

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,680
We're recording the interview of Tera Pollard.

2
00:00:06,680 --> 00:00:15,920
The interview is beginning... The interview is being conducted by David Morse from the Wright State University Veteran Voices Project.

3
00:00:15,920 --> 00:00:20,140
The interview is being recorded at Wright State University's

4
00:00:20,140 --> 00:00:23,240
Veterans' Military Center in Dayton, Ohio.

5
00:00:23,240 --> 00:00:42,520
It is 9... 9:08 and it is the 18th of August, 2016. Let's begin with just when and where you were born?

6
00:00:42,520 --> 00:00:47,180
I was born in Belleville, Illinois, August 22nd, 1972.

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00:00:47,180 --> 00:00:52,360
Okay and who are your parents?

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00:00:52,360 --> 00:00:56,300
Virginia Beggly and Harold Mandry, the II.

9
00:00:56,300 --> 00:00:59,200
Okay and what were their occupations?

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00:00:59,200 --> 00:01:06,500
So my biological father was in the Air Force at the time I was born. So I was actually born at Scott Air Force Base.

11
00:01:06,500 --> 00:01:17,020
My mother currently works as a unit coordinator for a neonatal intensive care unit in a local hospital here.

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00:01:17,020 --> 00:01:19,220
And did you have any siblings?

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00:01:19,220 --> 00:01:27,340
I have an older sister, a younger brother, and then a younger half-brother whose much younger, so.

14
00:01:27,340 --> 00:01:28,300
Okay.

15
00:01:28,300 --> 00:01:32,080
I actually have a daughter the same age as my younger half-brother.

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00:01:32,080 --> 00:01:37,700
Oh wow, okay. Any of your siblings serve?

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00:01:37,700 --> 00:01:40,580
No, only my biological father.

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00:01:40,580 --> 00:01:46,840
Okay. What did you do before you entered the service?

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00:01:46,840 --> 00:01:56,520
High school and then I kind of just kind of goofed off for a year. Before I went into the military I was working at Kmart at that time.

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00:01:56,560 --> 00:02:06,600
Okay. Alright, so what branch of the military did you end up going into?

21
00:02:06,620 --> 00:02:07,700
The US Navy. [laughing]

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00:02:07,700 --> 00:02:15,900
The US Navy. Tell me, how did you end up going into the Navy, did you enlist?

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00:02:15,920 --> 00:02:25,120
I did enlist, it was actually kind of a spur-of-the-moment decision. I was just you know, had been out of high school maybe a year.

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00:02:25,120 --> 00:02:34,040
Well, less than a year when I DEP'ed. I had to go into the delayed entry program, but I had been out of high school about nine months and was really bored,

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00:02:34,040 --> 00:02:43,440
not really sure what I was going to do, wanted to go to school, but couldn't really afford to go to school and I saw a commercial for the Navy and I thought "why not".

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00:02:43,440 --> 00:02:53,220

[laughing] So I called the recruiter and ended up joining the Navy. I wanted to be by the ocean, didn't want to be landlocked anymore.

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00:02:53,220 --> 00:02:57,700

So the Navy was the branch that made sense to me

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00:02:57,700 --> 00:03:04,920

Good and what time was this that you enlisted into the Navy?

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00:03:04,920 --> 00:03:06,120

What time or..?

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00:03:06,120 --> 00:03:07,700

Yeah, what year?

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00:03:07,760 --> 00:03:14,480

It was in 1991, so I DEP'ed in in March of '91 and I actually left for boot camp July of 1991

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00:03:14,580 --> 00:03:21,760

Oh, okay. Alright, what was your family's feelings about you joining the Navy.

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00:03:21,820 --> 00:03:34,800

Everybody was surprised, my family and my friends were all very surprised. Actually, my stepfather tried to talk me out of it [laughing] initially.

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00:03:34,820 --> 00:03:40,320

My mom kind of thought I wouldn't really go through with it. So I think everybody was just kind of shocked.

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00:03:40,320 --> 00:03:48,760

Yeah, yeah, wow. So tell me about boot camp, where was boot camp at?

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00:03:48,760 --> 00:03:51,260

I went to boot camp in Orlando, Florida.

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00:03:51,260 --> 00:03:51,960

Oh nice. [laughing]

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00:03:51,960 --> 00:04:03,440

Had the privilege of being there July, August, and and part of September. So absolute hottest months of the year, miserable time to be in Orlando.

