This interview was conducted by a student in an oral history seminar in the Department of History and American Studies at the University of Mary Washington. Oral History is a method of collecting historical information through recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. The recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

All uses of this interview transcript are covered by a legal agreement between the interviewee and the University of Mary Washington. The interview transcript is thereby made available for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to the University of Mary Washington. No part of the interview transcript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Department of History and American Studies, University of Mary Washington, 1301 College Avenue, Fredericksburg, Virginia, 22401, and should include identification of the specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of the passages, and identification of the user. Excerpts up to 1000 words from this interview may be quoted for publication without seeking permission as long as the use is non-commercial and properly cited.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows: Rosie the Riveter and the World War II American Home Front Oral History Project: An Oral History with Robert H. Torgler conducted by James Hitch, Date, Department of History and American Studies, University of Mary Washington, 2012.
James Hitch: Can you state your name and date of birth for me?

(00:00:05) Robert Torgler: My name is Bob Torgler, Robert H. Torgler. My date of birth is January 28, 1928.

James Hitch: Can you talk a bit about growing up in Canton, Ohio and what that was like for you?

(00:00:23) Robert Torgler: Canton Ohio is an industrial city in central Ohio, of 150,000 people. It's known today for the fact that the football hall of fame is there. In fact I grew up just a block or two from where the football hall of fame is now located. It was not there in 1928, but professional football started in my city. The city is a lunch box town, big names like Temkin Roller Bearing, Hoover Sweeper, like Republic Steel, among many others and the citizens were lunchbox citizens. Opposed to the arts or professions. So that was my growing up in a classical mid-class community. Homes close together with Victorian like porches and went to public school there and went to public high school there.

James Hitch: Can you go into a little bit more depth about what you mean by the lunchbox town and how you think that shaped your childhood?

(00:01:37) Robert Torgler: Well most of the men, first of all women weren't working in those days. I didn't know a family where the mother was working. The fathers were working and the father’s were by in large hourly workers, shift workers, in plants like Hoover and Temkin, with regular hours. That the mill in which I grew up.

James Hitch: Can you go into a little bit about the racial diversity in Canton while you were growing up there?

(00:02:21) Robert Torgler: There was a racial diversity, but it was economic rather than political. In fact in my high school, we did not have one black student. In a high school of about 1000 people. It was a wide variety of whites. At that day there were no Hispanics. The blacks were centered in another part of the city where the school was almost 75% black. We have four high schools in our city and the racial issue was economic.

James Hitch: How large of a city would you say Canton was when you were growing up?

(00:03:10) Robert Torgler: Canton when I grew up was about 150,000, now it’s about 110,000. They call it the rust bucket area. The Rust Belt. And steel industry is just about gone and the auto industry has been depressed. So as a consequence our population fell. But it was a wonderful town James, to grow up in. You never locked your door at night, on a Saturday my mother would give me a bag with my lunch in it and I would go to the park and Id come home when the lights came on. We’d play baseball or football all day long. And there was no concern about any back activities.
James Hitch: So you would say the steel industry and auto industry were fundamental in your town’s economic success?

(00:04:14) Robert Torgler: Yes, and well the roller bearing industry is not only the automobiles it was the largest roller bearing factory in the world as opposed to normal bearings. And the Hoover Sweeper Company was world famous.

James Hitch: Can you talk to me a little bit about your parents and what it was like growing up with your parents? Their household roles? The jobs they held? Things of that nature?

