

Dorothy Hannemann Oral History Interview

ED METZLER: This is Ed Metzler, today is the 16th of June, 2014.

I am in Fredericksburg, Texas, and I am interviewing Ms. Dorothy Hannemann at her home. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Resource Center for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to this site. So, Dorothy, thank you for spending the time today to share some of your World War Two experiences with us, and I would like to start by having you give us a formal introduction. Your full name, date of birth, and where you were born, and then we'll talk a little bit about family, and then we'll talk about World War Two. So, go ahead and introduce yourself.

DORTHY HANNEMANN: My name is Dorothy [Hanky?] Hannemann, I was born on August 12th, 1923, and I was born in the house that's on the corner of Llano and Travis, which is the first house that my grandfather built. He was the first boy born in Fredericksburg. And he became a stonemason and he built that house, and my family has been living in it until, I think, '72.

EM: So you're third-generation of Germans here in Fredericksburg.

DH: Fourth.

EM: Fourth. Okay. Because your grandfather was the first boy born in Fredericksburg. So, you would be the fourth.

DH: Be the fourth. Yeah.

EM: Oh, wow. Now, tell me a little bit about your parents. What did your father do for a living, and your mother, and that kind of thing?

DH: When mother and daddy got married, he was a schoolteacher.

EM: What was his name?

DH: Max Theodore Hanky, he went by Max T. Hanky. And when he quit teaching school, he went into the grocery store business, and had the grocery store and service station right across the street from the house where I was born and where they got married and lived and so on.

EM: So, this was the one on North Llano and Travis.

DH: Corner of Llano and Travis.

EM: And your mother, what was her family background?

DH: Her family background was Schaper. S-C-H-A-P-E-R. they lived out at Grapetown, not Grapetown, but off the highway at Morris Ranch.

EM: Morris Ranch.

DH: That's where she came from. She was always helping daddy at the grocery store. She was a good seamstress, and sewed all of my clothes, and she had her sewing machine in the

grocery store, because that's where she was working all day.

EM: And what about brothers and sisters? I know you had brothers and sisters.

DH: No, I only had one brother, and that was Sidney Hanky, he was ten years older than I was. And Sidney ended up being mayor in Fredericksburg for 16 years, four different --

EM: Four different administrations.

DH: Yes, right.

EM: I'll be darned.

DH: So, that's the history on him. He's been dead 90-so... he's been dead a long time. He built his house next to where dad lived, a lot between, but I didn't want to get sandwiched in there. When I graduated from high school in 1941, I had started dating with Hans Hannemann in my senior year. When I finished high school in May, I went to John Sealy Hospital in Galveston, Texas and started my three years of nurses' training in September. In December, the war broke out.

EM: So, what was it like when you went to Galveston? That was a big trip for a little, local lady.

DH: My mom and dad left on, we left on a Sunday, of course it was just two-lane highway down there, and it was a long trip. When we woke up the next morning the waves on the

seawall were coming over the wall. And I think mom and dad knew what was going on. So, they hurried up and got me to the nurses' residence and got settled in my room and they left about 9:30 that morning and at noon, the causeway was closed.

EM: So, they had a hurricane.

DH: They had a hurricane.

EM: Because that is hurricane territory and hurricane season.

DH: And then that first night, they had a party for newcomers, new students, and of course, the electricity was gone at the nurses' residence. The hospital had their own generator, but the nurses' residence across the street was on a black lot, but they always had plenty of candles there. We had our party, and went to bed, and the next morning when I woke up, the room that I had was right next to the sidewalk, and a tree, and then the road. There was one big tree uprooted right by the window where my bedroom was. So, that was my initiation into Galveston.

EM: So, you started this time in Galveston with a bang.

DH: Oh, I started it with a bang, and a scary one. (laughter)
But anyhow, everything worked out, and then the first three months we just had practice with dummy making.

EM: Now, why did you want to be a nurse?

DH: Because there was a girl who was starting her senior year, who was a very good friend of mine from Fredericksburg, and during her freshman and sophomore years, when her parents went to Galveston to see her, they always took me along.

EM: Oh, so you had been to Galveston before?

DH: I had been to Galveston and I liked it. But I was never down there when they had a storm. (laughs)

EM: You didn't know about the storm part.

