

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,540

...everything's going. Can you scoot to your right just a little bit.

2

00:00:06,540 --> 00:00:09,640

Okay, good. I just want to set it up on the wall so that it looks nice.

3

00:00:09,640 --> 00:00:15,140

Alright, we're recording the interview of Christine Ricciardo

4

00:00:15,140 --> 00:00:20,760

The interview is being conducted by Adrian Hill and David Morse from the Wright State University Veteran Voices Project.

5

00:00:20,820 --> 00:00:24,020

This interview is being recorded at Wright State University in Dayton Ohio

6

00:00:24,020 --> 00:00:27,860

It is 11:20 am on June 10th, 2016.

7

00:00:27,869 --> 00:00:31,380

Alright Christine, let's start with when and where were you born?

8

00:00:31,380 --> 00:00:34,880

Newark, Ohio in September 7th, 1962.

9

00:00:34,880 --> 00:00:38,360

Okay and who are your parents and what were their occupations.

10

00:00:38,360 --> 00:00:41,960

I was raised by my grandmother and she was a baker for a university.

11

00:00:41,969 --> 00:00:52,329

Okay, did either your grandparents or anybody, close family serve in the military?

12

00:00:52,329 --> 00:00:54,120

No.

13

00:00:54,120 --> 00:00:57,760

No, you're the only one? Okay. Any siblings?

14

00:00:57,760 --> 00:00:58,620

Yes.

15

00:00:58,620 --> 00:01:01,040

Names?

16

00:01:01,040 --> 00:01:02,100

No.

17

00:01:02,100 --> 00:01:04,520

No? Okay, did any of them serve in the military?

18

00:01:04,520 --> 00:01:05,020

No.

19

00:01:05,020 --> 00:01:09,480

You said no. Okay. So what were you doing before you entered the service then?

20

00:01:09,480 --> 00:01:10,979

I joined right out of high school.

21

00:01:10,979 --> 00:01:11,600

Okay.

22

00:01:11,600 --> 00:01:16,400

I graduated a year early and joined when I was 17 and went active when I was 18

23

00:01:16,409 --> 00:01:20,449

Oh okay, so did you do like your basic training the summer before you graduated or anything like that?

24

00:01:20,449 --> 00:01:21,750

I know they do that now, but no?

25

00:01:21,750 --> 00:01:34,000

Okay, so what like I guess what made you decide that you were going to join right out of high school?

26

00:01:34,000 --> 00:01:41,120

Knowing the skills that I had, I knew I didn't want to be a waitress for the rest of my life. So I wanted to find something where I could do something.

27

00:01:41,130 --> 00:01:41,950

Yeah?

28

00:01:41,950 --> 00:01:46,680

And the recruiter said come to school, I think it was the year before and

29

00:01:46,680 --> 00:01:52,580

I was just out driving around one day and drove by the recruiter's office and said "this is better than being a waitress"

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00:01:52,580 --> 00:01:55,160

and thankfully they didn't put me in the mess hall for my entire career.

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00:01:55,160 --> 00:01:56,360

[laughing]

32

00:01:56,360 --> 00:02:01,980

Okay. so why... You said that you served in the..?

33

00:02:01,980 --> 00:02:02,640

Air Force.

34

00:02:02,640 --> 00:02:06,170

Air Force, okay and you enlisted.

35

00:02:06,170 --> 00:02:08,010

Why the air force then?

36

00:02:08,010 --> 00:02:15,240

Honestly, because the Navy door was locked. They were out to lunch and the Air Force door was open. They were right next to each other and...

37

00:02:15,240 --> 00:02:19,800

Same thing happened to me, except it was Air Force and Army and I picked... at the Air Force door...

38

00:02:19,800 --> 00:02:24,800

Well actually nobody was at the front desk and I waited for like 10, nobody showed up so I walked across the hall to the Army.

39

00:02:24,800 --> 00:02:26,520

So I can relate to you on that.

40

00:02:26,520 --> 00:02:34,970

Just, I think it was a month ago, I got one of those Facebook messages from someone and I kept looking at the name,

41

00:02:34,970 --> 00:02:38,870

"I know that name from somewhere" and as I read the message, it was from my recruiter

42

00:02:38,870 --> 00:02:47,480

and I was polite, but I didn't thank him for lying to me 35 years ago. [laughing]

43

00:02:47,480 --> 00:02:52,260

Yes it does. I think everybody can kind of see that, yeah. [laughing]

44

00:02:52,260 --> 00:02:55,380

It's like yeah you kind of lied to me. Yeah.

45

00:02:55,380 --> 00:03:00,620

Okay so do you do you recall departing for basic --- or for, is it called basic training for you guys?

46

00:03:00,620 --> 00:03:01,120

Umhmm.

47

00:03:01,120 --> 00:03:03,440

Okay, do you recall leaving for basic training?

48

00:03:03,440 --> 00:03:13,240

Yes, it was my first airplane ride and I remember when we got there, looking around like "what did I get myself into?"

49

00:03:13,240 --> 00:03:18,900

Basic training was a blast. We had several TIs, the training instructors.

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00:03:18,900 --> 00:03:27,200

The male got relocated somehow, quickly and it was fun.

51

00:03:27,200 --> 00:03:31,120

I actually wanted to become a TI for a while, didn't happen.

52

00:03:31,130 --> 00:03:39,170

Yeah. Do you recall kind of what, maybe feelings and emotions you were going through leaving home for the first time?

53

00:03:39,170 --> 00:03:44,970

You said it was the first time you were on an airplane. SO the first time kind of leaving that way. Do you recall what that was like at all?

54

00:03:44,970 --> 00:03:52,250

It was the first time I'd been away from my grandmother, other than you know, when she went camping or something and I didn't want to do that.

