

## WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT

### ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Carol Louise Pollack

INTERVIEWER: Therese Strohmer

DATE: April 18, 2014

[Begin Interview]

TS: Today is April 18, 2014. My name is Therese Strohmer. I'm at the home of Carol Pollack in West Jefferson, North Carolina on a beautiful day—could be sunnier—to conduct an oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina of Greensboro. Carol, could you please state your name the way that you'd like it to read on your collection?

CP: Carol Louise Pollack.

TS: Okay. Well, Carol why don't we start off by having you tell me when and where you were born?

CP: I was born October 10, 1939, in a place called Mankato, Minnesota, which is not very far from Le Sueur, Minnesota, home of Green Giant peas and corn and, yes, there is a Jolly Green Giant who does live in the valley. The elves I've never seen. When I was about six years old my family decided that another winter spent in Minnesota was just not going to happen so we moved to Texas. We moved to Houston, stayed there for about six months, maybe a little longer, and then my parents bought twenty acres outside of a little town called Winnie, which was fifteen miles from the Gulf of Mexico, somewhere between Houston and Beaumont, Texas, and it was flat and it was miserable and it had bugs and it was just yuck, but that's where I grew up. It had some good points and some bad points, but—

TS: Did you have any siblings?

CP: I was the youngest. I had a sister thirteen years older, a brother twelve years older, a brother ten years older, and then me, and so everyone always wonders, "Well, why is there this big gap between you and your brother?"

And I remember distinctly one time, I guess I was just starting puberty and getting a little mouthy, and I said to my mother one time, "You just never wanted me anyway."

Well, that was a mistake, because she says, "Then why did I go—have to go to bed for five months so you could be born?" Because I was born premature, a breach birth, and a blue baby, and I was a little-bitty thing, and I didn't have any eyebrows, I didn't have any fingernails, I didn't have toenails, I wa—just kind of pathetic.

[Blue Baby Syndrome is a term used to describe newborns with cyanotic conditions]

TS: [chuckles]

CP: But there's more to that story but we won't go into that. But she said that she had had about sixteen to eighteen miscarriages from the time that my—next youngest brother and me. And so, what happened was she knew that she didn't carry babies very well, and maybe two or three months along and she would always abort them, and when I was still there on the fourth month, or somewhere around there and I was still there, she thought, "Well, maybe there's a chance."

And went to see the doctor and the doctor told her, "Yeah, but you can't do anything."

TS: Bed rest?

CP: So he let her wander around for another couple weeks and then told her she had to go to bed until I was born, and so that's what happened. So she reminded me of that, quite frankly, that, "Yes, I did want you, or I could have just thrown you out in the outhouse with all the others," so I keep thinking that there was a reason that I was born and I don't—just don't know what it is yet.

TS: There you go. Now, you said as a young girl it was—growing up in Texas, it was—you were out on a farm—where—

CP: Well, we didn't have a farm, we just had twenty acres of land.

TS: Okay.

CP: My dad was a carpenter, my mother was a stay-at-home mom.

TS: Okay.

CP: And she had a garden and she raised chickens, and then she got the bright idea that she wanted to be a nurse and, of course, they wouldn't accept her if she was over fifty so when she was forty-nine she decided to be an LPN; Licensed Practical Nurse. And so, she went to college which left me at home to take care of my dad, and because she was twenty-six miles away and she was going to school and she had to rent a hou—rent a room.

TS: Oh, she stayed there.

CP: And she stayed there, yeah, because we only had one vehicle. Well, that was when I decided I was not going to be a housewife, because I did not particularly like having to cook meals by myself.

TS: How old were you when your mom went to be the LPN?

CP: Sixteen.

TS: Okay.

CP: But it was just I—the entire thing was—I used to help her out a little bit but it never was my full responsibility, and washing clothes with a washing machine you had to fill manually with hot water, and you have the rinse tubs you have to fill, and then you have to go put the clothes on the line, and then you have to iron them. And my dad just loved to wear khakis, and if you have never ironed khakis you just have no idea what ironing is, because you have to starch them and then you have to iron them—and they're wet when you iron them—and you think that you got them ironed but by the time you get to the next leg the first one is all wrinkled again because it really wasn't dry and you thought it was, and so I just hated it. And my mom was one of these little housewives that thinks that you also iron the handkerchiefs, so.

TS: So you had to.

CP: And I just really didn't like that, so I decided I was going to go and become educated.

TS: Well, before you become educated tell me about what kind of schooling you had. I mean, like, elementary school and things like that.

CP: Well, we had an elementary school and a middle school; what we called junior high and then high school.

TS: Okay.

CP: Yeah.

TS: Did you like school?

CP: In a way. I—I loved reading. We—I grew up at a time when we really didn't have TV until I was maybe about fourteen, fifteen years old. We got our first TV. And there was nothing out there. I would get on—I'd walk down to catch the bus and walk through a big cow pasture. And then when they were having their calves and things and the neighbors who own the cows would send the two boys down on horses and they would never let me

ride the horse. They would never put me on the horse, they made me walk, but I—they were there to protect me from the mama cows who were very protective of their babies and they would have stomped me into hamburger, so I—that's how I would go down and catch the school bus. Then they would meet me at—in the evening and walk me home, and so I—I really couldn't participate in very many extra-curricular activities—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Because of the distance?

CP: —having only one vehicle.

TS: Oh, okay.

CP: And we were too far from the school for me to walk, and I didn't have any real close neighbors that went to school, so it wasn't like they could pick me up and take me anywhere.

TS: Right.

CP: So I read a lot.

TS: Okay.

CP: I think the greatest achievement of my entire life was learning to read, and I read everything, and my mom, even though we didn't have much money, believed in education, and I think she liked to read because she found the money somehow to buy *World Book Encyclopedias*. And so, I would sit there and start at A, and I read all the way through Z of the *World Book Encyclopedias*, which made me a very obnoxious child.

TS: Why is that?

CP: Because I know a little bit about everything and not a whole lot about anything. And my mom had finally gotten all us kids together for Christmas one year, and they loved oyster stew, and I wouldn't eat oyster stew, because we were right on the Gulf of Mexico and mom would go get five or six big bags of oysters and then shuck them and she would make oyster stew, and everybody was eating them and I wouldn't eat them; I'd have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. And finally my sister got really ticked off at me—the one who's thirteen years older—and said, "Why won't you eat the oyster stew?"

And I said, "Because I don't like oysters and I don't like all the stuff inside of them."

She says, "There's nothing inside of them, it's just meat."

I said, "There is a liver, there is a stomach, there is a spleen," and I went on explaining to her what was inside this oyster, and I said I'm not going to sit there and chew up all this—all these guts and stuff inside that chunk of slimy—

And of course, she got very upset with me and I—and she said, "Oh, you're lying." And I went off and I got my *World Book Encyclopedia* and came back with oysters and there was the diagram of the oyster with all the stuff in it, and she just got really upset with me and she says, "Nobody cares about the anatomy of an oyster." And so that became the family joke.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: Whenever I would start expounding and saying, "but," and I, "but," because I knew, and I wouldn't argue unless I was absolutely positively sure I was right, because I could back it up, and if I—the minute that I would say, "but", and then she'd say, "No one cares about the anatomy of an oyster." It didn't make any difference what the subject was, that meant shut up, so.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: But I did—I really enjoyed that and—but I really, like I said, did not get to participate in very many extra-curricular activities. If the school was sponsoring something and they really wanted me they would come after me and—and I did find out that I did have a talent, and it was extemporaneous speaking, and so they—

TS: Did you enter some contests for that?

CP: Yes, and I won the school contest and then I won the county contest and I got to go to state and I came in second in extemporaneous speaking. And what they would do is, they would take things like *Time Magazine* and *Newsweek* and everything like that—current things—and then they would put you in a room and they'd give you these magazines for an hour and a half or so, and you had no idea what the question was going to be. It was kind of like Miss America, where they plop—suddenly throw something at you and you had so many minutes to speak on the subject, and I came in second for state so I thought, "Oh, well this is—this is really great." So I've never had a fear of public speaking. I mean, I was in my glory. Then again, I think going back to this, "Well, if I know it—"

TS: [chuckles]

CP: "—I'm not afraid to mention it."

TS: Right. There you go.

CP: And if I don't know it, I just—I'm not going to talk about it, so.

TS: Yeah.

CP: Yeah.

TS: Well, do you remember anything—So you were a very young girl during World War II. Do you remember anything from that war?

CP: Yes, I was jilted by a sailor.

TS: Jilted?

CP: Yes. My brother was—My oldest brother, Lloyd, had joined the navy and his buddy had joined the navy, and they came home on leave and they were in their little sailor uniforms. I have a picture of me with both of them, and I was in a little sailor outfit. And when they were ready to go back we went down to the Green Mill Bar, which was the local bar there, and—

TS: So were you like four or five years old, or something like that?

CP: Yeah, I was about five.

TS: Okay.

CP: It was right before we came to Texas. And I remember sitting up on the bar and the—a popular song at that time was "Now is the Hour" and I—it's a very short song and I was—I—I learned it real quick, and so I was singing it, and he was singing it, and he said, "I will come back and marry you some day."  
And I said, "Okay." I mean, at five, I mean, this seemed like a good idea.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: Well, I not only never saw him again, I obviously did not marry him, so I said jilted by a sailor at the age of five was a pretty traumatic experience.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: So, yeah.

TS: Yeah.

CP: That's one of the big highlights of—of everything, and so yeah, I remember everybody talking about the war, and my other brother joined the Merchant Marines, and my mom actually, the first time that she had gone to Texas before we moved there, worked in a airplane manufacturing plant—

TS: Okay.

CP: —in Fort Worth, Texas, but we didn't go to Fort Worth, we went on all the way down to Houston.

TS: Houston, right.

CP: [unclear]

TS: Why'd she pick Texas to—

CP: It was pretty [far] south.

TS: Okay.

CP: I mean—

TS: Get as—Get away from Minnesota.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: When you look at Minnesota and you go south there's Texas; there—there's just no—no two ways about it.

TS: There you go.

CP: Yeah.

TS: So it—Did—Was your father in the service at all?

CP: No.

TS: So your two brothers, one Merchant Marine, and navy, okay.

CP: Yes.

TS: All right, so then as you—did you have any thoughts about [U.S.] President [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt or [First Lady of the U.S. Anna] Eleanor Roosevelt or the—

CP: I thought they were nice people.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And I remember listening on the radio, and the—

TS: *Fireside chats.*

CP: —different things, the *fireside chats*, and—and we always kept up on the news and what was happening, and so—yeah, yeah. To me it was pretty impressive, and then my sister had married a guy who was in the army.

[The fireside chats were a series of radio addresses given by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt between 1934 and 1944.]

TS: Okay.

CP: And so, we kept track of him, making sure he was okay, and—so, yeah.

TS: Everybody made it home safe?

CP: Everybody made it home safe.

TS: Okay.

CP: Yeah. Now my dad, although he didn't go in the—in the army or anything, he had seven brothers and six of them served, but because he was the oldest boy in the—and lived on a farm and the parents had died, that made him head of the household and they didn't have him—they allowed him to stay at home.

TS: So he wasn't drafted.

CP: So he was not drafted, yeah.

TS: I see.

CP: [unclear]

TS: He had an exemption.

CP: Yeah.

TS: I see.

CP: Which kind of upset him because everybody else got to be a hero and he didn't, so.

TS: Yeah.



CP: He's our hero.

TS: Now, you—Okay, so you're back at—We're back sixteen years old and you're taking care of your dad, being the housewife for him while your mom's off getting her LPN, and you—you had started to say you decided to get an education.

CP: Yeah. One of the things—a little insert here is—because I wanted to go to college, that put me in a different category because they had two—

TS: At school?

CP: —things—

TS: You mean at—in—

CP: —in the high school

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: —in high school? Yes.

CP: If you weren't going to college you took the—the shop and homemaking and you took all of—so how to sew and how to cook and all that kind of stuff—

TS: Yes.

CP: —and if you wanted to [go to] college then you had to take the algebra, and the—all the other things to get you into college. So I decided I wanted to go to college so I wasn't taking the girlie stuff, I was taking the guy stuff. The guy stuff—who happened to be my bus driver; he was also the football coach; he was also the math teacher. He made my life hell because I was the only girl in the class.

TS: Which class was that?

CP: Algebra.

TS: Okay.

CP: And he would sit there and he would say, "Anybody want to hear a good story?"

"Yeah!"

"Oh, I forgot, I can't. We have a girl here."

Well—So all the boys hated my guts because they wouldn't get to hear the good stories because this girl was here. Then he would send me up to the [chalk]board, and do

his—a program, that we hadn't—we hadn't discussed yet; none of us had learned it. And he would put these numbers up on the board. "Now, solve it." Well, of course, I had no idea even how to do it, and then he would just say, "What? You can't do it? Aren't girls stupid." And then he would go up and, "Well, it's very simple. All you had to do was—," and then he would work out the pro—problem and everything, and I'd be sitting there with the tears streaming down my face and everything; about how stupid I was because I couldn't do math.

Well, he set me up for failure every single time, and I guess somebody found out about this because I got sent over to a—an old lady who—teacher—who was also teaching math named Miss Geelan[?] who had to have been a hundred and twenty, and she had a crutch, and she had a couple boys—a bunch of boys in her class, too, and they were always trying to make fun of her and hide her crutch and she'd just walk up and whack them across the head with the crutch. And so, then they stole a crutch. It was—It was all kinds of fun and games there, but I still, for years and years and years and years and years, had this fear of math.

TS: Right, a phobia probably.

CP: Oh, complete—I just can't do it; I just can't do it.

TS: Yes.

CP: You know what? Now I think it's pretty fascinating. I said, "Gee, I could have learned that." Now, of course, when I went to college and graduate school I just went, "I still have to take math." And I got through it so I guess I was okay. It was just that fear.

But because I didn't take the—the home economics and all that stuff, it was still mandatory for all the girls to take the Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow test. Okay, that was mandatory, so I had to take the test. Guess who won? And to this day, I have my Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow pin, which is a she—sheaf of wheat with a little pendant, which is a heart, with a—and in the heart there is a little house and on the back it says "Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow."

Well, the other girls were just furious because they had taken two years of home economics and they didn't win anything, and how could I win something when I hadn't taken any of that and learned how to bake bananas and all the other stuff they were learning. I said, "I was doing it; I was cooking; I was ironing; I was washing clothes; I know how long hamburger will last in a refrigerator," I—nine ways to make something.

[Starting in 1955, high school seniors across American elected to take a 50-minute exam as part of "The Betty Crocker Search for the All-American Homemaker of Tomorrow" scholarship program]

TS: [chuckles] You were doing it—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: I was doing it, yeah.

TS: —not just studying it, right.

CP: Yeah.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And so I—I just breezed right through that.

TS: Yeah.

CP: That was pretty interesting, so yeah.

TS: When—When did you graduate from high school?

CP: Nineteen fifty-eight.

TS: Nineteen fifty-eight. Now, did you ever have any—You say you didn't do many extra-curriculars, but did you go to any of the sock hops or anything like that?

CP: I went to the prom by myself.

TS: Okay.

CP: And I—Mom sometimes cleaned house for one of the rich ladies in town and—who had a friend who had a daughter that was two years ahead of me in school so we weren't so—socially at all connected, and I got her leftover clothes, which was fine with me; I could never have afforded those clothes. And I got this prom dress to wear and mom was insisting I was going to that prom one way or another and I was insisting I wasn't; "Yes, you are."

My mom bought me a corsage for a wrist—my wrist corsage. Well, I was humiliated, but she took me there and dumped me off, made me go, and it was only later that somebody said, "Well, I would have taken you." Another guy, "Well, I would have taken you." In some ways I think they were a little bit afraid of me. I'm not sure why, but it was just like, "Well, I didn't know nobody was going to take you; I would have taken you," So, yeah, no—no social life at all.

TS: Well, did you listen to any music or—

CP: Just what was on the radio.

TS: Yeah? Do you remember what kind of music was playing then?

CP: Well, not a whole bunch. It was nice music, I remember that, but—

TS: Do you have, like, big—big band or anything?

CP: We had a little big band and had things like Perry Como and that group.

TS: Yes.

CP: And it was only when I got to college that I became very much aware—

TS: Okay.

CP: —because you have college roommates and their little radios are going full blast and they all have stereos and—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —the good old 45's [vinyl recordings] and they've got—they're listening to Elvis Presley and all this good stuff so, yeah, yeah.

TS: Well, when you decided that you were going to go to college did you have an idea of what it was you wanted to study?

CP: Oh, that was interesting. Of course I didn't.

TS: [chuckles] You did not?

CP: And again, you take another test; they have all these tests that you get to take. I don't know if you still get to take them or not, but one of them was this—figure out what it is that you would be good at, and I got—I mean, it was about eight or ten pages, and I was filling it all out; "Would you rather this or would you rather that, and if you had your choice, would you do this, would you do that," type thing. And I got through and I walked in for the results and the counselor looked at me and he says, "Well," he says, "we've narrowed it down to two things."  
I said, "What?"  
He said, "You're either going to be a forest ranger or a traffic cop."  
[chuckles] I said, "What?"  
And he says, "Well, according to these results, you like to be outside and you like to direct others."  
I just, "Okay," so. But I—I like to doodle, and I like to draw and stuff, so I decided I'd take art, and then I also thought, "Well—" I—I figured you really didn't make

any money doing that, that was more of a hobby, and I then got a degree in secondary education, so I had two majors.

TS: Art and Secondary Education?

CP: Yeah.

TS: Where'd you go to college at?

CP: Lamar State College of Technology, Beaumont, Texas, which is now Lamar University.

TS: Okay. And when—When did you enter that college?

CP: [Nineteen] fifty-nine.

TS: Fifty-nine? And when did you graduate?

CP: Six—Well, I went straight from there to the [United States] Marine Corps, so.

TS: Did—But did you graduate?

CP: Yeah.

TS: So sixty—

CP: Sixty—

TS: Sixty-four?

CP: Sixty-three or sixty-four.

TS: Okay, sixty-three. And so—

CP: Fifty-eight, '59, '60, '61, '62, '63—Yeah, because I had a double major and I ha—it took me—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: So five.

CP: —a little longer, yeah.

TS: So a couple things are happening, then, in that period. You have [U.S.] President [Robert Fitzgerald] Kennedy was—[Dwight David "Ike"] Eisenhower to President Kennedy. Did you have any thoughts on either of those two presidents?

CP: Well, actually I was out in MCRD [Marine Corps Recruiting Depot] San Diego when JFK was president, and so then—yeah, I thought it was—I thought he was great when I was out there, and had his picture on a—you always have your Commander in Chief's picture up somewhere in your office so we had his—the picture up there and everything, and, yeah.

TS: What'd you think—Do you remember hearing about his assassination?

CP: Oh, yes, yes. That was really a shock.

TS: Where were you at?

CP: I remember being in my office and somebody came in and said, "Let's find a TV. Let's find some place that has a TV." And we went—And, of course, it took a little while for it to get out that he wa—that he had been killed, so.

TS: Yeah.

CP: That came as a big shock.

TS: Right. Now, did you're—You're talking in the 60's, too, about [the] Cuban Missile Crisis. Did you ever have any worries about nuclear war and things like that?

CP: Not really. I remember when I was in—it's—it's [sic] kind of all runs together—

TS: [chuckles]

CP: —because it's been so long ago.

TS: Right.

CP: I'll be seventy-five in October, and I said I have periods of my life that are just as clear as can be, and then I have these soupy areas because I guess not a whole bunch happened and it just all inter—intermingles. Then I have others where it's very, very vivid and yeah, okay. I guess these little milestones that stick with you a whole lot more than others.

TS: That could be.

CP: And I've—And when someone will say, "Well, where were you on—"

"Well, I don't know. I—I think I was—" Then later I said, "Well, no, I couldn't have been. It had to have been—"

TS: Yeah.

CP: "—this other time I was probably there."

TS: Right.

CP: But somebody will jog my memory or something and I say, "Oh, yeah, I remember now, yeah, where—where I was," so.

TS: So you didn't—Did you do any duck and cover in school or anything like that?

CP: Yes, I remember having to crawl under the desk.

TS: Yes.

CP: And then when—While I was in the service I went to Mc—Fort McClellan, Alabama to Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Warfare School [U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School], where I learned that that's not going to really help you very much, and even now when someone says, "Well, if we're going to get bombed by Al-Qaeda, or something like that, and there's going to be nuclear bombs dropped and all that, and you put the duct tape around the windows and all—you—"

Come on. You know that is not going to help you one little bit. It'll give you something to do—maybe take your mind off the fact that you're probably going to die—but it's not going to do a darned thing."

