

WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Nancy Zona Uhland

INTERVIEWER: Therese Strohmer

DATE: November 3, 2013

[Begin Interview]

TS: Today is November 3, 2013. My name is Therese Strohmer. I'm at the home of Nancy Uhland in New Bern, North Carolina, to conduct an oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina of Greensboro. Nancy, could you please state your name the way you would like it to be on your collection?

NU: Nancy—in parenthesis my maiden name—"Zona"—and my married name—Uhland.

TS: Okay, excellent. Well, Nancy, why don't you go ahead and tell me a little bit about where and when you were born?

NU: I was born in a small coal mining town in Eastern Pennsylvania called Lansford; Lansford, we call it.

TS: Lansford?

NU: Yes. Dad was a coal miner, mom was a house-maker—homemaker.

TS: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

NU: I am eight in line of nine.

TS: So you had a few?

NU: Yes.

TS: You're the eight. How does that break down for the boys and the girls?

NU: We had three boys in the family.

TS: So the girls ruled?

NU: Yes.

TS: [chuckles] So you had six girls?

NU: Yes.

TS: Okay.

NU: My five sisters, yes.

TS: Who was the one after you; who was the youngest?

NU: My baby brother.

TS: Oh, okay. He probably gets spoiled.

NU: He is.

TS: Yes. Well, you were probably spoiled as the youngest girl, I would think. Not—Not really?

NU: Not really.

TS: Okay. Well, what was it like growing up in Lansford?

NU: It was very nice; very nice *Leave It To Beaver* kind of town. You left your doors open; everybody watched out for you; they gave you a good education; everybody went to church; all the stores were closed on Sunday. And on Sunday you went around and visited your relatives, came home and had your roast chicken, and it was—it was a very good life; poor but good.

TS: Yeah. Was it one of those cases where you didn't really know you were poor because—

NU: Yeah; yes.

TS: Well, did you—So with so many kids—I don't know what the spread is between the oldest and the youngest, but usually you find that kids have a lot of responsibility—

NU: Yes.

TS: —at a young age, in a large family.

NU: Yes.

TS: Was that the case with your family?

NU: Not necessarily, no. Mom took care of us very well. She did the ironing and the washing and the cooking, and I maybe helped dust a little.

TS: Yeah?

NU: My older sisters say that they were—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: They had to work some more?

NU: They had more chores, yeah.

TS: Yeah. Again, you were the youngest girl so—

NU: Well, yeah.

TS: [chuckles] So was it, like, a rural town or was it—

NU: No, it was a pretty booming town during the coal days.

TS: Oh, okay.

NU: Yeah.

TS: Okay, and did you live in town or outside of town?

NU: I lived in town.

TS: In town?

NU: There were thirteen churches there.

TS: Yeah?

NU: They're—like I said—very down-to-earth, hard-working people.

TS: What kind of things did you do for fun?

NU: I would go out to the corner and play basketball with the neighborhood boys.

TS: Yeah?

NU: We played hide-and-seek on the corner; Mom was always sitting on the front porch watching us. But we played hide-and-seek; I was a cheerleader in high school; wasn't really much for girls to do. We didn't have the sports teams—

TS: Like they do today?

NU: —like they do today.

TS: Yeah. Did you—were involved in church activities or anything like that?

NU: Yes; youth group; yes.

TS: Did you do any singing or instruments—musical instruments?

NU: No. No, we couldn't afford it.

TS: Yeah. Yeah, that would have been tough.

NU: Couldn't—Yeah. I always envied my friends in my class that could have piano lessons, but I couldn't—

TS: No.

NU: —couldn't afford it, no.

TS: So you—you grew up during the fifties, during the Cold War.

NU: Yes.

TS: Did you have to do anything at school like the duck and cover, or you remember anything like that?

NU: No, I don't remember that.

TS: Not at all?

NU: Nope.

TS: Were you aware of any of the Cold War politics, listening to the radio or—

NU: We had a very good Social Studies teacher, and we—I know my mom scraped to get the subscription price—we had to read *US News & World Report* every week, and we were quite aware of what was going on, but I guess we thought we were so isolated up there in Lansford. Nobody would want to bomb a coal town.

TS: Yeah.

NU: Who would want to do that? So we weren't really—

TS: Not concerned about it?

NU: Not concerned. No, we knew what was going on though.

TS: What about when John [Fitzgerald] Kennedy was elected president? As a catholic—You didn't grow up as a Catholic; that's right.

NU: No, I grew up Lutheran.

TS: Oh, that's right. What did you guys think about that at the time?

NU: Thought it was wonderful; we thought he was a good candidate.