DH: I was initiated with that the first day, yeah.

EM: Because it was quite a bit different than living in Fredericksburg, you're in a larger town, you're out on the shore, it's just enough different that it was an adventure.

DH: Well, in my class, we were the first class to have over 100 students at the high school. There was eight of us girls that went in the nurses' training.

EM: Now where was the high school at that time? Is it up where the middle school is now?

DH: Yeah.

EM: Okay.

DH: The high school was on Travis Street.

EM: Travis Street. Was just right down the road, wasn't it, from where --

DH: Yeah, we had an hour off for lunch, and I had to run home, eat lunch, and hurry and get back. And if it was rainy

weather, why, I insisted that momma fixed me a sandwich so I could stay at school with the other kids and eat my sandwich with my friends. But it was --

EM: Now, I've heard that German was still widely spoken, in not only the homes but on Main Street and in the shops. Tell me about that, just briefly.

DH: Well, our customers that came to the store, they would ask for everything that they needed in German, and I learned German when I was, I guess, started walking. I took German at summer school, at Holy Ghost Church, and during the summer, they had vacation Bible school, and that was in German. So, I learned that. But then when I was confirmed, there were six of us that couldn't grab the German in memory, we had permission, the preacher that confirmed us in the English language, but all the explanation of everything was in the German language.

EM: But you knew English well, as well as German.

DH: Oh, yes.

EM: Because I've heard the stories, like the people who lived out in the countryside, some of them learned their English when they went to kindergarten.

DH: That's the way Hans was. He learned English when he started going to school.

EM: Isn't that something. Okay, let's go back to Galveston now. So, the first few months, you're practicing on dummies. Practicing what?

DH: Like a human being, and making the beds, learning how to bathe them, turning them over in bed, if they couldn't get out of bed, how to change the linens on the bed and roll them over on one side and then roll them over on the other side. How to help them go to the bathroom, and change their clothes in the bed. That was for September, October, and November. And if we passed that, then we had what we called a capping exercise, we got our nursing cap to wear.

EM: And when did that happen? Was that before the war started?

DH: Yes. That happened in November. And then the war started in December. That capping exercise was the first time mom and dad came down to Galveston to see me.

EM: They came all the way down for --

DH: For the capping. (laughter) Well, it was important.

EM: Yeah. Well, it must have been important, because that was a long trip.

DH: It meant that I was able and was supposed to be graduating in three years.

EM: I bet they were proud, too.

DH: Yes, they were.

EM: They should have been, that's hard work.

DH: The nurses' residence in Galveston was made out of brick. It was three stories, and on the second story, there was one enclosed, I guess you would call it a pathway to go over the street to get to the hospital if the weather was bad.

EM: Kind of like an elevated walkway that was covered.

DH: Yeah. And then you had to work your way from one hospital to another, wherever you were going to be on duty that day.

EM: Was there more than one hospital in Galveston at the time, or was John Sealy it?

DH: John Sealy was one, and then starting at two blocks down, was a Catholic hospital. So, they were within walking distance of each other.

EM: What was Galveston like as a city when you went there?

DH: Well, to me it was like an ordinary city. We went, a couple of us together, would walk from Avenue 815, Avenue C all the way to downtown and do our shopping and go to a theater and of course they had all of the restaurants and stuff along the sea wall, which was a big drawing card. But then when the war broke out, those cafes and restaurants, most of them painted their windows black, so that they wouldn't have all of that light --

EM: Yeah, you had to black out.

DH: -- from the boats.

EM: Right.

DH: And then the buses that ran in town, they had their windows painted too, and the girls, we were taught not to go any place by ourselves, there was an Army base between Galveston and Houston, and when those guys had off, they were all in Galveston.

EM: So you had to be careful.

DH: We were very careful.

EM: Now did they still have those trolleys on rails back there or buses like you and I think of buses?

DH: The trolley rails were still there, but I never rode one. They were very, very scarce. They were maybe along the boulevard to bring you into town. We were close enough, we needed the exercise, we walked.

EM: Now tell me about December the seventh.

