

Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Shore, First Sgt. Frances

Date: 12-30-14 & 12-31-14

Length: (0:59:51-Part I, 1:59:49 – Part II)

Interviewer: Schwarz-Wetter, Joanie

Transcription By: Bob Hoffman Video & Photography

Q: Good morning. Today is December 30th, 2014. My name is Joanie Schwarz-Wetter. I'm an educator at the MCRD Command Museum. I'm interviewing First Sergeant Frances Shore, United States Marine Corps Retired. We are in the Oral History Room in the MCRD Museum in San Diego, California. Miss Frances, what was your maiden name?

A: Gonzales.

Q: And when did you enlist in the Marine Corps?

A: October of '57, 1957.

Q: Why did you choose to enlist?

A: I wanted to travel, and I didn't want to stay in my home town because nobody ever went anywhere.

Q: What did your family think?

A: They were very much against it. My mother cried tears. I had already made arrangements with the recruiter to come down to see her without telling her about it. So the recruiter—I cleaned the house up, and the recruiter showed up, and my mother almost had a heart attack. This big, tall recruiter came walking through the door and talked to us, and my mother just about—she just couldn't believe I did that without telling her. But I was dead set I was going to go. One way or another, I was going to go.

Q: Why did you choose the Marines over other services?

A: Because my brother joined the Air Force. My oldest brother joined the Air Force. My oldest sister joined the Navy. The Army, I didn't like. So the only thing left was the Marine Corps, and nobody had even touched the Marine Corps, so I thought that was the one for me.

Q: What did your recruiter tell you about the Marine Corps?

A: Well, she told me it was going to be hard. She told me I was going to enjoy it, and being that I wanted to do a lot of traveling, this was my opportunity to do that, and she just made it very glamorous, and I would be taken care of, I would be taken down, I would travel by train, I would be given coupons for my food and all that, and somebody would be waiting for me at the other end. And she—I would take the bus and go down to Albuquerque, which was a bigger city than Santa Fe, and she would be waiting for me there, and she would take me to my—I had to spend the night in Albuquerque, and take the train the next morning. She just made it sound very glamorous.

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Q: What were your mother's objections to you joining?

A: She just—well, a lot of people didn't think women at that time belonged in the military, so she didn't think I should go. She thought I should stay home and work at the Five and Dime like everybody else, and I was not going to do that. I was going to go out and I wanted to see things. I'd read about them, but I'd never seen them. You know, we never—you didn't travel that much back in those days. You didn't travel. And I—and that was her biggest thing. And her sister had a lot of input, my aunt, and she told her not to let me go. But I wasn't going to be happy unless I went. So I did.

Q: Is—was your hometown Santa Fe then?

A: Yes.

Q: Santa Fe, New Mexico.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. So when did you ship out to boot camp?

A: It was in October, I believe it was the 16th, the 16th of October, I want to say, or the 17th of October, is when we ended up shipping out, and I went up to Albuquerque, spent the night in Albuquerque, and the next morning, I got the train, and went by train all the way across country to South Carolina.

Q: What happened then when you arrived by train in South Carolina?

A: There was another young lady that was traveling with me, and we got off the train, and we had to wait for a bus, transfer to a bus to go to Parris Island. We both had to go to the restroom very badly, and when we tried to go, we saw there was a sign up that said colored, and another sign that said white, and we didn't know which one we should go to because they didn't have one for us, you know. It just—and there was a young man in uniform that was there, a sergeant, and he was observing us, and he decided—he came over and asked us if we had a problem, and when we explained to him the situation, he said, don't worry about it, I will stand outside and take care of it while you both take care of your business. So he was our guardian angel for the rest of the way. He said, just stick close to me, he says, I'll get you there. And [overtalk].

Q: Did you know was he officially assigned to wait for recruits coming in or—?

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A: No. He was coming from New York. He was from New York. He was coming off leave, and he just happened to be there waiting for the bus, the same as us, and going to Parris Island.

Q: Definitely a guardian angel.

A: Oh, yes, because we didn't—we had no idea. You know, back in those days, we had no idea. This wasn't something that we saw where we came from, you know, from New Mexico. We didn't see this type of thing, but this was something that was practiced on the East Coast, which we were not aware of, you know.

Q: So what happened when you arrived at Parris Island?

A: Well, the males boarded the bus and did a lot of yelling and shouting, and provided a lot of instruction, and they told us, the women, we'd just sit there and we would be taken care of. And the men went by the battalions, and they got down, and the bus driver kept right on going over to the women's battalion, and that's where our drill instructors boarded the bus and told us what to do. They weren't as loud as the males were, but they were very stern as to what we were to do.

Q: What were your first thoughts when—?

A: I wanted to go home. I wanted to go home. I didn't want, you know, I said, what did I do? You know, I should have listened to somebody. I should have stayed home. I didn't realize. The recruiter didn't say anything about this, you know. That was almost like a shot, like we hadn't done anything, and yet all these people were yelling and screaming and carrying on, you know. They could have told us the same thing without all that. I say that now, but, you know.

Q: Do you recall the date when you arrived at Parris Island?

A: I'm going to say maybe October the 20th, probably October the 20th, '57, because, yeah, I think pretty close to that.

Q: And how long was boot camp at that time?

A: About eight weeks.

Q: How many DI's did you have?

A: We had two DI's. We had a senior drill instructor, and we had a junior drill instructor. One was very nice, and the other one was very mean. She never had anything good to tell us.

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Q: So did you have any interaction with make drill instructors?

A: We had a male drill instructor that taught us drill. He taught us first aid and some military history. And the gas NBC class, those were the classes that he taught the women, and he was the only male that we saw.

Q: Did you guys go into the gas chambers?

A: Yes, we did.

Q: What other subjects did they teach you at boot camp?

A: We were taught military history, customs and courtesies, some administration, grooming, uniform regulations, some NBC. I believe that's about it.

Q: Were there classes about makeup?

A: Yes. And for grooming, yes, there was. We were only allowed to wear red lipstick, and that was to match our cap cord, and that was on our cover, and same with the nail polish. We could only wear—if we wore nail polish, we wore red nail polish.

Q: Did the color have a name?

A: It probably did. I was—it probably—there was a name for it. I don't recall right now what the name was, but there was a name for it.

Q: Was it Montezuma Red or something like that?

A: It's not what—it wasn't. I don't think they called it Montezuma Red, but there was—there was a name for it.

Q: That's okay if you don't remember.

A: Yeah, I can't recall what the name of it was. Of course, they had a lot of names for red at that time, you know, [overtalk].

Q: Did they—I'm sorry, go ahead.

A: We had, our hair had to be, could be shoulder length, but it couldn't touch our collars, and we couldn't have short hair.

Q: So it needed to be a feminine style?

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A: Yes.

Q: Did they teach you or talk about social etiquette?

A: We had some on social etiquette. We had... as far as addressing our seniors and our juniors and how to address people whenever you went to a function, or who went through first to eat, you know, and who went in last, and how you should sit down with your uniform so that you didn't wrinkle it. You always had to make sure that your skirt was pulled just right, so that you sat down and didn't wrinkle your skirt.

Q: Was there an emphasis on femininity?

A: Oh, yes. We had a—carried a—had to wear nylons. We had to wear girdles. Everybody had to have a bra. We wore—we had handbags issued to us, purses, and we had gloves that were issued to us, and anytime we had, were in uniform, we had to make sure we had our purse on our shoulder, and our gloves in our hand, in our left hand because we used our right hand for saluting, and that had to be free at all times. But we always had to wear high heels, unless you had a chit from a doctor saying you could wear an oxford, and that was very far and in between.

Q: How high were the heels?

A: They were only, I think they were only maybe two inches high, or an inch and a half high, and they had to be—the only ones you could wear were the ones that were sold to you at the PX. No spikes. And they were leather, and you had to polish them.

Q: Did they talk about feminine behavior?

A: They did talk on feminine behavior as far as how we were to conduct ourselves in, where there were males around. We couldn't be loud, we couldn't be—carry on like wild women. We had to be nice, you know, and they'd—I believe, now that I think about it, that we did have a tea that one commanding officer we had wanted us to have a tea so that we all knew how to behave in having teas. That was kind of crazy.

Q: Why do you think there was such an emphasis on femininity?

A: Well, they wanted women to be feminine. They didn't want them to be masculine because they could very easily fall into that role of being masculine, and they wanted them to remember they were women. They weren't men, and we were—we lived in nothing but men. They were around all the time. So I think they just wanted us to remember where—we were women. We weren't men.

Q: That makes sense, huh?

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A: You know, so they worked on it.

Q: Did you do any field training at boot camp?

A: Nope. The only thing we did was we did a march to go to the gas mask place for NBC. We marched all the way from our barracks down and we did our—went into the gas chamber, and you went in one time with your mask on. Then everybody came out, and then they only took I think it was only about five or ten people that went in, and then you had to take the mask off, so you could see what it would felt like. The burning sensation. And then you ran out. You had to be able to put your mask back on and clear it when you went in, and then that was the extent of our field exercise.

Q: So no marksmanship training?

A: No, no marksmanship training at all.

Q: How many women were there in your platoon to start off?

A: 75, I believe. We had 75 women. By the time they finished, it was probably down. They dropped a lot. I'm going to say maybe we started out with 70, 75, and ended up with maybe 60.

Q: Do you know the reasons why some of the women were dropped or quit or—?

A: Some were medical. Some were bedwetters. Some were just wanted to go home. They couldn't handle the stress, the yelling that was going on. There was too much provided. You were constantly going, so some people just weren't—they just couldn't handle it. So a lot of people went home. Some attempted suicide. And they just—they were just sent home because they didn't have time to deal with them.

Q: Do you recall the racial makeup of your platoon?

A: We had—oh, like we had people from all over the United States. We had people from the West Coast. We had blacks. We had Spanish people. We had Hawaiians. And we had those girls from Boston that couldn't talk. Oops. We used to make fun of them just to hear them talk, you know, that accent of theirs. Yeah, that was, it was kind of—there was a big mixture there. So we had a little bit of everything.

Q: Do you recall what part of the Island where the women's battalion was?

A: Well, that was separated because they had the male battalions were over on the—where the entranceway was, where you go on board the base. That's where you'd meet

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up with all the male battalions first, and then the women's battalion was backed further. You had to go through the whole route to get to the women's battalion. It was almost like we were being—we were being spared. They would have to hit the male battalions first, and then they'd hit the women's battalion. So it was back in the back, deep in the—I would think it was the in deeper than the other ones.

Q: So it was past Mainside?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you assigned to a company within the battalion?

A: WM Company.

Q: W—?

