

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Muriel Helsel

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History project

Interview # VR2-V-L-2007-027

Muriel Helsel, wife of a U.S. Navy officer who was assigned to Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: November 5, 2007

Location: IL Information Services Studio,
Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support: Mark Suszko, IL Information Services

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center

Edited by: Flatt, Rozanne

Indexed by: _____

Total Pages: 18 Total Time: 54 minutes / .9 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on Dec 31, 2007

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
Illinois.

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Abstract

Muriel Helsel, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-L-2007-027

Biographical Information & Synopsis: Muriel (Vanderwalker) Helsel was born on April 24, 1919 in Bisbee, Arizona, and grew up in Los Angeles. She married Rolland A. Helsel on April 2, 1940, and shortly thereafter he joined the U.S. Naval Reserve. The navy soon sent him to Harvard Business School for course work, and following that Rolland was commissioned in the U.S. Navy, eventually being assigned to Pearl Harbor, specifically to the U.S.S. Pennsylvania. The young couple arrived in Hawaii just days before the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Muriel discusses the attack in detail, as well as her employment on Ford Island in the Public Works Department. Her husband worked as the Incoming Stores Officer (logistics) in Hawaii throughout the war, while Muriel worked for most of the war as a stenographer at Director, Pacific Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks with Mr. John Delany. She also discussed life in Hawaii during the war, and the impact that the Navy's victory at Midway had with conditions in Hawaii afterward.

Topics Covered: Attack on Pearl Harbor; USS Pennsylvania; Ford Island; Director, Pacific Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks; rationing during WW II; blackout conditions at Pearl Harbor; battle of Midway

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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