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Interview of **SPAR Ensign Lenora Bond, USCGR (W)**
World War II veteran



Coast Guard World War II Veteran Lenora Bond at her home in 2015.

Conducted by C. Douglas Kroll, Ph. D., U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

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Corvallis, OR

Biographical Summary

Born in Agra, Kansas on 7 February 1921, Lenora Dorothea Jensen moved with her family to Monmouth, Oregon when she was fifteen-years-old. After graduating from Monmouth High School she attended the Oregon College of Education for two years and became an elementary school teacher in the Tillamook, Oregon area. She married Carl Bond in June 1942. They had two girls: Nancy (1948) and Judy (1951). When the United States entered World War II Carl joined the Navy Seabees. One of her brothers joined the

Army and another brother joined the Navy. Lenora wanted to join the WAVES but was prevented because her husband was in the Navy. She became a SPAR instead and attended boot camp in Miami Beach, Florida. As a Seaman 1/c, she was assigned to recruiting duty in Omaha and St. Louis. She applied to become an officer and attended SPAR officer training at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. Upon graduation and commissioning, she was assigned back to the large recruiting office in St. Louis. She also served at the Oklahoma City recruiting office before returning to St. Louis. As the war was ending she served her final assignment at the recruiting office in Seattle. After the war Lenora and Carl attended Oregon State College (University) on the G. I.



Bill. Lenora earned a bachelor's degree in education and guidance counseling and Carl earned a bachelor's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife. He later earned a master's degree and a doctorate and taught in the Fisheries Department at Oregon State College/University in Corvallis, Oregon. Lenora went to work as a personnel secretary (human resources) for the fisheries department in 1955. The position began as a part-time one but later became full-time. Lenora retired in 1983 and her husband the following year. They remained in Corvallis and in 2005 moved to the Stoneybrook Lodge there. Her husband died in 2007. Lenora still resides at Stoneybrook.

INTERVIEWER: When and where were you born?

BOND: I was born in Agra, Kansas on February 7, 1921. I was born on my mother's birthday.

INTERVIEWER: What were you named, when you were born?

BOND: Lenora Dorothea Jensen.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any brothers or sisters growing up?

BOND: Yes. I had no sisters and two brothers younger than I. was.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me a little about Agra, Kansas?

BOND: Agra was a very small town fairly close to the Nebraska border.

INTERVIEWER: East, west or central Kansas?

BOND: West central, north of Hays, Kansas, but just south of Nebraska

INTERVIEWER: Did you go to school in Agra?

BOND: Yes. I went to elementary school there but when I was 15 our family moved to Monmouth, Oregon. I graduated from Monmouth High School.

INTERVIEWER: What year did you graduate from high school?

BOND: 1938.

INTERVIEWER: What did you do after you graduated from high school?

BOND: I went to school at O.C.E., which is Oregon College of Education. It was primarily for teachers at elementary schools. It is now known as Western Oregon University in Monmouth.

INTERVIEWER: How many years did you attend?

BOND: I was there two years. After that we were eligible to teach elementary school.

INTERVIEWER: So after two years you became an elementary school teacher. Where did you teach?

BOND: I taught over in South Prairie, Oregon, which is close to Tillamook. Then I taught one year in Sheridan. While I was in Sheridan I began applying to enter the Coast Guard.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you decide to enter the Coast Guard?

BOND: I wanted to be in the Navy, because my husband joined the Navy. He was a Seabee. [Navy Construction Battalion]

INTERVIEWER: So, since he was in the Navy, you couldn't be in the Navy?

BOND: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: When were you married?

BOND: Right before I began teaching at Sheridan, June 1942.

INTERVIEWER: What was your husband's name?

BOND: Carl Bond.

INTERVIEWER: So he had already joined the Navy?

BOND: Yes, and because he was in the Navy, I couldn't join the WAVES.

INTERVIEWER: So you joined the Coast Guard because you couldn't join the WAVES?

BOND: Because of the Sullivan Brothers who were lost, they wouldn't allow two members of a family to serve in the same branch. So I joined the Coast Guard.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

BOND: I was fishing on the Rose River, out of Depot Bay. It was a bright, sunny, Sunday. People were coming up and down the banks of the river telling people of the attack.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you enlist in the Coast Guard?

BOND: I was sworn in at Portland.

INTERVIEWER: What year?

BOND: 1943.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you go for boot camp?

BOND: I was sent to Palm Beach, Florida. We had boot camp at a hotel in Palm Beach. That was an interesting experience.

INTERVIEWER: Anything stand out in your memory from your time at Palm Beach?

BOND: Everything. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: How was the food?

BOND: It was pretty good, except I didn't care much for the Florida oranges.

INTERVIEWER: Was the training fairly intense?

BOND: Not as intense as it later became at Officer Candidate School. I think it was because I was among the early ones at Palm Beach.

INTERVIEWER: How long was the course at Palm Beach?

BOND: I was there for about six weeks. From there they sent me to Omaha, Nebraska.

INTERVIEWER: What did you do at Omaha?