(00:04:43) Robert Torgler: Yeah, my father was a white-collar work and he was with the railroad. He was the general manager for the railroad in our part of Ohio. In fact his mission with his group was to sell freight services to the companies I just mentioned. He was called general agent. And I use to travel with him as a kid before school to the outlying areas as far west as Mansfield and as far south as Coshocton Ohio, east of Youngstown. That was the general area. My mother was a typical American housewife. Very active in bridge, a magnificent bridge player. Actually a duplicate bridge player. I use to play bridge growing up with her. And I have played bridge all my life as a consequence. She was a marvelous housewife and she cooked. She was up first thing in the morning and we’d always come downstairs to fresh German cooking or fresh rolls or fresh cake. She canned and of course we didn’t have any of the appliances we do today and my mission was, every Monday I had to hang out clothes before I went to school. In the basement in the winter. Outside in the summer. Canning season came. My twin sisters two years younger than I, my mother canned profusely. We would take hundreds and hundreds of mason jars of canned goods from the kitchen down to the basement. Women from that area took pride in their canning area. And it wasn’t uncommon for women to show other women their pantry and what they had canned. None of which occurs today of course. Both were first generation Americans. My mother’s parents came from Nuremberg and Munich. And my father’s parents came from Zurich Switzerland. We knew them both and they classic old-line families. So I was a second generation American, which was not uncommon for that area.

James Hitch: So being a second generation American and having your parents as first generation Americans, what do you think drew them to Canton from Europe?

(00:07:40) Robert Torgler: In the case of my father, my father went to school in Cleveland. Lost his mother, lost his father an Ant was raising him and never finished high school. But he was good with typing and stenography. He became of a stenographer for the railroad. He learned the trade and moved up the line and then became part of management. In the process he was promoted to Canton, Ohio to be general agent. The railroad was located in Cleveland. It’s had many different names, it’s gone by, I think it’s the Nickel Plate Railroad now. If that’s still around. My mother he married my mother in Cleveland and that’s when brought my to Canton.
James Hitch: You mentioned traveling with your father when he was working. Do you think this was an effort to groom you to take a position similar to his once you grew up and went into the professional world?

(00:08:52) Robert Torgler: No, to the contrary. We enjoyed each other’s company James. And the one thing he admonished me was when you grow up, two professions you want to steer clear of. One is the railroad and the other is banking. The railroads were going downhill at a terrific pace. They were being just pecked to death by the trucking industry. So as a consequence he did not see that as a growth area. And banking was the pits at that point. It isn’t like the banking industry today. I traveled with him for companionship and just the enjoyment of his company.

James Hitch: Can you talk a little bit about your younger twin sisters?

(00:09:42) Robert Torgler: I had had twin sisters two years younger than I. They were identical. Handsome as the dickens. They went on to Kent State University and they joint football queens. They were as close as brothers and sisters could be. We did everything together. Both were athletic, we had basketball court in the backyard and they played with the guys just like guys would. So we were quite close in growing up. Same high school two years apart. Close relationship.

James Hitch: Moving on to your junior high years, what sort of memories and recollections do you have personally during the onset of the war in Europe?

(00:10:42) Robert Torgler: Amazingly my high school years, 1941 through 1945 coincided with Pearl Harbor in ’41 and the atomic bomb in ’45. So my entire four years were a part of World War II. And I remember the announcement and we were playing basketball in the backyard. Dad opened the window and the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. None of us had any idea where Pearl Harbor was but we started laughing and we thought those bandy legged little guys with coke bottles for eyes, we’ll kill them in six months. And how wrong we were. And then from then we started to see, as a freshman, seniors enlisting, as they were 17. We lost a lot of our hundred or so men in our senior class, we lost maybe 30%-40% of them who volunteered. So it hit us in high school quite a bit.

Break (Relocating)

