciplined myself to be exact in the work I did, and always had a dictionary on my desk for reference. When it came to medical terminology, there were encyclopedias in the library for research. I do remember that the letters for the general had to be "perfectly" correct, with no errors. They always came to me to type them. In reminiscing, I am amazed at myself that, regardless of how many pages there were, I could type them accurately without a single error.

The whole experience taught me many lessons. We had to budget for everything, including transportation. We could have ridden the "cattle cars", but we opted to find other transportation when we could. The "cattle cars" were ugly gray converted buses in which people were packed into and no fun to ride. I was glad when we got better transportation. One of the women who lived with us found a man living nearby whom we paid to drive us to work everyday.

END OF INTERVIEW



E. PAULINE FOGARTY:

(Note: Please see Access Agreement at back of booklet)

Mrs. Pauline Fogarty: began her career in Feb 1942 for the War Department at Fairfield Air Depot in Fairfield Ohio.

Voss: When and where were you born and raised?

Fogarty: I was born in Springfield Ohio and have lived all 75 years of my life here. I was born in 1924 and will soon be 76 in April.

Voss: What did you do after high school?

Fogarty: After high school I worked at Crowell Collier Publishing Company which was the biggest industry here in Springfield at the time—particularly a lot of women and girls worked there. I had just turned 17 and graduated from high school; my dad worked there as a machinist. I worked there for several months as a typist. My dad took off a day from work which was unusual for him and drove me down to Patterson Feld, and it was two months after the war (WWII) had started so I went down old route 4. I remember it was snowing. I went down and took a test. At that time they called it Area C. It was the main gate you could go in, and I went in and I can't remember who it was who took me back into personnel. I took my first test in personnel. I was asked if I could take shorthand. I said, "yes," so after I took a letter in shorthand, he said to someone, 'we're going to keep her here because she can take shorthand,' so then I stayed in personnel for quite some time in Area C. It was an old wooden building. They also had a Headquarters (HQ) there right across the way from that building. Later on, some parts of personnel

moved over there and I worked there. Later on they built another HQ nearby. I don't know what they called it.

Voss: This was still in Area C?

Fogarty: Yes. The colonel in charge was Colonel Penland—he was well known. He was a full colonel. I worked there for quite some time. He was Chief of Civilian Personnel.

Voss: You weren't recruited but went to the base seeking a job?

Fogarty: Yes.

Voss: You were hired that day?

Fogarty: Yes. I prayed I wouldn't pass the test. There was so much going on. I thought 'this is not for me.' I was so quiet. But I took the job, of course, and I've never been sorry since. I was there at that HQ for quite some time. I went from there to Civilian Training. They took in a lot as you may know. They went to all different towns to recruit people.

Voss: Did you travel to the other towns?

Fogarty: Oh no. That was part of what my office did. I typed correspondence pertaining to that—the travel and such. The supervisors would go out and recruit people and then they would also go out and check the bases under Patterson Field. They had little small bases at different places. I became friends with a girl who they recruited from clear up in St Louis Missouri and one in Kentucky. They also moved our office over to Wood City, still as part of personnel but it was the training division. I remember seeing classes of people sitting in a classroom learning how to type. That's how desperate they were for typists.

Voss: So they brought people in and then trained them?

Fogarty: Yes. That's one of the things I did, was keep records of that, you know, and that was pretty interesting. I felt fortunate that I did know how to type and take shorthand. That's how badly they needed people to work. Then, also, when I was there at first, I came in on the bus from Springfield because I didn't know anybody to ride with. After a while, I met people and got a ride. I was there seven years all together but I only had five or six different rides which was pretty good.

Voss: So you would meet someone and carpool with them to get to work?

Fogarty: Yes. They would pick me up and we'd go together and park in the parking lot and meet them afterwards and ride home to Springfield together. Mostly men drove, I did ride with one lady, who would drive down Route 4 through Enon.

Voss: So you didn't take the trolley or the interurban down to the base. Did you ever take the bus?

