**WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT**

**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

INTERVIEWEE: Clara L. Adams-Ender

INTERVIEWER: Hermann J. Trojanowski

DATE: September 10, 2005

[Begin Interview]

HT: Today is September 10, 2005. My name is Hermann Trojanowski. I'm at the home of General Clara L. Adams-Ender in Woodbridge, Virginia, to conduct an oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

General Adams-Ender, thank you so much. This is a great privilege.

CAE: My pleasure.

HT: Could you give us your full name, and we'll use that as a test to see how your voice sounds on the machine.

CAE: My full name is Clara L. Adams-Ender.

[Tape recorder turned off]

HT: Again, thank you. Could you tell us a few biographical bits of information about your life, such as when you were born and where you were born?

CAE: Well, I was born in a small town in North Carolina called Willow Springs, North Carolina. It is still there. I found it the other day, a little small post office, still small, and I was born on a farm in that area, a tobacco farm out in Willow Springs, North Carolina. I had, of course, a mother and father, and nine brothers and sisters. There were six girls and four boys in this family, and we were born on a tobacco farm down in that area.

HT: Where is Willow Springs near?

CAE: Willow Springs is near Raleigh, North Carolina, which is the capital city. It's about twenty miles out of Raleigh.

HT: South of Raleigh, I guess?

CAE: South, yes, off 401. It's in Wake County. Yes, it's in Wake County, but it's off 401.

HT: Well, tell me a little bit about your family. You mentioned that you had quite a few brothers and sisters.

CAE: Well, I was born into a very large family, and I was the fourth oldest of that family. During this time, of course, America was much an agrarian society, which means that most people lived on farms in those areas, and so they had to have large families in order to be able to help them take care of the farm. So my father and mother had ten children, and we were all employed full time on that farm in tobacco. Tobacco—I don't know if you know very much about tobacco or not—but tobacco is a very difficult crop.

HT: I do. I grew up on a tobacco farm as well, in Watauga County.

CAE: Oh, really. It is a lot of work, and we did a lot of work there on that farm. I must admit, and I will confess, that I did not always value coming up and growing up in a large family. We lived on a farm and at that time, I'll tell you, I didn't know that we were poor, because we always equated being poor with being hungry, and we were never hungry, because you grew everything that you ate. We had a big garden, had an area for a big garden, and my father was a sharecropper. We had an area for a big garden, and we always planted all the fruits, all the vegetables, and everything that we needed to eat, both summer and winter, so we were never hungry, you know.

My mother would talk a little bit about the fact that you can't get a new doll because your sister needs shoes, but it didn't register in my head at that time. But as I was saying, I didn't value too much growing up in a large family until much later, and that was when I started in the work world, because I found that being in the work world it's very important to know people, and so when I got in the work world I knew at least twelve people, because my sisters and brothers would behave in certain kinds of ways all the time, and I'd see other people doing that when I got in the work world, and I'd say, gee, now, my sister used to act like that. Now, what did I do when she behaved in that fashion? [laughs] So I knew a lot about people, whenever I got into the work world, and that had been a value to me, and I knew where I learned it was in my childhood.

HT: Where did you go to high school?

CAE: I went to high school in the next little town, and its name was Fuquay-Varina. At that time, though, it was Fuquay Springs, because Fuquay-Varina are twin cities, but at that time it was Fuquay Springs Consolidated [High] School. It was called a consolidated school because it was a school that brought together the African American students from not only the little town of Fuquay Springs, but also all of the towns around in that area, because there was just one high school for the whole area, and the school went from

grades one through twelve. But the high school was for the whole area, and so they called it Fuquay Consolidated.

HT: And after high school did you go on to college?

CAE: Yes, I did. I left Fuquay Springs Consolidated High School when I was sixteen, graduated when I was sixteen, went off to college at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina. I entered into a nursing program, and I might add it was not of my choosing. My dad chose my career, and we started having discussions about that when I was four years old, because my sister taught me to read, and so I could read when I was four. My oldest sister, my oldest sister who's five years older than I am, Betty, taught me to read when I was four, and so as a result of that I started to read magazines and so forth, and I saw this lady in *Ebony* magazine, and she was in these great judicial robes, and I thought that was a great thing. So I asked my mother, "Who is this person?"

And she said, "Oh, that's a judge."

And I said, "What do you have to do to be a judge?"

And she said, "First you have to be a lawyer."

And I said, "That's fine. That's what I'll be."

And so my father said, "No, no, no, no, no, no. You will not be a lawyer. Lawyers are liars, and that's best left to men." That's literally what he told me. So he decided that I should go to nursing school. Basically what he said was, "You should do something safe in this life, because women ought to do something safe." And he said, "They just opened that new nursing school up in Greensboro, and you need to apply there."

So he literally stood over me as I finished my application and went off to that school, because I reasoned that it was better to have a college education in nursing than not to have a college education, because my parents always valued education. They said, "If you have education, nobody can ever take that from you," and so they always worked a lot to make sure that we all got educated. So I was the second one in my family to go off to school. My oldest sister had gone off to college, and my brothers had then gone into the military, one into the Air Force and the other one into the [U.S.] Navy, and so I was the next one to go off to college. So I went to college and then graduated from that school four years later.

HT: And when was that?

CAE: I went off to college in 1956, but I was out for one year because my dad didn't have the money to send me, and so I took a year and worked. My sister had gone to New Jersey, so I worked for a year, and then when I went back in 1958, I graduated '61.

HT: What was college life like for you at A&T?

CAE: College life for me was wonderful. It was wonderful because I could go to school every day, and my only responsibility was to go to school. It was great. That was the first time I had had so few responsibilities in my life, because when we grew up we learned early

that you have to be able to do things and to do work, in order to be able to not only help yourself but to support the whole family, and so all of us had chores at the house that had to be done, after all the field work had been done. So we did the field work for the family, and then we did our own individual chores to make sure that we knew how to work well.

I tell people often that my father taught me how to be a workaholic many years ago, and I didn't learn until later that I didn't really have to do that all my lifetime. But I learned how to never, ever be around with my hands idle and doing nothing, and so I enjoyed being at college and being in an area where I could just go to school and that was my full responsibility, to go to school to make grades so's I could graduate.

HT: Did you enjoy attending the nursing program?

CAE: Yes, yes. I enjoyed attending the nursing program because I found out something about my ambition, and that was that it was not so much that it was necessary for me to be a lawyer. It was that I needed to have something challenging in my life. I needed to have something that I could say, "Today I'm going to work, and at the end of the day I know I've done a full day's work, and I feel within myself that I made a difference in the lives of somebody." And I'll tell you, you could do that in nursing. That is very, very easy to do if you're paying attention and dealing with the folks that are there and need the help that you have to give.

HT: So you were in Greensboro A&T before students from A&T started a sit-in situation in downtown Greensboro. What do you remember from that period of time? That must have been February of 1960.

CAE: Oh yes, I remember that period of time very well, because I was involved in the sit-ins, and we had many, many briefings where we used to have to go to, because the students had decided that we needed to do something in order to be able to show our, express our feelings about the importance of civil rights in this country, and that's basically what that was about, the civil rights of African Americans.

And so we had to go to the briefings, and these four that have been known as the Greensboro Four, as they became known as, I only knew one of the fellows very well. I knew Ezell Blair, Jr., very well, because he was in some classes with me, and I used to see him on campus all the time. He was a very talkative fellow, and very outgoing, and so he got to know a lot of people around, so we knew him very well. But the four of them would get us together. They would talk about the fact that we were participating in these sit-ins, or doing these sit-ins because of our own civil rights, and as a result of that we needed to make sure that we did them in the appropriate fashion. And one of the appropriate fashions, of course, was that we would do whatever that we did in a non-violent manner. And it was very interesting, because I have always said to—

[Tape recorder turned off.]

HT: We were talking about the civil rights sit-ins in 1960 before we turned off the tape.

CAE: Yes. And we were talking about the fact that we were to do this, and we were to conduct ourselves as adults, and we were to do these sit-ins in non-violent manner. Now, I will tell you I have since then heard more of Martin Luther King's philosophy and what went on as he was discussing this with the folks. Of course he was leading in the larger civil rights movement, but I can imagine that he had quite a time trying to tell the brothers about doing things non-violently. When people push you, spit on you, curse you and do those kinds of things, it's very difficult not to raise your hand, but that was what it was all about. But in reality, when you think about it, it's quite a powerful thing to be able to sit and do nothing while people do that. Well, I'll tell you, the Greensboro Four had a little bit of a problem discussing this with the brothers that was with us, because they said, "Now, now tell us that again. You want us to do what?" [laughs]

They said, "If somebody raises their hand and strikes you, you're to just sit there," and that's what we were prepared to do. Luckily, nothing happened to us, and as a matter of fact the actual sit-ins only lasted about three weeks. I just met with one of those Greensboro Four. We got together about two years ago, and he said that later on they really got the feeling that we probably didn't have any problems, because it was determined by the leadership there in Greensboro and in much of the South that civil rights was going to come, either by law or by force, and so he kind of felt that they were told that they shouldn't bother with the students.

HT: Did you participate in any sit-ins?

CAE: I did. I went down.

HT: Woolworth's?

CAE: Right. Went down and sat down. We would go down in groups of four to six, and we would exchange with the group that was leaving, and they would tell us about what had gone on during the time that they were there. We'd sit for an hour or so at the time. There was a leader, as far as our group was concerned, and he went down and he announced to the—a manager had come out, of course, by this time—

HT: Mr. [Clarence L.] Harris.

CAE: —and he said, "We would like to be served at this lunch counter," you know.

And the manager said, "We don't serve Negroes here." And, of course, that was a polite way of saying other derogatory terms that we knew about.

And the young man said—and, of course, we'd practiced many of these comebacks that we needed to deal with—and he said, "No sir, and I don't eat them either. So how about a hamburger and a Coke?" And, of course, we had to sit there and show our somber faces.

And he said, "No, we will not serve you at this counter." And then he went on away, and we'd sit there for our period of time, on four to six stools in this area, and then

we'd go away and the next group would come. But during our periods of sitting there we just kind of looked around and made sure that we watched what was going on, but we had no problems.

HT: Were there quite a few female students participating in the sit-ins at that time, or was it mainly males?

CAE: Yes, there were quite a few female students, because there were more female students around A&T than there were male students, and so there were quite a few of us there, yes.

HT: I know currently there's an International Civil Rights Museum being built in Greensboro where the Woolworth's was. How do you feel about the progress being made?

CAE: Oh, I think that's great. I think that it was—and I'm sure the Woolworth people had to do that, in order to be able to leave that as a legacy. They either had to sell that property to somebody, or they gave it to them, in terms of making sure that that happened. The lunch counter itself is up at the Smithsonian [Institute]. But I think it's a great thing, because I believe that we still need to record the information about certain times in our lives in this country that may not be the most pleasant times, but they were a part of our history, and we've got to still remember where we're coming from, and where we've come from, because that gives us some direction. Someone said this years ago. I didn't say this. I've never said anything this profound. They said that it's important to remember the history of where you've come from, so that you know where you're going.

HT: That's very true, very true, yes. So you graduated in 1961, and what was the next step in your career?

CAE: Well, during the time that I was at A&T, after I finished my sophomore year—at the beginning of my junior year at A&T I joined the army. I joined the army during that year because they had money. I needed—I really was looking for an opportunity to be able to earn some money, because my father paid my tuition and room and board. But he told me when I went off to college, and he made it very clear to me, he said, "All of your spending money you're going to have to get for yourself." And I knew this put quite a strain on him to be able to do this. As a matter of fact, my oldest sister and I talk about this sometimes, we will be forever grateful to a white man whose name was Walter Myatt, and he owned the grocery store there in Willow Springs. He would lend out sums of money for a period of time—because sharecroppers only got money in the fall, and he would lend out money for a period of time so that they could do the various things they needed to do, and then you'd pay him back whenever you sold the tobacco or whatever you had to do at that time.

And he was the one who loaned Daddy some money early, in order to be able to get us to pay the initial tuition and to do those things until his crops came in and that got going. So it was very important for me to try and do something so that I could help that situation. I was coming home one night after having been working in a lady's house,

because I worked as a maid in her house. I cleaned the house for her and did those things on a weekly basis, and she paid me fifty cents an hour to do this, and I would spend time—I found that much of it was just talking to her, being able to talk and deal with her, too. But I spent a lot of time just sitting and talking with her, listening to her, because when I went down she always said she knew about students. She had at least one daughter that I knew about who went on to be a lawyer, and she's a lawyer in Greensboro now. She said, "Students are always hungry."

[Tape recorder turned off.]

HT: You had mentioned something about Walter Myatt.

CAE: Yes, I talked about him lending my father the money for us to go to school, yes. And whenever, of course, my father got settled in and he got his money, then he could pay him back. But I know what I was telling you. I was telling you about having to do all these jobs in order to be able to get my spending money, because one of the things that happens to college students all the time is they're hungry. And I was hungry, and I had never been in a position where I was hungry and didn't have food to eat, you see, because on the farm you may not have had what you wanted, but you had food. And so I said, oh, I've got to do something different than this.

So I was coming home from one night at Mrs. Alexander's house and I saw this sign at the student union that said, "The Army Nurse Corps needs you." And there was this woman standing there in her army uniform, and I thought she looked real sharp, and so I said, "Oh, I'm going in to see her. I'll bet they have money." So I went in there and I talked to the lady, and she told me about all these benefits and all that stuff, and she talked to me about a lot of things. I didn't remember too much of it, because I knew they were going to send me some money, and she told me how much money I would be making, and it was two hundred and fifty dollars a month. I thought that was wonderful, because I wouldn't have to do all these other duties I was doing. I was doing sewing, because I took sewing and home economics in high school, and so I could sew for people, and then I'd do hair and I could do hair for people, and then I was cleaning house, you know. And if I got this money, I wouldn't have to do any, well, not all of those things, not as much as I was doing.

So she said, "Well, don't you want to know about the obligation?"

And I said, "Yes, ma'am." I said, "You can tell me," I said, "but, you know, I'm nineteen years of age; I can do anything." [laughs]

So she said, "I'm telling you anyway." So the deal was, the army had a shortage of nurses, and what they wanted was to send nurses to nursing school in exchange for—they'd send you for one or two years if you were in a baccalaureate program—in exchange for two or three years of payback time as a nurse in the army. And I thought that was a good deal, because I was just nineteen. I could do that. So I took the papers, because I wasn't old enough to sign up myself. You had to be twenty-one and I wasn't old enough. So I took the papers, and when I went home at Thanksgiving I told my

mother about this situation, and she said, "Oh, that sounds like a good thing. You could get your education, and then you would have an opportunity to travel as you wanted to," because as I said, I learned to read when I was four, so I knew a lot about places of the world.

And I always said, "When I grow up I'm going there." So I was looking to do that, and she remembered that I'd talked about that. So I said, "Okay. I will go and do this." Well, my father came. He was the one to convince. So we talked to him about it and he didn't say very much about the whole thing, because he was a part of this group of farmers that got together at Walter Myatt's grocery store, and they talked about what went on with the crops and their families and everything. I mean, it was just a little social club, the DDs. I used to call them the boys. I still call them the boys. And he'd go and talk to them about these situations. I grew up and people used to talk about how women gossip, and I said, "Listen, men gossip, too, a lot, about a lot of things," and that's what they used to do in there. That's basically what they were doing. So he came back and he said, "Well, I'll tell you," he said. "I was talking to them up there at that store, and they said that all Clara wants to do, Clara Mae wants to do is to go into the army so she can find a husband."

And I remember my mother said, "There is nothing that Clara Mae can do in the army that she cannot do right here." She'd had enough of the boys on the corner. So she said, "Sign this paper. It will help you in terms of being able to deal with your money, and you don't have to pay her tuition anymore," because, see, the army paid tuition, room and board, and a two hundred and fifty dollar-a-month stipend. I was a rich kid. [laughs] So she said, "Sign this paper right here, because it will help us in terms of being able to manage these other children that we have here." So he signed. I saw the paper the other day; I was in there looking at some files. He signed and I went off to the army. I joined the army.

HT: Now, was this part of the ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps]?

CAE: No, no. This was before ROTC. This was called the Army Student Nurse Program, where they would take in these nursing students and give them, we say a scholarship. They would say a scholarship, which included tuition, room and board, and two hundred and fifty dollars a month. It was wonderful. And also, you got a rank in the army. You had a rank as a private, and I was a private in the WAC [Women's Army Corps] Reserve. And I went to pfc [private first class] before I got my commission. I was twenty-three months in that program. I had a wonderful time.

So when I left college in 1961 I went off to the army, because I said I would. And you know, while you're in college you develop relationships with people, and I had met the absolute love of my life there at A&T at that time. So he said to me as we were getting ready to graduate, he said, "You know, you are graduating," he said, "but you know, you don't have to go into the army," because at that time if you got married your obligation was no longer, as a female. I have never understood that. I wonder how come that was so. Men could do most anything, and they had to keep their obligations, but for women, if you got married—at that time you could not be married as a female and be on active duty. All right.

So he said, "We should get married," at this point, and I couldn't understand that, because I made a promise that I would go.

And I said, "But the army needs nurses."

He said, "Yes. But if we're going to get married we should do it now. And I will tell you, it's either me or the army." Oh, he should never have said that. That was not the right thing to say.

So I said, "Give me time to think about it, overnight." What that meant was, telephones had come to the country then, so I had to go talk to my mother. [both laugh] Because I always bounced these important things off my mother. She was a great mom. She could talk to you about anything—never would tell you what to do, but would just lay out the situation so that you could understand it.

And, you know, I always appreciated that from her, and since I've grown up and learned about educated people and all that kind of stuff, I always wonder how she could do that, because my dad left school when he finished the third grade, and my mom left when she finished the sixth, because they all had to go to work, to help to support the family and everything. But I'll tell you, she had more common sense than anybody, and she could sit and listen to you and tell you what she'd heard you say, and tell you what you had said before, and then help you. And you'd say, "Oh yeah, that's clear." It wasn't so clear to me before, but after she laid it out it was very clear to me.

So I talked to her and she said, "Well," she said, "Clara," she said, "you know you've always said that you wanted to go and join the army, and the reason why you wanted to get into this program is because you wanted to travel." She said, "I know you've talked about traveling all of your life, and this was an opportunity for you to do this." And she said, "I just want to ask you, if you're not going to do it now, when?"

I thought about this, because, you know, when you get married you've got somebody else who gets an opportunity to have a vote. So I said, "I guess I'd better go to the army." Well, the love of my life became the un-love of my life very quickly, because I said, "I'm going to the army to do my obligation." And he went off and married somebody else. But I never regretted that. I saw him a few years later, you know, and he'd rolled up, gotten bald, and was paunchy and everything, so I said, "Yeah, that was all right. That was a good decision." [laughs]

So I joined the army, and while I was not in ROTC, the ROTC department at A&T really did help me out a lot. I mean, they treated me just as if I was one of their cadets that was in ROTC, because I had to learn how to salute and march and do all that business, and I had to learn how to wear my uniform and do all those things, and I didn't know any of that stuff, and they helped me with all of this. That turned out very well.

HT: Were there other female students in this Army Student Nurse Program with you on campus?

CAE: There were two seniors who were in this program when I was a junior, and there was one other person—was there one other person? No, I was the only person in my class, and then they picked up a couple more kids the next year. Yes, yes, yes. At that time not too many joined. Before that program finished there were a lot of students at A&T that

joined. I'm talking about eight to ten at one time. That's a pretty good group, you know, to get out —

HT: So you said the ROTC people helped you quite a bit. Did you do marching and that sort of thing with them, or how did that work out?

CAE: Yes. Well, when they were practicing, you know, I could go over, and they would take me and practice me, and then they would teach me how to salute and do all that kind of stuff, and the reservists were very good at doing those things, too, you know, because I was in the WAC Reserve.

HT: Did you have to attend monthly meetings?

CAE: No, no, no, had no obligation. My only obligation was to go to school and make a grade of 2.0 or above. Well, that was easy for me. I graduated with 3.3, so that was pretty simple. So I did that and it was a delightful time, because I had a tough time in high school. When we were in high school we probably went to school about 150 days out of the 180, because you had to stay out and do the tobacco, and my father said, "I need you here during this time." And as we were doing that, we'd meet the bus in the afternoon, and my girlfriend would send me my assignments and I'd work them out at night, and get them ready after we had done all the work that we had to do in the evening, and then I'd meet the bus in the morning and give the assignment to the driver, and he'd get it back to my girlfriend.