DH: Okay. That was on a Sunday. We had been to church, and on our way home from the church at noon, the bus driver had a radio on, and that's when we found out that we were at war, and of course we were all wanting to go home, but they secured and informed us that we were going to be safe, which we were.

EM: But you didn't know that for sure, did you?

DH: No. We were told that. At the hospital, there was a back wharf that you could get to the hospital with a boat, and

at times, there were rumors that they had spotted a boat behind the hospital.

EM: Like maybe a submarine or something?

DH: Yeah. And of course, that scared us. Night duty was what was scary. Sometimes when we had bad weather or a storm, we always had an orderly, that's what they called it. Most of the time it was a colored man to help us with what we needed. And I had the 11 o'clock to 7 o'clock in the morning shift, the night shift. That one time when we had a terrible storm, I made it across the street to the hospital where I was supposed to be going, and at about 11:15, my orderly called. And he said, we were always called by our last name, he said "Hanky, I cannot come into work, our streets are flooded and the buses are not running." So there I was, on a psychiatric ward, to begin with, where they were all excited with the thundering and lightning going on behind their locked doors that led into a hall, and they were all wanting to get out of the room.

EM: And you were there alone.

DH: And there I was alone in the hallway, and I didn't dare walking down the hallway without locking the door behind me in case any of them would break through.

EM: Now how long was this after you first started nursing school when this happened?

DH: Probably in my second year.

EM: So this was after the war started?

DH: Yeah, the war was going the whole time that I was down there.

EM: Now, I assume they had multiple scares where they thought they might be attacked by ships, of the Germans in particular, so how did those situations work out, what did you have to do?

DH: There wasn't anything we could do. They tried not to get us excited, they would let us know that this is the news, but that we were supposed to be safe, and we were.

EM: So did they have black outs with no lights and all this kind of stuff?

DH: Not really, we were encouraged not to burn the lights unless we absolutely need it. And, of course, our room only had one window to the outside, the rooms were just for a single person. And we had shades and we were encouraged to pull the shades down.

EM: Now there is a Fort there in Galveston. Fort Crockett, isn't that what it's called?

DH: Well, there was one that was --

EM: It's right down there on the seawall.

DH: -- on the seawall. But that was one place that we never went, because it took a bus to get us there. And we didn't

have the money for all of that, so we just always walked to the shore, to the seawall.

EM: Did you get any spending money while you were down there, that allowed you go to go to the movies every once in a while, or do something?

DH: Whatever daddy could send me.

EM: Okay.

DH: There was a person, even when I was at home, that liked to go to the movies, so it was nothing that I didn't have any problems doing without that. But most of the time we had studying to do, or projects to work on.

EM: What was the food like?

DH: Cafeteria style, my parents had sent me my food stamps to turn in so that I could have something to eat.

EM: So was that something you had to get used to? Their cooking?

DH: Yeah. The cooking was good, it was a big cafeteria, we had certain hours, and depending on what shift we were working and what part of the hospital we were at, we were sent to the cafeteria for our lunch. The last day of my graduation of my service down there, I got to wear my white uniform. We're going to go back to that. At this point the war was still on, it was my third year, and I was to graduate.

EM: So this would be '44?

DH: Yeah. To save money, the medical students were having a graduation, and the nurses were included with that graduation program to cut down on expenses for speakers and all this kind of good stuff. So, on that graduation day, I wore my white uniform, and then the next day, when I went back on duty, I had to go back into my nurse's uniform until I had finished completing my three years, which was then in August, when I had finished my three years. Of course, the parents came down, got me, and I was on my way home. And I had started dating Hans when I was a senior in high school, and of course I went to Galveston and he was working and taking flying lessons at the same time, mainly on weekends.

EM: Here in Fredericksburg?

DH: No, they went to San Antonio, to Stinson Field. He and his partner, that had taken him in, was William [Schrater?], standard service company on Main Street. And those two had started taking flying lessons before the war started, and they kind of knew what was going to be happening and going on. So, they became licensed pilot instructors to teach flying. So, then after the war was over and these boys got these, what do you call them, a grant or something, to learn how to fly. They taught flying at night, the book work --

EM: Classroom work.

DH: -- in the back of the show room at standard service company is where they had their lessons. And then they had, Hans and Schrater, they had two planes. And then they started taking these boys out to teach them their flying.