Fogarty: The trolleys were mostly in Dayton. Sometimes I took the bus. When the war ended I was still at Wood City as a secretary in the Adjutant's office. What it was is that they had the legal papers and so on for the boys who were coming back after the war to get discharged. I remember the same record playing all the time when the boys came in to get discharged. I remember they'd play this music, a certain record, and they'd tell the boys 'you're now discharged.' They, the boys, were all real happy and everything. Every day they brought boys in from all over to be discharged from the Air Force.



Wood City

Voss: So your office would have a little ceremony then when they signed their discharge papers?

Fogarty: Yes.

Voss: Do you remember what song they played for them?

Fogarty: I don't remember which song they played. But it seems like after that assignment I went back over to the base and worked in personnel. I then went to one of the HQ buildings and worked in personnel. I was there for quite some time and a job came up to be the secretary to the Administrative Surgeon. This was toward the latter part of my career. I then took a test and interviewed for Colonel Glenn. He had been a general but when the war was over, he became a colonel. He was very military. I was still a quiet girl and I thought 'Oh Lord, help us,' (Laughter) and then I became his secretary. Later on he retired and then came Col Schreuder, Otis B Schreuder. I remember him very well, he was a very nice person. In this office I had my own office that I shared with the colonel's driver. At that time colonels had their own driver, a Sergeant; and he and I shared the same office. When the colonel needed to go over to check on things at the hospital, the driver would take him over there. I liked Colonel Schreuder very much. He was a nice man who had just come back from England--very nice person.

Voss: Was he then promoted to general?

Fogarty: As I was resigning he received notice that he was to become a brigadier general. Some people were calling him a general already but he hadn't gotten pinned on yet. He was a brigadier general select.

Voss: When you worked for him, was that in Building 262?



Building 262, HQ Air Service Command

Fogarty: Yes, in the Surgeon's office.

Voss: Did you ever work in the Staff Judge Advocate's office? You mentioned legal papers when the boys were discharged.

Fogarty: I can't remember if they called it the Staff Judge Advocate's office but I know they did legal papers as part of personnel. Maybe it was a little subset of personnel.

Voss: Where did you live when you were working at the base?

Fogarty: I lived in Springfield at 915 Warder Street.

Voss: We have so much in common. I was born on Warder Street. My dad worked at Ohio Edison and we lived on the block with

Whitey's Bar on the corner. My uncle, Wirt Harris, and his family also lived on Warder Street.

Fogarty: What was your number?

Voss: I think it was 1044 or 1058.

Fogarty: I remember Whitey's—not that we went over there but it was kind of a landmark. Everybody, you know, all the guys would go up there after work.

Voss: It was a very working class bar, wasn't it?

Fogarty: It was.

Voss: We moved out to a farm when I was three so I have very limited memories of living on Warder Street.

Fogarty: It was a nice neighborhood back then. Very nice.

Voss: Were you given special training to do your job at the base?

Fogarty: I came in with the skills I needed to do my job. I don't remember ever having any special training. You know, I came in as a stenographer. We took a test and normally you automatically became civil service but then they were giving us war service indefinite appointments. Have you ever heard of war service indefinite appointment?

Voss: Was that the contract that expired upon the end of the war?

Fogarty: Yes, to my knowledge that is what it was. I might have the records where I took a test to become permanent civil service. I remember so vividly that there were girls coming in who were stenographers and after they took the typing test they gave them shorthand tests. I remember thinking, 'why were all those girls leaving the test room?' I think it was too much, maybe they had not done much shorthand while they were working there so maybe they

didn't do so well on the test. A lot of the girls left then so they ended up as just typists. Later on, I'm not sure exactly when, these girls were allowed to take the test over again. I know I had an acquaintance who had to take the test over again. I felt very fortunate that I passed, not that I was a brain, but I passed the civil service test because I really wanted a civil service appointment. I had learned these things in high school from the nuns.

Voss: Did you attend high school at Catholic Central in Springfield?

Fogarty: Yes, I did. This one sister, God love her, she was so worried that the girls would not be prepared to go out into the workforce in 1941, this was right before the war, and the nuns were so dedicated to getting the students ready to go out into the world. The nuns didn't get much money but they were so dedicated. One nun really worked hard on getting us ready.

