WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Joyce A. Heflin

INTERVIEWER: Therese Strohmer

DATE: April 14, 2010

[Recording test redacted]

[Begin Interview]

TS: This is Therese Strohmer, and today is April 14, 2010. I am in Durham, North Carolina with Joyce Heflin, and we're here for an interview for the Women's Veterans Oral Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Joyce, how would you like your name to be on your collection?

JH: Joyce A. Heflin.

TS: Okay, very good. Well, Joyce, I also should probably introduce Ben—and Bo might be back in here—your two puppy dogs. So, they might be talking to us a little bit.
But why don't you go ahead and start and tell us where you grew up, where you were born, and a little bit about that.

JH: I was born in Tacoma Park, Maryland, grew up in Rockville, Maryland, and went to high school at Richard Montgomery High School.

TS: When you were growing up, did you have any brothers or sisters?

JH: Yeah. I have a brother who is six years younger and a sister who is ten years younger.

TS: So you have—There's three siblings.

JH: Yes.

TS: What did your folks do for a living?

JH: My dad was an entrepreneur. He was a manufacturer's representative, he was an electronics guy, and did all sorts of different things. He actually invented pine bark mulch and was always doing something interesting with horticultural products.

TS: Oh, well, that's really kind of cool. And did your mom work also?

JH: She worked for a short time, and then she came home to be with the kids.

TS: Okay. Now what—At this time in Tacoma Park, was it a rural area, was it suburban?

JH: Tacoma Park was where the hospital was. That was where I was born. And then [slurping noise]—There's the dogs. And then I grew up in Rockville, Maryland. So, it was a suburb of Washington, D.C.

TS: What was that—What years were you growing up as a kid, that you remember?

JH: I was born in 1952, and so '52 through '70 were, you know, growing up years.

TS: So, what was it like? What kind of things did you do growing up?

JH: Oh, it was a great neighborhood. There were tons of kids, and we had a great park and a wonderful summer program. I was always involved in athletics, crafts, anything that the park offered. They took us on trips, we went down to the Smithsonian, and it was great being in a suburb of D.C. because you had all the exposure to cultural events. Concerts at Constitutional Hall—amazing place to grow up. Montgomery County, Maryland, is—or was known as the highest per-capita income per education student for K through 12. So it was just a wonderful education and a great place to grow up.

TS: So, you had siblings who were, what, about ten years older?

JH: Ten years younger—six years younger.

TS: Six years younger and ten years older? So, you didn't have—they weren't necessarily right in your age, but you had a lot of friends that you hung out with and did things with.

JH: Yeah, plenty of kids in the neighborhood.

TS: Was there anything in particular that you guys liked to play, any particular games?

JH: Well that was back when you really played. You made up games, hide-and-seek, tag. Of course we played sports, too, with whatever equipment you could scrounge up. [slurping sound] So, we played basketball and baseball and football and everything was tackle and roughhousing. I was definitely a tomboy.

TS: Now, did you—you went to school. What was the name of the school you went to?

JH: Richard Montgomery High School.

TS: Richard Montgomery High School. Well, how did you like it—even before that, in elementary school did you like school?

JH: Yeah, I always liked school, always did well in school, enjoyed school.

TS: Was there always like a favorite teacher or a favorite class or anything like that?

JH: Math was not my favorite subject. Elementary school I had my first male teacher in fifth grade, Mr. Trice, and he was fantastic. I really enjoyed that. And then in junior high, I had an instructor, Mr. Conway, for English, and he just made English and words and reading come alive. He was marvelous, just a real eccentric guy, wore a bow tie when everybody else wore regular ties. So, he was very influential.

TS: So, you were growing up then—did you have—Kind of during late fifties, early sixties and seventies, the Cold War was happening at that time. You're in the D.C. area. Did you have a sense of that as a kid at all?

JH: Oh yeah. Yeah, there were air raid warnings and you'd have to get under your desk and put your hands over your head and cuddle down to assume a bomb position attack. And lots of folks in the neighborhood were building bomb shelters and stocking those up [wish] all sorts of food and supplies. And there was all sorts of controversy about: Well, if we really did have an attack and the folks that had bomb shelters, would they let other folks come in or not? It was a crazy time. It really was.

TS: Do you remember what—what you thought about it at the time, as a young girl? [pause] Not really?

JH: Never really bothered me at all.

TS: Did you get to see any of the shelters or—

JH: No, no.

TS: Just kind of heard about them?

JH: Yeah. And just the air raid sirens when we would have our drills at school.

TS: And you didn't like the duck and cover sort of thing?

JH: Anything to break up the routine at school, I liked. [laughs]

TS: That was good. So, you're growing up, let's see—so you would have—were you aware of politics at all at that age?

JH: My dad was incredibly conservative, so he was Mr. Republican. So, I think my initial views were certainly skewed by him. My mom is very conservative, but she wasn't quite as opinionated or as vocal as he was.

TS: Do you remember the election between [Richard] Nixon and JFK [John F. Kennedy]?

JH: Yes.

TS: What do you remember about that?

JH: Having a mock election at school, and the controversy that he was so young—JFK was so young—and that he was Catholic. And, of course, my father was very pro-Nixon, and [pause] I guess that's all I really remember about that period.

TS: Yeah. Do you remember anything about when Kennedy was assassinated?

JH: Oh yeah. Yeah. I remember being in class and the announcement coming out over the loudspeaker, and then I watched all of the funeral proceedings and the burial and everything. So, it was riveting.

TS: Do you remember what your parents thought about that?

JH: Well, I don't know if I want to say this for an official document, but my father didn't have any remorse whatsoever that he had been killed. It was awful. And I just saw this young, youthful guy who—I didn't really understand what was going on. I remember the Bay of Pigs thing. That was a real stressful time because we thought we were going to be attacked or something by the Soviets. [pause] But except for my dad being real opinionated, very, very conservative, very fundamental, I wasn't really into politics much, except for the presidential elections.

TS: When they came around?

JH: Yes.

TS: So you had—So, you're liking school. And did you have a sense of what you thought you were going to do when you got done with school?

JH: Well, initially I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to be an orthopedic surgeon, but mostly I went to college to play sports. [laughter]

TS: Where'd you go to college?

JH: So, I went to the State University of New York, the college of Cortland. They usually call it SUNY Cortland. That's upstate New York, between Binghamton and Syracuse. And I went there on recommendations of my high school coach, who was another very influential person in my life, Jan McNealy[?]. She's passed away. But she had gone to Ithaca College for her graduate work, and she recommended Cortland to me. She said, "It's small enough where enough people will know you, but it's large enough that you can get lost if you want to."

TS: Was she right about that?

JH: Yeah, yeah. It was just perfect for me. So, I played three sports—played four in high school and three in college.

TS: What did you play in high school?

JH: High school I played field hockey, basketball, volleyball, and softball. And then in college I played field hockey, basketball, and softball.

TS: Did you travel around at all?

JH: Yeah, yeah. We did a significant amount of, you know, away games, home games. That was before the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] took over, obviously, but—and it was before Title IX.

TS: So, you would have graduated around '70?

JH: Seventy-four was when I graduated. Title 9 started in '72, but we really didn't see the effects of it until much later.

TS: What did—you graduated from what in '74?

JH: College.

TS: College. But you graduated from, like, high school in—

JH: Seventy.

TS: Seventy, then. Okay. So '74—So, no Title IX.

JH: No. In high school we had bake sales to raise money for our uniforms, and our parents drove us to the games. We didn't even get busses or anything to go to our away games; we had to recruit parents to drive us to the games. And—

TS: What did you think about that? Did you feel like that was—

JH: Incredibly discriminatory.

TS: Oh, you thought so at the time?

JH: I always felt like I should have been a boy [laughter] because the boys had all the good stuff. They had the sports, they had other things. I hated it in school when I couldn't take vocational subjects, so—

TS: What did you want to take?

JH: I wanted to take shop. I wanted to take wood shop and metal shop and fixing automobiles and all the great things that the guys took, whereas all we got to take was home economics and art and music. Music was fine. I was in the band, so I played trumpet when I was in school. But it was just—It was so discriminatory that you couldn't take what you wanted to take. There was no reason why a girl couldn't take vocational stuff.

TS: But you—so, that's something that you were aware of, even at that age.

JH: Oh, incredibly, yes.