In fact, I said, "If you have any sense at all, you hope that you get blown up, because," I said, "I can't think of anything worse than dying of radiation poisoning."

TS: Yes.

CP: I said, "Little—," I said, "You die in pieces," So I said, "I would just as soon say, 'boom'—okay, that's it."

TS: You're gone.

CP: Yeah. I said, "I don't want to prolong it," and when I see on TV these preppers; the ones that are getting ready for the big invasion and all the stuff they're going to do, and how they're hoarding the food and they're doing this, that, and the other, and they are so dumb. They are just—I just feel so sorry for them all; they're just wasting money. They're just pro—prolonging the inevitable. And now I notice on TV it's all these people that are—have survived and how they're surviving even more. Well, that's so unrealistic. It's just—

TS: Right.

CP: —unbelievable.

TS: Well, did you have—Let me go back to when you were in college—

CP: Okay.

TS: —and you are—you're going through that. Was that a good experience for you; college?

CP: It was pretty interesting. I still didn't get to socialize very much—

TS: No?

CP: —because I had to help pay my way in. And so, I had two jobs; I worked in the cafeteria, and I also—which was very ironical—I had to—I got a job cleaning up after the home economic majors, and they would go in and dirty every pot and pan in the whole world making their magnificent concoctions, and I had to go and clean all up behind them and wash all their pots and pans and all that kind of stuff, and it just—Trying to get away from something like that—

TS: [chuckles]

CP: —and that was how I would put myself through college.

TS: Yeah.

CP: Yeah.

TS: Well, when did you start thinking about the services?

CP: Well, I—One, I didn't—I admired my teachers and I think that's why I thought secondary education would be a good thing for me, and I enjoyed getting up in front of people and talking, and I thought, "I know how important it was for me to learn," and I wanted to share that with other people, and so I thought education is really good.  
So the very last course that I had was at Davy Crockett Junior High School [Beaumont, Texas] where I did my student teaching, which was a kind of a reform school, in that the kids that got thrown out of the regular schools because they were too disruptive, they said, "Well, let's just put them all in one school," And so, these were not the cream of the crop type kids to begin with, and believe it or not, I was also teaching remedial reading there and art. Now, trying to teach remedial reading—

TS: Now, was this as a—I'm sorry, Carol—Was this as a student teaching?

CP: As a student teaching.



TS: Okay, okay.

CP: Yes, as a student teacher I—I was teaching remedial reading and art to these little juvenile delinquents, which is probably not the best things they wanted to do any—anyway, but I really did a pretty good job, I thought. They gave me a present when I left, and a—a real pretty crystal necklace and earrings and how much they liked me and everything, and so I felt good about that. But the thing that, I guess, the nail in the coffin was my student instructor came out, the one who was the normal teacher, and she says, "Come out in the hall, I want you to mop up some blood before the bell rings."

And I walked out and the—two or three of the kids in shop had gotten into a fight and one pulled a knife on the other one and sliced him open, and he's leaning against the wall holding his insides together while we're waiting for the ambulance to come. And I am—there's a stream—little strip of blood coming from the shop all the way up to the door, where they're going to bring the ambulance, and I'm there with a mop and some—and a bucket trying to clean up all the blood, so I thought, "Is this something I really want to do?"

That afternoon I went back to the student union at the college and I saw this poster, and it was a poster of a woman Marine officer and it said "You too could be a Marine officer" and she looked so pretty and she looked so nice in that uniform and she was smiling.

And I thought, "What are you smiling about, lady?" Well, there were postcards there so I took a postcard and filled it out. Next thing I know recruiter had contacted me, and I went and talked to the recruiter, and you got to go to [Marine Corps Base] Quantico, Virginia, and I was in Beaumont, Texas, and I had no plans for the summer anyway, and I thought, "Well, at least I'll get a free trip and maybe go see Washington, D.C. or something."

TS: Was this a summer of your—before your senior year, then, maybe?

CP: Oh, no, no, I was—

TS: You're—You had graduated?

CP: I was taking my—Yeah, it's my very last class.

TS: Okay, so you were—it was the summer—

CP: My student teaching was my very last class.

TS: I got it, okay, so you—you were going to be graduating.

CP: So the minute that I finished student teaching I would get my diploma.

TS: Gotcha, okay.

CP: So I thought, "Okay, so I can—I could do that. I should be graduated by then." And so, I signed up, they told me to report, and I did, and they sent me by airplane to someplace, when then some other people picked me up and took me to Quantico and I went through my basi—my candidate school, and then once I com—committed myself to the Marine Corps as an officer, then they sent me to basics school to finish out my officer training, and that's how I became a Marine officer.

TS: Now, you had said something about when they sent you first to Quantico you got to take—before you committed they took you on a tour of Washington, D.C.

CP: Yes.

TS: That's what you told me before—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Yes

TS: —we started the tape.

CP: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

TS: You want to tell that?

CP: Well, sure, that was when I—when we were in candidate school, right before we had to make our decision as to whether or not we wanted to be a Marine or not, because once we signed on the dotted line and we said our oath of office we were—they owned us; we now became government property. So we thought, "Okay, all right, no problem."

Well, they took us up to Washington, D.C. First thing was the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which, of course, if anyone has ever seen it, is very moving, and you get a lump in your throat. Now, we've been through all this Marine Corps history jazz during candidate school, so suddenly here we see the Marine Memorial which is this greater than life-size picture of the raising of the flag on Mt. Suribachi in Iwo Jima, and that brings a tear to your eye, and it was getting—getting dark and the sun was beginning to set. They whipped us over to "8th & I," which is a Marine barracks in Washington, D.C., and they had what they called a sunset parade, and it is absolutely the most awe-inspiring thing you ever saw in your life. And it was just gorgeous and they have the Silent Drill Team [Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon] and you got thirty people in perfect unison, throwing their guns in the air and clap, clap, slap, slap, and all that good stuff, and they were dropping it. And it was so amazing, and we got through there and they took us to a reception. At the reception while all this is still fresh in our mind, now here was our piece of paper—Do you want to sign up?—and, of course, we all signed up and

said, "Yes, we all want to be Marine officers." And then you wake up the next morning and you—"What have I done?" But I didn't regret it.

TS: Well, by then you had probably thought a lot about becoming a Marine.

CP: Oh, yeah.

TS: Right?

CP: Sure.

TS: And so, what did your family think about your decision?

CP: Well, they were all for me doing whatever I wanted to do that I thought I could be a success at.

TS: Yeah. Was there anybody surprised?

CP: Everybody.

TS: Everybody was surprised but they still supported you, is that what you mean?

CP: Yeah.

TS: Yeah.

CP: Because I really had never talked about wanting to travel, never wanting to leave or anything like that. I never sat around—"I can't wait to get out of this godforsaken place," or—or anything. I was just sort of went—go with the flow, so.

TS: When did you think that you wanted to do something different?

CP: I knew I didn't want to stay in Beaumont, Texas, and I wasn't sure at this point if I really wanted a career in teaching.

TS: After that incident?

CP: Yeah.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And I thought, "Well, I haven't tried much in my life; I want to get out and find out what else there is out there."

TS: Did you want to have, kind of, an adventure, too, do you think?

CP: Yes, I thought it would be an adventure because I knew I wouldn't be stuck in one place very long, that they would move you around, and I thought, "Well, that's good."

TS: That was a big draw, you think?

CP: That was a big draw, that they—you weren't on the move constantly, but you were—you really can't get too bored if you're going to—if you know that within two or three years you're going somewhere else, and that's what's really nice about the military. When someone says, "Oh, I—it would just be horrible."

And I said, "It is not unbearable. It's not unbearable, for the simple reason is, if you work for some jerk, one of you is getting transferred. That jerk may leave and someone may really nice may come back." And I said, "You may have a crummy job and they move you and suddenly you got a really good job." So I said, "It—You just sit there and say, 'It's just a matter of time, it's just a matter of time. I can handle this; I can handle this,' " and you do. It's a—It's—Things will always change and that's what I really liked about it.

And one of the things I found out that I like most about the military, when someone says, "Oh, I would never be able to be in the military. That's just absolutely horrible."

I said, "I found horrible when I got out and I had to join the real world," and I said, "There is no rhyme or reason for anything on the outside world, and everybody marches to their own drum except they're all going in different directions and they have no idea who to follow; they don't know what the rules are." I said, "You cannot get into trouble when you're in the military unless you want to, because everything is set out in rules and regulations, yeah, but if you don't break them you can't get into trouble."

I said, "When I got out into the civilian world I found out because there were no rules, it was an arbitrary decision all the time. If here you came in and your boss had had a bad day and his wife had served him burnt toast for breakfast, and he comes in and he's in a bad mood and you say, 'Good morning, sir, how are you today?' 'It's none of your you-know-what business, and that is disrespectful to even ask—You're fired; you're gone.'" They have—do not have to give you a single reason why you are gone. You are gone.

And I said, "To me, that was the most ridiculous way to run a railroad." To be—And I said, "I would much rather have some control over my life by knowing when I was going to get in trouble and what the consequences were than to have someone arbitrarily decide." And so, that was a big eye-opening thing for me.

TS: What about—Did you look at any of the other services besides Marine Corps?

CP: Well, back—I had looked at the—the air force because I thought that was pretty—pretty neat. It was a new serv—it was new—it was newer than the other services and they seemed to have a lot of money and they got to fly crazy airplanes and I thought that would be fun, and blue's a nice color. Well, at the time that I was thinking about it, I had

never said I want to be an officer, I just wanted to join. Well, my eyes were too bad. Even though they were correctible 20/20 with glasses, no.

TS: For the—For the air force they were too bad—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —but not for the Marine Corps?

CP: Oh, yeah. But if you're an officer it didn't make a difference. It was only the enlisteds that that rule applied to, so the fact that I was willing to become an officer, oh, yeah, as long as it's correctable, that's okay.

TS: Was it the same for the air force at that time, too, or—

CP: Yeah, I think so because I found out later—"We—Oh, we wanted you; we wanted you so bad." They said I was way up in the five percentile and they had never had anyone—all this—they—I think they tell that to everybody, but if you were just so off the chart on all this stuff, and—"We had such high hopes for you, and we really wanted you and then w—you didn't pass the eye exam."

The reason I had kind of figured I hadn't was because they put you in this little smock like they always do and they put you up on the op—on the table—examining table—and they had taken the glasses off and put them somewhere, and he says, "Okay," he says, "look at the eye chart and tell me—read—read it."

And I remember looking around the room going, "Where?"

TS: "Where's the eye chart?"

CP: Yeah, because it was white walls with a white chart, and there were other things on the walls but I couldn't tell what in the heck they were. And he says, "Right there, it's right in front of you. That's the eye chart."

And I'm squinting and I said, "It is?" And you fail right then and there. And I put my glasses on, "Oh, yeah, E—E, T, F, G, S, T;" I just went right on down the line. S

He said, 'No, no, no. Sorry, no, we can't—"

TS: Right.

CP: But that was when I was going to enlist.

TS: Right.

CP: But as an officer candidate I would have—they would have waived that.

TS: Let you. Well, tell me a little bit about basic training. Did you do basic training first and then the officer training, or which did you do—

CP: Well, candidate training, yes, that's where you learn to march—

TS: Okay.

CP: —and all the other good stuff.

TS: How was that for you?

CP: And how to clean, how to make a bunk.

TS: You had that down because you had your little Betty Crocker award.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Homemaker of Tomorrow.

TS: Yes.

CP: No, I didn't know how to make a bunk.

TS: Okay.

CP: That's different, you have to use the hospital corners and all that good stuff. Have to be able to drop a quarter and have it bounce and all that bit, but—and I really wasn't fond of housework; I've never been fond of housework. There was anything I could do in my life as long as it did not involve housework, and so it just seemed like I just keep going from housework to housework to housework, but even in the service and, of course, we would have to go and clean the latrines—which we called the heads because we used navy terminology when you're in the Marine Corps—and with a toothbrush, and you get down on your hands and knees—every little crevice and every little thing—and they have white collar inspections and they go around really with—with white gloves, and they go around all the cornices and all the tops of the doors, and every little place that you just—no one in God's green earth would even look, they're going to look, and heaven—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Well, they know where the dust is at so that's [unclear]—

CP: Well, they know whether you don't want to clean.

TS: That's right; that's right.

CP: So, yeah, and then after you get your—knowing how to march and how to stand and how to stand for long periods of time, and when to salute and when not to salute, a little bit of mi—military history, physical education. The things that a lot of the boys went through except that the ladies were not expected to have the physical abilities that the men have, thank God. Women are not lumpy men, and this is what a lot of people keep thinking; "Well, they're just lumpy men."

No, we are not lumpy men. Men's entire physiology is completely different than that of a woman, and if you don't believe it, join the military where you've got male DIs [drill instructors] who keep thinking that all they have to do is just modify their approach to things and things are going to be just fine. One of them was the rifle range. We had to learn to shoot a pistol, we had to learn to—which is—I have some good stories on that. But the—But the rifle range, they would make you lie prone. Well, when you've got bumps in the front, it's kind of hard to be prone, and then you have to get all the way down and hold the rifle in front of you and you have to be able to sight all the way down the little thing. Of course, if you wear glasses that makes it even harder. And it just bugged the heck out of them that you were not flat enough on the ground, and they would insist that you be flat on the ground to the point where they—this one put his knee right between my shoulder blades and put all his weight on it to smoosh me into the ground so I would be low enough to meet his specifications on how I should be able to shoot. And with the sling around it, which was cutting in everywhere, it was miserable. So you're sitting there trying not to cry and the tears are rolling down your face and they're yelling at you, and they did not use the—the type of profanity that they used on the male recruits because this was a no-no, and besides that we were officer candidates and you had to be a little nicer to us, but they could make "ladies" sound like the dirtiest language you ever heard in your life.

"All right, you ladies."

"Oh no, we're in trouble now."

And what was really a shock was when we graduated from candidate school, and the very next Monday we show up for officer basic school. We are now commissioned officers; we have little gold bars on our epaulets. We are officers, they are enlisted, and now all of a sudden it was, "Ma'am, would you do this? Ma'am, respectfully, would you do that?" And we're still terrified of them, we're still going [makes noise], like this, and then suddenly it dawns on us that they are completely turned around and—and treating us with the utmost respect, and I kind of miss the old way; it was—But it—it was a—it was a learning curve.

TS: Now, did you have male trainers for both your candidate school and the basic?

CP: Yes.

TS: All—All men doing that?

CP: No, we had female plat—platoon—Well, we had captains and lieutenants that were already commissioned for candidate school.

TS: Okay.

CP: But we still had male DIs—

TS: I see.

CP: —to teach us the finer things of marching and—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —all that good stuff. And then we—I had the same DIs when we went into officer candidate school—I mean officer basic school.

TS: Right.

CP: They just sort of followed us along and so, of course, they were used to us and we were used to them but we only had one—one class a year.

TS: Of officers? Oh, in the Marines?

CP: Now, let me give you a little example. At the time I went in, the women Marines could only be 2% of the number of people in the Marine Corps. Out of that 2%, only 10% could be officers. That made us a very tiny minority. So we had almost sixty people in my candidate class, which was about—that's—was max [maximum]. You could not have any more people coming into the Marine Corps—female—so we only had one course a year, where the men had four courses a year.

TS: Were you finding that—How were you finding your acclimation to the Marine Corps during your training sessions?

CP: Once you get over the initial shock that this is not in Kansas anymore, you're—you're okay. Like I said, once they tell you this is what you can do and what you can't do and you just go ahead and do what you're supposed to do, it's not a problem.

TS: Was there anything that was particularly difficult, either physically or emotionally?

CP: I've never been a physical person. To me—I never played sports. I tried. When I was in high school they made you go out for sports for P—PE [physical education], and so we would play basketball and softball and volleyball, stuff like that. Well, volleyball was not good. I got a ball smashed in my face and my glasses, they had to use—they had to call the custodian to come out with two pairs of pliers and straighten out the frames to get them off my nose because it had just smashed it right into the nose and they couldn't pull



my glasses off. And so, I really looked terrible, did not duck when I should have, and I got smashed pretty good. So I became terrified of the volleyball smashing me in the face. Softball, I couldn't hit very well and about the most I could do was if they—if I got a walk, and I get to walk because their pitchers weren't that good either. But I remember this one time when they asked me—they said, "What position did you play in softball?"

Well, you always played work up[?], so you got to play other position[s], and I said, "Well," I said, "my—my fondest memory is I was third base."

And they said, "Oh, you played third base."

And I said, "No, I was the third base."

And they said, "How did that happen?"

And I said, "Well, I was on third base, and this lady, this—one of my cohorts—I don't know—I don't remember exactly—I think if I had run to third base or I was at third base, all I know is that Nancy, who was a hefty girl—she was big-boned, she outweighed me by a good sixty, seventy pounds, she was solid muscle—she came tearing around that—those—those bases, and I remember they threw the ball at me, and I was trying to catch the ball, and they kept telling her, "You've got to—You've got to get on third, you've got to get on third!" Well, I was on third. So she just knocked me down and stomped on me going around, and sure enough, I mean, I was on my back and she stomped me right in the middle of the stomach and everything else, as she's running to home. And I'm laying there trying to catch my breath and I couldn't catch my breath and I'm wheezing my last—and they're telling me to get up because I was holding up the game and all that, and they were mad at me about that. Well, I'm sorry, but I was third base. [chuckles] She had—I was on top of it and she was supposed to be on third; she was. So that—My—My sports thing was not good. So the thing is, is that when they want to do physical stuff in the Marine Corps, that was way low priority for me.

TS: Yeah.

CP: I did the minimum the best I could and tried, and tried, and tried, but I did not do anything.

TS: No. Well, you didn't—at—at that time you didn't have that—like you said, as much physical exertion as—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —they do now.

CP: Would I, could I get through the Marine Corps today? No. Would I get in the front door? Nope.

TS: [chuckles] Well, you never know, Carol.

CP: Could I get as far as the recruiter? Nope.

TS: [chuckles] Well, tell me then about how you got—what they decided, or what you decided you were going to do for your career—or for your job, not necessarily a career at that time.

CP: What? I'm sorry, I don't understand.

TS: Well, what job did you get in the Marine Corps?

CP: Oh, well, I started off—because of my educational background, they thought it—art—“Let's put her in audio-visual—” because we did all the charts and graphics and things for presentations so—and it was a film library and everything so that's when I got to MCRD, San Diego—

TS: Okay.

CP: —and—Marine Corps Recruit Depot. And then, of course, because I was an officer and Vietnam was really getting swinging, they were moving out a lot of male officers [unclear] they needed them so—elsewhere. So they had a lot of these little sections that were—now had no officers in them, and some of them were as many as fifty, sixty people in them and some of them only had two or three people in them. So the women officers that were stationed there would get all these as additional duties, so even though you had a primary duty, you might have five or six other little duties that you got to go do. And so, I was a training aids[?] officer but I—I had a major over me—male—who was getting his doctorate so he was never there. I was supposed to lie for him, tell them that he was off on official business when I knew he was at the library at the college doing his thing, but I—I was a good little Marine and I tried to do the best I could.

I was swimming pool officer. Being an officer and knowing what you're supposed to do, I decided one day that I would go inspect the swimming pool, so I told my staff sergeant at the training aid [unclear] to take me over there, because this parade field was a half a mile long and women officers always had to wear high heels. Now, this is a long way to go on asphalt and cement, takes a long time, and I said, “I want to go over there.” And we were not allowed to drive the golf carts. Only the enlisted men could drive the golf carts so if I wanted to go anywhere he had to take me.

Well, he tried his darnedest—“Now—Now, Lieutenant, why don't we call Sergeant Cowey[?] and let him know that you're coming.”

“No, it wouldn't be a surprise inspection; I want to go now.”

“Okay.” So he took me, and he says, “Well, let me let Sergeant—let me tell Sergeant Cowey you're here.” He was a big Hawaiian, which was—

TS: Which one? The one driving or the one—

CP: No—

TS: —you were going to see?