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00:04:03,440 --> 00:04:11,840

We typically had a black flag out by 8 or 9 in the morning, meaning we were getting up to 2:30 -3 o'clock in the morning to eat breakfast

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00:04:11,880 --> 00:04:17,760

so that they could do all of the outside stuff with us before the black flag was in place, so.

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00:04:17,760 --> 00:04:27,180

Wow. What were your instructors like?

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00:04:27,260 --> 00:04:39,060

[laughing] Very difficult, we had two female company commanders and I would say at least at that time, female company commanders felt like they had something to prove.

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00:04:39,100 --> 00:04:49,760

So we were the first company for both you know, first company for both company commanders. So they really felt like they had something to prove.

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00:04:49,760 --> 00:05:01,660

So we had a lot harder than most of the other companies in our division and even the other company commanders would tell us how sorry they felt for us.

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00:05:01,660 --> 00:05:12,800

The only privilege we really earned in boot camp if we aced an inspection, we earned the right to lean against the bulkhead for maybe 10 or 15 minutes as a reward,

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00:05:12,820 --> 00:05:17,540

instead of just having to sit, not leaning against anything when we sat on the floor.

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00:05:17,540 --> 00:05:18,440

Wow.

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00:05:18,480 --> 00:05:24,460

I think other than that the only other privilege really earned was like one can of soda.

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00:05:24,720 --> 00:05:25,240

Oh my goodness.

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00:05:25,240 --> 00:05:35,520

We had it rough, but we ended up being the CO's white company, so the best company in the division when I graduated boot camp

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00:05:35,520 --> 00:05:42,920

and I think that's because we were all completely terrified of messing up in anyway. [laughing]

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00:05:42,960 --> 00:05:48,960

That's funny. So you said this was you entered into boot camp in '91?

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00:05:48,980 --> 00:05:49,620

'91

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00:05:49,640 --> 00:05:56,980

Okay, was there much integration between females and males at the time?

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00:05:56,980 --> 00:06:06,740

So that started shortly after I went through boot camp. how it was when I was in boot camp is there was a group I believe, 8 or 10 companies in the division.

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00:06:06,740 --> 00:06:14,980

There were 2 female companies. So both female companies had a brother company, but most brother companies had another brother company.

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00:06:14,980 --> 00:06:23,860

So you had you know, a brother company or a couple of the male companies had a sister company. So we had a brother company that we did everything with.

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00:06:23,860 --> 00:06:34,120

Our barracks were not in the same building, they had the females separated from the males, but we did everything together like the firefighting, the gas chamber,

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00:06:34,120 --> 00:06:44,160

all of the things we did together with our brother company, but we weren't allowed to even look at one another or... [laughing]

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00:06:44,160 --> 00:07:00,020

Yeah, yeah, that's pretty typical. In our basic training I had a sister flight and yeah, they they pretty much deterred the women from even looking at us,

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00:07:00,020 --> 00:07:07,560

the men flights and they pretty much just said all these guys are bald and ugly you don't even want to mess with with them.

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00:07:07,560 --> 00:07:08,560

[laughing]

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00:07:08,560 --> 00:07:17,060

We were in the same building, but yeah, it was very... they kept us busy enough to where we... we didn't do anything.

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00:07:17,060 --> 00:07:22,160

But I'm interested, you said you guys did some fire fighting during basic training?

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00:07:22,200 --> 00:07:23,140

Yep.

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00:07:23,140 --> 00:07:36,960

How... walk me through a little bit of your basic training, because it sounds to me... or your boot camp, because it sounds to me like boot camp for the Navy is a bit different than the rest of them.

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00:07:37,120 --> 00:07:45,440

Yep, so boot camp in the Navy, you do have to swim, you have to be able to pass the swimming test and that's probably what most people who struggled in boot camp,

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00:07:45,440 --> 00:07:50,760

they struggled with the swimming. So some people had to go to remedial swimming, but you're on a ship and

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00:07:50,780 --> 00:07:58,880

so if your on a ship and you end up overboard you know, you have to be take your pants off and tie them as a flotation devise and float around in the ocean

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00:07:58,920 --> 00:08:05,160

or swim, tread water until they can get back on the boat. You also have to be able to put out fires yourself.

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00:08:05,160 --> 00:08:10,860

If you're on a submarine or ship, because the fire department obviously cannot get to you.