EM: This was after the war, right?

DH: After the war. And when it came time for them to learn how to fly at night, of course, the airport had been bought, Hans and Mr. Schrater had gone to all the county schools and were encouraging the people that we needed an airport in Fredericksburg. And for them to vote for the bond election to buy the property, and they did, and it came to a vote, it passed by 18 points.

EM: 18 votes?

DH: 18 votes.

EM: My word.

DH: But anyhow, we had the property to take the boys to. It was just graded at the same place that it is now. But at night, they would wait until it was full moon, but we still had to take our car and park it at an angle, and each boy had to bring his own car, not drive together, and turn their lights on, so they could land.

EM: Oh my god, they have landing lights! (laughs)

DH: Then when LBJ became president, he invited Arthur Godfrey to the summer White House, and they, Godfrey, of course, had his own plane.

EM: He was a pilot.

DH: He was a pilot. He came in late, and wanted to land at the airport and there were no lights. So, he had to fly into Austin, and security had to go to Austin airport to pick Arthur Godfrey up and bring him to Johnson City to the White House. So, sometime during the time that he was here, he went out to the airport. And several months after Arthur Godfrey had been here, the Fredericksburg received a package, and it was nothing but landing lights for the airport.

EM: And I wonder who sent those.

DH: Those were the first ones that Arthur Godfrey sent.

EM: I had never heard that.

DH: And there was a gentleman by the name of Alan [Astrife?] that was an electrician for the city, and William Schrater and Hans Hannemann, those three installed them. Red drove a Dodge Pickup, they put a rope in behind it, and Hans had a garden plow, walked in behind that truck, dug the ditch. Alan Astrife was behind him with the lights and the wiring, and those three installed the first traffic lights, or landing lights, at the airport.

EM: Now let me go back to Galveston. While you were there, you already knew Hans, and you all had been dating when you left, did you stay in close contact while you were down there.

DH: He called when he had time. (laughs)

EM: Did you ever write to each other?

DH: I wrote more than he did. (laughter) He didn't like to write letters. But we were in correspondence, and after he had gotten his solo and private license that he could fly, he landed between Houston and Galveston at a little airport, and then rented a car to come in just for the weekend.

EM: Did you ever get back to Fredericksburg in those three years?

DH: The first Christmas I got back, and during the summer when I had my vacation. And that first Christmas in '41, after the war had broke out, Hans gave me my engagement ring that Christmas. So, he wanted to be sure. I said, "I didn't go down there to get married to a medical student! I wanted to learn nurse's training!" So, I was engaged the whole time. And the thing of that was, we were not allowed to wear any jewelry while we were in uniform and working with the patients. And the uniform was a dress that was fairly long, and then it had an apron with a bib on it that was

white, that we wore over that. And we could put our scissors and stuff like that in the pocket underneath the apron. So, of course patients knew where it was at. But anyhow, that's where I pinned my engagement ring. In the pocket. So, for three years, I carried it in the pocket of my nurse's uniform.

EM: Now when you were down there, did you develop a close friendship with the other nurses, anybody in particular?

DH: Yes, I did. There was a girl that moved right across, or I moved right across the hall from her on the second floor, and her name was Alma Eve Hodde, H-O-D-D-E from Brenham. and the first year, like I said, when we were down there that first Thanksgiving, I didn't have enough time to come to Fredericksburg, it would have taken all day to get to the bus to get home, didn't have any extra time, so she invited me to go with her to Brenham. We could make it to Brenham and back. So, she and I became closest of friends.

EM: Did you stay in contact after the war was over?

DH: Very much so. In fact, she and another friend came to Fredericksburg and worked for Dr. [Feller?] and Dr. [Cizer?] at the Fredericksburg Hospital in [Clenning?] for two years, and lived with Hans and me. So, we did.

EM: So, where did she end up?

DH: They ended up, I forget now where it was. The other girl started dating a boy from Fredericksburg, and they ended up getting married. With his job, they moved, I don't even remember anymore. But Alma Eve stayed with us and she never did get married. She was the closest friend that anybody could have.