CP: Howey—Cowey, and I guess that's because he swam a lot, so he got to be in charge of the swimming pool.  
Well, I knew recruits were being trained, I'd seen training pictures, so I told Sergeant Cowey, I says, "I'm here to inspect the pool."  
And he goes, "No, Ma'am. Respectfully request you come at another time."  
And I went, "Sergeant Cowey, I am here to inspect the pool; I am going to inspect the pool."  
He looked at me and he said, "Yes, Ma'am," dutiful young man that he was. I go around this baffle, which they have where you can't look directly in, and there are two platoons of naked men. Naked as the day they were born. I turned around and come right back out, [chuckles] and both of them are looking at me, trying not to laugh, and he says, "Do they pass your their inspection, Ma'am?"  
"Why didn't you tell me?"  
He says, "You didn't ask."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: "I told you to come back at a different time."  
I said, "They're not wearing anything."  
He says, "No, they're not."  
"But I saw the training films."  
He said, "They wear things in the training films but," he says, "in real life, recruits do not wear anything in the swimming pools."  
"Oh." So I became one of the educated right then and there.

TS: I guess so. [chuckles]

CP: That was one of the little highlights.

TS: Right.

CP: The joys of—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —being an officer.

TS: So how did you—How were you taking to the Marine Corps? Where you enjoying it at this point?

CP: Well, I had a lot of enjoyment. There were—It's a learning curve. It's like a lot of things, you make a lot of little mistakes and things because you really don't know the ropes yet, and so far, though, I thought it was kind of fun.

TS: What were your housing conditions like?

CP: Well, I—They give you what they call an allowance—a housing allowance, and you can go—you can either stay—they really didn't have any on-base housing at MCRD San Diego so—it's just too crowded a city for them to have a lot of land so we had to find apartments, and so they subsidized our apartments. So I started off in a little tiny studio apartment and had a table with two chairs, and—and it was furnished—so I had two plates, two cups, two pans. [both chuckle] It wa—It was interesting. I should have—should have never gone beyond that.

TS: Why?

CP: Because then I got a bigger studio and that was one where I ended up with four plates, and four cups, and four—stuff, and then I begin decorating and I begin getting—buying things. And then I got one bedroom apartment. Well, now you have to go buy more stuff, such as bedding, and a—and a bedspread, and towels, and sheets, and pillowcases, and more stuff. And I said—And every time—And then I go to a two-bedroom apartment, and then a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment, and I said, "You keep accumulating." Well, when the first year that I was there, and I had to move three times— which are different stories which are quite interesting—but it was very easy. Two suitcases and a cardboard box. You put it in your car, you moved. As time goes on, now you need to have help to move.

TS: Right.

CP: Friends with trucks. [chuckles]

TS: You keep having to fill it up depending on the size that you get.

CP: Nature abhors a vacuum. As long as there is a room to put something you're going to find something to put in it.

TS: So what are your interesting stories about having to move?

CP: One of them was, I was in this really cute little one-bedroom apartment, and the bedrooms backed up to each other but I—apartments are like that, and I came down with something; I don't know what it was but I felt crummy and—Now, there had been stuff going on at night; I understood; between men and women. And it got to be a little loud occasionally and banging against the—the wall between us and everything—the headboard, I think. Anyway, I came home about two o'clock and I laid down in my—took a couple aspirin and I was trying to rest, and I could hear this—this whining and this moaning and this groaning and this bumping and all this good kind of stuff, and the dog was barking, and the cat was meowing, and the bird was screaming, and all this stuff is going on, and I just couldn't take it anymore, and I got up and walked over to the wall and I'm banging on it with my fist screaming, "Shut up, just shut up! For once, just shut up!" I

says, "Night after night," I says, "I have to listen to this. I am—I am sick, I am tired, I'm—All I want is some rest. Could you just let me go to sleep?" And there was this dead silence; absolute dead silence; not a single sound.

And I hear this, "No! No!" Pow! And I could hear someone getting slapped, and this woman is crying and screaming and everything else. A guy is beating her—beating her up. Well, I didn't know what was going on but at least they stopped all that. I went back to bed. Next morning I was getting ready to go to work and this woman is standing there with a couple black eyes, a busted lip. She looked at me like this and she says, "You had better move."

And I said, "Why?"

She says—She says, "Because of what happened." She says, "My friends will come and you're going to get slashed tires every night," she says, "and you—I cannot vouch for your safety."

And I said, "Well, what did I do?"

She says, "Why did you do what you did the other day?"

And I said, "Because it's true." I said, "I'm sorry," I said, "but I was just sick and I—" I said, "All this noise all the time."

And she says, "Do you know who that was?"

And I said, "No."

She said, "That was my husband."

"So?"

"He just got back from deployment."

TS: Oh.

CP: He had been at sea, and she and her little cohorts were running a prostitution ring, and so all these nights that I thought it was a husband and wife, it really wasn't. So when he came and he heard me accusing her of night after night after night, it kind of ticked him off a little bit. I thought, "It's time to leave." So that was one of my—Yeah, I better get out.

TS: Right.

CP: [chuckles]

TS: That's a pretty good reason to move, I think.

CP: I think so too.

TS: Yeah, yeah. Now, how about your—Did you eat—Did you get allowances to eat off the post, or—

CP: I don't remember getting food allowance. I just remember the housing allowance.

TS: Did you—Did you eat on—on your base then?

CP: Well, if you were on a base you still had to pay for your food—

TS: Okay.

CP: —if you belonged to the bachelor officers' quarters.

TS: Okay.

CP: If you lived there you had to buy their meal tickets, whatever it is, and it was so much a month and—and when you had breakfast you gave them one, another ticket for lunch, another one for dinner.

TS: Then it was—So it was, like, at the officers club that you could eat?

CP: Yes, yes.

TS: Did—How did you—How'd you like the food?

CP: Delicious.

TS: Yeah?

CP: Those cooks are good.

TS: Yeah.

CP: Yeah. Anyone who complains about military food really—I think the MREs [Meals Ready to Eat], they call them now, are probably not the best in the world, but, I mean, as far as what they feed you, they believe in food. They also believe that you're going to work it off, and, unfortunately, if you're not in combat and you're not training every day, you don't work it off, but you're still used to eating like that and that's why you see so many overweight military, is because, "Hey, we're not working it off." [both chuckle]

TS: That's right. Well, what—How did you think about your pay at that time?

CP: Well, the pay was actually not that bad. I think my first—I think I made [\$]14,000 a year.

TS: As an officer?

CP: Yeah, yeah.

TS: How would that have compared to the civilian world for you at that time as a woman?

CP: Oh, that was way high. Yeah.

TS: Was that a draw for you at all, for being in the Marine Corps?

CP: I had never really thought about that part of it.

TS: No?

CP: No.

TS: Because it just was, like, your first job, really, right?

CP: One of the things—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Well, not—not your first job. I mean your first job after college.

CP: One of the things, though, about being an officer which I hadn't thought about is, as an enlisted person they give you your uniforms when you start out. Three sets of uniforms, all kinds of stuff. As an officer you have to buy them, and not only that but they have to be tailor-made, so when you're going in and you are getting tailor-made clothes out of the finest materials, and it's made individually to fit you perfectly, and you're paying beau coups of money—because I remember my—just my regular uniform, which was—consisted of a shirt, which we called a blouse, and a skirt, and a jacket. The blouse we could buy off the rack, those were not tailor-made, but the uniforms themselves were tailor-made; \$120. That is a lot of money for one, and then when you get to the dress blues, and then we had our summer white—dress whites—and all the other things, a lot of what you were paying for was just trying to keep clothes on your back.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And it always had to be so perfect. Every barracks that you go into in—in—I can only speak for the Marine Corps—is on your way out there is a full length mirror and you were supposed to stop and look and make sure everything was perfect before you walked out that door, and we used to get so frustrated with our instructors in candidate school, is because as much as we tried, and, I mean, we—Wisk [laundry detergent]; that's what we discovered; Wisk. And I—Even today—I use Tide [laundry detergent] all the time and then something comes up and I go get some Wisk and it takes care of it. But we had to wash, by hand, our—our shirts and everything. The rest we had to have dry cleaned.

But they would come in, and we would be in class sitting down, and we would get up and, of course, you'd get little wrinkles in your rear, and they came in, they never had a wrinkle. We could not understand it; how they would work all day long and never get wrinkled. It dawned on us as we got toward the end of the program; we found out why.

There were three of them for each—each group of women. They took turns going out to do stuff. They never sat down. They—They had a room where they had an ironing board, and if they did sit down before they came back they would iron out their shirt—their skirt—and come back so there were no wrinkles and then fuss at us because, "You have a wrinkle under your rear." I said—So it was pretty pathetic. [both chuckle]

TS: Well, now, how was your—how were your relationships between you and your peers? Did you mostly work with other women or men or—

CP: Well, during candidate course we worked and—

TS: Well, after that—

CP: —basic school—

TS: But after you got out.

CP: Once we got out of training—

TS: Yes.

CP: —you were just a Marine. That's it. Once a Marine, always a Marine. From the time you—you're there—so you are peers and you get along okay except we had a problem, and the problem was, like when I went out to MSRD San Diego, we had these old gunnery sergeants; grizzled old gunnery sergeants been in since year one, nearing retirement, had never even seen a woman Marine. Not only were they seeing women Marines but they had suddenly found out there was such a thing as Marine officers that no one had ever told them about. And one of them, which was kind of an interesting story, is that I got to be GED [General Education Development] Officer. I told you we get these strange little additional duties. And so, they told me where to go and I went down and I walked in and there was—there were two desks, and I'm basically a nice person I keep thinking, but you had to keep a certain element of superiority all the time as an officer or they'd run right over you. I walked in and this gunny was sitting there with his feet up on the desk, leaning back, kind of looked at me and says, "What do you want, sweetie?"

Now, his little cohort in crime was a lance corporal who was a little bit more astute and much younger, and he goes "[makes noise]," and kind of looks away. Uh-oh.

And I said, "Well, the first thing you can do," I said, "is get your feet off my desk and stand up when I come—walk in that room."

And he said, "Now, why would I want to do that?"

I said, "Because, one," I said, "I'm an officer; two, you are sitting at the desk that I am now going to commandeer. I am officer in charge of the GED section."

His jaw dropped, he looked at me, he looked at his little fella who was sitting here like this, hands folded. "Yes, ma'am."



I said, "From now on," I said, "where you are is my desk." I said, "I want you to take all your personal things out of there. I want everything that belongs to you out of my desk. I want everything that belongs to you that's on top of that desk off. I want my desk when I come in tomorrow morning.

And he says, "Well, where am I supposed to sit?"

I said, "I don't know." I said, "I understand," I said, "that Marines are really good at finding things." I said, "I guess you're just going to have to go find a desk."

And he looked at this little lance corporal and he says, "You heard her. Get your stuff of the desk, I'm going to use yours."

I said, "No, you're not. Didn't you hear me?" I said, "He keeps his desk." I said, "You find yourself a desk."

"Where do you want me to put it?"

I said, "I don't care, but that is going to be where I'm going to be sitting. Right where it is; right where it stands." I came to work the next day, there was a third desk, and he was at it with all his stuff. His little lance corporal was still at his original place with his desk, and I had my desk, which I did not use that often because I had other duties to do, but it was just a shock to this poor man, and I found this very often many places the first, maybe, four or five years that I was in, that there were people who had no idea there were women officers. They might have seen an enlisted woman once in a while but it was just a shock to them.

TS: Did you find—So, like, this particular gunnery sergeant, did he shape up after that and not give you any guff or—

CP: We had at truce.

TS: Yeah?

CP: I mean, I wasn't mean to him and he—he—I don't know what he said about me when my back was turned, I don't really care, but while I was there he was respectful enough and—We didn't—We wouldn't—I don't send him Christmas cards, let's put it like that. We just—it was—"Okay, fine, this is the way it's going to be," and he would report to me and tell me what they were doing and how many had come in, how many were trained, who got their GEDs, who didn't, and I went, "Okay," and I—that—that was it; that was just—They had to have an officer in charge.

TS: So it was like just a professional relationship then, just—

CP: Very totally professional.

TS: Yeah.

CP: It was about the only thing that you could have. I was Top Secret Material Control Officer at three different stations—three different places.

TS: This was in San Diego?

CP: Not in S—Yes, in San Diego, I got to the first—the first time.

TS: Yes.

CP: And then [Marine Corps Base] Quantico [Virginia] and then [Marine Corps Base] Camp Lejeune [North Carolina], so—

TS: Okay.

CP: So all three of those places I ended up Top Secret Material Control Officer—No. Quantico, MCRD San Diego, and Oahu [Marine Corps Base Hawaii].

TS: Okay, Hawaii.

CP: When I—When I was in Hawaii. Is that—They put you in these areas that have no windows, you have one way in, one way out, doors, top security, and when you're locked up with somebody for eight, ten hours a day, you get to know them pretty good. And I had one other officer who was usually over me, and we would be in the same room for hours and hours and hours, and we got to be—I don't know if it was friends, but confidants, because he would tell me things that I'm sure that his mother even didn't have no idea what was going on, and I'm sure his wife didn't know. And I would tell him things, because I knew he wasn't going to go any further. But we would just sit there, because there really wasn't that much to do as a Top Secret Material Control Officer. You got the stuff in, you logged it in, you made sure it was accounted for, you gave it a number, you knew where it was, you made sure that whoever was supposed to see it saw it, if they weren't supposed to see it, they didn't get to see it, all that. And that was where I really learned that maybe things have changed. I'm not going to do this as a blanket statement or anything, but while I was doing these things—Never trust the news. Never trust what's happening on TV, don't ever trust what you read in a newspaper. It's all a lie. Downright lie. It's not so much that they deceive you, it's that they just don't tell you, so people are s—putting their own spin on things. Well, if this is this, and this is this, this must be this, and this is what we're going to report on. Probably not.

TS: Do you have an example?

CP: No.

TS: No?

CP: Well, not right off my—top of my head, but it was always interesting to go home and watch the news and now we know, really, what the situation was. "Now, why are they reporting it that way?" But then, most of the people that were in the military, whether they had a—a top secret clearance or not, just knew from their buddies and things,

because the buddies would tell them what was going on, and there were some atrocities that really went on that I just—but we never heard of them.

TS: Is this during Vietnam?

CP: But—But the ones that we did hear about—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: My Lai [Massacre]?

CP: —were bad enough.

TS: Like My Lai?

[The My Lai Massacre was the Vietnam War mass killing of between 347 and 504 unarmed civilians by United States Army soldiers in South Vietnam on March 16, 1968]

CP: Yeah.

TS: Yes.

CP: Those—Those were bad enough, but it was also surprising to us that—how they would pick and choose which ones they were going to release or who was going to find out about it. It was just sort of like, "Well, what about this other situation?"

"No, no, no, that never got out."

"Oh, okay." So—But—

TS: What did you think about all that?

CP: There was a reason for it. First of all, Vietnam, as you well remember—or maybe not, you're young—was a terrible time. Should we have been in there? Probably not. Should we have ever gone there? Probably not. Did we make a difference? Probably not. Or should we be proud of it? Probably not. There are many "probably nots." At the same time, it is the decisions that were made at the time to do this and to follow through [on] our decisions that were made, and as a good citizen, as a member of the military, you are commanders. When they tell you to do something, you do it; you follow the orders.

Now, you do not have to follow orders that are illegal. That's one of the first things they tell you; if it's an illegal order, you are under no obligation to do it. Like, if your commanding officer was mad at your bunkmate and said, "Shoot him," no, you're not going to shoot your bunkmate. That would be totally illogical.

But there were lots of things that were bad during this period of time. The morale was bad mostly because of the press, and I think that this is where the press got a bad rap, was because you had all these people that were going to Canada so they wouldn't get drafted, you had all these college kids that were storming every place they could with their pickets and everything, and denouncing how mean and rotten and lousy the—the soldiers were over there beating up on all these poor Vietnamese who were trying to kill everybody, and who were, because they were no saints, believe me. They were doing some horrible things to their own people; it was just horrible. I mean, really, really, bad that made what we did look like a picnic. Really, we did not sit there and torture and torture and torture and torture these people and little kids and say, "Oh, you're going to—We're mad at you because you did this, so let's—okay, we got your baby there, cut off a finger at a time; cut off a toe at a time; blind it; cut off its tongue." The baby is trying to scream and the mother is standing there watching all this kind of stuff. Oh no, you never hear that. But some soldier shoots this mother with the baby in her hands and the baby dies, he is suddenly the worst creature that ever came down the pike, and we're going to hate all the military.

And that was where it was unfair, is that when these guys came back from a lot of this, and they were under a lot of stress—and they were over there for long periods of time, also, and they were not under the best of circumstances over there—the hate that they faced when they came back. Today when you talk to a lot of male Vietnam veterans, and you ask them, "Well, tell me about yours—"

"No."

You ask a family relative, "Well, what happened over there?"

"Nothing."

"You going to talk about your experiences?"

"No."

They won't. They won't discuss it, and it's not that they didn't feel anything and it's not that they didn't care. They did care, but they also knew that they would be judged and that was what the saddest thing is. We have such honor and respect for World War I; such honor and respect and joy for World War II veterans. Oh, a World War II veteran, ninety-four years old and he is a hero. Yay! Yes, he is. Korea, oh yeah, these guys—the Chosin—frozen Chosin. [Battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War] What they went through there, these are heroes. Vietnam. Baby killers, rapist, nasty people. They should all be thrown off the face of the earth. There's a place in hell for those people in uniform. That is the sad part that I see.

Then, all of a sudden, we get into a nice war again. [chuckles] We hardly get into any trouble anymore, but what do we do?

TS: Which war are you talking about?

CP: Well, Afghanistan and Iraq.

TS: Yes.

CP: But now we're heroes again. The news—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: But there—But there—

CP: The news—

TS: But they report things that have—

CP: Yeah, but—

TS: —[unclear] the atrocities.

CP: — the news people and everything—

TS: Yes.

CP: —these brave soldiers coming back, and the families—every time a father comes home, the little kid and momma are there, and the little kid runs over and you've got the news people there with their cameras; "Isn't this [unclear]? I cry every time I see this." Ha. Yes, I think it's wonderful, I really do, but not like them coming back from Vietnam.

TS: But don't you think that's a lesson that they learned from Vietnam, and how they—the media portrayed that? Instead of portraying the soldiers, they're—they talk more about policy now?

CP: I think that it—that—that probably did. They realized that if you're not part of the solution you're part of the problem, and that when something starts feeding on itself it just feeds and feeds and feeds, and it gets bigger and bigger and bigger, and you can't control it; you can't control it. And so, I think that that may be part of it. Also, today, with the technology we have.

TS: Right.

CP: You can't hide anything.

TS: [chuckles] Right.

CP: I mean, everybody has a cell phone; everybody takes pictures; everybody takes [unclear]—

TS: Not everybody has a cell phone apparently.

CP: I don't have a cell phone.

TS: [laughs] [unclear]

CP: But I mean, it's so funny. I can remember when I was growing up, I mean, you would sit there and have some horrible disaster in California and I was in Texas. We might hear about it two weeks later. Here you're watching the news—"Breaking news, here is, live from Sacramento, big col—big collision, bridge falls, nine people killed."  
And you're sitting here going, "Oh, okay." It's instantaneous.

TS: Yes, it is instan—it is instantaneous.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: All this stuff. And then you've got the people now in the war zones too, are—they're all sitting there with their cell phones and they're recording things, and they're leaving messages and sending messages to everybody back home, so it's—There aren't any secrets anymore. [chuckles]

TS: Well, I wanted to ask you a little bit more—I was just looking—like, you were—You were in the Marine Corps during pretty much all of our hot involvement with the Vietnam War.

CP: Yes.

TS: And so—And you were stationed at San Diego and [Marine Corps Air Station] Cherry Point [North Carolina], and Quantico. Now, did you come in contact with soldiers returning or going to Vietnam?

CP: Oh, yeah.

TS: Because you—you—no Marine Corps women were over in Vietnam—

CP: No.

TS: —I don't believe, right.

CP: Oh, yeah, we—constantly. Not so much MCRD because that's a training—it's mostly for training.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: That's Quantico, or which one—MCRD.

CP: MCRD; that was San Diego.

TS: Okay, San Diego.

CP: See, on the east coast it's [Marine Corps Recruit Depot] Parris Island [South Carolina]—

TS: Right.

CP: —on the West Coast it's San Diego.

TS: Okay.

CP: So that's the difference. Marine—Your west coast Marines and east coast Marines.

TS: So what kind of, like, personal contact did you have with the war?