Voss: What was it like to be a woman working on the base? Do you think you were treated fairly and with respect?

Fogarty: Oh absolutely. There was never any discrimination that I came across when I was there.

Voss: Did you have to arrange for child care?

Fogarty: No, I was still single then.

Voss: What was your total time working at the base?

Fogarty: I started Feb 13, 1942, and I think I resigned in December in 1948. I had leave through May of 1949, so if you count the leave, I had around seven years.

Voss: When you left did they pay you for your accumulated leave?

Fogarty: Yes, it was wonderful. They paid me for maternity leave. My understanding is that they didn't pay you for your sick leave unless you were ill or resigning because of pregnancy. I was

resigning because of pregnancy. I'd like to note here that I don't recall ever calling in sick. The only time I took off with sick leave is one half of a day to go to the dentist. I don't remember ever calling in sick. I thought you just go in to work.

Voss: Where did you go from your employment at the base?

Fogarty: I married and stayed home to raise my family. I raised 11 children with my husband John.

Voss: Do you have written biographical information?

Fogarty: I have some records from when I worked at the base. I'll get my records. Due to the fact that since a lot of girls didn't even pass the test, I felt fortunate to have employment there. I notice that on my records at one time they changed my grade to a lower salary. I think there was some kind of regulation that they could have only so many CAF 2s or 3s so I don't know what...it wasn't a demotion but the grade did change after the war.

Voss: I see that you made \$2694 a year. Was that considered a good salary?

F: Oh yes, compared to Crowell Collier Publishing Company. When I first started there I got \$13.00 a week and by the time they took out Social Security I got \$12.87 a week. I can still remember that, you know. I always blessed my dad for encouraging me and taking me down to the base that day. Coming back the roads got slippery because of the snow and we almost hit a tree!

Voss: So you went from \$13.00 a week to?

Fogarty: It was \$14.40 as a CAF 2. The typists started out as CAF 1s but I took shorthand, you know, so I started out as a CAF 2.

Voss: So with the raise, it was worth it to work at the base even though it was farther away from your home.

Fogarty: Oh yes.

Voss: I see by this form, name change due to marriage, that you were a June bride.

Fogarty: I think my other papers may be the same, just copies of that.

Voss: You left with 703 hours of leave.

Fogarty: Yes, that was a lot. I think if I had it to do over again, I would leave the money in for a retirement fund, but what we did was use that money to buy furniture, you know, to set up our home. So I started out with new furniture.

Voss: We'll have the luncheon at the Officers Club.

Fogarty: It's so funny, the Officers Club, I thought 'gee,' I had only been there one time during my employment there. I think how the good Lord provided me with sons, I have two sons in the military and had two sons-in-law in the military and we often go there. Years ago, when I worked at the base, I would have given anything to go there. There were girls who worked with me who did get invited to the Officers Club often, but I was so quiet then. Some of the girls dated a lot then. I did have dates with boys that worked down there but not to go to the Officers Club. I do want to mention something that is so funny. I went to school with my husband who was a year ahead of me in school at Catholic Central, even though he was two years older than me he was only one year ahead of me in school. When the war was over and I was working in Wood City at the separation base, I went in to take a paper to this one office and he was sitting there. I remembered him from school and I said hi. He said hi. It wasn't until two years later that he called me (laughter) and in the meantime I had dated others.

Voss: So you met him at work? But you already knew who he was?

Fogarty: I knew who he was, but he said 'hi' as he was going in for an interview, but he decided not to take that job. I think he said his job in the Navy, he was enlisted, and his old job was somewhat similar to the one he was interviewing for, some kind of counseling in personnel or something and he wanted to do something else. Anyway, it was funny, I said 'hi,' but it was two years before he called me.

My brother also graduated with John and was looking through some pictures. John also had a sister. He came down to my house, I remember this, he came by the house on a Saturday afternoon and asked if Dan was there. Me mom said 'no,' he was up with a bunch of boys at Whitey's so he went up to Whitey's to see my brother.

Voss: Where was Wood City?