(00:12:09) Robert Torgler: The one thing probably more than any other I recall was my two years as a paperboy. Being a paperboy in that day was not like it is now. It was very personal, there was an evening paper and we hand delivered the papers by throwing them up onto the Victorian porches. Every Friday we would collect, we would go to each house, we would be invited in. We would talk about what was going on and I began to talk about their sons, who I knew most of them from just walking the route. And they are going into the service. And I notice as time went on blue stars started appearing in the front dining room windows of a number of homes. Maybe 30 or 40 homes. And a blue star signified that a member of the family was serving in the armed forces. And so on I
would call on them, we’d talk about Robert who was in the Pacific, or Bill who was in Anzio and I got an intimate view of the view from the parents standpoint. And then one day walking my route I notice a gold star in the window. And a gold star signified that a member of the family had died. And in this case it was a guy I knew very well. His brother and I were the best of friends. And he was killed, he was a torpedo bomber pilot and he was killed in the Pacific. And henceforth whenever we called on that home, it wasn’t happy, it wasn’t gay. It was very sad in the reflection of the loss of their son. This occurred maybe half a dozen times and so those six homes it was almost like a body blow. Because I knew the boys and then all of a sudden they weren’t there. That was probably, of everything that happened, the most vivid memory I have of my intermediate years. Whenever an alumnus came back wed always have an assembly. And he would talk to the students about his tour all that he could talk and then when we filed up we’d have a war bond rally. Everybody bought war bonds in those days. They were called e-bonds. They were $18.75, and when the matured in 10 years you got $25 for them. Well we didn’t have that kind of money. But we would bring quarters, and we would buy war stamps. And we each had a little war book that would contain enough for $18.75. And we would buy stamps and we would put them in the war book. And when we had them filled, we’d go to the bank, or our parents would take us to the bank, and we’d get a bond for it. So that was a constant drumbeat while school was going on. And we had all kinds of collection days. We collected medal, and we collected paper. And it was obvious, Lucky Strike cigarettes used to be all green, the package. And all of a sudden they were white. And the message was Lucky Strike green has gone to war. They were using the collar for camouflage. So you saw it again and again. Probably most of all in rationing. Many many things were rationed. The most significant thing to me as a teenager was gasoline. I had turned 16, we had one car, and I really craved that car for dates. That dilemma was, we had only so many gallons a week. My dad was fortunate, we had A, B, and C stickers. C gave you the most. My dad had a C sticker, which you put on your windshield. And he got the most gallons a week because he was in ordinance there helping to move war goods from coast to coast. But everything was rationed, meat was rationed, tires were rationed, butter was rationed, you had stamps when you went to the store. So that was a very common occurrence. Another occurrence that I had was that one day, some British children showed up. One was in my class; one was in my sisters’ class. And these were kids who came from London where the battle of Britain was going on. And wealthy American families would sponsor British children to come to American. And they would pay their transportation and help house them. And then American families would be their custodians for while they were in America. And it was sobering, to look at these kids, they had given up their families, their mom and dad and their neighborhood. And they’ve come to a country that they don’t even know. And we had two of those British, a boy and a girl. I even dated the girl.

James Hitch: Going back to the onset of the war. Do you think that once news of the war began emerging in Europe, and you all began hearing about, do you think it set an ominous atmosphere within your community? Knowing that there was potential for a large-scale world war.
Robert Torgler: Oh yes. Absolutely. Because the first years of the war were horrendous. We lost our battleship fleet at Pearl Harbor, and the Japanese were just cleaning up the Pacific. China, Philippines, Baton, Hong Kong, and that was sobering. And then in the east it was even worse because the Blitzkrieg had taken over all of Europe to speak of. And the British were lucky they got their fleet out of Dunkirk. All their soldiers, and this was very sobering and we followed this with maps everyday at our home. My dad had maps up. We didn’t have television but we all had big RCA radios and we would listen to Walter Cronkite and Edward R. Murrow. My dad would show us on the map where we are, it was dicey.

James Hitch: Do you remember what your first emotions were when hearing about the war breaking out in Europe?

Robert Torgler: My first emotions were, that’s not for us. I was a Taft-like Republican, an isolationist. Let them fight their own battles, we have the ocean between us. A lot of us in the Midwest, well we were all under the influence of senator Taft in Ohio who led the Republican party, was a strong isolationist. The European war was their problem, until it became more and more apparent it was going to be our problem. As the submarine warfare began to take affect.

James Hitch: You mentioned early that you were a freshmen in high school when Pearl Harbor was attacked, can you back over what sort of reaction you, your friends, your family and the community had given this news?