55

00:03:52,250 --> 00:04:01,570

It was just a new adventure and then once I got there I started missing her and it actually made our relationship more solid, so.

56

00:04:01,570 --> 00:04:05,810

Oh, so did you get to communicate with her via letters and stuff like that, while you were over there? Okay.

57

00:04:05,810 --> 00:04:13,730

Care packages. That was always fun with the training instructor going through the box and going "you can't have that, you can't have that, you can't have..." [laughing]

58

00:04:13,730 --> 00:04:17,450

Yeah, did she ever send anything good that you got to keep?

59

00:04:17,450 --> 00:04:25,330

This going to be some embarrassing, but she she had this thing about sending me chocolate covered cherries. I can't figure out why she did that.

60

00:04:25,330 --> 00:04:26,290

[laughing]

61

00:04:26,290 --> 00:04:33,190

And the other thing she sent me: Garfield underwear. [laughing] Yeah.

62

00:04:33,190 --> 00:04:37,620

Maybe she knew what was going to happen, they knew that they were going to go through it. [laughing]

63

00:04:37,620 --> 00:04:40,180

Never thought of that. She's that kind of person.

64

00:04:40,180 --> 00:04:42,640

I'll get her from hundreds of miles away.

65

00:04:42,640 --> 00:04:43,840

Yeah.

66

00:04:43,840 --> 00:04:47,980

Okay so you said you recalled your TI instructors.

67

00:04:47,980 --> 00:04:49,720

Do you still remember their names or anything?

68

00:04:49,720 --> 00:04:55,580

Yes, we had Elizabeth Budd and she was just funny. She could not say my name.

69

00:04:55,580 --> 00:05:08,800

When mail call came around I was usually just alphabet and the male, I can't remember his name. Something like Sutter or Sutton and then we got a female staff sergeant.

70

00:05:08,810 --> 00:05:11,600

I can see her face but I can't remember her name right now.

71

00:05:11,600 --> 00:05:18,820

Okay, anything memorable with any of the particular TI instructor or the instructors there?

72

00:05:18,820 --> 00:05:26,460

Yes, when you first go it's not like the college thing where you gain the 20lbs automatically. It's usually everybody loses weight

73

00:05:26,460 --> 00:05:34,540

and I was walking between one building and another and this female chief master sergeant passed by me and she goes "you are a disgrace to your uniform"

74

00:05:34,540 --> 00:05:41,940

and I went back to my TI crying, because I've lost 20 pounds in the first 30 days I was there. So everything was juts hanging off of me.

75

00:05:41,940 --> 00:05:49,860

She said "it's okay, it's okay, just get another uniform". "I'm not a disgrace". [laughing]

76

00:05:49,860 --> 00:06:02,220

Okay, alright so while you were at basic training, do you recall you know, maybe the change in food or anything like that?

77

00:06:02,220 --> 00:06:06,300

Did that affect you at all or did you think that was alright? Were you kind of surprised when you saw it or anything like that?

78

00:06:06,300 --> 00:06:10,640

I'm a vegetarian so it was really hard for me find a good meal no matter where I went.

79

00:06:10,649 --> 00:06:15,389

Everybody on the planet thinks that they need to force feed you meat

80

00:06:15,389 --> 00:06:20,339

So no, I'm used to being told to go out and graze in the grass.

81

00:06:20,339 --> 00:06:24,979

Yeah so was that... are you still vegetarian? Were you through your whole service?

82

00:06:24,979 --> 00:06:25,540

Yes.

83

00:06:25,540 --> 00:06:27,200

So I bet that was a challenge then, huh?

84

00:06:27,200 --> 00:06:28,080

Yeah.

85

00:06:28,080 --> 00:06:35,280

Our... the coordinator for the project that we do, she's a vegetarian as well and she would probably get along with you well in that respect.

86

00:06:35,280 --> 00:06:37,740

You kind of get tired of salad, but that's all they usually offer.

87

00:06:37,740 --> 00:06:46,440

Yeah that's rough, wow. Alright, well so how do you think you adapted to that military lifestyle,

88

00:06:46,440 --> 00:06:51,020

The regiment, the food, the barracks, the social life?

89

00:06:51,029 --> 00:06:55,489

I'm the type of person that likes things in order.

90

00:06:55,489 --> 00:07:02,889

If you tell me to do A, B, C, and D I'm not going to do A, B, D, C and I appreciate that.

91

00:07:02,889 --> 00:07:08,399

My first assignment was in SAC, which is the kind of "this is what the rules say, you do what the rules say".

92

00:07:08,400 --> 00:07:14,080

It's not "eh, we'll put the rules over here and do what we want". So I loved that part of my career.

93

00:07:14,080 --> 00:07:16,880

Okay, so you liked the adjustment then?

94

00:07:16,880 --> 00:07:17,459

Yes.

95

00:07:17,459 --> 00:07:26,659

Okay. Alright well so after your initial, your basic training, what was next for you?

96

00:07:26,660 --> 00:07:33,300

I had orders to go to Michigan, but they had me under the wrong career field, so then I got Biloxi, Mississippi.

97

00:07:33,300 --> 00:07:33,800

Okay.

98

00:07:33,800 --> 00:07:38,820

And that was 10 weeks for administrative training.

99

00:07:38,820 --> 00:07:42,180

Okay and I forgot to ask, where was your basic training at?

100

00:07:42,180 --> 00:07:43,740

San Antonio, Texas.

101

00:07:43,750 --> 00:07:49,300

Okay, in Texas. Alright, so any other specialized besides your admin training then?

102

00:07:49,300 --> 00:07:57,160

Not there. Once I got into different jobs I would have different training.

103

00:07:57,160 --> 00:08:08,160

I went through a train-the-trainer program. We had a lot of people when I got here, a lot of people that were having trouble passing their CDC or career development course.

