

O'GormanNellieL-11-29-95-1of1

[Speaker 2]

The date of this interview is November 29, 1995. The person being interviewed is Mrs. Raymond O'Corman of Glasgow, Kentucky. The person conducting the interview is Winfred Moncrieff.

Mrs. O'Corman is the former Nellie Lee Wortham. She served in the Red Cross during the Second World War and attended, as a representative of the Red Cross, the Nuremberg Trials. This interview devotes itself primarily to that topic, but to other experiences Mrs. O'Corman had as well. Give me your name, please.

[Speaker 1]

My name is Nellie L. O'Corman.

[Speaker 2]

And where are you from originally?

[Speaker 1]

Originally, I'm from Wortham, Mississippi.

[Speaker 2]

Okay, and you attended school where? College where?

[Speaker 1]

I attended college in Perkinson Junior College and Mississippi Southern College. I graduated from Mississippi Southern.

[Speaker 2]

And during the Second World War you served with the American Red Cross. Would you give me a brief description of the most impressive thing you did while you were with the Red Cross in Europe?

[Speaker 1]

I consider the most impressive thing that I did while I was with the American Red Cross in Europe was attend the Nuremberg Trials. I was fortunate enough to be stationed at the Army Hospital in Nuremberg in 1947 when the doctors in Germany were being tried for their crimes during the war. I was on the staff of the hospital and all the doctors, nurses, and Red Cross personnel who wanted to go were allowed to attend sessions of the trials of the doctors.

We could either go for a morning session or an afternoon session. And we were limited in the number that could go, so we didn't attend too many sessions. But we did hear the doctors tried during the time that we were there.

We were, of course, very closely associated with the doctors and nurses because we worked with them, and we were all very interested in what would happen to the doctors who were on trial. We had heard so many stories of the atrocities committed by the doctors during the war and before the war, and especially of their experiments on human beings and children

who had certain alterations in their bodies and were permitted to live. So this made it very interesting to us.

We would go, and then in the evening we would get together and discuss the things that we had heard during the day and speculate as to what was going to happen.

[Speaker 2]

Could you tell me where the trials were held, the description of the place where they were held?

[Speaker 1]

The trials were held in a huge, big courtroom with a big stage at the front. The audience sat out in chairs similar to those in a theater, and we were given earphones so that we could dial to the language that we wanted to hear, English, French, Spanish, German, or whatever, and we sat just side by side with the Germans. Anyone who wanted to attend the trials might be our seatmate.

[Speaker 2]

When did you begin service with the Red Cross, and a little bit about your other experiences?

[Speaker 1]

I began service with the American Red Cross in April of 1945 after three months of training for overseas duty in Washington, D.C. From Washington, D.C., we were sent to New York to a staging area in the St. George Hotel, and from there we sailed at midnight on April the 12th, 1945, the day that Franklin Roosevelt died. We sailed on the General Meigs, which was a huge Navy transport loaded with thousands of troops, doctors, nurses, officers, enlisted men, Red Cross personnel. The crossing was to take ten days, but we made very slow time.

After we got out about the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, we started being chased by German submarines. They would leave us alone in the daytime, but at night they chased our ship, and we were not permitted to stay in our quarters at night. We were herded into huge areas where we were told to sit and wait and see what happened.

The ship would drop depth charges trying to sink the submarines, and this went on all night. We sat on the floor, slept a little if we could, and the next morning would go back to our quarters and sleep most of the day in preparation for the next night. We were to land at Le Havre, France, but as we neared the coast of France, the submarines were so bad that we were told that we could not land there, and we landed at Liverpool, England instead.

We stayed in the harbor at Liverpool for five days, and after that we were told that it was safe to cross the English Channel and land at Le Havre. We landed at Le Havre on a Sunday morning, and in the afternoon were loaded on a train to go overnight to Paris. We were dressed in every item of clothes that we had with us.

The train had no doors, no windows, and no lights. It was very cold in the spring, and by the time we arrived in Paris, we were almost frozen. After a meal at a restaurant in Paris, we were assigned to our living quarters in a hotel, and I was told that my duty would be at First

General Hospital, which was the evacuation point for all injured or ill troops in Europe and England.

It was a very interesting assignment because we saw every kind of injury, every kind of illness that you could possibly imagine. I worked in Paris for the months of April, May, June, and July the 13th, which was a Friday. I took my first plane ride on a C-47 to Bremerhaven, Germany, where I was assigned to the 348th Station Hospital.

We lived in the hospital building with the nurses, and I worked there until December 6th, when I was given a month's leave to come home. Upon my return to Europe, I was assigned to Nuremberg, Germany, and was there in the winter of 1947. From Nuremberg, I went to Regensburg, Germany, for a few months, and then I was assigned to Gießen, Germany, which is a little town just north of Frankfurt.

I was there until the fall of 49, but in May of that year, I was given a month's leave to come home again. When I returned, I was assigned to Salzburg, Austria in June of 49, and I served in the Army Hospital there until January of 1951, when I was reassigned at my request to the United States to work for Red Cross there.