A: Or Recruit Company.

Q: Recruit Company. Okay.

A: Yeah. Because you had a WM Company, and then you had Recruit Company.

Q: Okay.

A: And the battalion consisted of both Recruit Company and WM Company because we had our own little world. We had our own PX as well. Our own mess hall. Our own clothing issue.

Q: For women or for women recruits?

A: For women.

Q: Oh.

A: For women period as well as for recruits. You know, everything was—everything was housed, everything was there for women.

Q: Do you recall your platoon number?

A: 16.

Q: Did you ever see any male recruits?

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A: When we went to church on Sunday, we had to go Mainside to go to church, and that's when we would see male recruits, and they would make sure that they gave us a eyes right or an eyes left, whatever side they were on, we couldn't see them until we passed them. But that's when we would see them, when we would go to church on Sundays.

Q: Were recruits allowed to smoke in boot camp?

A: Yes. We had two minute, five minute, 10 minute, depending on how good we were for the day. We had three smokes a day, breakfast, lunch and dinner. And we always smoked in the shower.

Q: Why in the shower?

A: I have no idea why in the shower. That was the closest probably, and it was away from the barracks, from the living area, from the sleeping area, but I never really thought about it, why in the shower. Why didn't they send us outside? I don't know. We always smoked in the shower. If we were really good, they'd give us a ten minute smoke, so we'd do, we could really smoke up a storm then. And somebody was always in charge of the dustpan where all the cigarettes went out, and they had to put, go outside and throw the cigarettes and butts away, and if you didn't smoke, by the time you left there, you did smoke because it was a good time. They—the drill instructors used to use the smokers to help them out because if the platoon did something wrong, then they would tell them, well, the smokers can't have a smoke break. So the smokers would make sure that everybody did what they were supposed to do, so that we could have a smoke break.

Q: A little peer pressure?

A: Yes. That didn't quite seem fair. Now, it doesn't quite seem fair, but then, I guess, it worked fine for them. They got what they wanted, and we got what we wanted. The one minute smoke wasn't too good because you'd barely get there, and it was time to go back. It was crazy.

Q: What was the chow like?

A: It was good. We were—we had dieters. And they would come around and check our plates to see if we were eating what we were supposed to eat. The food was good. We didn't have that much time. I don't think we had that much time to eat, especially the people at the end of the platoon because by the time we got in and sat down, the drill instructor was ready to leave because there was no time. I don't believe there was a time set on how long we were allowed to stay in the mess hall, like they have today, but when that woman put her hat, her cover back on, we had, we had to be ready to go. But the food was good, what food we got.

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Q: So was the platoon aligned from tallest to shortest?

A: Yes. There were days that they would let the feather merchants go in first. That was us, the ones that were small. We got to go in first. That was a treat because we could sit there and enjoy our meal, but it didn't happen that often.

Q: What did you do for PT?

A: Jumping jacks and we don't—I don't remember. We didn't do any running. We did jumping jacks. We did bend-overs. We jumped in place. We used to do our exercise in our peanut suits, and they looked like peanuts, too. It was a one-piece, bloomer-type, the bottom, and that was our, the extent of our exercise.

Q: Did you do sit-ups or—

A: I don't remember doing sit-ups. A lot of leg lifts, but I don't think they did, that we did sit-ups.

Q: Did you do any upper body?

A: You know, I don't really remember if we did upper body.

Q: What color were the peanut suits?

A: They looked like peanuts.

Q: So they were like a tan?

A: They were tan, yes, and they were that jersey-type puffy material, looked just like a peanut shell.

Q: How long were the bloomer parts of them?

A: They were just like shorts. They just went right to bloomer, where your underwear would fit, right there, had elastic on them, and then we had a skirt that went around. We could put a skirt over that.

Q: What shoes did you wear?

A: We used oxfords or tennis, tennis shoes.

Q: What other uniforms did you wear in boot camp?

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A: We wore our utilities, mostly utilities. And once we got going, we may have worn our dress uniforms, so that we knew how to wear them. But that didn't happen very often because they were in Clothing being altered, and I think we must have had about four alterations by the time they finished with us because the, you know, your weight fluctuates back and forth, so it was, they had to give a certain time, you know, to go back in and check again, but mostly we wore our peanuts and our utilities, and we had—that's about it.

Q: What color were the utilities?

A: The utilities were green.

Q: Was is the herringbone twill?

A: Yes.

Q: Were they specially made for women, or were they just male utilities?

A: Yes, they were made, it was all made for women.

Q: Can you describe the other uniforms, like the dress uniforms that you had at that time, or basically that, what you would wear once you became a Marine?

A: Well, we had our full piece dress that had a belt sown in that went around, short-sleeve shirts, short sleeves for the summer time, and they were striped, a bluish-green color with white in them. Your taller girls looked very good in them. You had a—in the wintertime, you had an olive shirt with a jacket to match, and you had a bluish, I guess you could call it a bluish or greenish-type shirt with a little tie, green tie that went on. That's what we wore for the winter, and we had our hat, our dress hat, which had the red binding on it. The summer had a garrison-type hat, but that was the uniform. And we had a—well, they gave us our, a raincoat, which was green and smelled horrible, made of rubber. We had a horse blanket that weighed a ton.

Q: Can you describe that a little more, the horse blanket?

A: It was a very heavy wool-type coat that wrapped around you and had buttons coming down the side. It was very warm, and it was very heavy. And we used to use that a lot for warmth because it was very warm. It was all wool.

Q: And then as you mentioned earlier, you always had to wear a bra and a girdle and panty hose.

A: Right.

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Q: Was it panty hose, or was it stockings?

A: They were stockings. We didn't have panty hose.

Q: So the stockings would attach to the girdle?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you also wear slips?

A: Yes, full-length slips.

Q: And those were all issued to you?

A: No, when we left for boot camp, we had, they would send us a list of items that we were required to take with us, and that was a full-length slip and I believe it was six pair of nylons, beige, and our underwear and our girdles and our bras. And once we got there, they went through to make sure we had everything we needed because I don't believe the, they had that much there to be able to give us all the stuff. We had to provide all this foundations, our feminine foundations. We had to provide all that. We had to make sure we arrived there, and we had to make sure we had 20 dollars, I think it was 20 dollars that we had to have on hand in cash. And all our foundations.

Q: What would—I don't know if you know. What would 20 dollars back then be worth today?

A: It might be worth—today, it might be worth only two dollars. I mean, 20 dollars back then would buy a lot. You know, when you think about it, that was in '57.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: That would buy a lot, 20 dollars, you know. Hey.

Q: So maybe like you could buy like today 200 dollars worth of things or...

A: Maybe.

Q: When did you graduate? What date did you graduate boot camp?

A: December the 20th, because I got home in time for Christmas.

Q: Did you graduate with the male recruits?

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A: No. We had our own graduation. It wasn't as elaborate as they have them today. We just, we got our emblems, which is the sign of graduation when you got to wear your emblems. The drill instructors would go up and down the line and put them on us, and that was our graduation because I do not—it was very plain and simple then. They didn't have this elaborate graduation series that they have today though, you know, where the parents come down and all that. They just [inaudible]—they didn't do that then like they do today.

Q: Was it an emotional experience when you got your emblem?

A: Oh, yes, because you know you made it. It was like, you know, like you get your diploma after having completed school. It was, it just felt good to having made it.

Q: Was anybody crying from happiness or emotion?

A: Oh, no. We didn't dare do that. Oh, no, you don't want to do that. No.

Q: What rank did you graduate as?

A: A private.

Q: So how long was your leave after boot camp?

A: We got 15 days.

Q: And so you went home.

A: We went home.

Q: How did people treat you?

A: While we were home?

Q: Yeah, like they knew that you came back as a Marine.

A: Yeah. Well, some people didn't know what to say, you know. A lot of people had questions as to what they did with us and how we managed. They had—some of the weirdest questions was the fact they thought that we were there altogether with the men and the women. That was their picture in their mind. They didn't realize that, no, we were separated. The women had their own battalion. The men had their battalion, you know. They didn't—they just had weird visions of what we went through or something like that, you know. They just, they didn't understand that it was, it was separated. It was a good thing, you know. We came back. We were better when we came back than when we were when we left. We stood up straighter. We said, yes, Ma'am, and no, Sir, and all that good stuff, which, you know, didn't

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come out automatically before. So there was change, and it was hard, it was hard to try to talk to some of them because they didn't, they really didn't understand the military, not that I understood it all that much. I was only gone for a short period of time, but it was a different way in life, totally different way of life, you know.

Q: After your boot camp leave, where did you go?

A: I was sent to Cherry Point.

Q: Did you request that?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: How—why did you--?

A: Because it was the furthest point away from home, and I wanted to start seeing the world on that end. I'd read about it. I drew maps of it, and I wanted to start at one end and work my way around, and that's what I wanted.

Q: Excuse me. So—excuse me. What unit were you assigned to at Cherry Point?

A: The women, we had a Women's Company, and we were assigned to the Women's Company, and then we were further assigned to work in male areas, and I worked at the White Elephant, which was a training library for Cherry Point, and I was a clerk typist, assigned as a clerk typist.

Q: So was the teaching OJT?

A: Yes, because all we did was go in and type. They give us a typing job, and we sit there. We were like the Remington Raiders, you know. We just typed away. We were their secretaries, I guess you could say.

Q: How far from the women barracks was the White Elephant?

A: I'm going to say it was probably maybe half a mile from there.

Q: And just to clarify, was it called Women Marine Company, or was it WN Company—WM Company?

A: They called it WM Company.

Q: How did you get to work?

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A: They had a, they had a shuttle that would come by and pick you up and take you to work.

Q: And would you wear your dress uniform?

A: Yes. Unless we were going to do a field day at work, and then we would wear utilities.

Q: Can you describe what happened to you one of the days that you were walking to work from your barracks?

A: There were days that I would walk to work because the shuttle was late, and I had to be to work. I had to pass all the male companies that were along the road, and the males would make wolf calls, say vulgar things, and try to get my attention, but I would never respond to them. This happened several times when I walked to work, and the last time that I walked to work was as I was walking down, there were three truckloads of male Marines coming, and all of a sudden, there was a shower of hard boiled eggs coming at me. I was so crushed that they would even do that to me. By the time I got to work, there was a black Staff Sergeant that was at the door, and he greeted me with good morning, and I just bursted out crying, and he asked me what was wrong, so I told him, and he took charge and went over, and they asked me to walk one more time, so I did, and the First Sergeants and the Company Gunnies were all in the barracks waiting for the guys to do something. And they must have told them that they couldn't do that because nobody did anything that morning when I walked. And then later on during the week when I walked again, there was always somebody watching out for me. I could hear the echoes coming from the barracks saying, there she comes, be quiet, there she comes. So they never did that to me again, but that was a, that was abuse. That was, you know, I never did anything to them for them to come out and do something like that to me. I didn't even acknowledge it. If I had been responding to it, I could probably understand that, but I never did, but that was very—what do you call that today? You call that sexual harassment.

