This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.
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Interviewee: Betty Sibley
Interviewer: Claire Rhein
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Claire Rhein: This is Claire Rhein. I'm in Helena with another interview with the First Special Service Force, but this one's a little different because this is with a Force wife who was on hand from the very beginning. Betty Sibley. It isn't too ordinary to have a wife who is as original as many of the fellows are, Betty. Why don't you tell me about briefly how you met your husband and why you decided to marry at the very critical time you did.

Betty Sibley: [laughs] Well, I accuse my mother of encouraging it. Harold had been inducted and he was to go in about 12 days, and I had decided I'd go down to camp to see him. My mother didn't want me to go down without being married, so we gathered the family together, and next day headed for Ohio for a quick wedding. So we had 11 days before he was inducted.

CR: You did get married...You took your family with you?

BS: Down to Ohio, yes, for the wedding. Both sides, we had to go 35 miles and collect both sides of the family.

CR: Are you from the same town?

BS: No, he's about 35 miles away.

CR: But you had known each other a sufficient amount of time?

BS: About three years, which was a long time. We were engaged.

CR: You were engaged.

BS: Yes. We were both 20 when he was inducted, but by the time he had left he was 21.

CR: Were you 21 too?

BS: No, no.

CR: No he was 21, but you were a young couple. That was a major step to make at a time like that. Tell me did you have any idea what he was going to be doing?

BS: Not when he was inducted. In fact, he had his basic in Texas, and I went down for a week to visit him. Then at the end of his basic, he wrote asking my opinion and kind of permission and
what I thought if he joined a paratrooper outfit. Well, it meant doubling his pay from 50 dollars to 100.

CR: Oh, yes! What year, incidentally, was this?

BS: That was in ’42. We married in August of ’42. So I tried to be very heroic and mature and I wrote him that this is something he’d have to decide, but before he got the letter he was on his way to Helena, Montana, to this outfit. All he knew was paratroop. [laughs]

CR: Oh, he did know that it was going to be paratroopers.

BS: Yes, they recruited. I mean, they sent out some kind of notice or something for those who might be interested in that and then I think you know they were chosen from their basic.

CR: He did, then, have a real chance to volunteer.

BS: Yes, I think the whole outfit was volunteer.

CR: Well, I understood that, but talking with a gentleman yesterday, he seemed to feel that many of the Americans were almost selected from certain outfits because they didn’t fit in in that outfit too well, and they thought they may... [laughs]

BS: Well, I know that came across in the movie that they made about the outfit, but I’m not sure of that and I don’t think Harold would be sure because I know that where he was in Texas he did volunteer.

CR: He didn’t know anything, and he didn’t have very much to tell you, I don’t suppose.

BS: No, and really even when he trained here they did not know for what they were training, but all he knew that there was paratroop and— [laughs]

CR: Did you ever come out here?

BS: No, I didn’t while he was training. I worked for General Motors and we were making Ducks [DUKW]. You know the amphibious car.

CR: Oh, yes indeed.

BS: So in those days, you could only work ten hours a day or a total of 48...Women, 48 hours a week, and so my boss really didn’t care. The workload was heavy. So he wasn’t interested in my taking too much time off. After using my vacation to go to Texas, he came home at Christmas and then they were sent to Norfolk for their amphibious training and I had a weekend because
he had a weekend pass. Then after, before and after Kiska, I went to Vermont because they were sent back there. So, out of his 39 months, I had...we had 52 days together.

CR: This is particularly interesting because I’m not really sure that there were that many women working in that important of a job. G.E—General Motors rather—and with the Duck. That was quite an experimental vehicle still at that time, wasn’t it?

BS: Well, they were in heavy production.

CR: Or was it full production, wasn’t it?

BS: Yes, yes. Of course, they used women an awful lot because the men were disappearing for the services, so I was a secretary to a purchasing agent. We bought all the rubber parts and the life preservers, so we were right in the midst of things. Part of the ordinance people were there.

CR: Were you in a factory situation itself? I mean, your office was in the factory?

BS: Well, in the administration building. That’s purchasing. We did our part. That was what...But to get time off...In fact, my boss said he’d fire me if I got married. Well, it was spur of the moment, and he just couldn’t do that because I was his right hand. So each time...I remember once in Vermont I had my luggage on the train to come home to be ready for Monday, and the other wives that I met in Vermont, “Oh you can’t. You can’t. They have a weekend pass. You can’t go.” So I quickly yanked my luggage off and did stay. I kept my job. [laughs]

CR: So out of that 50...50--some days...52 did you say?