TS: So, when you were in college, did you—did you get to do the orthopedic?

JH: No, I found out I had eczema on my hands and I couldn't scrub, and so I—the courses were so similar, so I just went into physical education.

TS: That's the one you graduated from: SUNY at—where'd you say at?

JH: Cortland.

TS: Cortland. What were your plans then?

JH: I was going to teach. I was going to teach, and so I got a job teaching in Philadelphia. I taught there for two years. And so I coached—I taught K through 4[th grade], the little ones, and then I coached in the middle school and the upper school. So, I coached lacrosse, basketball, and field hockey.

TS: Bet that kept you kind of busy.

JH: Yeah, it was fun. It was a good two years. So, the basketball teams were undefeated. I took them on tour, so I brought them from Philadelphia down to the D. C. area and then to Richmond, Virginia, so they got a chance to experience some more competition. There was a good group of kids. We had a good time.

TS: So, what years would this have been, that you were doing this teaching?

JH: That was ’74 through ’76.

TS: Okay. So then what? Why did you stop teaching there?

JH: I think I was bored. I had done everything I wanted to do. I just couldn’t imagine continuing to do that, so I applied to graduate school and I went to the University of Maryland for a master’s in exercise physiology.

TS: And how did that go?

JH: Well, it was a great two years. I had written the first three chapters of my—of my thesis, and my results came out 180 from my hypothesis. So, it meant I needed to re-write my first three chapters, and I was just crushed. So, that’s when I started looking at something else to do.

So, somebody said, “Did you ever consider the military?” And I had always been enthralled by the military. I would look at books—picture books about the academies. I thought that was so interesting, but of course women couldn’t go then, and I thought that was discriminatory. It’s just like all these things that I thought I might want to do I couldn’t do because I was a girl. So, I started looking around at the different branches of service. I had a friend who was in the Marines. I went down to [Marine Corps Base] Quantico and visited with her, and she showed me all around and—

TS: What’d you think of that?

JH: I didn’t like the limited opportunity that was there. So, there were so many things that she couldn’t do because she was a woman in the Marines, and so I didn’t want to get into that. [I] interviewed with the air force; they were okay. But the navy really got my attention. One, because the duty stations were the best, always near water, which I always loved. I thought their uniforms were the best, and I think they leveled with me the most. They said, “Here’s what you can do as a woman. Here’s what you won’t be able to do. But for the most part, other than what Congress restricts us, we’re probably as open-ended as you can get.” And so that would’ve been in ’77, 1977.

TS: When you were looking around.

JH: When I was looking around.

TS: And—go ahead.

JH: So, when I finished up my coursework for my master’s program but wasn’t going to rewrite or finish the thesis, I just went ahead and signed up to be an officer in the navy.

TS: Now had you—what—did your family have any background in the military?

JH: My dad had been in the navy. He was a gunnery instructor at the [Naval Station] Great Lakes during the war, World War II.

TS: Did that have any influence, do you think, on you at all?

JH: None whatsoever.

TS: [laughter] Now what did he think about you joining up?

JH: My dad and I had a rocky relationship, and I was told that he was very proud of me, but he never could say that to me. So, I always heard it through somebody else.

TS: Yeah. How about your mom?

JH: Mom was very proud. Mom came to my signing in, my swearing in, and she came to my commissioning and all sorts of milestones throughout my career. My mom was there, but Dad was nowhere to be found.

TS: Well then how about your siblings? What did they think about it?

JH: I think they were just more like, "That's Joyce. That's just what she's going to do. It's going to be something different, something crazy, something pushing the envelope, something that most folks wouldn't do." That's kind of how they viewed my military service.

TS: And how about—so—and your friends?

JH: Well, I had one friend that was going to go in with me, but they decided at the last minute not to. And as we look back on that now, she says it was probably a good thing that she didn't get in, because it wouldn't have suited her at all.

TS: No? [laughter]

JH: But all my friends, I mean—being in the military, for me, was pretty much just like having another job. It's just that you worked 24/7 and you got thirty days leave, but included the weekends. So, it isn't thirty days like most folks think of thirty days in terms of that being five weeks for them. For us it was thirty days. And you had to stand duty, twenty-four hour duty, which was pretty tough sometimes. And you could be sent into a very hazardous situation. But other than that it was—It was another job. I loved the structure of the military. I liked knowing where things were coming from and where I had to send things, so it isn't like I had experienced in corporate America, where you can be stabbed in the back and you don't know where it's come from. In the military, if somebody screwed you over, you knew where it came from.

TS: [chuckles] Okay. Well, what—when—okay, let me back up a little bit. So you're—when you're in graduate school, you're having that thesis issue, and you're looking—somebody—do you remember who it was that suggested it, the military thing?

JH: I don't remember.

TS: Was there other things that you were looking at also at that time, or was it—other opportunities outside the military that you were looking at to do?

JH: I was really kind of stuck, because a master's degree was required to teach at the college level, and I wasn't going to get that. I didn't know what I was going to do. I thought maybe I would end up working for my dad on the farm or something, I really didn't know what I was going to do.

TS: So, when somebody suggested it, that seemed like an opportunity, in some respects. Okay.

JH: Yes.

TS: Did you—okay. So, you sign up and it's 1978, and you went through Officer Training School.

JH: Officer Candidate School.

TS: Officer Candidate School, okay. How was that?

[Comments regarding dog redacted]

JH: Officer Candidate School was in Newport, Rhode Island, and I loved every minute of it. It was challenging, physically, emotionally, spiritually. It was the classic, "We're going to tear you down and build you up the way we want you to operate." And I just thought it was marvelous. I loved being in uniform. I was really proud of that. And I loved the challenges. I loved learning all about the navy, learning how to drive a ship. It was just—It was incredible. I just loved it.

Funny story in Officer Candidate School: During the first week—they kind of called it "hell week"—and everybody in my company was really getting down. And when you wanted to speak you had to go outside of your room and stand on this little mark and yell out, "Sir! Officer Candidate Heflin, Foxtrot Company, Cumin[?] class, 78004, request permission to speak, sir!" I can still remember it, that's how many times we said it.

And then the drill instructor would come right up in your face and say, "Very well, speak!"

So, towards the end of that hell week—but we didn't know it was a week; we didn't know it was just going to last a week—

TS: How long it was going to last.

JH: Yeah. And so when he came up and said, "Speak."

I went "Woof!" And everybody in the company just cracked up. He laughed, and then he had to compose himself.

He says, "Fall into your spaces. Fall in!"

And my roommate was just white. She said, "You're going to get killed! You're going to get killed!"

But it really rallied everybody and pulled everybody together, so we made it through.

TS: It broke some of that stress level that was going on.

JH: Yeah, yeah. But I had to march on—they call it the Grinder, which is a blacktop, so I had to do demerit duty for my outburst, with a rifle in a dress uniform, marching back and forth on this hot asphalt.

TS: Yeah. Was it worth it?

JH: Oh yeah. [laughter] Oh yeah. Definitely.

TS: So what was it about—you said you loved it. What—can you, like, pinpoint what it was so much that you enjoyed?

JH: I think I liked being part of something bigger than I was. I felt very proud to have been accepted to, you know; go through this training and to be an officer. I liked the structure. I thought what we were learning was fascinating—how things operated. I mean, you can imagine learning how these incredible ships work. How do you get a thousand people to all be pulling in the same direction and move them from ship to ship and everything just keeps working wonderfully well. I thought it was just amazing.

TS: Do you remember the first time you put on your uniform?

JH: Yes.

TS: Tell me about that.

JH: Well, that would have been at Officer Candidate School. And when you first got there, you go through all of these stations, and so they give you, you know, all of your clothes. And then you had to learn how to put on the different uniforms. And what I remember—[laughs] probably the funniest story is, they weren't hemmed. So, we had trousers and they weren't hemmed and we didn't have anything to hem them with. And I

thought, "Well, we could use tape." So, I turned the cuffs in and put masking tape, and that morning when we went marching in the grass, of course, the tape got wet and then a lot of us were marching with our trousers just dragging over our feet. It was really kind of funny. I didn't like it that the women's uniforms were different from the guys'. Again, I just felt that was discrimination. I wanted to be equal to. I didn't want to be different from, and I didn't want different standards. And so I hated it that the physical standards were different, that, you know, I could do a modified push-up and the guys had to do regular push-ups. I wanted to have everything the same. So, I think I felt discrimination, you know, from the earliest days, just because that's the way it was.