TS: Yeah. What about—So you would have been about thirteen when he was assassinated. Do you remember when that happened?

NU: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. I can remember vividly what seat I was in.

TS: Oh, you do?

NU: Yes.

TS: In class?

NU: In—Yeah.

TS: How did they announce it?

NU: Over the loudspeaker.

TS: Yeah?

NU: And everybody was in tears and couldn't believe it; tears and shock. Yeah, you always remember those kind of things; where you were at that time.

TS: Right. What about—In school, did you have a favorite subject?

NU: I really liked math.

TS: Okay.

NU: And I thought I was going to go on to college to be a math teacher but that ended up being elementary education. [chuckles]

TS: How was that?

NU: Well, in high school I was at the top of the class—one of the top ten—and everything came rather easy, but when I got into Penn State [Pennsylvania State University] it was much more intense.

TS: More competition?

NU: More competition, yeah, and it was a bigger world out there than I had ever, ever seen.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Actually, we didn't have—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Were you away from home for the first time?

NU: Yes.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Actually, we had—I hadn't seen a black person until I went to college.

TS: Yeah?

NU: They just weren't around our area.

TS: You had—There wasn't any kind of segregation up in Pennsylvania at that time; they were integrated schools?

NU: No, all whites.

TS: All whites?

NU: Yeah.

TS: Okay.

NU: We didn't have any blacks up there.

TS: There just wasn't—nobody there?

NU: No, they didn't do coal mining.

TS: No?

NU: No.

TS: Okay.

NU: I don't know. They just—I guess they never—The colored population never got north of Philadelphia, I guess, but I don't remember anyone—growing up with.

TS: Did you make friends in—in college?

NU: Oh, absolutely; no difference; lovely people. But it's just I had never been exposed to that before.

TS: Yeah. What about—So going to college, how was it that you—So did you—When you're in high school and you're thinking you're going to be a teacher, right?

NU: Yes.

TS: Math teacher? Did you have, like, college preparatory classes?

NU: Yes, I was in college prep.

TS: Okay.

NU: Yes.

TS: And did you apply any place else besides Penn State?

NU: Not that I remember, because, of course, you had to send along some application fees, and that was hard to come by too.

TS: Right.

NU: I don't remember applying anywhere else, and I was readily accepted. And back then, really, my—my—don't fault him, but our guidance counselor really, kind of, tried to

steer the girls to either Goldey-Beacom [College] secretarial school or nursing school or be a teacher.

TS: Okay.

NU: That was it. That was like your three main goals in life.

TS: Yeah.

NU: And since in my family I already had three nurses—three sisters that were nurses, and I couldn't type to save my life—

TS: [chuckles]

NU: —I guess the only other field left to me was to be an educator.

TS: I see, okay. Well, how was it that you got involved with the army?

NU: I went to my first two years of Penn State—To save money I went to the [Penn State] Hazleton campus.

TS: Okay.

NU: And at that time it was only a commuter campus. Now they have dormitories and it's a—almost a four year thing up there for some courses of study. But we would drive to Hazleton every day from Lansford and Summit Hill; we were in a carpool for friends. I would come back at night, work at the sewing factory; I sewed Bobbie Brooks clothes at night.

TS: Bobbie Brooks? Is that, like, a type of clothes?

NU: It's like Lloydstag[?] of today.

TS: Oh, okay.

NU: Yeah. I'd sew clothes at night, go home, study, start again in the morning.

TS: For two years.

NU: For two years, and then I had to go—it was only a two year course up there at Hazleton then.

TS: Okay.

NU: Then I had to transfer to the main campus, and that's when—Let me see if I have the article here—Colonel [Norman?] Gottlieb put an article in *The Daily Collegian*, and it invited females to join ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps].

TS: And this is in 1972? No, this would have been before that.

NU: Sixty-nine.

TS: Sixty-nine.

NU: Sixty-nine; I graduated high school [in] '67.

TS: Okay.

NU: So I was up at the main campus in '69. And there's a lovely article in here. "We have no—" Let's see: "If girls want to take part in drills, they'll be more than welcome," reported Colonel Gottlieb, chief architect of the new idea, "but we have no provisions for the uniforms, so I guess in the beginning, at least, they'll have to wear whatever they want."

[chuckles]

TS: Oh. So it's kind of a new idea?

NU: It was. Colonel Gottlieb said he's pushing the idea for girls in ROTC because he's a firm believer in relevancy for college course.

TS: What was it that interested you about that?

NU: My older brother was in the air force and my sister had been a nurse in the air force. Most of my sisters married servicemen.

TS: Is that right?

NU: Yes. Yes. My oldest sister, Teenie[?], married a CB, and that's construction brigade something, okay?