104

00:08:08,160 --> 00:08:08,660

Okay.

105

00:08:08,660 --> 00:08:14,260

I forget what it's called -- and they would teach us how to train someone to study that.

106

00:08:14,260 --> 00:08:19,160

And I actually found out one young lady had trouble reading and that's why she was having trouble passing here course.

107

00:08:19,160 --> 00:08:26,440

Oh okay got you. So did you enjoy that kind of training then or..?

108

00:08:26,440 --> 00:08:28,000

Yes.

109

00:08:28,000 --> 00:08:32,200

Okay so you were admin the whole time you were in, right?

110

00:08:32,200 --> 00:08:32,700

Yes.

111

00:08:32,700 --> 00:08:33,860

Because you were in 20 years, right?

112

00:08:33,860 --> 00:08:35,360

Yes.

113

00:08:35,360 --> 00:08:43,640

So what kind of... I'm guessing you did kind of a wide variety of jobs while you were in there.

114

00:08:43,640 --> 00:08:47,080

I mean what was your favorite duty station, I guess?

115

00:08:47,080 --> 00:08:57,620

I guess I really didn't have a favorite all around. My favorite job when I was in California was personal mail.

116

00:08:57,620 --> 00:09:02,720

People would come in and get all happy, because they got a letter from their parents or from their loved one.

117

00:09:02,720 --> 00:09:07,920

And then I went into doing the professional mail where you'd drive around from office to office

118

00:09:07,920 --> 00:09:11,860

and I did that for the majority of my career.

119

00:09:11,860 --> 00:09:16,060

I loved California because of the people. I'm still in contact with them.

120

00:09:16,060 --> 00:09:21,280

I talked to a friend last night that I haven't seen in 35 years, but we were in the same dorm together.

121

00:09:21,280 --> 00:09:24,460

I came back from Japan to go to her wedding

122

00:09:24,460 --> 00:09:31,380

My favorite place as far as the beauty of it was Okinawa, Japan.

123

00:09:31,380 --> 00:09:38,300

Least favorite would have to be Fort Mead, Maryland, NSA.

124

00:09:38,300 --> 00:09:40,780

[laughing] couldn't get away with anything there, huh?

125

00:09:40,780 --> 00:09:44,760

You can't scrub your brain from that stuff. [laughing] There's not enough bleach in the world.

126

00:09:44,760 --> 00:09:50,780

Yeah. Alright, so just kind of a quick overview, I know you mentioned a couple of there,

127

00:09:50,790 --> 00:09:58,030

but you know, can you just take us from the best of your memory where your service took you location to location.

128

00:09:58,030 --> 00:10:02,120

San Antonio, Texas, the basic training was 6 weeks.

129

00:10:02,130 --> 00:10:08,340

Biloxi, Mississippi for training and career field training was 10 weeks.

130

00:10:08,340 --> 00:10:18,380

And then I was as at Castle Air Force Base for 12 months and then I went to Okinawa, Japan for 18 months.

131

00:10:18,380 --> 00:10:28,230

Iraklion Air Station, Crete, Greece for 18 months, Fort George D, Maryland for 14 months and then Wright-Patt for the rest of my career.

132

00:10:28,230 --> 00:10:29,750

And how long was that?

133

00:10:29,750 --> 00:10:30,610  
13 year.

134  
00:10:30,610 --> 00:10:36,080  
13 years, okay. So how did you go from jumping around so much to ending up staying in one place for so long.

135  
00:10:36,080 --> 00:10:39,220  
I was brought back here on a humanitarian for my grandparents.

136  
00:10:39,220 --> 00:10:39,720  
Okay.

137  
00:10:39,720 --> 00:10:45,020  
And when my grandfather died it just kind of went on to for my grandmother. So it was actually for two.

138  
00:10:45,029 --> 00:10:47,609  
Okay, so they let you stay here to be with your family?

139  
00:10:47,609 --> 00:10:48,109  
Yes.

140  
00:10:48,109 --> 00:10:50,080  
Oh okay, didn't know they did that. That's nice.

141  
00:10:50,080 --> 00:10:52,800  
Yeah the Army calls it hardship, I think

142  
00:10:52,800 --> 00:10:53,420  
Okay.

143  
00:10:53,420 --> 00:10:55,080  
and the Air Force is humanitarian.

144  
00:10:55,080 --> 00:11:00,480  
Interesting. Alright, so serving abroad, you said you were in Greece and Japan.

145  
00:11:00,480 --> 00:11:08,720  
Do you have any memorable you know, stories or memories from that you cherish?

146

00:11:08,720 --> 00:11:19,620

One I always found funny being in California, never felt an earthquake. I didn't feel the one that was here in 1978, I think, because I was this big slab of cement.

147

00:11:19,620 --> 00:11:24,640

Everybody is going "oh, we're having an earthquake" and I'm going "what?" Never on in California.

148

00:11:24,640 --> 00:11:31,000

I get to Japan and I'm standing around talking with friends and then all of the sudden we're going "alright earthquake",

149

00:11:31,000 --> 00:11:39,320

but we look up and Okinawa has a dual runway. We saw every plane and helicopter taking off at once.

150

00:11:39,320 --> 00:11:45,940

Everybody, zoom, zoom, zoom and we found out that was when the Korean airliner was shot down and they were all taking off trying to find survivors.

151

00:11:45,940 --> 00:11:46,960

Oh wow.

152

00:11:46,960 --> 00:11:51,360

So if you're going from [excited noise] to "oh" it's kind of like a 9/11 moment.

153

00:11:51,360 --> 00:11:52,080

Yeah.

154

00:11:52,080 --> 00:11:53,560

where everybody's "what's going on?"