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00:08:10,860 --> 00:08:21,680

So in boot camp one the things you learn is firefighting and it was done in a you know, control building obviously, where they were controlling the fire,

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00:08:21,680 --> 00:08:31,700

but you took terms moving up on the hose you know, different positions to go in and put the fire out.

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00:08:31,700 --> 00:08:44,720

Wow, that's intense. So moving on from basic training, did you have training after that, any IT training or..?

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00:08:44,720 --> 00:08:55,840

Yep so I went to A school and C school is what we called it in the Navy, so I went to a school in Fort Devens, Massachusetts, which was are actually an Army base,

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00:08:55,840 --> 00:09:04,260

but I was a cryptologic technician for military intelligence and in that area all the branches of services come together.

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00:09:04,260 --> 00:09:11,780

So I was actually stationed at an Air Force Base in Japan you know, so my A school was at an Army base in Fort Devens, Massachusetts

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00:09:11,780 --> 00:09:16,720

and then my C school was in Pensacola, Florida at a Navy base, so.

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00:09:16,720 --> 00:09:21,300

Okay and how was training for that?

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00:09:21,320 --> 00:09:29,180

Well initially in Fort Devens, Massachusetts it was pretty boring, because it was learning Morse code, doing Morse code you know maybe eight hours a day

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00:09:29,180 --> 00:09:40,960

[laughing] until we could get up to you know, a certain speed at you know a certain very high percentage of accuracy to be able to copy Morse code

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00:09:40,980 --> 00:09:45,500

But you actually get to where it's natural and you can carry on a conversation and have Morse code going in the background

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00:09:49,680 --> 00:09:58,360

and carry on a conversation and still copy the message, because it just becomes like an automatic response after a while.

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00:09:58,360 --> 00:10:05,720

But you know, it takes time to get to that point. So in Fort Devens that's primarily what I was doing was learning Morse code

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00:10:05,760 --> 00:10:13,840

and then when I went to Pensacola I learned other types of signals that we also work with.

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00:10:13,880 --> 00:10:24,280

Okay and so how long was your training altogether from basic training to the end of your A and C school?

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00:10:24,320 --> 00:10:32,080

Let's see, it was about a year all together for about schools, maybe just over a year

88
00:10:32,080 --> 00:10:38,180
Okay. Alright and then what was your first duty station?

89
00:10:38,200 --> 00:10:41,900
So my first duty station was Misawa, Japan. [laughing]

90
00:10:41,900 --> 00:10:42,660
That's nice.

91
00:10:42,680 --> 00:10:46,740
Middle of rice fields of Northern island of Honshu in Japan.

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00:10:46,740 --> 00:10:49,620
Wow, what did you think of that?

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00:10:49,620 --> 00:11:07,980
It was a big culture shock. It was interesting, but very different and I actually lived out in town in Japan. So it was interesting. [laughing]

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00:11:07,980 --> 00:11:11,820
So this was around 1993?

95
00:11:11,820 --> 00:11:12,540
Yeah.

96
00:11:12,540 --> 00:11:13,680
...By the time you got to Misawa.

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00:11:13,680 --> 00:11:15,940
By the time I got to Japan it was the end of 1993.

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00:11:15,940 --> 00:11:18,380
Okay, alright.

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00:11:18,380 --> 00:11:20,520
No, sorry, end of '92.

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00:11:20,520 --> 00:11:21,380
End of '92?

101
00:11:21,380 --> 00:11:22,820
'92, yes.

102
00:11:22,820 --> 00:11:23,580
Okay.

103
00:11:23,580 --> 00:11:27,360
But I was there '92 and I left in '95, so.

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00:11:27,360 --> 00:11:37,860
In '95, okay. Not a whole lot going on during that time as far as the world is concerned, as far as the military's concerned. So peacetime roughly?

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00:11:37,880 --> 00:11:48,300
Yeah mean so we had the first Gulf War kind of going on at the time. I enlisted, but obviously that wasn't going on around Japan, so.

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00:11:48,300 --> 00:11:48,860
Yeah.

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00:11:48,860 --> 00:11:53,680
It had resolved pretty much by the time I got to Japan, so.

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00:11:53,680 --> 00:11:59,320
Okay. What was your job duty out there in Misawa?