HT: And the teachers had no problems with this at all?

CAE: No, no, because there were a number of kids who were doing that, a number of kids who were doing it. Now, if you'd see my record my record would say 178 days, 180 days, and all of those things for high school, but I wasn't there all that time. But the principal knew what he had to do in order to be able to get us out of there, and he'd put down those records, especially those who were trying to go to college, just what they needed in those, because, you know, I did the work, you see. I just wasn't present. But I never missed my work.

HT: That is amazing. So after you graduated, I guess it was May of '61 from A&T, you graduated in May?

CAE: June.

HT: June. What was the next step? Did you go into the army right away?

CAE: No. First I had to take the state board. I had to take the North Carolina state board. You have to do the board before you go on active duty. So I had to take the board and I had to wait around until I found out whether I passed or not, and so we did that. Another thing that they would try to do, too, was to get me to be twenty-one, because I wasn't

twenty-one when I graduated, I was twenty, and I wasn't twenty-one until July, you see. So we took the board. We graduated the first week in June, we took the board, like the second week in June, and then about the middle of July we got the result. The result came back and I got this envelope, because the board is terrible, and I got this envelope and it had a little window down there, and it said passed. I didn't care anything about what it said inside. It didn't matter to me. It said the right words on the outside, so I could see.

[Tape recorder turned off.]

HT: Before we turned the tape off we were talking about the state board you had just passed.

CAE: Yes, just passed. I just got the little envelope, it had a little window down there and it said passed, and that's all I needed to know. Then I checked on the grades and that type thing later. But then I could go and send that information off to the army, and then get ready for my orders to go to the officer basic course, because, see, I got my commission as a lieutenant in the United States Army, second lieutenant in the United States Army Nurse Corps in February of my last year of school, in February of '61. They commissioned me three months early, before I graduated. And that was great because, you see, after that you'd get lieutenant's pay.

HT: It's even better.

CAE: That would be even better, even better than the private's pay. So that turned out very, very well for me, and then I was able to get my uniforms and do those things that were necessary for me to get ready to go on active duty.

HT: So when did you go on active duty?

CAE: I went on active duty in August of 1961.

HT: Where was your first duty station?

CAE: Fort Sam Houston, Texas, down at Fort Sam Houston.

HT: Did you go into anything like a basic training course?

CAE: Yes. Well, that's what it was. They called it officer basic orientation, yes, officer basic orientation course, OBC. What you do primarily, what we did primarily in that area, and the reason why we went to Fort Sam Houston was because that is the home of the Army Medical Department. We went down to Fort Sam Houston because it had, at that time it was called the Medical Field Service School. It's now called the Academy of Health Sciences, but at that time it was the Medical Field Service School, and we went down there to learn all of the basic information that was necessary about being officers in the

Army Medical Department, and also to learn the basics of being a soldier, you know, which was shoot, march, salute, drill, and ceremony, all of those things. Well, I was doing pretty good, see, because I had already had a little bit of training in that saluting and doing those kind of things, and marching, so I could get in line and I knew my left from my right, which a lot of nurses did not know. [laughs] It was fun. We had a great time.

HT: How long was that training?

CAE: That was six weeks, it was six weeks, right, and that was just temporary duty, because after that I already had orders that indicated that I was to go from there, once I was finished, to Fort Dix, New Jersey, which was really my first duty assignment, and it was my first choice of duty assignment, too, which you don't often get.

HT: Why Fort Dix?

CAE: Because my sister was living in Newark, my oldest sister, and she and I had lived together when I was out of school for that year, and I wanted to go up there and be assigned close to her. I didn't want to go to Fort Bragg, [North Carolina], because I always thought if anything happened to Mother and Daddy, and I needed to have a compassionate transfer, I could always get down to Fort Bragg if I hadn't been there before. Plus, that was too close to home for me. You know, I had to go some places and see some things, you see.

So I got to Fort Dix and did my first duty assignment as a lieutenant. It was wonderful. I had a great time. I enjoyed the work I had to do. I enjoyed the meeting new people and dealing with the patients, and there was a lot of work, too, I'll tell you.

HT: What did your family and friends think about you being in the army?

CAE: Oh, my mother thought it was great, you know. My dad, he still was skeptical about various things, but he got over it. But they all thought it was great, you know, and when I finally came home, got a chance to come home and was in uniform and all this stuff, and they found out I was doing well, you know, my mother always supported, always supported anything that we wanted to do at any point in time, and especially if we were doing well. Now, if things didn't go right she'd say, "Listen. I don't think that's the right thing for you." But if she saw you were doing well at what you were doing, she said, "Yeah, go for it." And so we always did that. My friends, they thought it was interesting, too. They thought I was kind of a little bit nuts to be so far from home.

HT: Especially your boyfriend at that time. [both laugh]

CAE: They thought I was crazy to be so far from home, and wanted to be so far from home, because they just never envisioned that they would ever live anyplace but right down there where they were. And I never envisioned that I would ever live down there again, because it was a small town and I could just see other places that I needed, because I read

a lot of books and I had a vivid imagination, and so I could see other places that I could be and go, and things that I could do, and so I wanted to see some of that.

HT: What type of work were you involved in at Fort Dix?

CAE: When I got to Fort Dix I was assigned as a staff nurse in—well, actually it was a general-duty nurse, general-duty nurse first, and then a staff nurse after a year—in one of the first intensive care units, surgical intensive care units that was established by the army. It was a six-bed unit, and we took care of all of the patients who had had serious surgery, and at that time serious surgery was to have things such as to have half of your stomach removed, and to have a large bit of surgery done as far as your bowel was concerned, you know, large portions of bowel taken out, you know, that type of thing. That was considered serious surgery.

HT: Was that your specialty, surgery?

CAE: Yes, surgery. Yes, surgical nursing was my specialty, yes, and I stayed in that for all of the time that I was laying on hands. But intensive care was at that time, and still is, a subspecialty of surgery, because you had to have skills over and above the regular skills of a surgical nurse, because you had to be able to take care and resuscitate folk if they became ill all of a sudden, and to take care of emergencies and do all those things, and we had to do the cardiopulmonary resuscitation and all that kind of business.

HT: If we could just backtrack for a second back to your college days, where did you get hands-on experience?

CAE: When I was in Greensboro? At two facilities. One of them I believe is probably at this point in time L. Richardson Memorial Hospital, and the other was Moses Cone [Hospital]. Yes. Of course, it was interesting, this was mostly for medical-surgical kind of nursing, the basic kind of nursing we do with adult patients.

Moses Cone was interested, of course, in our coming and dealing at that point in time, and, of course, this was during the time when segregation was still the law of the land. Not too many facilities in North Carolina allowed African American students to practice in them, but Cone did, and for them it was an economical thing. I mean, we were cheap labor, because that's what nursing students were mostly. That's how come everybody enjoyed the hospital schools, because they were cheap, cheap labor. [laughs] But we did about half the time that they did, and so we were just cheap labor. But they allowed us to come.

But for a psychiatric affiliation and for TB affiliation, and what else did we do? We had to go to New York to do psychiatric affiliation, because Dorothea Dix [Hospital] would have no part of them, you see, and that was the largest place in North Carolina. Greensboro didn't even have any psych places then, and we had to travel from Greensboro up to New York to do that affiliation.

HT: How long did these periods last that you were stationed at various hospitals either in Greensboro or New York?

CAE: That was a twelve-week period. Yes, you had to do one whole semester there, I mean one whole quarter there, yes, yes, because they were on the quarter system at that time. Now they're semester. So we had to do one whole quarter there, so that was the whole summer, you know. We had to go up there for psych affiliation. Oh, that was interesting. And then we went to—for the TB and long-term illness, because we couldn't use the nursing homes and those things at that time either. Well, you had to learn how to take care of patients that had long-term illnesses, so we went out to Oteen, [North Carolina], near Asheville, you ever been out there, to the VA [Veterans Administration] hospital?

HT: Oh, the VA hospital.

CAE: Right, VA hospital near Asheville, but the place was called Oteen at that time, and I think it still is. And that we did another quarter. Actually, we did ten weeks. We did ten weeks there, I remember.

HT: So you did quite a bit of traveling, even though you were just a college student.

CAE: That's right. We did a lot of traveling at that time, yes. I remember one time, because—and I was glad that we got a chance to go to Oteen, because, see, my oldest sister was teaching in Newark. She had subsequently gotten married in 1960 and she was teaching in Newark, and so I knew that if I got to New York, if I got any time off I could go and visit her. Plus my favorite aunt, she just died last year, lived there, too, and when we were up there she was so nice and so kind to us, and so I wanted an opportunity to go and spend some more time with her and do all those things, because she was a marvelous gal, and we had a marvelous time.

The hospital there was Central Islip and it was out on the island, out on Long Island. As a matter of fact, it was just before the last stop on Long Island, so I used to have to take the train in to New York, take the Long Island train into New York, and then switch over to the bus system—I mean, get a cab and go over to Port Authority, and then get on the bus system and go into Newark. I used to check my money and make sure that I had enough money to do this, you know, because if I got there I knew they'd help me with my stash, because two hundred and fifty dollars was enough to keep me down in Greensboro, but it was not enough to get you straight up in New York. So I would have enough monies to get over and do what I needed to do, and then I'd get to Newark and they'd take care of me.

One time I was coming back—I've told people this story on many occasions, but it was interesting. You know, I wasn't used to—I was used to the fact that people would yell and do catcalls and those things at you, and try to pick you up and that kind of business, but I didn't—in Greensboro, because we—outside of the university there—it was a college at that time, but outside there was the street going up, Market Street, there was a little area where the winos hung out, you see, and as you were passing through there they'd always say, "Hey, baby, how you doing?" Because we had to walk uptown,

because we walked almost every place we went. And what you did was, you spoke to them but you never stopped, you see. You just kept right on walking, you know, and they didn't mind that you kept walking, but you had to speak. You know, I'd say, "How are you?" I was very good at speaking to people and doing that stuff. So we get uptown.

Well, I went into the Long Island train, trying to get back to Central Islip one Sunday night in New York, and went into Penn Station—

[End Tape 1, Side A—Begin Tape 1, side B.]

CAE: —went into Penn Station, down in to get the Long Island train, and this guy came over and he'd had a lot to drink, and he was trying to pick me up. [lowers voice] And I remembered the behavior of some of my patients that I'd just taken care of out there in Central Islip, [resumes normal volume] and I decided to start saying things. [laughs] So I started saying, "Get away from me! Get away from me! I see you standing in my room." So this fellow saw that obviously I had a problem, and so he took off and went in another direction, and I told my aunt about that the next time I was in Newark, and she laughed about that for many years afterwards. She said, "Oh, you are absolutely out of your mind." I said, "Well, that's what you are when you're out at Central Islip. I mean, you can go crazy and be anything you want to be." [laughs] We had a great time about that.

HT: Oh, god. I guess we'd better go fast forward again and—

CAE: Get me back on active duty.

HT: Get you back to active duty. I'm sorry, I should have thought of that earlier. [both laugh]

CAE: Yes, I was at Fort Dix, and that was my first duty station, and I learned a lot there about how to take care of patients and how to deal with patients in real situations, when you have the responsibility, and not only that, you have the accountability for those patients. And it's a lot different than what the book says, but that was reality over there in that corner.

One of the highlights of being at Fort Dix for me was that I worked in this intensive care unit, but I worked with a sergeant who was a licensed practical nurse. His name was [Richard] Zeitlin, and he had been in the Korean War, and so he knew a lot about how to take care of patients. So he came to me one day and he said, "Lieutenant," he said, "you know," he said, "I think you're going to be a good nurse," he said. "And you listen to people," he said, "so I'm willing to help you," he said. "And what I will do is," he said, "I know all the practical stuff, and I know how to do all the treatments and the procedures and all those kind of things." He said, "I'll teach you all of that." He said, "But now if the supervisor comes round," he said, "now, remember, you have to be the lieutenant." He said, "I can't go reporting to the supervisor," he said, "because that's not my job as long as you're here." He said, "As long as you're here, you've got to be the lieutenant."

So I said, "Okay. I can handle that." So he taught me all those procedures and all those things.

He said, "And I will do this," he said. And then one day when we were working together he said, "I'm going to go over to the recovery room," because we ran the recovery room and the intensive care unit. He said, "I'm going over to the recovery room and I'm going to get in one of the beds, and I'm going to sleep, and then I'm going to see how much you've learned, because you're going to have to take care of all the patients."

So I said, "Okay." So we worked at this for about three, four weeks, and then one evening we had, you know, one night we had night duty together, me and Zeit, Zeitlin and I.

And Zeitlin said, "Okay, lieutenant. This is your time to shine." He said, "I'm going over there," and he said, "but you always know that if you need me, all you have to do is call me." He said, "If a lot of patients come in and you need to have some help," he said, "you let me know, and I will come and help you."

Let me tell you, what Zeitlin didn't understand was, there was no way that I was going to call him for anything, because I could handle it, and so we started the evening, the night. It was eleven to seven. Things were pretty quiet when we started, had two or three patients over there, nothing going on. I said, "This is a breeze." But it was the weekend and it was Fort Dix, New Jersey, and we had a physician that was on call. He was the surgeon on call, that no matter when he was on call, all the patients came to see him with their little illnesses, and needing surgery, and all this other.

So it was about two o'clock in the morning, I guess, when they called me about this person, an air force sergeant that was down in the emergency room. Do you know Fort Dix, New Jersey at all?

HT: I do not.

CAE: Well, McGuire Air Force Base is right across the way. But this guy was—they have a lot of little roads in New Jersey, and many of them are very dark at night, and these guys would be driving down these roads, you know, and they'd been to a club somewhere, they had two or three more than they should have had, and they would hit things, you know, or things would hit them. Like transfer trucks run into them, and things like that.

And this guy had gotten all broken up in his face, and they took him to surgery and literally lifted his face out. He had on this little—we used to call him the moon man, because he had his turban on, and they had literally lifted his face out, put wires in there, and kept it pulled out so that the bones could heal back in place. Ooh, those surgeons could do most anything, I'm telling you, with the dental surgeon. So he had had his face pulled out and was—and I said, "Oh, he's going to be a lot of work." But I got everything set up. I knew what he needed, got him all set up and got him into the bed, and was going along dealing with him very well.

Well, he had also, because he couldn't eat at this time, and wasn't going to be able to eat for several days, they put in what we call a nasal-gastric tube. They call it a stomach tube sometimes, too. They run the tube through the nose and down through the esophagus and down to the stomach in order to be able to take out the fluids that collect there, because fluids collect there whether you're eating or not, you see. So they ran the

tube down there so that they could keep the stomach decompressed and the gut decompressed, so that he wouldn't vomit and do all those other kinds of things. Well, at that time those tubes were made of rubber, and they were known periodically to collapse after you had them in, because if you don't have enough air in there to keep them open, the suction will cause them to collapse and close off. Well, hell, you don't want that to happen either, and they had given me these scissors over there, because they had the jaws all wired together. They had given me the scissors so that if anything happened, like if that thing collapsed and he started vomiting, you could clip the wires and then he could open up. But what you're going to do, then, is you're going to wreck all of that surgery.

So, I mean, and I'm a new lieutenant. I don't know that I've got this much sense to do this stuff or not. [laughs] And Zeitlin's gone to bed. I mean, you know. And I ain't going to call him, I don't care what happens. Well, he started to—I said, "Oh, something is not right." So I tried to move the tube a little bit, and nothing happened. And that's the other thing it would do, too, is that as the wave action happens in the esophagus and going down to the stomach, it can cause the tube to fold back on itself, and you get a little kink in it, and when you get a little kink in it, if you pull it out you pull it out a little bit from the nose, and then it'll open up. I pulled it out a little bit; it didn't open up. I said, "Oh, my god. I'm going to have a problem over here. I'll never get this straight." So I worked on it a little bit more, and then I pushed a little bit of air in it, and I turned him in another position a little bit so he was on his side some more, and finally that thing opened and started to fill. I said, "Hallelujah." And plus he was full of all sorts of fluids and everything, because that alcohol just causes everything to just kind of secrete more water than you normally would get, and so he had everything, and all this stuff started flowing out. I said, "Oh, that is marvelous. Just get it all out of there." And so he did, and we got that straight.

Well, I'll tell you, I had several of those little kind of incidents and things that were going on. By the next morning I was harried, I tell you. I got home and looked at myself, I said, "Oh, my god. I look like I've been working."

Along about six o'clock old Zeitlin got up, Sergeant Zeitlin, and he stretched and he said, "How's everything going, lieutenant?"

I said, "Fine." [laughs] I had never worked so hard in my life, but I learned.

HT: You were by yourself. There were no other nurses.

CAE: No other nurses, no other nurses. We only had one nurse that was on the shift, and this particular night, because we didn't have a lot of folks assigned—I normally would have two corpsmen, you know. Because we didn't have too many people assigned, and we were short of folks, they pulled the other fellow to another place, and Zeitlin went to bed, and so there was just me. But I'll tell you, I lived through it, and I was a better nurse for having done that. And he used to always joke me. He was from Philadelphia, and he used to always joke about the fact that, he said, "I know you had a tough night," he said, "because I could see you had a tough night when I came over there." He said, "But you're a stubborn old person."

I said, "Listen. I had to learn, and I was not going to learn what I needed to do if you had been there, you see. So I just decided I'd stick it out. But I'll tell you, I had some

harried moments." I tell folks a lot about the people that make so much of a to-do about prayer in schools. Well, you can pray anywhere you want to, at any point in time. Nobody ever would know that you ever said a prayer. And I don't need for everybody to know that, but I said many a prayer that night. I mean, nobody could have stopped me from doing that, because it was needed. [laughs] That was fun.

HT: How long did you stay at Fort Dix?

CAE: Fourteen months. Then I had requested to go off to a course for intensive care nurses, because they'd opened a course at Fitzsimmons at that time. Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center was in Denver, Colorado, and plus I saw another place that I could go, you see. They did this course for eight weeks, and I said, "Jeez, I've never been to Colorado." It was wonderful. I always said I'd wanted to go out there, because it's the only place I'd ever been where it was seven below, and I was in this little light jacket and I felt fine, high and dry, you know, there in Denver.

So I went out there, met some more people, wandered around, went to Aspen, watched them ski, decided I couldn't do that skiing, and so I never got on skis. Then when I finished that course, because it was just temporary duty there, I came back to Fort Dix and I was in the dining facility one day—we called it the mess hall at that time—and I said to the chief nurse, she said, "Oh, we're glad you're back," she said, "but I'm going to stop sending nurses off to those schools, because every time I send them off to school they get orders."

I said, "Oh, who got orders?"

She said, "You."

I said, "Really? Where am I going?"

She said, "Korea."

I said, "Oh, my goodness." Well, I had to get ready for that situation, and first I had to get my mother ready for that situation. But, you know, she usually didn't have too many problems with what it was I was doing. I just had to go and assure her that I was not going to be involved in combat directly, and all those kinds of things, and so I went down, I talked to her and I talked to my dad, and it was for one year that we had to go.

So then I went off to Korea, doing the same kind of jobs. I went into intensive care out there, and that was, until I went to Europe, that was absolutely my best duty assignment in the army.

HT: At which base?

CAE: I went to the 21st Evacuation Hospital, in a manmade city there called ASCOM City, Army Support Command, A-s-c-o-m.

HT: What was that near?

CAE: That was just about seventeen miles from Seoul, near Seoul. The hospital subsequently got moved to Seoul, but it was outside of Seoul at that time. We were in one step above tents in that place, because we were an evacuation hospital, and so we were in Quonset

huts. They were known as Quonset huts at that time. The hospital was in Quonset huts and we lived in Quonset huts on the grounds there at that place.

It was a good assignment for me, though, because, one, I was with a bunch of lieutenants for the first time in my life. See, at Fort Dix we had a lot of captains and we had a lot of lieutenants, but we also had a lot of captains and majors there. But in Korea it was mostly lieutenants, and the first thing that I learned, in terms of dealing with the army's hierarchy is that, you know, there's always somebody above you. [laughs] And when I dealt with the lieutenant portion, of course, there was a lot of people that were above me, and so I had to get myself ready to do the things that were necessary, because I knew we were going to have to do the duty.