Fogarty: I think the Wood City I remember is where the BX and things are now. When you called me I thought that what I did wasn't very important compared to the girls who fixed the engines and things you know.

Voss: But you were very important too. Paper work has to be processed.

Fogarty: I always thought it would be so neat to work on the flight line, you know, to be able to work there.

Voss: We interviewed a lady who worked on the flight line. She held a screwdriver and a flashlight for the men who worked on the planes. The mechanics worked on the planes and the young ladies would hold the tools.

Fogarty: Isn't that interesting?

Voss: This young lady, Sylvia Fox, now Powell, was tuning an engine when the first lady, Mrs. Roosevelt came by on a walk-through. We're hoping to bring her out to the base for the luncheon so maybe you can meet her.

When you first started working there, what was it called?

Fogarty: I believe it was called the Army Air Corps. Maybe it is in my paperwork. It says the Army Air Force on my paperwork from 1946.

I'd like to mention that now there are not as many secretaries because of the computers, right?

Voss: Yes, you're right.

Fogarty: One thing I remember was the rules and regulations. I remember one girl who was in charge of whenever one regulation would cancel out another one; I always remember that I wanted to make sure that all my letters were typed right. Another thing, about grammar, we were so careful to use the correct grammar. I still try to keep up with that and I notice mistakes now even in the newspaper.

Voss: We still have Air Force Regulations but they have been renamed Air Force Instructions or AFIs for short. Compliance is mandatory and the instructions are on the computer instead of being printed and circulated. We are expected to keep up in our areas by checking for the new AFIs on the computer. We communicate so much by electronic mail now that we seldom see the hard copy of the letter printed on letterhead.

Fogarty: Oh, that's too bad. I like to look at the letters after they were typed. They looked so nice. I also write to people on email. I've sent away for a correct grammar book from the email.

END OF INTERVIEW



SYLVIA F. POWELL

(Note: Please see Access Agreement at back of booklet)

Ms Sylvia Fox Powell worked at Patterson Field during World War II from 1942-1945. Ms Fox worked in buildings 13 and 89, repairing engines. She worked on such engines as the Wright R-1820 "Cyclone" for the B-17 and the Allison V-1710 for the P-38 and P-51. When Mrs. Roosevelt visited the base during the war, she stopped behind Ms Fox's work station and commented on how well she used her screwdriver. After that, she said that she was given a more up-to-date screwdriver.

Romesburg: Where were you born and raised? What did you do when you graduated from high school?

Powell: I was born in a little wide place in the road called Napier, West Virginia. Old country store and a little post office in the country store and that was Napier. Napier was right in the center of West Virginia, about 100 miles north of Charleston. I graduated from high school in 1941, and there wasn't anything to do around there. All families were farmers; they dug out a living in the hills. So I felt like I had to get away to find a job so I went to Huntington, West Virginia. Before that I worked in the country store for a little while. And that's all the work I did (in Napier). When I went to Huntington I lived with my sister and worked in a dime store for a while. Then I heard on the radio that was an opportunity to get a job at a war plant. So I went to the employment office where they were signing up; it was just a bunch of desks, each one had their own job. So my friend and I just went from desk to desk and by the time we finished

we had a job, but I didn't even know where the job was. I was going to go anywhere. It turned out to be up here in Dayton. We came to Dayton. Started there and started training.

Romesburg: Do you remember what year that was? Were you married? Where did you live?

Powell: I think 1942—it was in January. I was single at the time. They found rooms for us in north Dayton, just had a room for a while. Then we moved to an apartment in what was then Fairfield. And I had a room in Osborn. Then I finally got married.

Romesburg: Did you meet someone at the job?

Powell: No. my roommate that I got to know in Dayton, she was from south Ohio and she had a brother in service. I started writing to him like we used to write to boys back then to keep them company. And one thing led to another, and so we got married. And I stayed on.

Romesburg: Was he stationed here?

Powell: No, he wasn't stationed here. He was overseas and came home and got out of the service.

Romesburg: At the employment office, what were you hired to do? At the base?