Q: Harassment.

A: Yeah.

Q: And just plain old bad behavior.

A: Yeah. Well, you know, you stop and think about it, maybe you should have responded. What would have happened had I responded? Would things have gotten uglier? You know, you never know. I just know they hurt my feelings so bad.

Q: Were there a lot of other women at your unit at the White Elephant?

Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Shore, First Sgt. Frances

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Interviewer: Schwarz-Wetter, Joanie

Transcription By: Bob Hoffman Video & Photography

A: There were two other women there. One was a sergeant, the other one was a corporal, and I was a private.

Q: Where did you go after Cherry Point?

A: While I was at Cherry Point, they sent me to steno school up in Bay Bridge, Maryland, and I was up there for, I'm going to say maybe a month, learning to be a stenographer, shorthand, and then they sent me back to, upon completion of that, I went back to Cherry Point, and I was later transferred to Headquarters Marine Corps, and I was the Sergeant Major's personal secretary.

Q: The Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps?

A: Yes. Until they discovered that he really didn't need a secretary, and they assigned me to the Director of Division of Reserve, and I stayed and worked there until I believe I reenlisted from there.

Q: What year did you transfer from Cherry Point to Headquarters Marine Corps?

A: '57, '58. I'm going to say '59.

Q: And what was the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps' name?

A: I believe it was Bestwick.

Q: And do you recall who the Commandant was at that time?

A: I don't know. I think, I want to say it was maybe [inaudible] Major General Shoup?

Q: Where were you billeted?

A: We were, we had what they called Henderson Hall right next to the Navy Annex. It was just a small little walk, and they had barracks there at Henderson Hall for males as well as females, and that's where, that's where we lived was in WM Barracks.

Q: Were you able to take part in any special activities that were going on at 8th and I, or just in Washington, D.C.?

A: We were in the Inauguration Parade for the President Kennedy.

Q: Were you excited about that?

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A: Oh, yes. And cold, too. Yeah, that was a big event.

Q: About how many other women participated in that with you?

A: Oh, we had many, we had a whole platoon of women. I believe we even had women that came up from Quantico because they had women stationed in Quantico, and I think there was a platoon of women from Quantico that were up there. There was Army. There was Air Force. It was quite a group.

Q: How long did the parade last?

A: Forever. I mean, we were out there standing in formation like forever. Our feet were frozen. By the time they gave us the forward march, we could barely move, and it was, and it had snowed the night before, so it was very cold out. We had our PJ's on. We had two pair of hose on. Anything to keep us warm. And the people that we were in a residential area all lined up, and the people that lived there came out to offer us drink, hot drinks and the use of their bathrooms, because we had been out there for a long time. It was a very long time when you stop and think about it.

Q: Do you recall when they told you to be in formation, like what time?

A: Well, I imagine that everybody adds 30 minutes to the time they were originally told.

Q: Of course.

A: We had to board, the busses had to take us down there, downtown, and we were down the side of the—because we were going to march all the way down Pennsylvania Avenue past the President's viewing stand. So I imagine—and there were so many platoons there that you could just close your eyes and imagine the long line of people that was there. The platoons, one right after the other, all lined up. So I imagine we were probably out there at 5 o'clock in the morning. The platoons didn't take off until 9 o'clock say? So that was a long time, you know. Maybe 10 o'clock, maybe that's when they went by?

Q: Were you wearing your dress green uniforms?

A: Yes, we were. We had the dress green uniform on, and we had the horse blanket on, and we had our red muffler wrapped around us. We had two pairs of gloves on us. Anything to keep warm.

Q: Did you have to wear your heels?

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A: No, no. We wore oxfords for that. We never would have made it in heels. No, we wore oxfords for that.

Q: So were you issued a muffler, or was it just like a light scarf?

A: We were issued a muffler. It was, it's just a red scarf really. They called it a muffler.

Q: And there was, was there a summertime counterpart?

A: There was a white, a white scarf that was silky. The red one was wool.

Q: Were there people cheering while you guys were marching?

A: Oh, yes. There were some that were calling us names, too. There's, you know, there's a little bit of everything in this world.

Q: Once the parade started, how long did it take?

A: Oh, gosh, it couldn't have taken very long, but it seemed like it took forever. When we were marching on Pennsylvania Avenue, they had railroad tracks. You ever been down there? I don't know if they still have them or not. But they had railroad tracks there where the trolleys or something used to run on that. Anyway, apparently somebody stepped inside one of those and lost their oxford, and you could see the oxford sitting there as we all marched by. And all we could do, we just wanted to get to our busses because it was so cold. But it seemed to take a long time and it probably was only a matter of, say by the time everybody went through, maybe it was a matter of an hour. You know, but at the time, it just seemed like it took forever. And the only thing we wanted were the busses were waiting for us at the other end to pick us up.

Q: Were you guys given like the order for eyes right and hand salute?

A: Oh, yes, we did. When we passed the President's box, they gave us eyes right.

Q: So you got to see him?

A: Well, we probably didn't see him at all. You think about it, you're marching and looking this other way, you know. How could you possibly, you know, it's hard. And especially if you're cold. [Inaudible]. You just wanted to get to that bus. When you stop and think about it now, it was a nice thing to do, but the pain that you went through, that's the, you know, the waiting, every, everything is hurry up and wait, you know. That's—but you did it.

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Q: Did you get to participate in any other type of fairs or outreach or—?

A: Oh, we went to, for the Armed Forces Day, they used to have shows and put on exhibits at different bases that we used to have to go down there and man the booth or something. We used to do, we used to have to, we used to do that.

Q: When you were working for the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, did you get to see any official functions or participate in any functions?

A: No. No. I don't recall any.

Q: So you became the secretary for the Director of Division of Reserves?

A: They—yes.

Q: How long did that last?

A: Well, that lasted until they discovered I didn't have any work to do.

Q: Oh.

A: And then they made us, they made it into a typing pool. The decided things would work a lot better, a lot faster if they made a typing pool, and every, all the typing went into this pool, and one person would direct who would type all this information up.

Q: Was it men and women, or just women?

A: No, it was men and women.

Q: What were your coworkers like?

A: They were all lower rank. We were all about the same rank, I guess. Though people that would issue out the work to be typed would be sergeants, you know, but that's what it consisted of was just sitting there and typing, and we would take, that's when we'd do the, you'd do the typewriters, and you had to be able to put your paper back in there to realign it and correct it, so you wouldn't have to type the whole thing all over again. You got to be very, to be very skilled to do that, and after a while, you got good at it.

Q: What was your rank at that time?

A: I believe by then I was Corporal or Lance Corporal.

Q: Was it an E-3 Corporal or an E-4 Corporal?

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A: E-3 Corporal because they changed the rank structure somewhere along the line. They gave us crossed rifles on our ranks, and that's when instead of having, they made you a Lance Corporal because you'd go from, what is it, PFC Corporal, so they ended up making you a Lance Corporal, and then you made Corporal.

Q: Where did you go on liberty?

A: Downtown D.C. We used to go down to—

Begin 12-31-14 Interview

Q: Good morning. Today is December 31st, 2014. My name is Joanie Schwarz-Wetter, and I'm an educator at the MCRD Museum. I am here to interview Miss Frances Shore, Retired First Sergeant. This is a second interview in a series of interviews about Miss Frances' long career in the Marine Corps. Miss Frances, we left off while you were still at Cherry Point, and your enlistment was about to end. So how long did you reenlist for?

A: I reenlisted at Headquarters Marine Corps for four more years because from Cherry Point, I went to Headquarters Marine Corps.

Q: Oh, okay. I'm sorry. I mistake, said that mistakenly. So you were at Headquarters Marine Corps when you reenlisted?

A: Right.

Q: Okay. For four years. And where did you go after Headquarters Marine Corps?

A: I requested San Diego, and they sent me to San Diego. I went, was assigned to RTRS-1 as a typist.

Q: And how many other women were there at that time?

A: There were two other women there.

Q: And what year was this?

A: That was in '61.

Q: How did the male Marines at RTR treat you?

A: They were very nice. They were very nice.

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Q: Did anything significant go on while you were stationed at MCRD at this time?

A: The only thing was I ended up getting promoted to Corporal, and I was selected to go to Parris Island for Drill Instructor School. Well, no, it wasn't school because they didn't have a school. You had to be on-the-job training for that. We—they also selected about four other women to go, and during that time, they had an investigation going on for women.

Q: What were they investigating?

A: The homosexuals, lesbians type thing, and that was when I found a recorder that had been hooked up underneath the table in the area where I was assigned to clean this area. It was a sitting room type thing, and I happened to be cleaning it, the table, and I went—it was a deep table, and I went in deeper to clean the dust, and that's when I noticed the recorder. It was taped up underneath the table, and I came out and told the world that—asked somebody what it was because I didn't know what it was, and they informed that it was a transmitter. And as a result of that, the majority of the women that went to—that were selected to go to Parris Island to become Drill Instructors did not go, and I was, I ended up being the only one that left and went to Parris Island. Everybody else—there was one young lady that had already left because she was on leave, and they were waiting for her when she got there, and they put her back on a plane to send her back to San Diego for the investigation. So I was the only one that ended up going to Parris Island at that time for training, and it was OJT, so we had to follow platoons. We followed two platoons around and took notes. We were not allowed to talk to anybody or correct any recruits or anything. We were just there to observe and learn, and we followed two, I believe it was two—two platoons. Then after they evaluated us and decided that we could perform the duties, then we were assigned a platoon of our own, still under an—on a trial basis because they evaluated us after that first platoon, and then later on, they assigned us the drill instructor MOS, which was an additional MOS, and we ended up receiving our Drill Instructor pay. And I was there for two years on the drill field, and when I completed my tour there, I requested to come back to the 12th District, the Marine Corps District that was located at San Francisco at the time.

Q: Let me interrupt real quick, I'm sorry, and jump back to the investigation at MCRD San Diego before you left to go to Parris Island to be a Drill Instructor. Am I correct in assuming that the recorder you found was recording the women and their conversations, and based on that, they discovered that some women were lesbians, and kicked them out?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they have—do you know, did they have any like court proceedings or how did—was there like a process of kicking them out, or did they just say, you're out?