EM: Now, you got your nursing degree after three years, in August of '44, the war is still going on. Did you ever see any wounded military there at John Sealy Hospital?

DH: Not at the hospital, no. They were not brought to the hospital. The servicemen they could just, date the girls, or be on the beach. Never had any contact with any of them.

EM: Now, tell me about the maternity ward there. You were involved with the maternity ward there for a while.

DH: Oh, yes.

EM: And I understand that there were a lot of babies being born, and even premature babies. Tell me about that.

DH: We were lucky, we had good incubators at the time already. Depending on how little they were, and what they weighed, we had to feed them with a sterilized medicine dropper that had a little rubber tip. You fed them every 30 minutes, and so the time you got through feeding an ounce to one of them, it was time to go to the next one and feed them an

ounce with the medicine dropper. And luckily, as much as I know of, I don't think we had any deaths. I think they all survived.

EM: Well now, your granddaughter told me of a story that she recounts from things you've told her, so I'll ask you about it. She said that there, especially when there was a scare or a possible attack, or an air drill or something, that a lot of the women went into premature labor, had their babies, and they would come, a lot of preemies real quickly, and you didn't have enough incubators, so you put them in shoeboxes, and you opened the ovens to let the extra heat into the room. Is that a fabrication or is that true?

DH: Some of it is true, and some of it is not. Putting them in shoeboxes, that was when they were born premature in their home.

EM: So there was some of that going on.

DH: Some of that going on. Of course, most everybody had a wood stove, didn't have electric stoves at that time. They would fire up the wood stove, open up the door, and put that shoebox on that lid of the open oven. We didn't have any of that. We had premature babies, but at that point we had the equipment, we had the incubators.

EM: Things have changed, haven't they?

DH: Yeah. (laughter)

EM: So, after you got your nursing degree, you came back to Fredericksburg, or what?

DH: Back to Fredericksburg. There is one thing about that. When I was a senior in training, and it was my first day that I was going to be the surgical nurse in the operating room, and I was standing out there in the outside room and scrubbing the arms, and all of the sudden they said, "Hanky, there's someone here to see you." And I thought, somebody there to see me? And they said, "Yeah come here." And it was Doctor Laurence Feller and Doctor Lester Cizer, and they were in Galveston for a seminar, and they knew that I was down there, and they looked me up, and they got me out of scrubbing for surgical nurse to say hello to me. And they also let me know, of course, the operating room was on the main floor, and all of the seats surrounding with medical students. And they said, "Well, we'll go sit up there and we'll watch you." And you talk about somebody being scared. I said, "Lord, I hope I can hand him the right instrument at the right time."

EM: Who were these doctors?

DH: They were the doctors at Fredericksburg Hospital. Dr. Feller was a local one, and Dr. Cizer had moved in, and he

was pretty much local. So, when I finished nurse's training, I had a job working for me.

EM: Because you did well down there?

DH: I guess so. (laughter)

EM: So, when you came back, you had a job at the Fredericksburg Hospital.

DH: Yes.

EM: Which was located where?

DH: At the corner of Xylem and San Antonio Street. You know where Holy Ghost Church is?

EM: I do.

DH: Up this road, at the corner. That's where the hospital was. I think it's still standing, I don't know what it is now.

EM: Offices.

DH: Offices.

EM: So, it's one half block off of Main Street, on Highway 16.

DH: And for a while, they had next to it, a two-story building. And we had a ramp that we had to go on to go up to the operating room, and that was something else, to push a patient on a stretcher.

EM: Up the ramp.

DH: Up the ramp. And then to hold onto it when they came back down. But we had some good orderlies, men that helped take care of that.

EM: So, Hans is waiting for you when you come back?

DH: Yeah.

EM: What happened?

DH: I finished training in September, finished up my full three years, and then in November of '44, we got married.

EM: Where did you get married?

DH: Zion Lutheran Church, Reverend [Brohar?]. Sunday, a couple of weeks before the wedding, he pulled up in front of the house and said, "I just bought this house." And it's the house that we lived in 62 years, 405 West Creek Street. What's his name, [Sotail?], moved there now.

EM: 405. Now that would be between which side streets on the creek?

DH: Milam and Edison.

EM: Okay. So, it's right there.

