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April 2003: Collection Provides Free Public Access to Government Documents

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Focus

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Collection provides free public access to government documents

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The Federal Government provides a wide range of publications, including census reports, laws and regulations, business information, science and technology, travel, defense and military history, teaching kits, maps, information on National Parks, health and fitness information, cookbooks and more. All documents and electronic information received by Dacus Library since 1994 are included in the Dacus Online Catalog (DOC). If the call number seems a little odd, that's because government documents use a different system of classification called the Superintendent of Documents classification system. This system arranges documents by government organization authorship and assigns classification letters and numbers according to the issuing agency and its subordinate bureaus and offices. The alphabetical identifier is based on the name of the organization.

For example, "A" for Agriculture Department, "D" for Defense Department, "ED" for Education Department, "HE" for Health and Human Services Department, "SS" for Social Security Administration, etc.

The amount of government information now available on the Internet poses a new challenge for government documents librarians. It is up to us to provide assistance in finding the appropriate government information online. GPO Access (www.gpo.gov/gpoaccess), provided by the U.S. Government Printing Office, is one of the

best sites for obtaining government information. It gives up-to-date, no-fee access to information from all three branches of the Federal Government, including the *Federal Register*, *Code of Federal Regulations*, *Congressional Record* and *Public Laws*, and access to more than 70 government databases. A locator service is available at www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/tools.html to help you find your way through roughly 170,000 federal titles.

Come take a look at our Government Documents department located on the second floor of Dacus Library and see for yourself the vast amount of information that is available to you.

Jackie McFadden
Reference Librarian/ Government Documents Coordinator

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Major Roberts' papers record 25 years of service



"...on October 6 [1942], I received my orders from the Fourth Service Command Headquarters in Atlanta, Ga., directing me to proceed from my home

at York, S.C., on October 10 to Fort Des Moines, Iowa. . . . With churning emotions I watched the train rush in, grind to a stop and the moment of parting was upon me. I wished my sisters would turn away without any goodbyes. It would be so much easier for us all. I was ashamed of the tears I could not hold back. But was I crying for myself or for them who looked so lost and lonesome standing there on the platform as the train pulled out? So, I, the first girl from western York County to enter the Armed Forces began my odyssey. In the course of a quarter century, it would take me around the world."

Eleanor Roberts wrote this in her memoirs about the beginning of her 25-year career in the United States Women's Army Corps (WAC). She enlisted in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) at Fort Jackson, S.C., in August of 1942 and after serving in World War II stayed in the WACs, rising in rank to Major until her retirement in 1967. The Winthrop Archives and Special Collections has the papers of this remarkable woman available for research.

Eleanor Roberts was born one of nine children in York, S.C., on Oct. 29, 1916, to W. N. and Avalona Roberts. She grew up in York and graduated from York High School in 1934. She enrolled at Winthrop and graduated with a B.A. in English in 1938. From 1938 to 1942, she taught school in Saluda and York counties. Miss Roberts was unhappy teaching school and decided not to return to Bethany school after the 1941-

1942 school year ended. After learning of the establishment of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, she decided to apply. The age bracket was 21 through 44. Women with children under 14 were ineligible as were women with dependents unless they could be supported by some other means than Army pay. Miss Roberts qualified for she was 25 years old and had no dependents. She applied as an officer candidate. How-

After arriving at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, Roberts endured a grueling basic training. The recruits went through much the same training program as male soldiers with the exception of tactics and weapons training. In the four short weeks of basic training, they were given a "smattering of what the Army was all about." The women drilled, were given medical inoculations, took quick courses in the Care and Wearing of



ever, because of the sheer number of applicants for officer candidates (more than 30,000 for 440 spots), she was turned down and told she could enlist. By the time Miss Roberts left for basic training in October, four of her brothers were in military service. Miss Roberts wrote that her mother "never questioned my going but I knew her thoughts: 'Must this war take daughters, too? Aren't sons enough?'" Miss Roberts' father had died only two years before, so it was especially hard on her mother. In August of 1942, when Roberts' oldest brother entered the military, she noted, "My mother commented sadly, 'I've already cried enough tears to wash my dress.'" By 1943, Mrs. Roberts had six children in the military. Her widowed daughter Lilly Allen had also joined the WACs.

Uniforms, Military Sanitation, Military Intelligence, First Aid, Interior Guard, Defense Against Chemical and Air Attack, Articles of War and Supply and Military Customs and Courtesies.

Referred to as Auxiliary, the WAAC equivalent of Private, Roberts made it through basic training with little difficulty. She finally received her uniform, of which there was a shortage, and was ready for a very different life in the Army. In her memoirs she writes, "Here I stood in sturdy oxfords, cotton stockings, plain rayon lingerie, man-style shirt and tie, thick wool skirt and blouse that bunched when I sat down. My hair was 'well above the collar' and I had dog tags around my neck. I realized in astonishment I don't even have any lace on my petticoat!"

Roberts went on to attend an eight-week administrative specialists course

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for officer candidates' school at Fort Des Moines. She was assigned to Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., in May of 1943. Later in 1943, the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, which began as a temporary group for the duration of the war, changed to the Women's Army Corps, thus becoming part of the regular army and giving women a chance to make the military a career. Second Lieutenant Eleanor Roberts did just that. During the war Lt. Roberts also served in Dallas, Tex., and overseas in Africa and Italy. After the war she served in Germany, Louisiana, Alabama, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Okinawa, Chicago, Maryland, Alaska and Washington, D.C. She was regularly promoted—First Lieutenant in 1945, Captain in 1948 and Major in 1954. After her retirement, she lived in Washington, D.C., until her

death a few years ago.

