

Maureen and Mike

# Mansfield Library

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

## **Archives and Special Collections**

Mansfield Library, University of Montana

Missoula MT 59812-9936

Email: [Archives and Special Collections](#)

Telephone: (406) 243-2053

The following transcript is a scan of the original and has not been edited. For additional assistance, please contact Archives and Special Collections.

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGANA EGELAND

October 27, 1987

C: (Discussing the history of the ship that her husband was on.)

G: He was a Seaman 2nd Class on the USS Santee. Enlisted when he was 17.

He didn't talk about the things, the actual happenings during the war because it hurt him. The things that he did talk about were the good things that he remembered. When Tokyo Rose's trial hit the front pages of all the newspapers, they were going to put her in prison for hurting the military and the Naval boys' morale and everything so much, Roy says, "What a shame. What a shame. They should give her a medal." He said, "She was the only connection we had with what was happening at home." And he said, "She had all the latest records, all the best music, and all the latest news." And he said that he couldn't wait for her to come on so they could go and listen. Sometimes she'd say, "Well, I know where you boys are." And she'd name a position, a navigational position. And he said, "Sometimes she'd be right and sometimes she'd be wrong." Or she'd tell them, "I know what's going to happen on such-and-such a day." And sometimes she'd be right and sometimes she'd be wrong. She did do propaganda and I suppose it was demoralizing for a

certain percentage of the men, but Roy said the greater percentage of them just enjoyed the music because it was something from home and they couldn't get it anywhere else.

C: Who were the ones who were demoralized?

G: Well, if they were demoralized it was because they listened to the propoganda part about "Do you know what your wives are doing? Do you know what your girlfriends are doing?" and some of them were very young and very attached and were torn away from their families, so to speak, and it bothered them a great deal. But by and large he said it was a bigger morale builder than anything else, at least as far as he was concerned.

C: Did she ever play on family . . . were there men who had children, to be missing their children--did she ever play on that?

G: He never said much about that. The only thing he ever said was the good things about her, and as I said--he said "She should have had a medal" for bringing the boys the things that they couldn't get out there in the middle of the ocean. The Navy didn't supply them with the latest music or the best records, but she did.

C: He must have been out there for long stretches.

G: He was out there for 3 years. They were at shore sometimes but he was in 3 years.

C: And she knew what they liked?

G: Oh, yes! You know, the 40s' music was marvelous. I should have made a list. I have all the records in there. The Big Band era--Glenn Miller--all the songs. And she played them all. She had them all. And she knew some of the names. She'd dedicate a song to a certain person. I suppose in her thinking this was supposed to make him feel bad, because here's this beautiful lonesome song, you're gone to the war, you know, and it's dedicated to so-and-so. But Roy said they just loved the music because it was something from home and she actually did them a service.

C: So they looked forward to . . .

G: They looked forward to her broadcasts. And he said if it got too sticky with propaganda and such, they just shut it off. He said you didn't have to listen to it.

C: How about the news value? Was the news correct, or didn't they care?

G: He said a great deal of the time she was very, very right about what ship was where. Some of the times she was wrong, but he said a lot of the time her information was very, very good. And correct.

C: Did he remember any particular song that he was fond of?

G: Oh, yes. He said she used to play Margaret Whiting's "Old Cape Cod." He loved that. There was another one too--I can't think of the name of it. I'd have to look

it up.

C: (Unintell.--something about a lot of them not getting letters.)

G: A lot of them didn't get letters, or get letters regularly from home. Some didn't get letters at all. And this was a tie with home. The music, the latest records, and a lot of times the news.

C: Would she have personal news about individuals?

G: As I remember, Roy said yes, sometimes she would actually mention someone's name and this--I almost forgot this, I don't know how I could forget this--Judy Garland was from our home town, Grand Rapids, Minnesota. And she played it, a song of Judy's, one night for the boys from Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Nobody on the ship believed that Roy actually came from Judy's home town or was part of that, and she actually played it. And it came over the radio that way. He said he was big-time on the ship after that. Yeah, she did. She'd say, "This is for the boys on the USS Santee," or whatever. She knew most of the time where they were, or that they were within distance of her radio. And where she was ever located I don't know. He never said, and I don't think he knew. I don't know if she had pre-recorded broadcasts or if she was a live entity on the radio waves. I think he said she came on live. I'm almost sure of that.