155

00:11:53,560 --> 00:11:59,880

Right. So did you guys kind of have increased security after that for a while?

156

00:11:59,890 --> 00:12:00,590

Oh yes.

157

00:12:00,590 --> 00:12:01,930

For the rest of your time there?

158

00:12:01,930 --> 00:12:02,550

No.

159

00:12:02,550 --> 00:12:14,390

No? Okay. So did you, you know being that you were over in Japan and Greece during the Cold War years, correct?

160

00:12:14,390 --> 00:12:20,210

You know, did you ever get a sense or can you maybe let you know, people who weren't maybe even alive during that time,

161

00:12:20,210 --> 00:12:25,900

what was kind of going through your head on a regular basis regarding that, did you..?

162

00:12:25,900 --> 00:12:37,240

well when I was in Greece the head of the KKE, which is the Greek version of the KGB, his wife worked on base

163

00:12:37,240 --> 00:12:44,680

and I asked someone in OSI, I said "how can you have her here when he does that?" and they said "because we can keep an eye on her".

164

00:12:44,680 --> 00:12:52,330

And every once in a while you'd try to go off base to go home or to go out somewhere and you were stuck on base, because the KKE was protesting by the gate

165

00:12:52,330 --> 00:12:58,990

or you couldn't get into work because they were there and I was there when the bombing happened at Bobby's,

166

00:12:58,990 --> 00:13:03,750

which was a bar that a lot of the service members went to in Athens

167

00:13:03,750 --> 00:13:11,790

and we were in heightened security at that point and after it started settling down someone from Life Magazine came on base and they were interviewing people

168

00:13:11,790 --> 00:13:21,730

and this young woman that was 18 and fresh out of Iowa was being and she's standing here facing me, the interviewer's standing here facing her

169

00:13:21,730 --> 00:13:28,760

and the interviewer said "well where do you guys go now that that place has been bombed?" And I looked at my friend and I went...

170

00:13:28,760 --> 00:13:33,100

She goes "we stay on base". Yes, thank you for saying that. laughing]

171

00:13:33,100 --> 00:13:34,640

Yeah, because that would have been nope, can't go to that one anymore.

172

00:13:34,640 --> 00:13:38,700

[laughing] Yeah. I understand the need to ask the question...

173

00:13:38,700 --> 00:13:39,200

Sure.

174

00:13:39,200 --> 00:13:40,060

It was just not the time.

175

00:13:40,060 --> 00:13:45,320

Yeah well interviewers are always prying for the information and it's up to us to kind of...

176

00:13:45,320 --> 00:13:45,980

Yes.

177

00:13:45,980 --> 00:13:48,740

...not say anything.

178

00:13:48,740 --> 00:13:54,100

So did you feel like the people maybe in Greece then, were hostile towards Americans then?

179

00:13:54,100 --> 00:14:04,260

Yes they didn't want us there. Without going into details, they were killing our animals. Yeah I'm not going to...

180

00:14:04,260 --> 00:14:10,680

Okay well, so you think overall, just the majority of the population in Greece didn't want us there.

181

00:14:10,680 --> 00:14:11,380

Yes.

182

00:14:11,380 --> 00:14:14,200

And this was during what year.. what years?

183

00:14:14,200 --> 00:14:15,780

'85.

184

00:14:15,780 --> 00:14:19,620

Okay, what about in Japan?

185

00:14:19,620 --> 00:14:28,620

They are the most gentle, loving, accepting people. I would go back in a heartbeat, but not as a military person.

186

00:14:28,620 --> 00:14:30,340

Right.

187

00:14:30,380 --> 00:14:37,920

I was out having dinner with a friend one night and this army guy came, maybe marine I don't remember which,

188

00:14:37,920 --> 00:14:46,560

but he came in, he was really drunk and he's going "oh my brothers in Beirut are being killed, you don't understand..." Really drunk

189

00:14:46,560 --> 00:14:55,900

and all of the sudden his arm is around me and starts going this way and the mamasan -- I don't know if she was the owner or the waitress or whatever,

190

00:14:55,900 --> 00:15:00,400

but they were just called mamasans -- she was scared, my friend and I were scared

191

00:15:00,400 --> 00:15:08,800

and the only thing I could think to do was to threaten the guy and I actually scared him until he left.

192

00:15:08,800 --> 00:15:13,840

[laughing] The mamasan goes "arigato, arigato, arigato"

193

00:15:13,840 --> 00:15:19,820

So yeah, sometimes you have to pick your battles and I was ready to battle, because this is not yours

194

00:15:19,820 --> 00:15:25,260

Right, absolutely. [laughing] Well good for you.

195

00:15:25,260 --> 00:15:28,440

So and it was Greece and Japan, those were the only two overseas..?

196

00:15:28,440 --> 00:15:29,420

Assignments, yes.

197

00:15:29,420 --> 00:15:29,920

Okay.

198

00:15:29,920 --> 00:15:35,640

I did go to Germany a couple of times. One was right after Rhein-Main had been bombed.

199

00:15:35,640 --> 00:15:43,840

and that was... if there was a DEFCON level for that they didn't have it marked high enough.

200

00:15:43,840 --> 00:15:44,340

Sure.

201

00:15:44,340 --> 00:15:45,400

Everybody was terrified.

202

00:15:45,400 --> 00:15:52,640

Yeah. I mean what was security like that after that then?

203

00:15:52,640 --> 00:16:01,920

It was really tight. I mean I'm sure you've seen Wright-Patt when they're, even if it's just an exercise where the people are lined up trying get on base.

204

00:16:01,930 --> 00:16:07,650

It was pretty much like that. They were checking everything. They had the mirrors to go underneath the cars,

205

00:16:07,650 --> 00:16:12,040

people were getting out to have their cars inspected. It was bad.