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00:11:59,400 --> 00:12:07,600
So in Misawa I was a cryptologic technician. I worked in high-frequency direction-finding. So...

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00:12:07,600 --> 00:12:21,720
Hmm, okay. So you transition from Morse code to this...

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00:12:21,720 --> 00:12:34,080
You kind of have to know Morse code to do any of it. Like so in direction-finding we would listen to Morse code as well

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00:12:34,100 --> 00:12:37,380
Okay, did this require you to be on a ship?

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00:12:37,380 --> 00:12:48,280

When I was in actually, females in my job we're not allowed to go to sea. That, as I was in and leaving Japan, that's when they first opened it up to females,

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00:12:48,280 --> 00:12:55,940

to able to go direct support to a ship, but when I went in it was pretty unheard of to have a female on a ship.

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00:12:55,960 --> 00:13:05,620

So our sea duty was considered overseas. So Japan for me, counted as sea duty, because that's what the women could do.

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00:13:05,620 --> 00:13:06,280

Interesting.

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00:13:06,280 --> 00:13:16,320

As I was leaving Japan actually, my best friend from the military was the first female to be stationed direct support as a CT.

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00:13:16,320 --> 00:13:17,120

Woa.

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00:13:17,120 --> 00:13:19,980

And her orders were out of Bahrain, so.

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00:13:19,980 --> 00:13:21,620

Okay.

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00:13:21,620 --> 00:13:32,640

So it was still uncommon at that time while I was in, for females. It's much more common now for females to be on the ship with that job.

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00:13:32,640 --> 00:13:42,720

Did your training for preparing for this, I mean imagine that the training... your A and C school, that they wouldn't adjust it...

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00:13:42,720 --> 00:13:44,660

So yes and no.

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00:13:44,660 --> 00:13:48,060

just females that weren't on ship.

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00:13:48,100 --> 00:14:00,020

So no and actually my C school was actually for a completely different area than what I actually ended up doing in

Japan.

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00:14:00,020 --> 00:14:07,320

So that direction-finding, the high-frequency direction-finding, when I got attached to that division it was pretty much all on-the-job training.

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00:14:07,340 --> 00:14:19,880

I didn't have the school for that particular job, but they needed a body in that division so they put me in that division and then I kind of learned it on the job

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00:14:19,880 --> 00:14:30,860

So my actual training, I was supposed to be doing something else in Japan, but when I got to Japan they didn't need people for what my actual MOS was,

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00:14:30,860 --> 00:14:37,200

my C school and so they they put me in direction-finding, which I ended up loving, honestly, so.

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00:14:37,200 --> 00:14:43,160

Okay. What did you do for recreation while you're out in Misawa?

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00:14:43,160 --> 00:14:54,900

[laughing] Oh boy, what did we do in Misawa? We had a lot of snow so we would sled down the the hills on the base.

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00:14:54,900 --> 00:15:07,140

We only maybe had one week a year of decent whether. It was either monsoon season or so raining all the time or lots of snow and very cold.

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00:15:07,140 --> 00:15:22,500

So we would sled, we would actually... You know, all of our commercials were like the...we only had one TV channel at that time: AFARTS. We used to call it A-Farts.

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00:15:22,500 --> 00:15:34,900

We also only had one radio station, so we would ask family or friends from home to send us TV shows, because the TV shows we had on our one station were...

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00:15:34,900 --> 00:15:44,400

I mean they were awful, they were 8 to ten 10 years old and shows we watched you know, maybe when we were in their sixth grade. [laughing]

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00:15:44,400 --> 00:15:53,280

Like the Facts of Life or we had one soap opera as well and it was years old.

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00:15:53,280 --> 00:15:58,060

It was actually the soap opera I'd watched, but I knew everything that was going to happen,

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00:15:58,060 --> 00:16:06,840

because it was 4 years ago. So we would ask for tapes of shows from back home or ask for really, commercials because we had no commercials

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00:16:06,840 --> 00:16:14,080

and you complain about commercials until you go a couple years and you don't get to see a commercial and then you want to see the commercials

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00:16:14,080 --> 00:16:23,200

So we would you have people send in tapes and we would all get together and watch the video tapes of just commercials or of various TV shows.

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00:16:23,320 --> 00:16:29,780

Or you know, sometimes we would watch the Japanese channels, because they had really funny game shows

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00:16:29,800 --> 00:16:38,060

and even though you couldn't understand anything they were saying or what the point was of the game show, they were amusing and entertaining to watch.