TS: Was it men and women together—

JH: Yes.

TS: —in this Officer Candidate School?

JH: Yeah, yeah. The men and women together on the same floor, so we were divided by companies. And so there would be a guys' room and a female room. And then when you would go out, there would be a men's head and a women's head, bathroom.

TS: So, what was your sense when you joined up? Did you have a sense about how long you might be doing this?

JH: I wanted to be an admiral. I wanted to be in charge of the navy. I wanted to be number one.

TS: So, that was how you set out?

JH: Yes.

TS: Okay. Now, where was your first duty station after OCS?

JH: Well, what was funny is I wanted to get away from sports and athletics.

TS: Why?

JH: I think just because I had not finished my—my master's degree. I was thinking that I, you know, I didn't qualify, and so I wanted to get away from that. But my first duty station was the Naval Academy teaching physical education, and then I ended up coaching varsity women's softball, because they saw what my credentials were in physical education and sports, so. [laughs] That was my first duty station.

TS: You didn't get very far away from it at all.

JH: Not at all, not at all. And it was great. It was great. I loved every minute of it. It's a fantastic place. I would never—if I had a daughter, I would never send her there.

TS: Why?

JH: Because it's hellacious experience.

TS: Yeah.

JH: It's just the utmost in demeaning, dehumanizing—for a whole year during that plebe year.

TS: Well, you would have been there, then—because the first women that went into the academy in '76, right?

JH: Yes.

TS: So they were like in the second year of their—of their time in Annapolis, right?

JH: That is correct. So, I was the second group of women to be assigned as instructors.

TS: Well, talk about that a little bit more. What was your experience there as far as—well, you've been talking a little bit about discrimination. What did you see—you obviously saw something from the way you're talking.

JH: Well, coaching the varsity kids, I got the chance to know them really well. When you just taught classes—the classes were huge, so you would be testing folks or running them through drills or whatever, and you didn't get to really know any of the students. But by coaching, I really got to know the young women. And some of the things that they would share with me I would just be flabbergasted, in terms of that some upperclassmen would take a jar of peanut butter with a knife and say, "Watch me deflower this." And just always harassing the women. I'm not saying sexual harassment but just an unusual amount of harassment, because the general culture was, "We don't want you here, you don't belong here, and we'll do everything we can to get rid of you."

So, the athletes tended to do very well because they could handle the physical stuff, and as long as they did okay in the academic arena, they did very well. The kids who were just strong academically got hammered because of the physical requirements.

TS: How about—

JH: It's not an easy place to go to school.

TS: Yeah. As an instructor there, you saw that the kids in the academy were facing some difficult times. How about for you, with your experience there? What was it like?

JH: Well, I was in seventh heaven because I was at a college, I was teaching physical education, and I was coaching a varsity sport. I couldn't have been happier. I had great bosses. They gave me the ball, literally, and let me run with it. And so I was an ensign just zooming around amongst all these senior officers, having a ball, not really understanding that my classmates from Officer Candidate School were doing real jobs. [laughs] They were doing real tough stuff, and here I was playing and coaching and working out and just having a great time.

TS: Were there a lot of women at the academy as instructors at that time?

JH: No. Not—

TS: How many do you think there might have been? Do you remember?

JH: Well, in the physical education department, where I was, there was just [pause]—There was one other officer and then there was another civilian, female; she was coaching gymnastics. And then there were several academic instructors, and then there were one or two company officers that were assigned to Bancroft Hall [dormitory], but there weren't a lot of us.

TS: Did you have—Well, I guess most of your superiors then were men, right?

JH: Yes.

TS: So what kind of relationships did you have—you said they were really great to work with.

JH: They were great. They were just great. I was good at what I did, and so, like I said, they gave me the ball and let me run with it. I did my assigned military tasks. It was just dynamite. The only problem that I had was I rode a motorcycle, and my superiors didn't like that. They didn't think that was a good example for the midshipmen. [laughs]

TS: Why? Why would they say that?

JH: Well, the midshipmen aren't allowed to have a motorcycle, and so when I would ride it on and off the yard, as it's called, they didn't think that was really cool. But that was during the oil crisis and gas was really terrible, and so I bought a motorcycle so I could get back and forth to work.

TS: So, where were you living at that time?

JH: Well, initially I was living with my parents in Rockville, Maryland, and was commuting from Rockville to Annapolis.

TS: How long of a commute is that? That's a long—

JH: That's a long haul, yeah. It was a good hour commute. And then I moved to Annapolis, and I lived within walking distance of the academy.

TS: So you lived off post or off the—

JH: Yeah, I didn't live in bachelors' officer quarters. I lived in a small house.

TS: Was there a reason for that?

JH: I wanted more than just a room.

TS: So, your choice.

JH: Yes, my choice.

TS: So, they did have accommodations if you had wanted to stay.

JH: Yes, yes.

TS: Okay.

JH: Almost every duty facility has bachelors' officer quarters, and then if you're married they have housing available.

TS: And so they had plenty for the women at that time, too, then?

JH: Yes.

TS: So, what happened next? Oh, I was going to ask you too—I'm sorry. What kind of things did you do—I know you're busy coaching. Did you have any leisure activities or off-duty activities that you liked to do?

JH: Well, I love to sail, and so Annapolis was a great place to be. So, I had a friend who had a boat and we did a lot of sailing. So, that was just delightful.

TS: [dogs shuffling] Oh, the [unclear]

JH: Yeah, the Severn River and the Chesapeake [Bay]. And I played softball myself, so I was Class A women's fast pitch softball, so I played that in D.C. in a travel league. So, that kept me busy when I wasn't coaching.

TS: How'd you do with that?

JH: I did really well. I had aspirations to try out for the Pan-Am [Pan American] team, but didn't get that opportunity.

TS: What position did you play?

JH: Shortstop.

TS: Yeah. So, you're traveling, you're coaching, you're sailing. Did you want to leave Annapolis?

JH: No. No, because what I had to do after that tour was I had to go into the real world, and—well, the real navy world—and so for three years, I was in heaven, and then I got a rude awakening when I had to go to the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida.

TS: What happened there?

JH: I was assigned as the assistant recreation officer, because they wanted to keep me in the sports area. And during my tour there, I wanted to fly. I wanted to get into aviation, because we were right there at the home of naval aviation. So, I applied, but I needed an age waiver. I was six months too old to get into the flight program, and they denied my request.

So, I went to the commanding officer and the executive officer and I said, "I want to be near the planes." Well, first I said, "I'm going to resign," because I was so crushed that I couldn't fly.

And they said, "Well, how about if we just get you near the planes?"

So, the next day I was the aviation—avionics division officer. So, our job was to fix all of the black boxes. So we did radios, radars, anything that was communication related or navigation-related. And it was an intermediate maintenance facility, so the squadrons would send stuff that they couldn't fix to us. We would fix it and then send it back to the squadrons. So, that was quite an education.

TS: I was going to say, how did you—now, how did you go from what you were doing before to learn this particular aspect of the navy?

JH: Well, since that was a whole new designator—I was an 1100 designator, which is general unrestricted line, and aircraft maintenance is a whole different designator. I think it's 1520. And they sent me to a school for a couple of weeks in Norfolk [Virginia] to learn about maintenance. And I thought about changing my designator, but something told me I didn't want to just get stuck in one area, so I kept my 1100 designator.

TS: Now, what kind of—Who did you supervise then? What was your rank at this time? I mean, what—at Pensacola?

JH: At Pensacola I arrived as a lieutenant junior grade, so while I was at Annapolis I went from ensign, which was two years, and then lieutenant junior grade, and then I early

selected for lieutenant. So, when I got to Pensacola, I was a lieutenant 0-3. And I forgot your question?

TS: How was it that—who were you supervising? So you're a lieutenant [dogs shuffling]—who were you in charge of at this station when you're the avionics division officer?

JH: Well, there was a chief, an enlisted chief, and then I had—oh golly, how many enlisted folks—probably fifty or sixty enlisted folks. And they would be, you know, radio folks or bench repair or electronics technicians. So, anything that had to do with the gear that we fixed, those would be the folks that I worked with.

TS: Did you have disciplinary issues that ever came up?

JH: Oh, yeah.

TS: What kind of things would come up?

