

Patricia Normoyle

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Question: Let me do one thing first so I have it on tape.

Answer: Sure.

Question: I'm going to get your name. Pat, P-A-T. Now, do you want -- do you go by Pat or by Patricia?

Answer: I would rather go by Pat.

Question: Pat, okay.

Answer: All of a sudden a lot of people have been calling me Patricia or Patty. But I prefer Pat.

Question: And Normoyle -- N-O-R-M-O-Y-L-E.

Answer: Yes (laughs)

Question: And that's just so when we go to edit this we have that for reference for all of our editors and everything.

Answer: (laughs) Yeah, hm-hmm, hm-hmm.

Question: During World War II, where did you live?

Answer: Well, I lived several places. (laughs) But I was in -- have you heard of Bucoda and Tenino? And Centralia? Well, I lived, actually my father was a coal miner, many years ago -- we lived up in the hills -- kids nowadays have no idea what -- what life was about -- they look at us and they think -- is she just making that up, you know? We didn't have anything. But then I moved to -- with my sister, my older sister, to help her with the children, and I then went to high school and graduated in Centralia

Answer: And that's where I met Corey's dad. And the astonishing thing about that -- we all -- it was almost to the day that they dropped the bomb when we met. He graduated a year before I did and he -- he was friends with -- before he met me, with a girlfriend of mine. And I was staying there because I hated living up in the hills. So Centralia was the big place. So I was -- I was visiting there and we just hit it off. He -- he had such, such a sense of humor, it -- it -- well, you can see some of it with Corey, and it was just -- it's just hard to explain. He, he was so happy-go-lucky and just loved everybody, and just a wonderful guy.

Question: And are you still in high school at this point?

Answer: I had not graduated yet. He had graduated. He lived in Chehalis and he'd come over to see me in Centralia

Answer: And so that's the way it was and actually I -- I didn't know him very long before and, and, and when they actually dropped the bomb on December the 7th, I had just met him. And -- and it was -- it was a day that I will never forget. I mean, to think that this thing could happen in our life, and we were all just -- it's hard to put it into words. But we were just so sad, because that's when they bombed Pearl Harbor. And then all of the news started filtering in and then the girls and the women did a lot of crying and we knew -- we just knew that the men were going to go into the Army.

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So it wasn't too long and he went to Fort Lewis first. And he was there for awhile. But he actually did his boot camp in Paso Robles, California

Answer: Well, but in between, we -- we got married -- before -- he was back from Fort Lewis and then back home and then he was -- they sent him to Seattle for awhile and he was in -- in, like I say, he was in Fort Lewis. And so we decided to get married. So we got married in Chehalis. And then there were so many things going on, I want to get this right. After that we -- they sent him, and I'm not sure the reason now why they sent him to Seattle, but we were there just a short time and then he was sent to Paso Robles. Well in between then -- oh, yes, of course. His family lived at Orchards, Washington -- have you heard of Orchards?

Question: No.

Answer: Well, Orchards is not -- it was a little town then but it's pretty big now. And they -- his parents had built a house there. And anyways, not far from Vancouver. And so -- they -- their was -- oh, every -- anyone could get a job. If you could take a nail and drive it, you could build barracks, or not -- they weren't exactly barracks -- they were -- they were just -- they looked like them to me, but they were -- some were houses and some were just like apartments that were -- because they hired all of these people from anywhere to work at the ship yards, and to build things. Well, my husband's father built him a house. He bought -- they bought property, and they were just in Chehalis for awhile and then they bought this property and they knew nothing about building. I don't know how they did it, but they -- they built first his father's house, and there was enough property, then they all helped together and they built his brother's house and then they built the other brothers -- our house, and then his other brother's house. And it wasn't The Ritz or anything, but those guys got up there and hammering things and they didn't know anything about it. So that's when Corey was born. And that's when they sent him, finally, after he was in Seattle for awhile. In fact, when he was -- we were in Seattle -- we were so many different places but we were there just for a few months. We were lucky to find any kind of an apartment. And I was a little home town girl, and these apartments -- they were old -- old houses that they been made into apartments. And when he had to be gone, I didn't like it. But anyway, we lived there not very long. Just like a little hole in the wall or something.

Question: So Pearl Harbor has happened now, right?

Answer: Oh, yes.

Question: Okay. So what's Seattle like at that -- I mean, are you very aware that war is going on or --

Answer: Well --

Question: Did life change?

Answer: Oh, yes. And the thing of it is, the mood. The mood of everyone. It just -- it was -- it was different. And then they tell you about when they -- when they bombed the -- which one in -- that big one that they bombed. Arizona and --

Question: Hm-hmm, yep, USS -- .

Answer: Yeah. And so we'd -- we mostly just had radios. So we listened to all -- everything that was going on. And it just changed our lives. I mean we grew up so fast.

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Question: You're what -- 19 years old now at this time-- 20, maybe?

Answer: Well, actually I had just graduated when all of this was going on, too, and he graduated a year before I did. And so then I graduated and I was out of school. And then that's when we were at different places and different things were happening and, and we didn't have TV's then and everyone would have their ears glued to see what was going on and that just seemed like our whole lives were -- well, not completely because the good old Evergreen, you know that burned -- well, we -- we had a chance enough to go out there and dance. And during, during the war, all of the big bands, you know, Benny Goodman and -- trying to think of some of the others -- actually, we knew one of them -- Harry James, and they -- a lot of them came to The Evergreen. And that would -- that would get our minds off of it, but every place you went are so many things that you heard or saw -- it was always there, you know. And they'd tell you -- you hear about more bombings, and we'd see pictures and we'd go to the movies and they showed, you know, what was going on, and it -- it was just rough for everyone.