DH: One block up from the football field and it's on the left hand side. There's an empty, well taken care of lot, then a small house, then it's our house. We lived there 62 years. And at that time, he bought from the neighbor's backyard all the way to Edison Street, all the way down to

the creek. Five acres of land that he bought along with it. I think he paid 7,000 dollars for it at that time.

EM: That was big money back then. You got married in Zion Lutheran, where did you have your reception?

DH: At the Nimitz Ballroom.

EM: I've heard of that. Tell me what the ballroom was like then.

DH: I mean, it was simple, it just had the tables and chairs, and in one corner when you first walked in, there were tables to the left where they had the guests, and then the main table was at the far end kind of in a U-shape. And the thing about that is, Hans went to get the key, when we were getting ready to leave for our honeymoon. They saw us go up front to get the key at the desk. I followed him, and he had rented a room on the first floor of the Nimitz. We went down the hall, took a left, and had the last room where the barn is in the backyard. And as soon as we were in the room, the doors opened into the hall. Those doors were slammed shut, and folding chairs were put in front of it, and after a little while, Hans' uncle and wife were all on the outside window with their car, and it was at least four or five feet out of the window and down to the ground. They helped us crawl through the windows. Now, how long mother and the attendants stayed in that room before they

got rid of the folding chairs so they could get out, I have no idea. (laughter)

EM: So, where did you all go?

DH: To Curville, he had a room at an old dress shop, is that the place where there was a hotel at that time?

EM: So, that was your great escape?

DH: That was our great escape. And then, he had two uncles that were sick and they couldn't come, so we made our rounds to the sick uncles, to introduce me to the family. That was in November, and in January, one of them passed away, and that was my first meeting with all of the kinfolks, at the funeral. And I'll never forget that because of how many there were. Everybody had five, six, seven kids.

EM: Big families.

DH: Big families.

EM: So, then after the honeymoon, you continued to be a nurse, the war is still going on.

DH: Yes.

EM: And Hans is doing what? Is he still training?

DH: No, he was in partnership with the automobile dealership at standard service company. And when he first started working there, that was when they were first starting to get electric refrigerators and electricity to people out in

the country, and the automobile business wasn't thriving all that much, so Mr. Schrater had the dealership for refrigerators and stoves, and Hans went out in the country and sold them and installed them.

EM: How did Hans stay out of the military?

DH: When Hans was 13 years old, his daddy died. And the last baby was born three weeks after the dad's funeral. So, there he was, his momma with nine kids.

EM: Including an infant.

DH: Including a newborn. Hans had a friend that got him the newspaper route for the San Antonio Express in the morning, and they had a new separate newspaper in the evening. He got a bicycle and he started having paper routes, and that's more or less how he helped support the family. And then they also were custodians for Zion Lutheran Church, that's where he belonged. So, his mother took all of the kids along, and they all knew that they were in church. Some of the other ones were given a dust rag to dust the pews, some of them took care of the little ones.

EM: Now, what church did your family belong to?

DH: Holy Ghost?

EM: Okay.

DH: Mother sang in the choir at Holy Ghost for 50 years. Dad had been on the church council any number. And my

grandfather, that first boy that was born, he ended up being a stonemason, and the article will say so. He lay the cornerstone at Holy Ghost Lutheran Church. And that's where I grew up. And I took piano lessons from the time I was seven, eight years old, and when I got old enough, mother wanted me to be able to play the organ, but at that time you had to have somebody on the side pumping the air into it. But I did play Christmas hymns probably two or three years. Just a hymn or so. But I did play the organ.

EM: Now I've heard stories about during both World War One and World War Two, because Fredericksburg was so predominantly German in heritage, in fact still speaking German, that there was a lot of attention paid by FBI and other army and military and security services, with regard to whether Fredericksburg was fully, one hundred percent American, and blah blah blah. Can you expand on that at all from your experience?

DH: Not really.

EM: Have you heard that?

DH: I've heard that, but I can't --

EM: Never really observed it?

DH: Experienced it or observed it.

EM: What about during the war, everything was rationed, a lot of key things were rationed. What was the impact on the community here?