CP: People coming and going. You asked me about them coming and going. We—We watched them while they were being deployed; we watched them when they came back. Mine was mostly—in the early years were single men yet—they were not married yet, and someone asked me one time why I never got married and I said, "Well," I said, "because for a while, if you got to like somebody they'd probably get killed."  
     And they said, "What?"  
     And I said, "Well," I said, "we—we're like brothers and sisters mostly." I said, "There was hardly ever any romance between us because we knew each other too well."  
     I was not that impressed with the male Marines, they were cute and everything else, but not like the school teachers and the nurses, they're all—"I want to be married to a Marine officer, they're so wonderful."  
     We just looked at them and—"Oh God, can you believe she believes that?" We just—We were just not that impressed because we were one, but it was—it was kind of interesting.  
     But they would—they would come back, or they were ready to go, and here you had spent maybe three, four, five months with them, and you'd go to movies, and you would sit around and shoot the bull, and you'd go to dinners, and you'd go to different people's houses.

TS: You mean, like, dating?

CP: Well, it was more like group dating.

TS: Group dating, okay.

CP: You went to someone's house and they had a cookout and—

TS: Lots of people were there, I see.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: —lots of people were there, and a lot of them did kind of pair up a little bit, and you would maybe have somebody that would start coming over on their own—they wouldn't wait for the group—and you got to be really close and everything. And so, we had this—this one guy and he was really a nice guy, and he started coming over and everything and then he had to go to Vietnam, and I was looking forward to him coming home because maybe something would come of this, and he was killed; killed in combat.

Okay, about five months later another one of my little buddies that I got real close to, met his parents, all his—met his siblings, had a lot in common, talked what he wanted in life, I told him what I wanted in life, they were kind of comparable. And so, well, we can probably get along real well and he went to Vietnam and got killed. Same thing with an airlin—air—with a pilot. He went over, got shot down, he was killed.

Well, that can almost make you think like, "Don't like anybody," because if you really get to like them that's their death warrant; the black widow and you're not even a—married, you're just—So don't learn to like somebody that much.

TS: How—But—How did you cope with that at the time? I mean, you're talking now, from a perspective of—How many years are we talking?—six—fifty years in so—in some sense?

CP: Yeah.

TS: Fifty years ago.

CP: Fifty years ago.

TS: So at the time you're in your twenties, right?

CP: Yeah, this—this picture's—I'm twenty-four.

TS: Okay, so you're—you're in your twenties and you're getting close to some of the guys and they—and you find out that they have been killed in Vietnam. At the time, what—what did you think then?

CP: You grieve like you would any of your other friends and your buddies and your family members. It's the same grief. We might not have had an intimacy or anything that would be—make it much deeper, but it was still this feeling of loss—

TS: Yes.



CP: —of things that might have been, and I think that that's—that's the biggest thing, is what have—what might have been, and you find that today in the military, too; the military families and wives and things when they—when they see hubby going off down the road and, "Is this going to be the last time I see him?" He may not even be killed in combat. The plane could go down, the ship could go down, it could be an accident, it could be something, but he's not there, and they're going to have that same loss whether you're killed in—in combat or you're killed in an accident, or anything else, the loss is still there.

TS: Have you been to the Vietnam [Veterans] Memorial [Washington, DC]?

CP: I have not.

TS: No? Have you wanted to go?

CP: I would want to but physically I can't.

TS: Okay.

CP: I mean, I am not going to go in a wheelchair. [chuckles]

TS: No?

CP: No, I mean, I wouldn't—I wouldn't put that burden on anybody.

TS: But they have those—the—what do they call the flights that they—where they take veterans to the Memorial. Have you ever looked at any of those?

CP: Yes and no.

TS: Yeah.

CP: But I do not do good walking long distances or standing long—long time and—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —stuff like that, so. My—My travel days are pretty limited right now.

TS: Yeah. Well, you've got a beautiful here—view here, Carol—

CP: I know.

TS: —for sure.

CP: Closer to heaven; you're up in the mountains.

TS: Yeah, it does look closer to heaven up here. Well, do you have any—So when you went from San Diego then you—you ended up—your next assignment was in Cherry Point.

CP: Right.

TS: What were some memories that you have from your Cherry Point assignment?

CP: Well, airplanes.

TS: Airplanes, okay.

CP: [laughs]

TS: Because that is a—

CP: From traffic to airplanes.

TS: The air station, right?

CP: Yeah, MCAS, yeah. It was hard getting used to, is because this is a training facility and I was in an officer in charge of the link trainers.

TS: Oh, the link trainers, okay.

CP: Yes, and some people know what link trainers are, some people don't know what link trainers are.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Well, describe them for people who are maybe not familiar—

CP: Well, this is where the pilots learn to fly their airplanes; this is where the gunners learn to gun; this is where the bombers learn to bomb; all that is there. There's—They're flight simulators, only they're very fancy ones, and so they are in these big buildings—they're sort of like sound stages—and they have all this electronic equipment; much better today than back then. That—It was more like the early video games, but still. One of the big things was, "Let's go bomb the officers club."  
"Okay."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: Because you had the topography and you would—it would be like you were really flying over, and then you would, like, release the bombs and then it would electronically tell you how close you got, and did you miss it completely and all that, and I really enjoyed the link trainers because once in a while I would get to go play with the airplanes. And I remember there was one time when I was—nobody was scheduled that I could see, and I was up there and had had one of the—one of the enlisted guys with me to—to run the—the program. And I was in there and I was in one of the fighter jets and I was just having a good time, and I was flying along, and all of a sudden this pilot who wanted to get some—his training flights training time in, walks in to where I am and he says, "Get out of there," he says, "I need to get my fli—my—my training time in."

And I says, "How dare you come aboard my plane at 45,000 feet and tell me to get out of here." It was a little banter like that.

And he says, "Then land it," because he didn't want to take over in mid-flight either.

So I said, "Okay." I said, "I'll just show you how good I am." Well, I'm landing the plane and, of course, came in and he's sitting there and he's watching the instruments and my little cohort in crime was sitting there watching the instruments and I felt so good about that. I got off, I said, "See?" I said, "No problem at all."

And he says, "Yeah, you landed twelve feet below the deck."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: "Oh." Which meant I was—I'd crashed.

TS: Exactly. [both laugh]

CP: "Yeah," he says, "you—you did real well," he says, "you landed twelve feet below the deck."

I said, "Oh, God." So then after that, the rule was don't let her go up and play with the airplanes very often, so.

TS: Sounds like maybe you needed the practice, though.

CP: I know. Who knows? I might have been one of the first female fighter pilots or something.

TS: That's right.

CP: Yeah.

TS: That's right. Oh, I was going to ask you one more thing about Vietnam was—maybe more than one thing, but did you ever feel like you should go there and serve over there?

CP: No.

TS: No?

CP: I hate to say that, but I was not one of these—"Yeah, let's go fight."

TS: Well, not necessarily fight but—

CP: Just to go, no, no.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: —administrative work or something over there?

CP: No, because I felt that I was doing my job here. "Free A Man To Fight," that was our mot—that was our motto. That was the whole reason we were allowed in to begin with, was because the men felt a certain resentment if they joined the Marine Corps and they're supposed to be the greatest fighting force in the world and they're stuck behind a desk, because they have no chance of promotion. They have no chance of making it big time because they are stuck doing menial jobs, and so the fact that we were coming in, and we were taking over these jobs to allow them to go over and make a name for themselves, it was very appreciated by them, and you'd see them and they would say, "Oh, I got orders. I get to go."

"Yay, you get to go."

"Who's taking my place?"

"She is."

"Oh, great! You're going to love it." But they were thrilled that we were coming. They were just, "Oh boy, we get to go fight," so no, I wou—I wouldn't have thought—I guess I hadn't really thought about it, but—to take one of their little—little slots away from them, an opportunity to go—go be famous or something, no, I was a very generous person in that respect; "I'll let you go."

TS: There you go. How did you like Cherry Point then?

CP: I loved Cherry Point.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Once you got used to the planes.

CP: It was fun. They'd go out and chase the deer off the runway and birds off the runway and—and you get used to the airplane sounds and the—and the jets taking off and landing and it was—it was—it was kind of fun. And you got used to the pilots, and I

swear, the—I don't know—This was a time when there was this perfume out. I never used it myself but it was called Imprevu [by Coty], and this was supposed to be the—the perfume that you just absolutely adored, it was just wonderful. Well, they would spray their facemask with it because they used the same facemask. You didn't have your own sanitary facemask when you were flying, you just—Oh, Joe was using it and he's sweating all over inside and then Tom uses it and he's sweating all over inside. Well, it got a little gamey after a while having this mask, and I did have to go through—because I wanted to ride in the planes, that I had to go through the pressure training and you wear the pressure suit and you go through the—slipped my mind right now, but the one that shows the pressure and you're going—get the bends when you go down.

TS: Okay.

CP: You know what I—

TS: Decompression.

CP: Decompression chamber, and we had to go through all that training and everything so it was—it was kind of fun and interesting.

TS: Did you get to go up in the planes then?

CP: Yes.

TS: Which ones did you get to fly in?

CP: I got to fl—I got to fly in the [McDonnell Douglas F-4] Phantom which was my favoritest plane in the whole world because I thought it was absolutely wonderful.

TS: Now, that's a jet, right?

CP: Oh, yeah.

TS: Yeah.

CP: Oh, yeah, and that's—that's the evil-looking one before the Stealth came out. It's the one that's real long and it's got those wings—

TS: Swept back wings?

CP: Swept back wings and the kind of little curvy little—looks like a—like it's going to eat you up, and fast, and loud, and really good. That was my dream. I said, "Just—Just get me up there. Just once, just once." So they took me up, but not for real long.

TS: Yeah.

CP: For—I got to ride in the Phantom; I got to ride in the Phantom.

TS: That's pretty neat.

CP: Yeah. And one of my favorite stories is—at Cherry Point was, two of the pilots that I knew that were idiots—and that's what I really say, they are complete idiots. [unclear] *Top Gun* and all this; the heroes and everything. Well, I'm sure at 40,000 feet they know what they're doing. It's probably the rarified air or something; all that oxygen and Imprevu in their mask or something. They pretty much know what they're doing. The minute their feet hit the ground their brains turn to noodles. That's about the only thing I can think of. They drank; they were drunk all the time. One of their—their favorite things was the WOQ—or the BOQ [Bachelor Officer Quarters], and they would have these parties, and one of the guys passed out and leaned him up against the wall and they would take all their empty beer cans and build a fence around him, and then when it would get about six, seven stories high, then they would just leave him there and in the morning he'd wake up and he would be surrounded by all these beer cans in a place where he doesn't even remember being. It was—It was always kind of fun. But the—they were idiots.

Well, anyway, these two idiots—really nice guys ordinarily—were sent to Norfolk to pick up the first of new airplanes, and it was called the A-6A [Grumman A-6 Intruder], and the A-6A was a new radar-type airplane, had a big—It was ugly. To me, it looked like a big horsefly. It was just—There was no grace to it whatsoever. But they were—the Marines were getting the very first for the Marine Corps, and these guys were going to go each pick up an airplane and fly it back to MCAS Cherry Point. They got to Norfolk just fine, thank you very much, get in their brand new six million dollar aircraft each, take off—which from Norfolk to MCAS is probably an hour and a half flying in a jet—they crashed mid-air into each other.

TS: Into each other?

CP: Oh, yes, because we have something new and it's so wonderful and let's play war games up here, and I'll go after you, and then can you go after me, and we're going to have this big fun time, and one of them comes up too close and gets underneath the other plane and they crash. And, of course, they both ejected, and they landed safely, and I thought—this old saying, the captain goes down with the ship, because it costs too much for him to have to replace it so you might as well die, and I thought, "They've got to punish these two. They each ruined a six million dollar aircraft because they were horsing around up there. They should be reduced in rank, they should be fined, they should be thrown in jail, they're co—they're totally incompetent." You know what punishment they got?

TS: I do not.

CP: They were chastised, and at the same time they were told, "Thank God you didn't land in civilian housing." That they kept those planes from crashing into civilian housing, they

were considered heroic, that they had saved the military all this grief. It's okay to ruin the airplanes as sea, they went down in the ocean, but they could have very easily landed in civilian housing, and "Good boys, good boys."

And I'm just going, "I can't believe it." [chuckles] But—But it—That was—It was fun.

TS: That was it; that's all they got; a slap on the wrist then?

CP: Yeah, a slap on the wrist, and—and then a citation—Thank God—

TS: Oh.

CP: —that you kept the planes from falling into the—into civilian housing, yeah.

TS: Right.

CP: Yeah, so whenever I see things on the news about some military person doing some stupid thing like that, and I'm just—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Right.

CP: —thinking—

TS: You're wondering what really is the real story is, right?

CP: Yeah, well, gee, he didn't land in civilian housing, he probably got a meritorious master promotion out of that. It's just sort of—

TS: Well, what—Tell me about, like, when you're in Cherry Point. Describe a typical day. If you—you had one.

CP: Get up, have breakfast, that's always fun. Marines live on coffee.

TS: Apparently still do.

CP: Yeah. [both chuckle]

TS: Because when I met you you'd already had five cups of coffee, I think.

CP: Yeah, and then I was on decaf.

TS: That's right.

CP: Not the best coffee in the world, which is another story where I learned to leave the coffee pot alone. But it was just like you have to have your—your coffee, your breakfast, and then you go to work and you have your coffee there, and then you have it all day long and then you go home and—

TS: Well, what kind of work are you doing?

CP: Well, whatever needs to be done.

TS: What's your title at this point, in Cherry Point?

CP: I was still at Cherry Point; I was still a training aids officer.

TS: Okay.

CP: Because the links were training.

TS: Oh, right. Okay.

CP: Yeah, so I was still training—and I was not the "boss boss;" we had a lieutenant colonel who was in charge of the links.

TS: What was your rank here?

CP: At that time I was still a lieutenant.

TS: Lieutenant, okay.

CP: And then there was a major, and then there was a captain, and then there was me, and then there were a couple other lieutenants under me yet. But my job, basically, was making sure that the scheduling and everything for the training was done properly and that somebody wasn't getting more hours than—than somebody else and that everything was being run fair and square.

TS: I see, okay.

CP: So that was my job, yeah.

TS: Got it. And then—So like a—Pretty much like a 9:00 [a.m.] to 5:00 [p.m] or 8:00 to 4:00 or 8:00 to 3:00 or something.

CP: We had regular hours because we didn't run the links during the night.



TS: Right.

CP: We just—That was during normal working hours.

TS: So what'd you do on your off-duty time?

CP: Watched TV, read, go visit somebody else in their—wherever they lived or go to the club.

TS: Yeah.

CP: Go to a movie; go to Hardee's [Food Systems, Inc.]. That's where we discovered Hardee's.

TS: Okay.

CP: Hardee's is an east coast hamburger joint, and when we were at MCAS Cherry Point, that was the only place to go. It was the only fast food restaurant, was Hardee's. And you'd—you'd go out the gate and you went down the road for about two miles and there was—there was a Hardee's, and you'd go in there and get your hamburger and everything and then you'd go back home.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: I mean, this was it. They didn't have other restaurants. I don't know why not because you had plenty of people on the base but they ate most of the time—

TS: Well, what time—what year are we talking about, like the late sixties, early seventies yet?

CP: That was still the early sixties.

TS: Earl—yeah, mid-sixties.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Sixty-four—Probably '67. I must have gone to Cherry Point in '67, '68.

TS: Okay.

CP: Because I spent three years in San Diego.

TS: Okay.

CP: And then I spent two years at MCAS Cherry Point.

TS: So '67, '68—So you were—We're getting on to, like, counter-culture movement in the country.

CP: When I got—When—On my way to Hawaii—

TS: Right.

CP: —I'm driving cross-country. I got pretty good driving cross-country, but I was [going to?] take my car to San Francisco and then they were going to ship it over to Hawaii. Well, I got outside[?] of San Francisco. I ended up getting there a day early, which was an excitement all in itself, that trip, with—with perils along the way. But I get to San Francisco, and this was Haight-Ashbury, and this was—in fact, on the—the play that was right then and there was—What in the heck was that?

TS: A play?

CP: Huh?

TS: A play?

CP: A play.

TS: Like *Hair*, or—

CP: *Hair*; *Hair*. *Hair* was playing in San Francisco so I thought, well, as long as I'm in San Francisco I'm going to go see *Hair*, so I got my ticket. Trying to go and get the ticket you are literally crawling over all these hippies. I mean, they're on the streets, they're laid out, they're sleeping everywhere, they're singing, they're dancing, they're—they're just—these are real people. And I went to see *Hair*, got out and, of course, I am not a city girl. I had no idea what to do. I knew I had to get back to Marine Memorial which was a hotel, and—which really catered to military and I had had it for the night the night before, and I was—had it for another night I thought. Well, I went to see *Hair*, and my regret, if one wants to have a regret, is I didn't go up on the stage at the end of the play, because they invited everybody to come up on the stage with the actors and dance to "Let the Sunshine In." They had no clothes on. This is another one of these things where nobody was—

TS: No clothes, right.

CP: But, the thing when you're watching it, the strobe lights, they're going all the time and you can't really see anything because everything's either light, light, dark, dark, dark, dark—

TS: Right.

CP: —light, light, light, dark, dark, dark, and people were going up there and dancing with these actors up on the stage and I kept thinking, "Carol, they don't know you from diddly-squat, you could go up there and dance; you really could."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: "You're an officer in the Marine Corps." Officers in the Marine Corps do not go up there and dance with a bunch of naked people on a stage no matter what so I didn't go. Well, then—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: So you had your two voices talking to you, huh?

CP: Yeah, and reason and sanity overcame.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: But I regret that, that I can say—that is—

TS: You do?

CP: I really do.

TS: Now, would you have taken your clothes off?

CP: Oh, heavens, no.

TS: Okay.

CP: But I mean, it was just being up there.

TS: Dancing with them, I got it.

CP: Nobody else took their clothes off, they just—

TS: Well, I don't know, I bet some of them did.

CP: Well, maybe they did, but I mean, they had at least enough nerve to go up there and do it.

TS: Yeah.

CP: But I didn't. So I come out—

TS: How did you like the play?

CP: It was del—wonderful; I loved it. I come out, and I want to go back to Marine Memorial. I have no idea how to get to Marine Memorial but I want to go. I know I want to go. I know the general direction but I wasn't going to walk it at 11:30 at night, almost twelve o'clock. And I saw people—The taxis were coming around picking people up and taking them away and taxi come around and pick up [unclear], taxi, taxi, [unclear] taxi after taxi, and I would sit there and I would go.

TS: Stick your hand up? Yeah.

CP: And the taxi would come up and people would just shove me out of the way and get in the taxi, and I thought, "That's rude." The next one would come up, park, shove me out of the way and get in the—in the car.

I looked at my watch; it was a quarter to 1:00 [a.m.]. I am still standing out there, and finally this taxi comes up and he says, "You still here?" He says, "I been by six times." He says "Why are you still here?"

"I didn't get in the taxi."

And he says—And he looked at the guy that was standing next to me, he says, "Would you mind sharing a cab with her?"

"Oh, no, that's fine."

And he says [unclear], so they got three people going three different places. Well, he delivered the other two and then took me to where I wanted to go. How you figure that out on the meter, I don't know. But, anyway, here I am now, it's almost two o'clock in the morning with this taxi driver who drops me off and says, "Okay," he says, "just go down the hill." He says, "That's the Marine Memorial."

I said, "Okay." I get out and go down the hill. Now again, you've got these flower children all over the place, the smell of marijuana is so thick you can hardly breathe, and I don't see the Marine Memorial. Where in the heck is it? So I go back up the hill where he dropped me off, and finally [unclear] says, "See—See that light over there?"

"Yeah."

"That's it." He had sent down the wrong direction. So I went—I got in—I walked in, asked for my key. He says, "No."

"What do you mean, no?"

He says, "You don't have a room here."

"Yes, I do."

"No, you don't."

I told him who I was, I said, "I was supposed to be here for another night."

He said, "No, you only had one night."

I said, "Well, where are my things?" He points to a corner; there's all of my stuff.

I said, "Can I stay here tonight in the lobby?"

He says, "Yeah, you can stay here in the lobby."

"Okay." So now I'm sitting there the rest of the night. [laughs] And I thought—So then I go deliver my—I said "Where do I go to deliver my car to be shipped out?" And he told me and I went down to the wharf, wherever it was.

"No, no, no, no, no, no, no. We don't take the car."

"But I'm—They told me to take it to San Francisco."

"No, they told you to take it such-and-such air force base." There's an air force base east of San Francisco where my flight was going to go out of. They load—

TS: Is that [unclear]?