BS: Yes.

CR: Fifty-two days, and then was the big departure.

BS: No. Well, yes, that’s true.

CR: For the Force. How much was your husband able to tell you about what was going on or what [unintelligible].

BS: Very little. You know it’s very hush hush, and when he was overseas, we did have a little secret code as we wrote.

CR: Oh, you did?
BS: So, yes. I got some messages. But because it was such a hush hush outfit, I started collecting all articles that I thought might apply, so I have fantastic scrapbook at home now. He came home and he said, “Yes, this applied,” and “No,” so we sorted out the articles.

CR: In the articles, was the First Special Service Force referred or merely the sort of thing they were doing?

BS: Yes, never by name.

CR: Never by name?

BS: No, I don’t have article by name. Of course they got the Black Devils from a German diary that lifted off of a dead German. So that was their nickname, but I don’t think I have any article that says First Special Service Force while the war was going on.

CR: Did you feel that you were kind of floundering not knowing a lot of these things, or did your code give you enough information that you could sleep a little better?

BS: Well, not really. It was sort of the age of innocence—war. You know, it was new, and you didn’t really realize the awfulness of their situation. You knew they were fighting, but you didn’t know they were sleeping in mud and slush—

CR: You got this from his letters?

BS: No, this is afterwards.

CR: What sort of letters was he able to send? Were they censored very much?

BS: They were. They were all censored. He wrote when he could. Often V letters. You know the little—

CR: Yes.

BS: —that fold up. But when he had time. He was very faithful when he could write. I never missed a day in the 39 months except for when we were together, so that’s a lot of letter writing. Sometimes he’d get a dozen or so at a time.

CR: And that was just fine wasn’t it? I mean he always had mail.

BS: Oh yes! Whenever he could.

CR: You never missed a day in 39 months.
BS: Except when the days we were together.

CR: When you could talk to him [unintelligible]. Thirty-nine months. Good heavens, that’s three years and three months. That included his time in ’42 to ’45. He went to another unit, I think, after the Force was disbanded.

BS: After Southern France, they broke up and he was assigned to the 474, which many of the non-commissioned officers were, and then into Northern France. When V.E. Day ended, they were sent in to try to get the Nazis, and he did get into Buchenwald and that horrible picture from that.

CR: Oh, he went through that?

BS: Yes. Then they were sent to Norway to process the Germans, so he was offered a commission to go to the Jap War, but he’d had it so he wanted to come home.

CR: Yes, and I imagine that you did too.

BS: I sure did.

CR: After he left the Force, was he able to tell you where he was then and were things more relaxed?

BS: Yes, pretty much. Yes.

CR: What did you hear from him about leaving the Force when the Force was disbanded. Do you remember what his letters were saying to you about how he felt going at that late date in the war in another unit?

BS: No, I don’t remember him saying too much. They just follow commands with that, and with this outfit especially they just were there to—

CR: But this was it seemed a particularly close outfit.

BS: It is. Very knit and these reunions…I did come to Montana for their first reunion.

CR: 1950?

BS: In ’47. ’47 and immediately…Well, number one the people here. This is home base. This was home to them, and the people, even this year, so friendly and warm and receptive. Now, we have great reunions other places, but it’s not home to the Force. The people here seem to really revere them, and of course, the monument is here and it’s just really special to come.
CR: Well, the people do because I’ve heard about the Force ever since I married my veteran, but he was already gone with the 41st Division when the Force came here. He just heard about it through his sister who was nurse in one of the local hospitals—

BS: Oh, here.

CR: —and met many of the members of the Force who came [unintelligible] for one reason or another. Either with a parachute jumping or whatever. Their training was severe it seemed.

BS: Yes, I remember, I think before he came home after his Christmas leave...probably early...Would be ’43 he had frostbite on his cheeks for skiing in these mountains at 50 below and that was before wind-chill factor, but he didn’t even realize it because it’s dry. He discovered he had frostbitten cheeks. But they were out there, and they would stay over in boxcars and—

CR: Well yes, their training was severe in every way. It seemed cruel and—

BS: It saved their lives. Well, I imagine it saved their lives when they got in the real combat.

CR: I understand that Italy was very bad. Was he ever wounded?