BOND: I was assigned to the Recruiting Office and did various things: typing, going around to different cities. From Omaha I went to St. Louis where I especially enjoyed seeing the boats being launched. A lot of ships were built near there. We were often called to come to ship launchings.

INTERVIEWER: What was your rank out of boot camp?

BOND: I was a Seamen 1/c. I [later] went to officers training at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

INTERVIEWER: Did you apply for officer training while you were recruiting?

BOND: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What was SPAR officer training like?

BOND: It was harder than boot camp. We had different things we needed to learn, including different uniforms.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of things did you study?

BOND: Learning what we would be expected to do as officers. We were able to actually go out on a training boat for a while.

INTERVIEWER: Was it a big sailing ship or a smaller vessel?

BOND: The *Danmark* [WIX 283] was on the river at that time, but we didn't go on it. It was more of a regular Coast Guard ship.

INTERVIEWER: Did you stay in Chase Hall in a separate area from the cadets, correct?

BOND: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: How was food at SPAR officer training?

BOND: It was good.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get liberty while you were in training at the Academy?

BOND: Yes, we got the weekends off, but we were discouraged from taking a long trip. In Connecticut at that time, you couldn't travel more than one half hour away from your duty station.

INTERVIEWER: Were SPARS required to attend chapel services on the Academy before having liberty on Sundays?

BOND: No. We could leave on liberty on Sunday mornings.

INTERVIEWER: How long was the [SPAR] officer training at the Academy?

BOND: It was about one and a half months.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any contact with the male officer candidates?

BOND: No. We ate separately from them and had classes separately from them.

INTERVIEWER: How did they decide where your first assignment as an officer would be?

BOND: They asked us where we wanted to go, but they never gave me anything I asked for. (laughter)

INTERVIEWER: What was your first assignment as a SPAR officer?

BOND: I was assigned back to St. Louis as a recruiter. A month and a half later I was later assigned to Oklahoma City as a recruiter. I did the same things I did as an enlisted recruiter. I went to county fairs, or whatever events I might, to meet potential people. But we did have some time to ourselves and that was enjoyable.

INTERVIEWER: Were you trying to recruit other women to become SPARS?

BOND: No. I was just trying to get people to join the Coast Guard.

INTERVIEWER: Was it a big recruiting office in Oklahoma City?

BOND: No. It was a fairly small one, but there was plenty of opportunity to interact with people.

INTERVIEWER: So you did a lot of traveling as a recruiter?

BOND: Yes, quite a lot. Once we were sent to Chattanooga, Tennessee for a couple of nights. We were there when the war in Europe ended. But, when everyone was out celebrating, for some reason they wouldn't allow us or any other military personnel to go out and celebrate. I always thought that was really odd.

INTERVIEWER: After that you returned to the recruiting office in Oklahoma City. Where did you get assigned after that.

BOND: They sent me back to St. Louis. It was a big recruiting office there.

INTERVIEWER: How difficult was it to recruit people for the Coast Guard at that time?

BOND: First you had to convince people that you were an officer and not any fly-by-night.

INTERVIEWER: Was it harder to recruit women than men?

BOND: I would say not.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you live during this time?

BOND: In a hotel with other officers. One was a chaplain, a couple others were SPARS.

INTERVIEWER: How did other Coast Guard and other service male officers react to you when they encountered you as a SPAR officer?

BOND: It depended on the person. Because I had a husband they were pretty quiet about any problems. Because I had a husband, it made a difference.

INTERVIEWER: Why was that?

BOND: That's a good question. But as soon as they found out I was married I was more accepted. I don't know why.

INTERVIEWER: What was the relationship between the commissioned officers and enlisted personnel at the recruiting offices?

BOND: Good.

INTERVIEWER: What happened when Japan surrendered and World War II ended? Were you still in St. Louis?

BOND: No, I was in Seattle because my husband had been transferred there after serving in the South Pacific. During the war he had been in England and Africa part of the time. Then he was sent to Midway Island in the Pacific. He was sent to Seattle for discharge when the war ended. We hadn't seen each other in quite a while. The Coast Guard transferred me to recruiting in Seattle so we could be together again.

INTERVIEWER: Was that your last assignment?

BOND: Yes, I was eventually discharged from there.

INTERVIEWER: What did you do after you were discharged?

BOND: My husband and I went back to Monmouth. We had gone to high school and college together and both became teachers before the war.

INTERVIEWER: Did you and your husband go back to teaching then?

BOND: No. We finished our bachelor degrees at Oregon State here in Corvallis. I majored in education and counseling and my husband majored in fisheries and wildlife. We moved to Corvallis. My husband went on to get his master's degree and I worked in the registrar's office. He later got a doctorate. We both had careers at Oregon State in the fisheries and wildlife department.

INTERVIEWER: In all your time in the Coast Guard, you were in recruiting. What would you say was your most memorable experience?

BOND: I guess I remember mostly that business of being pushed off the street in Chattanooga and not being allowed to celebrate the victory in Europe.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you for sharing your memories.

END OF ORAL HISTORY

