

LEHMAN COLLEGE

"WAVES INTERVIEWS"

INTERVIEW WITH OLIVE FRASER

CORRESPONDENT: TANISIA MORRIS

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OLIVE FRASER:

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Well, I had seen a port-- a poster in the post office in my hometown. And I went home to my grandmother and I said, "They want Waves, want someone to join the navy." She said, "Well, if I were you, I'd join." Well, I went right down and enlisted.

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I was 20. I had just had my 20-- 20th birthday. And-- you could go in then-- you could go in earlier I guess if you had your parents' signature. And-- really they wanted you to be 21. But I was 20. And I don't remember whether my mother had to sign for me or not.

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But anyway-- in November I was called and I went

down to Milwaukee. And then from Milwaukee I went to-- on a trip train from Chicago to Hunter College, New York. That was in the end of dil-- November. Then December, I was in boot camp until the 1-- day after Christmas, December 26.

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And I was put on a trip train, went up through Canada and then down south to Stillwater, Oklahoma where I had-- Yeoman school in Stillwater, Oklahoma. I was there for the month of January. February, I had a few days vacation at home and then I went to Washington D.C. I was there in Washington D.C.

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February 5, I was assigned to the Bureau of Ships, we call it short, BuShips. It was a temporary building along Constitution Avenue at that time. So '45 and of course at April '45, I looked out my window and of course that's when President Roosevelt died and his funeral cortege went down to-- you know, to the-- the-- on view at the-- capital.

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And I was in BuShips until the end of-- '46. January of '47-- because of the coal mines that-- strike, President Truman said, "We want the navy-- to negotiate a settlement with the coal mines," coal miners, I should say." So I was-- at the coal mines administration-- Department of Interior for January '47 to September '47. That's w-- I was assigned to work with-- for two lawyers, civilian lawyers. And-- then September of '47, I was-- I decided to stay in the service, of course. But the Waves were from '43, '44, you know, through the end of '46.

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My family supported me. And-- no, it was an adventure for me. And I figured a small town had not much to offer. You could be a clerk and a steward. You could be a teacher. You could be a nurse. There's not-- much opportunity. And I figured, hey, this was a good way to see the world, see-- get away. And I had very good duty.