

**ADMIRAL NIMITZ NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF THE PACIFIC WAR
Fredericksburg, Texas**

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

ANNIE (AMY) MAY WEBB

ON THE HOME FRONT

MARCH 2001

**ORAL HISTORY OF
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Mrs. Bloomfield: This is Vivian Bloomfield. I am interviewing Mrs. Amy Webb. Her full name is Annie May Webb. Today is March 24, 2001 and we are at the Fredericksburg Inn. She and her husband are here for the Convention of the Second Marines which is being held in Fredericksburg. This interview will go into the archives of the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas.

Mrs. Webb: Actually my husband was not a member of the Second Marine Division. He was in a Marine Fighter Squadron. He was invited by one of the members to be their Chaplain and he said that Marines weren't very particular about their Chaplains anyway. He did cover their landings on Iwo Jima from a fighter plane. He thought he sort of qualified from that point of view.

Mrs. Bloomfield: I would like to clarify that this reunion that we are attending is of the Second Marine Division Association, the Texas Chapter. This group is of retired marines. The Second Marine Division is still active so we don't want to get that confused.

Mrs. Webb is going to relay the experiences when she and her husband had been dating in college, became engaged and then he went off to military training.

Mrs. Webb: We were attending college at Sam Houston State University when he decided to learn to fly. He took Civilian Pilot Training in college and soloed. Then he went into the Naval flight training. The Marine training was under the Navy. He left on December 19, to go to Pre-Flight School and that was about the saddest Christmas I ever remember. He was there for about three months and then went to St. Louis for his secondary training. I did go to see him while he was there. His mother and I went up and spent a week-end up there.

Then he went to Corpus Christi where he graduated. His parents and I went for the graduation, which I remember very well. The thing I remember most was that afternoon, he had been busy running around checking out everything and I was back at the hotel. He called me and asked me how I would like to go to Miami, Florida for my honeymoon. We were getting married in November, so it was a nice time to go.

We married on November 15, on a Monday night and left on Thursday to go to Miami. When we got there, he was confined to the base and I lived at the YWCA and we just met for meals occasionally. Soon that was over and we went to Santa Barbara, California.

He kept saying that I was going to have to stay in Texas and finish my college education, because my parents were convinced that I needed to get that degree. I remember when I got off the train in Houston and met my parents. My daddy hugged me and told me not to let anybody talk me out of going to California. We were there for about a year.

He left to go overseas on January 1, 1945. Now by that time I was six months pregnant. I was so concerned about letting him know when the baby came because back then we didn't know what the baby was going to be. So he told me that he thought the best way to get word to him would be to send a registered air-mail letter because you couldn't send a cablegram to a ship during war time. He was stationed on the aircraft carrier USS Bennington. His Marine Squadron was VMF-112.

So when it was time for the baby to be born, I asked my doctor if when he put the baby's footprints on the birth certificate, could he put a little set on a piece of paper that I could send to the father. That morning my mother and my husband's mother were at the hospital in Houston. When they got this little set of footprints they brought it out. His mother was writing to him and put this little set of footprints in the letter.

It was exactly two weeks later that he was standing on the fantail of the aircraft carrier – that is out on the back – when a destroyer pulled up along side the carrier. He heard them shout “we'll have to have a signed receipt for this registered mail.” He said that he knew it was his baby. He ran down and caught the mail bag when it came across on the breeches buoy from the ship. He grabbed and said “This is my baby, this is my baby.” The postmaster said he would have to take it down to the post office. So he carried it down below deck saying “This is my baby, this is my baby.” When they got to the post office, the postmaster unlocked the bag, shook it out and one letter fell out to Lt. William C. Webb. He opened it and the letter told him that he had a baby girl.

We have always appreciated the Navy for that reason. He said that there is no telling what it cost the Navy to deliver that letter to him to tell him about the birth of his daughter.

Mrs. Bloomfield: You said he got the footprint of the baby. Had you chosen a name ahead of time? What did you name your daughter?

Mrs. Webb: We named her Dell Elizabeth. On the way to the base the morning he left, we decided on the name. I wanted to name her Dell for a very dear friend of ours. He said that he didn't care what it was just so we had Elizabeth with it.

Mrs. Bloomfield: Where did you and the baby live while he was gone? And how long did his service continue?

Mrs. Webb: We were living in Webster, Texas, where NASA is now, with my parents. We would go into Houston occasionally to see his folks. She was three months old when he came home. He came home in July.

I can remember thinking that she had already done everything cute she would ever do before he got home.

Mrs. Bloomfield: She was three months old. Was this just on a leave when he saw her or....

Mrs. Webb: Well, yes, we thought it was on a leave. But while he was home on his 30-day leave, they dropped the atomic bomb. We knew then, that the war was over. He did have to go back to El Centro, California for a while before he was discharged. The end of October he was discharged and came home.

Mrs. Bloomfield: That was 1945?

Mrs. Webb: Yes, 1945.

Mrs. Bloomfield: October, 1945.

Mrs. Webb: An interesting thing is, our daughter was born the day President Roosevelt died. April 12, 1945. I had an uncle on Tarawa at the time and he wrote me and said that her life would have to amount to something great to make up for the one that was lost that day.

Mrs. Bloomfield: Then, he left the service? You said that he was discharged in 1945.

Mrs. Webb: Yes, he was discharged.

Mrs. Bloomfield: What have you done since then?

Mrs. Webb: Right after that, he had planned to go into the ministry. We went and talked to the District Superintendent, an official of our church. He had planned to go back to Sam Houston State University. The District Superintendent suggested he transfer to the University of Houston because there was a church available in Houston. So he was assigned a church in November

before he had any theological training. Full-time church. He has been a minister every since, and is now retired after 45 years.

Mrs. Bloomfield: He remained in the Houston area?

Mrs. Webb: Yes, in the Texas Conference. The Eastern part of Texas.

Mrs. Bloomfield: What was the name of the original church?

Mrs. Webb: Wesley Methodist Church in Northeast Houston.

Mrs. Bloomfield: Did you ever go back to college?

Mrs. Webb: I went back to Sam Houston a couple of summers later. Our little girl was three years old. I had to leave her every week and it was very lonely. But I finally got that degree and he got his and then went to Perkins School of Theology for his theological training.

Mrs. Bloomfield: You said that he had kept in touch with this group because he was their chaplain while they were fighting at Iwo Jima...

Mrs. Webb: No. He was not associated with this group at all during the war. He was on the aircraft carrier with this Marine Squadron. We have kept in contact with them and we meet with them once a year, also. There were 27 in his squadron. There are just about 10 or 12 left now.

We were serving a church in Dayton, Texas and a man who was in the Second Marine Division called him and asked if he would consider serving as their chaplain. He took that job on when he retired from the church.

Mrs. Bloomfield: What is Dell Elizabeth doing?

Mrs. Webb: Well, Dell lives in Seattle where she is a choir director at a Methodist church. We also have three sons. Two of them are Methodist ministers. Our youngest son is getting married on Palm Sunday of this year. We are going to Seattle for the wedding.

Mrs. Bloomfield: Are all the children in that area?

Mrs. Webb: No. The two sons who are ministers are here in Texas.

Mrs. Bloomfield: Well, thank you so much. I think this is a very nice story and it will make real interesting addition to our library.

Typed by
Becky Lindig
Nimitz Volunteer
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