CP: —the cars and take them to a different place to put them on a boat to send them to Hawaii

TS: Oh, okay.

CP: So I didn't need to go to San Francisco at all; that was just something I thought I had to do.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: I could have stopped right at the air force base and everything would have been taken care of.

TS: You wouldn't have seen the play and had all your—

CP: That's true.

TS: —your good experiences.

CP: So I go and I bring the car back to the air force base. They take my keys. They say, "Say goodbye to your car; you'll see it in Hawaii."

"Goodbye, car." And then I stayed overnight at the officers' club there, and their quarters, and next day they flew us on an airplane and sent us off to Oahu, and landed at Hickam Air Force Base. Hickam—Is that it?—or whatever, and no car the next day or the next month. Where's my car? Could not find my car. Six weeks, no car. Finally I get this call; they have found my car. They thought I was in the army so they had shipped it with the army cars and all—everybody had picked up their car and there's the same—this one little car.

TS: What kind of car was it?

CP: It was a [Chevrolet] Caprice. And I went—Chevy Caprice. And I went—Oh, I think it was a Caprice. Anyway, I go and I get my car, drive it back. I go to the officers club, parked at the officers' club parking lot about 4:30 in the afternoon and I thought, "Well, it's too late to really go back to work because we're off at 5:00." I had managed to get a different job then where I had a 8:00—9:00 to 5:00—8:00 to 5:00 job. So I go—go to the

officers' club, had Happy Hour, had a couple little drinkie-poos, go to get in my car, it wouldn't start. Why won't my car start? Darn it, well, it's been sitting around. So I go back to the club and I got one of the guys to come out and I said, "My car won't start."

And he opens up the hood and he looks underneath, he says, "I can tell you why your car's not starting."

And I said, "Why not?"

And he said, "You don't have a carburetor."

"I don't have a what?"

"You don't have a carburetor. See that empty spot right there?"

"Yeah."

"It's gone. You don't have a carburetor."

"Oh." Someone stole it. I said, "After six weeks—almost seven weeks—I have my car for four hours and someone has stolen a part off of it."

He said, "They probably were just waiting and waiting and waiting for someone to come in with this—this model car so they could get a—get a part for their car." You know? But I just—And one other thing when I got to Hawaii and they had to put me up in a—in a—they gave you a housing allowance, put you up in a—it was like a motel type thing, they were having a dock strike and nothing was coming in to Hawaii. If you went out to eat there were no salt and pepper shakers on the table. There were no toi—There was no toilet paper in the toilets, nothing.

TS: Do you remember what year this was, that you went to Hawaii?

CP: That was—That was my duty station before Camp Lejeune so—and I was there for almost three years so—

TS: So like '70—'70—1970, '71?

CP: Somewhere in there.

TS: Okay.

CP: And it was very interesting to find out that—Well, being in the military it was great because we had a PX [post exchange] and we could just go there and buy our groceries and all that kind of stuff, but there were no [unclear]. You'd go and you'd talk to the civilian women and they were just hysterical. You can't buy Kotex [brand of feminine products], you can't buy anything. There are no sanitary products. [unclear] [chuckles] And they're used to this luxury of life and they go—suddenly they're going, "We can't get this stuff." And so, any—any place they would go in that had it, they would steal it. They—They didn't think twice about stealing it so—and, of course, we had no problem because supply [unclear].

TS: The ships came in still—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: The ships kept coming in—

TS: —for the military, yes.

CP: Yeah, so that was one of the—the joys of being in the military—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —is that you knew that they were not going to starve you and that you were going to get all the necessities that you needed.

TS: Yes, that's true. Well, I'm going to pause it for just a second here.

[Interview Paused]

TS: Let's see. Okay, we took a little break there but we're going to go ahead and continue with Hawaii. And so, was there anything—you had a different kind of job in Hawaii; you said more administrative.

CP: Well, I went back into the vaults again. I was Top Secret Material Control—

TS: Okay.

CP: —Officer. But then I also—In fact, the first six months I was in Hawaii, I really wasn't sure what it looked like because I would go to work in the dark and I'd go home in the dark, and this is week—weekends, then I'd wake up, and I decided after about the first year there that I didn't want to live in Hawaii, and was—"Why? It's the most beautiful place in the world."

I said, "To visit. Yes, it is. Everyone should go at least once." But I said, "With me, it was this over color saturation." I said, "Everything is just too bright." I said, "The blues are too blues and the greens are too greens," and I said, "and the reds and the yellows and all these colors." But that's not enough, you have nature doing that with the flowers and everything. You've got these people with the aloha shirts and the muumuus and everything else, and I said, "You go in and there's flowers on the table, there's flowers in your drinks and there's umbrellas and there's—it's just color, color, color, color, color," and I said, "after a while," I said, "your eyeballs just sort of feel like they're going to explode." And I said—I kept saying, "Where's Fall; where's Spring? I want to see trees with no leaves; I want to see little brown animals; I want—"

And the thing about Hawaii is their—their wildlife is no—almost nonexistent, and so what happened was, when the first ships came they brought in rats, and so the people

said, well, the rats are killing off the—the wildlife, and the nene was the—the goose, which is the national bird of Hawaii, and they were losing all the nenes because they were being eaten by the mongooses that weren't[?] letting them have their babies, so—I mean the rats—so someone got this bright idea, "Well, we need to bring in some mongoose. The mongoose will kill the rats." So they started importing mongooses to take care of the rats. There was one small problem with this. Man, again, in his wisdom. The rats came out at night. The mongooses come out during the day, so the only time they would see each other was if they were getting up or going to bed.

TS: [chuckles] So that didn't work out too good.

CP: No. So anyway, that was Hawaii—

TS: Right.

CP: —and I had three or four different jobs there. The last job I had was an awards officer, and the awards officer was the one that made sure that all of the combat veterans would get their—their silver stars and their purple hearts and all these other wonderful things. And we didn't—there—you've heard of a boiler plate, where you just fill in the names and all this; we didn't. We made every last one. We would get the reports from the field and "Joe Blow did this wonderful thing and he did all this and we are putting him in for the Bronze Star," or whatever it was. First of all, we would check to see if it met the criteria for the medal that he was supposed to be getting, and then we would have someone write this up, and it was a—you had to cover certain points but after that you would put in to make it extremely—that it was only one person that could have possibly done that and that's Joe Blow, so we did that, and it was—it was quite interesting—to—to give them that—those honors.

TS: You got to see a lot about what they did then—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —to earn them.

CP: And then, of course, wherever they were, they would—the awards would go to their command. The com—command would usually have everybody come out and stand in formation. Then they would read this thing about old Joe who did this and that, then off—pin his new medal on him and it was always a very nice thing. And—But it could get to be boring after a while, because it was over and over and over, and how many ways can you put something that is going to sound different.

TS: Right.

CP: Well, this one guy—I had a mango rash because where I was living at the time had a mango tree and no one told me that there's such a thing as mango rash, and I was out



picking up leaves and trying to keep the—the place clean, and I broke out with this rash from my elbow to my wrist and it is like—it would make poison ivy feel good. I mean, this stuff just, oh, it was terrible, terrible, terrible. No matter what you did you couldn't get rid of it. First time I went to the doctor he said, "Oh, you have mango rash." So he said, "I'm going to give you some medication."

And I said, "Well," I said, "is it going to keep it from itching?"

He said, "No, you just won't care." And I thought that was the strangest thing I'd ever heard but that's exactly what it was. He says, "You just won't care. It's still going to itch you just don't care."

And I thought, "Okay." So I was taking this medication—same thing, I'm going, "Sure is itching today but you do your thing and I don't care if it's itching." And so, I was really, really busy and they all disappeared because I was so busy reading the awards, make sure everything was right and everything was spelled right and matching them up, and I looked up and everybody was gone.

TS: Everybody in your office?

CP: Gone.

TS: Okay.

CP: Then I went out looking for them; where are they? Couldn't find them. Finally, about an hour later—I was calling all over the place [unclear] they wander back in. "Where have you been?"

"Oh, we've just been around."

"You can't just walk out like that."

"We did." And they said, "You were so engrossed and Joe had gone over—Joe was my Marine again—had come over and said, "Captain, is it okay if I go to the PX? I want to pick up such-and such."

And I said, "Yeah, just—just be back as soon as you can," and so he left.

So the next one goes up and says, "Is it okay if I do this?"

"Yeah, go. Yeah, just go ahead. I'm busy."

And then the third one or fourth one—and finally he says, "I wonder if she would notice if any of us left? Well, let's see if she does." So one by one, at about two minute intervals, they would get up and just walk by me and say goodbye and keep right on going. Well, I never saw them; I don't remember talking to them; I was busy reading.

So when I looked up and there was nobody there I thought, "Good grief." So I kind of chewed them out about that. Well, again, with their little pranking ways—yes, they do have fun—I got one of these citations and I was reading it and the more I read it the more disturbed I got, and by the end of it, I mean, I was just doubled over with laughter and it was sick laughter, and I said, "Okay, Corporal So-and-So," I said, "this is very funny, ha ha ha ha. Now," I said, "be careful," I said, "that we don't ever let this out." I said, "Put a big 'VOID' over it," because we had a stamp where we could void them out and stuff. I says, "because this—"

"Well, what does it say? What does it say?"

Well, the gist of it was that this naval aviator was flying his helicopter in to extract wounded Marines from an attack and—and it always sort of starts off the same way, "with disregard to his perilous journey," he—he goes into this—where the enemy has surrounded the Marines and has killed four and wounded three and we went in to—to retrieve the bodies and the—to get the—the wounded to safety. Well, they got the wounded out and they went in to retrieve the bodies and they were retrieving the bodies and the enemy was firing on them and trying to bring the helicopter down, and with disregard for the danger they were in. They were determined to bring back the bodies of their fallen comrades, and the body bags—put the—the—the Marine in the body bag and was lifting him in the—toward the helicopter with a sling when all of a sudden the body bag broke and the body tumbles to the earth, hitting the earth and the enemy is screaming, "Litterbugs!" [chuckles]

Anyway, it wa—it was just that thing, "Litterbugs;" oh, God. And of course, everybody was just howling; they thought that was the funniest thing in the world.

"No, we are not sending this out."

So, we got ready to send everything out, you—you put them—and packaged them depending on where they were going; whether you're going to [Marine Corps Base] Camp Pendleton [CA] or you're going to Quantico or you're going to Parris Island.

TS: Right.

CP: Wherever the next duty station was going to be where these people worked, we would make sure that this little bundle of things got there, and I noticed that there was one left, and it was for this pilot and I thought, "Oh, this is the—the joke[?] one and he had written 'VOID' on it. And I'm reading it, and it was very nicely written; very nicely written; recognized the story except for the litterbugs—

TS: Right.

CP: And so, I'm sitting there and I says, "Corporal So-and-So."

He says, "What?"

"Remember Major So-and-So's award that you wrote?"

He says, "Oh, yeah."

I said, "Where is it?"

He says, "It's on its way to Pendleton."

I said, "You're sure it's Pendleton?"

"Oh, I'm not sure where it's going but," he says, "I finished it and put it with the other ones."

I said, "What's this?"

And he looks. "[makes gasping noise] Oh, my God. We sent the wrong one. We sent the joke one."

I said, "Go get that immediately. Right now."

"Well, Corporal So-and-So helped me."

"Well, get Corporal So-and-So to go help you get it back, right now."

Well, they were gone about a half an hour and they come back and they said, "Ma'am, we can't get them back."

"What do you mean you can't get them back?"

"The post office has them."

"Yes, the post office has them, get them back."

"We can't. They won't let us have them."

"What do you mean, they won't let you have them?"

"Once something goes in the post office, it belongs to the post office, it's not ours anymore, and it's not written to us and we—even though we're the ones that's sending them, we can't get them back and we've already sent them and they won't let us have them."

I said, "We're going to the post office." So I went over to the post office. I begged, I pleaded, I explained the situation. I said, "We've got to get this back, please, please, please, please, please." So finally they had mercy on me and they said okay.

They said, "We'll give you one hour to find that thing." So we're opening up packages right, left, and sideways and we—thankfully, on the third package we opened, we found it and, of course, we had the real one right there, too.

TS: You put it back in?

CP: Slid it right in there, and I'm right in front of everybody and I'm tearing this thing up and I says, "Never, ever, ever, ever, ever—Do you understand me?"

"Yes, yes, sir."

I said, "You don't know how close you've come to losing your rank right here."

"Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am."

So I said—Well, you talk about panic, panic, panic, panic.

TS: No kidding.

CP: Yeah, but it wa—it was fun. It was little fun things you had to do. And I found that throughout most of my service life, is that you can have a sense of humor and you can play some jokes on people and everything as long as they're not mean and it doesn't cost anybody anything and you're not ruining government property, and it's—

TS: Rifling through the post office and—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Rifl—Yeah, yeah.

TS: —destroying packages. [chuckles]

CP: Yes. Breaking federal laws and—

TS: That's right.

CP: Yeah. [chuckles]

TS: That's right. So how would you say your relationships were with the other male Marines during your service years?

CP: They resented us.

TS: But you personally. Your personal experience.

CP: My personal experience was—I could understand in some ways where they were coming from because it was an all-boys club, had been for a long time. They really wanted to keep it that way and it was hard for them to understand that—and it wasn't women's lib or anything else, it's just that women shouldn't be a Marine. I mean, Marines are guys and so they would—A lot of them really were nice. They were—Their mommas raised them right, is the way you'd—good southern gentlemen would say, and they said, "Hey, she does a good job, that—leave her alone;" that sort of a thing. And I got along, I'd say, with 95% of them just fine. There was no animosity, and they'd either take you or leave you, but they didn't go out of their way to make life miserable for you. It wasn't like they—"Let's go get them," or "Let's get her in trouble," or anything like that. I found that in the civilian life; that's where that came in. But in the military it was more or less just sort of like, well, okay, this—this is part of the job, this is what we're going to do.

TS: How do you—Do you feel you were treated fairly for your promotions?

CP: Yes and no. When I said that I had—I had to leave after thirteen years—is they didn't tell us at the beginning when we signed up that your regular Marine commissioned officer—that if you don't make field grade in thirteen years you have to leave. If I had joined the reserves as an officer that rule did not apply. They had not ever mentioned that at all and I was so gung-ho about going in and being a Marine officer that—I want a regular—I want to be a real Marine—so I signed up for the regulars, and I did make captain early—one year early. Well, when it got close to my thirteenth year, and it—it has—by the thirteenth year you've got to go up—you have to be major; you have to go to field grade; that was the way they put it; you have to be field grade by the thirteenth year.

Our little pyramid was so—so tiny. Our highest-ranking woman officer was a [full] bird colonel. They had two lieutenant colonels, that's the rank below that. They had about nine or ten majors below that and they have a sm—a smattering of captains and the rest were all lieutenants, so our little pyramid was not very big. We were not in competition with the men for promotion. We had our own promotion pyramid, period, and—but we were doing the same jobs as the men were because we were taking over their jobs. Whatever jobs they had we were taking them over but they weren't taking any of that into consideration; you're a woman Marine, you've got that little pyramid.

So when it came time for field grade they had two openings. They could only promote two majors—of the women—and they had already two slots picked out. One was data processing and the other one was disbursing. Neither one were my fields so I wasn't even considered for promotion. So they wrote me my little letter that says, "Thank you very much for your service but you do not fit our needs at this time. Bye."

And I was bitter. I have to admit that I was a little bit angry because the very next year after they did this, someone with a little bit of sanity sat down and said, "That's not right." There—Because they still had MOSs that were—military occupational specialties that were the same as the men's. If you were a truck driver, you were a truck driver whether you were male or female; if you were a cook, you were a cook whether you were male or female; if you were an admin clerk, you were admin clerk whether you were male or female. So they said they should be in competition with each other for promotion. Do away with that little py—pyramid thing. And they did. So then I felt I would have had a really good chance because I had made maj—I mean, captain, a year early, that I was not a slug—or a slackard—

TS: Right.

CP: —or anything else, and that I probably would have been a good field grade officer but I never was given that opportunity.

TS: Could you go into the reserves?

CP: No.

TS: No?

CP: I could as an enlisted person but why would I do that?

TS: Right.

CP: Yeah, they told me—they said, "Fine, we can make you a sergeant."

"You—You go from captain to sergeant?"

"Well, if you want to stay in the Marines you do."

"No." I probably could have traded services.

TS: So that was '76 when you had to get out?

CP: Well, I keep saying '77, but you say '76, so.

TS: Well, '76 I think was on the DD2[14] report. It might have sa—I might have read it wrong [unclear].

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: It probably said '76, but.

TS: Yeah, right in that—around that time, so.

CP: Because I was going by the thirteen year thing.

TS: Right, right, thirteen, yeah. I think—Yeah, well, we'll check that DD—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Sixty-four—

TS: That's something we can look up. We could look that up.

CP: Sixty-four to '77 is thirteen.

TS: So that—Did you feel—You said you felt some bitterness about that and—

CP: Well, I don't know if the word is bitter or not. Disappointment.

TS: Disappointment, well, it's okay. Well, you can have some—because you'd been—were enjoying your time in the Marine Corps, right?

CP: Yes, and it wasn't that I was a bad person and it wasn't that I wasn't doing my job.

TS: But you didn't have the opportunity, really.

CP: I didn't have an opportunity.

TS: Yes. Did you ever get any memorable awards or decorations yourself?

CP: Well, not anything memorable. I mean, I got my normal service-related medals, and yeah, you were in the Marine Corps, you get a medal for that, and—

TS: Right, the standard ones that you—

CP: Yeah. Your meritorious—yeah. I said I can't—as—as an officer you can't even get a good conduct medal. You have to be good for nothing. [both chuckle]

TS: How about sexual harassment; did you ever experience anything like that?

CP: Yes, definitely.

TS: You want to tell any stories about that?

CP: Well, I had—My first encounter was at MCRD San Diego and I was—we'd gone to happy hour, of course, and we were dancing. I was dancing with this young officer and he was very romantic and he waltzed me out onto the patio, waltzed me down close to the river. Immediately threw me down on the grass and tried to have his way with me, which I was having none of. And I think what made me madder than anything, I was in my summer uniform and it was Dacron—nylon, Dacron, and you cannot get grass stains out of that stuff. [laughs] And—And, I mean, when I finally got—got him off me, and he was very mad at me because I led him on—how, I don't know why—I mean, all I did was dance with him but they—he thought I owed him something. And I went and got my purse and left and went home, and I took my uniform off and I thought, "I'm never going to get the grass stains out of this cotton-picking uniform."

So I had said something to one of the other women officers and she says, "Well, he had no right to do that." I mean, let's face it, men are a lot stronger than women, and they—they decide they've got something on their mind, that—that's it. He had not raped me. Now, I—His intentions were to have his way with me, I knew that, there's no doubt about that, because he told me. [chuckles]

"You owe me this," that sort of a thing. Why, I don't know.

But anyway, I thought, "I'm going to report it." Well, I didn't know exactly who he worked for; he wasn't going to tell me who he worked for.

TS: Did you know his name?

CP: I knew his first name.

TS: Okay.

CP: But I could sure pick him out in a line up. And so, I went to the officer who ran the club—

TS: Yes.

CP: —the officers club, to report it, and he said, "So?"

And I said, "This guy—" I said, "I didn't do anything." I was trying to plead my case.

And he said, "Well, what do you want me to do about it?"

I said, "Well," I said, "find out who he is and tell him not to do that anymore."  
[chuckles]

TS: Right.

CP: I felt like a fool then—

TS: Right.

CP: "Now that I've got your attention, what can I really tell you?"

And he says, "Well," he says, "just—just chalk it up to everybody had too much to drink and let it go at that." Well, what else could I do? Except that he knew he got off really good because I'd see him—we'd all go to the club or something, and he'd be over in a corner smirking at me and winking and [chuckles], and punching his buddies and pointing at me, and all that kind of—I knew he was making up all kinds of stories and so I just—that—that was really—tick—ticked me off to no end.

The one that—that I had told Mr. Hunt—the one that he thought was worthy of bringing to all of you's—your attentions—was the one that happened when I was at Quantico, and I was with this warfare team. This is where I'm not going to go into too many details. It's all in records you can go find out for sure where it was and everything, and once you find out for sure who it was then since they list all the names, you would have no problem finding the—the culprit, so I'm not going to mention the names.