BS: No, praise the lord, he was not. From Anzio to Rome, they were out-flanking...being outflanked from the people on both sides. They had men on both sides so they were ordered to stop, and he took off his gas mask and it was shattered from shrapnel. He was carrying a bag of live mortar shells from which he had pulled the pins ready to fire, and he looked down and here was a gapping hole. He looked inside, and two shells were shattered. Why they didn’t explode? Only the lord intervened, I say. In fact, when he left for service, his parents had the minister in and he gave Psalm 91 that says, “A thousand fall at their right side and 10,000, but it shall not come out of thee,” and we just claimed that. It wasn’t maybe that number, but it’s a miracle.

CR: it certainly was, particularly again, with this unit because the casualty rate was so—

BS: Right, and for the original members too. So many replacements came in. I don’t know how many came to Helena and began there that survived the whole thing without injury.

CR: One man told me five in his company made it.

BS: I know that with replacements Harold’s platoon leaving Anzio was 28, and he and three others crossed the bridges of Rome. That was very severe. Anzio was very severe too.

CR: You met some of the wives before they went overseas, and then you began meeting other wives in 1947. You must have developed some special friendships among these ladies. Did you keep any kind of contact with them?
BS: Really, we feel family. I knew in Vermont, we were roaming the streets during the day waiting for the fellows to get off duty, so I’d meet the girls. Really, our husbands had not met, being in different companies or regiments and so forth, so we matched some of the men up too. Three gals especially now. One was here and she lives...they live ten miles from us at home, but then in the course of reunions, we’ve met some beautiful people, and it’s just great to come back and have that fellowship.

CR: Well, there certainly seem to be a lot at the Colonial. A lot of people knew one another. I saw a lot of physical tightness even among the men.

BS: Oh, yes.

CR: A lot of hugging.

BS: Oh, yes. I mean when you live together in a foxhole...When we went back to Rome for the celebration of the 40th—

CR: Oh, did you go to that?

BS: Oh yes, and that was beautiful. The guide—Italian guide—would tell...the worst winter of Italian history, and the fellows say how they just to get in a foxhole they had to get in slush and water. In fact, I think that saved my husband’s life. He blacked out with pneumonia, and I say if it hadn’t been for that time in the hospital with what they were going through.

CR: Well we’re all grateful for these things it seems so—

BS: Yes, at the time.

CR: —at the time tragic, but turn out to be very, very fortunate, very fortunate. Certainly you both were. There was a problem common to a lot of marriages at the end of the war even for those who suffered less stress, shall we say, than yours. When your husband came home, had he been able to wind down some, or did he carry a special burden with him for a while, did you think?

BS: Yes, I remember picking him up in Detroit and the congestion—the traffic—I mean he just was really nervous over there. I remember a thunderstorm and we were in an apartment and I was acting silly of course. I ran and “save me,” and Harry was prostrate right on the davenport just glaring in shock because he thought he was on the battlefield. He wanted nothing to do with talking war or seeing war movies or reading war books. Now, as the years have passed, actually the Force almost possesses a lot of the men’s lives because [unintelligible].

CR: That’s an interesting way to put it though too.
BS: It is so if you talk to them. I mean, they live for the reunions and need to be in contact with one another.

CR: It still remains a special bond.

BS: Yes, like family. I was thinking of Helena. The Force was born here, and so this is home. Whether they come from British Columbia or Nova Scotia or San Diego or Vermont, the Force comes home when they come to Helena, and they come as a family reunion because they have become family really.

CR: I have to ask you because it seems so amazing and it seems it needs to be reinforced. About this Canadian-American thing, did you ever sense anything that separated the members of the Force other than their regiment or company? Did you get the feeling that the Canadians or the Americans had problems with each other?

BS: I’ll say no to that because my contact wasn’t until after the war at the reunions and they were a unit. The movie showed them with a lot of animosity when they first joined—hooked up—and I’m sure the movie was quite Hollywood. But there was that feeling.

CR: How did you feel about that? That movie?

BS: Well we went to the premiere.

CR: Oh, you did?

BS: in Detroit. Detroit and Windsor, and they were premiered at both places. It’s just across the river, and so any Force members that could come were invited to the premiere. I got a neat picture of Cliff Robertson with his arm around me because the movie stars were there.

CR: Oh how grand! Cliff Robertson.

BS: Oh, yes. Then Harold worked Pontiac Motors so the photographer of Pontiac Motor went and we got beautiful 8 by 10s. So it was a great thing. We crossed the bridge, and we ceremonies when we were in Canada. I got a picture of General Clark talking to General Frederick. I mean, it was fantastic experience to attend the movie, but for your question, I guess Harold just said, “Well, it was all right,” but the first part was quite Hollywood for how the roughness of the men. My husband’s a sweetie, and he’s not rough or tough—a great soldier.