Powell: Work on airplane engines. I don't know if I was set up for the job then, but that is what we got. When we came here we took some training. There were a few of us sent to Indianapolis Indiana and had a few weeks of training. Then we came back and went to work on the engines. Building back up the engines after they had been broke and tore down. Had to be repaired...

Romesburg: What do they call that, depot maintenance?

Powell: Engine assembly is all that I can remember.

Romesburg: And you said that was in Building 13?



Building 13

Powell: Yes and building 89 where this picture was taken. I first worked in building 13, further back in the base. Building 89 was close to the exit there.

Romesburg: I've been in Building 89.

Powell: I have too, my daughter recently got a job and she worked in Building 89. She took me through it and it looked quite different than it did back then.

Romesburg: I bet, although it's still a big warehouse. Most of it is...

Powell: It was a big open space where they had an assembly line running through it. And some office too, I guess.



Building 89 assembly line

Romesburg: The base is slowly taking some of these buildings and re-doing the interiors. Many of them have been declared historic buildings and there is a rule that you can't build a new building unless you take an old one down. But so many of them are historic and they are being protected under the Park Service. I don't know if building 89 qualifies, but I know, ever since I've been here, there has always been some activity in 89.

I meant to ask you one other question on housing. Were you ever living in this base housing that was provided for civilians?

Powell: No too long before I got married, yes, we living in what they called the barracks on the base.

Romesburg: Was that the Hebble Housing?

Powell: No, it was like barracks, it was across the road from Hebble Homes. On the north side of Broad Street. They had a few barracks that the girls lived in. It was after that I moved to Osborn and got a room.



Civilian barracks (left)

Romesburg: When did the two towns merge?

Powell: 1950. It was 50 years ago.

Romesburg: Was that quite a disruption to the community?

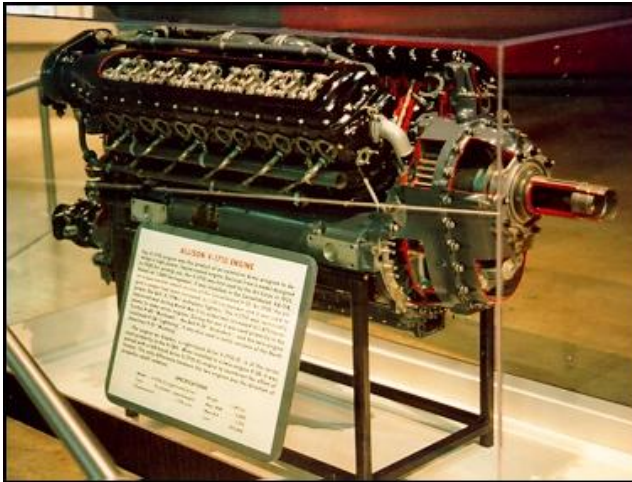
Powell: I couldn't tell that it was. We went to work and it happened. It was already together. The buildings were right next to one another. I don't know what the street was that run between them, but Osborn was already added to Fairborn.

Romesburg: Did they actually move buildings?

Powell: Way back when Osborn was over in the country outside of Fairfield. And they moved the buildings right next to Fairfield. And then in 1950 they joined the cities. I've been looking at pictures too because they want to do an article on my son. He was the first baby born in the new city of Fairborn.

Romesburg: When you went to Indianapolis, was that at an industrial plant that you received training?

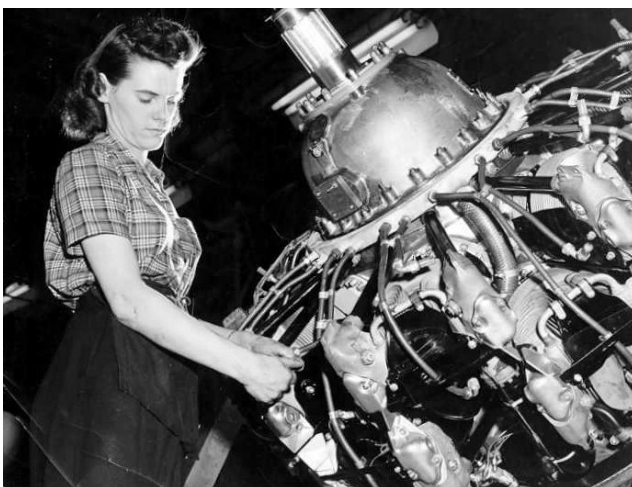
Powell: It was at Allison Engine. It was an interesting engine to work on—I was working on it in building 89. I had a more delicate job then, I timed the magnetos, exhaust and intake valves—it was kind of exact. But this cylinder engine (in the picture)—there wasn't too much to this one. I used a screwdriver. I don't remember what plane it went on. The first Allison engines I worked on went on P-51 and P-38—they were very recognizable.