Robert Torgler: Most of our reaction was a totally over optimistic view of the situation. Everything from Japan at that point was cheap, when you saw the sign made in Japan, it meant shotty merchandise. So we thought, here is this country that makes shotty toys with tiny little men, with bandy legs and coke bottle eyes, this will be over shortly. We didn’t realize at that point that we had lost our entire battleship fleet. But our first reaction was tremendous over optimism and lack of realism.

James Hitch: Can you talk to me a little bit about your high school experiences in and the environment that was created in your town knowing that there was a looming, very involved world war?

Robert Torgler: It was a gradual osmosis to one a keep your head down and work hard, and we’re all in this together. It was the only time I have ever seen our country as unanimous in its motivation as the war went on. And as we realized, you can’t be isolationists. And we were especially aware of this because at one of the automotive plants they were making half-tracks. And we would see half-tracks going down the street as they were going to the railroad station. And that was a constant reminder. We had air raid drills. And my father was an air raid warden. And I use to go with him, and the major discipline for air raid drills was blackouts. You had to have your home blacked out. My dad would go up and knock on the door of those who didn’t and everybody complied. I never understood why we had to worry about blackouts 1500 miles from the coast and
Dad never had an explanation for me. But nonetheless, it was a regular reminder of the war, as were the half-tracks during the day, and the blue stars and gold stars.

James Hitch: You mentioned the British students who came to your high school. At what point did they come and do you remember when they were sent back?

(00:23:38) Robert Torgler: I remember when they came. They came in 1942. At the onslaught of the Battle of Britain. The buzz bombs in the summer of ’42 when London was badly damaged. They came in my sophomore year and honestly they graduated with us. They wanted to stay and graduate with their class. And we had a reunion believe it or not, I had a 50th reunion not too long ago and the lady came back from Britain, which was an awfully nice touch.

James Hitch: You mentioned a little bit earlier about the rationing and the blackout practices. What kind of other changes do you remember after the onset of the war within your own community and your own household?

(00:24:39) Robert Torgler: Well I went to work in the summer. My sisters were too old. But at age 16, I went to work at the Hoover Roller Bearing Company and worked there for the next three summers. They made sweepers and the presses that make the hood for the sweeper, they turned into making helmet liners. Which were the plastic helmet liners under the tin hats. And my job was to staple the leather straps on the helmet liners, and I did that. God we made millions of helmet liners. That was my job for three summers. Everybody worked. The steel company, the roller bearing company, because the men had gone to war. And this was the first time to my knowledge women were doing men’s work. We had women truck drivers, we had women flying planes, and doing all, welders. Rosie the Riveter expression started in our town. In fact the lady that I married, Jim, unbeknownst to me, was a Riveter. Everybody was involved and it is still one of the miracles of industrialization how we were able to turn out as many ships, as many planes, as many tanks as we were able to do. But it was the work of every citizen and that changed the entire concept of women in the work force. When I first graduated from high school, there were only about three things a woman could do. She could be a nurse, she could be a secretary, or she could be a teacher. And then the war came along. And they were doing everything. Ironically, they found in many cases they did it better. And that’s changed the whole concept of the American work force.

James Hitch: Do you remember a shift your parent’s attitudes once the war started, in regards to being more conservative with certain luxuries? Like you said gas, are there any other examples of that?

(00:27:29) Robert Torgler: No question. My mother spent two days a week at the church making bandages that were used. I never knew how, but they would roll bandages. And my dad as I said was in the ordinances and on some of his missions he carried a pistol, which was unheard of. And then I worked and my sisters were part of many war drives. It was consummating, just consummating as a way of life.
James Hitch: So you touched on a little bit earlier, working as a paperboy during your high school years. Can you go into a little more depth about how long you were a paperboy, the certain duties that were entailed in being a paperboy and the invaluable experiences that you gained from this job?