Major Roberts' papers are a fascinating collection of correspondence, memoirs, photographs,



memorabilia, scrapbooks and other material relating not only Major Roberts' service but also her siblings' experiences during World War II. There are wonderful letters written to and from family members describing life in the various places the siblings served during the war and the misfortunes and triumphs they encountered. Other letters from Major Roberts to her family after the war describe her travels and experiences in the Army. She was among the first women to be given a permanent commission in the Women's Army Corps, making her papers a pioneering distaff account in the armed forces. Major Roberts' descriptions of her diverse travels and experiences are vivid and interesting. She was stationed in Africa and Italy during the war, on Okinawa for almost two years

(1954-1956) and survived the Good Friday earthquake while stationed in Alaska (1953-1965) just to name a few.

“That type of magnetism to a known destiny drew me to the WAAC rather than a burst of patriotism, a search for adventure or an awakening of the pioneering instinct, though possibly each of these went into the composite of that sense of polarity.”--Eleanor Roberts

Major Roberts wrote in her memoirs, *“Why did you join the WAAC? In the course of twenty-five years I have been asked that question many times—often officially, sometimes out of curiosity, other times merely as a means of opening a conversation. But I have never been able to answer it casually. For with the establishment of the WAAC on May 14, 1942, I came face to face with my polarity. There was no decision for me to make. For me, joining the WAAC was something I had to do. Some people are born knowing they have to be a doctor, a nurse, a lawyer. That type of magnetism to a known destiny drew me to the WAAC rather than a burst of patriotism, a search for adventure or an awakening of the pioneering instinct, though possibly each of these went into the composite of that sense of polarity.”*

In Major Roberts' papers there is a copy of a poem titled “The Skirted Soldier,” of which the following is excerpted:

I am proud to the last fiber of my body,
 To the deepest misty recesses of my spirit,
 That I am privileged to wear the uniform of my country.
 Proud that I am privileged to have a part in making history.
 Proud that I am privileged to play a role, however small,
 In this grim, necessary struggle to keep our country

A land wherein we may live, love and

Worship God any way we please.
 Mister, if you'll pardon me—
 I have work to do—
 I am a WAAC.

What a fitting tribute to Major Eleanor Roberts.

Gina Price White
 Director of Archives
 and Special Collections

SCCTP Courses in Serials Cataloging

Advanced Serials cataloging (May 20—21) and Electronic Serials (May 22)

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location: Winthrop University,
 Rock Hill South Carolina
 Advanced Serials Cataloging,
 Electronic Serials Cataloging,

Access information and registration form at:

<<http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus/Workshops/serialscataloging.htm>>

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Meet the staff

Gale Teaster



Our head of Serials Acquisitions Cataloguing is Associate Professor Gale Teaster. Gale came to Dacus in 1976 and is one of Dacus' many cat fanciers. Married to the irrepressible Judge Henry Woods, Gale has just survived the building of a new home and the subsequent moving. Wait, no, strike that. Moving is still underway and it's a toss up, she tells us, whether she'll survive.

In addition to her serial ways, she is convinced that Elvis lives. Or, if not, at least in her heart. Any visitor to her desk is bound to experience an Elvis-sighting.

A tireless committee worker, Gale recently let go the reins of the university's freshman program. For eleven years, she directed and taught in the program and ushered into college life literally scores of incoming freshmen.

Dacus

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Larry Mitlin

When he isn't mothering boards, repairing hard drives, re-linking broken Web links, or solving a myriad number of patrons' access problems, Associate Dean and professor Larry is busy keeping track of his teenage son Frank or his 3-year-old daughter Rebecca. Between Frank's baseball practice (and a dozen other sports), or Rebecca's feats at Macfeat, Larry stays a very busy man.

In addition to being the library's techno-guru *par excellence*, he is also the library's institutional history. Dacus came into being in 1968, and Larry walked through



her doors in 1971. From the moment he walked in, Larry has brought continuity, grace, good humor and professional excellence to all that he does or touches. Married to attorney Debbie Mollycheck, Larry holds court in Dacus over all things Dell – and HP and IBM and—well, you get the picture.

Whether it's tinkering with that frozen computer for the fiftieth time, answering questions at Reference or chairing yet another library or university committee, Larry always brings his insightful intelligence to the heart of the matter.

Time to return or renew books

The end of the semester is approaching rapidly, bringing with it a few "seasonal" changes in Dacus' usual circulation policies.

The final due date for all student materials this semester is May 7. Online renewals for graduate students have been suspended until the end of the term; renewals for undergraduate students will be suspended beginning April 23. Students with materials *due before May 7* may bring them to the Circulation desk where a staff member will gladly extend the loan to the end of the term. Extensions beyond May 7 may be granted for students with later project deadlines.

Faculty materials having *no prior renewals* may now be renewed online. All other faculty items must be returned to the library for check-in or renewal by May 7. The due date for all items checked out or renewed after April 9 is December 17.

Questions? Contact the Circulation Department at 803-323-4502.

For more information: <http://www.winthrop.edu/dacus> to About Dacus, to Library Publications, to Dacus Focus or Dean's Corner. Also be sure to check our Goals under Library Fund Raising.

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