CR: That wasn’t on the American side this was? This roughness. This crudeness.
BR: No, when they came together. When the Force was formed I mean, and they came here to Helena. The movie shows the Canadians all dressed up, marching in to bagpipes, and it shows the Americans fighting on the grounds and just rough necking and dressed sloppily. At least by the time Harold came, that didn’t exist. See, he came, I think it was November.

CR: Since you lived in so far north yourself relatively close to the border, bagpipes are not as strange to you as they are to many parts of the country, I would think. Am I assuming something?

BS: No, no, really they were quite strange. I mean, we don’t really hear them in Michigan that I know of.

CR: One of the most romantic things it seemed to me at the memorial service was the bagpipes.

BS: I love them. Love them. Of course, the Special Forces in Canada have them, and they usually come. We went to Pittsburg and then Fort Bragg. Quite a large bagpipe group was there, and it’s just great to hear them.

CR: They’ve become part of your tradition then.

BS: I believe so. Always it seemed like both Fort Bragg Special Forces American and Petawawa in Canada send troops, and they usually have jumps in the demonstrations. Well, the wind was too strong this time.

CR: Oh, they didn’t jump at all?

BS: No, and they used only helicopters, but one man jumped from the helicopter but that was all that they could do.

CR: Certainly not using Force equipment any more. The parachutes are so different.

BS: Oh, colorful and beautiful at least on the demonstration side. In war, I’m sure they wouldn’t do it.

CR: [unintelligible] and so I’ve been told most smokejumpers, of course, and you would know about them I’m sure in your part of the country. They could just almost land on a dime and so gently that they just can collapse their chute and walk off and not take nearly the—

BS: Right, and in the demonstrations they make a circle usually, and many of them hit that circle. Just come right on the circle.
CR: Oh, yes. Isn’t it marvelous? It was interesting seeing that Weasel because that it seemed was one of the more interesting things too. Studebaker did such an incredible job. I don’t know whether they could do that now—

BS: Hearing that man turn on the motor and it just purred. I expected a real cumbersome noise, and it was a really soft thing. Although Harold said that they used mostly the two-seater. That was a four-seater.

CR: A little smaller version. I thought it was remarkable they even had a live one there.

BS: I know it, and the tent was so cute too, wasn’t it?

CR: And they liked it. The men seemed to like that so much. [unintelligible]

BS: Buddies, see. They’re buddies, aren’t they?

CR: Well yes, and the fellow from Helena does not look too well and your husband is looking in very fine shape.

BS: Well we thank the lord because when we come here and see many with false limbs and some really mentally were affected by the war so we are very thankful.

CR: It is interesting too that men from that war—your war, our war—were affected. We hear so much of this Vietnam and the problems that some of the veterans are having after Vietnam. Were there just as many problems, do you think, or were they just quieter about it after World War Two?

BS: No, one think I ask Harold about, and there was never any indication of homosexuality, for instance. He never saw any evidence of that, and of course, fighting on the front like they were...access to drink. They went into town and the ones that drank were rowdy, but their opportunities weren’t...much of their overseas life anyway, their opportunities weren’t.

CR: And drugs?

BS: I don’t think so. He’s never mentioned it, and I don’t think there was an issue.

CR: I’ve wondered whether that could have contributed to the problems today.

BS: Oh well, we know that, yes.

CR: Because I didn’t ever remember any of that either. You husband came home then...Was he discharged before the end of the war?
BS: No, the European war. Then he went Northern France and then to Norway. After now that...See, that was in May—V.E. Day.

CR: V.E. Day was May.

BS: I remember some of us at work—we girls—and we’d never do it now, but we went down to Detroit to a park to celebrate. Now, one sailor tried to kiss me, but...Well, but nowadays you’d be mugged and you’d be raped and everything else. You wouldn’t dare do that, but we were so jubilant so we did that. [laughs]

CR: How did it work out being largely a female society for you? Did you accept the feeling that you were doing the best that you could for the war effort, or was it a particularly long...As you look back on it, I’m sure it wasn’t nearly as long as it was living through it. But it was largely female.

BS: My sisters came home. We all stayed at home. One sister, her husband first went in in the army and came back for his work and then went in the navy. My other sister’s husband was navy, but we lived at home, and then my brother went into the navy. Harold was the only army. Everybody just accepted and worked together.

CR: But you were at home?