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A: Well, they had NIS was involved in it. They did a lot of—of conversations and bringing people in and questioning them, and other people were brought in to ask them different questions as to what had transpired in reference to the recording that they had picked up the recordings. So that's how they worked it. It wasn't, it wasn't a court martial or anything like that. It was just an administrative discharge that they got.

Q: Were the women upset about being found out and—?

A: Well, yeah, they were upset. They—there was a lot of tension. There was a lot of stress because there wasn't any—you couldn't trust anybody. You didn't know who was going to turn on who, and where all their information was coming from because they had a lot of information on these people. So they really had—they couldn't deny it because they had it on tape, so it was something that just took place, and they went ahead and they took their discharges and left. So it was more like a cleaning. They cleaned out the area it what it amounted to, so—

Q: About how many were discharged?

A: I'm going to say approximately six people, six women were the ones that left, that were discharged.

Q: Thank you. And then back to Parris Island. Was boot camp different from when you went through as a recruit?

A: It was pretty much the same. I don't—the only difference than when we were there as recruits, we took our footlockers. We lived in a two-story barracks, and we took out footlockers up and down, two girls to a footlocker, and bring them back down, and when we were going through, they used to go up through and tear the barracks apart, tearing up the bunks. And if you left your lock unlocked, because they had locks for each footlocker, and if you left it unlocked, they would open it up, and they would scatter things all over the place. So you had to make sure when you left you locked your footlocker because that was all your worldly possessions were all in that footlocker. That's all we had—was the items that we were supposed to have in the footlocker. And that was one thing that when I went back, that was something that we could no longer, we couldn't do that to the recruits because it was dangerous carrying that footlockers down because you'd being them back on the stairs, and that was, that was a little dangerous. So that was something we couldn't not anymore. But you still had the loud voices, the commands and all this constantly going on. You had runners that were assigned runners for the day that would stand outside the DI's office and wait for the DI to call them, and they would give them instructions and tell them what they wanted the platoons to do, and then they, the runner would go back and instruct the recruits on what to do when they was to fall out or to get ready for an inspection or whatever the situation may be.

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Q: And I believe you, if I'm thinking of your dates of service correctly, you were a Drill Instructor at Parris Island when President Kennedy was shot?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you recall where you were when you found out?

A: I had—I was just bringing the, my platoon back from a class, and we were going to go to PT, and I just brought them up on the sidewalk when somebody yelled out the window that President Kennedy had been shot.

Q: What was everyone's reaction?

A: Everybody was shocked. It was a surprise. It was a shock, just unbelievable really to think that something like that could really happen, you know.

Q: Did the base hold any memorial services or anything?

A: We did. We had an hour of silence. The flag went at half mast, and we had quiet time.

Q: Did you notice a difference in the caliber of women you were training from when you went through as a recruit or the other women who were your peers on active duty?

A: There were—they were probably were a lot more knowledgeable than when we went through boot camp because there was a lot more women going in at that time, whereas it was very—there wasn't that many when I went through boot camp, there wasn't that many that went in. But it was—when I was down there, they seemed to be more knowledgeable. There was a lot of people that had degrees that had been to college. So they did it—they had a lot more knowledge. They were easier, I think they were easier to train.

Q: What year did you leave there again and go to 12th District?

A: I'm going to say in '63. I think it was '63 when I went to, I was transferred to 12th District.

Q: Did you request that?

A: Yes.

Q: And what rank were you?

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A: I was a, I was a Sergeant then, and I picked up, when I went to 12th District, I picked up Staff Sergeant.

Q: Where did you live?

A: For the 12th District, we lived—they didn't have any barracks for us. Everybody lived out in town, and we were required to—the Colonel wanted—there was only two women that were there, me and this other Corporal, and we, he wanted us to live, to get an apartment together, so that we'd have—be able to commute back and forth, and it was a lot better than being for us than being alone. The men had a—lived in apartments as well. They never inspected our apartment. They always inspected the men's apartment. The whole time I was there, they never inspected ours, but we lived in Oakland, and we used to drive back and forth from Oakland to San Francisco across the Bay Bridge.

Q: Did the citizens of San Francisco ever have an odd reaction to you ladies in the Marine uniform?

A: No, because what we did was we went in civilian clothes to work, and we had lockers at 12th District, and we used to change into our uniform at the 12th District.

Q: Were you also a clerk typist at this?

A: Yes.

Q: Did it feel different working at 12th District as opposed to being on a Marine base in a barracks?

A: It was very different. You didn't have, you didn't have the people around you all the time. You were on your own, so you had to be very, very watchful and careful as to what you did because you were on—you had to be on your best behavior really when it come down to it because you were on your own. You couldn't—just common sense like, you know, really, because—and the men were very, very helpful as far as making sure that if we all went somewhere, everybody went together, and they were very—they kept an eye on us for the most part.

Q: How long were you at 12th District?

A: I was only there for I think about a year, a year and a half maybe because then I got orders for Camp Elmore in Virginia, Norfolk, Virginia. The Marines had—there was a base called Camp Elmore, and that's where we had—there were 63 women in the Company, and they had a male company, and that's when we had—the companies had their Unit diaries and their SRB's, and we took care of all that. So they sent me to Camp Elmore as an

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Acting First Sergeant, and that was a Staff Sergeant at the time, and that's where I had to learn all about the SRB's and the Unit diaries and...

Q: Was this a Navy base?

A: It was a Navy base.

Q: Do you know what unit you were with?

A: We were with the WM Company. We were—they had an H&S Battalion there, and they had a male company there. So there was the male company, there was a WM Company, and they used Marines as security guards.

Q: Oh, okay. Since you were a Staff Sergeant being an Acting First Sergeant, were you the Senior Staff NCO for women?

A: Yes.

Q: So what year did you arrive at Camp Elmore?

A: That had to be in '61, '62—that had to be probably in '64, '65.

Q: Okay. And how long were you there?

A: I was there for about a year and a half, and when they came out with a request for volunteers to go to Vietnam, I volunteered to go to Vietnam.

Q: Were you shocked when you heard that there were billets for women in Vietnam?

A: Well, I was eager. I was ready to go. It was—that was some—I wanted to travel, and that was one way of traveling. I could volunteer to go, so—

Q: Did the thought of going to a war zone intimidate you?

A: Not—not at the time I volunteered. It wasn't until I was getting close to the time that I was leaving that I gave it a second thought, and thought maybe I shouldn't be doing that. Maybe I should stay home.

Q: What year did that request for volunteers come out?

A: I believe it was '67.

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Q: And where did you deploy from to go to Vietnam?

A: There was a—my sister was living in Westminster, and I came to Westminster. They picked me up from—I was on leave, and they had a helicopter come in and pick me up in Westminster to take me to the Air Force base.

Q: And so you flew from the base?

A: Yes. They flew me up to Alaska, and then from there, we got a transport, an airline to Vietnam.

Q: Where did you land?

A: In Tan Son Nhut Airport in Saigon.

Q: What unit were you assigned to?

A: We were—they had a WM—not a WM. They had a Marine Corps office that took care of all the SRB's and all the Unit diary entries and everything else. It was like, it was a company like the, I want to say an H&S Battalion Company that took care of all the, the records for all the Marines that were in Saigon area, and that's what we were, the command we were assigned to, but we were then further assigned to MACV, which was on Tan Son Nhut, MACV Headquarters.

Q: Where were you billeted?

A: We were billeted in hotels. They had Army and Air Force and Marines in hotels throughout the area because we had, there was a lot of Army women, lot of Air Force, and we only had a small number of WM's.

Q: About how many, could you estimate?

A: There was about four that were in headquartered in MACV, and then we had—there were three that were back in the office in the Administrative Office. We had Captain and I believe it was two Corporals that were in the Administrative Office.

Q: What month did you arrive in Vietnam?

A: It was right after the Tet Offensive.

Q: Did you know the Tet Offensive was going on when you had left stateside?

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A: Yes, because it was almost over. They were still under curfew when I arrived there, and everybody, all the military had to be in their quarters by a certain time because there was a curfew still going on. But the amazing thing to me was the fact that the media made it sound worse than what it really was, because we were under curfew and all that, but it wasn't as bad as they made it sound. That's what scared me was the fact that I was listening to all the information on the media, and I got cold feet then, but once I got there, it wasn't, it wasn't as bad as they made it sound because we arrived and we went through, and they checked us out, and they issued us our utilities, and we went through a briefing on the do's and don'ts of what we were supposed to do while there. And then they assigned us to our hotels, and I was—the first night, I spent in a hotel where all the nurses were because we had a lot of nurses over there. And then after the first two nights, I was moved to a regular, to my permanent hotel with the rest of the women.

Q: Did you feel safe in the hotels like—?

A: Yeah. We had guards out in front of every hotel. There was a guard sitting out there. They were Vietnamese guards, and there were sandbags all over the place right where the door was, the entranceway, so you were pretty safe.

Q: Were there checkpoints around the city?

A: Yes.

Q: How did the Vietnamese people treat you?

A: Well, they were very nice. They couldn't speak English, but they tried, and we couldn't speak Vietnamese, and we tried. So we used to have a mamasan that used to do our washing for us, and they didn't have any washing machines or anything like that. They washed our clothes by hand and wore them out, because they would scrub them against the cement. Everything was cement. And they would iron them for us, and we used to pay them I believe it was 25 dollars a month we would pay them to do our washing. They would clean our rooms also and make our beds. And then once they had been there for a while, because this had been going on for quite some time, they started to be more demanding as to what they wanted. They wanted more money. They wanted us to get them an ironing board and to get them irons and all these nice things that we took for granted, but they thought it was awesome to have.

Q: Were you ever attacked or did you ever come under fire?

A: No. We used to hear the incoming at night. When we were in bed, we could hear the incoming, and it was—it wasn't in directly in the city. It was on the outskirts of the city, and you could hear the incoming coming in. But it wasn't—what was left in Saigon was on the side of the roads were all cars and things that had already been blown up, and it was

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just—it was—they hadn't gotten around to cleaning up the area. That was the only thing that was left out there that was, that you could see was the remains of what had transpired as far as the Tet Offensive that had taken place before I got there.

Q: You mentioned you had an in-brief, do's and don'ts. Did you ever receive any sort of combat training?

A: No.

Q: Weapons training?

A: They tried to—if the women wanted, they could, they would issue them a weapon.

Q: What kind of weapon?

A: It was a 45 or a rifle, but I never took one. Some women did take them.

Q: You mentioned you were issued utilities. Were these sateens? Were they—?

