

Excerpt from an Interview with Evelyn Hutchins

I went to drive. They probably considered that in case something went wrong I could do a lot of clerical work. On that basis they were willing to send me there.

I had driven a number of ambulances here around the city, taking them back and forth to the boat, and they were satisfied that I really could handle the cars. It was found that I could drive the car as well as, and better than, some of the fellows who were going...Some fellows thought it was very funny that I should be there driving. I am little but I never made any attempt to swagger or act mannish. I acted just the way I always acted. I used to argue with them about it. They would say, "You are so little, what can you do?" And I would tell them, "I am just me." I was a girl, I was small and didn't weigh much but I was doing a job and wasn't that enough. They would like to take pictures of me next to my truck; because I was small they thought it was very funny. Some of them would say, "All I have to do is give one hard blow and you'll keel over." But the important thing was that the fellows who understood why I wanted to be there, why I had taken the job of driving which was the only possibility of getting as close as I could to the actual fighting, they didn't think a girl shouldn't want to fight and have a machine gun instead of driving a car - these fellows were the fellows who took the thing seriously, and I found them to have a more serious and level headed attitude about things that happened.

I always had to shift for myself and take care of myself and make my own decisions, and sometimes it would be tough on me. If that conditions you, I was conditioned. On the other hand I have always been very incensed at a lot of different injustices I have seen, and at the injustices I have seen against women. I have been frustrated so many times because I was not a man. So I probably see things faster than somebody else who doesn't care. Some girls might not mind not being allowed to go to the army...I was always told by everybody that I must not do this, or I must not do that because girls don't do those things. I was told so many times that girls are inferior to men, that men can do things and girls can't, and I couldn't take it. I didn't care how hard it was on me.

So far as the political situation in Europe, I am not like some people who think that all this stuff is just propaganda. I remember when Mussolini issued a decree - I was just a kid at the time - he issued a decree that women were not to wear short skirts, and that they were to keep their proper places. Well, Mussolini was definitely out so far as I was concerned. I was convinced that anybody with that kind of an attitude was absolutely no good for the people generally. I never felt that I was an outstanding genius, but people had to give me a chance to think and develop whatever thinkabilities I had. If a person would not give me a chance I would fight them. Hitler has the system where he sends women to camps to be breeders. That strikes me at my very most innermost desire for freedom, and self-expression, and for culture, and education. Just being an ordinary human-being I couldn't tolerate a thing like that. It has gotten to mean so much to me that I don't care what I do in the process of fighting against conditions like that.

I got the idea of going to Spain first and then my husband got the idea and my brother got the idea, and they got there ahead of me. And I worked so hard to go over there. I had saved money for it, I had to convince people. I had to argue with them, and to prove things. But the average fellow or my husband had no difficulty getting there. It might have helped that he was there. I don't know....I went over there because I wanted to do a job.

The complete interview can be found in John Dollard's manuscript collection: ALBA Collection #122, Tamiment Library, New York University.