206

00:16:12,040 --> 00:16:25,980

Okay, so what kind of friendships and camaraderie did you make while you were... during your stay in military?

207

00:16:25,980 --> 00:16:34,740

A lot of people, you really consider them family. My friend Judy that I told I talked to, we just pick right up.

208

00:16:34,750 --> 00:16:42,930

"hey do you remember when we met Gabe?" and this is the man she married and just great group of people.

209

00:16:42,930 --> 00:16:53,530

And then other people, you're like you really don't want to be in front of me when I'm armed. You just don't have a clue how stupid you are. [laughing] Yeah.

210

00:16:53,530 --> 00:17:04,990

Alright, so you know you said you adjusted pretty well to military lifestyle, but what about the social aspect of it?

211

00:17:04,990 --> 00:17:09,500

You know, jumping in like you said, there were some people who just you know, don't mess with me and some you can get along with.

212

00:17:09,500 --> 00:17:16,720

Did you, you know, how do you think you faired I guess compared to others maybe with you know, adjusting to being thrown into people who you've never met before

213

00:17:16,730 --> 00:17:21,130

from different parts of the country. How do you think you handled that?

214

00:17:21,130 --> 00:17:29,240

I think it was all right. You know, I didn't grow up as an only child because I had my aunt who was older than me,

215

00:17:29,240 --> 00:17:39,900

but you know, you have your own room, toys, everything and then you're thrown in this room with 50 women and the showers the bathrooms and everything.

216

00:17:39,900 --> 00:17:49,300

You're just together the whole time. You're kind of... I don't know if I handle this? And then you just kind of "okay we're all one big happy family".

217

00:17:49,309 --> 00:17:55,189

You can have a few odd balls. Maybe I was one of the odd balls once in awhile, but that's the way everybody...

218

00:17:55,189 --> 00:18:01,091

I mean even in classrooms here. Sometimes you sit there going "I think you need to settle". [laughing]

219

00:18:01,100 --> 00:18:06,100

Yeah. Well, so do what year did you enlist, 80..?

220

00:18:06,100 --> 00:18:06,980

'81.

221

00:18:06,980 --> 00:18:15,140

'81. You know women had been in the military already, but it was less common for a woman to join the military.

222

00:18:15,140 --> 00:18:21,780

You know, how did your grandparents react when you told them you were going to enlist? Where they you know, were they supportive or..?

223

00:18:21,780 --> 00:18:28,920

My grandma was supportive supportive. She took me to the movie Private Benjamin with a friend of her's

224

00:18:28,920 --> 00:18:35,080

and the whole time they were laughing hysterically going "that's you, that is so you, you're not going to make it,

225

00:18:35,090 --> 00:18:37,760

you don't take crap from anybody". [laughing]

226

00:18:37,760 --> 00:18:47,760

It was, it was an adjustment and I don't know if I would do it again.

227

00:18:47,760 --> 00:18:54,360

it's one of things where you sit back going okay, if you do the pros and cons, the pros definitely outweigh the cons

228

00:18:54,360 --> 00:18:59,480

and then you went with that con. I don't know if I could handle that one again [laughing]

229

00:18:59,480 --> 00:19:07,700

Sure, so what about friends you know, friends from high school anything like,

230

00:19:07,700 --> 00:19:14,040

was anybody surprised maybe or anything like that or did you think... or was this a typical thing that people were doing then?

231

00:19:14,040 --> 00:19:24,540

No, most of the people I went to school with went to college and some actually went in during college, some waited until after college.

232

00:19:24,540 --> 00:19:39,900

I was a little bit surprised that more didn't write and I tried to encourage people you know, to send the cards to the wounded warriors at -  
- I can't remember the hospital.

233

00:19:39,900 --> 00:19:40,760

At Walter Reed?

234

00:19:40,760 --> 00:19:47,460

Thank you, Walter Reed. You know, that's the main thing that people talk about, is I got a letter from home.

235

00:19:47,480 --> 00:19:55,820

And doing the personal mail, I know how important it is. So even while I was active duty and friends were overseas I'd send them care packages.

236

00:19:55,820 --> 00:20:06,420

Nice, so what about you know, besides the letters and the care packages, how else did you stay in touch with your family and friends when you...

237

00:20:06,420 --> 00:20:14,420

You know, not just in basic trianing -- you talked about that a little bit -- but you know overseas at different stations around the country, how did you stay in touch?

238

00:20:14,420 --> 00:20:22,020

I would call my grandmother from Japan and the Japanese can not say my name to save their lives, they couldn't say my name.

239

00:20:22,020 --> 00:20:28,100

You couldn't say it either, [laughing] but I would forget about the time change and you had to call through the Audubon

240

00:20:28,100 --> 00:20:35,140

the operator, you wait a couple of hours, they'd get in contact with the person and then they get you back on the line

241

00:20:35,140 --> 00:20:44,260

and I would hear her say "correct call a Swiss chard?" And my grandmother's sound asleep at 2 in the morning, "no" click

242

00:20:44,260 --> 00:20:48,380

"Damn it" [laughing] try again. [laughing]

243

00:20:48,380 --> 00:20:50,880

Is that because they pronounce it, your grandmother didn't know who it was?

244

00:20:50,880 --> 00:20:51,800

Swiss chard.

245

00:20:51,800 --> 00:20:53,560

Yeah. [laughing]

246

00:20:53,560 --> 00:20:54,920

Yeah that's real close

247

00:20:54,920 --> 00:21:01,000

Yeah, [laughing] alright, well interesting. Any other ways... You know did you...

248

00:21:01,010 --> 00:21:05,570

I know some people if they didn't have access to the phone then they would send tapes back home or anything like that.

249

00:21:05,570 --> 00:21:06,570

Did you have kids or anything?