DH: Well, I mean, people just had to put up with it. Like me being in Galveston, they had to send my food stamps to Galveston so I could have some meat down there. But daddy at the grocery store, people had to accept it, there wasn't anything they could do but accept it. You had to have stamped by this, and stamp --

EM: And I guess it was the grocer who had to enforce it.

DH: Yeah.

EM: So that made life complex, if you were in the grocery business.

DH: It wasn't easiest thing that daddy had to do.

EM: Now what about this theory that you are distantly related to Admiral Nimitz.

DH: I have no idea of any of it. I have never been told, we were never included in any history on down the line, and it's just by hearsay that I --

EM: Strictly hearsay.

DH: -- hearsay that I have been told, "Well, we're kin to him," but it doesn't mean anything.

EM: He was hometown boy, and he's the Commander five-star --

DH: General.

EM: He had 15 million military men, I mean five million, or whatever it was. What kind of impact does that have on the local community, I mean did you follow him in the crowd, or...

DH: Well, the people, if he came home and we knew about it, we always had a big celebration, and extra security.

EM: Did he ever come home during the war? I guess he probably didn't have time, did he?

DH: He did, I don't know about it, I was in Galveston. I weren't home.

EM: Yeah, you weren't home either. And what about things like victory gardens, where people were raising vegetables in the esplanades of streets and all that kind of stuff during the war. Did you see any of that when you were down in Galveston?

DH: Not really. I mean, we were down there, and we were in training, and we were in school, or we were at work, or we were sleeping during the day to work the night shift. The activity that I had in Galveston that I had in Galveston. Not much social lives going on.

EM: Yeah, you didn't have time to do anything but go to school.

DH: Or the money to go to shows and ride the bus.

EM: So, you had been back in Fredericksburg a little bit less than a year when the war was over. Because you came back in August of '44?

DH: Yeah.

EM: And the war was over in August, September of '45. Do you remember when the war was over? Any celebrations?

DH: Everybody was glad that it was over with, and I was glad that he didn't have to go because of his family. He and Schrater had started going to Stinson Field for flying lessons on Sunday afternoons when I was still in high school. So, by the time I was down there a while, he had graduated and made his solo. Then they ended up with these teaching --

EM: He did that during the war as well as after, is that correct?

DH: He started it during the war, but then afterwards, they had any number of these guys, there was Doctor [Oodle Bassey?], the dentist, he was one of them who took flying from Hans and Red.

EM: So was he living in San Antonio during that period of time?

DH: Who?

EM: Hans.

DH: No, he never lived in San Antonio, he was always in Fredericksburg.

EM: Okay. And, just to make sure I've got this straight, during the war there really wasn't an air field in Fredericksburg?

DH: No, they had a landing strip between Friendship Drive and, golly... One of the [Queen-Wogey?] boys lives at the corner in the house, and then there's Friendship Lane... There was a landing I guess about three blocks.

EM: There's Vernon Lane over there and...

DH: Actually it's South Creek Street.

EM: I know where that is.

DH: Okay, all of those houses off to the left. In fact, when Susan and Kenneth got married and moved away from the house that they had on his dad's property. They lived in one of the houses there on South Creek Street, where Hans used to land his airplane.

EM: So, right out there? Out there behind the Walmart area now?

DH: Yeah.

EM: I'll be darned. Well, what other things pop into your mind when I say World War Two? From your personal experience?

DH: I guess I was scared, and I knew that Hans might have to go, and there I was in Galveston, and the things that sometimes were spoken, we didn't get to go around much to hear any of that, and I think they tried to keep it from us

at the hospital. But, we knew what was going on, because we had radios and they couldn't take them away from us. We sure didn't go to the beach much. And if we did, we were enough of us there, or not enough of us there, how do you ever know --

EM: If it's enough. (laughs)

DH: Yeah. But we always went in groups of at least four or five.

EM: How many children did you and Hans have?

DH: Three. Helen, Miss [Ellen Rody?], and then we had Linda. And when Linda was 11 years old, she came home from school, and she said, "Momma, telephone poles and everything is jagged." Five minutes later, I was on the telephone with the doctor over in Kerrville, he said, "Bring her over tomorrow." And from there, he sent us to San Antonio to a specialist, and she ended up having brain tumor. She was operated on on March 11th, and her birthday was April 11th, and she was kept in intensive care for a few days. Long story short, she survived it, and she'd already been going to confirmation during that time, and she was well enough to wear, she wore her confirmation robe and we bought her a wig. At that time, the wigs were just starting to get popular, and they were shiny.