Question: So when you got married --

Answer: Hm-hmm.

Question: And Corey's Dad's name was --

Answer: Well, his name was Clifford --

Question: Clifford.

Answer: But they called him -- they started in high school calling him Bake -- because his last

Question: What was it?

Answer: Bake because his last name is Baker.

Question: Oh, okay.

Answer: Someone, one of his best buddies gave him that name. And it hung on. It even hung on to some of my family.

Question: So when you got married, had he already enlisted in the Army?

Answer: Yes. He had -- he had enlisted, but he -- there was a time just before that he enlisted that he was building these things -- houses at Fort Lewis and Orchard. And that's when he built our house. And that's where Corey was born. But Corey was just a few months old when they drafted him. So he was in Paso Robles and my sister, her husband had built one of these little houses next door. And I was -- I was just devastated, you know, to think that that was going on, 'cause Corey was just a baby. I think you put a picture of Corey in one of them when he was on our little house, our porch. Well, so, my sister said you better -- you better get on a bus and go to Paso Robles. And of course I was just devastated and Corey was so little and then his dad had to just get up and leave. So I'll never forget that train trip going down there. Because when you talk to the young people now and talk to the kids, they have no idea -- they have everything for their -- the Pampers where they don't have to worry, you know about anything getting damp in there or anything. And then all you had -- just the barest necessities. Their diapers. And then they had nothing like these plastic things.

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They were -- they were -- they had things like -- they were knit and that had to keep them together, but it didn't. But he was so -- he was the best baby and so good natured, and there were three sailors. Corey and I had -- were on -- I had one of the seats to try to take care of him. Kids nowadays have no idea

Answer: But these sailors were just so nice. They just took such a liking to him. And he was that kind of a guy -- little guy, anyway, baby. That he just laughed all the time. Hardly ever cried. And it was pretty difficult with -- with diapers, you know. You just hoped and prayed that you had enough and you couldn't bathe them and it -- I just -- I said later, I said I don't know what I was thinking, or how I could ever go from -- from -- well, we left from Centralia then to go to -- to Paso Robles. I said I don't think I could do that again. But these sailors -- they just were absolutely wonderful. They helped me hold him and feed him and everything. So -- so we got down there.

Question: So you were this brand new mom, you got this little baby --

Answer: Yes, yes.

Question: -- your husband now is down at training in California and so you're left alone.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: You get on the train --

Answer: Yeah. Q You make this adventure -- this girl from the big city of Centralia now.

Answer: Yes, yeah. (laughs)

Question: And you go all the way down --

Answer: To Paso Robles. And it ... and then we had no place to live when we got there. I mean, everything was taken. And so finally we just looked and looked and we -- we - I don't know whether we saw an ad in the paper, but we came in contact with these wonderful people and they had two children that -- they were about -- about eight and eleven, and they said well, they both worked. And she said, well, I need someone to help with -- with the cooking and everything in the house -- I worked pretty hard there. But it was better than some of the places that we'd seen. So we moved in with them and they were just wonderful to us and -- but then we just decided we wanted a place of our own and we looked and looked. And we -- the first place we had was nothing but a -- just, you know, like motel rooms or something. Just a room like that. And I - it was hard to keep track of Corey. And he was very lively. So then we did find a place that was kind of way out in the country and he had to take -- take in these galvanized tubs and wash in them and you had your rinse water and it wasn't easy. And so --

Oh, but I skipped a part where my sister kept Corey and I went down to see him and I only stayed about three days and -- and of course I, I knew that he was going to be leaving. He was going to be shipping out. And so we -- let's see after we were in that place, then I guess we -- that's right when -- Oh, they -- they let him have one more trip home. Yes, I know, because the one -- I skipped -- the first time when I went down there, and I hadn't -- if anyone said that I would ever hitchhike -- I was one of these little, you know, little, very strictly brought up young ladies. And he said, well honey, he said, everybody's hitchhiking, because there's no -- it was so hard to get -- everybody wanted to get up to, you know, different places, San Francisco and every place. So we hitchhiked and we got a ride with some very wonderful people. And I look at it now, if my kids did that, I'd -- I'd have a fit.

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Question: Does this -- was he in uniform at that time?

Answer: Oh, yes.

Question: The reason I ask that -- did people see somebody in uniform and

Answer: Oh, yeah, yeah --

Question: -- go more out of their way?

Answer: Oh, yes, yeah, and there were so many of them that were hitchhiking, you know, and no one thought anything about it. Well, I had different adventures like that that I never thought I was -- I was ever going to have.

Let's see -- where did our adventures take us then. Let's see, he got to see Corey, you know, and that was hard. Because ... he didn't -- I don't think he saw him again after that.

Everything happened so fast, and so he was with us for awhile and he -- did some -- he was always doing some work, carpenter work, you know he did some things like that. And then he -- he was sent. He was sent out. And he was sent to Luzon in the Philippines. And he wasn't there -- he wasn't there very long and -- before he was killed. And he wasn't there long before the war was over, and that's the hardest part, because if, a couple months later, he would have been home. And that's when I said when I was waiting for the telegram. Well, the reason for that was -- what now are medical buildings. I guess that's what they are. That was the McCleary Mansion. And I was always the one that took care of the kids. One of my friends had a little girl, in fact she and Corey grew up together. And she and our other friend worked for a dentist and so I was the housekeeper and took care of the children. And they -- everybody thought boy, this is -- this is a mansion, you know, living in this. Well, they kept up the rooms and everything; it was a really nice place.

Question: I'm going to ask you to hold it for just a second because I'm getting a beep in my ear which means I have to switch tapes.