Allison engine

Romesburg: The plane in the other picture is a bomber, isn't it? B-17?

Powell: B-17 sounds familiar. There was a little story when I worked on the cylinder engine in the picture. We were always having "big wigs" come through the building. So one time there was a group of officers accompanying Mrs. Roosevelt. And they came right up behind me. And I was just using a screwdriver. I got pretty good with it. And she stopped and commented on how well I used that screwdriver. After that we were issued a more up-to-date screwdriver.



Sylvia working on engine in building 89

Romesburg: So you would have been in your early 20's?

Powell: Yes, I was probably 21 or 22 when that was taken. I got married in 1945.

Romesburg: I usually ask people if they were married at that time, and they had children, what did they do with their kids during the work day. But it sounds like you did not have that problem. How long did you work on the base?

Powell: I worked from 1942 to 1945. Then I got married in 1945 and had my first baby in 1946. Didn't take long back then. I quit at that point. After we got married I went to Lawton Oklahoma where he was stationed for about a month before they closed it down after the war. I didn't work after that.

Romesburg: What was it like to be a woman working on the base during that time?



Fairfield Air Service Command, Maintenance Division's War Loan Drive. (Sylvia Fox [Powell] is pictured immediately right of sign in dark skirt)

Powell: Well, I never had done anything like that before and I so naïve I was shocked at the behavior, the way some of the guys teased the girls. Some of the girls would go along with anything and I would be embarrassed to death. I was embarrassed to be a woman. I was pretty naïve. And that bothered me. I couldn't get

used to it. Otherwise it was just like any other job, very dedicated. We just wouldn't take a day off. The time I wanted a day or two off to go home to West Virginia, and I just felt so guilty—they made me feel guilty. So we were very obligated—we walked to work. I lived up on Mann Ave. near Maple in Fairborn. It was a very harsh winter. I'd always walk to everything. I didn't drive then. Didn't have a car. We were there every day. It was pretty poor pay back then.

Romesburg: Were there men doing the same job?

Powell: Yes, they were generally older men. And single girls?

Romesburg: And it was those older men that gave the girls a hard time?

Powell: Yes. They never bothered me, I guess I had that look.

Romesburg: Were you paid less than the men?

Powell: Oh I'm sure we were. I had no idea and didn't think anything of it at the time.

Romesburg: I'm sure there was a pay difference because of experience...Were there any women there that were as old or as experienced as the men?

Powell: No, older women probably did not get into that kind of work.

Romesburg: So all in all you enjoyed it?

Powell: Yes, I enjoyed working, I enjoyed the fact that I could work, make a little money, compared to working at the dime store. We made \$2800 a year and then we got a raise to about \$3000 a year, not too much money.

Romesburg: So after you quit in 1945 and got married, do you ever go back to doing anything remotely related to this?

Powell: No I never went back to work. I stayed home and raised a family. My husband got out of the service and got a job over at the base. We just started living in Fairborn and had four children. Stayed home because that's the life I knew.

Romesburg: What did he do?

Powell: He was an electrician. He didn't work there long, he got laid off as soon as they could get around to laying them off. They had to cut back. Got rid of a lot of the service men even though they had promised a permanent jobs when they went to work. He went to work at the cement plant after that. He worked there then until he retired.

END OF INTERVIEW



NELLIE F. ROGERS

(Note: Please see Access Agreement at back of booklet)

Mrs. Nellie Rogers came from North Carolina via the National Youth Association to Wright-Patterson to work as a radio repair worker.