JH: Well, that was really a big time for drugs. So, we're looking at now the mid-eighties, and the navy had a very hard stand on drugs. It was "not on my watch," and if you came up positive, you were gone. So, we had folks that we lost because of coming up positive on drug tests. We had folks that missed duty or were late to work, you know, just the standard type of thing. I never had anybody who was a real bad egg. I had some good folks that worked for me.

TS: Were they mostly men or—

JH: Yeah, yeah.

TS: —men and women? Was there a mix of them?

JH: There were a few women but it was mostly men.

TS: Mostly men.

JH: Yes.

TS: So, did they have any issues with you being their, you know, commanding officer?

JH: No, I think that—I know a retired electronics guy, and he kind of briefed me on what it was going to be like and made some suggestions on what I should do in terms of how I deport myself.

TS: What kind of things did he suggest?

JH: He said, "Study, know what you're talking about, and be consistent, be fair, be honest, be strict, and you'll earn the respect of your troops." And that's kind of the way I operate anyway, so I always try to treat people the way I would like to be treated myself, whether they're enlisted or officer. It didn't make any difference to me. So, I got along real well with my troops.

TS: But you said, now, you went from this ideal world to the real navy. How was it different, then, Joyce? What was different about it?

JH: Well, something as simple as wearing the uniform. At Annapolis, a lot of the time I was in PT [physical training] gear, you know gym clothes. So, only wore my uniform when I wasn't doing something that was related to PT stuff. Whereas in the real navy you wear your uniform. So, you only wear your PT gear when you're actually doing physical training. So, that was the most obvious difference. The other thing was just the work schedule. The work schedule at Pensacola: You started at 7[PM] in the morning and you got off at 4[PM], usually, if the work was done. But you would have duty and that would be a twenty-four hour thing. So it was—It was an awakening to go to the real navy and deal with not students and youngsters, but adults that were in the navy as their career.

TS: Now, did you do anything in your off-time then?

JH: Yeah, I got into triathlons. So, we started the Navy Open Triathlon at Pensacola, and I did triathlons all over the United States, qualified for Nationals, and just had a great, great time with physical stuff.

TS: So, tell me what a triathlon does.

JH: Triathlon is a swim, bike, and run. And probably the most famous one is the Iron Man in Hawaii, and that's a two-point-something mile swim, a—what is the bike? The bike is a hundred miles, and then the run is a marathon, twenty six point whatever run [2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26.2 mile run]. So, that's what I had aspired to, but my knee wore out. [laughs] So, I had to have knee surgery and couldn't train what was required to do that. But we had a very active group of navy folks who did triathlons, and we traveled around together and competed.

TS: What kind of places did you go?

JH: Oh, all over Florida, went to San Diego, Sacramento, California—where else did I race? Atlanta—mostly California, Florida, Atlanta, and—let's see. The Nationals one year were in Hilton Head, South Carolina, so I was there, too.

TS: So, you got to travel a little bit around the country with that, too. And this was on the navy, right?

JH: No, this was on my own dime.

TS: On your own dime? Okay.

JH: Yeah.

TS: So, you're in Pensacola until '84, right? And how are you liking the navy?

JH: Still loving it. I had great bosses. My department head at the maintenance department was just super. He was a warrant officer, and he was just dynamite. I just loved him dearly. And he and his wife kind of took me under their wing, and he was very good at counseling me. And then my commanding officer was one of my recruits from Annapolis' dad. So I kind of had an in because I had gotten his daughter into the academy. He treated me like gold, and I was very grateful for that. And then my next commanding officer at Pensacola was a prisoner of war survivor from Vietnam, and probably one of the most outstanding men I have ever worked for. He was the kind of guy, if he said, "Run into that wall," I would just do it, because I knew it was right if he told me to do it. He was just—he was an incredible boss, just incredible.

TS: So, you're having really good mentors that are male mentors for you. Was there anything about the culture of the navy—because you hear a lot about, you know, the equality that happened later, but, you know, the idea that the men didn't want the women in the navy. But you're not really seeing that kind of tension in the jobs that you're at.

JH: Well, I'm still so early in my career that I still don't see the big picture about the hoops that you need to jump through in order to become a senior officer. And I'm thinking about duty in Hawaii because it would be fun to be in Hawaii, and I'm just having a good time. I work real hard, I do my work well, but I'm doing triathlons. I'm just, you know, having a ball with the whole experience. So, I wasn't really focused on trying to work in such a manner as to progress my career. I think if I had—and my first taste of that was not getting in as an aviator—was that I wonder if a guy would have gotten an age waiver. I think they were just so strict on the women. And then I watched the women that did get in from the fleet, I watched them fail the physical fitness tests, and I was just crushed, just crushed.

TS: Because you knew that you would have no problem with it at all.

JH: Right. Yeah.

TS: So, you did it—so, you're not—you're just thinking, "Okay. I'm here. I'm here and I'm going to be doing the athletic things and going to some fun places and things like that."

JH: Yes.

TS: So, what happens next? So you—oh, I also did want to ask you, too—So you're kind of in the middle of the Cold War, too. So, '80, '84, Ronald Reagan is president. What did you think of him at that particular time period, politically?

JH: Well, I bought my first house in Pensacola, and the interest rate when I closed was sixteen percent. So, I was not a big fan of President Reagan. [laughs] You know, the economic conditions were terrible then. I mean, can you imagine sixteen percent interest, whereas now we have four and five percent. So, you know, it was a tough time. It was a tough time. I remember the, you know, the Berlin Wall coming down; that was an incredible experience. So that was—

TS: That was the early, you know, nineties?

JH: Yeah. So—I can't remember the exact date.

TS: Yeah, I was going to say it was somewhere around '89 or '91. [laughter]

JH: I rely on you, the history—history expert, on that. But Reagan was president, I remember.

TS: Well, we had a few things happening there that the navy was involved in, and, you know, we went to Grenada in those years. We had Beirut [peacekeeping with the Multinational Force in Lebanon].

JH: Yeah. I was the duty officer in Pensacola the night that they staged [the invasion of] Grenada, because they used Pensacola to come in and out of to get to Grenada. And everything was top secret, and so I knew a lot of things that I wasn't able to say to anybody, because everything was top secret. But that was kind of exciting.

TS: Because you knew it was going to go on.

JH: Yes.

TS: And things like that. Yeah. What did you think about that time period, with what was happening?

JH: I wasn't political at all. It really didn't—Things just didn't faze me, as far as what was going on politically. I just wasn't interested.

TS: Yeah. So, it was like, "Okay. I have to pay the sixteen percent for my house; that's going to affect my pocketbook," sort of things.

JH: Yeah. But if it didn't really affect me, I didn't care much about it.

TS: So, what were your thoughts about—so you—How many years were you in, about four or five years?

JH: Yeah.

TS: Going on six years.

JH: Going on six years.

TS: So, what are your thoughts now about what—where you're at in your career and where you want to be?

JH: Well, now I had been counseled as to, you know, what you need to do in order to advance, and I was really lucky to get selected for the Naval Postgraduate School.

TS: And tell us about that. What's that about?

JH: The navy wants to provide opportunities for its officers to get at least a master's degree, and in some areas an actual doctorate, so that in house they will have expertise in the subspecialties that are important to the navy. And so that's the whole basis of the postgraduate school. So, they really pick the cream of the crop. They're looking at folks who they envision are going to become senior officers and become senior leaders. So, I was honored and thrilled because while I was at Pensacola, I was also going to graduate school. So, because I felt so bad about not finishing my first master's program, I signed up and did tuition assistance and did a master's program in education and training at the University of West Florida, while I was at Pensacola and while I was doing everything else.

TS: So, you did get your master's?

JH: So, I ended up getting a master's there. And then I got selected for postgraduate school, and so I got another master's while I was at PG [postgraduate] school, and that was in management.

TS: Management. And how was that experience?

JH: That was the toughest academic experience I've ever had. If you can imagine the cream of the crop of the navy, academically and performance, and the most competitive folks, are now going to go to this small pool and thrash about. And the best way I can think to describe it is, they graded on a curve, so you could get a 96 on an exam and fail. That's pretty tough standards.

TS: That's pretty tough. Yes, I would agree. [laughter] I wouldn't let that sit too well with me.