TS: Right.

NU: My sister Anna married an air force sergeant; sister Beckta[?] married an air force sergeant; Mary Lou married a marine that had just gotten back from the Korean war; Susie[?], as I said, went into the air force herself; she had her nursing degree and so she went in as an air force nurse lieutenant.

TS: Interesting.

NU: My brother was a sergeant.

TS: In the army?

NU: In the air force.

TS: In the air force, okay.

NU: I think that just about names everybody. [chuckles] And—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Now, had your father been in the service during the war?

NU: No, my daddy was refused into the service. He—They went—He went—He tried to get into, I believe—first it was the army, like my uncle John did. My Uncle John served in the China Burma India Theater.

TS: Oh.

NU: And my daddy tried to get in but he was refused because they said he had too much black coal dust on his lungs already.

TS: Oh, wow.

NU: So they sent him home, so he went back; he tried to join the navy then and they said the same thing: “We can’t take you.” So he went back and he did his service as a civil patrol—

TS: I see.

NU: —in town, and just was a great dad.

TS: Yeah. Interesting, though, that so many of your siblings are—have service connections; were either in or married someone.

NU: Yeah. So when Colonel Gottlieb said come on in and see what it’s like, and I knew I wanted to teach, and I thought, “Well, maybe I would like to teach on bases.

TS: I see.

NU: On service bases. So I wanted to see the kind of psychology the children would have to undergo; their home life and everything; what was their dad coming home with; the structure they’d have to live under. And you know military brats, they all had that dad that had the white glove. No, not really. [both chuckle]

TS: Well, some of them did.

NU: Some of them did.

TS: Yeah, some of them did.

NU: But I wanted to know—[unclear] to feel more comfortable around my students at the time.

TS: Okay.

NU: And then, I had done so well in my classes that my cadre said, “Why don’t you try to go into the service yourself?”

TS: After your ROTC?

NU: After the two years of ROTC, just being around. And so I did. I took the tests from a recruiter in—in Philadel—in Pittsburgh, passed with flying colors again, and so I went into the army.

TS: Okay. Was the army really the one you selected because it was the R—it was the one ROTC program on campus and then—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

NU: Because it was the one—Oh, we had more ROTC programs on campus—

TS: Oh, you did?

NU: —but the army was the first to let in females.

TS: Oh, okay; I see.

NU: Yes. And at that time you could not get a commission. You could go in, you could take the courses for the college credit. They did find me a uniform.

TS: [chuckles] Okay.

NU: And I went around more as a PR [public relations] person, because at that time—'69, '70, I graduated in '71—I would go to the sorority halls with one of the captains, mostly—no, Major—trying to think—Major Harvey[?]? No, it was Captain Harvey, Major Du—Major McDuffy[?], and we would go around to the sororities and try and be more of a PR, that what their boyfriends were doing in the ROTC was of great importance to the nation at that time. We were in Vietnam and there was a lot of backlash. I remember being at Wagner Building when we were bombed; just—

TS: You were bombed?

NU: Just little bombs.

TS: What kind of bombs?

NU: I don't know. Whatever they—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Like Molotov cocktails?

NU: Yeah. Yeah. I'm sure that's—was—

TS: Oh, okay.

NU: Yeah, but there was great resentment at that time, and so it was more of a public relations situation.

TS: Were any of your brothers in the war at all, in Vietnam?

NU: Not that I remember. I don't remember.

TS: So what was your, like, thinking of that time, about all this turmoil that was going on?

NU: I didn't like it, of course, but we were in it; what was I to do?

TS: Right, right. Well, and then you decide—then you get involved—

NU: Yes.

TS: —with the ROTC. Did you ever, personally, have any animosity directed at you when you were in your uniform?

NU: No.

TS: No?

NU: No, and I did just go to the drill sessions in my uniform, just like the boys; did not drill with them but I was there with Major McDuffy.

TS: You didn't drill with them?

NU: No.

TS: How many other girls were there?

NU: There was one other but she dropped out.

TS: Oh, so you were the only one that went—made it through?

NU: Yes.

TS: Now, did you get a stipend for—

NU: No.

TS: No?

NU: No, there was nothing. As I said, it was just an offer to come in, see what the—

TS: Program was like?

NU: —program was like, what the young men were going through. You could get the college credit for the courses, for map reading and logistics and whatever else I took. I got the college credit but that's all. You couldn't even get a—a commission at the time.

TS: Okay. Let me take you to—Before you grad—Well, let's see. You graduated high school in '67?

NU: Yes.

TS: And so then, while you're in college in '68, that was quite a tumultuous year.

NU: Yes.