BS: Yes. We all came back. Two had apartments, I think. They both had children. Both my sisters had small children, so one stayed home who had the lesser paying job, and the other one kept her job and split her income. You know we just worked together. There was gas rationing and everything, and you just—

CR: Ration coupons. Did you save any of that sort of thing too along with all of the clippings from the paper?

BS: I have a little, well, it’s a printer’s box, with a little momentums in them. I found a gas coupon [laughs] so that’s in there as a momentum.

CR: Then when you look back, then your memories have got to be, at least, acceptable. You’re very thankful that everything worked out as it did.

BS: Oh! Oh, yes! I mean, I just can’t thank the lord enough. Even now in my prayers, when I think how he was spared and the life that we have now, I just give thanks.

CR: Well, you, I sense, have a very deep religious feeling. I wonder how some of the women, and maybe you’ve talked with them about this, the bitterness about maybe their husbands not feeling as well or in not such good condition. Did you ever hear any bitterness expressed among the wives?

Betty Sibley Interview, OH 151-010, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
BS: No, and one of the closest friends, I met her in Vermont. We were together here at this reunion, and he had a foot blown off. He’s got an artificial. Now, they have a deep faith too, which I’m sure helps, but I guess I can’t even think of anyone. The couple that live near us, he was sent home on a Section 8. I understand he started to dig a foxhole, and he dug up a dead German and that just undid him. But anyway, I don’t hear any of that. I don’t think I’ve ever heard any bitterness. Now, at the reunions maybe, the wives that were widowed didn’t come, so you couldn’t hear from them. I guess I should back track. One gal that I met in Vermont, her husband was taken prisoner, and when he was freed after the war, he left her and I think she became pretty bitter. So when I think back, but that was not...Well, it might have been connected to the war for his thinking or whatever, but anyway, that marriage did not work out. We tried to get in touch with her with no response, so perhaps she had bitterness but—

CR: On the whole marriages stayed together? The ones that you know about.

BS: Yes, although I didn’t know an awful lot of wives, but other than that one example, the ones I’ve met—

CR: It would be interesting to know what proportion of these men were married before they went.

BS: I met an awful lot that were married, and now some are on their second marriages. In fact, a gal—a widow from the Force—is here with her second husband and they [unintelligible].

CR: Was he a Force member?

BS: No, no, he’s not.

CR: But she still feels part of the Force.

BS: But she came you know with her second husband and—

CR: There was a lady I hoped to talk with yesterday whose husband was killed relatively early on. She married another Force member. He has since died, so she is twice widowed in the Force and has not remarried and came to the reunion, and I missed her. I hoped very much to talk with her too, because she may have a special [unintelligible].

BS: She is coming. She was here.

CR: The Force, I understand, has given them all honorary memberships, and they are kept in close contact with whatever is going on.

BS: The number, each year that they read in memoriam is shocking. I think it was 72 this year.

Betty Sibley Interview, OH 151-010, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
CR: Oh, it seemed to run quite a while, and I didn’t think to count because actually while they were doing some of that I was standing and taking pictures along the front of the two companies of the men and, of course, the young soldiers who always look so young. [laughs]

BS: Oh and the generals had the banquet last night. Can’t believe they look so young.

CR: But I was more taken with just looking.

BS: At faces.

CR: I finally just had to put the camera down and look at the faces at reactions—

[End of Side A]
CR: There. We should be recording again. Let’s backtrack a bit and talk about how long that formation was for these men. Many of them had a difficult time maintaining it, didn’t they?

BS: Yes, and the walk before too. We talked about that. That marching. They formed up back quite far, and of course, then they couldn’t walk at all so they dropped it. Even that was a lot in the hot sun, and I know they said the sweat was just running down their backs and in their new jackets. Those are Rome uniforms, by the way. When we went to Rome, they could never get that...I say we saved Harold’s uniform, but they decided on the navy jackets and gray pants.

CR: Very smart looking.

BS: Yes, yes. Ten the green berets were actual green berets. Of course, the outfit [the Force] is the father of the Green Berets, and the Green Berets that come just seem to idolize the men and that just does something to you.

CR: They set an almost impossible goal for these young fellows to keep up with. I remember reading at one point in...must have been La Difensa, when even the mules couldn’t get up the mountain to bring supplies, and the service battalion as well as some of the men in the other regiments were packing incredible loads on their backs.

BS: I guess that’s where they got the nickname of Freddy’s Freighters. In the movie, they showed them...Of course, they took La Difensa by going up the cliff that the Germans didn’t even have lookouts on because it was impossible.