Romesburg: Where were you raised? What did you do after high school and how did you come to Wright-Patterson?

Rogers: I was raised in North Carolina, the western part. I worked for the Red Cross right after high school.

31 NYA Girls Get Ready To Help Uncle Sam



LEAVE FOR OHIO.—Thirty-one girl radio operators, who have been receiving their training at the Sardinia NYA center and the center at Elberbe, left here yesterday for Vandalia, Ohio, near Dayton, to take advanced work before being attached to the army air forces supply depot at Patterson Field, Ohio, where they will be civil service radio technicians. They are shown above, just as they were about to leave the Sardinia center to catch their train yesterday afternoon. In the group are Emma Lentz, Irene Pustel, Sue Waters, Elsie Brendell, Hilda Brown, Dorothy Heriman, Roberta Smith, Helen Beel, Frances Brookshire, Frances Scott, Arkus Farrington, Myrtle Primm, Eva Pierce, Geneva Murr, Frances Calhoun, Rebecca Blar, Nellie Marie Beck, Ruth Council, Verle Craver, Juanita Dalton, Doris Freeman, Maxine Hatcher, Louise Hilton, Carol Dyama, Eloise McCorkle, Nannie Mabe, Jane Malcolm, Dorothy Meigs, Virginia Penry, Loretta Steele and Eunice Lee Underwood. (Observer Staff photo.)

Nov. 11, 1942

Romesburg: When did you come to Wright-Patterson?

Rogers: I believe it was in 1942. After nine months, I left for personal reasons.

Romesburg: Did they attempt to train you to work with radios?

Rogers: They did that before. When we came here, we were just helpers to the radio installers. What we did was hold the screwdrivers, flashlights and that sort of stuff.

Romesburg: Did you receive training before you came up here?

Rogers: We did to a certain extent.

Romesburg: So you only stayed at the base nine months. Did you stay in this area?

Rogers: I stayed in this area about a year. I worked at a number of places that always hired me, but I was low on the (list) and was always the first to be let go.

But then I went to United Aircraft where we made engine parts. That was here in Dayton. United Aircraft was the nicest place I worked. I was treated with respect and the salary was good.

Romesburg: Do you remember where you worked on the base?

Rogers: It was probably Area C, on the flightline.

Romesburg: Do you live in Hebble homes?

Rogers: My husband and I lived in Hebble Homes after the war was over and he returned to his job at Wright-Patterson.

Romesburg: Was Hebble homes just for civilians?

Rogers: No, there were GIs living there too.

Romesburg: And that used to be here, right in this area? Were they single family homes? Or like a duplex?

Rogers: There were duplexes and single family homes with two bedrooms. From there we bought the house I'm living in today.

Romesburg: Even though you only worked there a short period of time, how would you describe working there as far as being a woman? Do you feel that you were treated fairly and with respect? Or was there a lot of harassment?

Rogers: I can't answer for others, but some went on.

Romesburg: You're talking about physical harassment?

Rogers: Not by everybody, just a few.

Romesburg: You got married after you quit? Did you have children and if you did, what did you do with them during the day? If you didn't have children were you aware of child care facilities?

Rogers: I didn't have any children during that time.

Later on after I was married, and my husband was stationed with the Navy in St. Louis, I worked at some electrical plant. We made some kind of electrical device. This was still during the war.

My husband was in the Air Corps for a short period of time in Hawaii. He got out a month before Pearl Harbor. He was going to be drafted back into the Air Corps, but he decided he wanted to join the Navy. So he joined the Navy and that's where we spent our time. He went to school the whole time he was in the Navy.

END OF INTERVIEW

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU

"The war could not have been won without the efforts of these women, and the millions of others who worked right along with them. Your work was difficult, your contribution was tremendous, and I believe you never fully received the recognition you deserved. You helped inspire future generations of women who have changed the way we think and operate as a country, as an Air Force, and as a center."

General Robert F. Raggio
Commander
Aeronautical Systems Center

ACCESS AGREEMENTS

Please read the following access provisions before citing any of the materials used in the interviews.