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00:16:38,080 --> 00:16:40,920

So we would watch those and laugh about them.

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00:16:40,940 --> 00:16:42,040

They're very animated.

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00:16:42,080 --> 00:16:52,800

[laughing] Yeah. There was small -- I wouldn't even consider it a mall, but it was a mall for I guess rural Japan,

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00:16:52,820 --> 00:17:01,060

which is about 45 minutes from the base. It was in Hachinohe, Japan. So sometimes we would go over there and they also had a park

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00:17:01,060 --> 00:17:09,280

that had like a miniature Statue of Liberty statue at the park .It was just like our Statue of Liberty, but a lot smaller

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00:17:09,280 --> 00:17:20,720

So we'd go to Hachinohe or we had a road at the time, the poles were all painted green. We called it the green pole road that had a lot of little Japanese shops and restaurants.

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00:17:20,760 --> 00:17:28,800

So we'd go out to green pole road and do various things, but there wasn't a whole lot you know, in Misawa.

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00:17:28,880 --> 00:17:41,800

It was so far from Tokyo or from any of the big cities of Japan that we kind of had to be creative in what we did for entertainment.

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00:17:41,800 --> 00:17:52,640

Speaking of asking you know, family and friends for video tapes, how did you stay in contact with your family and friends while you're in Misawa?

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00:17:52,660 --> 00:18:04,660

So when I was in Japan we didn't have the internet, at least not like the internet that we have today. So there was no email and it was very expensive to call home

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00:18:04,740 --> 00:18:13,380

back then. You know, now you can call internationally and pay a flat rate and talk unlimited on a lot of plans. It was not like that in Japan.

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00:18:13,380 --> 00:18:23,320

So we could buy these cards that were a 1,000 yen, which was about the equivalent of about \$10 roughly, give or take a little bit

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00:18:23,320 --> 00:18:30,560

and you got about 8 minutes of talk time on those. So we would buy cards and be able to talk for 8 minutes

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00:18:30,560 --> 00:18:37,960

or you know, I had... I lived out in Japan, I mean in the community in Japan and they had these...

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00:18:37,980 --> 00:18:48,840

It was crazy expensive to get an actual phone in your house, unless you got a pay phone. So they had these great big pink pay phones that weighed about 500 pounds

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00:18:48,840 --> 00:18:59,460

[laughing] The handset alone probably weighed about 20 pounds. So my family could call me into that phone, but if I used that phone, then i would have to sit there

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00:18:59,460 --> 00:19:09,660

and every couple minutes you know, put hundred yen coins into the phone so my family could call me or I could call them collect

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00:19:09,660 --> 00:19:20,220

from one of the phones on base. I couldn't call them collect from my house phone, but I could get those little cards that

would give me about eight minutes to call home.

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00:19:20,220 --> 00:19:27,340

And like I said, we didn't have the internet back then. I mean I think it's probably much easier to stay in contact today.

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00:19:27,340 --> 00:19:34,640

Back then it was so expensive to call that I you know, maybe only called home once or twice a month for just a few minutes at a time.

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00:19:34,640 --> 00:19:47,120

Hmm, okay. So you said you stayed in Japan until about '95. What did you do from there?

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00:19:47,140 --> 00:19:55,760

So I actually got out of the Navy for a year. So I got out of the Navy in January of '95 and then I went back into the Navy November of '95.

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00:19:55,760 --> 00:20:06,220

So I was out for about 11 months. So during that time I was out, I was kind of like... I lived in Florida for a little bit, lived in Indianapolis for a little bit,

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00:20:06,220 --> 00:20:09,280

and Ohio and then went back into the Navy.

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00:20:09,280 --> 00:20:18,620

What made you decide to go back into the Navy?

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00:20:18,620 --> 00:20:29,640

I missed it you know, I had gotten out of the Navy related to a bad experience I had the first time I was in the military and that situation kind of resolved itself

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00:20:29,640 --> 00:20:42,600

and I wanted the stability. I had a daughter, I wanted a stability, the health insurance, and the benefits that the military had to offer

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00:20:42,620 --> 00:20:54,500

and I missed my friends that I had military. So I wouldn't have gotten out the first time I had it not been for a bad situation and I had gone through.