So I went off to do the evenings and night duties, because I knew a lot of evenings and nights were coming to me, and they did. But I had a good time doing that, and I had a good—because on those shifts I was able to learn what I needed to do as a nurse, without having someone else there to tell me how to do it. I could make the decision. I could make the decisions for me. I could make the decisions for the paraprofessional personnel that I had working with me at that time; now they're called assistive personnel. So I could get all of those things together, and then we could do the work that we had to do.

HT: How did you get along with the doctors?

CAE: Got along with them fine, yes.

HT: They didn't try to lord it over the nurses and that sort of thing?

CAE: No, no. See, because the military has a different setup than the civilian world does. See, in the military everybody has rank, and it goes by your rank, okay, and physicians started as captains, all right, which means that they were much closer; even though they started a rank ahead of us, they were still much closer to us than they are in the civilian world, see, because in the civilian sector physicians are not employees of the hospital, and all these physicians on active duty in the army are employees of the United States Army, okay? And as a result of that, we all worked for the same people. You see, so you can't come in and decide one day that you don't like the way this person parts her hair, or you don't like what they did to you yesterday, and so therefore somebody ought to fire them, and I still get people saying that that happens to them in hospitals in this country, because we all worked for the same folks. I mean, you've got to go through the right person to get that done.

The second things is, we've always made it very clear in the military that nurses are in charge of nursing practice. Physicians are not in charge of nursing practice. They can't be. They don't know the practice, and so they can't be in charge of that. We say, "Y'all go and do the doctoring, all right, and you can sit here and you can say—" and at that time they were all, all of the hospitals were commanded by physicians. It's changed, because nurses command hospitals now, too, and so do hospital administrators. But at that time they were all commanded by the physicians. So we said, "Okay. At that level you can deal with that."

And the surgeon general, who is the three-star general, has always been a physician. But the law got changed, so they need not necessarily be now, so we're going to see that switch out one of these days. But at that time that's the way it was. But in facilities it was always very clear that we had a chief nurse, and the purpose for that person being there was to administer the practice of nursing, and be responsible for the nurses, the nursing assistants and the folks that dealt with that.

HT: How about the corpsmen? How do they fit into all this?

CAE: Well, the corpsmen fit in in that the corpsmen have a dual management, because the corpsmen are enlisted folks, and being enlisted people they then deal with one boss whenever they're on active duty, and then another boss whenever they've got to go to sleep and to the company, you see. But the person that is really responsible for them most of the time is the company commander, all right, and at one time the company commander used to be responsible for the corpsmen and corps women all of the time. But what they would do was, whenever they'd come to duty, if they had something they needed to have done in the company, or somebody called a parade, they'd come to pull all the people off the unit whenever we needed to work. You can't have that! I mean, you can't run a nursing service if you don't have the control of the people. So the rules now are, when you're on duty, for the period of time you're on duty you're responsible to the chief nurse and to the chief ward master.

HT: That certainly makes sense.

CAE: Yes, oh yes. We had to get it to make sense. And then when you get finished with that duty—and that chief nurse and that chief ward master, the chief ward master is doing the most of it, since they're enlisted people—then does the negotiation with the company commander as to who you can pull out when they're on duty and not, because we know there's some duties that you have to do that for, and so that's how we negotiated that. But that worked a whole lot better than the other way around, so we managed to get that all sorted out.

But the physicians, I'll tell you, over the years they really adjusted to the situation that exists as far as the military is concerned. I mean, sometimes some of them want to do a little bit differently, but we still have to sort it out with them and tell them, "This is what it is that we're about, and you need to understand that when you want to deal with the practice of nursing and the nurses who are involved in it, that you get an opportunity to have your input, but the decision comes from the chief." So that works out very well.

And I was glad that I had had some good experiences. I have had some that were not so good, but I can say that most of the experiences that I had to deal with were very pleasant ones, and as a result of that, when I got to be the chief, and especially had to assign the nurses to certain facilities—see, because we assign nurses to facilities, I as the chief of the Army Nurse Corps, when those nurses go into their assignments I have no further control over them. They report to the chief nurse in that facility, and to the commander, okay, and that's who they're responsible to in that facility.

So when I got to be chief of the corps I then started giving, you know, picking folks to go to hospitals, because I had done a lot of inspection of hospitals and I found out that you've got to send people to places that have a certain personality, because facilities themselves have personalities, and we tend to send people there that have got the same personality that fits into that facility. I'm telling you, I didn't know a whole lot about organizational effectiveness and that kind of stuff, but I will tell you I learned it on the job, and I found out that was so, so I tried to make sure that I matched the chief nurse with the personality and management style of the physician, so that you don't put a built-in problem to start with, you see. And if you get folks pretty well matched together, then you can deal with what happens to them.

HT: You had to have very good people skills.

CAE: Oh yes, oh yes. I'd worked on that, yes.

HT: I guess having so many brothers and sisters really helped you in that way.

CAE: It sure did. And see, I didn't even understand that when I was growing up, but it sure did pay off later, I'll tell you.

HT: After you were near Seoul, Korea, where was your next duty station?

CAE: What'd I do after I finished Seoul, Korea? Oh, I came back to San Antonio, Texas, again, and this is the first time I'd been back since I left the basic. I went back there to do my, what was known as the career course, a nine-month course where you start to learn management within the Army Medical Department. You need to understand that I was a fairly new captain going to that course, and at that course at that time they only sent senior majors. Senior captains and majors used to go to that course, and I had just—as a matter of fact, I got promoted in the course to a captain. I was about finished, and they promoted me to captain. But I was one of three lieutenants that were selected to go to the course.

HT: Did you request to attend this?

CAE: No. They invited me to come, as a lieutenant. I was surprised that I was getting to go down there. But I had asked to go to teach in one of the army's schools for medics, and so they said, "Well, while you're down there at Fort Sam Houston, you might as well go on to that course, and get finished, and then go stay there and teach, and then we don't have to move you twice." So that's what happened.

It was very good for me because I always wanted to teach, you know. I had grown up—when we were growing up we used to have what I've described to people as the family council, you know, that used to happen every night. Daddy would get together to ask us our opinion, not that we were ever going to get anything out of it, but he'd ask us our opinion about things, and my sister, of course, being the oldest was the spokesperson for the children, you know. And I saw her go in there one time, and she did not have her

act together. And you did not go to Daddy to do nothing when you didn't have your act together. I mean, if he's going to ask you a question, you need to have an answer for it.

And I remember being about six years old, which meant that she was about eleven or so, and I said, when she got finished I said, "Listen. You should have said this to Daddy, and you should have been able to argue this point." She said, "If you think you can do it better, why don't you do it?" That was all I needed to know. [laughs] I took over that spokesperson. So they'd come to me and they'd tell me all this stuff, and what they wanted to do, and what they want to be about, and all this stuff, and I'd go and I'd argue my case in front of Daddy. But I'll tell you, he got me ready for a lot of stuff, because he knew the questions to ask, he knew what he wanted to know about this whole thing, and I had to sit down and say, now, he may ask this, he may ask that, and if he asks this then I need to know this, and I'd work it all out before I got there, the most of it. Sometimes I didn't have things, but I could just tell by his eyes. He was always impressed that I could manage to pull that stuff off. And listen, I could discuss with him right down to the last minute, and would do it, too. [both laugh]

So I had learned a lot about debating and dealing with what it was I needed to deal with, because Daddy got me ready for that. And so when I got out—and it happened in nursing school, too. I ended up being spokesperson for a lot of situations, lot of situations, with the students, and then, of course, working in various clubs. I was president of the Student Nursing Association at one time there at A&T, and you know, just had a marvelous time doing many of those things. I always had a lot of energy and so on, and always needed to channel it somewhere, so I used to keep it going.

HT: What were some of the things you learned at this school in San Antonio that you attended for nine months?

CAE: Well, what we did learn primarily was the management and leadership of nursing staff, you know, how to manage and leading nursing staffs in various kinds of situations—mostly in case of mobilization in war, because that's what the army prepares for all of the time, you see. The reason for the army existing at all is to fight the nation's land wars, you see, and since they're going to be doing that, any of the support groups that are there with them have to be able to take care of patients in those kind of settings.

That's why we have such a great camaraderie and friendship with the infantry people, you know, infantry artillery and armor, because that's what they do. They fight the war. And as a result of that we have to be there to support them, and that's what we were learning how to do. But at the same time that we learned how to take care of those skills and to be able to be good managers and leaders in nursing, we also at the same time had to do a section called military science, where you got to learn a lot about what the army is doing at that time, and what you learn in those courses, of course, is all those things that have to do with the type of weapons that are being deployed, what they do to the human body when they're being deployed, and what kinds of facilities that you have to set up and be able to deal with in order to be able to support an army in the field that's mobilized. Learned a lot of stuff there.

HT: This lasted for nine months.

CAE: Yes, it did at that time. Yes, now it lasts for about six.

HT: What did you do next after you finished school?

CAE: After I finished that school, oh, then I went to teach in the Medical Training Center. I went to teach medics, basic medics. These are the basic hospital corpsmen.

HT: And this was at Fort Sam Houston?

CAE: At Fort Sam Houston, Texas, yes, teach those medics, and I taught them for three years. Yes, it was '64 to '67, and then after that I left and went to graduate school, got picked up for graduate school.

HT: When you say you taught, did you teach all day long?

CAE: Yes, all day long, right.

HT: Just normal types.

CAE: Seven-thirty-to-four kind of thing. Well, in the beginning I used to do a lot of platform time, which meant that I'd go in the classroom and we would do classes that were straight lecture, or we would do lecture discussion, or lecture discussion and demonstration. Like if we got to a situation where we had to teach them how to give injections, then you've got to talk for an hour, then you've got to demonstrate how it gets done, and then they've got to do the practical exercise, so that'd be about a four-hour class, I mean, you know. And we had eight hours of class that we did. We'd do four in the morning, and four in the afternoon most days. Some days you didn't have to do any in the morning at all, and then you'd have to do four in the afternoon. But we had to have time off to write our lesson plans, to revise the lesson plans, and to do those kinds of things.

HT: And this was geared toward corpsmen only.

CAE: Right, geared toward corpsmen only, right. It's really like a basic nursing-assistant course.

HT: Both male and female?

CAE: Male and female, right, yes.

HT: And then you say after that you went to graduate school?

CAE: No, no. Well, I did go to graduate school, but I taught on the platform for about a year, and then the next two years I did what was called the ward training, because what we would do was we'd take all of the procedures that were necessary for them to do within a

facility, and we'd give them one whole day of doing the practical exercises, doing the injections, doing the bed baths, and all this. And lord have mercy, kids can be something whenever they're basically learning this stuff, and this was during the time when we did not have the all-volunteer army like we have now, so many of the people that were there didn't want to be there in the first place. So you've got to make things at least interesting for them. This is Vietnam. This is Vietnam era, you know, because it was '64, and the buildup had already started. We started out teaching like five lines per week, five, six lines per week, and we went to fourteen lines per week, and the lines is the number of students that you have coming through at a time. But they also increased the numbers that were in each line, and so it was a big buildup time.

HT: How were people chosen to join the Medic Corps, corpsmen? Was it just by chance?

CAE: No, no, no. They had something they call a battery of tests that they did, the army's battery of tests, and they looked to see anybody who was mostly a social, outgoing person, good dexterity, good manual skills and things of that nature, and if they didn't need anybody to be a truck driver. [laughs] No, they used to send us pretty good people, because, you know, at this time, since it was not volunteer and folk were getting drafted, we'd get lawyers and folks who had some background in being a medic before, and people with pretty good high education, you know, and so forth.

I had this one kid one time—I used to tell people about this—that was in the class on injections, and we were doing venal punctures, trying to teach them how to stick a needle into the vein and that type thing, because many of those kids went off to be medics in units in Vietnam, you see, so they had to know a lot of basic things to start with. So we were doing the venal puncture and we had this kid over there, and I was watching him and he was good. He was very good at getting, finding the vein and putting the needle in and doing stuff. So I went over to him and I said, "Listen." I said, "You are very good at this." I said, "I think you've had some practice before."

He said, "Yes, ma'am, I have."

I said, "Where?"

He said, "On the streets of Chicago. This is how I used to make my money, giving heroin to the junkies."

I said, "Well, you're here, brother. Let me tell you, the skill is the same." [laughs]

HT: What a story.

CAE: The skill is the same. Lord, a lot of them kids had some stories, I'll tell you. But the skill is the same, and he was good, he was very good at doing it.

So I taught there for the next two years, had a marvelous time, really did enjoy that, and left from there, and that was 1967, and went to graduate school, University of Minnesota. Froze myself to death for two years. Great school, learned a lot about teaching, because I had decided at that time that teaching was the best and only thing that a person could do in life. I mean, you know, here you are, responsible for folks' education, and the army was opening a school of nursing, had opened a school of nursing, because this was Vietnam and we needed to get more nurses out. So the army had opened

this school of nursing, which it had opened twice before and closed, but they needed to open it again to get more nurses out.

So that's what we did, we opened the school of nursing, and I was going there to get my master's degree so that I could teach in that school, because I had already made known the fact that I wanted to teach there. So they took me into the university, and I went to the University of Minnesota because I'm still dealing with my traveling bit. I had never been to the Midwest, and I thought education ought to come from more than one side of the world, I mean of the USA. So I said, "I'd love to go out there. I've never been to mid-America to go to school. I'd love to go there." So I got selected and went there, and the University of Minnesota has a reputation of being a wonderful school. So I went there and I majored in medical-surgical nursing with an emphasis on teaching, and got my master's. Then I was sent to Walter Reed [Army Institute of Nursing], to teach in that school of nursing, where I stayed for the next five years.

HT: That was an unusually long time.

CAE: Yes. But I had a wonderful time. And the reason how come I stayed there was because every now and then crises come up in this life, all right, and a crisis came up. That's how I stayed the last two years. I was over there teaching, doing my assignments, doing those things I was supposed to do, and we were getting ready for the fall year, because we were changing the curriculum and doing a number of things, and someone came and tapped on my shoulder. So I said, "Oh, what is happening here?" So they said, "Listen. The chief of the corps is here, and her name is General [Lillian] "Lil" Dunlap, and she wants to see you. Well, I had known Lil Dunlap since I had been in that course—you remember I went to that career course as a lieutenant?

HT: Yes.

CAE: To learn management and leadership of nurses? I had a problem there, because I had a roommate that was failing the course, and there were some students in the class who thought that I should be responsible for this woman who was failing this course. And I was having a little bit of concern about that, because I thought I had to be responsible for me. I didn't know I had to be responsible for everybody else. And so I said, "I'm going to go ask somebody about this, because obviously I don't quite have this straight." But it was a little captain that was telling me that I had to do this, and so I said, "Let me go check out Colonel Dunlap," because she was in charge of the course. At that time she was a lieutenant colonel.

So I went to see her and when I went to see her I told her about my situation, and she said, "Let me tell you something, lieutenant." She said, "If you fail this course because you are going out of your way to try and help somebody else pass," she said, "I will see to it that you never get anyplace in the army." She said, "You're responsible for you here, and nobody else." And basically she said, "You keep your mouth shut and do your work, and I'll get you where you think you need to go." That was my first lesson in mentoring.

And she picked me up and she kept in touch with me for the next fourteen years. And I was never assigned with her, and then we kept in touch by either she was—because she went on to the Surgeon General's Office in Washington after that time, and she was in charge of the branch there, and she would call me on the telephone that she was in charge of the nursing career branch there, and she would call me on the telephone or she would come down on a staff visit, or I'd see her someplace like that, but we were never assigned together. But I will tell you she moved me along, because she would call up and say, "Hey, listen. This is the next assignment you've got to go to. This is what you're supposed to do when you get there, and you go and take care of it." And I did. I mean, I knew I could do the work, you see, but mentors are about taking care of the things that you can't take care of.

HT: What happened to this woman who was failing?

CAE: She failed, yes, because she didn't have good study habits, you know? Her idea of study was to get two or three minutes after she had come home. First she took off her clothes, she said, "I have to relax." So she'd have herself about three highballs, and, of course, that'll get you ready for something, but it would not get you ready for studying too very well. Then she'd have her steak, and she always ate a steak and salad. That was her evening meal. And then she'd have a couple more drinks, and then she'd think about she wanted to study, and by that time she was too sleepy to do anything.

I had a friend that she and I studied together all of the time. She's dead, someone told me she died. We used to always study together, and so when we got finished and we got undressed in the afternoon, we'd just go hit the books before we forgot what we got told that day. [laughs] So we'd get all that together, and at that time I wasn't much of a drinking person anyway, and so we'd do that and then maybe we'd go up—I ate a lot of ice cream, and we'd do that and then we'd be finished, you see, for the evening. But that's the way we did ours, and that's how I was getting by. And out of the class I graduated number six in that class, because I applied myself and did very well in terms of doing that.

And plus, this woman was a captain. I didn't see how come I had to be responsible for a captain. Well, she had to leave the corps finally, because she was not making the grades and was not keeping up.

HT: That must have been very embarrassing for her.

CAE: Yes, yes, I guess it was.

HT: Would something like that ruin your career?

CAE: Oh yes, oh yes. You're probably pretty well done after that time, you're probably pretty well confined to not getting promoted along with your peers, that's for sure.

So that's how I got picked up by Lil Dunlap, and so then after then she started to move me around and do whatever, and I started to shine. I was going places and doing things. I left the career course and went down to that school, and I got down to the school

and I was doing great in that school, and not only did I get to go in the school, but I got to go and work in the ward training section, which was considered to be a very, very choice area to work, because you had regular hours, you had Monday through Friday. Most everybody was doing Monday through Friday, weekends off, and that's great. I mean, nurses want that more than anything else. But the other thing that you had to do, you didn't have to do all those lesson plans and that kind of stuff, because you just had to do these four or five lesson plans for this particular area, and you didn't have to review all the twenty or thirty more that was used up in the other areas.

So I thought things were going great, and I was doing very well there. And I had had a chief nurse that was up at Fort Dix when I was first assigned there, and she had gotten another job as chief nurse of what was known at that time as the Continental Army Command. It's now Traydock, but it was the Continental Army Command at that time, and they did training and doctrine for all the military schools around. So she came down to visit the school at the Medical Training Center. Now you know, I was a captain. I wasn't in charge of anything but my little ward training section, okay. But we had a chief nurse in that area. When she came down to see the chief nurse she said, "I want to see Lieutenant Leach while I'm here," because she knew I had been at Fort Dix, and I was a good nurse there for her in her area. So she wanted to find out what was going on in that place, and she figured if she got a hold of me she could find out. [laughs] Well, she knew I'd tell her what I knew.

But it didn't help me with my relations with my boss, you understand, that she would come down and instead of saying, "I want to talk to you about what's happening here," "I want to go down and see Lt Leach." Well, I'll tell you, that didn't make for good relations at all, and I had a boss who had a little bit of vindictiveness in her. So that and a couple of other situations that went on, and unbeknownst to me, to her trying to get me removed from the job that I was in, because she wanted to put her friend into it, got me to get a terribly, terribly, terribly bad efficiency report.

We had an efficiency report at that time that had a grading system where they showed a pyramid of people. I don't know if you've seen that grading system, but they have the one person at the top, and then you've got about two on this line, but it all adds up to one hundred people, you know. But as it's shown, it's kind of like a curve when you get finished, you know. When you turn it on its side it's really kind of like a bell curve, but when you stand it up you've got one person at the top, and you've got—I used to say one man at the top, and then you've got one man at the bottom, right. I was rated down there with that little man at the bottom. I was holding up all the other men. And I didn't know that she had done this. But I was called—it was in July, in San Antonio. San Antonio, Texas, is a very, very warm place. Fort Sam Houston was in San Antonio. Oh, you know, you did the Air Force.

HT: That's right. I went to Lackland, [Texas].

CAE: You've been there.

HT: In November, and it was still hot.

CAE: It was still hot! It could be that way. Well, in July you can know—oh, lord, I remember the Six-Day War. Every time anybody talks about Israel and the Six-Day War, I remember standing there doing blood pressures, and the water was dripping down my face that afternoon. Probably part of how come it was dripping down is because they had already alerted us that if we have to go and help out Israel, you need to know that you may be going. Oh, my god, how am I going to explain this to my mother? It's always, how am I going to explain this to mother.

But anyway, we were down there and it was hot this day, and I was over there battling with the students in war training, and somebody came down and said, "Listen. The commander wants to see you." Commander? What did I do? You know, it's always, what did I do now? And I couldn't remember anything.

So I said, "Well, I'm just going up here and see the commander. He's just going to have to tell me what this is about, because I don't know nothing."