(00:28:32) Robert Torgler: You were an entrepreneur. You had to do your own collecting, we had these little coin changers that you may have seen cashiers carry. We had it on our belt with quarters, fifty-cent pieces, and nickels and dimes and pennies. And every Friday, the worst part of the job was collecting. I had a 110 customers and I would have to go to 110 homes and collect 30 cents. That was what the weekly fee was. And everybody had a little card and I would have a punch and it would have 52 weeks and I would punch if they had paid for the week. And that’s how we knew how much they owed. So I would be in everybody’s living room once a week and I was responsible for the collection and then the paying of that money to the newspapers. And I would be able to keep the excess. I forget the percentage now but let’s say of the 30 cents I had to turn in, 25, I just don’t remember Jim. And I was able to keep the balance and then every afternoon around 2 the Canton paper would be dropped off at a corner near where I lived and I would sit down. We used to fold the papers. Fold them and twist them. And I’d load them up into my basket and throw them onto the porch. And that’s when I’d see all these guys later who were blue stars, playing softball or basketball or tap football. And if I had time I joined them. That’s how I got to know these future blue stars.

James Hitch: Do you remember this being a reasonable sort of income for a high school student?

(00:30:39) Robert Torgler: Oh yeah, it was a nice income. A nice income. It didn’t put me in wine and cheese, but for a kid it was worthwhile. Hard work though, rain and shine. When it was raining it was a bitch and the Sunday papers were like they are now. So dad would always help me on Sunday. We’d put the papers in the car, and he’d drive the car and I would lay them up on the porch.

James Hitch: Can you talk a little bit more about the interactions you had with the families that you delivered papers to?

(00:31:20) Robert Torgler: Well we always talked about their kids. Where is Robert now? And they’d show me the letters they got from the boys. That was up until the gold stars appeared. So I knew about kids that were involved in the African attack, the Solerno attack in Sicily, and lower Italy. And I got into all that vicariously through the mothers and dads. And they would show me pictures and show me letters and vicariously knew them. And then it was a body blow when I’d see a gold star go up. I would frequently go down to dad’s offices, which were right on the Pennsylvania railroad. And there was a terminal building there and he had part of the second floor. And I’d go down Saturday mornings with my sisters and they were twins and we’d play officer and do dumb things like that. We would always see as a train was coming in from the west, there would always be two of three guys going into the service. And the whole family would be there, and the neighbors would be there. And they’d be crying and sobbing and that got to be a
normal sight. And later on in the war as they were coming home, it would be hoorays and cheers. Tears and kisses as they came home from the war. You never made a second glance, then it was a common experience every time a train came in.

James Hitch: So you mentioned earlier working for the Hoover Sweeper Company as your wartime contribution. Can you discuss a little bit more about the service you provided making the lining for the helmets and how long you worked there? And what kind of environment you worked in given that you were contributing to the war effort?

(00:33:41) Robert Torgler: So was everybody, the whole plant. We weren’t making any sweepers first of all. We were making tons of different things, my area was making helmet liners. Honest to goodness I think we made millions of them. And it was a typical lunchbox community, we had a small department. The presses were there bringing them out and we would take the crude helmet liners and we would file away the burrs from the side and then start stapling the leather. We all came with box lunches, your lunch pail. Eight hours days, all summer long. Five days a week, sometimes time and a half. Sometimes we would work Saturday. That was good money of course for a kid. And all that money I saved because when the war ended in ’45. I started right away that summer in college. I was pre-med and I went to the college of Wister and started on my pre-med studies. Dad didn’t have that much money, but I got a scholarship and with the money that I saved at Hoover I was able to get along but I knew that wasn’t going to last. So the following summer after the first year, two friends and I went to the post office and enlisted in the army. The recruiting sergeant had promised us if we would recruit that day, he could promise us that we would spend the next three years together. Well we were as close of buddies as you could be, and that was heaven to us. We were going to get a college education out of it because of the G.I. Bill, we would be with each other, and so we all enlisted. We’re all sent to Cleveland, this was in 1946. We never saw each other in uniform. I was sent to Indian Town Gap in Pennsylvania, another guy goes east to Fort Dix. Another guy goes south. We never see each other. And then I went from there after artillery training in Fort Knox to Korea for 3 years.