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00:20:54,520 --> 00:21:01,820

Sure, going back into the Navy, did you fall into the same career field?

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00:21:01,820 --> 00:21:12,680

Yes, so I went back in as a cryptologic technician. I actually got a reenlistment to come back in, because when I came back in my field was critical manning

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00:21:12,680 --> 00:21:18,980

and so I was offered a reenlistment bonus to go back in. That's actually how it came to be is the recruiter called me one day

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00:21:18,980 --> 00:21:24,820

and said "did you realize if you come back in, we will give you this money" and I was like "yeah".

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00:21:24,860 --> 00:21:31,440

So I went back in, same career field, stationed in Kunia, Hawaii.

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00:21:31,440 --> 00:21:40,700

Wow, man, so you're seeing quite a bit of the world while you were in. How was Hawaii?

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00:21:40,700 --> 00:21:41,780

Beautiful. [laughing]

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00:21:41,780 --> 00:21:42,540

Yeah. [laughing]

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00:21:42,540 --> 00:21:52,380

Absolutely beautiful, I ended up living there for 10 years. So even after I got out you know, I continued living there

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00:21:52,380 --> 00:21:54,299

My ex-husband was also active duty Navy, so we were stationed there for 10 years.

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00:21:54,300 --> 00:22:09,780

So to me, in a lot of ways, I consider Hawaii home. It feels like home to me sometimes more than Ohio does now, because I love Hawaii and the people in Hawaii.

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00:22:09,780 --> 00:22:19,520

What was the difference between what you did in Japan and what you did in Hawaii?

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00:22:19,520 --> 00:22:30,000

So in Hawaii I was actually what they would call collections. So I was actually copying messages. So I wasn't doing the direction-finding any more,

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00:22:30,000 --> 00:22:40,660

I was actually intercepting and copying messages and also while I was in Hawaii for one year, I had the opportunity for special assignment

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00:22:40,660 --> 00:22:49,100

and I worked as a legal assistant for the staff JAG officer, which was wonderful experience, so.

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00:22:49,100 --> 00:22:54,320

That's good, that's really good. Did you need any training for that, any further training?

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00:22:54,320 --> 00:23:01,040

It was kind of all on the job training. [laughing] You know, I pick things up pretty quickly.

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00:23:01,040 --> 00:23:13,640

Sure. At this point, when you when you reenlisted and went to Hawaii, were you the same rank, did you..?

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00:23:13,640 --> 00:23:25,120

Yeah so when I got out of the Navy in Japan I was an E4 and when I came back and I was still an E4 and then when I got out of the Navy again I was an E5, so.

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00:23:25,160 --> 00:23:36,340

I've got you, alright. So tell me a little bit about Hawaii. What was the environment like? What did you do recreation?

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00:23:36,400 --> 00:23:46,540

Perfect weather. [laughing] What did I do for recreation? I went to the beach a lot. So when I worked in Japan, when I was doing collections I had the great schedule,

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00:23:46,540 --> 00:23:59,380

which was called deltas and it was 4 days on 2 days off, 4:30 in the morning, which a lot of people cringe about, but I got off work at 12:30 in the afternoon every day.

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00:23:59,380 --> 00:24:05,260

So I would get off work at 12:30 and maybe just go to the beach and take a nap. [laughing]

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00:24:05,260 --> 00:24:11,860

There's so much to do in Hawaii, because the weather is pretty much perfect 95% of the time

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00:24:11,860 --> 00:24:20,820

So a lot of hiking, a lot about door activities, hiking, going to the beach, camping, picnics, maybe flying to one of the other islands

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00:24:20,820 --> 00:24:29,340

you know Maui or the Big Island for a few days. There's never a shortage of things to do in Hawaii if you enjoy the outdoors.

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00:24:29,380 --> 00:24:37,320

Yeah, yeah, wow. Food, what was the food like out there?

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00:24:37,320 --> 00:24:43,840

Well I'm a very picky eater. [laughing] So you can spam at McDonald's in Hawaii.

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00:24:43,920 --> 00:24:45,520

Oh wow, okay.

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00:24:45,560 --> 00:24:56,060

Not that I ever did, but you can. My kids grew up in Hawaii so you know, you open a can of spam around them and they're kind of like dogs begging. [laughing]

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00:24:56,080 --> 00:25:07,800

They have these things called spam musubis, which is like a bed of rice, a slab of spam, wrapped in seaweed, and it's got soy sauce in it and my kids love those things

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00:25:07,800 --> 00:25:17,100

and you can get them at the movie theater and get them at the 7-Elevens. You can get them all over Hawaii and so when we left Japan that was one of the things...