JH: Oh, man. So, here I was thinking that I was, you know, a really good academic person and a very good performer, and I went to PG school and my curriculum was computers,

and I was floundering. I was just floundering. The math was throwing me for a curve, the economics, you know, the programming courses and—and so I was like, "I'm going to flunk out of here," I thought, with this curve and everything else and the competition. I was just falling through the cracks. So, I went to my advisor and I asked if I could switch curriculums. So, I wanted to go into management, so there wouldn't be quite as heavy a concentration of the tough science stuff. And so what I ended up then was I got approved, I switched to the management curriculum, but I still had to take economics, I still had to take calculus, I still had to take all of these really tough courses—statistics and the whole nine yards. And it was just—it was brutal. It was brutal; it was the toughest experience I've ever had. I framed my diploma in red, because I paid for it in blood. [laughter]

TS: Well, of course, you're stationed at a place that's almost heaven on earth, too, though, right?

JH: It was very nice, very expensive. I shared a townhouse with another officer, and my half of the rent was more than my mortgage payment in Florida.

TS: Which you still had at that time?

JH: That's right.

TS: Yeah. Yeah, because this was in Monterey, California.

JH: Yeah, yeah. And I was only going to be there eighteen months, so there was no need to—to buy anything.

TS: So what kind of things—did you have any time to do any kind of outside activity besides your studies while you were there?

JH: Yeah, I had to study a lot, but on Fridays I didn't have any classes, and so I actually substitute taught in one of the school districts there, and that was fun. And I did officiating. I did—I officiated basketball, boys' basketball. That was fun. I would—you would show up, and, of course, when you walk out on the court, you've got a jacket on, and I had short hair, so they really couldn't tell if I was male or female. But when I took my jacket off, then it was obvious that I was a female. And so some of the coaches and some of the boys would start giving me some lip, and it was just very easy to say, "One more word out of you and you're gone." And I never had any more problems. So, that was fun. And I was still doing triathlons then, so I was traveling all over the West Coast doing triathlons. So, I would bike to school. I lived in Marina, California, about—I guess about ten miles north of Monterey, and so I would bike in. And I would usually swim at noontime, and then I would run and bike home. So, still doing the triathlon stuff.

TS: My goodness. Wow. You're making me tired just listening to it. [laughter]

JH: Sometimes I look back on that time and I go, "My goodness, how did I do all that?"

TS: Yeah. How did you do it all? That's a lot.

JH: Yeah, well, young and foolish.

TS: You didn't have a lot of downtime.

JH: No, no downtime, no downtime.

TS: Did you listen to any music or—?

JH: No, I had almost zero social life and—

TS: [laughs] Okay.

JH: Other than triathlon, that was my major pursuit.

TS: Those were the friends that you hung out with, doing that kind of stuff.

JH: Yeah.

TS: So that took you about—

JH: Can we stop the tape just a second?

TS: Oh, absolutely. Sure, let's stop. Let's pause.

[recording paused]

TS: Okay. We had a little short break and we're back, and I think we were talking about how you didn't have a life, Joyce, right? Is that what you were telling me, you're doing your triathlons and—? But you wanted to go back a little bit and talk about some other aspects of military life that were, I guess, a little trying in some ways for you.

JH: Well, I think probably the most challenging thing overall—everything okay with the machine? The most challenging thing overall was that I was probably gay from birth, but denied it because it was something that my father said you couldn't be. You couldn't get pregnant, you couldn't be gay, and so I didn't know what to do. But my tomboy nature was probably more than just being a tomboy; it was definitely that I was gay. So, I think it's genetic. And so now I'm in an organization where its rules and regulations are very clear that it's not okay to be gay, that I've actually lied because I've said that I'm not gay when asked the direct question—

TS: Right.

JH: —and so my whole commitment to honor and duty is compromised by the fact that I'm living a double life. And so my social life was a matter of what was private, in terms of having a relationship with another woman, and what was public, in terms of dating guys so that everybody would think that I wasn't gay.

TS: So, you had, like, a double life.

JH: Right. And you never got to be really friendly with any of the other female officers, because they would turn you in. Even if they were gay, they would turn you in to the witch-hunt in order to protect themselves.

TS: Did you know of that happening to anyone?

JH: Yes.

TS: Do you want to tell me about it?

JH: Not—I don't want to go into details about it, but at the Naval Academy, one of the coaches was accused of being gay, and so there was a hearing that went on with that. And I think it was a vicious rumor that came out of some of the guys just wanting to get at the women, and that was one great way to get at women because who's successful in the military? Somebody who is assertive, aggressive, has a lot of masculine characteristics. And I'm not saying that that's what all gay women have, but that certainly made you stand out in the military. So, if there was a way to get rid of you that was one of the ways that they tried to do it.

TS: Did—was she a gay woman?

JH: Yes.

TS: And did she get kicked out?

JH: No. But when I left the Naval Academy, unbeknownst to me, several members of the softball team that I coached were charged with being gay and were kicked out.

TS: After you had left?

JH: After I had left. I was never called to testify or make any statement or anything. So it was—it was very frightening to me because here I was putting up that front, and my kids were actually losing their careers because they were gay.

TS: So how—so you said you had a long-term relationship, from the very beginning—from the very beginning of when you were in the navy, right?

JH: Well, not actually from the very beginning. There was a student of mine who left the academy to pursue a medical degree, and we ended up getting to be very friendly and ended up becoming partners, although I wasn't really ready to call it that because at that point I was still saying, "I'm not gay, I just happen to love this woman."

TS: This one woman.

JH: This one woman—one particular woman. And so for six years we were together, and so I was as closeted and as homophobic and as uptight as anybody could possibly be, because at this point I'm loving the navy. There's nothing that I wanted to do that was going to hurt my navy career, and yet here I was somebody who was going to get kicked out just because I was gay.

TS: So did this woman—did she live with you?

JH: Yes.

TS: And so was that one of the reasons that you lived off the post, too, when you said they had the BOQ, instead of having to—

JH: Well, at Annapolis I had my own place, but we weren't together at that point. So, it was after I transferred to Pensacola, and then she moved to Pensacola to be with me.

TS: So, it was at that point. Okay. So then—so, that's one of the reasons that you stayed off of the naval station.

JH: Yes.

TS: Was just because of that, because you had that separation.

JH: Yes. Yes, had to have a private life.

TS: So were you also—when you're—the six years that you're with this woman, were you also dating men, too?

JH: Yeah, as a front.

TS: As a front. So that, like your partner knew that this was part of the game you were playing, kind of thing?

JH: Yes.

TS: How was that? I mean, what did you think about—

JH: It's horrendous. It is totally demeaning. It is abusive to the guys that you're dating because obviously you don't tell them, and I hate the fact that I used people that way. And I hated the fact that I was living a lie: that when I went on a vacation—and I went on some great vacations—that when I came back, I couldn't show pictures that had her in them, and I couldn't talk about her, my partner. It was always "my roommate," you know, that type of thing. And everybody just knew we were really good friends. So it's—it is the most awful experience that you can imagine.

TS: And you said, you know—what is it—a second ago you said that you were really homophobic, too. How—can you explain how you mean by that? What—

JH: Well, I think in basic terms, being homophobic is that you are gay and yet you're not able to admit it, and therefore you strike out at it. So that which you are, you repulse. So, you have this awful push and pull relationship with who you are and other people who are your people.

TS: At the time that you're experiencing this—okay, so are you saying, like, "I'm not really"—you're at the point where you're saying, "I'm not really gay." Was this most of the time that you had this relationship with this woman?

JH: Yes.

TS: So, it's just this one woman, "I'm just—this is the exception. It's not who I am. It's not my identity," right?

JH: That's what I said, yeah.

TS: Is it—I didn't mean to make those—put those words in your mouth. "That's what you said."

JH: That's okay. That's okay.

TS: So, that's like—so, that's like your coping mechanism that you're doing, sort of. I mean, as you're reflecting back now, right?

JH: Yes.

TS: At the time, do you remember what you were thinking about how you were doing?