So I went up to see him, and I remember him saying to the secretary—she said to him, "Shall I close the door?"

And he said, "Oh no." He said, "You don't have to close the door." He said, "If Clara starts yelling and screaming in here I think we can handle her."

So I said, "My goodness. What am I going to yell and scream about?" I didn't know nothing. You know, people don't ever tell you what it is folk want, especially when it's the commander. They don't ever tell you anything except for, "The boss wants to see you." So I sat down and he gave me my efficiency report, and at that time you didn't have to show people their efficiency reports. As a matter of fact, most times they didn't, you know. Now it's a whole different system. I mean, you've got to talk to people and tell them all about stuff. As a matter of fact, you've got to talk to them all the time. But at that time you didn't get to see them.

But there were some commanders who, if it was going to be an adverse report, they would show it to you, and this was an adverse report. When I looked down there—again, I first opened up the thing and I started looking at it, and I read the first side, and I remember thinking, god, that didn't say very much. I thought I was better than that. Then I read the back and I got down to those little men, and she rated me round here, "unconfident, incompetent." What is this all about? So then—

[End Tape 1, Side B—Begin Tape 2, Side A.]

CAE: Okay. I was talking about the report that I got. Then I looked at the report and I told him, "Oh, I didn't realize that I had done so badly in this time." And so I started to cry.

And the commander just kind of sat there with me and he said, "Well, Clara, what do you think?"

And I said, "I don't know, sir." I said, "I don't believe that my performance was as bad as she has portrayed it here."

He said, "Well, did you see what the endorser and the reviewer wrote?" because he was the reviewer.

And I said, “Yes, sir. I saw what was written there.” But, you see, at that time the person that was your immediate supervisor was the rater, and that individual was the most important person in the system. Their—what they wrote got the most weight, it carried the most weight in your report, and so I knew that this was going to be considered to be a terrible report.

So he said, “Well, Clara,” he said, “I will tell you. Since it is such a discrepancy between what the rater has said and what the endorser and reviewer has said,” he said, “we have sent it forward one time.” He says, “Matter of fact, we’ve sent it forward twice, so this is coming back to us for the third time, and this time we just thought we should notify you that this kind of report is going in.” And he said, “That’s why I had you come and read it.” And he said, “Well, is there anything that you want to say about it?”

And I told him, I said, “Sir,” I said, “I don’t believe it’s true.”

And he said, “Well, are you aware of the regulations that’s necessary to be able to object and to formally make your objections to this?”

And I said, “Yes, sir. I know a little bit.” I said, “But I don’t know everything I should, but I will.” So I left his office and he gave me a copy of that report, and he told me that they were going to send it back the next time, because they had brought it back twice and asked her to change it; she’d refused. So if she refused to change it the third time, then they would send it forth. So they brought it back to her and she refused to change it, so then it had to go before a board to see what happened, because the discrepancy was already there.

Well, my brother had a good friend who was an air force sergeant, and he and I used to get together very often, and he was in personnel. When I showed him that report he said, “Oh, Clara.” He said, “You’re going to be a major.” He said, “You’re going to be a major very soon.”

I said, “Why?”

He said, “Because you can’t write a report like this and have it go through.” He says, “There’s too much of a discrepancy between what she said and what the other folks had to say about you.” And he says that what the other folks have to say about you indicates that they have also seen your performance many times on an infrequent basis, but frequent enough, because the commander used to always come down with all the dignitaries. See, I worked in a place where all the dignitaries came through, because these kids were doing hands-on training, and everybody wanted to see somebody doing some hands-on training. So I was down there and I would, whenever they came down, of course, I being the gracious and gregarious person that I was, I would tour them through the area, talk to them, deal with everything they needed to deal with, answer all their questions, and deal with what’s happening.

And so my rater at that time wanted her friend to work in this area, and she went to the commander to get him to move me, because I was a junior officer. There was no doubt about it, I was a junior captain there, and her friend was a senior captain. And she said, “I’d like to put her down there in that place, because she has more experience in this area,” la ti da ti da. The real big thing was she was her friend, because she was not a people person.

So the commander said, “No, don’t, you can’t move her,” she said, “because Capt Leach is doing just fine down in that area. Leave her to do what she’s doing.” So the long

and short of it all was, she would not agree to change the report, and I went out over that weekend and I found that regulation, read the regulation, did all the information that I needed to do, got all the information gathered that I needed to gather to offer a rebuttal, and I never had to do it.

Because when the report went forth a third time it was sent from—actually, Lil Dunlap was by then a full colonel, and she was in the Office of the Surgeon General, doing personnel for the Army Nurse Corps, and she got the report. Then she called up my boss there and she said, "What on earth are you writing for this officer? I know this officer myself, and I know that she's better than what you have written here."

Well, she says, "That's the way I see it."

So she said, "All right." So they sent the report forward and the report finally got to something called the Army Board of [Record] Corrections.

They took that report and they said, "There's no way there's so much discrepancy between what the rater has said, and what the reviewer and endorser said." So what they did was, they threw out what the rater had to say, they threw out what the reviewer had to say, they doubled the score of the endorser, who was the middle person—who had given me a good score, by the way—and that report stood in my record in that fashion.

HT: That's amazing.

CAE: The rest of what they did was they went back and looked at, because they saw something that they thought was a pattern of behavior of this particular rating official, so they went back and looked at all the people that she had rated over time, and when they got that finished and they looked at that, they said, "It is substantiated. There is something about the manner in which she rates folks, and she has a tendency to be very tough on the folks that she has rated, especially if they were African American." So they whipped it right out of there, and pretty soon she was no longer in the army. They sent her packing.

So I said, oh, I got out of that one. And the commander, though, the commander was very, very—he was very, very supportive of me, and he said to me, he said, "Clara, you know, you are very good at what it is that you do," he said, "but I will tell you, in some ways you're a very naïve person."

I said, "Why do you say that, sir?"

He said, "Because you really believe that everybody will do the right thing, and that everybody is pleased whenever you do well." I learned a lesson that day. And he said, "And I will tell you, on both of those points it's not always the case." He said, "So you're going to have to learn to pay attention to what it is that people are about, and see what it is they're saying, because then you may be able to find out some more about which way they're going to go and how they're going to deal with you when the time comes."

But, you know, I didn't know anything about envy, jealousy, and all that other good kind of stuff, because the work environment I had come out of, which was in those tobacco fields, the main value there was that you worked, and that you worked well. And if you didn't work well, it didn't matter who you were, you were not valued in that environment. My father said, "You've got to be able to do your job and carry your load, and you've got to be able to do that well." So I just went through life just doing that, you

see, assuming that everybody was going to consider this is important to do. Well, some folk consider that to be something that you're doing to try and get one step ahead of them. I didn't know anything about that stuff. So he told me, "Take this and pay attention, and pull this record out every now and then and read it, and know that people can do different things." So I learned the lesson that day.

But Lil Dunlap saved me again. And so I taught at that school. I stayed there and taught at that school until I went off to graduate school, and that was the other concern, too, was I was on my way to graduate school, and she knew it, and she knew if I got an adverse report in my record that I probably would not be picked for graduate school, because the folks who were picking me for graduate school were military people, you see, and the army is not going to send you out there with not a good record of having performed well in the military.

HT: So the graduate school would have been like a leave of absence, almost, for you.

CAE: That's right, for two years.

HT: A little sabbatical.

CAE: That's right. Oh, it was wonderful. [laughs]

HT: And she had it in for you.

CAE: Lord, did she ever!

HT: I mean, there was probably nothing you could have done otherwise, I mean, to change her mind.

CAE: That's right, that's right. She didn't even tell me to start with, so there was nothing I could have done in there.

HT: What was this person's rank?

CAE: She was a major, yes, but she was a senior major, you know. See, I tell people very often, as I tell that story I tell people very often, I probably did not help my situation very well anyway in this case, because I was incredibly honest to the point of being blunt some days, you know, because she used to always go around bragging about the fact that when the next list came out for promotion to a lieutenant colonel, she was going to be on it. And we used to have to listen to that every day. And so the list came out, and I got your *Army Times* and I went and looked, and her name wasn't on it. And so I said, "Hey, I've got your *Army Times* last night, ma'am, and I looked. You know, I didn't see your name on there." [laughs]

HT: That's a little jab there, right? [laughs]

CAE: And you know, I didn't even really mean for it to be that way, but I really didn't see her name on the list, and I just wanted to say, "What happened? Did they forget you or something?" You know, that's what I was about. I wasn't trying to say, "Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah." That wasn't it at all. But you see, things can be taken in a different kind of way, and now, today, I would never say anything like that to anybody. I would just let that opportunity pass. [laughs] I have let many opportunities like that pass. I heard a lot that day.

So I got out of that one, and the Army Board of [Record] Corrections cannot correct to—it's just like the law, very often. You can't correct to what you feel would be equal, this person gets. Like if one person kills another person, you can't take but one life, you know. And in this particular case, when somebody does you a grievous injustice over here, you can only fix it one time, and then you can only fix it to the extent you think you ought to fix it, and then you've got to be done with it.

So they kind of made sure that they kind of overcorrected in my favor. So what they did was, when that record got thrown out, luckily the process was finished before the board adjourned for my going to school, and also for my consideration for a promotion. Now, I wasn't in the primary zone of promotion that particular year. I was in the secondary zone of promotion. But the folks looked down and they saw that record over there, where there had been, obviously, some kind of difficulty, and they saw what kind of score I got as a result of having doubled the score for the endorser, and they tacked me onto that list in the 5 percent of the people that were below the zone for promotion, but who otherwise showed potential. I was on the bottom of the list, and a couple of people pointed that out to me, too. They said, "Listen. We saw that promotion list, and your name is on it. You're right down at the bottom."

I said, "But I'm on the list, where are you?" [laughs] Because they'd wanted to go get on the list, you see. So I made below the zone promotions to major, lieutenant colonel, and full colonel, and it started with that one particular thing. But after that set me free I went on out there and did some more things with some more people, but I had to have a little bit of help to get me out of that one, and they got me out.

Then when I got finished at that school, I went off to graduate school up to University of Minnesota, marvelous experience. I always liked school. I like going to school. I always liked being in school and learning new things and different things, and I will tell you, Minnesota was new and different. I arrived there out of having been in San Antonio, Texas, for three years, and having dealt with that, of course, the weather that you talked about in November down there in Lackland, and the weather that I had known right up into Minnesota.

Got there in August, and, of course, September kind of drifted by. September's kind of cool sometimes, but it can also be warm. Well, listen. The first of October comes, you can count it out in Minnesota. That temperature dipped down to thirty-five degrees. I thought I was going to die. And people laughed at me. I had on two coats, and boots, and everything. They said, "Oh, lord, you think it's cold now, just you wait." And I waited, and it got colder. I mean, it really did get cold. When it went down to fifty below I said, "I don't think I could live here much longer." Ice and snow and sleet, and school never closed, you see, because if they closed school because of a little ice and snow and sleet, they would never go to school there from October to May. So I said, "Oh, I'd better get

used to this." And the rules there were that if you lived within a mile of the university, you walked to the university every day. Some days I made it, but some days I would drive our car. I knew every person who took care of the garage, because I would always bribe them into letting me park someplace, so that I could get home without having to walk through all that cold weather. And they took pity on me, and they would let me do that.

The university is really a marvelous place to go to school. It is a rather liberal university in a very otherwise conservative state. Roy Wilkins, who was very big in civil rights in this country, came out of St. Paul, which is the capital of Minnesota, born there, and that was his home. There were not too many African Americans in Minnesota, and I think much of the problem had to do with the weather. [both laugh] African Americans usually don't like it that cold. They mostly don't like that cold weather, so I think that's one of the reasons how come.

I enjoyed my time there. I minored in anthropology and did a couple of papers. I wrote a couple of papers that had to do with death and dying and how it is, and I still like to deal in that subject, and how it is that people cope in various societies with the whole idea of dying. I did a lot during the school time with recruiting of other nurses, because the nurse that was there that was the nurse counselor in that area that was responsible for recruiting, she'd come over and get me to help out and go out and talk to the people and everything, and so I did a lot of, lot of recruitment activities.

I did a lot with the church, because I had changed my religion when I came in. See, I used to read about religions of the world and this, and I always said, whenever I went in the army and had an opportunity, I was going to become a Roman Catholic. So I did that when I was in basic, in my basic orientation course down at Fort Sam Houston. I started taking the catechism and getting, you know, my lessons together and that kind of business, and I finished it off up at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and met a Catholic chaplain who taught me everything that he knew about being a Catholic, and I took care of everything that he needed whenever he used to come to the ICU to see his patients.

When he'd walk in and the doc would say, "Well, chaplain, I've done all I can do. It's in your hands now."

He said, "What am I supposed to do?" [laughs] And so I was in the ICU when he came in the ICU to see patients, I would always call him up, because that was our deal. He said, "If you will teach me everything about those patients when I come up there to see them in the ICU," he said, "I will tell you everything I know about being a good Catholic."

So I said, "All right. That's my deal." And so I did that. He did his part and I did my part, because we had some real serious situations there very often, and I would just tell him about it, and then when he went in the room he knew how to talk to the parents, and he knew, you know, how to deal with the situation, and everything worked that way.

Oh, I was in graduate school, doing my graduate school thing. I worked in the St. Lawrence Parish there in Minneapolis, and it was a Roman Catholic church, and I did a lot of work there because it was another time of tremendous social change in our country. It was in the late sixties, and the Civil Rights Act had just passed in '64, and Martin Luther King got killed in '68, and I went to school there in '67, and I will tell you it was a time when people were discussing a lot of things, and this parish was committed to

making sure the folk got educated about the social change that was going on in the country. So I would spend time with this one Catholic priest, well, actually, these two Catholic priests. One of them is a monsignor now, and the other one is retired. He was older than both of us at that time. But he's retired and he's down in Florida, and I get to see him every now and then. We used to go into homes and talk to folks about what was going on with the African Americans in this country, and what do they want and what are they trying to do, and how are they dealing with the protests and that kind of stuff.

Whenever—of course, Martin Luther King got killed—much of this country burned. Much of it did. And understand, just to set it in the right perspective, I had just left San Antonio, Texas, and parts of Dallas had burned during that time, Washington, D.C. had gone up in flames, followed by Newark, Columbus, Ohio, Cleveland, Ohio, and all these places, you know, all. So I went there to do my basic studies, but I ended up doing a whole bunch of other things that I found was important to get done, to help promote understanding among individuals and groups. That's what I was about doing. It was interesting. We used to have some very heated discussions about much of this stuff. But by this time I had learned how to stand my ground, and so it all worked out pretty well.

HT: But you were still on active duty while you were at the university.

CAE: I was still on active duty, but I wore civilian clothes and never, never had to wear a uniform there, because you wore civilian clothes and you did those things in the civilian community, because your duty was to go to school and make the grades.

HT: When you went around to help your friend with the recruiting, did you wear an army uniform at that time?

CAE: Sometimes, sometimes, yes.

HT: So that was not an official duty of yours, I assume. It was sort of unofficial, the recruiting?

CAE: Yes, right. It was unofficial. Yes, it was unofficial.

HT: So that was on top of going to school, was just helping out a friend.

CAE: I just helped my good buddy over there. I graduated from University of Minnesota in 1969, so I went there in August of '67 and I graduated in May of '69. After I got finished there I got assigned to the Army School of Nursing at Walter Reed, taught there from '69, late '69 to '74, left there in '74.

HT: What was Walter Reed like in those days?

CAE: Walter Reed was a bustling, busy place, lots of patients, because it was Vietnam time, and a lot of people were getting shot up in Vietnam, and were coming home, and I had

these young students that were there that had their own ideas about what they needed to be about, and what they needed to get going for themselves, and what they thought about the war and all those things. So it was one of those situations where I was really earning my money and my keep every day, you know?

We'd get some of the young fellows back from Vietnam and they would have weird and different dietary habits and these kinds of things. For example, there was this one kid who came back. He wanted nothing but 7-Up to drink, and he wanted to eat nothing but peanuts, breakfast, dinner, or supper, he'd just take this. And my students were concerned about this, they said, because, "You know, he needs some other things to have at this time."

And I said, "Well, now, tell me about the content of protein in peanuts." They went back and found that out and everything, and they decided that probably was all right for him to eat, but what about this sugar water he was drinking? Well, I said, "Sugar, carbonated water. I don't think it's going to cause him any problems, but at least he's getting a lot of water." So we didn't bother about trying to get him to switch up until he was ready, which was probably about four or five months later. But he did just kept that steady diet three times a day. He had the drink, the 7-Up, and ate the peanuts. All right. I've often wondered what happened to that kid; lost both his legs.

I had a lot of association with the students, and their ideology was different than mine at that time, because I was one of the folks who had agreed to serve and support, and so I was going to get that done no matter what went on, because I believed in the cause that we had going there. My sisters spent some time—my sisters were in school during that period. No, by this time I had gotten them out of school, because they went in right after I got to be a lieutenant, so I got them out of there in the middle sixties. They got out just before I went off to school, because they went in '63, so they were coming out. Yes, they graduated in June and I started school in August, September that same year.

But that was a great time for me. I really enjoyed that, being back in graduate school, taking care of students, dealing with students and patients in the hospital and clinic setting, and that all turned out very, very well.

HT: After you finished your chores at Walter Reed, where was your next assignment?

CAE: Finished Water Reed and then at that time, let's see. Oh, I went to Fort Meade, [Maryland], for a year, and I would not have gotten to Fort Meade except for they had the need for a person there who knew something about the spoof and spy business, and could help take care of the patients in the hospital over there in that area, and facilitate the relations between the hospitals and the National—what's the name of that place? National Security? NRC, National Security Center. That's at Fort Meade.

I stayed there for a year, and then I got selected to go to the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This is the army's middle-management school for middle managers, those individuals that normally, for those individuals who are going in as senior majors and lieutenant colonels, to learn how to do their basic skills in this area. [pause] It is the first school that really does a cut on who may get to be general officer at some point in time.

At that point in time, especially if you're sending folks out, like nurses, who only had one space, you know, because we had one space in the school at that time. We've got a lot more now, got over twenty plus who are nurses to go in residence, and I went in residence, and I was the only nurse selected to go that year.

HT: I think you said that this school lasted a year, is that correct, for a full year?

CAE: Yes, it lasted one year, right, one year.

HT: What type of courses did you take there?

CAE: Well, I took a lot of courses having to do with tactics and strategy, mostly tactics, and I learned very quickly how come I didn't carry a rifle. I don't like rifles. I don't like weapons. I don't like weapons at all.

HT: Well, of course, in your career you had seen what they did to people.

CAE: That's right, and that's my thing, you know. A lot of people said, "Oh, look at this. This is a neat weapon. We can kill this, this—" "Yeah. You could also maim this, this, this and that, too," and that's where I come in, where the big problem comes. But I had to, of course, go through the course and get to associate, and that's what you do in those courses more than anything else, is you go to the courses, you get to associate with people from other [army] branches, you find out what they do and they find out what you do, and you go right ahead doing what it is that you've been assigned to.

HT: So you were in school situations all day long?

CAE: That's right.

HT: Just like a regular college-type courses.

CAE: Yes, all day, oh yes, all-day long, regular school.

HT: By this time you were a major, I think you said?

CAE: I was a lieutenant colonel.

HT: Oh, lieutenant colonel.

CAE: Well, actually I was a major when I first went in there to Fort Meade, but then I got promoted about halfway out of Fort Meade, so by the time I got to CGSC, Command and General Staff College, I was a lieutenant colonel, and as a result of my being a lieutenant colonel, it was the first year that the commandant had decided that you would assume a position based on your rank, regardless of gender. So I was a lieutenant colonel. I was number fifteen in the class in rank, so that meant I had to be a section leader, because

they had twenty-four sections, and I had to take charge of a section. A section is a group of about sixty people, at that time all men that I had in my group, and they have to stay in this group and do various activities with the rest of the groups, or sometimes in competition with the rest of the group. But you've got to learn who they are and talk to them so you can decide if you need to be—

HT: Especially if you're the leader.

CAE: That's right. Yes, if you decide you're going to be in charge of them, or you're going to be telling them what it is they ought to be about doing, you've got to know who they are. So we got to the point where we could rub shoulders and do various things. I had those fellows in there, four of which were foreign service officers. They'd come from their armies in various places around the world. One was from Lebanon, one was from Holland. Oh, goodness, I had two more, and I can't remember where they come from right now, but it was great having their perspective on things.