A: These were Army fatigues, and they were, they were men fatigues or utilities, and they were way too big for us. We had to take them to a tailor to have them cut down, so that they would fit us, and everybody did that, and they were green. They weren't—I'm trying to think whether they were herringbone or not, but they were the ugliest things. And we also wore our—at that time, we had a blue utility uniform that we used to wear. We had blue slacks and a light blue shirt that we used to wear because that what we had changed to for the Marine Corps.

Q: For the entire Marine Corps or just the women?

A: For the women, and we used to wear that, and switch off with the utilities that the Army had issued us. And they issued us boots, but if nothing was going on, we would wear our uniform. While we were in curfew and things were still kind of uneasy, we would be in utilities. And they had busses that would come by and pick you up and take you to work, and there was men aboard the busses with weapons. It looked kind of scary, but everybody was—things just worked.

Q: Were the male Marines happy to see you?

A: Oh, the males were very nice. They were—they treated us great. They were very gentleman-like. They, they just wanted to—they—for those that had been in country for a long time, they were just happy to be able to sit down and talk to a woman because they

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couldn't talk to the Vietnamese because the Vietnamese couldn't speak English, so they were just very happy to be able just to have normal conversation, and they were just—they were just awesome.

Q: Did you ever get liberty?

A: We had, we had liberty. We could go into town, but to their whatever—they had clubs for us that had slot machines. They had transportation that could take you there and bring you back, but it wasn't—there wasn't that much to see. They also had a zoo, but their zoo was pitiful. It wasn't—I think we went to it one time, and it just wasn't—in comparing our zoo to their zoo, it—you couldn't even compare it. It was very sad. The animals were very unkempt. Of course, they had just gotten through the Tet Offensive, for crying out loud, you know. So they didn't have anything too good. We went to a—we wanted pizza one night. We all went to a pizza place, and the place was dark, and we couldn't see too well, and the tables were just—I'm going to say they were 12 by 12 tables. And everybody's sitting around there, and we're itching because we can feel something on us, but we couldn't see. Somebody lit a lamp on the table, and the place was crawling with ants. So we didn't have any pizza. It was, you know, and we went to a hospital to tour a hospital that they had there one time, and it was really in bad shape, and they had—you could see six people in a bed, children were in a bed that were sick, and that, you know, it was really—it was very sad, very sad.

Q: Did you ever go on R&R?

A: We went on R&R after we'd been there I think it was about six months, we went on R&R, and I selected Australia and went to Australia on our R&R.

Q: Did you have a chance to see any of the countryside in Vietnam?

A: We had some friends that were Australians that had an assignment. They had an island off of Saigon there in Vietnam where they would take political prisoners, and they had to deliver something there one time, and they took us with them, with us to a—in a helicopter, and we went across to the island, and it was a beautiful island. The beach was fantastic. It was so pretty and so blue, and we spent the day there, and then we came back because they had delivered whatever they were going to deliver, and we came back, but it was very nice. And we went down to Long Binh, which was where most of the Army was, and the men gave us a tour of that area down there. But other than that, it was, everything was very destructive. It wasn't, it wasn't very clean. It was—reminded me of Tijuana, you know, it wasn't—the children would run around the street. There was always people along the roads selling you food, and they were cooking on the sidewalks. And the children, the little kids would run around without any diapers or anything, and they would do their business wherever they wanted, you know. It just wasn't—it was a torn country, you know. It was very torn at the time.

Oral History Interview

Interviewee: Shore, First Sgt. Frances

Date: 12-30-14 & 12-31-14

Length: (0:59:51-Part I, 1:59:49 – Part II)

Interviewer: Schwarz-Wetter, Joanie

Transcription By: Bob Hoffman Video & Photography

Q: When did you leave Vietnam? Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot. I had another question. Did you have any other billets while you were there in Vietnam?

A: No. The only thing—where I was assigned to work?

Q: Well, so you weren't working in the Company office.

A: No.

Q: Where were you working?

A: I worked at Headquarters MACV, which was where all the officers, and they had the main office, and they had all the traffic, the message traffic and all that would come into—and they were the people that planned everything because we worked in the G3 Section, and the General's office was there, and I worked as the—took care of the classified documents, and I had to be there to pick up the classified documents from the G3 Section, and log them in, and assign them to the different officers, and had then ready to go by the time the officers came in to work.

Q: So when did you have to get there?

A: I would get there about 6:30 in the morning or 7, so that all the documents would be ready for the men to chomp on them.

Q: How long did it take for you to get a security clearance?

A: Well, I always had one.

Q: Oh, okay. How long was the typical work day?

A: It could be eight hours. It could be 16. It would depend on what was going on. We might stay after, after hours, you know. It all depended on what was going on. They had a mess hall for us. Everybody went to the mess hall.

Q: So when did you leave Vietnam?

A: I was there a year. So we'll say maybe '68. I left in '68, and was transferred to Headquarters Marine Corps.

Q: Why were you there for just a year?

A: That's all they would let us stay. You could request to stay more, but the only people that really stayed for any length of time was the Army. They wouldn't—it

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wasn't a place where you would want to stay because it was a torn country. It wasn't—the money was good. You couldn't spend any money, you know. There was nowhere you could spend money. Everybody had money like crazy because there was nowhere you could really spend it. They had free movies for us. But it was—we had our—occupied our time.

Q: What did you think of the people protesting the war back home?

A: Well, I thought that was terrible because they just—they were protesting something they probably didn't go along with the fact of having the war, but they had to see the situation I would think for them to really understand it, you know. You can protest anything, but if you don't know that much about it or can't see what's going on, then, you know, it's not right that you should protest something that you don't, you can't really see what's going on.

Q: When you were there, did you feel like what the United States was doing made a difference? A positive difference [overtalk]?

A: I think so.

Q: And then looking back with all the knowledge you have now, do you still have that same opinion?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where did you transfer to?

A: To Headquarters Marine Corps.

Q: So that was maybe in late 1968?

A: Right.

Q: What rank were you by this time?

A: Oh, I was a Staff Sergeant.

Q: Where did you live?

A: I believe—

Q: Oh, sorry.

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A: I believe I was Staff Sergeant. I was getting ready to pick up Gunnery Sergeant.

Q: Did you still live at Henderson Hall?

A: No, because I had my mother as my dependent, and we lived off—I lived off base then. But the women still lived at Henderson Hall.

Q: So what was your role when you were there?

A: I was selected to go there to be the NCOIC in charge the women Marines that were in, that had been assigned to work at MCI at 8th and I. They used to go there to grade the papers, the tests and the lessons that the Marines would send in on their MCI lessons. The women used to grade them and return them back to the, to the Marines, and that took place at 8th and I, and they must—they had about 35, maybe 40 women that worked there, and they used to get a bus and transport them to 8th and I every morning, and then they'd pick them up at night and bring them back to Henderson Hall at the close of the end of the workday, and they needed a Staff NCO to be, to overlook all the women that were there because there was nobody there to direct them or to track them, and I had to ride the bus for about a month, two months, because the women were very rowdy. They got in a fight.

Q: What were they fighting about?

A: I have no idea. But the Sergeant Major asked me to ride on the bus because they were just—it was just totally out of hand. And then when they worked at 8th and I, they were all over the building. There were beds all over the building.

Q: Why were there beds?

A: Because they got sick a lot. The women had their monthly cycle. Some of them had three or four a month, and they couldn't work. They had cramps real bad, and you could—they were always sleeping somewhere because they had cramps. And my job was to go in there and clean it up, and in talking to the Colonel there that was in charge of 8th and I, whatever, anything that I wanted done, he would back me on it. And within a matter of a couple of months, we had—the bus situation got better. The women no longer ran wild at the building. We got rid of all the beds that they had all over the place. They had to be—they were well accounted for. I had to make tours throughout the building constantly to make sure that they weren't sleeping in the stairway because they were totally out of control. So we brought that back down, and it worked very well.

Q: Why do you think they were out of control?

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A: Well, there was nobody there to direct them. They could tell the men anything, and the men would believe them. Why not? You know, they were just—they could get away with it. Who was, who is going to know any better, you know? And they would tell them, well, you know, I got cramps. Okay, you got cramps, you know. Go lay down. And they would go lay down, you know, which—they were. They took advantage of the situation, you know. They had a good time. They took advantage of it. But that was taken care of within time and everything. They started doing their job. They did what they were supposed to do, and things got a lot better.

Q: Do you think they saw the error of their ways, or just they were only behaving because they were being held accountable?

A: They were behaving because they—they had to be held accountable for what they were doing, because they were there to do a job, you know, and they weren't doing their job. There might have been one or two that did, but the rest of them didn't do it.

Q: I bet that Colonel was very grateful to you.

A: Yeah, he was really surprised that it, you know, it went as well as it did go because we also had to attend 8th and I parades on Friday night whenever they had then. We had to man the gates and assist people, which they used to have a list of all the people that were to go into the 8th and I parade, and the women had to wear dress blues and stand at the gate and check off the individuals that came through the gate. If their name wasn't on the list, they didn't get in, and we had that assignment as well as the assignment of grading the MCI papers. But within time, everything worked out. Everything got back on schedule, and there was just—I don't know why, but I guess because they were women, the men were hard on them, or did not demand then to do what they were supposed to do. I have no idea, but it got solved.

Q: When you ladies were wearing dress blues, did you wear dress blue trousers, or a dress blue skirt?

A: Oh, no. Just skirt. We didn't have, we didn't have any trousers.

Q: When did you leave 8th and I?

A: About a year. 1970, I left 8th and I.

Q: Were you still a Staff Sergeant, or did you pick up Gunnery Sergeant?

A: I picked up Gunny.

Q: Where did you go?

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A: I—they needed a Staff NCO in Iwakuni, Japan, so I volunteered for that.

Q: Was that unusual at the time to have women in Japan?

A: There was women out there already because they had already started sending women overseas whereas before they hadn't sent—they would only send them to Hawaii, to Italy, and you had to be a stenographer to go to those places. And then they started sending them out to all these different overseas areas. And it was mostly West Pac that these—I think there was one that Jo Davis they sent out to the Dominican Republic, but they needed somebody at Japan's—Staff NCO in Japan because we had women that were out there and they were all junior NCO's and that, so I volunteered to go there.

Q: In addition to overseeing the women there, what other duties did you have?

A: I was—in Japan?

Q: Yes.

A: I was the Administrative Chief for H&S Battalion.

Q: So did that mean you were in charge of men, too?

A: No, because you had the, you had a Master Sergeant that was over everybody.

Q: Did you get to go on liberty?

