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## Interview with Thelma Long (When the war came to Australia)

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**Repository** Australian War Memorial, Research Centre

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**Reference** [F04037](#)

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### Details

Mrs Thelma Long visited Germany in 1938 as a team member of the Australian Women's Tennis Team and describes her experiences. As part of the war effort, she joined the Red Cross as a transport driver and worked in Melbourne. She then joined the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS). She gives a history of women's participation in the armed forces: navy, airforce and army; also the medical services. She details many statistics, eg. 70,000 women served in the combined services in the 1939-1945 war. She describes women's participation in the field, in Australia and New Guinea. She discusses women's conditions in the context of the period: pay rates, duties, value, etc. Mrs Long was on the staff of Colonel S.H. Irving MBE, Controller AWAS for a time and describes people, places and events in Melbourne from 1942. She mentions differences between the American troops and the Australians. In Mrs Long's opinion, women working in the forces pioneered their working in careers. The role of women in the war is discussed: women in the armed forces released some 55,000 men to go to forward positions.

### Author Details

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