TS: What do you remember about that year?

NU: Not much.

TS: No?

NU: No.

TS: Do you remember the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.? It was in '68.

NU: I have to tell you that I had encephalitis when I was—when I had—when I was in—Let's see. I guess that would have been '74.

TS: Okay.

NU: Right after I got out of the service.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: The service?

NU: I went to work for some corporations, and while I was working for McDonald's, I was bitten by a mosquito, so you'll please have to excuse me if I don't remember some of these things.

TS: Oh, that's okay. So you have some memory loss from some of that?

NU: Yes.

TS: I see; okay. Yeah. Well, because it—having been in the—going into the army at this time, in this—you have the issue of the counter-culture, too, where people are doing drugs and the free love and sex and things like that.

NU: Yes.

TS: Was that anything that you were aware of going on in the campuses, or was this—

NU: Actually, no.

TS: —not so much like that at Penn State?

NU: No. No, I was a little town girl.

TS: Yeah?

NU: And I guess they thought—I don't know; "She's too dumb."

TS: No.

NU: No, don't—don't put that down. [chuckles]

TS: Well, some—No, certainly that's not the case.

NU: No.

TS: But—

NU: I was never invited to anything like that, and I don't think I would have said yes anyway, the way I had been grown up—been raised.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Right, been raised.

NU: But no, I did not see any of that on campus.

TS: Yeah. Well, tell me a little bit, then, about when you decided to join the army.

NU: Okay.

TS: What did your family think about that?

NU: They were very proud.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Yeah. My dad was gone by then. He—He had passed away when I was a senior in college, and I thought, "Well, I don't really want to go back and teach in this little coal mining town. They're offering me a very good opportunity to go around—at least around the United States—

TS: Right.

NU: —so I'll try this, I'll sign up for two years, and then if I don't like it I'll go back home.”

TS: Okay.

NU: But I did like it, but at the same time I met my husband, who was a young pilot—

TS: Okay.

NU: —at McGuire Air Force Base [Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst], and the rest is history.

TS: [chuckles] So that was the reason that you got out, is you got married and—

NU: Yes.

TS: Well, we'll get to that in a minute then, but—So when you first went in, then—So you graduated from college—

NU: Yes.

TS: You signed up—

NU: With a degree in education.

TS: Oh, right, okay.

NU: Yeah.

TS: In education, and then you signed up as a—with a commission as a second lieutenant? Is that what you start out as?

NU: Yes.

TS: Okay, and so you went to your officer training?

NU: Yes.

TS: How was that and where'd you go for that?

NU: Women's Officer Basic Course—Course; WOB C, we called it, and that was at Fort McClellan, Alabama; a very nice, little place. I got giggled[?] in more than I wanted to. [both chuckle]

TS: Those are like demerits or something?

NU: Yes.

TS: Okay.

NU: [chuckling] Somehow my ribbons weren't straight or my shoes weren't polished just right. I think I got giggled in more than anything, but we had some very interesting girls that came down. One was Kathy Einbeck[?] from Wyoming.

TS: What was interesting about her?

NU: Oh, she was just the nicest girl.

TS: Yeah? You became friends?

NU: We became friends, and then we both got stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

TS: You stayed in trouble with her in there? [chuckles]

NU: [chuckling] No, we didn't get in trouble. No, she was just a very nice girl. Then there was Debbie Munson from California. Her dad was a X—was a colonel. Debbie was a hoot.

TS: Do you remember during your officer training, was there anything particularly difficult, besides, like, getting your—keeping your gigs—[chuckles] that level down?

NU: Keeping [me gigless?]?

TS: Yeah. But I mean, was it hard for, like, the—physically or emotionally or ed—for your academics, at all; any of those?

NU: No. It was rather easy actually because I had gone through ROTC, so—

TS: So you knew all—

NU: —I was having map reading for the second time and I was teaching the girls how to do it because they didn't know.

TS: Oh, I see.

NU: It was really rather easy.

TS: So you kind of had a leg up because you went through the ROTC.

NU: Absolutely.

TS: Okay. Did you—And so, did you enjoy it?

NU: I loved it.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Yeah.

TS: What was Alabama like?

NU: It was hot. [both chuckle]

TS: Having come from Pennsylvania, I would think.

NU: Yeah, it was hot. But it was only—What?—two months, I guess. We graduated in June. I went down in February, graduated in June.

TS: And then you went to—Where'd—Where—

NU: Well, since my dad had passed away when I was a senior in college I didn't really want to go that far. I could have gone anywhere; I was at the top of the class there too. And I really wanted to stay close to my mom.

TS: I see.

NU: So when I got the opportunity for Fort Dix, that's what I chose.