HT: How many other females were there in school with you at this time?

CAE: The number of other females in school with me during that period was seven, out of eleven hundred officers. There were eight of us in the course, and there were two of us who got together on a regular basis to talk about things that happened to females in the military. The others were younger, because Claudia was also a lieutenant colonel, because she had been selected by her branch, the WAC branch, the Women's Army Corps branch, to come to the course. They only had one space, and so she got to come pretty late, too.

HT: What was her last name, do you recall?

CAE: I don't, but I've got it in the book. I'll get that out of the book. So Claudia and I would try and hold meetings with the other women, you know, to talk about what was going on and if there was anything we needed to bring to the attention of the course directors, and things like that. And none of them would meet with us, because if they did they felt that they'd be criticized by the men that were in their sections for trying to do things in secret that they didn't know about. Little do they know that men do things in secret all the time, and don't intend to tell you.

So we said, "Well, you don't have to worry." It was 1976. I was there—I graduated in Class of '76 from Command and General Staff College, and, of course, that was the year of the Bicentennial. But that was also the International Year of Women, and all across the army they were putting on these programs to talk about what contributions women had made to the military and to defense, and to this place and to that place and to the other place. And, of course, I was the senior officer in my class, and there was [unclear] officer in my class, and Tom didn't have any trouble with me being the senior person, and he was my ExO, but a lot of other people did. As a matter of fact, there was a guy in my section from Korea, and he was the one who came over to tell me one day that,

he said, “Oh, you’re the senior person here,” he said, “but he’s the next one, and you should lerinquish (sic) your position to him because he’s an infantry officer.”

I said, “When you learn how to say it, then maybe I’ll do it.” [laughs]

HT: So he was Korean.

CAE: Yes, he was Korean. He was Korean. He was going to tell me what I needed to do, because, you know, the old chauvinism was hanging out there. But Tom didn’t have any problems at all. He said, “She’s the ranking person and that’s that.”

Well, one of the other things that they said about me being the ranking person was that I didn’t have wife, because, you see, it’s these couples together were the ones who took care of the sections. The wives took care of the women, and the men took care of the men, all right? And this one guy said to me, he said, “You know, it’s just a little problem with you running this section.” He was talking to me on the telephone before I got there. He said, “You don’t have a wife.”

I said, “No, sir, and I’m not apt to get one either, before I get there.” [laughs] So I said, “But I bet y’all figure out something for me to do with that.” So they decided that I should work with Tom’s wife, and it worked just fine. I mean, Tom’s wife knew how to do all that stuff. She’d done it all before whenever she was growing up. He was company commander and she dealt with that then, and battalion, so it all worked out just fine. She’d done that business. So I didn’t have any problem, and she didn’t have any problem working with me. So that all worked out very, very well.

But they said, “No, you can’t do this because you have no wife.”

I said, “I don’t think so, because I’m not about to get one.” So it was interesting. But we got, finished that, and there were times when some of the guys did their little passive-aggressive, you know, behavior, but we took care of that. I mean, we took care of what we needed to take care of.

It was funny because the leaders, they would not talk to me very much, but they’d stand back and watch to see how I would handle certain situations, and the one thing that they did not understand is that taking care of a bunch of nurses is about one of the most challenging things you can ever do in this life, because in the first place, they’re all kind of independent people, and they know everything about everything, and you’ve got to get them together and try to get things going. I mean, to take care of a bunch of guys was really very simple for me. As a matter of fact, some of them used to do different kinds of games, and, of course, a woman is not going to try to flatter you to do it. “Look. Why should I do that?” you see.

And the guys, of course, you know they’d know how to do the little flattering thing every now and then, and to go to it, so I could see different sides of ways and means of dealing. But I said, “Oh, this is simple. I should be able to handle it.” So the leaders, the course director and the commandant, we always loaded the buses for exercises in front of his house, and I never noticed to look out on his porch until after he told me he’d been watching me one day. But he would always stand out there to see how the leaders did their things in terms of getting the people together, and getting them to the places they needed to get to.

So we were doing this International Year for Women. Well, we were going to put the program together. Well, the deputy commandant was supposed to be in charge of all of the programs that got done by the school, and he decided that he wasn't going to have anything to do with this. The course director said, "Hey, listen. If you want to do that program you've got to go and present it to the deputy commandant." So Claudia and I got together and we decided, you know, everybody's doing one of these programs. We need to do one here, because definitely these folks here need to be educated about women in the military, because we were increasing the numbers of women that were coming in during this time, too. So we got our briefing together and went to see him.

[Tape recorder turned off.]

CAE: So the deputy commandant said, "Well, you know, I don't believe y'all should do this program anyway," he says, "because all of this business of the International Year of Women, and we've got to recognize women in defense, is a bunch of hoopla that we shouldn't have to be involved in. I mean, we're here to fight the army's wars." See, little did he understand that relations is what people are about, and trying to promote them was what people were about.

And so I said to him, "Sir, I've heard you get up and give this speech. You've told the people that—are you telling me that you don't believe this?"

He said, "Well, you know, there are certain things that I have to say."

I said, "Well, we're going to do this program." So we told him about what we were going to be about. The course director was out there to help us, too, and in order for the deputy commandant to make a point to us as to how much he disapproved of us doing this program, he scheduled it on a Monday morning after a long weekend, the second period in the morning after a long weekend, you see, so that the guys, in the first place, probably didn't have to come back until Monday morning, because they had enough time to get back to school and everything, but if even they came back Sunday night, they could sleep late Monday morning, because the first period was open time.

Well, now if you want to talk about how not to get people to come to a course, I mean, that's the greatest incentive there was around. [laughs] So then Claudia and I said, "We'll fix this. We know how to get those fellows over there." So we did whatever we thought was necessary, coercion. [laughs] We did a number of things. I mean, we sat down. We pleaded with some people, we debated with some other folks. We said, "You need to come and check out this program."

The folks who were most amenable to dealing with this whole area were those who were going into the areas where women were coming into their branches, like the MPs [Military Police], the quartermasters, the signal corps officers, and those kinds of things. Out of the eleven hundred students, we got about six hundred of them to attend that program.

And here we were over there. We'd planned everything. We'd talked to the course director. He said, "You've got a good program going." And the morning of, the deputy commandant said, "Well, I guess they're going to do this anyway, so I need to go

over there to introduce them." When he found out there were six hundred people sitting out there in that audience, he said, "I'd better go and show my face." He went, he came, and he said, "Good morning."

I said, "Good morning," and Claudia kind of acted like she didn't hear, and so she was running around the corner.

And he said, "I see you were going to do this program. I thought I'd come over here and ask you if you wanted me to introduce you." Well, who's going to say no to the deputy commandant? Who's going to do that?

Claudia would have, but I said, "Shut your mouth, Claudia." I said, "Yes, sir. Absolutely." And he had our bios and everything there, so he knew who we were.

So he went out there. The course director first introduced him, and he went out there and did his thing, and he talked about the International Year for Women, and we were about to puke in the background. But we stood through it, because you see, it's how people behave that you have to deal with, you know, and what goes on with that. So we had him out there behaving in the right way. I didn't care what he believed. I just wanted him to behave.

So Claudia said, "Oh, such hypocrisy."

I said, "Claudia, be cool. Just get ready for your part." And so we did the thing, showed the film that they had recommended that we show, and talked a little bit about some of the women in the military and some of their contributions, and some of the women in defense, and it was a wonderful program. The fellows gave us a standing ovation. Many of them came by later and said, "I didn't know much of that stuff." They said, "It must have been out there for me to see," he said, "because you found it." He said, "So it must have been out there for me to see. How come we didn't find it?"

I said, "Because you weren't looking." [laughs] So we got through that, and that turned out very well.

Second thing was, the course director sent out a directive one day. It was the year when the army was getting a lot into physical fitness, and making sure that soldiers were fit. Nineteen seventy-six now. Sent out a directive and said, "Physical fitness is the responsibility of every officer in the army. These are the reasons why," and all of those kinds of things. "So we're going to have a physical fitness test on this particular day. All officers are responsible for scheduling this test, and passing." And then a little line—

[End Tape 2, Side A—Begin Tape 2, Side B.]

CAE: I went to the course director and I said, "Sir, what does this mean?"

He said, "What do you mean,, what does this mean?"

I said, "You said at the top of this announcement that all officers have the responsibility of becoming physically fit." I said, "Down at the bottom it says, 'Female officers are exempt.'" I said, "Now, are we saying that female officers are not officers, or they don't need to be physically fit?"

He said, "Clara, we're not saying any of that."

I said, “I think if we’re going to be officers we have to take a PT test just like everybody else does.”

He said, “Well, you’re not required.”

I said, “Well, why not? We’re officers.”

And he said, “Well—”

I said, “Yeah. I know what that ‘well’ is. Y’all don’t believe that yet.”

So he said, “Clara, if you want to take the physical fitness test you can do it.”

I said, “Okay, I will.” And so I did. I scheduled myself to take that test. But you know, sometimes you put your mouth in gear before you do the brain, and I said, now that I’ve said it I’ve got to do it. So I took off and got myself ready to take that test, because I’d always done PT. I mean, when you’re on the farm you were always doing PT, so I was in very good shape, and I had already done the expert field medical badge, first female in the army to get the expert field medical badge in 1967, and so I had done a number of things in my lifetime.

So he said, “If you want to take that test, you can take it.”

One of the guys found out that I had signed up for this test, and he was a little West Pointer. I will never forget it. He came to me. He was in my section, and he came to me, he said, “Ma’am,” he said, “I will tell you.” He said, “You can do the most of this test without any trouble.” He said, “But you’re going to have trouble with the parallel bars.” Because the center of gravity for women is much lower than it is for men. See, the center of gravity for men is up in his chest, but the center of gravity for women is down below, down with all them assets in the back and everything, you see. And so when you get ready to pull up on stuff, you’ve got to pull, because your center of gravity is not here, you’d do much better with your legs and with things that have to do with your legs than you can with your arms. And so you have to practice them parallel bars, because you’ve got to walk those things all the way down as you’re doing that. And I had to do eight bars to pass, and when I started I couldn’t do but two, and I had a month to get myself ready. So he said, “Ma’am, if you meet me on the PT field at six in the morning, I’ll teach you how to get past them bars and do what you’ve got to do.” And so he taught me. I took that test and I scored 290-something, two or three or somewhere in there. I think 294 I think it was, because I did the minimum for the bars, so I got six points for that, out of a possible 300.

Well, that was funny to a whole bunch of people, and they called me the jock of the year, female jock of the year, and we got past that one. But the thing that I think was going on in terms of my being one of the first females that’s going through many of these things, and things that were going on at the time, was our utter surprise at the fact that the guys always saw us as competing against them, and I wasn’t competing against them. I was just trying to win for me.

You know, I’ve always said to people, “You should never hold things against folks, in terms of the work world, that they can do absolutely nothing about.” I can do nothing about having been born a female. Can’t change it, can’t do nothing about that. But I can do the best with what I’ve got, and that’s all I want to do. All I want is the opportunity to be able to do the best with what I’ve got, and see if that gets me where I want to go, and helps to move other systems along pretty well, too.

When I got out of that school they said, "Hallelujah, we're glad you're gone," some of them, but others of them said, "We appreciate what it is you've taught us," and I talked a lot to MPs that year who were getting a large contingent of females, and many of these guys, the only females that they knew and had known in their lifetime were those who they were married to, or they dated, you know, and when you're trying to make decisions about what should happen in the workplace based on your social relations, it's a whole lot different, especially because of that marriage stuff, because wives know how to play games, you know. I mean, some of these folks are going to do it in the workplace, too, but they may not be the same kind of games, you see, and so you've got to deal with that kind of business. But that was all of their comparison. "I know all about women. I know how to deal with women, because I was married to one, I had a sister, I'm married to one, I have a sister." I mean, I said, "All of those are about social relations, gang. You don't know nothing about working with them. Now let's talk about working with them and in the workplace and what needs to happen there." We've come a long way since thirty years ago, but it took us a while to get here.

So I got finished there and I wanted to go and be a chief nurse somewhere, and the army said, "No, it's not time for you to go and be a chief nurse. It is time for you to go to the IG team, and so they sent me to the inspector general's team down at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. I went to the Inspector General's Team at Fort Sam Houston because that was the home of the Army Medical Department, and the Health Services Command was down there. So I went down there and I was assigned to that headquarters to do inspecting hospitals, and I inspected hospitals for a living for the next two years. Wonderful, had a marvelous time, learned a lot about dealing with people in facilities, and learned a lot about how to entertain myself when nobody wanted to talk to me. You know, people don't like folks to grade you. I mean, they don't like the people who do the grading. Oh, and I was the one—

HT: They probably dreaded when you came.

CAE: Yes, they hated it, they absolutely hated it. And many of them were my friends, you know, who I had to deal with. But they learned very quickly, friend or no friend, Clara can give you an honest opinion, and so they did, and so I did, and I did my thing.

I got very involved in talking about what was going on as far as my work was concerned back there when I was teaching at WRAIN, but what I failed to tell you was that I got married back there, too. I went back home after I finished graduate school. I went back home and married my childhood sweetheart.

HT: But not the fellow you talked about earlier.

CAE: No, no, no, no, no. This was a homeboy, kid I met in the eighth grade, yes.

HT: Okay. What was his name?

CAE: James Adams, James Kelso Adams, that's why the Adams.

So by this time I was Colonel Adams, Lt. Col. Adams when I used to inspect hospitals. And listen, the word would go out on the street. "Listen. You've just got to be right or else; you can't get very far with her," because the thing that I had discovered, having worked in hospitals and having been a hands-on nurse, and having dealt in the area of teaching medics and that type thing, I learned very quickly that the largest group of health professionals within any healthcare system is nurses and nursing personnel of one kind or another. They're the folks who lay on the hands all of the time, and they have to do things according to certain standards, or else the whole system comes apart. All right? The whole system will fall apart if it doesn't happen. So I had to really sit down sometime and talk to myself, and I spent a lot of time talking to me, because there were two nurses on the team and we had two teams, and so we were always going in different directions, you know. Every now and then we'd get together and we'd have to talk about those things, in terms of providing the nursing input to the policies and things of that nature, and she and I didn't agree on everything. But we did agree on the point that you had to make sure that nursing was kept to a certain standard, because if they weren't kept to certain standards we would have problems in terms of making sure that patients got the quality care they needed.

HT: Let me ask you a question. When you went out on these inspection tours did you go by yourself?

CAE: No. I went with the team. There was always a team. There was always a team of about twelve to fifteen people, depending upon what kind of facility we had to inspect. See, in the army the hospitals are run by commanders, and commanders are usually physicians. See, in the civilian world hospitals are run by CEOs, and CEOs are normally administrators, all right. Well, the administrator in a military hospital is the ExO, all right, and the person that you would call, that is known as the medical director, who is usually a physician in the civilian hospitals is really the commander in the army hospitals, and they take charge of everything.

But if you go into a medical center like Walter Reed, you've got to take about fifteen people with you, plus you've got to order about five more, because you have to inspect—see, in addition to being a hospital facility it is also a command, and being a command, then it has all the elements that a command might have, in addition to the hospital, which includes engineering, they have health and environment, you have safety, you have all of those things that you have to inspect in the command, which would be in relationship to the hospital.

HT: So some of these inspections could last for several days, I assume.

CAE: Walter Reed was two weeks.

HT: Oh, my gosh.

CAE: Yes. Yes, you just go over there and you just get yourself into a hotel, and you just stay in town and do whatever. Oh yes. And then some of them would have special programs that

were going on, like that was of interest to the commander in health services command, and so you had to make sure you inspected those areas, too.

I remember going up to Fort Meade, because I'd been assigned at Fort Meade before, and I went up there to do an inspection one time. Well, one of the programs that we had to inspect was the optometry program, and how the folk got glasses and stuff. Let me tell you, that can become a very lucrative business, you know, selling glasses and acquiring glasses, because everybody wants your business. What they would do was—and this optometry has told me exactly how it worked—what the companies would do was they were really providing kickbacks. That's really what they were doing. See, they would—whenever they got an optometrist in an assignment, they would go to him and say, "Hey, listen. You are in this particular assignment, and you are an optometrist and we'd like to do business with you. And in order for us to do business with you, what we will do is we will provide to you at no cost a certain amount of money to your account every month, just for you to continue to do business with us." And those guys thought that was a good deal, because the only thing they had to do was to provide the business. Well, it was a good deal, but it was highly against the law, highly illegal. [laughs]

And, you know, I could never understand how people could not see that this would be an illegal thing to do, but they didn't. I went to this guy and we were trying to get this inspection finished. It's Friday afternoon. I'm trying to make sure that I get everything done, and then I look down my list, because the biggest thing I always had to do was to inspect the nursing services. But sometimes with some of these extra programs and stuff that I had to do, it would take up my time, and I wasn't able to get done what I needed to get done. And so I was over here doing this program, taking up my time. No, they had done something extra that morning—finishing up the nursing service, was pretty well finished with them, getting ready to write my report on that area so we could report out before we left, a little preliminary report, and then I looked on my list and I said, "Oh, my god, I haven't done the optometry program." It was twelve-thirty and we've got to be finished with the whole thing by two o'clock so we could make our plane in time. So I said, "Oh, god, I've got to go see about this program."

So I got myself up and I went down there, and you always pray that the program is all right when you go down there. I went down there and this guy started telling me—I said, "I forgot to ask you a question when I was down here, and that was about your optometry program," I said, "and optical wear and your acquiring of it. How is that program?"

He said, "Oh, ma'am," he said, "that's going just fine."

And he told me, and the more he talked to me about what was happening, the more I wanted to say, "Shut your mouth." [laughs] "That's against the law." And so then, because that's what you've got to do after he tells you, you've got to tell him that that's against the law, cease and desist right now. Don't take another dime from anybody, today. And then you've got to go write it up, and then you've got to go tell the commander, who may not even know what's happening, see, because that's when somebody, the red flag should have gone up and said, "Something is wrong with this picture, because they said, 'You give me your bank account and we'll just slip it into your bank account, and nobody else needs to know.'" Red flag. And then so they didn't tell anybody else, you see?

Got to that business, went back, had to write up the whole thing, but first had to talk to him. And I said, "Listen. I need for you to know that this is a private conversation. It will not be discussed with anyone else except the commander, because I have to discuss it with the commander, because he is in charge of this program, and we have to make sure that he knows about, you know, what is going on. But I will also tell him that I have told you as of this day to cease and desist, and so he starts his surveillance after this time." So that he wouldn't have to go to jail that day. But there were some interesting things.

I mean, there are mounds of experiences, I will tell you, and I picked up a lot of information, a lot about how to behave in a situation and in a system where a lot of team members depend and count on you for what's going on, and how to deal with teams, and how to put teams together, because I will tell you, I saw some things going that were not correct and according to Hoyle.

But for the most part there are a lot of people out here doing a lot of creative things, and I learned a lot about how it was that I could behave when I got to be a chief nurse, so it wasn't all bad for me to go to that job. I'll tell you how I got in there. I had a mentor that I met when I was at Fort Meade, mentor Katie Galloway. Katie said, "Clara, I can run this hospital with my little finger," she said, "but you can't." And so she said, "I'm going to teach you all about running hospitals." And so she taught me a lot about running hospitals, and she taught me a lot about running nursing services. And she said, "There's a couple of things you've got to do when you deal with nursing service, and that is, you have to understand that nursing, if it's done right, is tough work." She said, "The whole idea and business of taking care of people who are in pain and are suffering is not only tough for the people who are experiencing the pain and suffering, but is also tough for the people who have to administer the thing." She said, "That's the thing that makes our work tough," and she said, "and that's what we do all of the time." She said, "So you know it's always going to be tough. Now you've got to make a decision. Do you want to do tough work, or not?"

She said, "Now if you decide that you don't want to do it, just leave the profession quietly and nobody will ever hold it against you, and go right on about your business doing what you want to do in this life." She said, "But if you decide that you want to be a nurse, and you want to be involved in doing difficult work," she said, "then you took it on and you made the decision." She said, "Then after that time don't bitch, don't gripe, don't talk about your professionals, and don't talk about your colleagues." She said, "Just get on with the business of doing tough work. And when it gets tough, suck it up and do what you've got to do." [laughs]

So I said, "Oh! Now I've got this straight."