250

00:21:06,570 --> 00:21:07,070

No.

251

00:21:07,070 --> 00:21:10,250

No, okay so didn't do any of those recordings or anything then?

252

00:21:10,250 --> 00:21:17,150

No, my aunt did one with my grandmother and her two children and sent that to me and that was...

253

00:21:17,150 --> 00:21:17,910

Okay.

254

00:21:17,910 --> 00:21:18,610

... that was good

255

00:21:18,640 --> 00:21:24,540

Alright, so what about recreation while you're in maybe Greece or Japan specifically?

256

00:21:24,540 --> 00:21:34,180

I was on the volleyball team in Japan -- I'm sorry -- in Greece and y friends and I would just get on out bicycles and ride everywhere throughout Japan.

257

00:21:34,180 --> 00:21:39,720

Just had a great, great time. Went to the Southeast Botanical Gardens, gorgeous.

258

00:21:39,720 --> 00:21:40,660

Yeah?

259

00:21:40,660 --> 00:21:42,600

[laughing] Just a beautiful place.

260

00:21:42,600 --> 00:21:46,820  
Okay, what about Greece?

261  
00:21:46,820 --> 00:21:55,160  
horseback riding and somehow I got invited to go -- not sure how -- and found out I'm allergic to horses.

262  
00:21:55,160 --> 00:21:55,900  
Oh.

263  
00:21:55,900 --> 00:21:57,900  
Yeah, great big welts about that big.

264  
00:21:57,900 --> 00:21:59,040  
Ooh.

265  
00:21:59,040 --> 00:22:00,540  
That was a fun emergency room trip.

266  
00:22:00,540 --> 00:22:04,740  
Yeah. [laughing] So you'd never been around horses before that then really?

267  
00:22:04,740 --> 00:22:06,100  
No. [laughing]

268  
00:22:06,100 --> 00:22:12,700  
Alright, well did you ever get to sight-see in Europe? I know you said you went, you know, you like the canal, it was beautiful. You got to see some of that, but what about that in Europe?

269  
00:22:12,700 --> 00:22:20,000  
I went to Japan twice, like I said. One was medical and one was a vacation and I was at Wiesbaden

270  
00:22:20,000 --> 00:22:30,080  
and I was in this park and I'm looking around going "what is wrong here?" and I figured it out. there wasn't a piece of dirt out of place, not trash, everything was just gorgeous.

271  
00:22:30,080 --> 00:22:31,130  
And where was this?

272

00:22:31,130 --> 00:22:32,590  
Wiesbaden in Germany.

273

00:22:32,590 --> 00:22:33,640  
Oh okay.

274

00:22:33,640 --> 00:22:39,680  
and I still see that when I come here, in my mind I see that gorgeous park and the people here "oh I'm done with that smoothie...

275

00:22:39,680 --> 00:22:40,180  
Yeah.

276

00:22:40,180 --> 00:22:44,240  
... and throw it and I'm so ashamed of Americans when we do that.

277

00:22:44,240 --> 00:22:51,020  
My friend and I, when we go hiking we take trash bags and a little litter picker upper things. Can't stand it.

278

00:22:51,020 --> 00:22:54,240  
The unsung heroes right here. [laughing]

279

00:22:54,260 --> 00:23:05,160  
Alright, so you were in the... where were when the Cold War ended?

280

00:23:05,160 --> 00:23:06,620  
Here.

281

00:23:06,620 --> 00:23:07,120  
At Wright-Patt?

282

00:23:07,120 --> 00:23:08,600  
Yes, I worked the Peace Talks.

283

00:23:08,600 --> 00:23:15,800  
Okay, oh wow, okay so what was kind of I mean, what was going through your head then during when that happened,

284

00:23:15,800 --> 00:23:23,740

because obviously the whole time you've been in the military we've been you know, an advisory, so what was that?

285

00:23:23,740 --> 00:23:34,660

You know, when you have the the different threat-com levels or def-coms or whatever they're calling them this week, you're always looking around.

286

00:23:34,660 --> 00:23:42,440

You know, is someone trying to get on base that's not supposed to be getting on base or they call you trying to get information they're not supposed to get

287

00:23:42,440 --> 00:23:48,880

and after the Cold War was over you kind of just did a little "okay, I can step back, I don't have to be as vigilant".

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00:23:48,880 --> 00:23:59,880

You're still vigilant, but you're not weary of everybody and everything and I learned that the propaganda that they were selling

289

00:23:59,920 --> 00:24:04,260

-- that the Russians were selling to their public, we were kind of selling to us too.

290

00:24:04,300 --> 00:24:09,280

"They're all out.. all of them are out to get us". Well all of us are out to get them kind of thing.

291

00:24:09,280 --> 00:24:14,980

So we were kind of bad guys, but we were better bad guys [laughing]

292

00:24:14,980 --> 00:24:30,700

Okay, you said you talked to a couple that you haven't seen in years, but how else have you stayed in contact or maybe reunited with some of your other veterans?

293

00:24:30,700 --> 00:24:37,280

My first supervisor when I was in California, she called when I was at my grandmother's house and came to visit

294

00:24:37,280 --> 00:24:49,440

and I hadn't seen her since '81. This was probably the late 90's when this happened.

295

00:24:49,440 --> 00:25:00,040

Facebook, telephone, letters, I'm a national Agitant for Women Veterans of America and we're having our conference in September

296

00:25:00,049 --> 00:25:08,109

and I'm sending the invitation out to all my women veteran friends and the one that I talked to on the phone the other day, she's considering going.

297

00:25:08,109 --> 00:25:12,649

So we might actually get to see each other after 30, 35, 36 years

298

00:25:12,680 --> 00:25:17,059

Wow, interesting and what is it called, the Association your part of?