TS: Now, did you know what kind of job you were going to get there?

NU: Administrative something.

TS: Okay.

NU: So they put me in as the Assistant Adjutant under Captain Manning.

TS: Okay. What is an Assistant Adju—You'll have to say the words for me. I can't seem to say it.

NU: Adjutant.

TS: Adjutant, [both chuckle] thank you.

NU: Assistant Adjutant. I was in charge of the courts and boards. I was—

TS: The boards for promotion and—

NU: No, court-martials.

TS: Oh, court-martials.

NU: Court-martials. And I had two clerks under me there.

TS: Okay.

NU: So I just had to make sure everything was—all the i's were dotted and the t's were crossed on the paperwork.

TS: Okay.

NU: I was more proofreading—

TS: I see.

NU: —because one of my clerks was a Boston [Massachusetts] lawyer.

TS: Oh.

NU: Yeah, he was a corporal but he was a Boston lawyer—

TS: Wow.

NU: —and I keep going in saying, “John, are you sure this is—”
“Lieutenant Zona, yeah, trust me.” [both laugh]

TS: He wanted to be enlisted, huh?

NU: He just wanted to put in his two years.

TS: Oh, and get out.

NU: It was ’71, ’72, and he wanted to get in, get out; that was it.

TS: I see. He was trying to, maybe, stay away from getting into the war?

NU: Yeah. Yeah.

TS: I see, okay. So you—Did you—You did a lot of the paperwork.

NU: Paperwork for courts and boards.

TS: Okay.

NU: I was Safety Officer. I would have to go around to the different companies and make sure they were in compliance with all the safety regulations for fire extinguishers and such.

TS: Oh, okay. You have a lot of different hats when you’re an officer, right?

NU: Yes. And then I was the Postal Officer, so I’d have to make sure our little post office thing—office down in the lower level of our headquarters building—make sure I took the—or made sure that the mail got to the post—main post office every day, and make sure the letters that got to our brigade—

TS: Right, to the right—

NU: —got disseminated properly.

TS: —right person.

NU: Yeah.

TS: What are you thinking about the army at this time, then?

NU: I like it.

TS: You like it?

NU: I like the structure; it's very much like home.

TS: Yeah?

NU: It's safe, it's good people.

TS: Yeah? Well, you hear today—

NU: Good people to follow the rules. [both chuckle]

TS: Today in the news you hear a lot more about, like, issues of sexual harassment or assault and things like that. You know, if you read the paper today with the women issues.

NU: Yes.

TS: Did you ever come across anything like that in the court-martials they had to do or—

NU: Never.

TS: No?

NU: No.

TS: Did you feel you were treated fairly for your own promotions and your own work?

NU: I did, yes.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Yeah. There was no discrimination there. I did—I went in early, I went home late, I got all my paperwork done.

TS: Did you work—Were there many other women in the office area that you worked in; either enlisted or other officers?

NU: Just Captain Manning. She was the Adjutant.

TS: Oh, okay; she was a female.

NU: Yes.

TS: Okay.

NU: I don't remember any other clerks. I had Sergeant Shara[?], I had John and the other corporal for courts and boards. I don't really remember any other female staff except Captain Manning and myself.

TS: What were your housing quarters like?

NU: At first I lived off base with Debbie Munson.

TS: Okay.

NU: And then she got engaged and I moved in on base at the BOQ [Bachelor Officers Quarters].

TS: How was that?

NU: It was nice. It was just a little one room, studio apartment.

TS: Is that what—okay.

NU: [chuckles] That's all it was. Mostly the nurses lived there.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: But you had it by yourself; a room to yourself?

NU: Yes.

TS: You didn't have to share it?

NU: No.

TS: Okay. Well, what was—Did you have to do any temporary duty assignments while you're at Fort Dix?

NU: No.

TS: At what point did you meet your husband?

NU: I guess at the officer's club, either during lunch or something, and struck up a conversation. Oh, I remember his roommate, they were rooming together in a townhouse in Mount Holly, and—oh, in Willingboro, and I was asked to a party at their house.

TS: And that's how you met him?

NU: And that's how I met him, yeah.

TS: What kind of things did you do on your off time?

NU: Visited my sister mostly, in Browns Mills, New Jersey.

TS: Is that right?

NU: Her and her husband, yes.

TS: Is that very far?

NU: He was a retired air force sergeant who had served with the flight crew that [Dwight David "Ike"] Eisenhower was on.

TS: Oh, is that right; when he was president?

NU: Yes.

TS: Oh, nice.

NU: Yeah, he was on one of the flight crews there.

TS: For, like, Air Force One?

NU: I don't think it was Air Force One; it was a backup plane.

