

Interview with Clementine Seifert Mace

October 21, 1989

Central Minnesota Historical Oral History Collection

St. Cloud State University Archives

Interviewed by Nancy Baker

Baker ([00:02](#)):

Okay. This interview is with Clementine Seifert Mace, also a World War II veteran. Date October 21st, 1989. So, you can start just by telling me a little about yourself.

Mace ([00:20](#)):

What about myself? I was born and raised a Little Falls born in 1917, went to Catholic School, first grade and a high school, grade school and high school, and came down to St. Cloud. I had spent Business College, St. Cloud Business College, went to work for an attorney in Little Falls and started working Camp Ripley in 1943, I believe. And joined the, from there, I was transferred down to Omaha, Nebraska, and I joined the Navy there.

Baker ([00:56](#)):

Okay. In Omaha, is where you joined? Okay.

Mace ([00:59](#)):

September '40.

Baker ([01:06](#)):

War was over in '45.

Mace ([01:07](#)):

Well, then I went in '44, September 7th of '44.

Baker (01:11):

Okay. And so where did you have your training then?

Mace (01:14):

And I went to Hunters, reported in a Hunter's Point in New York, at Hunter's College in New York. And for my boot camp, I was there for six months, six weeks! Boy, six weeks boot camp. And from there I went to Cedar Rapids, oh my God, Cedar Falls, I believe where the Yeoman school was in Iowa, Cedar Falls Iowa, I think.

Baker (01:14):

Okay.

Mace (01:46):

And then from there I reported in the San Francisco with the post office and duty with [inaudible 00:01:55] assigned there in Bell Count, San Francisco. And was there till, this is really giving me a basic, was there until I was discharged in November of '45.

Baker (02:12):

Okay. So then basically what kind of work did you do?

Mace (02:16):

I was at Yeoman, its clerical administrative.

Baker (02:19):

So you did that kind of work. Okay. You were assigned to work

Mace (02:27):

Well to work within San Francisco, with the [inaudible 00:02:30] [crosstalk 00:02:30] post office.

Baker (02:29):

Okay, so. Okay.

Mace (02:32):

And I was kind of associated with them or connect with them or assigned to them all the time. I didn't, but I lived at the barracks to begin with. And then I went out and lived with a family in San Francisco.

Baker (02:48):

Okay. And this was while you were still in the service. Okay. Now you just really went and listed then, is that correct? Okay. So, it was different than the nursing part of it. You, okay.

Mace (03:03):

Yeah, And I was enlisted in [inaudible 00:03:04] an officer. But I have kind to live a little differently.

Baker (03:05):

Okay. So then what kind of, did you have like a basic training then?

Mace (03:09):

That was at Hunter boot camp, basic planning and your Yeoman's School in Cedar. I don't remember, Cedar Falls or Cedar Rapids.

Baker (03:16):

Well.

Mace (03:18):

But, I don't have anything with me, Michelle. Think its Cedar Falls, its down by Davenport anyway, whichever one's around there if you want to look at the map. And that was, that's been about six weeks or eight weeks down there and six weeks in New York.

Baker (03:37):

Okay. So, your, the basic training.

Mace (03:40):

At the boot camp.

Baker (03:41):

The boot camp, Okay. How many weeks was that then?

Mace (03:44):

Six weeks.

Baker (03:44):

So that was a six week training program.

Mace (03:44):

Uh-huh (affirmative).

Baker (03:47):

Okay.

Mace (03:49):

And then I remember I reported in San Francisco on the 23rd of December, two days before Christmas. And I'd come back here. I'd been home for leave in route with my son and mother. So

I couldn't have been any more than six weeks down in the highways.

Baker (04:08):

Okay.

Mace (04:09):

I would say.

Baker (04:13):

Okay. How about where, where you were stationed in San Francisco, how aware were you like of what was going on with the war? Did you have a lot of contact with no related activity? Or [inaudible 00:04:27]

Mace (04:27):

Because this was all clerical work. And we had to do with getting, getting the mail over to the service people, the Navy people on board, different ships in the Pacific.

Baker (04:37):

Okay. And how about--

Mace (04:40):

We lived in the Navy? I lived in barracks room all men [inaudible 00:04:46]

Baker (04:46):

Okay. But were there a lot of women?

Mace (04:48):

They were all men.

Baker (04:49):

How many would you say?

Mace (04:51):

Well, you mean, I ended up there? I don't know.

Baker (04:57):

I guess I'm trying to get an idea of how many women just went and enlisted.

Mace (05:03):

I'm not sure I'm trying to think. I can't, I couldn't begin to be in the Navy, particularly. We were a smaller brand group than the army and there were a lot of wax or anymore, but there weren't as many WAVES, I couldn't even [inaudible 00:05:22] tell you now.

Baker (05:23):

Well, like in the barracks, how many?

Mace (05:26):

Well, we had 12 floors and we had two floors that were dorms. We must've had a good four or 500 beds.

Baker (05:33):

Okay. Okay. How about knowing in this is a different setting than nursing. What about the relations with the staff? As far as men and women are concerned?

Mace (05:46):

We didn't had any trouble. We were very good got a lot of camaraderie and [inaudible 00:05:53] associations that we kept up afterwards. I don't anymore but I did.

Baker (05:57):

Sure, okay. How about for, what did you do for entertainment for fun?

Mace (06:07):

We did everything. We could have found San Francisco. Well, at first, when I looked out with the private family that came down, offered rooms and there were two of us that went out and we didn't do the winning and I didn't do too much out there. We do other Navy after we left the barracks, we weren't that closely associated except for our work hours. We had good morale. There was no [inaudible 00:06:41]

Baker ([06:42](#)):

How about like your food and eat?