But I was in charge of pla—plans and scheduling. How I got that—what this team did—it would—it had put together something called Excalibur—Operation Excalibur, and they would go to different military bases and show how the Marines fit in with their organizations to carry out war, whatever it is, and we can do this if you do this, if you support us here we can support you there, this is—these are our resources and this is how we can do this. And so, it was just a contingency plan and it was really nice and we were set up for something like nine or ten bases that we were going to.

And this one major was the plans and scheduling officer who had been begging and begging and begging to go to—to go with the team because he wanted to go—he wanted to be part of the boy group. And we had one civilian secretary, a lady who was older than dirt, and she was—she was in the office. They had two desks in the office. And so they said, "Okay, we'll—we'll make you a member of the team and your replacement's coming in." Well, he was thrilled to death until he saw me, and then it was, "Oh, boy." He said, "You're a woman."

And I said, "Yeah."

And he goes, "That's a slap in the face."

I said, "To who?"

He said, "To me."

I said, "Why?"

And he said—and he was sincere—He says, "They think that some woman can do my job?"

And I said, "Yeah."

And he goes, "What does that make me look like? I'm better than you. There ain't no woman on this earth that's as—is worth as much as I am." And he says, "You're taking my job. That means that everything that I've done up to this point has been useless and worthless."

I said, "I don't know why you're saying it that way." But that was his attitude and he hated me with a passion, and I don't know what—what started it or anything else. And



one day he got really ticked off about something and he waited until everybody was gone, because I usually was one of the last people to leave the office. We had taken care of stuff, and being a girl you have to try a little harder, and so I was there doing all this little stuff and—and he was at the door and he said, "I want to talk to you."

I said, "Okay."

"Come out here."

Well, he outranked me, I thought, "Okay." He's a major, I wasn't. I was a captain.

I went out in the hall, he says, "Come with me," and he grabbed me by the arm and he drug me into another room and he says, "I've been waiting to do something to you for a long time. Put you in your place."

And I thought, "Uh oh. Now what?"

And he says, "And I'm not really sure yet what it's going to be but I'm going to start this way." And he grabbed me by the neck with his hand, lifted me up as much as he could and threw me up against the wall and he was holding me there. And he had his other fist—he had his right fist balled up. He says, "I can knock your teeth out." He says, "I will break your nose." He says, "I will—" He says, "You're going to be sorry that you ever walked through—through these doors."

And I was scared, I was just absolutely terrified, and I couldn't say anything because he had his—his hand around my neck. And finally he says—he let go, he says, "But you're not worth it. All I'd do is get in trouble." But he says, "And knowing that I could do it," he says, "I feel so much better." And he says, "You can just worry all you want to because," he says, "one way or the other," he says, "before too long," he says, "you're going to be sorry you ever walked in here. Taking my job like that." And he turned around and left.

Well, now what? Am I going to report him? All I could think of was, he didn't grab me hard enough to really leave any marks on my neck. I couldn't prove he grabbed me by the neck. He—I didn't have any cuts or anything on the back of my head to say, "You see what he did? He threw me against the wall." I had a threat; I had a fear of violence; I had a fear of bodily harm; and I did hurt but I—I decided then and there—I said, "What good is it really going to do for me to report him," because the animosity is such that—in his state of mind, he would probably shoot me the next time. He probably wouldn't even worry about the other stuff so," I said, "it's best not to say anything," so I just sort of sucked it up, as they say; "Suck it up, Marine."

The next week they were on their way to go to California and what happened there was, there were eighteen people going to California and they were on—going to go on this plane and one of them was a Royal Marine. Nice man; Colonel Blevins. And he said—he called me and he said, "Could—I left my briefcase," he says, "on my desk." He says, "Could you bring to the air—airfield?"

And I said, "Yes."

So I took—took it over to him, and I went to the plane where I knew they were supposed to be and—and the guy said, "No, they're not here, they're in that plane over there." They said, "This one here, there's some malfunction so they—they're taking the other plane."

So I went over, did all the—So I knew they were taking the different plane. Well, that night, my—one of my best friends was an air traffic controller. She was having dinner at my house and she says, "One of our planes is missing."

And I said, "Missing?"

And she said, "Yeah." She says such-and-such; she gave me the tail number.

And I said, "That's our plane. That's the one my people have gone out on."

And she says, "Where were they going?"

And I said, "They're going to California."

And she says, "Well, this plane crashed into Mt. Tobin [Nevada]."

TS: Into what?

CP: Mt. Tobin; there was a mountain there.

TS: Tobin?

CP: Yeah, a mountain, and—She's going to write it down. So anyway, all people were killed. The plane, they found it, and I got pictures. I still have a whole folder here and it's got the picture of the plane. It's a perfect outline; there are no pieces of airplane. It is a perfect—The plane is there; it burned; the back of the plane did not burn. And when they went—the—Colonel Blevins had been—had gotten out of the plane, and I guess he was dazed or wounded or something, but they found him and he was dead, but he had walked away from the plane. And what was so ironic is that all the equipment was in the back of the plane, in the tail. They shipped back every last piece of all the equipment, the whole presentation was intact, except everybody in my section were dead; every last one of them.

Now, the first thing, because we had this stuff, is to get the team back together again. Now, these were all colonels—lieutenant colonels. These were important people. Majors on up. How are you going to find them? War College. The Marine [Corps] War College and the Naval War College; wherever it was that they went to become generals someday, had been assigned to go to different stations. They'd all graduated. They were so thrilled with their new assignments. All of a sudden the commandant in the Marine Corps, in his wisdom says, "No, colonel, we're not going to send you there. We're going to send you to Quantico. You got—You've got to reconstitute the amphibious warfare team."

So now I have problem number two. Problem number two, is now I have nine—because of the eighteen were a lot of other—other services and other—

TS: Multi-service units?

CP: Multi-service units.

TS: Okay.

CP: So we only had nine Marines died, out of eighteen—but eighteen people did die. And they were ticked, you can imagine. These plum jobs that they had worked so hard to get for their little career ladder, yanked away and they were sent to this little hole in the wall at Quantico to put this team back together. And who was there to greet them? Moi [French word for "me"]. They were not happy; not at all; and they let me know it.

TS: So they took it out on you?

CP: They took it out on me.

TS: What did they do; what happened?

CP: Well, one thing, Colonel Holscomb [?]  
—I think he was the one at the time—was so pleased with my job, and he had sat down and we talked about my fitness report and he was just glowing and he just said, "You are doing such a wonderful job and I just am so pleased with what you're doing, and you're conscientious and you haven't made any mistakes, and we've all gotten where we're going and everything that we've asked of you, you've done and we're," he says, "I—You're an outstanding officer."  
"Thank you." Well, guess what. These new people didn't know me from Adam, so what kind of fitness report did I get? Inconclusive. "We do not know the capabilities of this officer at this time and therefore we are not going to—"  
And I said, "In his paperwork. Look in his desk. It's there. I saw them when he filled it out."  
"Oh, he's dead. He is not going to [unclear] you a fitness report. We're sending you the fitness report. And we're—As far as we're concerned, you don't do diddly-squat." Oh, boy. That was a kick in the teeth.

TS: Yeah. How long did that last there?

CP: Well, I was only there another five or six months. Now, to make a long story shorter—the longer story shorter—This major still bothered me; I still thought about him.

TS: The one who died in the plane crash?

CP: He died in the plane crash. And I thought, "Carol, did you wish this on him? He was so mean and he was so nasty to you and—is this revenge? Is God getting even for you or something like that?" I dreamed one night; I had this dream just as vivid as it could be. Not only vivid but I knew it was a dream. It's one of these dreams that you know is a dream.

TS: This before or after the crash?

CP: After.

TS: After, okay.

CP: And I was dreaming that I was working at my desk—his old desk—and I was—I felt someone looking at me and I looked up and he's leaning on the door jamb, one of his favorite poses; just sort of leaning there like this and he's just snarling at me. Just sneer, sneering, this mumbling under his breath. And I looked up at him—again, this is very lucid—I said, "Major So-and-So," I said, "You are dead. You might as well get that through your head right now. You can't do a thing to me so you might as well just go away and leave me alone." And he looked at me with this strange expression and just kind of disappeared, and I never had another thought of him. It was just like he had just been evaporated from my mind.

TS: It's interesting how the mind works, isn't it?

CP: It is amazing.

TS: Yeah.

CP: I just [makes noise]. Thank you. [both chuckle]

TS: Well, that must have been very difficult, though, to live with those threats and know that there were men out there who were so bitter.

CP: Crazy.

TS: And—Right, and violent. Now, that would have happened to you before the incident that happened to you in San Diego, right? No, let's see, no, San Diego came first.

CP: San Diego came first.

TS: I see, okay.

CP: Yeah, this was toward the end of my career.

TS: So those experiences that you described are really more assault than—

CP: Yes.

TS: —sexual harassment, like, in the office.

CP: Well—

TS: But, I mean, certainly he—he assaulted you—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: I did not have—Well, it depends on how you—

TS: I think physically hurting you is assault.

CP: A lot of it—Yeah, they told dirty jokes.

TS: Yes.

CP: Yeah, and they would make comments about the women all the time. "You can tell when the women Marines are going by because their legs are squishing together and you can smell—" and they're going [unclear].

You just sort of go, "God, they're just so juvenile." And they were very—like what you'd expect of a fourteen year old boy or a thirteen year old boy just starting menopa—I mean pubescence.

TS: Puberty.

CP: Puberty, yeah.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And I said, "This is really stupid." But they'd laugh. They just thought this was so funny, and they would make comments about you. Bumps and lumps and all that—Bumps and all that. Well, we were so used to it. I guess it was our ti—our age group or something that—[unclear] this—it didn't really affect us that much because we could either take it or leave it. If they wanted to make idiots out of themselves that's fine. If they all want to snicker in the corner that's fine too. We just wouldn't have anything to do with them. Forget about a date.

TS: Like if it—if—Were there men that just did that and men that didn't do that?

CP: We had some very fine men. We had some men that—"Well, I don't think we ought to be talking like that," which we thought was real nice but that—that was not in the majority.

TS: Right.

CP: Because they feed on themselves, they—they get bolder as time goes—"Oh, we got by with that," and they get a little bolder than that and then, "Oh, we got by with that, too." And very seldom did you find a woman who would get all huffed up and say, "Don't you say things like that. Don't you dare say things like that."

The thing was—is that their attitude toward us was not necessarily the attitude toward women. These attitude was women Marines, because when the schoolteachers were around, oh, honey would melt in their mouth. When the nurses were around, oh,

they are just so loving and they are so courteous and they open the car doors and, "Honey, can I get you this," and, "Sweetie, can I get you that," and, "Wouldn't you just love—Can you—Would you like to go to the movies? You can pick it out; we can go to dinner; you get to choose where you want to go." And with us it was like, "Yeah—" And—And this—And more than once we heard the same thing and we heard it so often that it just got so we kind of didn't even think about it anymore. It was—He says, "There are only two kinds of women that join the service, especially Marines: whores and lesbians."

And I thought, "Well, there's no way to win against that one, is there?" If you don't sleep with them you're a lesbian, if you do sleep with them you're a whore, so you have your choice. Which one are you going to be? And that was so pervasive—that attitude—and it was like, "Oh, everyone knows it's true." Who's everyone? So it was just one of those—Honestly, now, where if someone even says to somebody, "I think it's gone too far, this sexual harassment thing."

Like, "Gee you've got a pretty dress on today."

"That's sexual harassment; you noticed I'm wearing a dress." Well, jeesh.

TS: Well, I don't know that that's what they say is sexual harassment.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Well, it's gone a little bit—

TS: [chuckles] Yeah.

CP: —exaggerated there but, I mean, it's just sort of like—

TS: Well, maybe what it is, is that bar was so high before—Right? —for anybody to say anything that it has gone down—been lowered over the years and now maybe it's—

CP: It's overdone.

TS: Well, maybe in certain circumstances but you—one of the things that is interesting that—that you say about it—you've talked a little bit about feminism, and the same kind of things are going on in the civilian employment, with women that are go—even though maybe the Marines are treating Marine officers and enlisted women differently than they—they treat other women, but it's still going on in the greater culture at this time in the 60's and 70's.

CP: What was interesting to me was the fact that you didn't notice this in the enlisted ranks. Now, you tell me that.

TS: Why—I don't know—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Why?

TS: —I talked to a lot of women—enlisted women that have brought it up.

CP: I know, but I mean as pervasive as it was—because the Marines were marrying Marines.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And this Marine would marry that Marine and they fell in love and they loved and honored and obeyed each other and they thought everybody was wonderful. Two women Marines that I know married Marine officers.

TS: Enlisted Marines, you mean?

CP: No, I'm talk—I said officers.

TS: Oh, officers. Oh, okay.

CP: Well, first of all we couldn't—we—you can't.

TS: Fraternization.

CP: You can't, no fraternization, so if you were a woman officer you could only date an officer. The same thing, if you were a male officer you could only date an officer, which was why they were going after the school teachers and the nurses and why we always—

TS: Right.

CP: —make these—make these fun things about the nurses and the—we used GD [God damn?] nurses [chuckles] and teachers. And I said I—It was funny because we would be in the ladies' room—some—I and another woman officer—and listen to them plot and, it would make the sitcoms today just really look pale in comparison, about how there—there was this couple women's colleges or something close to Quantico; I don't even remember now where they are. And so, whenever there was a male graduation or something they would send invitations to the male officers to come to these little soirées and they would go down and they would get to meet all these women. And the women would—because then the Marine Corps felt they had to reciprocate, so they would have these little gatherings and invite the women from the colleges up to be with the male

officers. And so you'd be in the—We'd go like little—the fly on—on the wall. We'd be in civilian clothes just like they were.

TS: Yes.

CP: They didn't know we—we were officers and we would just listen as they were plotting.

"Well, which one do you like?"

"Well, I like that one."

"Well, you go after him, I'll go after the other one."

"Well, he's from Mississippi."

"Well, I don't want to live in Mississippi."

"Where do you want to live?"

"Well, I thought maybe Tennessee."

"Well, okay. I—So-and-so's from Tennessee."

"Oh, he is?"

"Yeah, I understand his dad has a lot of land."

"Oh, well, I'll tell you want. I'll trade you. If you give me the guy from Tennessee and I'll give you the one—what—do you like Alabama? That one's from Alabama. He's kind of cute too."

"Okay, I'll go with Alabama."

And they were sort of like, "What do they have to offer? Where are they from and who wants who?" And—And then they would plan their attack and how they were going to do this.

"Well, but he's with you tonight."

"Well, I can get out of it because—" and—

God, I'd just sit there and go, "I have never heard such planning." These women were very clever; they were really good. But it was—it was kind of funny.

And what got me—I think that's why our—our—our feeling about the officers went down a lot—was they were so gullible. I mean, the women would come out and, "Oh, honey, you're just so wonderful. You're so strong and you're so brave and you're a Marine officer, and I am just so impressed," and you—and the guys kind of melt all over the place. [makes noise], the old hook in the mouth, I've got to reel them in now.

And it was—It was—I thought, "How can you be so stupid? How can you—Why?" [chuckles]

TS: Right. Well—

CP: But they were adorable.

TS: Would you consider yourself a feminist at all?

CP: Not really. I don't consider myself a feminist. I am not—have never ever stood up in a protest; I have never marched; I have never written letters to anybody about it.



TS: Well, if you consider that there [unclear] quality in oppor—quality and opportunity and access to opportunity, in that sense of feminism.

CP: Again, it depends on—

TS: Okay.

CP: It's—It really depends on circumstances and everything. It's this—Well, it's like, I was just reading an article, which was really true, about equal—this thing about equal pay for equal—women and men should be paid equally for the same job.

TS: Same work.

CP: Same work, yeah, and then it was explained why that's not necessarily true; it was a—

TS: Well, in the—in the Marine Corps you got paid the same—

CP: Yeah, well—

TS: —pay.

CP: —we had no problem there. We—

TS: Yes.

CP: —by your rank.

TS: But that didn't work that way in the civilian world—

CP: No.

TS: —so that you didn't have that sort of—

CP: Yeah, so we didn't have that problem.

TS: —framework, right.

CP: No. But—

TS: But for the other things that you're talking about, like, promotions—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —not having that pyramid and limited access to promotions [unclear]—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: But, see, that was the culture of the times, too.

TS: Yes.

CP: And the fact is, is that we were a very young organization. We only came in a little bit before World War II, even as women Marines, so it was very new yet, and everybody's still trying to—You stop and think about the mid-thirties when they first started having women in the—in the Marine Corps, and then building it up to when I went in, in early sixties; that has not been a long history of having women in the service.

TS: Yes, true. It's true.

CP: And I think that a lot of people just say, "Well, it sounds like a grand idea but how do we really implement it?" Like—When I was in all these different sections and things we didn't have separate toilets or anything like that. You went to the head; there it is. And then it was funny, you get out into the civilian world and, "Oh, I can't work there, they only have one bathroom. The men use the bathroom, I can't use the bathroom men use." I thought, "Are you married? You have brothers?" I do not understand the difference.

TS: [chuckles] Well, do you want to talk a little bit about—Let's see, we haven't gotten to Camp Lejeune.

CP: Okay.

TS: Was that the last place that you were stationed?

CP: Yeah.

TS: Now, along the way did you supervise or command anyone?

CP: I was a c—I was a—a company commander for a women Marine company.

TS: Was that at Quantico?

CP: If you want to stop that I'll go bring pictures.

TS: Okay, I'll pause it here for a second.

[Recording paused]

TS: —but then we started looking for that picture.

CP: Yeah.

TS: Okay, we took a little break to look at some of the pictures but we didn't find the one you were looking for.

CP: It's around.

TS: It's around. [chuckles] But it was going to show that you were taking over as company commander—

CP: Of the women Marine company.

TS: At Camp Lejeune?

CP: Yes.

TS: Okay.

CP: Headquarters and service battalion.

TS: So it was around '73, '74-ish? Somewhere in there?

CP: Well, it was my last duty station so—

TS: Okay.

CP: —before I got out.

TS: How did you end—How did you like that? Did you enjoy that—

CP: Oh, yeah.

TS: —assignment.

CP: I was—that was really fun. I got an education; these young ladies can really educate you.

TS: Yeah, in what way?

CP: Because that time I was a old lady.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: I was in my late thirties.

TS: Oh, right, yeah.

CP: Well, thirties.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And one of my—my favorite stories, if you've got time.

TS: I got time.

CP: Well, is a—As a company commander, of course, all these people are your responsibility, and they're really young ladies. They're not children anymore so you can't really treat them like children but they sometimes don't act as mature as they should. And every week we would have an inspection. On Monday morning they would all fall out and we would all look at them, make sure they were looking good. And this one I noticed was beginning to thicken up a little bit in the middle and no place else which was a—kind of an indication that there's a possibility that she might be pregnant, and you can't just come right out and say, "I think you're pregnant." So the next week I looked at her and I said, "Are you feeling okay?"

She says, "Yeah, I feel fine. I feel great," and she's real happy.

And third week I said, "You're not looking too good. Are you sure you're okay?" Well, I used my little psychological warfare on her for another two or three weeks, and telling her that she really looked—that she wasn't really up to par and she needed to go to get a physical.

TS: Ah.

CP: And I talked her into go getting a physical. I said, "Just for my piece of mind I think you need to go get a physical."

So she agreed and we went off to the place and I kind of hinted to the doctor, I says, "I think she's pregnant but I'm not sure and I don't want to accuse her of it and just—if you can kind of work this in."

And he says, "Oh, sure." So, anyway, he worked it all in and he comes back out and I was sitting there and this young lady was sitting there and—and he says, "Ann[?]," he says, "you're in perfect health." He says, "You're in really good shape and nothing wrong with you except one small thing."

And, "What, what?"

And he says, "You're pregnant." Well, she just threw a hissy fit.

"I am not pregnant. There is absolutely no way on God's green earth that I could be pregnant," and—and she was twenty.

And he said, "Well, you are. You are definitely pregnant." He says, "You're about four months along."

And she says, "I am—," and that was when if you were pregnant you couldn't stay in the service.

TS: Okay.

CP: You had to get out, period, and so she would be discharged. And she says, "I can't be pregnant. I—There's just no way."

And so, I started thinking about this and I—I said, "Well," I said, "do you know how you get pregnant?"

She says, "Well, yes."

And I said, "Well—"

And the doctor said, "Well, if you know how you get pregnant—Didn't you do something where you could get pregnant?"

And she said, "No."

And I thought, "Okay, let's go through this again." I said, "Who told you how you get pregnant?"

"My mother."

TS: Uh-oh.

CP: "My mother told me—"

And I said—

"—not to do and I wouldn't get pregnant."