TS: Oh, okay.

NU: But he remembers going on trips with Eisenhower. That was my brother-in-law, Ted. And so, I vis—would visit my sister.

TS: Yeah.

NU: And that—Yes, Browns Mills was very close to Fort Dix, New Jersey.

TS: Okay.

NU: So.

TS: And did you—Do you recall—Sometimes in the military we have a different type of humor. Things that happen at—Just humorous things that happened.

NU: Yes.

TS: Did you—Do you have any funny stories that you'd like to share?

NU: I can't remember at this time.

TS: Yeah?

NU: I just can't—I'm sure there must be but I've never been asked that question before so I haven't—haven't recalled any.

TS: Yeah. Sometimes they—for people who were in for a long time, it happens, like, at their retirement ceremonies; they're given little gag gifts, or things in the office that are done for—practical jokes and things like that.

NU: I just decided after two years it was very nice but I had met this wonderful lieutenant and we were dating and I thought, "Oh, if I get [unclear] somewhere and he gets [unclear] somewhere this might all work out, so—

TS: Yeah. Well, and at that time, too, did you have to get out if you got pregnant?

NU: Yes, you did.

TS: Did you?

NU: Yes.

TS: Okay. So did you—

NU: And there was no fraternization. You couldn't date a sergeant or anything like that. That was—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Between the ranks?

NU: Yes, nothing between the ranks. That was also grounds for dismissal.

TS: Yeah. But he was another officer, right?

NU: Yes.

TS: So that was okay?

NU: Yes.

TS: What was his rank at that time?

NU: First lieutenant.

TS: Oh, okay, so you guys were very—pretty close in—in—

NU: Pretty close.

TS: You outranked him in a little, didn't you?

NU: No, he did.

TS: Oh, okay. Oh, you were a second lieutenant.

NU: I was, what they called, a "butter bar."

TS: The second.

NU: Yeah. [both chuckle]

TS: Okay. Now, what did you—Did you serve the whole time; your whole two—your two years, before you got out?

NU: Yes.

TS: Did you get married while you were in the service or after?

NU: We got married in 1975.

TS: Oh, okay, so after you got out.

NU: Yes.

TS: Okay. But you knew that you were on that, kind of—

NU: I knew we were on that path.

TS: Yeah. Well, that's neat. Well, what do you think about—You said your son is in the—air force? Is that right?

NU: Yes, he is.

TS: If you'd—So obviously he followed the footsteps of his father and you, really.

NU: Well, actually, he went to Penn State—

TS: Yeah.

NU: —and he, at first, did not want to even hear of ROTC, and I said, “You will go and you will see what they have to offer,” and after his first year he did sign up; enjoyed the heck out of it because he met a really good group of people that all had the same goals and—and moral standards. And so, he graduated from Air Force ROTC at Penn State.

TS: Neat.

NU: My Alma Mater.

TS: So he—he did follow in your footsteps for sure.

NU: He did. He didn't go army; he didn't. [chuckles]

TS: But he went the air force.

NU: Went air force, like Daddy.

TS: Now, if you'd had a daughter, would you have—and she wanted to go in the service, would you have recommended the service for her?

NU: I most certainly would. I really wish that more girls knew of the opportunity.

TS: What kind of values do you think that you get from the military?

NU: Values.

TS: Or benefits or whatever it is that you think—reasons why they should experience it.

NU: Confidence in yourself. You just grow up so much more strong and secure, and you see the possibilities in the world, what you can be. As they said when I was growing up—all they said you could be was a—a secretary, a teacher, or a nurse, and if I had my druthers, I would have rather been an archaeologist. [both chuckle] So I think that—the sense of

adventure is what I signed up for the army to—No, I—I don't really want to go home and—back home and teach, I want a little bit of adventure, and that was—I didn't get it all, but once I married my husband we traveled and—

TS: Did he retire from the service?

NU: Yes, thirty-two years.

TS: Oh, okay, yeah, so you did get—you followed—probably were stationed a lot of different places.

NU: No, we weren't.

TS: No?

NU: But we went a lot of places.

TS: Well, nice.

NU: Yes, it was very nice.

TS: So that sense of adventure—

NU: But girls just don't see the possibility of further education; the adventure, meeting new and different people. And I think there's a lot to be said for the structure you learn when you're in the service; getting things done in a timely manner, getting them done to a certain level of acceptability. I don't think we have that too much anymore in schools.

TS: When you said that about confidence—gaining confidence—

NU: Yes.

TS: —do you think that the type of jobs or tasks that you were assigned to do pushed your comfort zone and made you do things that you didn't necessarily think you were ready to do, but then they're like, "You need to do this," and—

NU: Yes.