A: Yes. When I got to Japan, the World Fair was going on in Osaka, Japan. And I checked in, and the Master Sergeant told me to go to the World Fair. And he set up arrangements, housing arrangements for me with a family, and I didn't know any Japanese. I didn't know the area, and he said, just go. It's—you'll only have this one time that you'll—you can go, and then it's going to be over with. I think it started in September and ended in October, or something like that. And he gave me a map, and he told me to get on the train and follow the crowd. And I did, and he had this family met me and took me in, and that's where I slept, on the floor. I couldn't speak Japanese though. Everything was sign language. But they were awesome. And I went to the World Fair in Japan. And then I came—I was there two days, three days, and then I came back and went in to work [overtalk].

Q: Were you in civilian attire, or were you wearing your uniform?

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A: Civilian attire, you know. That was really awesome because I'd never really expected anything like that. But he said, this is the only time you'll ever get to do this. And it was the first World Fair that Japan had ever had, the first time they'd held it. So I thought that was pretty neat.

Q: What else happened while you were at Iwakuni?

A: Oh—

Q: Were you still single?

A: I was still single, and then I got married.

Q: To a Marine?

A: Then I got married.

Q: Was he a Marine?

A: I got married to a Marine, yes. I met him when I was at Headquarters Marine Corps, and then I volunteered and left, and he decided he was going to follow me, and I said, oh sure, you know, I'll marry you if you get to Japan. I didn't think he's get to Japan because he had just gotten to Headquarters Marine Corps. But he did get to Japan. And I got married there in Japan. And I was towards the end of my enlistment, which was in October.

Q: What year was that?

A: That was in '71. And then I got pregnant, and I decided that I would get out of the Marine Corps.

Q: Did you want to, or did you feel you had to?

A: Well, I had to. As far as I knew, I had to get out of the Marine Corps, or at the end of my enlistment, because it was the end—it was October and it was the end of my enlistment, and I was—couldn't reenlist because I was pregnant, so when I was in the middle of checking out, because I was going to come back. I'd get out on my EAS, but there was a Captain that worked at the wing of SJA Wing and he told me, he says, you don't have to get out. He says, you can request to stay in, and I didn't know that. And he showed me a bulletin, Marine Corps bulletin, that said that women could request to stay in the Marine Corps if they were pregnant, and they would be considered on a base to base, base by base, I mean, individual by individual, and so I took the bulletin, and me and my husband wrote up my AA form, and submitted it, and of course, they had to transfer me out, and I went to Treasure Island, and—

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Q: I forgot to ask you, I'm sorry, what Unit you were assigned to in Iwakuni?

A: H&S Battalion.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. We had a WM Company where the WMs lived.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: Okay? But we worked for H&S Battalion.

Q: Okay.

A: Anyway, I was transferred out of Iwakuni, and I went back to, I went to Treasure Island to await the result of my AA form. And I was the first one that had requested to stay in because I was pregnant. So they did not know what to do with me. The Sergeant Major Oden, Mable Oden, she could not believe it. She was in San Diego at the time on an inspection tour when the AA form hit, and she could not believe it. And I was in Treasure Island, so she called me up and she talked to me. And she said she would see what she could do. But anyway, I had to fill out—my mother was living with me, so she had to fill out affidavits and swear that she would take care of the child if anything happened to me or if my military duties or if she got in my way of my military assignments. And I stayed there from I guess it was September, October and November, I got my AA form back from Headquarters Marine Corps assigning me to MCRD San Diego for duty, and I could stay in the Marine Corps.

Q: What was your reaction?

A: I was happy. I could not believe that it—it was awesome. But I transferred down here, and they assigned me to Casual Company as a Personnel Chief. And that was in November. I was due in January.

Q: How did you fit in your uniform?

A: I went into maternity clothes. I didn't wear my uniform. Because by that time, I was—I had, I'd already gotten to the point with—first of all, they couldn't figure out whether I was pregnant or not, and every morning I got up at Treasure Island, and I went to Sick Bay, and I gave my urine sample, and they would test it, and it was—came out false every time.

Q: That's unusual.

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A: Yeah. But anyway, they said I wasn't pregnant. So I had to go, every morning, I had to go give my test, and I have proof that that little girl was not a tumor. [Inaudible]. Yeah, it was, it was really weird. Anyway, I got back and transferred over here to San Diego, and I worked for a while, and then I had—

Q: What did people think when they see a pregnant Marine wearing civilian attire? What was their reaction?

A: The men were very—they were very good about it. They didn't want me to do anything. They just—they were afraid that something was going to happen to me. I was going to break or something. I couldn't do anything, you know. They were—I worked—when I was at Treasure Island, I worked for the MP's, and I used to go in to work every morning and work for them down there. I was a typist for them while I was waiting for my results of my AA form. When I came up to Headquarters—here to MCRD, I worked as the Personnel Chief, and I just did my job. They were—the men were just very supportive. They were very nice, very good.

Q: So as Personnel Chief, you were in charge of men?

A: Yes. We had men—

Q: That was the first time you were in charge of men?

A: We had men, we had men here that worked there in Casual Company.

Q: How did they feel about that?

A: They just accepted it. It wasn't, it wasn't a problem. I never saw that it was a problem, you know. The Colonel for H&S Battalion was—when I got—I had 60 days on the books, I took leave. They also gave me maternity leave.

Q: How long was that?

A: And I believe it was 30 days. And when I had my child in the end of January, and in February, I had used up all my leave and used up all the maternity leave, and the 13th of February, I went—we went to the WM Anniversary, and the Colonel gave me another 30 days. He thought I needed another 30 days of maternity leave.

Q: That was kind.

A: Yeah. So they were very supportive. They were very—they didn't know what to do with me really, you know. They didn't want me to do anything I shouldn't do

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or, you know, but it was just normal life. That was it. I mean, you know, women have been doing this for years. I mean, you know—

Q: How did the women Marines act? As it was new to them, too.

A: Yeah. Some of the older women really didn't—frowned on it. They just didn't think that was—excuse me—that was not, you know, that shouldn't be. But they still, they went along with it. They—I don't—some of them didn't like the idea. But then they weren't in that situation where I had already had all this time in the Marine Corps. What was it? I had 14, 15 years in the Marine Corps already, and I was going to give that whole thing up when I had the opportunity to request to stay in, you know? And all they could do is say no anyway, you know, so anyway, it worked out. I went—I had my child. I went back to work at Casual Company.

Q: Would that be about March time frame?

A: Yes. And then I got orders. I was there, I guess I was there for about a year or two years because my daughter was already walking.

Q: Who took care of her during the day?

A: My mother did. My mother lived with me. She was my dependent, and I guess it was she was walking already, talking, so that's when I got orders to go back to Parris Island.

Q: Were you happy about that?

A: Well, no. That was Parris Island. I was going to WM Company—to Recruit Company again, you know. That was a demanding situation really, and I thought they were doing this to test me, you know, see if I could function under all this stress. You know, could I still do my work and have a child and all this stuff. And nobody ever said it, but I always thought that this was a test really, you know, so—

Q: What rank were you?

A: I was going to pick up—I was a gunny when I had her, but I was getting ready to pick up First Sergeant. So I went to Parris Island, and I became the First Sergeant of Recruit Company.

Q: Did your husband transfer with you?

A: Yes, he did.

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Q: And then your mom and your daughter, so you all PCS'ed over there?

A: Uh-huh. We all went.

Q: Did you get base housing, or were you out in town?

A: No, we got—we bought a house on Lady's Island with all the mosquitoes, but it was—I think it was a test. They wanted to see how well I would—if I would function. Nobody said it, but I know they did. So I did my tour there.

Q: Were there any changes in training? This was like the third time you've been there.

A: Well, there was a lot more regulations. A lot more of you-can't-do's.

Q: Like what?

A: Like, you know, we couldn't, you couldn't, you had, you had to be very careful what you said anymore, you know. The women were never, never used language, vulgar language to begin with. They never did that, but somewhere along the line I guess this started to develop, and that was something that they said we could not do anymore, and we'd—I don't remember ever, the women ever doing that, you know. But today, if you listen, women use it all, all the time. I don't understand that because I don't think that—it's almost like we're going down—not to say anything's the matter with men. When the men talk, they talk vulgar. They use all these words, adjectives, whatever you want to call them, and that's in their world, and we're in their world, but that doesn't mean that we have to go to that level, you know, and apparently women were doing that at the time when I was back there, but that was something that we could not do, and we had to treat them, treat them with dignity, and we always, I thought we always did, you know. I don't—maybe I'm wrong, or maybe I'm the one that was in the—I don't know, you know, but it was—there were more—we had to take care of a lot closer, and you had to be careful what you said, what you did. You couldn't touch a recruit, and if you were going to touch him, you had to tell him you were going to touch him, you know. You just—it was, it was kind of a—it was different. And that's when they were getting ready to, they were building what they called today the 4th Battalion, I think. And they were building one over where the men are, and that's where the women moved to because—

Q: How far away was that from—?

A: That was—the women battalion was all the way in the back part of Parris Island. The men battalions were up front. As you came in through the gates, you could see all the battalions, and they were all the men battalions. The women, you had to go in through the—to the back. I saw the back part of it, but I think they moved and they built the 4th Battalion

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up alongside where the rest of the men were, you know, and when I left, they were getting ready to move that battalion over to the 4th Battalion. And I said I didn't want no part of that because I wasn't going to be there long, you know, so let somebody new come in and do it [inaudible], and that worked out fine for me.

Q: Again, this is the third time you were back there. Did you notice any changes in these batch of recruits from when you were a DI previously, and from when you were a recruit previously?

A: Well, I guess, now I would probably say that they were more mouthy, not what they were back then, you know. They were—or maybe it was just me. Maybe they were always mouthy. I don't think so though because when you stop and you think about it, when I went through, we didn't say anything, okay? And then when I went back as a Drill Instructor, I don't think—they still didn't say anything. But as—when I went back as a First Sergeant, it was—it just seemed like they were more, they were mouthier. They had more requests. They felt like they could say things that we would never think of saying. I don't—that's what the way I look at it, you know, just they were more, well, you know, you would never walk up and tell your Drill Instructor you wanted to go home. You know, send me home, I want to go home. You would never do that. But it seemed like the newer generation, they had all their rights. They knew what their rights were. They wanted to go home, they wanted to go home, and that's it.

Q: So maybe they were more assertive?

A: Yes, I would say so.

Q: What about the racial makeup? From when you first were a recruit to now you were a First Sergeant?

A: It was—we had a lot more, we had a lot more blacks. There was a lot—there was a lot more Orientals, too, than what there had been in the past, you know. It's almost like they opened up the doors. It just got even a lot more different races.

Q: Were there any racial issues?