And she said, "But the rest of what you have to understand is you will never have a more rewarding time," and that is absolute truth, as when you've done nursing well and you're satisfied that you've done it well. So then I set to doing that and having fun, and then I went out to inspect these hospitals, and I found out there were a lot of other people out there. I met a lot of people who were doing a lot of good work, and were having a good time at it, and sometimes whole facilities, because much of it came from the commander, the chief nurse, and administrator, three of them, because they're a triad, setting the tone. And at that time, you know, we used to fight a lot about whether or not

the chief nurse—they were changing names and doing all that stuff. They were changing names from the commander, and then you had a deputy commander for clinical services, and that was a physician. You had a deputy commander for administrative services, and that was the hospital administrator. And then the other person, of course, in the triad was the nurse. And physicians have always tried to keep nurses out of administration, and out of knowing anything about the big picture, because, as one little [physician] said at Fort [Belvoir] when they asked her if they thought the nurse should ever be a commander, she said, "No."

And the woman that was asking her said, "Why not?"

She said, "Because they run everything else in the hospital. If you put them in command, there's nothing left for nobody else." [laughs] Well, we have to be involved in everything that goes on as far as the patient is concerned, and so, you know, that's what we do, you see. Well, Katie taught me all about that. I got all that together, and I saw that whenever those three people worked together, things got done for patients, got done for staff, and folks fared a lot better at that place than they did at places where people did not manage to get together. So I put that lesson back in my little kit box, too.

Had a wonderful time inspecting those hospitals, but then I had a little deal with the chief of the corps that I could stay at Health Services Command and inspect hospitals for three years, if there were no problems, and if there were no problems meant that if nobody left from a position where I might be needed. Well, that happened in 1978. In 1978 I went to—I was assigned out of Health Services Command and I got orders to go to Germany.

I hadn't been out of the country in fourteen years, because, you see, I taught through Vietnam. I taught first at the Medical Training Center, I taught the medics and I sent them to Vietnam, and then when I got finished there—because the rule of war and mobilization is, if you're caught in a teaching assignment you have to stay there, because they have no more time to train trainers, you see. So that's how I got to go to graduate school, because it was easier for me to go from one training school to get my master's degree, to go to another one, than it was for them to try and pull somebody out of rotation to mobilize for Vietnam than to take me. So they took me and I went ahead and did that.

So I hadn't been out of the country in fourteen years, and I said, oh, my goodness. So I talked to the folks and I just didn't think that was the time I should be out of the country, because by that time I had gone around selling wolf pickets—I used to sell wolf pickets to people all the time—in that I would tell them that I needed the promotion. I said, "It's time for me to be promoted." I said, "You know, I've been in this rank for a long period of time. It must be time for me to get promoted again." And I thought it was time for me to get promoted to full colonel. I'd been a lieutenant colonel for three years, but I thought it was about enough, you know, because I had never stayed in a rank for any very long period of time.

So I said, "Are y'all sure you want me to go out of this country now?"

They said, "Yeah, we want you to go." But before I left I went by Washington to tell Colonel Pat Miller, who was in charge of the nursing personnel branch, that I needed to get promoted.

And she said, "Clara, now you know I don't have anything to do with promotion."

I said, "I understand. I understand there's a board that selects people, and they do it based on their records and that kind of thing." I said, "But you make sure that my record gets there. You make sure they know what my name is." [laughs]

She said, "Get out of here," because we had taught together at the school, you know, from before. She said, "Get out of here and go to Europe."

I said, "I'm going." So I went over. Well, I had been in Korea, you know, in the early sixties, and we were lieutenants at that time, and we used to call the chief nurse and her assistant "the little old ladies." And we always said, "Men never made passes at little old ladies or their assistants." And so here we are, here I am, somebody called me up to be an assistant chief nurse. I said, "Oh, my god. This is the end of my life, I am sure."

So I literally packed my bed and my books, and I went off to Germany for a long winter's nap for three years. [laughs] After I got there I met my chief nurse, and we had a number of conversations. As a matter of fact I was there about three weeks and then she took off to Ireland, because she was of Irish descent and she wanted to go and see the Old Country before she came home, so she took three weeks that she'd never been able to take that much time before, and she was getting ready to come home, too, so she took her three weeks off.

Oh, my goodness. I'd been in the hospital about three weeks at that time, and I didn't know much about nothing in terms of what was going on there, and the minute she stepped out of that door, you know, that's when folks start doing different things, whenever the boss is away. But I made sure that nothing major that the boss had talked to me about was going to change while she was gone, and half the time I didn't know what the hell I was talking about, but I sure did talk a real good game, because we kept that nursing department together.

HT: Where was this in Germany?

CAE: This was in Frankfurt, Frankfurt Army Regional Medical Center. [pause] I was there for one year, and on that board that I talked to Pat Miller about, I got picked up to be a full colonel. They reached down. I will tell you, this was the 1 percent, because after they had looked at all the people that were considered for full colonel that were in the zone, they had, I guess, the records of five people on the table that were from below the zone that they were looking at.

My girlfriend told me years after that, because they couldn't talk about the board—I didn't even know she was on the board at the time—but she told me years later, she said—because on the board that sat, you have officers from all branches in the military, and most of them come from the line, you know, armor, artillery, and infantry, because that's most of the officers at the colonel level in the military, and so they get to sit on those boards. But they don't know too much about nurses, but they can read a racket and tell whenever you've done well. So she was a nurse that was on the board. There's only one nurse on the board, and there are other officers there. There's another Army Medical Department person, usually a physician or an administrator, that sits the board at the same time, and I think it was an administrator that was president of that board.

But this artillery officer read these records, and he came over and asked her, he said, "Do you know this Lt. Col. Adams?"

And she said, "Oh yeah, I know her."

He said, "No, you don't understand. I mean, do you really know her?"

And she said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I want to know if she's as good as her records say she is."

She said, "No, she's not as good as her record says she is. She's better."

I said, "Oh, S, you go, girl." [laughs] When she told me that years later it was really funny. Well, they decided that—they looked at the records that were there that really and truly there was one person that stood out, and they pulled my name out of that hat. I will tell you, that was a day, because the big thing in the military is to make it to full colonel. I mean, if you can make it to full colonel you can coast after that. And here I was in my seventeenth year, I said, "Oh, this is wonderful."

You know, nothing else could happen to me after this, because I just wanted to get to be a colonel. I just wanted to be the lady colonel. I never wanted to be the colonel's lady. I thought this was always lots better. I mean, you know, you get the money and it's all yours. Well, anyway, they picked me up for colonel that year and I made it the next year, just a little bit shy of my fortieth birthday. I was a full colonel in the United States Army, one of the youngest ever to make full colonel. Wonderful.

Then after that I got to be the chief nurse of the hospital when my chief nurse left, and that's where I stayed until I rotated in two years after that. Had a wonderful time with that staff, because then it was an opportunity for me to put into practice some of those things that I had learned from so many nurses, administrators, and physicians that were out there in them hospitals when I was an inspector. I said, "I need to go and see if I can do it like the least of them," because I think I learned something, and I went out there and I decided that I was going to do that, and make sure that I had gotten together the information that I needed and was doing the things that I needed to do.

Lil Dunlap had retired by this time, was living down in San Antonio, Texas, but I didn't make a move ever unless I checked with her, because she was my mentor for life. She didn't know it—well, she learned it later—but she was. So I called her up, because at that time, you know, the commander, whenever you got picked to go to be a chief nurse at a place, the commander always wanted to interview you and do all those things, and I figured since I was there at Frankfurt, I ought to go and see him at least.

So I called Lil and I said, "Lil, why do I have to go and see the commander?" I said, "Seems like he ought to come and interview me. After all, I'm running the largest department in this hospital."

She said, "Yeah, you may be, but you're not the commander."

I said, "Oh, okay."

And she says, "And that's the way we do it these days."

And so I said, "Okay. I'll go up for him to interview me." So I went there, went for him to interview me. That was an interesting interview, I will tell you, but I lived through it. I talked to him and I asked him, you know, after he asked me all these questions, which weren't many, I said to him, I said, "Sir, I just have one question for you. Why did you select me to be the chief nurse here?"

He said, "Well, I have a couple of reasons for doing that." He said, "One was, I've seen you go around here and do your thing as the assistant chief nurse," he said, "and I like your style." He said, "You are very knowledgeable and you take care of the troops, and, you know, that's what it is you're supposed to be about." He said, "But a second reason is, you got picked below the zone for promotion." See, everybody knew that I was the last name on the list. [laughs] I was the last name on the list, and so he said, "And I figured if you got picked below the zone, and the Army Nurse Corps put you in here to be chief nurse of a medical center"—see, because they were only taking senior full colonels in those positions at that time—he said, "that you must be good at what you do." He said, "You can do that here and that won't be any problem," he says, "but I want you to remember three things." No, it was two things he wanted me to get, two things he wanted me to get.

"One," he said, "you need to understand that I as a white person know about you, and all of you as African Americans," he said, "as black people in America." He said, "And you need to know that no matter how smart you get, we are always smarter."

So I kind of leaned over, I said, "I want to hear some more of this."

And so he said, "And the second thing that you need to remember is that the physician is always right, in all of the circumstances, it doesn't matter."

HT: Was he a physician?

CAE: Yes, he was the commander. You see, remember, they're physicians in the army hospital, in the military hospital. And so he said, "The physician is always right," he says, "so as long as you don't forget that," he said, "that will help in our relationship, because if you're having a situation and anything happens," he said, "I'm a physician. I'll always be right."

And you know, I kind of sat there, because I felt that I had come a long way, because I have seen the times when he would never have spoken to me in that fashion without me telling him about what I really thought of him. [laughs] But I said to him, I said, "You know, sir," I said, "I'm feeling real proud of myself right now, because I'm sitting here and I'm listening to you say what it is you're saying, and you know, I don't feel any anger towards you, or anything else," I said, "because I do know what the real truth is."

I said, "You said that you as a white person know black folks." I said, "I want to tell you, I'll bet you I know a whole lot more about you than you know about me, because I've had to know more about you than you know about me." I said, "I want you to remember what you've said here," I said, "because I will tell you this. Every chance, every opportunity that I have at this facility, I'm going to put you out front." I said, "because that's where you're supposed to be, because you're the commander here." I said, "And I want the people to know that I support you as the commander."

I said, "But let me tell you this. If you ever slip and let anyone get the idea that you feel about me as you have just relayed to me," I said, "I'll slap a class-action suit on you so fast it'll make your head swim." I said, "In relation to your second thing for me to remember, I wouldn't even grace that with a comment." Got myself up, walked right out and went on about my business, you see, because there was nobody there but me and

him. Now, what's he going to do? What's he going to do, say, "Clara was insubordinate"? He can't say it, there was me and him there.

And I would have said, "Who, me, insubordinate? Do y'all think I'm crazy enough to be insubordinate? Just got picked below the zone for full colonel." He never said a word about it, and I never repeated it again, but I put him out in front any opportunity that I got, so that he could show, and he never slipped. He never let anybody see it. Because I learned years ago, you cannot change people's attitude. You cannot. But you can switch up their behavior, and that's all I care. All I care is that your behavior changes, and his behavior certainly did not reflect what it was he told me out of his mouth. Oh, it was very interesting.

But we had a marvelous time. We had to deal with a couple of situations, because he had an idea about putting some of his friends in certain positions, and some of his friends were enlisted folk, and I didn't think enlisted people had any business doing vasectomies. [laughs] And sometimes he was permitting some of these things to happen. So I was the consultant in this area, and I was responsible for that person that he was having do all these other different kinds of things, so we had to get that sorted out.

But the commander at medical command, 7th Medical Command in Germany at that time, had been assigned with me, he'd been assigned with me at Walter Reed, when I was in the school of nursing, and I had served on a couple of committees with him, so I knew him very well. And I inspected the hospitals when he was there, so he knew that I was a no-nonsense kind of person when it came to taking care of patients. So if I told him something was going on, he'd take care of it. He took care of all those situations, and sometimes I'd have to go to him as opposed to my commander, but I'd tell my commander first, "As the consultant in this particular area, I have to talk to the Commander of Health Services Command, and this is what we need to deal with."

So we had to sort out a couple of those things, but for the most part he and I didn't have any problems, and we got through that situation without any problems whatsoever. And I don't know about what he thinks about me today, and, frankly, I really don't care. But we got through that assignment. And when he came home it was interesting, because his assignment finished before, because I came about six months after he did. When he came home and went and got ready to go to his next assignment, he went down to see the chief of the Army Nurse Corps, and he said, "When the next turn comes for the chief, y'all would be crazy if you don't pick old Adams over there in Frankfurt." He said, "She's tops." He said, "I've worked with a lot of nurses in the army," he said, "but she's tops at what she does." But he never said a word about that to me. But he wrote me a good report, and so I went on about my business.

It was a marvelous time. I did have a great time there, and we were setting Army Nurse Corps standards at that time, and we were doing a workload-management system to make sure that we learned how to take care of patients with engineered standards and all of those things. It was a busy time, but we had a lot of fun in that place, and I had a lot of youngsters there that were youngsters when I got there, but they grew up later, and so did I. They grew up to be full colonels and so forth, and have retired since that time, but we often remember our times in that whole era. It was really good.

I also took the troops up one time to the troops for United States Army Europe, because that's what all the troops were under, all the army troops were under the United

States Army Europe there. Every year up in Holland they used to have a walk in Neimagan, and they would commemorate the World War II liberation of the Dutch by the Allied troops, and the Allied troops were mostly the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions. We would go up and walk a hundred miles in four days to do this commemoration. I was a senior marcher for those troops in 1980. That was a great time. I had a marvelous time.

HT: Were you in full uniform?

CAE: Yes, the BDU, the BDU, right. BDUs [Battle Dress Uniform], and I walked with a Spec 5, a specialist five who is now a PA, physician's assistant, and he's retired from the army. He went on, and when the army changed their rank, because they changed them from enlisted rank to be officers, and he retired as a lieutenant. I think he was a lieutenant or a captain. I think he was a lieutenant, yes, first lieutenant down in Texas, and he's in a practice down in Texas now.

He and I walked a hundred miles in four days. We had a wonderful time, took up seven hundred troops and we walked in teams. He and I walked in front of the group, because that's how we started out in the morning, and the big thing in the morning was to get in front of the senior marcher and the senior enlisted man that was there at the time. So they'd all run to get in front of me first thing in the morning, but see, they'd be up partying all night long, and I went to bed. I'd go to bed and I got a good night's sleep, because I knew if I didn't I was never going to be able to walk twenty-five miles in one day. So they'd be petering out about twelve o'clock, and I'd be finishing. [laughs] Oh, goodness, I passed them. They said, "Oh, she's passing us. Oh, we can't stand it, she's passing." But I'd do that, so they'd be sleeping, because we had until six o'clock in the evening to finish, you know. So they'd take them a little nap and then they could get up and go again, but I didn't have the time to take a nap. If I'd taken a nap that would have been the end of it for me. So we'd start about six in the morning and I'd finish about two in the afternoon.

And we were in full dress uniform, boots, and you had a twenty-two-pound pack that you had to carry, and your sidearm. I had to carry a sidearm. They all carried rifles, but I had to carry a sidearm, which is a .45, because officers carried .45s at that time. Now we carry Berettas, but we carried a .45 at that time, so I had to carry these things and do my walk, because that is one of the rules. If you were the senior marcher you had to do two things. One, you had to walk every step of the way, and you had to make all the parties that—as the U.S. representative, the U.S. military rep at all of the parties that were given by the four countries, the United States, Britain, France, and Germany. And everybody thinks the Germans are big partiers. Let me tell you, the English can stay up all night. Good lord. And I had a little arrangement with my driver, because I couldn't do past ten o'clock. If I stayed up past ten o'clock I was never going to make it that next day.

So I had to get out of my BDUs, go home and soak my feet, and put on my little fancy shoes and fancy uniform, because you had to wear your full-dress uniform, because the English have some beautiful full-dress uniforms, and they were going to be looking good. So you had to put on your full-dress uniform and then go to the party. But I had an arrangement with the driver to be by the back door at ten o'clock, because I had to go so I

could go to sleep, because I had to walk the next day. The rest of those folks didn't have to walk. [laughs] Mostly they were just out there supporting their troops, you know. So I had to get ready to go, so I got up and marched, I mean, would march the next day through those four days, and got that finished, and it was a wonderful time.

We walked with about fifty thousand people a day, because you've got a lot of civilians walking, and in Europe, you know, that's the thing that they can do very well is they can walk. A lot of these folks came out of the Scandinavian countries—Norway, Sweden, Denmark—and they walk in the mountains in those places. Many of them walked in sandals, and we were talking about all these fancy boots you have to have, and how you have to have support, and those kinds of things. Many of those fellows walked in sandals, said they'd been walking in sandals all their lives.

But it was great to get together and to talk with the folks from the other militaries, because we had them there from several militaries around the world, and then a lot of the civilian folks, you know, because you were in uniform they'd come over and say hello and you'd walk with them. Some of the guys, they knew how to do this, some of the civilian folks over there would bring out little Schnapps bottles, you know. [laughs] You know, Europeans know a lot about Schnapps. They'd break out those little bottles at nine o'clock in the morning and say, "You want a little?"

"Heavens, no! I can't drink that stuff at nine o'clock in the morning." [laughs] Not when I'm walking, forget it. Oh, goodness. But it was fun. It was a great time, and I suppose the thing that I'm probably saying through all of this is that I spent a lot of time throughout my career in the military serving people and getting to know people, and trying to promote relations with folks, because work goes a whole lot better when people are able to get along with one another. I mean, it does a whole lot better. And folks can find all sorts of reasons, but the tone is set by the person in charge, and I always decided that, jeez, I think I can do it a little better if I—

[End Tape 2, Side B—Begin Tape 3, side A.]

CAE: In August, I'm almost certain it was August of 1979, I put on my eagle as a full colonel in the United States Army. Let me tell you, that was a wonderful day. That was an absolutely marvelous day.

In the interim—I have to go back and fill this in—in the interim I had met Heinz [Ender], because remember I was going over there, I packed my bed and board. Well, my chief nurse said, "You know," she said, "you really don't have a whole lot to do around here." She said, "You need to join this group where we get together and"—it was a German-American medical society. It was called the Towners Medical Society. And she said, "You need to get together, you need to go over and join this group, because we get together and we talk about the challenges that we have in healthcare between the two countries, and the things that we can learn from one another." They would have someone get up and speak, and they'd ask questions and they'd do various kinds of things.

And, now, if you want to meet a bunch of chauvinists in this world, you deal with them European physicians. Jesus. Because they didn't ever want to come, many of them,

whenever nurses were doing the presentations because, you know, in their facilities nurses don't do half the things that nurses do in America. But those who came to see us and to hear what we had to say, especially talking about nurse practitioners and nurse anesthetists, they said, "My god, if y'all do all that, what do the physicians do?" We said, "Not much." [laughs] So they would come over and we would talk about the various issues that we had to deal with, various times. I went to the first meeting and I said, well, you know, I don't have anything else to do. Why not go over here and find out what's going on? Another chance to meet somebody, just talk to folks. So I went over there, plus I really did want to learn to speak the language very well. So I went over, and every time I got a chance I'd be trying to talk. Well, they were trying to learn English, and so I developed this relationship with people where I spoke to them in German and they spoke to me in English, and then they'd correct me when I was wrong, and I'd take care of them when they were wrong. So we managed to do much of that.

But I was standing over in this area just having a drink, and I'm a great people watcher, and so I was just watching folks come and go. And all of a sudden here's this man walking in front of me, and he said, "And who are you?" I remember hearing, "And who are you?" And I said, here's another pushy German. I said, "I'm Clara Adams, and who are you?" So he told me who he was. His name was Heinz Ender and he was a dentist, and he had a practice there in Frankfurt, and he was also a surgeon and he did orthodontist work. So by that time somebody rang a little bell, and that meant we had to go and eat. So he went with his friends back over to the corner to eat, and I went with my friends back over to the corner. And finally, when we were finished with the evening he came over to me and because we always had a little get together afterwards, and you just kind of stood and talked a little bit more, and drank a little bit more before we went away. So we were talking and he said, "You know, I have this place in Italy," he said. And I said, oh, my god, here we go, come and see my etchings. He said, "I have this place in Italy and I go there every year. I have to go every year and harvest my grapes."

And I said, "Oh yes," I said, "and I have to go off to REFORGER," because we have this little exercise that gets done every year in Germany, REturn of the FORces to GERmany, because we bring in the forces to show how we're going to defend that area in case we have to in that country. So I said, "Yeah, and I have to go up to REFORGER for two weeks."