EM: They looked funny.

DH: Yeah, artificial stuff. We were able to get her a human hair wig. It came in on the bus from San Antonio.

EM: And how old was she?

DH: 11.

EM: She was 11.

DH: On the eight o'clock bus. And Helen, our older daughter, she and her husband went to the bus station, and came home with a box. Pulled it out, and put it on her head. Sunday morning she walked into church with a big human hair wig, and was confirmed.

EM: That's good. That's your two children, and who was --

DH: Dennis. Dennis Solomon. He was born in '50, Linda was born in April of '49, and Dennis was born in '50 of April. They were a year and a half apart. And Helen is very active in [Clovers Guild?], she's one of the main ones there.

EM: Is she Susan's mother?

DH: Yes.

EM: Okay. I've met her before.

DH: Okay. So, anyhow, getting back to Linda. We had to take her to San Antonio for cobalt treatments, and I don't hear them using cobalt anymore.

EM: No, I don't think they do.

DH: But we had a schedule where we left Monday afternoon, I did the bookkeeping for standard service company. So, we left in the afternoons in time to get to San Antonio for her treatment Monday afternoon, got one early Tuesday morning, and one early Wednesday morning. And as soon as that Wednesday morning treatment was over with, we drove to Fredericksburg, I did my bookkeeping Wednesday and Thursday, and then on Thursday we had to leave in time to make her treatment Thursday afternoon, then we made another treatment early on Friday mornings, and then I was home on the weekends. And we did that for almost a year.

EM: That will take a lot out of you. Well, what else can we talk about the World War Two years? We've covered a lot of territory here.

DH: Well, I wasn't involved in anything, but with Hans and his flying after it was over with, I got involved with him helping out at the airport. But other than that --

EM: Did he take you up in the airplane?

DH: Yes. When Helen was born, he said she was going to be the first one to learn how to fly. She's still waiting for her first lesson. (laughter) He was a good father. He was gone from home more than he was at home, civic work. Fire department, community chest, the church, and Chamber of Commerce, and Rotary Club. The awards that I have fill up

the room. He's got outstanding from Texas Lutheran College, he's an alumni, he's got one on the wall that I can show you that he got from the Historical Society here that's in the shape of Texas, and the rest of them are on the wall there. I keep the door closed because I can't get myself to go in there.

EM: I understand. I understand. So, did you continue to be a nurse through most of your career, or not?

DH: Not really, I worked at the hospital I guess, six months. And after the baby was born I just did private duty. I took the night shift because Hans could take care of her at night. Mother kept her a little during the day so I could get some sleep. And then when Hans was home in the evenings I would try to take a little nap before my 11 o'clock shift.

EM: That night shift work is tough.

DH: Well, yeah. To a certain extent.

EM: I guess until you get used to it.

DH: If you get used to it and if your patient is not too uncomfortable, or is uncomfortable and you can give them a shot for the pain and you can sleep. You just have to stay awake and sit there and watch him sleep, read a book and do something.

EM: Okay, Dorothy, thank you for spending the time with me, and World War Two is our focus at the museum, and we interview people like yourself, who were here on the home front as well as people who were overseas being shot at. So, it was a group effort. Home front was an important part, so I thank you for spending the time today.

DH: Well, he had the two older brothers, both went in the service, and the older of the two, one year at Christmas when he was home, he left us know that he had had a boat shot out from under him, that we had heard about. But he was able to get out of the service, and he said, "I'm going to go into the ministry."

EM: Now, which brother was this?

DH: Eugene.

EM: Oh, this was Eugene.

DH: Eugene.

EM: So, he had a boat shot out from underneath him?

DH: Yeah.

EM: Wow.

DH: And that's when he vowed that he would live to get back on water, this was right after the war, and so, he ended up being a Major.

EM: Okay, I'm going to end this.

DH: Okay.

EM: Thank you again Dorthy for spending the time with us.

END OF AUDIO FILE