JH: Well, there was a point in time where I was very religious, and I thought, "Geez, I'm going to hell. I'm going to hell in a hand basket." You know, not only am I lying, but I'm living this terrible thing, and I'm terrible, so there's a lot of shame, a lot of remorse. And then of course the guys that I was dating, it was—you wonder, why doesn't—Why can't I make this work? Why can't I really be attracted to them in all dimensions? But I couldn't! I liked them a lot. I love guys; I just don't want to have sex with them. So, it

was living a lie, shame. It was just an awful place to be. Whereas one point you put the uniform on, you're so proud, you're so committed to serving your country and being honest and upholding the values, and in the other you're saying, you know, I am a total hypocrite. But the bottom line is: being gay never, ever, in one degree, affected my ability to perform my job. And I think that's what's so important for us now, you know, in 2010, to recognize that this policy [Don't ask, don't tell] needs to go away. This law needs to go away that discriminates against gay folks from serving their country.

TS: Did you—was there any friends that you had that were in the military that you knew also that—like, was there a group that you hung around with that were military, or were these—was there anybody besides your partner, is what I'm saying, I guess?

JH: My social life consisted of just my partner and the triathlon circles, because to associate with gay folks just branded you as being gay, and so I didn't do that.

TS: Stayed away from that.

JH: Yeah.

TS: So you didn't, like, go to any bars—

JH: No.

TS: Read any books or have them in your apartment—

JH: No.

TS: Did you—she's living with you, so you didn't necessarily have to write any letters back and forth, but you probably did when you—

JH: Before we started living together, yeah. So, those would have been incredibly incriminating.

TS: Were you, like, thinking about that at the time?

JH: Yes.

TS: "I have to, like, hide these letters."

JH: Yes, yes.

TS: Did you keep them or did you—what did you ever do with them?

JH: I think eventually I burned them, you know, ones I had received from her. And then you worried about your phone being tapped or, you know, some investigator coming in and

going through your personal effects or something. So it was just—it was always in the back of your mind.

TS: So you're—It's interesting to me that you're over at Monterey, really close to San Francisco, where there's a very, you know, wide gay community. Did you go there at all?

JH: No.

TS: Just stayed as far away from it as—

JH: Because I actually didn't accept myself as a gay woman until 1987, so that was after the postgraduate school experience and when I came back to Washington, D.C., for my duty assignment out of the postgraduate school. So, in 1987 I finally accepted myself. And then there were two gals—well, one gal that I was stationed with who I came out to, and she came out to me, and so she was like my lifeline. And then I found out about a high school friend who was gay, and she also was somebody who helped me in my coming out process. So, after 1987 I was as out and open as you could be and still be in the military.

TS: What changed in 1987?

JH: I couldn't live a lie anymore. It had just gotten to the point where it was—it was more than I can handle. Our relationship ended—that six-year relationship ended.

TS: Was it difficult for her, to live—to know that you were so closeted?

JH: Yes.

TS: Was she also closeted in her—?

JH: She was wanting to be more out and open, and, of course, I was like, "Can't do that," you know. "Please don't make me do that." But she ended up falling in love with someone else, another woman, and so that ended that relationship. And I just kind of fell apart, and I knew that the biggest piece of that was I couldn't live this lie anymore.

TS: Right. [JH coughs] So what did you do?

JH: Well, I came out to that gal that I had worked with and came out to my high school friend, and I started participating in the gay community.

TS: In what ways?

JH: So, I went to social events. I went to women's festivals, women's music festivals. I—

TS: Like where? Can you tell me about some of the places that you went?

JH: Well, right in the D.C. area, since I was in the D.C. area. So, there was a huge women's festival—I think it was in Marlboro, Maryland. And it was just thousands of women and then women performers. So, the top names in women's music were performing. And I was just there—

TS: Do you remember who some of them were?

JH: Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, Holly Near, Tret Fure[?]—

TS: Fure? Tret Fure.

JH: Yeah. And that's all I can remember.

TS: Lucie Tremblay. Was she playing?

JH: Yeah, she was there. So it was just—it was jaw-dropping and it was so freeing, and yet I was still living with tremendous fear because if the navy did find out, I would get kicked out. And then in '93, right before I retired, when [President Bill] Clinton was—looks like he's going to be elected, I was very tempted to come out. And I went to the March on Washington for [Lesbian] Gay [and Bi Equal] Rights [and Liberation] in '93, and I had a chance to meet Colonel [Margarethe "Grethe"] Cammermeyer.

And I talked to her, and I said, "I want to come out. I'm just so sick of the things people are saying. And maybe if I come out it'll work."

And she said to me, she said, "Joyce, stay and get your retirement. Let us fight until you can join us." And those were such wise words because I am so grateful for my retirement. I earned it, and there's nothing about my being gay that undermines my service.

TS: Do you think—how do you think—okay, for somebody who is a heterosexual and they are looking at the military, how is it different—except for, like you say, the job, how is—You know, keeping hidden years, for yourself, how can you explain to them the feelings that you had about the stress level that you were under to hide this the whole time you were in the navy? Is there a way you can articulate that?

JH: Well, if you can imagine a culture that prides itself on honesty and values and the utmost in order and discipline, and then you have yourself as a gay member who also subscribes to all of that—that's why you're there—but because that culture says you can't belong there because you're gay, you have to create a front and deny what you really are. So, you're living a lie, and you're filled with shame and trying to pretend that you're something that you're not. And like I said before, there is absolutely no reason why a gay person can't serve in the military in the United States. They serve in Canada; they serve all throughout Europe, Israel. There is no big deal, no repercussions, no problems, no detriment to good order and discipline.

TS: You were saying, when we had a little break, how one of the most difficult things for you was when you were on a—I'm not sure what you called it—a board for someone?

JH: While I was a division officer at Pensacola, one of my sailors, a female, was accused of being a lesbian, and I was assigned to sit on the administrative hearing board to, in essence, try her. And so here I am exactly what she is: a top performer, an incredible person, and yet because of who you choose to love, you are now deemed socially unfit. And here I am sitting in a position of authority, not being able to admit that I'm just like her. And I remember voting: I said, "There is no credible evidence to convince me that she is and that it has any affect on her performance." And so I think she was retained. I don't think she was kicked out, although I can't remember.

TS: But it was kind of traumatic for you.

JH: Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh. Just again living a lie. Living a lie, filled with shame, and purporting to be something that you aren't really.

TS: When you finally decided to come out and you went to some of these women's festivals and things like that, what was that like for you?

JH: It was what I imagine the slaves felt when they were emancipated: that, oh, my gosh, free at last, free at last! It was empowering, it was affirming, it was inspirational. It was the first time that I started to gain a positive view of myself as a gay woman.

TS: I think you were about thirty-five, I think?

JH: Yes, thirty-five, thirty-seven, right in that ballpark.

TS: Did you come out to your family also at that time?

JH: Yes.

TS: How did that go over?

JH: No problems. No problems. Like I said, I think my family probably knew I was gay from birth because of the extreme nature of my being a tomboy and my incredible involvement in sports and playing with the guys and everything. They didn't really have any trouble with it. My mom had more trouble than my dad because she was very religious, and her view of it being a sin in the religious nature, she had a hard time getting over that. But she has accepted and loved me, you know, better than I ever could have imagined so.

TS: And how about for your dad?

JH: My dad was like, "Oh, my gosh. What did I do wrong?" He thought he had done something wrong: that he had made me do things that were too boy-ish and worked too hard and laboring with him on projects around the house or whatnot.

But I had to tell him, you know, "It has nothing to do with anything that you did. This is who I am, and there's nothing wrong with that."

TS: And he did finally understand that?

JH: Yeah.

TS: And how about your two siblings?

JH: No problem at all. In fact, my younger sister—she's ten years younger—she was trying to help me come out before I was ready. And I remember I went to visit her. She went to William and Mary College, and [I] went to visit her for a gay pride event, and she took me to that event. And I was like, "Oh, my god. What the hell am I doing here?"

And so she said, "I thought you were gay!"

And I was just like, "I'm not ready to do that yet!" [laughs] So, she has been wonderful.

TS: So, was this something that you'd talked about, though? I mean, did you talk to her about that, those feelings and—

JH: A little bit.

TS: But it was kind of—

JH: Yeah, at the time we didn't talk a whole lot about it—

TS: Like into [unclear]?

JH: —but subsequently we're very close and we talk about that a lot.

TS: Yeah, that's interesting.

JH: And my brother had no problems because his wife's brother was gay, and so there was no problem at all with him either.

TS: Yeah. So now you're—I guess we can go back to—actually, let me stop for just a second.