I said, "What did your mother tell you?"

She says, "My mother told me, 'Don't let any man kiss you before you're married.'"

Boing. And we went, "Oh."

I said, "So you and your boyfriend have never kissed."

"Oh, absolutely not. I'm a good girl."

And the doctor, "[clears throat] Well, Miss So-and-So—" he says, "Did you ever—" And then he goes into the other explanation.

"Oh, yeah, all the time."

And he just looks at her and he says, "You're pregnant; your mother lied to you."

"My mother wouldn't lie to me."

"She lied to you. This is how you get pregnant." [chuckles]

TS: Oh, my goodness.

CP: And—And then we had to contact her mother. Her mother came to get her and wanted to sue the Marine Corps for getting her baby in trouble because we didn't protect her, and I just looked at her and I says, "Did it ever occur to you to tell your daughter the facts of life as they really were instead of that if she kissed a guy she'd get pregnant?"

"Well, I thought it would—If she didn't kiss him it wouldn't go any further."

Wrong. So—[chuckles] But it was so funny; it was just sort of like [makes exasperated noise].

TS: Yeah. Did—Do—Do you think that—that rule about having women get out when they were pregnant, did you think it was a good rule or a rule that [unclear]—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: Well, I think that it was a good rule.

TS: Yeah.

CP: For the simple reason is that, well, the Marine Corps does not—one of their things for a long time was if the Marine Corps wanted you to have a wife he would have issued you one. And it's the same thing. I mean, what is an unwed mother going to do with a baby?

TS: Well, even wed, though, I mean, even if they were married and had a baby.

CP: Yeah.

TS: They still had to get out.

CP: Well, yeah. Well, we didn't have any pregnancy uniforms. Now they do, I understand.

TS: Yeah.

CP: We have these uniforms you can wear when you're pregnant. But there's been a lot of changes that—Just because the woman has to carry the baby doesn't mean that she should be penalized. Someone got her pregnant and if she has to get out, throw him out, too, for getting her pregnant. I—If you want to be honest about it, it's just sort of like—so I—I think it's fine if they work it out right.

TS: Let them stay in, you mean?

CP: Yeah, let them stay in if they want to and—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —they might have to go on unpaid leave or something like that; I mean, you can't pay them if they're not working. [chuckles]

TS: Well, we pay people when they're just disabled for six months—

CP: Yeah.

TS: — with a broken leg—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —and stuff, or not working; they still get paid.

CP: Consider that they're disabled for nine months or six months [unclear]—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: They were probably working for most of that time.

CP: Yeah, well, at the time that I was in we had—if they were married they could stay in.

TS: But not if they had children.

CP: If they what?

TS: Not if they had children.

CP: Right.

TS: Right.

CP: But I don't remember now exa—when I was in Oahu—I'm trying to think if it was—it was a woman Marine of—a woman Marine—or one of the very first that was allowed to be pregnant and—and still be in the service.

TS: I think they started giving waivers around that time in the—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —like, early seventies.

CP: Yeah, and because—She was the best little clerk typist we had. She would just type, type, type, type, type, type. And so, she was sitting there and it—I can remember it was a Friday afternoon, sort of like now, and it was Hawaii and it was dreary and it was rainy and everything, and she's typing away and—and I know she had a husband because she called him periodically, and she says, "Well, I don't know if I should call So-and-So yet." There's going to be another Joe. "I don't know if I should call Joe yet." She says, "No." Type, type, type, type, type. "Well, maybe I should."  
I says, "Why, what's going on?"

She says, "Well, since this morning I've been feeling a little squeezezy [?]," and she says, "and I'm feeling worse and worse and worse and I think that maybe I'm going to have a baby."

I said, "Yeah, we're go—you're going to have a baby all right."

She says, "Oh, I mean pretty soon," and about that time she—the water broke.

And I said, "You're probably going to have a baby; I think you ought to call your husband."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: So she says, "Okay, I'll call him." So she calls him matter-of-factly and she keeps right on typing; she's typing away. He walks in and she says, "Just a minute, I'm almost finished," and she finishes up and she says, "Is this okay?"

And I said, "Yeah, that's fine, go. Get out of here."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: So she says, "All right, bye," and he helps her out to the car and off they go. Monday morning she comes walking in; eight o'clock in the morning she comes walking in.

"Well, I'm ready to go to work."

"You're what?"

"Yeah, my sister came. She's going to take care of the baby while I'm at work."

I said, "No, you're not." I said, "You go home with that baby."

And she says, "Well, I feel just fine."

I said, "No."

"Oh. You want to see the baby?"

"Yeah, but I hope you didn't bring it out."

"Yeah, my sister's in the car with it." So she goes out, she brings the baby in [unclear]. I just couldn't believe it. [both chuckle] She had had it and—It was her very first child and she had had it within five hours from the time that she left the office.

"Boing," she said, "there it was." [laughs]

TS: And then back at work, huh?

CP: Yeah, and she just came right back to work, "You want to see it?"

TS: Yeah.

CP: She was so funny.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And I can imagine what her children are—She was a fun momma. That's really fun.



TS: Yeah, neat. Well, do you—Can you think of any other kind of changes that went on, just in the time you were, in for women?

CP: I think that one of the things that—I'm in a kind of a time warp because of the simple fact that unlike other professions where you keep up with it—I said, "When I left the Marine Corps I left the Marine Corps." Like I said, I was kind of ticked off at them for a while.

TS: Right.

CP: And so, I didn't follow the trends. I didn't really follow the—what was happening.

TS: I just mean while you were in, not after.

CP: Yeah. So while I was in I could see that things changed slowly, and I could see that things were going to change slowly. I could see that there was going to be that tipping point where we're going to have to really take a lot of this stuff seriously, but basically they had—why should we—or why should they have to keep bending to the civilian viewpoint if they—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Who's they?

CP: They.

TS: The military?

CP: The military. Because it's not the civilians, they aren't in the military, and I see this today—of course, you didn't want me to mention today—where you have—

TS: No, you can mention today, that's fine.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: —where you have the public opinion that sways the military. Well, enough people stand up and ye—yell and carry on and—Well, we'll just change it. Well, it's not always change for the better; there's a reason for the things being the way they were.

TS: What things do you think have not been for the better?

CP: Well, when they—they—they lean too much into the Congress, to their wishes and stuff.

TS: But what kind of things specifically?

CP: Well, like I said, I'm not following it one by one by one.

TS: Well, let me ask you this.

CP: But, I mean, it's the fact that there was a time when you relied on your commanders in the field.

TS: Yes.

CP: And now it's like, no, you can't really rely on the commanders in the field because they work for us. The military works for us. We are the people and they work for us and we don't like what they're doing and therefore we are going to not allow them to do certain things. I mean, the military is not perfect. They make boo-boos. They can make some really big boo-boos, but a lot of the boo-boos are because of miscommunication and stuff, so—and I'm babbling and I don't want to babble.

TS: No, that's fine. Well, do you think there's anything that women can't do in the military or in the Marine Corps?

CP: I think there are a lot of things that women shouldn't do—

TS: Okay.

CP: —in the military.

TS: Even if they can do them?

CP: Even if they can do it.

TS: Like what, for example.

CP: Combat.

TS: Combat? Okay.

CP: And the reason being, and everyone looks at me like, "You're just so prudish; you're so [unclear]."

TS: Well, you're certainly not the only person with that opinion, Carol.

CP: Well. Well, the reason I say that is, my first experience, not with women—our women in combat—not military women in combat, but those photographers and newswomen that

they sent over to Vietnam that so many of our people got killed. "Our people" being my Marines, got killed protecting the womenfolk because they just sort of went in with the idea, "Well, I want this picture," or "I want this story. I want to get up at the front. I want to take—I want to be noticed; I'm going to put in this good report," and they—it's—"You stay here. You stay right here. Don't you even think of moving, lady. We have a job to do."

And they'd hear this scuttle, scuttle, scuttle, and here she is right about two steps behind them; "Well, I'm here to do a job; I'm here to do a job." And then when they start getting shot at, the first thing the guys would do is turn around, grab her, push her out of the way, shove her down on a—on a—behind a rock or something. Meanwhile, they're getting killed because they're still exposed, whereas if they had just been out on their own, by the first shot they would have been behind the rock, they would have been behind the hill, but no, we got to save the women folk. And then a lot of the women did—did get killed over there, but a lot of them, too, are so proud that the—that the men protected them and kept them from harm. And I thought—And you—you cannot help that. This is built in, I think, in—in just gender make up, is that it's a basic human instinct to protect the women folks no matter what. And you get a woman who gets out there and she says, "I am—I don't need you to protect me. I can—Myself—That I shoot as well as you do. I can run as fast as you can run, and I can climb as well as you can climb, and I'm going to get out there, and I've already proved that I can do it. Just leave me alone; let me go with you."

Well, how can you tell her no? She's already proven that she can do it but not under the ideal situations of—of combat. So they get out there—bang, bang, bang—and she's doing a fine job. She's right out there doing the same thing—little bead-brained[?] men at this point—She's getting shot at.

This protective thing comes right back out and all this, "Oh, we're not going to interfere if—she has to take her chance with everybody else," goes out the window and they're going to try to save her again.

TS: But you haven't really heard those kind of reports coming from Iraq and Afghanistan of women being protected by men in those kind of combat situations.

CP: Well, I don't know.

TS: Yeah. I just—From—

CP: But I mean—

TS: —what we've heard—

CP: —we don't know what comes out—

TS: No.

CP: —of those situations. It may be that it not—it doesn't exist.

TS: Well, it might be, too, that in today's military the training that they do isn't the training that they did when you were in, and so they're working side by side all the way through and it's not something new when they get into combat.

CP: That's right.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: It's what they're used to doing.

CP: I admire them, that they want to do it and that they can do it. I mean, I couldn't have done it. Forget it. "How long will you last?"  
"Oh, about two seconds."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: You know?

TS: Right.

CP: "Would you like to go?"  
"No."  
"You want to be a hero?"  
"No."  
"You want to win a medal?"  
"No, just let me—"

TS: Do you think they can be fighter pilots?

CP: Sure.

TS: Yeah? Just, like, the hand to hand direct combat, infantry, kind of level?

CP: The thing about being a fighter pilot is, yeah, there's a possibility you're getting shot down, but they are also in control. The enemy's not really in control. If they see that they're getting into a real bad situation they can always turn away, they don't have to complete that mission. They still have—use their brain to say this is not a good idea and I'm going to live to fight another day, and they have proven themselves; the helicopter—woman helicopter pilots have done a good job from what I understand.

TS: Did you have any heroes or heroines when you were in the service? Anybody that you looked up to and admired?

CP: Well, our director of Women Marines I thought was—because she was at the forefront of our time, and she was trying to push for more equality too.

TS: What was her name? If you don't know, that's okay, we can look her—look it up.

[Colonel Barbara J. Bishop was director of the Women Marines from 1964-1969 and Colonel Jeanette I. Sustad was director from 1969-1973.]

CP: I'll think of it in just a minute. Somewhere I have a card from her.

TS: Yeah. We can add that to the transcript, Carol, that's fine.

CP: But anyway. But our director of women Marines.

TS: Yes.

CP: And just the—just the ones that had been in for a while and had—it wasn't—I didn't have any hero worship or anything. You can look back on the history of the Marine Corps and yeah, everyone loves Chesty Puller and that sort of a thing. So yeah. I mean, it would be un-American if you didn't; that—that sort of a thing.

[Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller was a U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant and one of the most decorated members of the Marine Corps.]

TS: Right. Well, when you—We talked a little bit about this earlier when you found that you had to get out after thirteen years and you returned to civilian life. How was that transition for you? You kind of—

CP: Difficult.

TS: —talked about it a little bit, yeah.

CP: It was difficult because I still had the "Yes, sir, no, sir" mentality, and I worked for the city of Fort Worth. It wasn't what you'd call a community organizer but we worked for HUD [Housing and Urban Development], and we would hold public meetings and talk about the different housing programs we had and how they could participate and all that, so that was—that was kind of fun.

My boss happened to be Hispanic, name of Ramone Lahardo[?] and how I got hired was, there was this Caucasian woman who was working in the—this section, and she was in charge of the little section, he was in charge of her. So she was looking for

someone to fill—fill a spot, and she had gone to him and said that she wanted me, and he had looked at my resume and he told her, "No." He said, "We don't want her."

And she says, "Well, why not?"

He said, "Because she won't stay. She's too qualified. She'll—She's going to come get her foot in the door and then she's—She was an officer in the Marine Corps, she's probably got ambition, she's not going to stay here. She is just going to be a waste of your time and mine to get her trained and have her just walk out the door." He says, "I don't want to hire her."

And she says, "Well, I want her."

And so, finally Ramone said, "Give me one reason that I should let you hire her. Just one good reason."

And she said, "I want someone to go to lunch with."

And he—he kind of looked at her and he said—I found this out later—he kind of looked at her and went, "Oh, well, that's a good reason. Okay, you can hire her." [both chuckle] And we did, we went to lunch almost every day. It was so funny because they were all guys, or they—and it was just really funny; "I want someone to go to lunch with."

TS: [chuckles] That's a great reason.

CP: Yeah.

TS: Now, did you consider yourself a trailblazer while you were in the Marine Corps?

CP: No.

TS: Not even though you were—described how there were so many—few women officers at the period of time in this little pyramid?

CP: Well, it was—when it's the norm you don't consider yourself a trailblazer. You can look back and say, "Oh, yeah, boy, I was one of the first ones that did this, and I was one of the first women ever to land on an aircraft carrier during—at sea."

TS: Oh, you were? When did you do that?

CP: I did that—I can't tell you the exact year.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Was that out in San Diego?

CP: No, no, no, that was when I was on the east coast.

TS: Oh, yeah? Quantico?

CP: When we were doing other warfare training.

TS: Okay.

CP: And this was my—this was my Academy Award situation.

TS: Okay.

CP: And so, we got—Oh, it had to have been Quantico because I had my company—I was company commander and I had my little women Marines—

TS: Okay.

CP: And so, they said that they wanted to have women participate in this thing as villagers and as different people, and—and they were doing war games and they had to—one of the women had to be the ambassador's wife—they're in some little country, heaven knows where—and I wanted—and I was going to be the ambassador's wife. I had this ambassador who was—who was—and I—I was going to be evacuated and they were going to take me by helicopter to the ship—the aircraft carrier—which was off—you could see it on the horizon, way off in the distance. And I—We were told—They said, "Now, women have never been on an aircraft carrier at sea before while it was in—actually in operations."

And so, they'd been,—when it was parked, docked somewhere, they could get on it and look around and then get off and everything but never at sea, so I thought, "Oh, well, this is going to be fun."

And so, he said, "I want you to pick so many women," I think six of us, and he said, "We'll—We'll give them their script," and he said, "it's unscripted script. It tells them who they are and what they are and from then on they just have to play it by ear."

So I said, "Okay," and I said, "Are there any rules for us how to play it?"

He said, "No." He said, "Whichever way you want to do it." He said, "Whatever you think would be possible or feasible in any way, good, bad or indifferent."

And I thought, "Okay."

So we get ready to go and, of course, the people who are monitoring—they are all in their little green utilities and they had a whis—white cape around their hats so you knew that they were not actually participants but they were just observers, and they were writing things down all the time. You could never trust a Marine with a clipboard because they're all taking notes. So we said, "Okay."

So we go out and I am at this particular location and they have the simulator fire, bombs going off, people radioing to each other about what's happening where, "You only have so much time to get off the island," and then—and all this. And so, this one comes over and he says, "Mrs. So-and so," because whatever her name was, he says—he said, "We're here to evacuate you." He says, "The helicopter will be here in two minutes." He says, "You need to get on the helicopter."

And I said, "I'm not leaving without my husband." I thought that was reasonable.

And he said, "Your husband's not here."

"I'm not leaving without my husband."

He says, "He's already at the ship; we evacuated him earlier; he is there; he's waiting for you; just get on the helicopter when it comes."

And I said, "Not without my furniture."

And he looked at me and he says, "Lady—" he's getting a little frustrated. He says, "We are evacuating you by helicopter. Do you understand? Helicopter." He says, "You get on the helicopter, we'll take you to the ship."

And I'm, "No." I looked around and there was this wooden crate. It was maybe about five feet long, maybe about three feet on one side, two feet on another; a nice box; nice big heavy box. And I said, "That is my grandmother's breakfront that I inherited. It has been with me everywhere I have gone and I am not leaving it here behind. That has to go with me."

He says, "No, it is not going with you."

"I'm not going." And he reached over to grab me and I go, "No, don't you touch me. You touch me, I will scream. I will tell my husband, the ambassador, that you attacked me so don't you even think about touching me." I was just as bitchy as I could be.

And he just looked at me for a minute and he says, "Get on the helicopter when it comes."

"Not without the breakfront."

"He says, "This is the last time I'm telling you."

I said, "I'm telling you too. I'm not getting on without the breakfront."

Well, the helicopter comes down. Meanwhile, we have three wounded Marines laying there, with the blood and everything all over them, to be evacuated and they were going to evacuate them along with Mrs. So-and-so.

So the helicopter finally comes down and lands and—and everybody jumps out and they're—they're starting—they're grabbing the wounded to take them aboard the helicopter and they said, "And this is the ambassador's wife, she's going too."

She says, "No." I said, "I'm not. I am not going. Not without my breakfront."

Well, this captain was turning absolutely purple. He says, "I will pick you up; I will tie you up; I will put you on that helicopter." And, I mean, I had never felt so real in my life that this was honest-to-god real, and I think he was feeling the same way. Yeah, I thought he was going to have a heart attack.

And I was crying and I was screaming and everything else. "I'm not going without it. It's been in the family," and I'm going on and on and these people are kind of looking at us—"My god, what's wrong with this woman?"

And I said, "Don't you even think of touching me. Without my breakfront I'm not going. How will you explain that to everybody; that you just left me here? And you just left me here to die?"

"God, the ambassador's wife, we can't leave her here to die."

Meanwhile, the little people are writing stuff down. And finally the pilot says, "We've got to get out of here." He said, "We've got to get out of here," he said, "within a minute, a minute and a half at the most." He says, "The enemy is coming," he says,



"they're going to surround us." He says, "We've got to get [unclear]." He says, "Take that thing and put it on the helicopter."

He says, "We can't put that on the helicopter. There's no room on the helicopter. We will have to take off two of the wounded."

And he says, "Take off our wounded so she can put that pile of junk in there?"

And he said, "Yes. She's not going without it."

He says, "I don't believe this." He says, "You've got forty-five seconds."

They went and they took the two bodies off the helicopter, took my big crate, threw it on the helicopter, threw me in behind it, slammed the door shut, zoom, off we went.

We get to the carrier, [unclear], jumped off. Okay, we went to the captain's quarters. Nice. Sat down. Now they don't know what to do with us. Well, it was just me. I was the only girl who really got to go.

So the other—the other five had to stay on the island, and I'm sitting there going, "Da-ti-da-ti-da-ti-da." I said, "Where is my husband?"

They just looked at me. They said, "Lady, games are over, we're not playing anymore. You just sit there and we'll—when we get ready we'll take you back—back to the base."

And I just thought, "Well, that's not very nice." [laughs]

And so, the next day they had a debriefing and so they were—what went right and what went wrong and everything, and so it came to our little display, and this poor captain was still throwing a hissy fit and arguing that that was—he said, "I still feel," he says, "that I was in the right," he says, "and that—," he said, "we should never, ever—," he says, "it would worry me to my dying day that we took those wounded men off the helicopter so she could carry that pile of junk on there and get her to the—," he says, "Why?" He says, "It is wrong, it is wrong, it is wrong, it is wrong."

And the powers that be who know said, "No, Captain. Your job—What was your job? What was your assignment?"

He's fuming and he says, "Get the ambassador's wife to the ship."

"And what did you do?"

"I got the ambassador's wife to the ship."

"Would you have done that if she—if you had had to leave her? She would not have been at the ship, would she?"

"No."

"And you would not have done your mission, right?"

"No."

"So you did the right thing by taking her."

"But it's wrong. You never leave your wounded behind," and he just went off on another tangent and I'm sitting there, "Nanny-nanny-na-na." [both chuckle] But it was this protocol thing again.

TS: Right.

CP: It was that, you know you do not leave—Yes, that is the Marine motto: You never leave your wounded behind. But, hey, she wants that breakfront, you take that breakfront and you take her and you get her where you need to take her, so—

TS: Interesting, very interesting, so—

CP: But that was fun.

