

MARY OREB

in 4-4-08 interview by CSU Fullerton student, Taran Schindler

Remembers conveyor belt accident.

MO: We had something that happened there during the war. It was an experience This woman she operated the machine on the chunk line that night. We were packing for the U.S. Army. We're talking 12:00 at night, 12:30. All of a sudden she says I have to go to the bathroom. She stops the machine. I said ok, let Jean take over your place until you come back. Always have somebody to make sure there was another alternate person to do the work when a person left any machinery, we never left no machinery unattended,

TS: What was the position that women was leaving

MO: That position was the switch operator on the big machine, the big steel belt. Marie came back from the bathroom. We had told her never to try to put salt on the belt when it was stopped. Cause the belt had stopped when she came back. A lot of fish, packing fast, the belt was going full speed. Well, Marie, Marie had the brainstorm to pick up a can of salt that was standing, they had salt in a very big tub and it had a coffee can on it. She took the coffee can, took the coffee can and went under the table, she had her glove half on, the rubber glove half on. She used the same hand, she took that can to throw that salt in and the machine started, caught her hand, caught her glove.

MO: and caught her glove and I'll never forget the scream, as long as-- the machine kept going. Her hand was half way up here. (gestures half way up her forearm) I screamed, I ran down there. Me and the other foreman ran down to get my brother, get maintenance.

You know what we had to do. Shut all the switches off in order to stop--The belt wouldn't stop, something happened, the belt would not stop. Had to cut the belt right in half. Destroy the belt, cut it right with the electric scissors. And Marie just fell.

We got her out, two men got her and pulled her out. Her hand was, just like your sweater there (I was wearing a maroon sweater) No blood, no blood whatsoever, just red.

MO: Took her to the hospital. The whole hand withered, never got back, you know what I mean when I say withered? Black and black and black and black, finally just took it off. Crushed, circulation, everything.