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00:25:17,100 --> 00:25:25,140

I mean left Hawaii - I'm sorry - one of the things my kids complain about the first time we went to the movies, because they always got spam musubi at the movie [laughing]

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00:25:25,140 --> 00:25:27,820

and there was no spam musubi at the movies anymore. [laughing]

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00:25:27,820 --> 00:25:28,600

What is this popcorn? [laughing]

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00:25:28,600 --> 00:25:36,600

Right? [laughing] They didn't want popcorn, they wanted spam and like I said you could get spam at McDonald's in Hawaii.

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00:25:36,600 --> 00:25:47,300

There's a poi, I mean you know, a lot of Kahlua pork, but again, I'm kind of a picky eater, vegetarian or was a vegetarian until a few years ago.

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00:25:47,300 --> 00:25:57,520

I do now eat chicken, but when I was in Hawaii I didn't eat really a lot of meat. So I wouldn't be the person asked about what the food's like. [laughing]

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00:25:57,520 --> 00:26:07,060

Well how was... speaking of you being a vegetarian, how was being a vegetarian in the Navy?

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00:26:07,060 --> 00:26:16,500

So in boot camp I ate a lot of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. So much so that I promised myself once I got out of boot camp I would never again

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00:26:16,500 --> 00:26:26,600

eat another peanut butter and jelly sandwich and to date I haven't [laughing] and you know, that's been 25 years ago

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00:26:26,600 --> 00:26:33,840

So for 25 years now I have not had a peanut butter and Jelly sandwich, but I had a lifetime fill of them in boot camp, so it's alright.

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00:26:33,840 --> 00:26:44,020

I ate a lot of peanut butter and jelly and being in Orlando, we also had a lot of fresh fruit. So a lot of fresh fruit, a lot of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, so.

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00:26:44,060 --> 00:26:47,620

So that was pretty much your only options was peanut butter jelly?

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00:26:47,620 --> 00:26:52,960

Well there would be occasionally other options, but yeah it was a lot of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

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00:26:53,020 --> 00:27:03,200

Wow. Alright so what time did you eventually get out of the Navy?

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00:27:03,200 --> 00:27:09,720

So I got out of the Navy again in November '95. I was medically discharged.

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00:27:09,720 --> 00:27:15,960

Okay, alright and what did you do at that point?

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00:27:15,960 --> 00:27:24,840

So since I was medically discharged I was connected with the VA while I was still going through the med board process everything

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00:27:24,840 --> 00:27:36,780

and that's one thing I'll say, my command was awesome as far as making sure I was connected with VA and VA benefits

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00:27:36,820 --> 00:27:49,100

So when I got out at first for a little while, I actually did work as a legal assistant as a civilian, based on my experience working as a legal assistant for the JAG officer.

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00:27:49,100 --> 00:27:58,280

I you know, had a lawyer who took a chance on me. so I worked for him for several months like as a legal assistant in training,

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00:27:58,280 --> 00:28:07,920

but then I got approved for vocational rehabilitation through the VA so ended up just going back to school and focusing on education.

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00:28:07,920 --> 00:28:14,160

So I went to school, got a bachelor's degree and a masters degree through voc rehab.

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00:28:14,200 --> 00:28:17,480

That's great, that's great and what do you do now?

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00:28:17,540 --> 00:28:28,000

Now I am a supervisory vocational rehabilitation counselor for the VA. So that's actually been a great experience to have gone through the program as a participant

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00:28:28,060 --> 00:28:35,740

and then kind of gone through as an employer and now I've worked my way up to where now I'm supervisor for the program.

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00:28:35,740 --> 00:28:50,820

That's amazing, that's really good. Do you stay in contact with any of your -- I know you mentioned one of your best friends being in the Navy..?

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00:28:50,820 --> 00:28:59,820

Yes there's there's a few people I stay in contact with. You do lose contact with a lot of people, but there are a few that I'm still in contact with

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00:28:59,820 --> 00:29:11,560

and I would say that you know, especially like when you're stationed overseas like that, I think the friendships you make are a lot stronger in many was

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00:29:11,600 --> 00:29:18,740

than other friendships you make in your life, because everybody's overseas and everybody's missing their families so they kind of become your family

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00:29:18,740 --> 00:29:25,660

and you form a pretty strong bond with people. So there are still several people that I still maintain contact with

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00:29:25,680 --> 00:29:33,600

That's good and veteran organizations, are you part of any veteran organizations?