James Hitch: You mentioned the roles of the war bonds and war stamps. Can you discuss a little bit more how these war bonds and war stamps were integrated into your school environment and how the little books that the students had would be carried around and used?

(00:36:42) Robert Torgler: Well first of all, war bonds were absolutely critical. Government needed money and by taking war bonds from us. It would prevent inflation. It would reduce the amount of money in circulation. So it was an absolutely vital thing for the government. And we had any movie star or famous athlete of the day, if he wasn’t in the service, he was volunteering, and he would go to high school assemblies like ours, Glen Miller came to ours. Now Glen Miller’s name was synonymous to Justin Bieber today. In terms of his band, and he would give a little talk to us about the importance of war bonds and he would go away. Then Jim Brown, the football star of the Cleveland Browns, would come visit us. As was the whole community, with movie stars and USO
troops that not only entertained the service, but they would entertain communities with the hopes of getting war bond money.

James Hitch: You mentioned earlier in the interview, the United States military dropped the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Can you discuss how this played out in your community, and what sort of response Canton had and what sort of response your friends and family had to this huge event?

(00:38:34) Robert Torgler: High school as over when the bombs dropped. They dropped in the summer. At least the people like my mother and the other women, it was a God sent. Because their children were not going to run the risk of the service death. So it was just a tremendous appreciation of the peace and relief and joy that it was over. And we could see the end of rationing. We’d be able to buy a new car. No cars were manufactured at all in those four year period. We had the thing, ’39 Pontiac throughout the war. And the same with everything. And so it was a profound relief. Relief primarily on the part of our parents that their kids wouldn’t be put in harms way. And then the joy at the victory and pride. Great pride that we had won the war.

James Hitch: How in any way would you describe the difference in the atmosphere in your community after the bombings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki compared to the beginning of the war when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor?

(00:40:09) Robert Torgler: Oh a profound difference. We were at the end of the war, we were the cock of the walk. We had defeated the greatest armada in the history of mankind probably before the Roman legions in Hitler’s army. And the army of Italy and the army of Japan. And there were damn few countries left that were able to mount campaigns against them. But it was tremendous sense of pride and joy. As opposed to when the war started, it was at first cockiness, and then realizing how bad it really was. And then fear. But we knew we had to fight in Japan but they were still isolationists in terms of Europe.

James Hitch: Do you recall any substantial changes in Canton, following the Allies victory in World War II?

(00:41:31) Robert Torgler: Well bare in mind I wasn’t there very much. I went from the college of Wister right to Korea. And I got out of Korea, went to the Wharton school of the University of Pennsylvania. I didn’t really back to Canton until after my college career. So I can’t really comment rationally on that.

James Hitch: When you enlisted in the army in the year of 1946 after the war concluded, what type of reaction did you receive from your parents?

(00:42:17) Robert Torgler: They were sanguine to it because the war was now over. There wouldn’t be any shooting, and they recognized my desire for an Ivy League education, which they couldn’t give me. So I think it was a hate to see you go but I think you’re doing the right thing. Because the only dilemma I had was that I had to get four years of
education in three years. Because my G.I. Bill was only three years and academic courses like biology and qualitative chemistry didn’t transfer to Wharton.

James Hitch: Referencing back to the G.I. bill, was it a common and popular move for high school graduates and students getting ready to go into college to join the service, even after the end of the war?

(00:43:20) Robert Torgler: Yes, and the G.I. Bill keep in mind ran out in the ’46-’47 time period. I was typical of the motivation. Here I was able to get a college education from the finest Ivy League schools in the nation, pay my tuition. And I would get $90 a month as long as I was in college. That coupled with the fact that I became president of my fraternity, which gave my room and board, made it a piece of cake financially to get through college.

James Hitch: Can you talk about your experiences after enlisting in the army, such as the training, the processing, where you spent your time serving, and how these experiences reshaped your view of being a serviceman in the United States?