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00:25:17,059 --> 00:25:18,560

Women Veterans of America.

300

00:25:18,560 --> 00:25:19,820

Okay and what is your position with them?

301

00:25:19,820 --> 00:25:21,060

National Agitant.

302

00:25:21,060 --> 00:25:27,900

Okay, how big is that organization, what all does it encompass?

303

00:25:27,900 --> 00:25:31,480

I think we have about 600 members. I'm not quite sure of the numbers

304

00:25:31,480 --> 00:25:38,900

and they have the conference every two years so they get people to come in and this is the year of the military woman.

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00:25:38,900 --> 00:25:41,480

I think it's a nation thing that they're doing.

306

00:25:41,480 --> 00:25:41,980

Yeah.

307

00:25:41,980 --> 00:25:48,200

Not just women veterans, but their idea this year is to inspire and empower.

308

00:25:48,200 --> 00:25:54,340

And they're just -- well we -- are advocates for women veterans.

309

00:25:54,340 --> 00:26:00,780

I got an email from one young lady that said that she was sexually assaulted and she's not getting any help from anyone. "What can I do, what can I do?"

310

00:26:00,780 --> 00:26:06,540

And I forwarded that to the national commander and she's getting her in touch with someone that can help her.

311

00:26:06,540 --> 00:26:16,540

And it's juts... A lot people say going to the VA is bad because they don't understand that you can't sit there and talk about sexual assault with a man kind of thing.

312

00:26:16,540 --> 00:26:26,940

So the VA actually has a women's center there now. So you can talk to females about female problems or female medical problems kind of thing and it...

313

00:26:26,940 --> 00:26:31,700

And the women's center at VA is in part thanks to the organization?

314

00:26:31,700 --> 00:26:36,480

Well it's not just us, but people fighting for it.

315

00:26:36,480 --> 00:26:42,160

A friend of mine went, she had a problem with her foot, goes to the emergency room, they didn't know what to do with her

316

00:26:42,170 --> 00:26:48,310

as far as putting in a room, because there aren't any.. they didn't want to put a man and a woman in the same room overnight.

317

00:26:48,310 --> 00:26:53,610

So they put her in the metal ward, because they could have a female room just for her.

318

00:26:53,610 --> 00:26:57,680

So these are the things we're trying to not fight, but correct.

319

00:26:57,680 --> 00:26:59,980

Right, wow, okay.

320

00:26:59,980 --> 00:27:03,320

VAs have been very open to you know, getting help.

321

00:27:03,320 --> 00:27:04,130

Right.

322

00:27:04,130 --> 00:27:08,000

"We don't know what to do, what can you tell us to do?" I think it's great.

323

00:27:08,000 --> 00:27:13,120

That's good. Okay, so once you got out of the military what year did you get out?

324

00:27:13,120 --> 00:27:13,840

2001.

325

00:27:13,840 --> 00:27:16,560

Okay, was this before or after September 11th?

326

00:27:16,560 --> 00:27:17,180

Before.

327

00:27:17,180 --> 00:27:27,140

Before? Okay, how did you readjust from going from you know, 20 years of military life to back to civilian life?

328

00:27:27,140 --> 00:27:36,440

It was nice to actually have a vacation for a while. [laughing] Most of my military career my vacation was emergency leave.

329

00:27:36,440 --> 00:27:42,740

So I actually got to take a trip which I hadn't been able to do and...

330

00:27:42,740 --> 00:27:45,060

Is that when you went back to the Japan for vacation or..?

331

00:27:45,060 --> 00:28:06,660

No I went to Vegas. Just hadn't been able to chill. Got a couple of jobs, work in a storage place, Dollar General, Time Warner Cable -- don't hold it against me.

332

00:28:06,660 --> 00:28:08,040

[laughing]

333

00:28:08,040 --> 00:28:09,420

Evil Empire, that's what I called them

334

00:28:09,420 --> 00:28:13,740

Yeah I think you and a long list of other people, so. [laughing]

335

00:28:13,740 --> 00:28:19,800

That's a... They could go work for Fort Mead. [laughing]

336

00:28:19,800 --> 00:28:25,040

An ink company and then I worked in Sinclair and Wright State

337

00:28:25,040 --> 00:28:27,240

Okay, do you still work?

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00:28:27,240 --> 00:28:27,880

No.

339

00:28:27,880 --> 00:28:35,540

No? Okay. So what about any other veterans organizations that you're a part of besides the one you'd already mentioned?

340

00:28:35,540 --> 00:28:48,860

I've been a member of American Legion, Non-Commissioned Officers, not VFW.

341

00:28:48,860 --> 00:28:54,680

I'm not a veteran of a war so I would be auxiliary, which to me is the wives club.

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00:28:54,680 --> 00:28:56,040

Right.

343

00:28:56,040 --> 00:29:05,580

And a friend of mine actually gave me one of their forms and I read through it and part of their oath is that you have to believe in God to be a part of the organization

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00:29:05,580 --> 00:29:09,940

and I'm so... the two have nothing to do with each other.

345

00:29:09,940 --> 00:29:10,800

Sure.

346

00:29:10,800 --> 00:29:13,500

So I just told them "no, I'm not interested".

347

00:29:13,500 --> 00:29:20,560

Understand that. Yeah they're going through a big thing right now with the auxiliary, because they have the Men's Auxiliary and the Women's Auxiliary and they're shifting it

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00:29:20,560 --> 00:29:28,600

and there's a lot of resistance from the older VFW members. You know, "this is for this part". So yeah, they are making some changes that I know of.

349

00:29:28,640 --> 00:29:39,960

Okay, so how did the military you know, affect your life overall? I'll give you a second. [laughing]

350

00:29:39,960 --> 00:29:40,900

Was I melded?