TS: —and is that how the confidence was built or—Can—Do you want to describe it in any other way?

NU: No, that's a good way to put it. I learned to stretch. I learned that there are different ways of doing things and if you try all the possibilities you're going to end up with a good—good result. You learn to broaden your outlook, many different viewpoints, and that that's good coming from the—the, kind of, narrow tunnel I grew up in, where everybody thought the same kind of—we were all just plain, white bread people back in Lansford. [both chuckle]

TS: Well, you had a certain worldview that was limited to that area and the culture that you were in, right? So going into the army broadened that worldview.

NU: Going into Penn State broadened it a little more, and then going into the service it was—it was a very nice experience, and I—I just wish more girls would realize that. I'm very happy to see now that they have the junior ROTC in high school.

TS: Right.

NU: That is great. And my American Legion post has now adopted the [U.S.] Navy Junior ROTC program at New Bern [North Carolina] and we're very happy.

TS: Nice.

NU: They have females in that and I'm very glad to see that.

TS: Well, today, do you think there's anything—Because they've expanded the type of roles that women can play in the military, do you think there's anything that they should not be able to do.

NU: No.

TS: So the idea of being in the infantry seems to—

NU: That would be fine.

TS: It would be fine?

NU: Yes. I wish I could have done it.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Yeah.

TS: Because a lot of people don't think that's acceptable, I guess; accept the role.

NU: Look at Israel. They're all—They all have mandatory military service, males and females. I—I don't see why it couldn't be. I think we were stronger with the draft. Now we have volunteer service. I think the draft was fine; a necessary evil almost, to keep our country strong. And yes, I think females, if they're willing to do it, if they'd like to experience or try it, I think it should be open to them.

TS: And then also, the other controversial topic, I suppose, is this idea—like, they opened up—Well, they had the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell,” that was put in for gays in the—in the military in the nineties, and then they repealed that, so now homosexuals and lesbians can be open about their service. Is that—What do you think about that?

NU: That's fine as long as anybody does their job. As long as anyone can do their job and do it adequately, I'm—I'm all for it.

TS: What about the idea of—what—you—when you were in, in the seventies, the number of women in the army was less than one percent of the total force.

NU: Was it really?

TS: Yes.

NU: I didn't know that number.

TS: Yeah, it was between one and two percent.

NU: Really.

TS: Did you ever consider yourself, then, a pioneer, or in retrospect, as, like, a pioneer?

NU: No.

TS: No?

NU: I never thought I was forging ahead or anything, I was just glad for the opportunity.

TS: Yeah?

NU: As I said, I wish it would be brought for—forward to more young women; “This is open to you.”

TS: Right.

NU: You don’t just have to be a nurse or a doctor—I mean, a nurse or a—an educator.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Now you can be a doctor.

NU: Now—Now you can be a doctor. You can be an archaeologist if you want to, and that’s one thing I pointed out to my second grade; you can be anything you want to be.

TS: Well, now, at the time you were in—and I remember you—I appreciate your memory issues that you have, but was there anybody that you respected, like—so as a president—really [Lyndon Baines] Johnson would have been the president when you were in—[Richard Milhous] Nixon, actually; Nixon, right; ’70? Did you have any thoughts about who was president or who was the Secretary of Defense, or those kind of things ever cross your mind?

NU: [Secretary of Defense Robert Strange] McNamara?

TS: McNamara, right.

NU: I was very happy for the strength and conviction of Kennedy during the missile crisis. I know I wasn’t born yet, but I do love my history and I really admire FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt].

TS: Why do you admire him?

NU: Getting us through World War II. I think every student in an American high school should watch the movie *The Longest Day*, to appreciate what we have. Our students today don't know the history and how lucky they are to have what they have. But that is one of my favorite movies, *The Longest Day*. You sit there and you just are in awe of that generation. To be able to stand up and fight like that, and give all themselves so we have what we have. And so, needless to say, I am not too happy with today's state of affairs.

TS: In—In what way?

NU: Oh, I just think everything is given to people; too much of a socialism today. Nobody has to go out and work hard for anything anymore. I know my daddy worked awfully hard to put food on the table for nine of us. I do remember my mother at one point saying about welfare—and you asked about the range of my sisters.

TS: Right.

NU: I have one sister right now that is eighty-two and one that's eighty-five, and I'm sixty-three.

TS: Yes.

NU: I remember my mother saying about welfare, that at one point she was so desperate—Daddy was out of work from the mines and she had three kids left at home to feed—she went to apply for welfare, and they said to her, “No, you have a daughter that has a job and is married and she can give you money. You can't have it.”