(00:44:24) Robert Torgler: Well a couple points, I was naïve beyond belief. I was a couple of years ahead of myself in school. So when I went into the service I was naïve beyond belief. When we were at Fort Knox, armor training, and artillery training, we got the classic training, and we got the films telling us about the sins of sex. And my God they were so profound and vivid I wouldn’t touch a women. The syphilis and the gonorrhea, and I’m 17 years old and I’m scared to death. Every woman was a walking time bomb. But I really grew up in the service and among other things it really taught me the advantage of having an education. I knew that what a leg up it made in terms of a life career. And it focused me on a vocation. In Korea I concluded I did not want to be a doctor that was not for me but enjoyed marketing and finance so that’s what drove me to Wharton. But it was a maturation process James, it was just terrific. Our artillery battery was composed of seasoned old veterans and then guys like myself. That dichotomy, it was one or the other, guys had been through Europe and they were career soldier. And they were the first sergeants and so forth, and then a group of us who were the cannon fodder. It was a very maturing process.

James Hitch: Do you look back on those memories now and look at them in a fond way?

(00:46:33) Robert Torgler: Oh yes, not that I would want to do it again. It was unbelievable to see another part of the world and I was fortunate the shooting had stopped and I was in that lull before the shooting started again. So I was not in fear of my life. So from that respect easy. And furthermore, I was a trumpet player in high school. And the division needed a bugler. They had no bugler. And records found me, so I spent my years as the divisional bugler, which was a piece of cake. I got out of all the KP duty, I got out of all the guard duty. I just had to get up at 6 o’clock in the morning and play revelry. So my life in that respect was a piece of cake.
James Hitch: Do you think most high school graduates who join the service right out of school went to universities and colleges right afterwards?

(00:47:56) Robert Torgler: Our high school was in the best part of town. The kids that went to that high school, most of us had classical curriculums. And most of us were intent on going to college one way or the other. So I can speak for my high school in that the all of the guys, well the three of us that enlisted together were all high school friends of mine. And there were a number of groups like that. All intent on G.I. Bill, free college education.

James Hitch: Going back to the women beginning to take the men’s jobs once they left and were deployed and were off to war, you mentioned that the Rosie the Riveter term began in your town. Can you talk a little bit about that and what you mean?

(00:48:57) Robert Torgler: I didn’t know it, but I know it from my wife. I didn’t even know her then but she was at Ohio State while I was at Wister. But she worked as a division of the Ford Motor company they were making airplane wings. She was studying to be a teacher so she taught riveting to women. Whole classes of women. Teaching them how to use the riveting gun and it’s a job meant for a women. Very meticulous, very tiny little holes, very specific and that’s what they did. They had rivet guns and wore glasses, and they riveted airplane wings up and down. And she taught it. They finally decided, she kept saying I want to see these being done. She was in the training room. And they finally escorted her out, she was a beautiful beautiful lady. And there were a lot of women out on the line were dyke like. They were afraid that my wife would be attacked. So two ladies escorted her so she could see, point being, they were a tough group of women.

James Hitch: Do you think your town was labeled as one of the home places for the Rosie the Riveter spirit?

(00:50:34) Robert Torgler: Oh absolutely, Ohio especially.

James Hitch: And do you think this was consistent with other states in the Midwest as well?

(00:50:45) Robert Torgler: No, I think it was all the Midwest, I think it was the type of job that women could do probably better than men. And they made a major poster on it, with a woman and her sleeves rolled up, you may have seen it, with a bandana on her head and a rivet gun. And those posters were all over the country. Rosie goes to war. And the point being was to motivate women to take wartime jobs and get out of the kitchen and help your country. And that’s how the Rosie the Riveter got its start.

James Hitch: Are there any other experiences or memories that would like to share?

(00:51:37) Robert Torgler: Well I’m just thinking. I’ve talked about the Hoover Company, really I think that’s it James.