He said, "When I get back from harvesting my grapes I'll give you a call." But he said, "In the meantime, take my number," he said, "and when you come back, if I can't get a hold of you then call me."

So I said, "Okay. Right." So I took the number and I think I must have thrown the number in the wastebasket that evening. Well, I went on off to REFORGER doing my thing, and when I got back from REFORGER there was a postcard, and I said, oh, my goodness, he did remember. Ooh, I'd better find that card. Of course, the maid had emptied the garbage, and so I couldn't find the card and couldn't get the information. So I said, oh well, we'll see what happens, but he found me, and he found me at the hospital.

So he called me up at the hospital and we started talking, and we started dating, and he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." He said, "You seem like a very nice person." And I found out that he had been in World War II, and he had fought in North Africa with [Erwin] Rommel, and he knew a whole lot about dealing with Rommel and the troops

and that kind of business, but he decided long before that he was not going to be a career officer, and he was not going to be a demolition expert the rest of his life, and he wanted to do something more sane and civil than that. So when he got out he went to dental school, finished dental school, and then he became a dentist, and he had been practicing in Frankfurt for almost forty years at that time. So he was very interesting to talk to, and the thing that happened—

When we went over we had to take a little course, a three-week course called "Gateway to Europe," because we had folk go to the Netherlands and a lot of other places. You had to learn a little bit of the language, you had to learn some of the customs and courtesies, and you had to learn how to deal with people. Well, we had this woman that was teaching there. She was a German and she said, "When you go to Europe, when you go to Germany remember two things. You have to remember this. Don't ever talk to the Germans about the war," and that was the big war, "and don't drink Schnapps." Well, I was talking to Heinz for about ten minutes and we had to discuss the big war, because the Germans talk about the war all the time. [laughs] So I had to tell him how Hitler couldn't win, so that was that.

And then so I said, ooh, I blew that one. But I'd never drunk Schnapps. So we were down in Austria, because he had at that time a house in Austria, one in Italy, and then a house in Switzerland. So we went down to see the place in Austria and he said, "Have you ever drunk Schnapps?"

I said, "No, I've never drunk Schnapps."

And he said, "Why not?" And that was one of Heinz's great questions, why not.

So I said, "Because Frau"— whomever her name was at that time—"told us we were not supposed to drink schnapps in Europe."

He said, "That's foolish. Everybody drinks Schnapps." So we went into this restaurant. I mean, you know, it was like I was on his turf, because he just whipped right into this place, and he ordered two obstlers, and I didn't know obstler from nothing. You familiar with obstler?

HT: I'm not. How do you spell that?

CAE: Oh, you're not? O-b-s-t, obst—

HT: Fruit?

CAE: That's right. Ler, l-e-r. Obstler is a fruit Schnapps, primarily from apple peels, all right? And it's a clear Schnapps, and it's not sweet. This is not a sweet one. This is like taking a drink of white lightning. [laughter] So I went to this place and there were a bunch of people sitting around in there, because it was just after lunchtime and they were just having a little drink and so forth. He announced to the group that I had never drunk Schnapps before. So when the Schnapps came out, they all waited. The manner in which you drink it is you put it in a little glass, you know, a little shot glass, and you make it as cold, because it's cold. You get it cold. You don't put ice in, because they don't put a lot of ice in their drinks. You get it cold as possible. As a matter of fact, you freeze the glass. In the nice restaurants and stuff, the glasses are kept in the Frigidaire, and the Schnapps is

kept in the Frigidaire there. Pull them out, put the Schnapps in there, and you're supposed to down the hatch in one time. Let me tell you, I took a drink of that stuff, down the hatch in one drink. They said, "Prosit."

You said, "Prosit," it goes down. And when it went down I felt it immediately in my big toe, and I was paralyzed in between. Oh, my heavens! What is this? And after two or three it's all right. [laughs] So I learned the Schnapps. I learned a lot of customs and courtesies of dealing with Germans and everything that went on with them there. I learned you're not supposed to cut potatoes with your fork—no, with a knife. You're supposed to cut it with a fork. You never put a knife into a potato. I didn't know anything about that stuff, and so we learned a lot of things.

But Heinz, there was something I liked about him, and that was that he knew people at every walk in life, because he ran a private practice in dentistry where he had private patients, but he also had patients who were on health insurance, and so, of course, they run the gamut of whatever. So he knew everybody, and he had some very good friends who were regular blue-collar workers that helped him with everything, and he would take them down to Italy and they would do all this kind of stuff, and we would go to their houses and socialize, and we had a wonderful time. I mean, that's what we did when we were in Frankfurt. Then he had some interest in some hotels down in Bavaria, and so we'd go down to the Black Forest in Bavaria, and just had a marvelous time. Oh, lord, did I have a good time there. And then it was time for me to come home, because I had done all of the things that I thought I should do, almost.

HT: Let me ask you a quick question. Where was Mr. Adams all this time?

CAE: Oh, I got divorced. Before I left Walter Reed, I got divorced. We were married three years.

HT: Okay. So he didn't follow you through your various—

CAE: No, he didn't follow me, and I think he did that on purpose, because I think that he kind of felt that he was kind of out of his league, trying to deal with following me around, because he had never been too far from home He was from a family of twelve, and they were all very close. They all still live right around the same area, you know, got together every weekend and did all this stuff and that kind of thing, and he kind of felt out of place doing that. He thought at some times I might have to go overseas and that kind of business, and I think that was part of his whole thing, that he decided that this was a mistake and that he ought to go back home, and so that's what he did. So Mr. Adams was gone after three years. Let's see. [pause] I got divorced in '74. We separated in '72. We were married in '69, we separated in '72, and I didn't get divorced till a couple of years later, but I got divorced.

So I was getting ready to come home from Frankfurt and Heinz said, "You know, I've heard you say this many times before, that you never want to get married again," he said, "but I thought that I could go with you to America and maybe we could live together."

I said, “What? Do you think the army’s going to tolerate its colonels living together with other people and not being married?”

So he said, “Well, maybe we ought to consider getting married.”

I said, “Let me think about it overnight.” You know what I’d do, I had to call my mother. [laughs] I called my mother and she had been to Germany, and she had met Heinz, and I will tell you, if you can’t tell by that little face in there, he was absolutely the kindest gentleman there ever was. I mean, I told him his silver hair and blue eyes would fool anybody, and he could smile nicely, and he could get anything he wanted from anybody.

I came over to America to pick up my mother and to bring her back, and he picked us up at the airport. Well, when he came to the airport, he came with a little bunch of red roses. She thought he was the greatest thing that ever happened. So when I called her up and I said Heinz had asked me to marry him, she said, “Well, what do you think?”

I said, “Mother, now, you know what I think about this.” I said, “You know, I’ve dated a lot of white men,” I said, “but I had never intended to marry any.”

She said, “Clara, I think you’re prejudiced.”

I said, “What?”

She said, “Listen. The thing you have to do is you have to deal with people.” Mother was such a wise person. She said, “You have to deal with people not based on the color of their skin, but you’ve got to deal with what their character is, and you’ve got to deal with whether or not they treat you with dignity and respect.” She said, “Do you have that?”

I said, “Yeah. I’ve got that.”

She said, “Well, then, there ain’t nothing too much else to consider.” She said, “Do you love him? Maybe that is a good thing,” she said, “to know at this point in time, but maybe that’ll develop over time.” And she said, “But I will tell you, you need to do what you think you ought to do.”

And Heinz said, “I would like to go with you, because I think I could help you out.” And I will tell you, I had learned that getting to be a full colonel, you need some help. I mean, you cannot keep right on doing all of those things both inside the house and outside the house, so I said, maybe I do need a partner here. So I agreed to marry him, and we came back to the States, and I went to be assigned to the Recruiter Command out at Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

It was funny. He watched me run around doing eighteen hours a day, eighteen to twenty hours a day. He watched that for about three weeks, and then he came to me one day and said, “Clara,” he said, “we need to talk.” So we sat down to talk. And, of course, he had sold his property before we came over, and he retired, because he said, “I’ll take care of you.”

I said, “Good. I can work.”

He said, “As long as you work, I’ll take care of you.” So he came over with me and we sat down and he said, “I need to tell you that in Germany, if you’re lucky enough to be able to call yourself doctor,” he said, “you don’t do any more of the menial tasks of this world. The menial tasks is that of washing, ironing, and cleaning, and that kind of stuff.” I said to myself, gee, that’s all I’ve ever had is menial tasks. But he said, “I will tell you this. I think I can help you with this house.” He said, “If you will show me how

to do the washing," he said, "just write down on the paper what I need to do, what I should put in the machine," he said, "I can do the washing, and I'll do the ironing." He said, "And if you'll get somebody to clean the house, I will supervise the house cleaning." I said, "Oh, that may be good, because you need a German to supervise the house cleaning." [laughs] They can get a house clean. They know about cleaning, jeez. So I said, "Okay. I'll do that." So I got everything together, and I got a housekeeper, and I showed him about how to use the washing machine, and he went to taking care of the house. He and the maid were the best of friends, and they would get that house cleaned. It would be spotless when I came home. They did a marvelous job.

And he at the same time decided that he wanted to go to college in the USA. Well, in order to go to college he had to finish high school. So he took a test and he passed the test, and they allowed him to do the degree equivalent, and so he took a GED and then they allowed him to do a degree equivalent, and he went over there and got his degree equivalent after taking a little bit of course in English, because they wanted to improve his English. They needed to improve his English, because he learned how to speak English from the English soldiers, see, because he was a prisoner of war in England after the war, in England. And some of that stuff, you couldn't take him out in mixed company, that he'd be speaking. So I said, "Oh no, you can't—" And so he'd learned a bit from me, but he needed to go to school and learn the grammar and stuff, so then he went to school, went to school up there and got his high school diploma, and he and the teacher were the best of friends. They were so happy when he got finished, because he went for about a year. I think he did three semesters, one whole year and then the summer, and then he graduated.

When he graduated, then he taught conversational German in the education center in the evening. Oh, he had a marvelous time. He also decided that he wanted to work with the Army Community Center, so he went over to Army Community Center and they took volunteers to do various jobs for helping the soldiers out whenever they came to new places and were new, had come back from overseas and were given a new assignment and so forth. He worked in that area for the entire time that he was there.

He got to know the post commander very well. The post commander was a full colonel, and he would go in and sit right down in his office in his little lederhosen at Sheridan, had a marvelous time. And as far as the generals, well, let me tell you. We would go to parties and stuff, and they would just wait for us to come. Well, when we came in they would always say, "Hi, Clara."

And I'd say, "Good evening, sir. How're you doing?"

And they'd say, "Hi, Heinz. Come on, Heinz." They'd take Heinz and they'd all go and talk about Rommel and what Rommel did and all the other kind of stuff, because Heinz could tell you tales about Rommel, I'll tell you, and Rommel was a busy general. I'll tell you, he was a good general, too. So they would talk a lot about that, so he was good from that standpoint in that he had no problem socializing, and at the same time, then he would find out a whole bunch of things that I needed to know, like what the generals, what did they have in mind in terms of doing certain kinds of things, because he'd hear me talk about what was going on in my work, and he'd go over and he'd find out all sorts of stuff. I mean, you know, he'd tell them some things and they'd tell him some things, and that worked out wonderfully. And I'd be over talking to the wives,

because I figured in order to be able to know the guy, you've got to know the spouse. So I'd go over to talk to the wives and find out who was who and what was what. It was fun. I had a marvelous time, and we were a great couple together.

So we stayed out there, got finished with the recruiting, and by this time, of course, now I've already been a full colonel five years, and I'm thinking it's time for me to be promoted. But you know, general was never promised to me, because the Army Nurse Corps only has one, you see, and I was just finishing my twenty-second year, and I didn't get picked that year to be the general, and I didn't feel good about that. But my commander at that time was Max Thurman, and Max was the commander at Recruiting Command. He was from North Carolina, came from High Point. He came from High Point, went to school at [North Carolina] State [University]. I came from near Raleigh and went to school at Greensboro. We used to talk about that.

I said, "Well, I don't know how come you were there," I said, "but I was there because University of North Carolina wouldn't take me. That's why I was there." Because segregation was the law of the land, you see, during this time, '56, and there was no way I was going to get into university. They sent me a letter telling me so.

So he said, "Well, I went to State because they had engineering and I wanted to deal with the engineering stuff."

So I said, "All right." So we used to discuss that. Well, he was the commander at that time, and he went to Washington, and one time while he was in Washington he read my record.

He called me in when he got back and he said, "I know you feel bad about the fact that you didn't get to be chief of the corps this time. But," he said, "you understand, they only pick a general every four years." He said, "And this is your twenty-second year. If they pick you this year, then you'll be thrown out of the army in four years, your twenty-sixth year." He said, "And the army would lose four good years of your time." He said, "The army ain't crazy, Clara." [laughs] He said, "Wait till next time."

See, because the chief of the corps at that time, by law, could only be a brigadier general, and could only stay for four years, and then after that time you had to do one of two things. You had to revert to the rank of full colonel in order to serve more, and a couple of them did that, or you had to leave. Now, the couple who did it were not generals at that time. That's when they were colonels. When they were colonels, a couple of them reverted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and they stayed on for a while, because they wanted to serve a little bit longer, to finish their thirty years.

But he said, "When you go out at twenty-six," he said, "that's not enough time." He said, "You wait till next time." So I waited. No, I didn't wait, not there. I finished my tour at Recruiting Command and then we came to Walter Reed, and Recruiting Command was out at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, wonderful place, back in the Midwest again, cold, wintertime, windy city. It is truly the windy city.

HT: What is Fort Sheridan near?

CAE: It's up on the North Shore. It's on Lake Michigan; it's cold up there, cold. I finished that assignment and eventually I was assigned to be the chief nurse at Walter Reed. Hey, let me tell you something. I said, "I'm moving into the big time now." I never in my wildest

dreams thought I'd get to be chief. Chief nurse at Walter Reed? My heavens, that was wonderful. You know, in the first place, the army chose 90 percent of its chiefs of the corps from Walter Reed, from a chief nurse at Walter Reed, you see. So I said, maybe if I go there I'll get looked at to be a general. One never knows.

So I went over there, and this was the largest assignment, this was really a big assignment. This was really the biggest assignment that I thought I had had, except for after I got to be the chief I really found out that probably one of the main assignments that you have in the army is being chief of recruiting, because after you decide to deal with those who are retained, the thing you've got to do is try to get some more, you know, so that was a pretty big assignment. And I was successful, all my years there I was successful.

So I went to Walter Reed and, of course, by this time I moved to the big city, and Heinz, of course, he has his own auto, because when he came from Europe he brought himself a Porsche. When Heinz came over here he was sixty-seven years old, when he came to America. So he decided that he needed to have a car, and he tried it out out there in Chicago, and it did real well through the snow and everything, so he said, "I'm taking it to Washington." So he brought it to Washington, and he could get around. He didn't have trouble getting around places and stuff. I'd draw him little maps, and he'd go where he needed to go.

Well, he went over to University of Maryland, and at that time—and I used to find out all of these things about what was happening—they had a program at the University of Maryland where, if you were a Maryland resident over sixty years of age, you could go to the university for free. So he went over there and started taking him some classes, and he decided he wanted to major in psychology. So he was over there doing psychology, and he would do all the psychology stuff, and when his grade point average got below where he thought it ought to be, he'd take a course in German, get an A, and then—he did some crazy stuff. But he did a lot of things.

Then he decided he wanted to get in politics. And, you know, all this time he's saying, "You're never at home with me. You're never"—because at Walter Reed I worked twelve, fourteen hours a day, but I mean, you know, you've got to do what you have to do to get people together, and so I was doing that. But it was better than those eighteen or twenty hours I was pulling at the Recruiting Command. But I learned a lot in that assignment. I tell you, I learned how to fall and land on my feet, and have a lot of other people land on their feet, because that's what you have to do in recruiting. In recruiting we have a saying that every month you go from hero to zero, because if you're successful at the end of the month, on the first of the next month you're a zero. All right? If you get down to the end of the month and you made your mission, you're a hero again, and that's every month of every—and we did this for thirty-six months. That was tough, but I got through it and I'm a better person for having done it, and I was glad I was there with Max Thurman, because I will tell you, he could work you to death.

He and his brother both were generals, and they were both bachelors, never married. Neither one of them had ever been married. Neither one of them ever got married. And them guys didn't do nothing but work. They lived to work, and, of course, they worked to live, you see. It's all about work. So he was there, and then they had a

couple of other commanders after that time, but he stayed there with me through my first year, so I knew about what I had to do, and I went ahead and did that.

So when I got finished and got out of there and got to Walter Reed, now I only had to do about twelve hours a day. I said, well, I can handle this. This is six hours less than before. So Heinz decided that he'd do some other things to entertain himself, and that's what he did. He would work with the Red Cross. He worked with the Red Cross at Walter Reed. He worked with the Army Community Service.

And somebody called him up one day, they were having a political campaign. A lady was running, a Republican. She was a Republican and she was running against [Barbara] Mikulski, who is the Democratic senator from Maryland. She was a Latino woman, and the Republicans were running her for the Senate, and somebody called him up and asked him to raise money. Well, see, Heinz didn't care who he was raising money for, and he told me this later. I didn't realize it at the time, but he told me this later, that he always had a dream when he came to America of shaking hands with the President of the United States. So when they called him and told him to help raise money for this candidate, he didn't know anything about Republican or Democrat. He just knew that if he did well, he might get to shake hands with the President of the United States, since he's right here in this area. Heinz raised over fifty thousand dollars for that woman, and he did get to shake hands with the president, and the president at that time was [Ronald] Reagan.

Now, Heinz, when we got to take these long trips and stuff, he would never ever drive to those areas, because he said, "It's too far, and I'll get lost." He said, "You need to draw me a little map as to how to get to Baltimore," because we lived in Silver Springs [Maryland], and Silver Springs is about thirty-five miles from Baltimore, and we had to drive to Baltimore for him to go to this hotel. I drew him a map exactly how to get to the hotel, and it was down on the Inner Harbor, and he got himself over there. Not only did he get himself over there, but he took his little camera, because Heinz loved to take pictures, mounds of pictures around. He had his little picture over there, and they called his name out for having raised fifty thousand dollars, and they had their own person there to take the picture, you know, with the president, and he'd given his camera to somebody else, and here he's saying, "Please excuse me, Mr. President," you know, with these little blue eyes and this silver hair. "Please excuse me, Mr. President, but would you mind if they took a picture with my camera here?" And Mr. President said, "No, not at all, Heinz." So they stood there and he got his own picture with his camera, with the President of the United States. [laughs] And he shook hands with every president after then, with the exception of George W. [Bush], and if he'd lived a little bit longer he'd have gotten George W., too, I know.

So he was over there doing his thing, of course, helping out the Officers Wives Club, because he loved to belong to Officers Wives Club, because he was the only man in it, and he would teach them how to run business, and how to do business, and how to raise money and do all these things. Oh, he had fun. I'll tell you, he had a marvelous time.

And in the meantime we would do, every time he'd have a birthday, because when we were out in Chicago he had his seventieth, and we had a fancy, fancy party for him. And, of course, I lived down among all the generals, because there were about five

generals assigned to Recruiting Command. They needed a lot of people to do the recruiting, and so we had a lot of generals out there, and so they would all come to his party and everything. This particular time I was trying to make sure that we did something special for him, and we did, and—He was seventy, and I invited in this woman to do a little song for him, and she was a stripper. So she came in dressed in this long red gown, and whenever she got finished she was down to her little baton suit, you know? [laughs] She just looked like a cheerleader. Well, it was something, and they always said, "Heinz, how do you get all these special things for your birthday?" He said, "Oh, my wife loves me." Anyway, we got all the business done, and I was sitting here thinking—I just happened to have a thought, and that is that the Memorial [Women in Military Service for America memorial] is going to close at five o'clock.

HT: I'll do it tomorrow.

CAE: Oh, you'll do it tomorrow. That's good, yes, come back down there tomorrow and check it out. How long are you going to be here?

HT: I'm leaving tomorrow afternoon.

CAE: Oh yes, go down and get it in the morning, because I think they open about, like, at ten o'clock.

So we had a marvelous time in Chicago, and then we came to Washington and we had a great time here. He enjoyed being at Walter Reed, and he enjoyed his work there, and he and the commander were good buddies. The commander was a two-star, and he was a West Point graduate, and he'd spent some time in Germany, of course, and so they had a good time. They had a marvelous time.