TS: Yeah, it sounds like it was fun. What—Had you considered—Do you consider yourself an independent-minded person?

CP: Yes.

TS: Do you think you were before you went into the Marine Corps?

CP: Probably.

TS: Do you think it—the Marine Corps had any influence over those kind of things?

CP: It gave me permission to be more independent. I don't know how to word that as to what I mean by "gave me permission."

TS: Yes.

CP: Is that it put me in more situations where I could—I could do it, because if you're just in the civilian world you're not going to be given very many opportunities.

TS: So you were in positions of authority—

CP: Yes.

TS: —and responsibility—

CP: Yes.

TS: —at a younger age, really, than—

CP: Yes.

TS: —than you had been—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —or would have been in the civilian—

CP: And you didn't give excuses why you couldn't do it, and it's just going back to this mission thing.

TS: Yes.

CP: "This is what we want you to do, now do it." And that was the whole thing, is that when they—they gave you something to do, they didn't really tell you how to do it. That was up for—you to decide how you were going to do it, as long as it wasn't illegal and you didn't kill anybody you weren't supposed to. If you weren't breaking any civil laws—

TS: Right.

CP: —you do it, and so that was good.

TS: I forgot to ask you about the—you didn't have this when you were in because there was no "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," but as far as the homosexuality in the service, how you said that earlier, about they're whores or lesbians but—

CP: Yeah.

TS: —there's the issue of homosexuality, and when you were in you just—you couldn't be a homosexual and be in the military, and then later came the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and then now that's been repealed. What do you think about that whole issue?

CP: I know why they had it to begin with, is the fact that where it was wrong, this "Don't Ask—" I mean, where it was wrong in that don't let anyone know, is because—just from what I understand is the reasoning behind it, is you could be blackmailed. If you were not allowed to be a homosexual, and you were in the service, say that you were getting up in rank a little bit and you—you had a good career and so far everything's fine. Then somebody comes and says, "I want you to do this for me, because if you don't do this for me I'm telling on you and there goes your career, and I have pictures, and I can prove that this is what you've been doing, and I have a letter from your lover who says that, 'Yes, you are a homosexual,' so you have to do this."

And, of course, the guy says, "Okay, I'll do it." And no—So therefore he would do something that he shouldn't do because of the fear of someone finding out. Now, if you take away that fear—If someone sits there and says, "Well, I'm going to tell that you're a homosexual."

He says, "Go ahead. Tell them. I have no fear about that. It's not going to affect me." Now that portion of it is gone; they can't blackmail you unless you have a fear of something that you need to hide.

TS: So do you think that having—not having that policy gone is a good thing then?

CP: They repealed it?

TS: Yeah, you can be openly gay or lesbian in the military now.

CP: Well, I don't know—I don't know—I—It's going to be on an individual basis, in a way, about how blatant you want to be, and I think that some will be asking for some trouble by flaunting it—if this is it, but I think that if they just continued to be discreet or whatever, or did not cause too much brouhaha, that it would be okay, but I don't know. I don't ever remember even thinking about it.

TS: Yeah.

CP: We didn't really—Yeah, okay. We didn't know anybody, and for us women who were behaving ourselves, we were not lesbians, I'll tell you that right now. There wasn't one of us in there that was that inclination; it just wasn't there. And I said, "It just amazes me that somebody would think that you're either a whore or a lesbian." I said, "How about just being a nice—a nice American girl that wants to serve her country. Has that ever occurred to you? No."

TS: Right. Well, what—Oh, would you recommend the service to a young woman today?

TS: Yes, I would. I recommend the service for every red-blooded American between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. I think it should be like other countries where it's mandatory, and the reason being is quite simple. It—I don't know what we're raising nowadays. I just—I'm on the sidelines watching it, and everything seems to be going in the—the people—the world owes them a living, "It's me first thing, it's only what I want. I don't have to listen to anybody else, I don't have to do anything. If I want to work, fine, if I don't want to work, that's fine, too."

No, the world is not like that, not in real life, and this may be while you're growing up and all that, and then you go out to get your first job and your boss criticizes you; "I quit." And then you get the second job and somebody says something to you; "I quit." And then you can't get the third job and you go home and live with mom, and—and all this kind of stuff. "Well, the world is just mean to me, and I just don't see that I can do anything anymore."

That's because you never learned to stand on your own two feet. You never learned how to—how to deal with other people or not get your own way. That if somebody is paying you, they are paying you to do X, they're not paying you for you to say, "I don't want to do X," and so if they're giving you a paycheck and they want you to do X, you do X. It's that simple. It's a contract. But, "No, I don't want to do that."

And I think that the military would be very good because it would get them out of—away from their own peers, get them away from mom and dad, and the ones that are keeping them in this state, and teach them that they're—they can do things on their own.

TS: Yes.

CP: That they are smart and that they are intelligent, they are—have ambition when they really want to.

TS: Well, do you think your life has been different because you joined the Marine Corps?

CP: Oh, definitely.

TS: In what ways?

CP: I probably would have stayed somewhere around Beaumont, Texas, and hated it every second, and I might have got a job with some school system somewhere and I would be married to some little beer-belching Cajun or something. Nothing wrong with Cajuns, I love them dearly. But I said sitting there in a clapboard house with my rowboat tied up to the dock, or something, and I said I never would have had the experience of—of having a well-rounded whatever.

TS: You got to travel.

CP: I—Well, I never got to go overseas or anything—Well, I went to Hawaii.

TS: Well, you traveled around the country.

CP: But I traveled around the country.

TS: Got to the east coast, west coast.

CP: And I did get a Master's degree. You asked me—

TS: Did you get that in the service?

CP: Yes.

TS: Oh, you did, okay.

CP: I said I never took advantage of any of the VA programs, but I guess I did in a way because—

TS: What did you get your Master's in?

CP: Counseling.

TS: Yeah?

CP: From Pepperdine University.

TS: When did you get that?

CP: That was while I was in Camp Lejeune.

TS: Oh, okay.

CP: It's old PU.

TS: Pepperdine University?

CP: We used to laugh about it all the time, about—I think it was PU. I mean, I know it was PU, I just—I think it was Lejeune. It might have been while I was at Quantico.

TS: Yes.

CP: But an—I think it was Lejeune. Everything goes together after a while.

TS: [chuckles] That's okay.

CP: [But we were making fun of our schooling?], is the fact that we had the teachers come out to us and we would go Friday night from 6:00 [p.m.] to 11:00, Saturday from 8:00 [a.m.] to 8:00 [p.m.], and Sunday from 1:00 [p.m.] to 6:00.

TS: Some long days.

CP: Huh?

TS: Some long days.

CP: And we would do that for a month for each of our courses that we were taking. We were taking twelve courses so that was one a month, and we had instructors being flown out from Arizona, New Mexico, and California and Minnesota; I mean, they were all over the place. And it didn't give you a lot of time because between real semesters, a couple—two or three months long or longer, and here we are jamming it all up into one. We'd finish that and you'd go the second one, then you go to the third one, and they were getting progressively more complicated as you went along. And so—And then you had all the—all the textbooks and you had to read all the—all the—there'd be reading material where it might have taken you four or five months, six months to go through—No, you only had not even one month. Plus, you had to go to work and you had your regular life that you—that you were trying to lead.

TS: It was pretty intensive.

CP: It was pretty intensive.

TS: Yeah.

CP: And we were joking that there was no such thing as Pepperdine University. That somewhere in California—we agreed it was in California—that there was a telephone booth and somebody was paid to answer the phone in this telephone booth, and if anybody called about Pepperdine University, then this person would say, "Yes, this is Pepperdine University. What may I—Do you have a question? I can answer your question about Pepperdine University." But that there really isn't a Pepperdine University. So it was kind of funny when I was sitting here one day and they—they were doing something. I was watching TV and, "Coming from beautiful Pepperdine University—" And I went, "There really is a Pepperdine University."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: We were thrilled. So I have my beautiful diploma from—

TS: There you go.

CP: —from old PU. We just—

TS: Yeah.

CP: So, yeah.

TS: Well, do you think there's anything that a civilian might not understand about being in the—someone being in the military, or maybe doesn't appreciate?

CP: Well, I think—For Veteran's Day, up here is just wonderful and the schools get involved, and sometimes we go to the high school and middle school and this last year we went—my Marine Corps League and a bunch of us went to the grammar school to the itty-bitty kids—the little ones—and they were so cute, and they were very intelligent little kids, they know a lot. And they were so impressed because little, old geezers all sitting up there, their little hats on and everything, and they would ask questions and everything. So when we got through and we would talk to them individually, and they would come up and ask us different questions and we would talk to them. But one of the questions when they were all in the assembly, and Johnny would stand up and ask a question, and one of them was—He says, "I don't want to join the military because they tell you what to do."

"Yeah, they tell you what to do."

"I don't like people telling me what to do." This was their main thing—almost every one of them; "They'll tell you what to do."

And then I said something to them, I said, "Does your mom and dad tell you what to do?"

"Yeah."

"Does your preacher tell you what to do?"

"Yeah."

"Do your teachers tell you what to do?"

"Yeah."

"Is that a good thing?"

"Yeah."

"Why is it a good thing?"

"Well, they tell us what to do so we don't get into trouble."

"And if you listen to them can you get in trouble?"

"No."

"So it's good that people are told what to do?"

"Yeah."

"Then why wouldn't you join the military? Because you're afraid they're going to tell you what to do?" Let me think about that [chuckles], you—

"Well, I guess it's okay."

I said, "Yeah." I said, "You—Unless you really try hard you can't do anything bad in the military, as long as you do what—what you're supposed to."

"Oh, so they're not just telling you what to do."

"No, they're teaching you what to do."

"Oh, okay. That's a good thing." And so, they—their little line of reasoning was just so pure.

TS: Yeah.

CP: It was just darling.

TS: Yeah.

CP: But that was their number one thing that they had heard.

TS: Right.

CP: "Well, my brother went into the Marine Corps and they were mean to him and they made him do this and they made him do that."

And I said, "Well, does—Is he mad at them?"

"Oh, no."

"Is he proud to be a Marine?"

"Oh, yeah."

"Well, okay."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: It was a good thing.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Just their perception of—



CP: Yeah.

TS: —being—yeah.

CP: Somebody was unhappy or somebody—but—

TS: Well, what does patriotism mean to you?

CP: God, country, [Marine] Corps; that's one of the things that we do. It goes a lot—You can almost start from the bottom and work up rather than start at the top and work down—is that patriotism is that once you make up your mind that something is right, that you're willing to do what you can to keep that right, and that you know this idea of my country, period, is not real patriotism, I don't think. My country, right or wrong. No. You don't want to be wrong. You want to be right.

Is that patriotism is abiding by the laws that have been established for that country, because they may be changed someday, it's not that they're locked in stone forever and ever and ever, they may get changed, but while they are in enforcement that you follow them. You can complain about them but that doesn't mean, like—

Here we have signs up here in the winter time: "On Mondays do not park here between the hours of midnight and 7:00 [a.m.] for snow removal." That's uptown[?]. How can they clear the streets if you've got parked cars along the streets? You can't. Are you going to get ticked off when old Joe leaves his pick-up truck in the middle of Main Street and you can't clear Main Street because his truck is covered with snow and the snowplows can't get to it, which closes off that whole section of street? That's wrong. So you have some rules that have to be followed, and being a patriot, I think, is that you believe in what's—I don't know; I knew at one time.

TS: [chuckles]

CP: I'm getting sidetracked, is what's happening; I'm getting distracted.

TS: Well, that's okay. We've been talking for quite a while, Carol, so—

CP: But patriotism—I liked the movie *The Patriot* [2000 historical fictional war film about the American Revolutionary War]. I thought that was good; Mel Gibson did a good job. Would I defend my country? Yes. Do I get ticked off if someone else doesn't like it? Yes. Am I going to say something if somebody starts bad-mouthing my country? Yes. I'll be the first one to defend almost everything. I may not agree with some of the stuff I'm defending but I'm going to defend it anyway and gripe privately because it's mine; that's—that doesn't make any sense either but it's true. It's just like—One of—One of my situations was, I had this Sergeant Ka—Katowski[?]. That's him right there, believe it or not.

TS: Okay.

CP: There he is; we're drinking beer together; it's a section party. And he was a fisherman; he loved to fish; loved to go out. So he'd been at Riverton[?] or something for a while and everything and he always kept saying—He says, "If I die, I want to be buried at sea; I just want to be thrown in the ocean." He says, "I've been eating little fishies all my life, I want little fishies to eat me;" he was just a real neat guy. But he was—[heart of gold] with a head to match. He was a difficult person sometimes and he was a drunk; he was a bona fide drunk. He would leave work and go straight to the NCO [non-commissioned officer] club and they would put a bottle of Christian Brothers Brandy up on the table, and when that bottle was gone he would go home, and he would come to work the next day fine. [unclear], off he'd go. And one day he came in and he looked like he'd been run through a meat grinder. I mean, he was just all bruised up and everything. And I asked one of the other guys, "What happened to Sergeant Ski[?]?"

And they said, "Oh, he got in a fight last night," and I—he said, "but you should see the other guy."

I said, "You mean, he won? Ski won?"

And he says, "Yeah."

So I walked over to him and I said, "Sergeant Ski," I said, "what happened?"

"Oh, I had a disagreement with someone."

"Yeah, I can see that." I said, "Well, did you convince him otherwise?"

He goes, "Oh, yeah, yes." He says, "He's not going to say anything anymore."

And I thought, "Well, that's good."

So finally, it took about another couple months but I got the story. Ski would go in bitching about me. "Oh, old Ski been here all these years with the Marine Corps, and I'm a man and I'm a real Marine, and they send that female over there and she's in charge and I've got to do what she wants," and he would go on and on and on about this. Well, one of the guys had come in and started agreeing with him.

Says, "Yeah, Ski, I can see that, that little bitch. Someone ought to teach her a lesson or two."

And whatever happened was that it just got worse, worse, and worse and Ski just laid into him. I don't know who threw the first punch, I don't really care, but when they got through, the last thing Ski told him was—He says, "I can talk about my Marine that way. I can talk about my woman Marine officer because she's my woman Marine officer, but I don't want any disrespect from any of the rest of you about her. She's a good person and she's a good officer and only I have that right so keep your opinions to yourself."

And I just went, "Awww."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: Yeah, I never did tell him what I found out.

TS: Yeah.

CP: But I just thought, "Ski, how sweet," and that was the thing, he could fuss, he could say all this stuff, but nobody else better say it.

TS: Well, that might be a good place to end unless there's something you want to add that we haven't talked about—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: I can't think of anything, I just—

TS: It's a good story.

CP: You always think of things—It's funny. It's just like, I'll think of things that happened years and years and years ago out of the clear blue sky and it has absolutely nothing that's triggered my memory. It's just all of the sudden there it is. It's just as clear as it can be.

TS: Yes.

CP: But if you ask me to remember something or pick up something and—and I have to search my memory. It's kind of hard.

TS: Yeah? Well, you've done a great job today.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

CP: And one of the things is, there were so many fun things that happened—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —in the service.

TS: You've talked about a few of them.

CP: Yeah, and the Everly Brothers [popular singing duo of the late 1950s and early 1960s] were Marines. Well, one of them—still is, because one of them died. But I said—I loved re—the rec—MCRD San Diego and seeing the recruit parades, and they are just so cute, and I said—this is what gets me now is—at my tender age—is I went to the [U.S.] Marine Corps [Birthday] Ball over at Sparta[?] and they had this new recruit that had—was in his little dress blues and everything and all I did—I kept looking at him going, "He's so cute. He is just the cutest thing you ever saw in your life," and I said, "That one is. It's like a puppy. Can I take him home?"

TS: [chuckles]

CP: "No you can't take him home."

"He's so cute." And he really wasn't a handsome young man, he wasn't. I mean, he wouldn't turn anybody's heads or anything, but there he was in his little Marine dress blues and I just went, "He's so little. He's so young. He needs help." [both chuckle] And I said—I can remember sitting there, three thousand Marines around me, [unclear] there they all are. They're all wearing the same clothes; they all look the same to me. And—And then all of a sudden I get one isolated and I go, "Oh, he's just the cutest thing."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: That's pathetic; that is really pathetic.

TS: Well, would you do it again?

CP: Yes. I think it was Don Everly. They asked him that question; I saw it on TV so I know it's true.

TS: Okay.

CP: I saw it—I heard it. They asked him—They said, "You spent—You and your brother spent time in the Marine Corps." They said, "Would you do it again?" They asked him that question.

And he said, "You couldn't pay me—" I don't know how he said it; I'm trying to get the word. He said something about a thousand dollars to do it again, but he says, "I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for the experiences," or a million dollars or however he put it, but it—what it was, was yeah, I'm not sure I'd want to go through it again but it was worth every bit of that money for the experience and everything that I—that I got out of it and so it evened itself out probably fifty-fifty each way—

TS: Yeah.

CP: —and—and that's really kind of what it is. You go—Looking back on it, I can't think of another profession that would have taught me as much because it's—they—you're thrown in with people from every single walk of life and every diverse background and where is—if you just grow up in a—in a place and you go to work in a place, you have a tendency to be with the people that you're familiar with, and you're going to work in a place where you feel comfortable, that these are the same economic group that you are, mental group that you are, and the whole bit. Whereas when you join a place like that it is a melting pot where you just got everybody thrown into the mix and you have to get along and you have to have a common denominator, and with us that's being a Marine.

Sergeant Greene[?], who I'll never forget—San Diego again—long parade field—was a roaming DI [drill instructor]; roamed around. He was black. He was probably about six [feet], six [inches]. He was probably about—more than a yard

between shoulder—between his shoulders here, and he wore his uniforms just perfectly, and his little Smokey Bear hat. And he would go from platoon to platoon, just walk. He never—hardly said a word. And my office was right in the middle of the parade field, and sometimes I'd go out and watch and listen to them while they're playing and marching around and all this bit, and the DIs for each of the platoons would be getting them. Well, they happened to have—it's not racist, it's just what happened—this was during that period of time where you could take your buddies in, and these people from New Jersey or someplace—black—five black young men joined up together and they thought they were hot stuff, and so they, I guess, had decided, and not thinking very much, that they were just—since there were five of them they just weren't going to do what they were told to do and they were out—still pretty much new recruits—brand new recruits. The two DIs, and one of the DIs went—told them to do something and this one just goes like this, "No. [unclear]," and the others put their arms like this. "No, we're not going to do it."

And the DI—He says, "You know, we talked to you about this before, that we tell you what to do and you do it."

And he says, "You can't tell us what to do. As long as we're together you don't dare touch us." And I don't know what other conversation—how it went—but Sergeant Greene, did not say a word. He walks over and, of course, they saw this big black Marine and they—"Ah ha, reinforcements." He's going to protect them—these five. He walks over to Mr. Mouthy. Pow! No words, just smacked him right across the chops. He went down like a poled ox. I mean, he was just out of it.

The other four are just sitting there looking at him, and Sergeant Greene looks at all four of them right—one right after the other, and he says, "All right," he says, "I've heard enough." He said, "You heard these gentlemen request that you do something. I suggest highly that when they request that you do something that you do it." And he said, "This thing about being prejudiced," he says, "let me tell you something, fellas." He said, "I don't care," he said, "if you're white, black, purple, green, or plaid. It doesn't make any difference." He says, "There is only one color that I'm concerned about. It's green. That's Marine Corps green, and my name is Greene." And he said, "Just remember that,"

And, "Uh".

And he says, "You," he points at the four, "get him up. Take him off to the side. When he can walk—if he can walk—get back in formation. If you can't, take him back to the Quonset hut, but," he said, "by tomorrow morning," he says, "all five of you will be here on your best behavior and you will do exactly as you're told. Is that right?" And he says—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: They're all nodding yes?

CP: "You relay that to him when he—when he's—when he can think again."  
And I thought, "Now that's the way to do it."

TS: [chuckles]

CP: And Sergeant Greene never cracked a smile.

TS: Yeah.

CP: Never said [unclear], he just looked at the—at the other DIs and kind of nods his head. He says, "Keep up the good work." Trots on off. [chuckles]

TS: There you go.

CP: Yeah.

TS: Well, I think we're going to have to end on that one, then, Carol, what do you think?

CP: Well, like I said, I get diarrhea of the mouth.

TS: No, oh no, it—that's great; that's great.

CP: You have a long trip back home.

TS: Well, thank you so much for letting me come here and talk with you. It's been great.

CP: Well, thank you.

[End of Interview]