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PRESS RELEASE

Voices of Veterans: U.S. Army Nurse Josephine Reaves Shares Her Story of Service During World War II and D-Day

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Austin — Today, Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham is proud to introduce the next installment of the series highlighting the VLB's Voices of Veterans oral history program. In this special episode, we highlight the service of Veterans who experienced D-Day. Today, we hear the story of U.S. Army nurse Josephine Reaves and her experience of D-Day.

Ms. Reaves lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where she attended nurses' training at the Philadelphia General Hospital. She received her degree as a registered nurse just two months after Pearl Harbor was bombed. Mrs. Reaves mentioned that her brother was also in the service, and their family was immensely proud of them for joining the military to serve their country.

She recalled that when she boarded the ship to travel overseas to Normandy to serve as a U.S. Army nurse, the Chief Nurse asked her where her military necessities were. Ms. Reaves told the woman she only had a small bag of cosmetic essentials. The Chief Nurse became exasperated regarding the cosmetic bag, and Ms. Reaves wittily replied, "Well, we'll fight the war with that then."

VOICES OF VETERANS

name Reaves, Josephine		
military branch Army	rank Lt	conflict WWII
date interviewed 10/29/2015		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> interview available on voicesofveterans.org

Josephine Reaves served as a nurse in the U.S. Army during WWII and was at forward aide stations during D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge.

Josephine Reaves - Voices of Veterans

Ms. Reaves spent five nights sleeping on the ship's deck and remembered that the sky was lit up like the 4th of July as nearby boats were hit and exploded. She also spoke about the shock she felt after seeing the bloodshed that occurred when U.S. soldiers stormed the beaches at Normandy.

Ms. Reaves said about D-Day, "The Germans are waiting up in the mountains to hit them, and that's what happened. That's why there were 14,000 boys over there, 14,000 young men. I'll never forget that scene as long as I live."

Ms. Reaves relayed that she served as a nurse in a post-operative seriously ill ward and spoke highly of the men she and the other nurses tended to, saying she had "never meet such wonderful, warm, wonderful men in my life. [They] never complained about anything, never complained."



Josephine Reaves - Voices of Veterans

She admitted that it was "quite a challenge" to care for these grievously injured and ill men. She also shared that she had not fully realized the difficulties she would face after entering the military until she faced the aftermath of D-Day.

Ms. Reaves said the nurses did all they could to care for these men and make them comfortable. "We just did the best we could with those boys, and I tried to be with all of them when they were not going to be around too long. I would just go up and talk to them. They were comatose... didn't know if they could hear me or not. [I] would talk to them just like we were talking face to face."

Before leaving the service in 1945, Ms. Reaves met her husband and later moved to Texas with him, saying, "It took a war to get a Texan and Yankee together." They were married for 60 years before his passing. Ms. Reaves continued to support military members and was the head of women's orthopedics at Fort Sam before retiring.

Even after retirement, Ms. Reaves gave back to the military and Veterans community by giving speeches about her experiences and helping fellow women Veterans in need. She was honored to receive the Yellow Rose of Texas award for her philanthropy.

To listen to Ms. Reaves tell her story, click the button below:

[Voices of Veterans: U.S. Army Nurse Josephine Reaves](#)

Veterans can email VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov to tell their stories. Please note that the Veteran must be a resident of Texas at the time of their interview.

Voices of Veterans is a state agency's first Veteran oral history program. It records the stories of Texas Veterans through their time in service and after returning home from combat.

The VLB records interviews with veterans over the phone or in person. Their interviews are then permanently archived in the Office of Veterans Records at the GLO, where they join the historical documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barret Travis.

Veterans' interviews are also available to researchers, historians, genealogists, and the public. These precious records inspire future generations and remind us of our Veterans' sacrifices.

To listen to the over 500 archived stories of Veterans documented through the GLO's Voices of Veterans oral history program, click the button below:

[Voices of Veterans](#)