351

00:29:40,900 --> 00:29:42,020

Yeah. [laughing]

352

00:29:42,020 --> 00:29:50,400

I don't actually know how to answer that

353

00:29:50,400 --> 00:29:55,420

Okay well I've got a couple that are kind of around the same root. So maybe if I ask them it will do.

354

00:29:55,420 --> 00:30:01,000

What life lessons did you learn from your military service?

355

00:30:01,000 --> 00:30:02,420

356

00:30:02,420 --> 00:30:04,680

Sorry. [laughing]

357

00:30:04,720 --> 00:30:09,580

358

00:30:09,580 --> 00:30:11,580

Don't know how to answer that on either

359

00:30:11,580 --> 00:30:18,320

Okay well what about you know your military service, being in the military, how has that impacted your feeling,

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00:30:18,320 --> 00:30:24,180

maybe from before you entered to now, your feelings towards the military in general?

361

00:30:24,180 --> 00:30:28,100

Did it kind of give you different view or..?

362

00:30:28,100 --> 00:30:39,380

No. Real quick story for you, when I was little was during Vietnam and my grandmother's second son was in Vietnam

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00:30:39,380 --> 00:30:46,920

and she was in bed crying one night and I said "what's wrong?" and she was just barely able to squeak out, she said "Vietnam"

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00:30:46,920 --> 00:30:52,620

and I said "but Uncle Jim is home" and she said other mothers sons are still there.

365

00:30:52,620 --> 00:31:02,870

And that just gave me a love for the country and our military people and maybe that's why I went over and pulled on the door to join.

366

00:31:02,870 --> 00:31:13,070

I don't know, but that was a that's a life lesson that I will not let go of. We are still family and like I said,

367

00:31:13,070 --> 00:31:20,040

there are people that I'd just like to smack upside the head, because they just didn't get it as far as

368

00:31:20,040 --> 00:31:29,840

yes I know you're an officer and I'm supposed to respect your rank, but when you're acting like a turd [laughing] I'm not going to go "yes sir". [laughing]

369

00:31:29,840 --> 00:31:38,240

Understand that. [laughing] Alright, well you know this is another one of the questions that you're going to go I need a second to think

370

00:31:38,240 --> 00:31:43,980

But do you know, is there any message you'd like to leave, because this id going to be in the Library of Congress,

371

00:31:43,980 --> 00:31:49,180

So if somebody's looking up you know maybe female veterans during the Cold War they could find your story,

372

00:31:49,180 --> 00:31:55,300

is there any message you would want to leave for anybody who could view it? It could be you know maybe younger women who we're thinking about joining the military

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00:31:55,300 --> 00:32:02,660

or you know, another veteran who's just looking through there for general interest, but would you would you want to say?

374

00:32:02,660 --> 00:32:10,880

For female veterans... or females wanting to go into the military I would say learn to stand up for yourself.

375

00:32:10,880 --> 00:32:18,260

I had a chief master sergeant try to force me to sign a piece of paper and I said "I will not sign that" and

376

00:32:18,260 --> 00:32:22,220

he goes "you'll do as I tell you" and I said "when it's a lawful order, I will".

377

00:32:22,220 --> 00:32:33,100

had a chief master sergeant try to tell me to do something illegal, I told him I wouldn't do it and that's not a military thing for me, that's my grandmother raised me to stand up for myself.

378

00:32:33,100 --> 00:32:44,080

Thank you Grandma. [laughing] For anyone wanting to know about the military and whether they should go in or not,

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00:32:44,090 --> 00:32:48,980

don't believe the recruiters, watch Private Benjamin.

380

00:32:48,980 --> 00:32:51,980

[laughing] It's exactly like that

381

00:32:51,980 --> 00:33:03,600

There are no yachts. [laughing] If you want to go to Japan put that you wan to go to Greece, because whatever you say, the military will do the opposite

382

00:33:03,600 --> 00:33:09,940

They seem to do that, don't they? Yeah, I definitely put Afghanistan on my application. I don't know about you, Dave. [laughing]

383

00:33:09,940 --> 00:33:16,500

Alright, well is there anything that we didn't discuss that you wanted to... the you feel should be added to the interview?

384

00:33:16,500 --> 00:33:19,620

Anything in particular you thought you were definitely going to tell me today?

385

00:33:19,620 --> 00:33:29,180

The VA has a stand down every once in awhile and that's taking veterans out and you get the little booths like you did here. What was that called?

386

00:33:29,180 --> 00:33:30,650

Veterans Moving Forward.

387

00:33:30,650 --> 00:33:38,850

Yes, that kind of thing, information plus you get a free lunch and they have giveaways: soaps and clothes and stuff like that

388

00:33:38,850 --> 00:33:47,350

And the Women Veterans of America, the chapter 6, which is here in Ohio had a booth and their adjutant was --- this was a men's stand down --

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00:33:47,350 --> 00:33:53,360

every time a guy would come up they'd say "do you know any women veterans?" "Nope" every one of them "nope, nope, nope".

390

00:33:53,360 --> 00:34:02,520

And I said let me ask it this way, "do you know women that were in the military?" "Oh yeah my sister's in the military". We're still not considered veterans by a lot of people.

391

00:34:02,520 --> 00:34:13,179

So we may be equal as far as getting the first female combat commander or something like that, but we're still not seen as equals.

392

00:34:13,179 --> 00:34:14,400

Interesting.

393

00:34:14,400 --> 00:34:16,260

And we're working on it.

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00:34:16,260 --> 00:34:18,580

Alright, was there anything else?

395

00:34:18,580 --> 00:34:21,400

Great, well thank you for doing this interview with us and thank you for your service.

396

00:34:21,400 --> 00:34:23,540

Thank you, thank you for yours

397

00:34:23,540 --> 00:34:24,660

Thank you for yours.