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASC/CX

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

I, STELLA ABRAHAM, participated in an oral history conducted by Laura N. Romesburg of the Aeronautical Systems Center Commander's Staff Operations Office on 8 DECEMBER 1999. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Air Force, as determined by the Air Force Historian or his representative. Subject to security classification restrictions I have been given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Air Force will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the United States Air Force with only the following restriction(s): (please initial one)

SA none.

_____ (other) _____
_____.

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Air Force will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials.

Stella Abraham 6/28/00
Stella Abraham Date

Accepted on behalf

of the U.S. Air Force by

Laura N. Romesburg 7/10/00
Laura N. Romesburg Date

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASC/CX

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

I, EDITH R. CARLSON, participated in an oral history conducted by Laura N. Romesburg of the Aeronautical Systems Center Commander's Staff Operations Office on 12 February 2000. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Air Force, as determined by the Air Force Historian or his representative. Subject to security classification restrictions I have been given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Air Force will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the United States Air Force with only the following restriction(s): (please initial one)

_____ none.

_____ (other) Names of towns - corrections of some
events + acts being in AFG 14 yrs.

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Air Force will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials.

Edith R. Carlson 6-20-2000
Edith R. Carlson Date

Accepted on behalf

of the U.S. Air Force by Laura N. Romesburg 23 Jan 01
Laura N. Romesburg Date

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASC/CX

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

I, MARY A. COCCA, participated in an oral history conducted by Laura N. Romesburg of the Aeronautical Systems Center Commander's Staff Operations Office on 12 FEBRUARY 2000. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Air Force, as determined by the Air Force Historian or his representative. Subject to security classification restrictions I have been given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Air Force will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the United States Air Force with only the following restriction(s): (please initial one)

mac none.

_____ (other) _____
_____.

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Air Force will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials.

Mary A. Cocca June 20, 2000
Mary A. Cocca Date

Accepted on behalf

of the U.S. Air Force by

Laura N. Romesburg
Laura N. Romesburg

23 June 00
Date

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASC/CX

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

I, **E. PAULINE FOGARTY**, participated in an oral history conducted by Debbie L. Voss of the Aeronautical Systems Center Commander's Staff Operations Office on 23 FEBRUARY 2000. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Air Force, as determined by the Air Force Historian or his representative. Subject to security classification restrictions I have been given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Air Force will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the United States Air Force with only the following restriction(s): (please initial one)

☒ none.

☐ (other) _____

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Air Force will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials.

E. Pauline Fogarty 6-25-2000
E. Pauline Fogarty Date

Accepted on behalf

of the U.S. Air Force by Laura N. Romesburg 28 Jun 00
Laura N. Romesburg Date

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASC/CX

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

I, **SYLVIA F. POWELL**, participated in an oral history conducted by Laura N. Romesburg of the Aeronautical Systems Center Commander's Staff Operations Office on 11 February 2000. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Air Force, as determined by the Air Force Historian or his representative. Subject to security classification restrictions I have been given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Air Force will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the United States Air Force with only the following restriction(s): (please initial one)

X none.

_____ (other) _____

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Air Force will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials.

Sylvia F. Powell 4 Jul 00
Sylvia F. Powell Date

Accepted on behalf

of the U.S. Air Force by Laura N. Romesburg 7 Jul 00
Laura N. Romesburg Date

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASC/CX

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

I, NELLIE F. ROGERS, participated in an oral history conducted by Laura N. Romesburg of the Aeronautical Systems Center Commander's Staff Operations Office on 12 February 2000. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Air Force, as determined by the Air Force Historian or his representative. Subject to security classification restrictions I have been given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Air Force will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the United States Air Force with only the following restriction(s): (please initial one)

NFR none.

_____ (other) _____
_____.

I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Air Force will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on these materials.

Nellie F. Rogers 7/3/00
Nellie F. Rogers Date

Accepted on behalf

of the U.S. Air Force by Laura N. Romesburg 7/3/00
Laura N. Romesburg Date