A: I don't recall. The only racial issues that I recall we ever had was back in the—in the '50s probably because by the time I went back as a First Sergeant, things had—were a lot easier as far as race went because when I was there as a Sergeant, and we had a ball team, they could not go to restaurants to eat, and we had black people in, on the ball team, and they would not let them eat in a restaurant. So a lot of that, by the time I went back as a First Sergeant, a lot of that had changed, you know. They were, they were more open to letting people come in and eat in restaurants and that, so it wasn't—there had been changes. Changes had

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taken place. I don't even think—maybe I just took for granted, but I don't even remember seeing any more signs that said, black, colored and white type signs that were there when I went originally, you know. So there had been, there had been some changes. Of course, you always have those people that never change, you know. There's always that undertow there, but it's never going to change. It's going to be the same for them, but there's, there's been—there were changes made.

Q: At this time, when you were a First Sergeant at Parris Island, was there any field training besides MBC or, you know, marksmanship training or combat training?

A: No. No. That didn't come in until late—I'm going to say the late '70s, early '80s.

Q: And what year were you—what years were you at Parris Island as a First Sergeant?

A: That was in '72, '73—'74. I believe I left in '74.

Q: Was there any talk of having combat training for women? Or was there any undercurrents of, you know, women Marines demanding more changes? Or was this sort of thrust upon the Marine Corps?

A: I don't know. I think, I don't think the women ever requested it. I think the powers to be up at the, in Washington are the ones that requested it.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't believe—I don't think I ever met anybody that said they wanted to—they wanted all this. Never. I mean, there were women that could—that they had a pistol team down at Parris Island, and I'm sure they probably had them all over the place that women could join, and it was only women, and they were on a pistol team, and they were very good at what they did. But I don't recall—it was like a hobby for them, you know. It's not—it wasn't something that they wanted to do. It was something that they'd probably been doing all their life because they were very good at it, and they went into—I think there were—there's a contest that they went for marksmanship and all that.

Q: Was it only women in the contest? Or was it men—?

A: Yeah. It was women against women type thing. It wasn't against men.

Q: Was it other bases or other branches of service they were competing against?

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A: Yeah. But I don't think I'd—I never heard anybody say that they wanted. The men probably said yeah, they wanted them to do it because they were getting promoted, and it was—maybe it was the men who started it. But the congressmen, the—and all those senators and all that, I think they're the ones who pushed it.

Q: So you left Parris Island in 1974? And where did you go?

A: I went to San Diego, California, MCRD.

Q: Did you request it again?

A: I requested it again. They told me I could not go because they did not have a woman billet there for me. But there was a male billet that was open as a First Sergeant, and there was a debatable whether they wanted to give that to me or not because it was Casual Company, and Casual Company was a company where all, everybody reported to that was getting discharged, the good, the bad and the evil. Everybody went to Casual Company.

Q: So what were their reservations?

A: Well, they didn't—because the type of company it was, you'd have all these bad eggs, and you had all this dope and marijuana and all this stuff going on. The dogs used to go through at least three times a day. They just didn't think that that would be a good place for me to go because it would—and I had my reservations about that also. But the Admin Chief that was there at the time was a good friend of ours, and he was a big tall Marine, very well built, and had a voice on him that would stop a train. Anyway, he said that he would be there when I got there, and that he would help me, and so they went ahead and they assigned me as the First Sergeant, Casual Company. And any time I needed to talk to any Marine, male Marine, the Admin Chief would come up and stand outside my door. In the event that this young man went crazy or decided he was going to whack me or something, he would stand outside my door to protect me.

Q: Did you have issues when you were counseling anybody?

A: I never did. The only issues that I had, I had two Marines that worked in the Company there as clerks, and they were Sergeants, and they refused to take any type of orders from me because I was a woman. My first inspection that I held for the Company, I don't believe that the Company Gunny informed them that I was coming through on inspection because he wanted that position as Acting First Sergeant, but it was given to me, and he was very upset about it. And on my first inspection, the place was a disaster. There was trash all over the place. The bunks weren't made properly. For women, any time we had a male come aboard in our barracks, we always yelled, man aboard, and that was just standard SOP that you did that. Well, being in a male company, this Company Gunny did not do that. We ended up going,

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walking into the head, the male head, because it was a male company, and he never yelled woman aboard once. And when we walked in, here sat this man on the throne. He didn't know what to do. I must have had a shocked look on my face, but I told him to carry on, and we just walked on through. I could not believe that this Gunny did this, and I guess he was working on me, he was trying to prove a point that that was not a job that I should have. And he was very—he was very angry. He was a very angry man because he wanted that job. But I informed him that we would have the inspection again the following day, and that, you know, the Administrative Chief would accompany me on the inspection.

Q: So essentially, did that mean basically you fired him—

A: Yeah. Because it just, it wasn't right, you know.

Q: Right.

A: I had just come from a company of women where I inspected all the time, and I knew what the inspection standards were, and if they were such for women, why weren't the same thing for men, you know? It's ridiculous, you know, but I guess he really, I think he wanted to make me look bad, you know. That was the bottom line on that. And then we had formations outside. Everybody would fall out in formation for inspection, and I inspected them and corrected them. And that was another thing that he never told them to get ready for inspection, you know, so they all looked like a bunch of Sad Sacks. So I inspected them, and I—and the—I had one young man that dipped down so that I could check him out, you know.

Q: Because you were shorter?

A: Yeah, because I was short. They wouldn't have done that for a General that was as small as I was. Why would he do that for me, you know? And I corrected him. But I think they were a little surprised that I knew what I was doing. I knew what I was looking for. It wasn't, you know, we demanded, you know, Irish pennants and all this stuff, and emblems had to have [end glue] on them, and they couldn't be shiny, and they had to be straight, I mean—

Q: Basic stuff.

A: Yeah, it was basic, I mean, why would they think it would be any different, you know? But for him, I guess he thought, well, she doesn't know what she's looking for. But I did it, and it was during that time that they had assigned other women to other companies, battalions, and I think they put a Colonel in charge of I'm thinking Camp Pendleton, they put a Colonel in charge of a H&S Battalion, and then they put a Sergeant Major, they put her in charge of a battalion, so they were already doing that out in other areas, you know. In due time, I think everybody got accustomed to it. It was just the idea. And then when the—I was

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there for a year, and then when the First Sergeant of WM Company retired, that's when they decided they would move me over to WM Company.

Q: Well, back to the recalcitrant Gunny, what ever happened to him? Did he finally—

A: He finally ended up getting transferred or going somewhere. He wasn't around. I guess he requested a transfer, you know, but he wasn't around for long because life would have been really bad if he would have stayed around too long, you know. It was just like the two Sergeants that wouldn't take—they never did anything to them, but the Admin Chief, Gunny Nelson, he took them aside and talked to them, and painted a picture for them and told them what was going to happen, what they were going to do. Well, they weren't going to talk back to him because he would, you know, and he told them what they were going to do, and eventually they ended up getting transferred as well.

Q: How many Marines were in Casual Company at the time you were First Sergeant?

A: Oh, [inaudible]. The place was busting. I can't remember because everybody that was getting discharged was going there. UA's, you name it, they were there. The regular discharges, those people coming back from overseas, that were getting ready to get out, everybody would be there. Maybe over 100 or something like that I would say.

Q: And where was Casual Company located here on the Depot?

A: You know where—you know where the flagpoles are?

Q: The main flagpole on the Parade Grounds?

A: The main flag pole over here on the Parade Deck? You have DI Schools over here, and Casual Company was right over here on the other side.

Q: So further down towards the CG's Building?

A: Yes. It was the next—it was—I believe it was the next building that was right—here's the opening with the—with the flags.

Q: Archway, yeah.

A: And it was right over in that area.

Q: So was Drill Instructor School still there at that time?

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A: Yeah. They were still—they were still there.

Q: Oh, okay. So they were on the other side of DI School?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And was the barracks—was the Company office and the barracks in the same building or—?

A: Mm-hmm.

Q: It was just open squad bay upstairs?

A: Yeah. All these little—you see these, some of these areas that, that have little rooms attached to them, like you see my office, where I was down there?

Q: Yeah.

A: That was the main office that I had. And then over here, there was a door, and there was an office there, and there was another office back here, could be storage areas. Well, in Casual Company, they had—it was the same type of set up, and they had Staff NCOs that lived in those rooms.

Q: How long were you at Casual Company before you were transferred to [overtalk]?

A: A year.

Q: A year?

A: Yeah.

Q: You mentioned everyone goes to Casual Company, and there's a lot of issues with drugs with some of those people. Was this all throughout the Marine Corps? Drug problems?

A: I don't think so. I think—because just like you had. Everybody that had a problem went to Casual Company, okay? So all the problems were right there in Casual Company. All of the drug addicts, all of this other stuff was right there. And it wasn't so much, I don't think it was so much the drugs as it was the marijuana because when the dogs were coming in at this end, people were throwing stuff out the windows at the other end, so they wouldn't find it on them because the dogs were good, and that's when they really use them. You don't see them doing that today, using, you know. They might go through once every so often,

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but they don't go through that often. I don't think so anyway. Or maybe I don't see it, you know.

Q: Do you feel you earned those Marines' respect when you were there [overtalk]?

A: I think so.

Q: That's saying something, considering the cross-section of Marines that you had.

A: Yeah. Because there would be a lot of them that would try to pull the wool over my eyes, you know. You always have those, and they come in. They give you this sad story, and you could almost fall for it, but you know, you've been around the block a couple of times. You can't fall for it all the time, you know. But they knew, they knew, you know.

Q: Were you—what were your thoughts on leaving Casual Company to go to WM Company?

A: Well, I didn't think it was fair because these people were forced to take me. Casual Company was forced to take me, and once they saw an opening over there, then [inaudible] put her over there, you know. And then because they could have put a male over there in WM Company. Why couldn't they have done that? But they wouldn't think of doing that. That male would have had a fit. Can you imagine? Well, at Parris Island, they had a Sergeant Major that was male over the battalion. How come they didn't get excited about that? Women didn't, you know, we didn't get excited about that. Why would they get excited about this? You know, they just need to go through the—through the motions and accept it, and that's it. Why couldn't they just accept it? But then you had a CO that was—he was a hard nose. He was one of those male chauvinists. When you have a male chauvinist, you've got—you're fighting, you know. So I think towards the end—well, he ended up leaving there as the CO of Casual Company, and he ended up being the Executive Officer of H&S Battalion. And when I was transferred over to WM Company, they called it D Company, which the men called it Dolly Company. We had this on young lady that got pregnant, and—by a Lieutenant, and they got rid of her in one day.

Q: Because she was unmarried?

A: Yeah.