CR: Nobody could do that.

BS: No.

CR: They were remarkable, and the years have not dulled any of it, it seems, for some. The response to those that we asked to talk to us, some were very gracious about it. If we just could have worked out our time schedule a little better, I think we would have been able to catch many more. We were particularly interested in talking with Canadians because many who have stayed in this area, we can reach and interview at another time. I don’t think it would be quite the emotional peek that everybody is on at this reunion.

BS: But they love to recall you know, and as I say when Harold...He wanted no part of...and many of them just wanted to eradicate the whole thing, but now they just really...you walk through the lobby or...They’re recalling.

CR: But they laugh a lot.
BS: Oh yes. Oh yeah! I think maybe they always did. I mean they were...Probably it helped them a great deal, the joking and the comradery that was among them.

CR: did you ever have the feeling that a good majority of these men were Westerners? They are westerners Westerners.

BS: No I guess not, but I never thought of it. Let see, the ones we know are Tennessee and North Carolina and Michigan and of course a good part, one was Nova Scotia in Harold’s outfit that...In fact, that young man...Oh, his mother wrote Harold’s mother during the war, keeping in touch.

CR: Well, that was particularly nice wasn’t it?

BS: Yes, it was.

CR: Really across the border.

CR: I remember reading in Burhans’ book [The First Special Service Force: A War History of the North Americans, 1942-1944, by Robert D. Burhans] that they needed individualists—men who could operate alone or in a small group. A comment was made here that of the men who have stayed in the Helena area, they’re all entrepreneurs in the sense that they work for themselves. They have their own business. They are men who can plan, who can do this sort of thing. Have you seen anything among the people that you know that would confirm that? That they remain individualists? They are men who can plan and do things on their own?

BS: Well, I know many of them did. Of course, many of them went back to what they were doing before and lived their own lives, but as I say as time goes on, they’re reliving that closeness and the Force is a really—

CR: Do the Force members when they get together, are they talking strictly Force or do they share an awful lot of their lives now in the sense that they [unintelligible].

BS: No, I really think they talk Force.

CR: They just talk Force.

BS: Yes, they do.

CR: Well, that’s certainly got to be a good conversation.

BS: You get really close to people and then you get back into your families, but I think by far and large, unless you are close. We are close to one couple that live in Dalton, Georgia. Well, we stop there now going back and forth to Florida. They insist upon it, but now this week we really
let loose and become real close and we know each other’s families. You know when you become real close to a certain...But in general, I think the talk is war and their experiences.

CR: How many reunions have you attended?

BS: Well quite often I was...My church camp that I counseled youth at, it took place at the same time, so Harold counted. He’s come back to 22 out of 40. Anymore now, he saying he wants me there so the time has been good.

CR: And you’re both retired in that sense.

BS: Yes, we are. So, probably I’ve maybe come to ten. I really didn’t count how many, but in the more recent years, we’ve come together.

CR: Your husband is retired, you’re retired, you mentioned Florida. Are you spending kind of half time here and half time there?

BS: Six and Six. We still have our home in Michigan. So it’s just about six and six.

CR: Do you go to a specific place in Florida each year?

BS: Yes, we have a little condo down there, and both my sisters and their husbands are in the same development and Harold’s brothers, a retired minister, and they came down to visit. We just go down to visit, and we end up buying. So we have family down there and it makes it nice.

CR: And you literally have two homes.

BS: Yes, yes.

CR: Complete with—

BS: Everything.

CR: —with family.

BS: But when we come back, it’s hard to leave family and friends also. Although some of our friends are doing what we are doing.

CR: Yes, a lot of us. And how about your own family? Do you have children?

BS: We have an adopted son and an adopted daughter. Our daughter has three children and they live about 150 miles away from us, but that doesn’t stop us. [laughs] Then our son and his
wife and their little girl live in our lower level. Separate but together, so we sure enjoy them. But we probably will sell next year, and go into an apartment up here in the north.

CR: You’ve been very blessed.

BS: Oh, we have. Oh, yes. Will say amen to that.

CR: In your life and your family. Your health?

BS: Yes, yes.

CR: Seems to be good.

BS: Yes, it is. We both are enjoying good health.

CR: I could wish this for the entire Force.

BS: Wouldn’t it be wonderful, but I just have not heard the men complaining that were wounded and are handicapped now. I just have not heard that.

CR: Well, bless you all. You’re a remarkable group, and it was a special pleasure for me.

BS: Well, this was a joy for me too.

[End of Interview]