Mace ([06:45](#)):

At the barracks? All tasted the same. Keep a notebook. I think we, I know we had the best skills cut, the meats and stuff. They might call her Yankee pot roast one day and the next day they call it something else and it was the same thing.

Baker ([07:04](#)):

Just the same thing. Okay. How bout for you? Was there anything that really frustrated you and made you angry while you were, you were in a total of how long again? For 14 months?

Mace ([07:04](#)):

Not that I can recall.

Baker ([07:22](#)):

Okay. Okay. How about when you enlisted then you could just enlist for, was it however long you want it to? Or--

Mace ([07:31](#)):

The duration, duration plus, what was it? 30 days or something like that? The duration? No, it was longer than that. It was duration six months because not everybody got out right after we also got on a point system.

Baker ([07:45](#)):

Okay.

Mace ([07:46](#)):

And I got up very soon because the time you had, cause I had my mother as a dependent and an allotment for her and that was kind of as a dependent. So, I got points off for that. So, I got out, I didn't have that much time. And I got out and came out of a point system.

Baker ([08:04](#)):

Okay. Then did you have, was there a reserve type?

Mace ([08:07](#)):

Yeah, I went, I stayed. I'm just trying to say we weren't really, in the ways we're not a part of the regular Navy until about two or three years after the war that the Congress or Senate, they made us part of the regular Navy. And until we were part of the regular Navy, there was no reserve, but I was associated with the Navy and I used to put in training duty with the Navy, even though we weren't really part of it. And eventually when we were made part of a regular reserve fight time that I put in the volunteer, I'm retired from the reserve and the Navy 30 some years in all together. No, not quite 29 in six months or something. [crosstalk 00:00:08:58]

Baker ([08:57](#)):

Well, that's almost 30 years. Okay. Okay, so then when you were in the reserve, did you do anything?

Mace ([09:00](#)):

Well, we have a month, monthly meetings or weekly because I'm associated with different units. And when I, I was out of the country [crosstalk 00:09:12] I was part of the associate. I'm still somewhat associate

Baker ([09:26](#)):

Oh okay. I'm going to go back to that bootcamp. Tell me about that.

Mace ([09:34](#)):

It's fun. I lost my luggage. We had the hurricane in New York that time and my luggage hadn't come through her. I think it was lost in Chicago when they changed trains. It was checked through and I got it right before I left New York and we had a stay at Hunter's College for the six weeks, except for the weekend. We were-- The last weekend, before we left, we got the seat in New York City left. The only time we were allowed out. And it was quite an experience.

Baker ([10:08](#)):

What kind of things did you have to do as far as say like physical training?

Mace ([10:12](#)):

Oh, we didn't have too much.

Baker ([10:14](#)):

Not too much.

Mace ([10:14](#)):

No. We had marching, some marching in formation, but that was really about all we had classes, some sort of about the history of the Navy and the Navy itself, but not too much physical, crazy differently than no. [crosstalk 00:10:36] Well, the wax were at that time and the Marines were two, three. Yeah and I know I tried to get in the Marines when I enlisted I was going to go to the Marines and they just halted and we'd been from my attrition through attrition, but they didn't know how soon I went. That made up my mind. I went when I went in the Navy, enlisted in the Navy. But we didn't have any strenuous gymnastics, any, any type of training.

Baker ([11:06](#)):

Oh, okay. That's what I was wondering. How about did women, were they entailed to the same benefits of men as far as after they were?

Mace (11:16):

Well, we were to begin with until we're paid part of the Navy.

Baker (11:20):

Okay.

Mace (11:22):

And yet it seems to me because I got my DIA entitlement before that. So, we felt some, some benefits couldn't get the gone to school. I couldn't bought a house or anything like that though.

[crosstalk 00:11:35]

Speaker 3 (11:35):

Aomething like that. You got the same as the regular, although you weren't a regular, you got the same [crosstalk 00:11:47].

Baker (11:35):

Okay.

Mace (11:58):

I don't know. I was in San Francisco at the time the war ended and I was in all the jubilation and

Baker (11:58):

Well, that's what I was going to ask about what's, it was big celebration then

Mace (12:04):

Yeah, never forget all, any of it as far as I could see [inaudible 00:12:10] with every bit, what you read about or hear about the crowds. And I kind of just stood still, I've been ready. That was a great day.

Baker ([12:20](#)):

Okay. How about the relationship now? What was your ranking? [crosstalk 00:12:25] Yeoman that's right you said you were, what was, where the relationships between officers and

Mace ([12:33](#)):

The officers I was connected, with associated, with was really I'm trying to [inaudible 00:12:41] them, we're a fairly small and we have a very good relationship with our officers and we had parties together with the officers, but I think we only had about four men. I got pictures. I think there were about four or five men and around four girls. So we had a small staff and we did things together. We had real good relationships. We have an American Legion group. That's all like Navy women.

Baker ([13:17](#)):

And now this is out in California?

Mace ([13:20](#)):

Well, it wasn't, it's still in San Francisco, but when I lived there, I was associated with this Post 13, John Steven. And we did a lot of hospital work, volunteer work at the hospital and look and general programs that the Legion has, but that continues and even now when I've gone from San Francisco, this group still comes right [inaudible 00:13:43] up at my place. A couple of times it came up. One was from Oregon that came down and a couple came from Los Angeles. And so associates.

Baker ([13:58](#)):

Oh, that's good.

Mace ([13:58](#)):

Yeah. That's about it.

Baker ([13:58](#)):

Okay.