Q: Or because there was fraternization?

A: Fraternization. He was a Lieutenant, and he was a promising potential. Great potential they saw in him. And that—do you know that young lady got out in one day, and

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you needed at least five days to get out, to check out because that's when we had Dispersing—we didn't have all this automated stuff we have today, you know. So she went through and did her little check out and all this stuff, and unbeknown to me, he calls the First Sergeant, he called me up and told me that I was going to have so-and-so come in and check out, and I was just to sign her sheet and send her on her way.

Q: That was what the CO told you?

A: That's what the XO told me.

Q: Oh, the XO. Okay.

A: Yeah. He said, don't ask her anything. Just sign it, and send her on her way. I could not believe it. She was the cutest little thing. Oh, she was a cute little thing. She must have been because that Lieutenant thought she was real cute, too.

Q: So nothing happened to him?

A: Oh, no. He got transferred. Nothing happened to him. She got a discharge. He got transferred because he had a lot of potential. So, gosh.

Q: In general, if a woman Marine became pregnant, and she wasn't married, would they look on that like unfavorably and try to force her out?

A: No. She had the option—I think the order states that they have the option to stay in or get out.

Q: Okay.

A: Because you have a lot of them today. Well, I shouldn't say a lot. But I've heard of several of them that have had, they have three or four kids. I barely made it with one. I don't know how these people do it with three or four. I don't know how that works.

Q: So when they changed the regulations, it was across the board pregnancy? It wasn't dependent upon your marital status?

A: No. Once it changed and everything was working, it just—it was almost like, zap, that's it. Rubber stamped. You requested to stay in. That's it. But I'm sure they had to have—I never really have gone back to read the regulations on it now to see whether—if there is a difference. I've never really read into it. Maybe I ought to just for drill check it out and see if they have specific things in there that says you've got to be married. I don't see why.

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Q: Well, I know they don't nowadays, but I was thinking back in that time in our history that single parenthood and unmarried mothers faced a lot of discrimination, and I was wondering if they were discriminated against in the Marine Corps.

A: I don't know. I never, I never went across anything like that.

Q: Where was WM Company on MCRD?

A: As you come in that gate where the bridge is, it was right over on the other side of that.

Q: So where the permanent personnel barracks are?

A: Yeah. You could come, walk up the sidewalk right there, and it was right there in that area.

Q: Was it also an open squad bay?

A: Mm-hmm.

Q: About how many women were there when you were First Sergeant there?

A: About 70.

Q: Did you choose to retire at 20 years, or was it mandatory?

A: No, I chose to retire because they wanted me to become the house mother for the women in the barracks, and I wasn't going to be a house mother. They wanted me to be in charge of the WM Barracks. Just be a housekeeper is what they wanted me to do.

Q: So when was WM Company disbanded?

A: In '77.

Q: Okay. So they're going to break up the Company. There would still be a women barracks, but women would—

A: Well, the women went in their—they were assigned to either Service Company or the Headquarters Company, depending on what their MOS was. But they still lived in the barracks.

Q: So just administratively, they got rid of WM Company?

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A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you know why they did that?

A: Because they didn't want—they didn't want separation of men and woman. I would imagine they wanted it to be one big happy family, like it is today. But look at CPAC. You know, everybody goes, checks in there, everybody gets discharged there. And I don't know. What do the companies do now? What are they in charge of other than additional duties or—

Q: Like an H&S Battalion?

A: Yeah. They still have their Headquarters and Service Company.

Q: Yeah. They—I think they, they do a lot of, you know, administrative, like personnel administration, like making sure all their Marines have done their annual training, and unit PT, that sort of thing.

A: Oh.

Q: That's just what I'm aware of. I don't know what else they do in addition to that.

A: Hmm. Well, they stand duty for different types of duty that they have to do.

Q: Right.

A: Maybe that's what they do. Because they took everything off of SRBs, everything that the companies do, they put it over—

Q: At CPAC.

A: CPAC.

Q: Yeah, I think it might be more training oriented.

A: Yeah.

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Q: So you were in for 20 years. You've seen, you saw a lot of change from the time you were a recruit to the time you retired as a First Sergeant. And we've talked about a lot of the changes, but is there anything else that you can think of of changes that occurred in the Marine Corps during that time?

A: Well, the uniform has changed.

Q: Mm-hmm.

A: For the women, they've changed. They don't even carry a purse anymore.

Q: Right.

A: They're not—I don't even think they're required to have a purse. They don't even issue them a purse, do they?

Q: I don't think so.

A: And they're getting rid of their hat.

Q: Well, when you—

A: They're wearing the men's hat now.

Q: When you retired, were there any uniform changes from when you were first as a recruit?

A: No.

Q: Were you issued—were they issued utilities in '76?

A: They had women utilities. You don't have women utilities today.

Q: No, everyone just has the digital cammies.

A: Yeah.

Q: So was it—what pattern was it? Was it sateens? Was it the woodland cammies [overtalk]?

A: They had, they had the sateens, and they got away from the blue utilities. They went to the sateens. And then somewhere along the line, they ended up with the

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camouflage and the boots. Nobody wears—maybe it's because it's during the war. Nobody wears the uniform. Very seldom do they wear a uniform. I think on Friday, they wear a uniform here. Or Thursday.

Q: Thursday and Friday, I think they wear the—

A: Yeah. They don't, they don't wear heels. Do—I don't even know if they have to wear girdles anymore.

Q: No, they don't.

A: What about bras?

Q: I think you have to wear a bra.

A: Oh, God. Yeah, I ought to read, I ought to read the regulation just for drill.

Q: When did you come to MCRD as a civilian employee?

A: 1989.

Q: And today is your last day here. You're retired as of today. Wow. So you—okay, so in addition to seeing a lot of changes in your active duty time, you've been here as a civilian. What are your overall thoughts about the direction the Marine Corps has gone, the changes that have happened since you first started as a recruit?

A: Well, they have come 180 degrees, all the way around. Look at them. They're automated now. They don't need as many people anymore. They don't need typists. Anybody can type today with computers, you know. When I came here in '89, the Marine Corps did not have computers. And then while I was working at Management Assistance, we were assigned one computer and one printer for the entire office. There were 15 people, civilians in that office. And we had to sign up to use the computer, and we had to sign up to use the printer. It was chaos. We had a GS-11 that refused to do any typing on the computer because he didn't know how to type. Everybody learned how to type. As soon as everybody got their own computer, they had to learn how to type, and even today, if you walk around and look, there're are still some people that heck and—pick and choose as they're typing, you know? What do they call that? Henpecking or something like that? Yeah. That was, that was a big change. That was a real big change. Because look at our Reproduction Section. They used to print everything. They don't have that much printing any more.

Q: When did you come to Repro?

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A: I've been with Repro since '90. 1990. '91.

Q: When did it fall under Combat Camera Section?

A: In '94, I believe it was. '94 or '95.

Q: Have you always done forms management?

A: Yes.

Q: [Inaudible].

A: That was—the billet that I took was a billet that was put together by Colonel [Forell] for a daughter of a friend of his. Yes. Because it was a conglomeration of jobs. That's what it was. And when she left, they gave me the job, and it was a conglomeration of different things in order to make it the GS rating that it was. And then now that I've decided to retire, they just separated all the things and put them back where they belonged.

Q: So you're a GS-11?

A: No, a GS-7.

Q: What do you think of the changes in women Marines over the years? Like the women's role in the Marine Corps as opposed to when you first began as a recruit?

A: Well, they have changed for the better. They take on a lot more than what they used to take on because I remember when the women didn't want to go or didn't want to be in certain jobs because it entailed something they didn't want to deal with. Today, they don't have a choice. They're put into that plate, and you deal with it.

Q: Do you think that's good?

A: It's good because you can hide. I know of one that retired. She went to the Pentagon as a PFC, and she retired as a Master Sergeant. Never left the Pentagon.

Q: Wow.

A: Yeah. And they tried very hard to get her. Everybody complained about it all the time, but they tried very hard to get her out of there, and she had been there too long. She knew everybody that was there. She retired from there. Yeah. They said they never wanted that to happen again. I don't know if it's ever happened again or not, but—yeah, you could find a way in and you stay there, you know. Well, look at some of these other people that they take their secretaries with them everywhere they go. You know, that's not good. Where do

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they expand and learn and, you know, do they? I don't—I learned a great deal the hard way. Heaven forbid. But there's a lot—a lot of good changes have come about.

Q: Do you think the sort of progression of women being more involved with combat training, marksmanship training, deploying to combat zones, actually being a lot more involved and in more danger than women Marines ever used to be? What do you think about that?

A: I don't know. It depends on the individual. You going to hand it to them for those that take it on. They really try. They do a good job. I don't know if I could have done that, you know. How could I carry a pack? I could barely—gee, how much does that pack weigh to carry around?

Q: Oh, I'd say at least 70 pounds.

A: 70?

Q: At least. I think it just depends.

A: You really got to hand it to them to take on something like that. I respect the ones coming in today that are doing that. That is, that's awesome.

Q: What differences do you see in the Marines today from the Marines back from when you were in?

A: When you say Marines, are you talking about the women or are you talking about men?

Q: I think both.

A: Well, the men is not as gentlemen as they used to be. They'll sit there and watch these young women pick up a box instead of getting and helping them. And it all has to do with the movement, the female movement, you know. You make the same amount of money I make. You can pick it up yourself. And they didn't used to be like that. But it would be nice to see them get back to something, be a little more gentlemanlike. And there are some that are—they are. But then you have those that aren't. And then you have women that are very—that want them to do it, then you have others that don't want them, so, you know, half and half. It'll be interesting to see what happens.

Q: What about the leadership in the Marine Corps? Like the leadership of the Senior Staff NCOs and officers today compared to back when you were in?

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A: I don't know that—they've turned everything over to the work section. The work section does all that now where it used to be the Company did that because I see them now, it's the work section that does all the, each section has a, what do they call them, a platoon sergeant or a trained NCO. And he's just a little NCO. He's not a Staff Sergeant or a Gunny. But the ones that do have that, I think they're very good at what they do because they make everybody do, you know, the band. The band has all your different ranks, and you see them and they operate like it's supposed to operate. But you see a little company or a little section, they don't have that. And you're dealing with the little NCO, and the NCO doesn't have the leadership that you're going to find a Gunnery Sergeant that has one, the leadership, you know, that can give him the advice and the guidance that they need.

Q: I think that about answers my questions. Do you have any other thoughts you want to share about your time in the Marine Corps?

A: Gee, I can't think of anything more. I think we've just about covered everything.

Q: Okay. Thank you. We'll end the interview right here then.