[recording paused]

TS: Okay. I made that whole segment a gay segment. [laughter] So, we can still continue interlacing it, but so that's like the core of it, I think, there. Wow. Really, really, really, [pause] thank you. People don't talk about it. Women don't talk about it. Even when I'm sitting in front of them and I know—[extraneous comment redacted]. That's really—how does it feel to talk about it?

JH: Well, liberating because I am so passionate about being out.

TS: Right.

JH: I don't go around waving a gay flag and I'm not a militant, but to me the most important thing I can do is be out and open. And this might be a good story for the tape, too, is: I bought a condo in Alexandria, and a guy had owned it several owners previous to when I bought it, and he was in the air force. And he was the same rank as I was, and he contacted me saying when I sold it, he would like to buy it, because he just realized he wanted that as an investment. And so he came into town one time and we went out to dinner. That was in the early, early nineties, so before '93 and all this talk about gays in the military with Clinton and whatnot. So, he started spouting off about, "Well you know if there's gays in the military, this is going to happen and this is going to happen and this is going to happen," and he just went on and on.

And I just leaned forward and I just took a big breath and I said, "That's not true." I said, "I'm gay, and that's not happening now." And I said, "There's a lot of folks that are gay that are in the military, and those things aren't happening. So, if gays are legally allowed in the military, nothing is going to change!"

TS: Right. The attitudes of the people who are against gays in the military: that is what's going to change. That is what they don't want to change. [extraneous comment redacted] So that would be a good one to say—

[Comments about the dogs redacted—pause in interview]

TS: Okay, so we're back after a little break. I don't actually—I am not positive I turned that off, so. Okay, so we were going back to—you're going back to Arlington, right?

JH: Right.

TS: Okay. So, you had survived your naval postgraduate school.

JH: That's a good way to put it. [TS laughs] I got my diploma, I survived.

TS: Yeah, you did. Well, you know, more than survived, you put the blood red around the frame, right? So now what kind of job—you're still doing athletic-type-related things here?

JH: No, I'm back in the real navy now, and so my job was as a placement officer.

TS: What's that?

JH: I worked—Placement officers represent the commands in getting the people that they need assigned to their command, whereas a detailer works for the naval member. So, placement officers and detailers are kind of at odds with each other because detailers are trying to get people what they want, and placement officers are trying to get the command what they want.

TS: I see. Okay. So, you're on the side of the command here in the placement, right?

JH: Yes.

TS: So, how was your experience here?

JH: It was the first time I experienced people lying to me because the deals were so dirty going on to get people assigned—

TS: Can you give an example of something like that?

JH: Well, I had a senior officer come up to me, and they used to call it a swizzle. And they would say, "I'm going to swizzle you. I'm going to tell you one thing, but here's what I'm actually going to really do." And I have no idea how to spell "swizzle." [laughter] But they would say, "I'm going to tell the boss this, but what I'm actually going to do is X." And I was crushed because I thought we were all upholding this honor and everything, and that we were all on the same team. That yes, the command was trying to get what they wanted, but the person needed to have their interests represented also. But I just was flabbergasted. And so I would have admirals call me and yelling at me and screaming at me and, "What did you do?" and, "How could you let this happen?" and on and on. It was a very, very stressful job.

TS: Not your favorite.

JH: No, no. No, I would not want to relive that period at all.

TS: And I see—let's see, you were there from '86 to '87, so you made it a nice short little—[laughs] all right. So then what did you do from there? You were telling me about experiences—we actually might have got this on tape where you were telling me about the fellow that you talked to.

JH: Right. Well, it was one of my first times of really taking a chance and coming out with somebody—coming out as a gay person with somebody who is in the military. He wanted to buy my condo, and we were talking about current events. And that was when

gays in the military was a big topic, in the early nineties. And he was saying all these things that were untrue, such as, you know, "The military will fall apart if we have gays in the military," and, "Good order and discipline will be compromised," and, "This will happen and this will happen."

And I just leaned forward and said, "That's not true. I'm gay and I'm decorated and I'm a good performer, and what you're saying isn't true."

And his jaw just dropped. And he actually said, "I've never met anybody who's gay." And so he said, "I really didn't know." And he promised me he wouldn't turn me in, which was very nice of him, but he could have. He could have recoiled in horror and said, "Oh my god!" and called my commanding officer and turned me in, but he didn't. And so—interesting.

TS: Do you think that you had—that you maybe changed his perspective a little bit?

JH: Oh, definitely, definitely. Because he wrote me letters subsequent to that saying how he was so glad that he met me because he had no idea, he didn't know anybody else that was gay, and it totally changed his perspective. So, that's why I'm such a firm believer that—not that I march in the streets or am militant, but the most important thing I can do is be out and open about who I really am because it does show people that I'm a good citizen, I was a great naval officer, I pay my taxes, I serve my community, I volunteer, I do all the things that you want a good person to do. And so who I choose to love has no basis on who I am as a member of a community.

TS: Is there—well, I want to ask this about, like, the military and your navy experience in general, even though we're not—we've got a couple more places that you went. But was there anything in the navy, for you, that was particularly difficult for you to do emotionally or physically?

JH: Well, I've always been so athletically inclined. I never had any trouble with the physical fitness requirements, you know, the testing or anything like that. Emotionally, the most challenging thing was being gay in a organization that didn't want you there, if they knew that you were there. So, here I could be one of the top performers, and yet if I told them I was gay, then I'd get kicked out. Just didn't make any sense.

TS: Did you have any difficulty with your gender at all? I mean, as far as dealing with the navy, which we kind of talked about—we've talked about being a woman within the military. So, being gay and hidden in the military: emotionally difficult.

JH: Yes.

TS: What about the part about being a woman in the military?

JH: No. I think I was so well groomed to be a leader, even before I went in the military that I was blessed with natural talents to be the kind of person that could take charge and it didn't matter that I was a woman. And so I never had guys question my authority. I think

the only thing that was difficult was knowing that there were certain jobs I couldn't have that were key ticket-punchers to have, and I couldn't get those because I was a woman.

TS: Like the one with the flying?

JH: Well, I didn't get an age waiver for flying. That wasn't necessarily gender, but I suspect that if it was a guy, they could have gotten a waiver.

TS: [unclear] What kind of job would have been like a gender one, that would have been a problem?

JH: Well, flying combat flights or serving on a combat vessel, being in a war zone. Those are things that are critical to advancement in the navy, and those were barred at that particular time while I was in. And so you were severely limited in dreaming, you know, of being the chief of naval operations or an admiral or whatever it might be in terms of the general warfare community.

TS: Let's see, here it says you ended up at—Oh, you're still in Washington, D.C., and you become a network manager?

JH: Right. After the naval military personnel command, I got the opportunity to work at the National Defense University, which is located at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. And it is the premier education slot because it's a joint command, so you have navy, army, air force and international military members coming to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the National War College. And so I got the opportunity to get into computers while I was there and started off kind of as a technician, learning the trade, and then ended up as the network manager after my term of service.

TS: How'd you like doing that?

JH: I loved it. I loved it. I didn't have any formal training in computers, but I've always liked them. I started playing with computers when they first came out—

TS: This was '87, I'm looking and seeing.

JH: Yes.

TS: Okay.

JH: And so when the PC [personal computer] first came out—and prior to the actual PCs, I had a Compaq—not a Compaq, a Kaypro II. And it had two disk drives, no hard drive, a little six-inch screen, and it looked like a little sewing machine: you could carry it around. So, I started playing with those and getting those to do things that would help me do my job better. That was great fun. So, going to the National Defense University was a great thing because it was a joint command, so it had a lot of prestige to it, and then working in

computers was just another playground for me. It was, "Oh, wow, look at all this neat stuff I get to learn and all these wonderful people I get to be associated with."

TS: So, you enjoyed that quite a bit.

JH: Very much.

TS: How was it that you got to get this assignment?

JH: Well, I was rolling out of the naval military personnel command and was up for assignment, and because I had completed PG school, I had a subspecialty in computers and management. And so they needed somebody in a job at the National Defense University that matched my qualifications, so I got the chance.

TS: This kind of fit together. And since you had done the placement job, you knew kind of a little bit of the ropes, right, about—

JH: A little bit, a little bit.

TS: Does it help to, like, know somebody to help you get to a particular—

JH: Oh, yes. Yes.

TS: How does that work, generally?