She went home and she said, “I will never ever beg again.” And that's the kind of honest sadness that I grew up with. I don't ask for anything. I now get Social Security but I worked awfully hard to get that, and too many people today are getting everything free that they never ever worked hard to get. End of—End of ser—End of sermon.

TS: Oh, [chuckles] that's okay. So when you—when you left the service, you hadn't—hadn't gotten married yet but you're going to get married, right?

NU: Yes.

TS: Did you—How was your adjustment to civilian life, although you kind of went back into military life with your husband, right?

NU: Not really, no. I wouldn't say that, no. I—I guess a week after I got out of the service a head hunter called me and said that they needed somebody at Ethicon [Inc.] in New Jersey. It was a suture winding plant for Johnson and Johnson, and I was there until '75, until the bottom fell out of everything, and I was one of the last to be let go, as a manager.

TS: Oh, okay.

NU: I was a production manager for Johnson and Johnson. Then the same head hunter called me up and said, "I have something at McDonald's for you." I was in corporate; I was on the fast track to be on corporate management. I was managing one of their corporate offices—or corporate restaurants in Philadelphia, and that's when I got bitten by a mosquito—

TS: Oh, okay.

NU: —and got the encephalitis.

TS: I see, okay.

NU: And we—My husband and I had just gotten engaged—just gotten engaged—and here I was a blithering idiot. I couldn't sign my name and I couldn't remember my sisters' names, so he stuck with me.

TS: Through that; through your recovery?

[Speaking Simultaneously]

NU: Through everything, yeah.

TS: Oh, okay. Well, what does patriotism mean to you?

NU: It means my family. I mean, we were so military oriented, and I really appreciate my uncle John going into World War II; my uncle Sam was in World War II; my uncle Jim was in the navy during World War II. What does patriotism mean? My country, my family, serving all those years, keeping it for me; otherwise, heavens knows where we'd be.

TS: Do you think there's any misperception that some people might have about military—

NU: Oh, I'm sure. Oh, absolutely.

TS: What do you think those misperceptions might be?

NU: I think a lot of it is what we see on TV. It's the—the war, the destruction, the—the advertisements for Wounded Warriors. They don't know how much more there is to military than just the—the combat fighting. There's the logistics, there's the intelligence, there's the computers that they use, there's the—Oh, my goodness—the medical staff. There's so much more out there but all we get bombarded with is stories of our—

TS: The destructive side?

NU: Destructive side, yeah. There's so much more that is an opportunity out there that is non-combative.

TS: The type of jobs that people can do, you mean?

NU: Yes.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Yes.

TS: The wide variety? The support services and—

NU: Absolutely, absolutely, and that's all very—very much needed.

TS: Yeah. Would you do it again?

NU: Oh, in a heartbeat; [chuckles] in a heartbeat, and I'd stay longer too; I'd stay longer.

TS: You would?

NU: I would.

TS: Yeah.

NU: Yes.

TS: Why would you stay longer?

NU: I would have liked to have served more.

TS: Yeah?

NU: Served more time.

TS: Done a little more traveling?

NU: Done a little more traveling.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Of course, you did what you wanted to, right, later, but—

NU: Yeah, yeah. I mean, it was a wonderful, happy circumstance meeting my husband as I did at—

TS: Right.

NU: —at that age.

TS: Yeah.

NU: Twenty-four. Back then, twenty-four, twenty-five is about when you got married.

TS: Right.

NU: Now it's a little bit later, and everybody's having children later, but back at—in my day [chuckles]—

TS: Right.

NU: —that was about the right timing phase. But I really, really think I could have done well—

TS: It sounds like you really enjoyed it.

NU: —had I—I did; I did.

TS: Well, there's—I don't have any other formal questions. Is there anything you'd like to add that I maybe haven't asked you about?

NU: No, that's it. As I said, I—I really had a—a very uneventful two years. I did my Courts and Boards. I found some people that had two Social Security Net—Social Security Numbers and they were in the army, so it was a little bit of detective work, and I do like mysteries.

TS: Oh, okay, so you enjoyed that type of job?

NU: I en—

TS: That—

NU: I enjoyed—Yeah, the—the—the detail work, I did enjoy that. I think I would have done well had I stayed in, and I'm glad our son is staying in.

TS: Well, very good.

NU: Yes, and hopefully his little girl he just had will find a little place of her own in the military someday.

TS: [chuckles] Well, make sure when she's older she takes a look at this transcript, or listens to it.

NU: I hope so.

TS: Very good. Well, Nancy, thanks so much for letting into your home and talking about your experiences. I appreciate it.

NU: You're welcome, Therese.

[End of Interview]