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00:29:33,600 --> 00:29:43,620

I am a member of the DAV: Disabled American Veterans, but I don't really go to the meeting or anything. [laughing]

But I'm a member

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00:29:43,620 --> 00:29:54,660

That's good. Well I'm sure in your career you find it very rewarding in how much you serve other veterans in that way.

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00:29:54,660 --> 00:30:09,340

So reflecting back in your military experience, what would you say would be one of the greatest life lessons that you've learned?

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00:30:09,340 --> 00:30:22,240

I would say from the military I got a lot of self-discipline and a lot of belief in myself that I am very capable and I can do whatever I set my mind to

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00:30:22,240 --> 00:30:33,320

and I don't know that I fully believed that before I went into the military, but getting through boot camp and and getting through some things in the military.

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00:30:33,320 --> 00:30:46,180

You know, I'm not easily frazzled. No matter how stressful something is I know that I can get through it and you know a lot of self-discipline

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00:30:46,180 --> 00:30:53,800

you know, to be able to see something through. If I start something i will see it through to the end.

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00:30:53,800 --> 00:31:09,300

That's very good. Your military service, how has that impacted your feelings on the military and war, the potential of war?

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00:31:09,300 --> 00:31:21,100

So you know, I love the military, I love military veterans and I wish we didn't have war. [laughing]

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00:31:21,100 --> 00:31:32,040

I have a lot of empathy and a lot of compassion and I know that being in the military you know, sometimes you do have to do things,

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00:31:32,040 --> 00:31:44,540

u don't have a choice to do things that you may not always agree with, but you agreed to do what was needed of you.

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00:31:44,540 --> 00:32:00,260

And so you know, I view the military positively. I think it's been... I would not be where I am in my life today had I never gone in the Navy, I know that.

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00:32:00,260 --> 00:32:07,660

I attribute you know, my success and I do consider myself to be a successful person.

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00:32:07,720 --> 00:32:16,080

I don't believe i would be as successful as I was had I not gone in the military. So for me it was life-changing and I think it's life-changing for many people

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00:32:16,080 --> 00:32:31,280

and so I you know I love the military and I do believe there are you know, some things that could be improved upon, but that's anywhere you go.

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00:32:31,280 --> 00:32:32,040

Sure.

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00:32:32,120 --> 00:32:42,580

I will say when I served in the military and more so my first go-around, it was quite a bit different experience my second go-around,

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00:32:42,580 --> 00:32:55,440

but as a female there were some people who I believe felt that women didn't belong in the military and so that was something I had to put up with

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00:32:55,440 --> 00:33:00,840

and that was difficult and i hope that it's not the same way now for females in the military.

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00:33:00,840 --> 00:33:12,320

I hope that you know, they're embraced better than maybe we were you know, 25 years ago or even prior to when I went in.

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00:33:12,320 --> 00:33:34,600

Yeah I hope so as well. For future generations, they have the opportunity to look at this being that this is going to be archived. What would be the message that you would want to give to them?

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00:33:34,600 --> 00:33:47,780

That they can do anything you know, like I said, I you know, they really can do anything.

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00:33:47,780 --> 00:34:05,460

That's good. Alright, well in closing, is there anything that we may have missed or that you feel that you want to share before we wrap this up?

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00:34:05,460 --> 00:34:07,440

I can't think of anything at the moment.

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00:34:07,440 --> 00:34:08,840

Okay, alright.

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00:34:08,840 --> 00:34:21,880

I mean all-and-all there were positive experiences along with some negative experiences, but all-in-all it was a very positive experience for me

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00:34:21,880 --> 00:34:31,700

and probably the best decision I made in my life was to go into the military, because it opened up a lot of doors and a lot of opportunities for me

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00:34:31,700 --> 00:34:36,480

and gave me you know, a lot of confidence in myself that I may not have had before.

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00:34:36,480 --> 00:34:44,040

Yeah, that's great, that's awesome. Well thank you very much Tera and thank you for your service.

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00:34:44,040 --> 00:34:45,820

Thank you.