And, of course, I could go about my work, doing all the things that I had to do, because there—I had had a nursing service when I was in Frankfurt, and it was a medical center, but it was much smaller. Walter Reed is the flagship, and, of course, it was a very big facility. We had at that time a thousand beds set up in the hospital, with expansive capacities of twenty-five hundred in case of mobilization, and I had thirteen hundred people in the Department of Nursing, you know, five hundred nurses, and then eight hundred paraprofessionals, LPNs [licensed practical nurse], you know, all those other folk, and so I was having a busy time, really busy time.

And there were a number of things going on in the world at that time, and so we had to get things done. But it worked out very, very well, and I managed to get myself finished with that tour, and I had gotten myself to Washington, which I wanted to do, and the next time they picked a chief, in 1985. I had been at Walter Reed since 1984, and I was finishing my tour there, and they reached down among those colonels on that list—I mean, fifty or sixty colonels that they could look at—and they pulled my name out of the hat, and I went on to be chief of the corps.

And my sisters and brothers could not believe it. My oldest sister, I called her up and I said, "Hey, listen." This was in June, because the board came out in June, yes, June, early July. I said, "Listen. I need to tell you, I just got picked to be a general in the army, and we're going to have a party here in September to celebrate this, because I'm going to

get promoted in September, and y'all need to be ready to come." So she said, "Okay." She said, "I'll see what we can do with that." Well, she got off the phone and she called up this fellow that she knew had been in the military before, because he was in ROTC when she was at A&T, and she said, "Clara just called up and said that she made general," she said, "and that we need to get ready to come down to a party in September." And she said, "And I don't know, quite frankly, how we're going to make that," she said, "because it just seems like another event to me."

He said, "Hey, listen. You stay right there." He said, "I'm coming to see you." He traveled all across Newark so he could sit down with Betty and tell her what it meant for a female in the army to make general, because at that time we only had about three on active duty. One got promoted after I did, so the whole time that I was there, there were four on active duty.

She called me back and she said, "Oh, Clara, you've been doing things." [laughs]

I said, "I think so." So she got everybody together up north.

Well, my brother, of course, had been in the air force, and he was down in North Carolina, and he got a group together down south, because he said, "Listen. Y'all ain't going to be able to see this very often." He said, "In the first place, ain't another rest of y'all in the military, so you ain't never going to get to this point no how." And he said, "I doubt that in your lifetime you'll see another person in our family make it to general, obviously, so let's go. We're going to this party." And so he rounded up everybody down South, and they all came up, and the folks came down.

And my aunt said, "I wouldn't miss it for the world."

HT: Where was the party held?

CAE: Here in Washington at the—where were we? Oh, it's a Hilton [Hotel] now, in Alexandria, on Seminary Road. But at that time it was either a Hyatt or a—what is that other thing, not a Marriott. But it's a Hilton now, but it wasn't a Hilton at that time. It was another one. I've forgotten the other name—Radisson, that's what it was. It was a Radisson before.

Let me tell you, people came from far and near to come to that party, because I had been an IG, and, of course, a lot of people knew me from having done that stuff, and at Walter Reed the lieutenants told me, see, because the colonels would be around talking about who was going to get to be chief of the corps, and they had told the lieutenants that I may get to be chief of the corps.

See, the thing that I would do was, I found out very early in my career, and very early in my time of doing the management and leadership thing, because they put me out there very early. I found out very early that I had to be very close to the people who were still in on the hands, so I could know what they needed, you know, to be able to represent them well. So in order for me to be able to do this, I had to be with the lieutenant. Well, in order to get to the lieutenant, you've got to be there evenings and nights. So while I had to work about twelve hours during the day, I had to sometimes go in at midnight in order to be able to see the lieutenant, and I had to sometimes be there at four o'clock in the morning, you see, so that I could find out exactly what the lieutenants were doing,

because they were the ones who were going to tell me what the practice of nursing should be about, and how to deal with that.

HT: I'm assuming that over the years it changed.

CAE: Oh, it changed a lot. It's changing all the time, and we were putting policies out there, and I had to know how the policies were affecting them, and that's where you get the information from. The colonels can't tell you, because they're not laying on hands. They're not doing it. They're not knowing what the patients are saying, they're not knowing how the patients are being affected, and so I always made sure that I stayed close to the lieutenants, so I was going and visiting the lieutenants, and they said, "Ma'am, if you get promoted—we heard that you might get promoted to general."

I said, "Well." I said, "I might." I said, "What do you think?"

They said, "Ma'am, we think that's great." They said, "If you get promoted to general, we're coming to the party." [laughs]

And I will tell you there's a guy that's in Baltimore today, he used to sell uniforms for the army, and I think he's probably pretty well retired now. He came from Argentina and he used to sell uniforms for the army. He sold them at Walter Reed, and he would talk to the nurses all the time. As a matter of fact, he talked to everybody all the time, but he certainly talked to the nurses and found out what they thought of me, because he told me when I got over there, he said, "You are going to be considered as a general next time it comes around. Now, I'm just telling you, you're probably going to make it," he said. So he said, "The lieutenants say you ought to make it, and if the lieutenants say that you ought to make it, that's good enough for me." So when I got picked and they knew that I was going to get promoted, they went down and they paid their money for the party, and they all went and got this fancy mess-dress uniform. He sold, he said—I mean, I think it was about twenty-five or thirty of those nurses who decided to go. When you consider twenty-five to thirty nurses in an eight- or nine-hundred-dollar uniform, he did all right. And he said, "Clara, I made more money off you than I've made off anybody in this place." He said, "You're going to do well, because the lieutenants—" And those lieutenants came to that party. I'm telling you, it was wonderful. We had a marvelous time.

And then I had to go to work. I brought the Germans over, lord. We had a bunch of friends in Germany, and about twelve of them came over, fourteen, because it was six couples and then there were two extra people. Yes, fourteen of them came over. And I will tell you, before them Germans got home it was time for them to go, because every evening they said, "Oh, she's back again. Have a happy hour." Well, I had to go back to work the next day. I couldn't—happy hours started hanging out all week. I mean, they stayed here for twelve days. I was so glad when they left, I didn't know what to do, because I had to go to work. But we had a marvelous time. We certainly did bring that business in right, had a great time.

So then I started doing my chief of the corps thing, of course, and that was doing staff visits to various places, and setting the policy as far as the Army Nurse Corps was concerned, and making sure that we recruited the numbers that we needed to have, and that's when I got into dealing with the Congress, because at that general officer level

that's when it starts to become political. Lots of things that happened in your life happened politically, and a lot of the work that you have to do is political. So I was spending a lot of time trying to do the political work that I had to do, and it was a fun time, and I had a great time, but it was a busy time.

I had twenty-two thousand nurses serving all over the world, and there were only about five thousand of them that were on active duty at that time, but the rest were in the guard and reserves. See, most of my assets were in the guard and reserves, but I had to do policy for everybody, and we had to make sure that everybody got managed, and they got the clothing that they needed, and that folks were doing well with their careers, and that type of thing. It was a little difficult dealing with the guard and reserves, well, not so much with the reserves, because the reserves worked with us mostly, but the guard have always wanted to have the little independent head, and so we took a little bit more convincing to get them together. But we finally got them straight, too, and it worked out very, very well for me.

I got a few things accomplished of which I'm proud. One of them was, there was a time when we were having another problem with the shortages of nurses coming and going, and shortages of nurses being in the country, and we needed a program in order to be able to recruit some more nurses, and we had gotten into the all-volunteer army. At that time we had on active duty over five thousand medics. This is the enlisted people that had two years of college or above. And, of course, nursing goes two plus two. You know, you do two years of general education, and then you do your two years of professional education. Well, I reasoned that if we could manage to get some of those people into school, and get them into their last two years of professional education, we could bring them on active duty as lieutenants, and we could retain them more, because they'd usually been in the service four or five years before they got picked up to go to school, and that they would make better nurse corps officers, and we'd be able to retain—

[End Tape 3, Side A—Begin Tape 3, Side B.]

CAE: I left the nurse corps in July, and they didn't go off until September of that year, so I didn't get to see them. But I've seen them later, and I've seen them around the army, and they were very grateful for the fact that we managed to get that program going.

So what we did was, we put in this program, and I had to get the spaces from the chief of staff of the army, because they were school spaces for enlisted people, and he made you justify all of those spaces, and why you wanted them, and what was happening. So he was telling somebody that he had gotten up that morning and he saw the chief nurse was on his schedule to come and see him to talk about school spaces for potential nurse corps officers, and he said, "I wonder why she wants to talk to me about that. Doesn't she know that the army's winding down?" Because we were. We were reducing the strength. It was after Vietnam and the American people were saying, "We don't to support a large standing army," and so they were reducing force. Well, I had to go get me some spaces, that's what I had to do, because I thought we still needed nurses, and it's

always difficult to do the recruiting unless you've got some reason to give the nurse to come.

So I went and I was going to support my position. I had to go talk to all of the other people in the army, the deputy chief of staff of personnel, the deputy chief of staff for budget, the deputy chief of staff for all the other areas, and everybody agreed with me except the deputy chief of staff for personnel. We called him DCSPER, and he'd always said, "Clara, we can't afford all the nurses that you are talking about."

And I said, "You can't afford not to have. You've got to have nurses."

So I was ready to make my speech before the chief, because all of us had to go before the chief, and he was going to listen to everybody's argument. Well, about an hour before it was time for me to go see the chief, this deputy chief of staff for personnel called my office and said, "Tell General Adams-Ender I will support her proposal."

I said, "Hallelujah," you know, because you don't want to ask any questions. Don't ask no questions, don't do none of that stuff, just take it and go. At least you've got a gift over here. So that's what I did. I asked for a hundred spaces, and he gave me 125, so I figured I must have made my case. [laughs] I got those spaces, and then about three weeks later he called me back in, because we had just finished Operation Desert Shield the first time, and I had been the director of personnel for the Surgeon General of the Army. I had helped them to manage to get all of the troops together, all the medics together, you know, physicians, nurses, dentists, all of them I dealt with.

We got finished with that, and that had turned out very well for us, and we wrote the after-action reports and got all that stuff finished, and then the chief called me in and said, "You know," he said, "you haven't done enough for the army."

I said, "Sir? Huh?" I said, "I've managed all the nurses." I said, "serving all over the world, sun never sets on the Army Nurse Corps." You know, I had this little spiel I used to give people.

And he said, "Yeah," he says, "well, Clara, that's management and administration." He said, "You need to command." He said, "That's the big thing to do in the army." Well, it is, because that's what the guys decided is the big thing to do, and it's more them than it is anybody else, and they get to decide. So he said, "I want to send you down to Fort Belvoir, [Virginia], to command. Don't screw it up."

And I knew exactly what that meant. That meant, go down there, Clara, and do what you're supposed to do, because if you don't, there may not get to be another female to do this in many, many years. And I knew what that meant, you know. It's really interesting how sometimes you carry the weight of your group on your shoulders. You know, you have to do that.

And somebody said, "Well, it ain't fair."

I said, "Well, life ain't, it's not necessarily fair all the time. You just do what you've got to do." So I knew that I had to be successful down there in that command. So he assigned me to Fort Belvoir. The engineers had just moved out, and it had become a base support command, where they spend a lot of time providing the services that were necessary to the other commands that were there. And we had the Intelligence Command, which is the largest one, or it was the largest one that was there at that time. Now it's got the Defense Logistics Agency, which is larger than that, but we provided support services to all of these folks.

Wonderful, absolutely wonderful time, absolutely had a marvelous time. It was a great assignment. It was a great assignment for me, because—and I've often told people, "Thank God I was a nurse first," because some of those things I learned to do as a nurse sustained me through command. I have done speeches on this with nurses and so forth, because I always go back and tell nurses, "You can do this, too. I mean, there's nothing magic about being a commander."

But there were three things that I always remember that got me ready, and one was, nurses know a lot about human behavior. They have to, because first we have to take classes, and we have to be able to observe and assess and evaluate human behavior in order to be able to tell if a patient's well or if a patient's getting sicker. You've got to be able to do that. And as a result of that we know that there are some personalities in this world, and some real characters, and some of them is us. So we just go through life just doing that. You have to know a whole lot about that when you're going to be a commander.

The second thing is, you learn how to manage many activities at once. You know, when you're a nurse you just can't manage one aspect of a patient's care and think that you've done very well at it, because you haven't. You have got to be willing and able to manage many facets of the care. Especially when you're on evenings and nights, and you don't have a whole lot of help around you, you've got to do a number of things. And so we learn how to work on that twenty-four-hour clock that says, anytime of the day or night I can tell you what I'm supposed to be doing for this person, and what it's supposed to be about, and what I can expect from what it is that I do for that. And so as a result of that, you learn to manage those many activities.

And the third thing is, we have a process for doing it. We set up something called the nursing process many, many years ago, where we put down the various aspects of getting a particular job done. First is, you've got to assess the situation that you have, so you've got the assessment phase. Physicians call it diagnosing; we call it assessment. Then you've got to plan what you're going to do in order to be able to get it done, and then you've got to do what you're going to do. That's called the intervention, and when you get finished with that you've got to do the evaluation.

You get those four things done, and, of course, right in line with evaluation goes the documentation, because you've got to write it down. Because I used to be an IG, and I can tell you, according to the law, if it wasn't written, it wasn't done. If I can't find it in the record, there's no way I can prove that you did it. You can say it all you want, but I can't prove that you did it if you didn't write it in the record, so we try to make sure that you've got records taken care of.

So when you go to do command you've got to do much the same thing. You've got to figure out how it is that you are going to get your mission done, you've got to plan how it is you're going to get your mission done, you've got to first, then, do the activities that are involved in getting the mission done, and then you've got to evaluate to see if you did what you were supposed to do, so that you can go back and start a process all over again.

I will tell you, it has gotten me over so many days. I mean, I'm at the point now, I used to teach it for a living when I was teaching those students, but now I can do it in my head, because I've learned how over the years to just manage, and you put those things

out there and that's the way you think. That's your thought processes through the whole situation, and before you're done you've got the whole thing taken care of so that you can handle it and manage it.

So I did that, and had a very successful time in command. I was investigated eighteen times by the IG, and they never, ever found me knowingly doing something wrong. Now, I'd had a situation—I told people about this situation. You know, sometimes you have to make the best assessment that you can of a situation, and then as a result of your assessment and what it is that you've done, you've got to make a decision as to what you're going to do.

It was the Christmas season and the commander of the military district of Washington was my boss, and he'd invited me up to a party that he was giving that evening, the Christmas party. And at Christmas parties we do little skits and that kind of thing, and then sing carols and do that business and go home. Well, the Officers' Wives Club invited me to their Christmas party also, and it was off the base. I had a little dilemma, because I could go up to the commander's party, and I didn't want to miss the Officers Wives Club party either, because when you do that as a commander, the women then think that you don't want to have anything to do with them, or you don't want to take care of them, you just want to take care of what the guys have to do. They don't care about all the parties you have to go to, and so you don't even have to explain all of that. You just have to try to figure out how you get this in. So I decided that I'd go up and see the old man and we would go to his party, and then on my way back, since that was on my way back, I would stop by this party at this private home in a community, which the law says you ain't supposed to do as a commander. What I really was supposed to do was to go home and get my car, and then come back up there, but if I'd done that the party would have been over. So I made what I thought was the best decision, to try and keep peace in the family and to take care of both groups at once.

Somebody's always watching. There was a guy who was out there who had come with his wife, and he was outside and he saw that vehicle out there with some government tags on it, and he saw my driver, and he went over to my driver and he said, "Sergeant, are you driving Gen. Adams-Ender?" And he said, "Yes, sir." Well, in the morning he reported me to the IG, and see, the IG has a rule about its general officers. They have a whole section in the IG that just takes care of general officers, because every time a complaint comes in on a general officer it must be investigated. I used to keep them busy. [both laugh] They were busy checking me out, but they ain't finding nothing. They didn't find nothing wrong.

But I went and he came and the IG called me. What happened was—the IG himself always calls the general office. He's a three-star, and so he can call up and talk to most people without any problem. So he called me up and he said, "Clara," he said, "we have this allegation in here."

So I said, "Sir, let me tell you exactly what happened."

So I told him and he said, "Okay." I told him about the times I was there, and I told him about my dilemma, because that's really what I had. I had to take the best of what I thought the two bad choices that I had. That's what a dilemma is, you know. You take the best of two bad choices, because neither of them is going to do me good. So I had to do what I thought was best in that situation.

So he said, "Okay, Clara. I got it." So he went away. He went back and talked to the fellow. He talked to the people around. He talked to a couple of other folks who had been at the party, and they told him what time I got there [and] what time [I left]. Then he talked to my boss, and my boss said, "Yeah, she had to come up here." He said, "I didn't know she had to go by that party," he said, "but if I were her, I probably would have done the same thing," he said, "because it does make a difference as to whether or not you are able to support the wives club and to do those things." He said, "And I didn't realize I was planning on the same night." He said, "I'll try to do better the next time," he said, "but I think she did the right thing."

So the guy called me back and said, "You know, we didn't find anything irregular about what you did." He said, "But I will tell you, you need to understand this, Clara." He said, "It's not always what you do, it's the perception that people have." He said, "And the fellow that reported you does not know how come you were there. The only thing he knows is that the rule says you have no business with the vehicle there." He said, "So I'm going to do this report, and I'll file this report," he said, "and I'll make sure that it says that you didn't do anything wrong here, and the reason how come you had to do what you had to do," he said, "but just know that sometimes it has to do with the perception."

I said, "I got it, Sir." So we talked about it on many occasions.

But whenever he got ready to leave that job over there, he came to see me, and he said, "I'll tell you something, General." He said, "I have been an IG in many an area," he said, "but I have never seen anybody dodge bullets like you dodge them." [both laugh]

HT: Somebody's looking out after you.

CAE: Yes. But see, I didn't set out to do anything wrong. Had I set out to do something wrong I would have slipped up someplace along the way. But all of the time, my motives were pure, because I tried to make sure that was so, because see, I could see very easily how you could slip into deciding that since you are the commander you are much bigger than life, and as a result of being bigger than life, you can do what the hell it is you want to. And that's how people get in trouble. That's how commanders get in trouble. The rules are always there to do the right thing. They are always there.

But I will tell you, you have so much authority and responsibility, until you get to the point where you think, whenever your head gets too big, you think, well, it seems I can do most anything, and that's when they start getting in trouble. And I didn't think I could do most anything. I just wanted to make sure them other folks kept me out of trouble. I told people, someplace in my lifetime I learned that going to jail was not cool, when I was growing up. So I said, "And I did everything that was necessary in order to be able to stay out of jail." Prostitution was not an option. I mean, there was no way anybody was going to get me that close to the law. And several other jobs that I saw, I said, no, I'm not getting involved in that. So when I went down there, I found out how easily other people can send you to jail. I said, "Let me tell you something, people. I have spent all this time in my lifetime keeping myself out of jail. I'll be damned if y'all are going to send me now. Forget it."

So we got ourselves a little camaraderie, and got done the things we needed to do, and that all worked out fine. I finished my command at Fort Belvoir, and when I got

finished there I was one year before the thirty-five, and they said, "You can take another assignment." So I said, "I don't think so." I was like that little woman said the other day, "I have had enough. I am tired. I think I'm going home." [laughs] So that's what I did. I retired in 1993 out of Fort Belvoir, a wonderful, wonderful place to be assigned.

I have a tape of my parade. Would you want a copy?

HT: Yes, that'd be wonderful.

CAE: Now, I can't give it to you, but you can copy it.

HT: Okay, we can do that.

CAE: As a matter of fact, I think what I will do is—could you get these things back to me in a couple of weeks?

HT: Oh, sure, I think so, yes.

CAE: See, what I would do is I would give you a group of pictures and photos, and then I have to go back and find the tapes and stuff, but I could drop those in the mail to you, and you don't have to have those right back to me. You can take the time you need to do those, because there are a couple of parades and things that I have to do with, especially my retirement parade, and a couple of what we call twilight tattoos that I did. That was my change of command, was the twilight tattoo, and it's a special parade that the army does that gets done.

HT: Well, let me go ahead and thank you on the tape, and then we'll look at some of that material. Thank you so much. It's been a wonderful, almost day, I think. [both laugh]

CAE: Well, sure, yes. And one of these days I'll tell you about what I did after [retirement from the army.]

HT: Okay, that'd be great. Thanks again.

CAE: Yes.

[End of Interview]