JH: Like any organization, it's who you know and who can pull strings for you and have a little influence for you. But I don't know that I got any real bennies [benefits] from having been a placement officer in getting that position, but my detailer called me and said there was a position open, would I be interested? And I said, "Yes!"

And so the guy who was going to be my boss wanted to interview me, which was kind of unusual. So, I went over and we talked and he said, "Do you know anything?"

And I said, "No, but I'm a quick study. I learn fast."

And the interview went really well, and so he called the detailer and said, "Write her a set of orders." So, that's where I went for my next job.

TS: So what, for you, was like a typical day in the navy, even at this point, say?

JH: Well, at the National Defense University?

TS: Yes.

JH: Well, the day would start at around 7[AM] in the morning. And then for me we always had things to do because we were responsible for running the network, so we had to make sure that everything was up and running, that the students had what they needed, that the faculty had what they needed, and then we had a queue of trouble calls. And so there was

myself, and I had two civilian employees and one military assigned to me to take care of all these things. So, we were really hopping all the time.

TS: What time would your day end?

JH: The day usually secured about 1600, four o' clock, five o' clock. So, kind of 7[AM] to 5[PM] is what you typically would be working. And then if there was some special event or something that we had to do after-hours, then you would end up working late, or if you had duty, you would be working late.

TS: Somebody once told me, that I was interviewing, the difference for them between the military and a civilian job was that when you were in the military and you had a job to do and five o' clock or four o' clock hit, and you had maybe another twenty minutes and you were going to finish the job, you stayed and you finished the job. And in the civilian world, she was very chagrined to find out that when that hour hit, you went home and you picked it up—you know, you pick it up the next day, regardless of—even if it was going to take you just another twenty minutes. Did you find that to be true at all?

JH: Exactly, exactly. And that's why I always tell folks that as a military person, especially as an officer, you serve 24/7, 365 days of the year. I've been on leave, on liberty, and been called back to work because of something that needed to be done. And they don't care that you're on vacation; you've come back and you get this job done.

TS: Right. This is before cell phones and [laughs]—they find you, right?

JH: Yeah, they do. They do.

TS: Because you fill out where you are, right?

JH: You have to—on your leave papers, you have to list the point of contact that can get in touch with you.

TS: Now did you ever take any hops or go traveling?

JH: Yes. Yeah, when I was in college, I did a semester in Germany and that was great. And so one time between assignments—I think it was between—what job was it between? The Naval Academy in Pensacola, I took a full thirty days of leave and I went back to Germany. So, I took a hop to Germany and visited with folks that I knew there, families that I had lived with. I went back to the school that I went to—

TS: What area of Germany did you—

JH: Cologne.

TS: Oh, Cologne. What year was that?

JH: That was in—well—

TS: Eighty-four—

JH: When did I go back?

TS: Yeah.

JH: So, that was between—that would have been ’81. So ’78, ’81—so between the Naval Academy and the—

TS: Oh, I see, Naval Academy. I was thinking postgraduate school.

JH: I didn’t take any leave at all while I was stationed at Annapolis because I was having such a good time; I didn’t need to take any leave. So, I had ninety days, and you can’t carry more than sixty over into a year, so I took thirty in-between.

TS: Good chunk.

JH: It was wonderful. And so it was ’81, I took a hop over to Germany and spent the month there traveling around and seeing folks that I had known from when I was there in ’73.

TS: So, did you take any other type of hops anywhere?

JH: Yeah, after I graduated from PG school, I took a hop to Hawaii. And I flew my mom out to Hawaii so that she could visit Hawaii.

TS: She finally got there.

JH: So she finally got there. She had come to graduation in Monterey, so she flew commercial and I flew a hop over.

TS: That’s nice. And then—so you’re at—Are you still playing softball and different sports?

JH: Yes.

TS: Did you do that throughout your career in the military—in the navy?

JH: Yeah.

TS: And then—some people say that it’s, you know, that softball is like—that’s a gay culture for women. Did you find that to be true at all?

JH: Well—

TS: Because you were saying, you know, for a long time you weren't out. So, what was that like? She has a very big smile on her face; I don't know why. Joyce?

JH: I think one of the jokes is that [softball] diamonds are a dyke's best friend. There's actually a book with that title. So, in the gay community, women playing softball is a social event. It can be very good softball, very competitive, but gay women playing softball kind of goes hand-in-hand. And so that was a big social outlet for me as well.

TS: Yeah. While you were in the military?

JH: Yes.

TS: Because you did play outside the military also?

JH: I played outside the military.

TS: While you were serving in the navy.

JH: Yes.

TS: Okay. So you did some inside and outside. Okay.

JH: Well, I didn't really play inside the navy. That was more for enlisted personnel to play on the All-Navy team, but I did all of my softball extracurricular to the navy.

TS: I see. Okay, okay. So then you had—so, you learned all about the network engineering and computers and you're loving that.

JH: Loving it.

TS: And you're in—you stayed on the East Coast here, I see, for most of the time, except for Pensacola.

JH: I was always East Coast except for PG school.

TS: And then Pensacola.

JH: Florida, yeah.

TS: I guess I don't think of that [laughter] as East Coast, but it's east, I guess. So in your career—so, while you're doing this as your network manager, are you thinking about your career still?

JH: Oh, very much so.

TS: So tell me about that, Joyce. What'd you—

JH: Well, you know, I wanted to be promoted, I wanted to advance, I wanted to become a senior officer for—I had made 04 while I was at National Defense University, so I was a lieutenant commander, and I wanted to make commander. I wanted to screen to be an executive officer, but I hadn't performed well enough. And I think that three years at the Naval Academy, where I didn't get my real navy experience, kind of hurt me in the long run. So, turns out I did not screen for XO [executive officer], and I didn't make commander. And so in '93, they offered the fifteen-year retirement. It's the only time it's ever been offered, and the purpose was to reduce the size of the military.

And I was working on a networking project, a huge project, and one of the major contractors was what's now Verizon [Communications], but it was Bell Atlantic at the time. And they really were impressed with my work, and so they made me a job offer, even before I got out. Then they offered this fifteen-year retirement, so I was like, "I'll go. I'll go," because it was obvious that nothing was going to change about being gay in the military any time soon. And the retirement was to be exactly as if you had served twenty, just a decrement in your pay. So, I went out as soon as you could get out with the fifteen-year retirement.

TS: Were you [pause]—were you disappointed, I guess, in some way?

JH: Oh, I was crushed. I was crushed because, in essence, this organization that I love dearly, the navy, was telling me I wasn't good enough, you know, to be retained and to continue to serve, and I was being forced out.

TS: What was it that was preventing you? I mean, like, you said you always performed really well, but then your performance—what—you mean like in evaluations or what specifically was it?

JH: Well, I think the three years at the academy, since I wasn't getting my division officer experience as an ensign, I think that held me back.

TS: So, you were like three years behind?

JH: In a lot of ways, in a lot of ways. And then other folks just did a better job than I did. So, when it came time for a selection board to go over every nook and cranny of your record, mine just came up as, you know, "This isn't someone that we see going on to, you know, to serve at the 05 and beyond level."

So, I was crushed. And even though I raised my hand and said, "I'll go with this retirement," it was incredible culture shock because you had to learn what clothes to wear. [laughs] I went to Nordstrom and got a personal shopper so they could help me learn how to dress for corporate America. You no longer went to sick call if you had a medical problem; now you had to make sure you had insurance and you had to go to a certain place, get a doc recommendation for this. So, the whole culture changed. The

whole idea that you kind of took care of your own was stripped away. And then you didn't have a uniform, you know. So, your rank and who you were was always on your shoulder, so if nothing else I knew "I'm a lieutenant" or "I'm a commander," I'm this, I'm that, regardless of how else you might have felt. So it was a terrible transition.

TS: Did you expect that?

JH: No, no, because I was so eager to leave. I was ready to go.

TS: She keeps raising her hand. [laughter] We don't have the video of this, Joyce.

JH: Take me! Take me!

TS: So, it was like a real shock to you to transition back into the civilian world.

JH: Yes.

TS: When you're—did you stay in the same area and have—Did you have a partner at this time or any of that?

JH: Yes, I had a partner at the time, and they were so grateful—I think it was [Operation] Desert Storm that had broken while I was at the National Defense University, and so my partner at the time was having a very, very difficult time with the thought that I might be shipped overseas to this war zone. And it was funny, because lots of reservists from the National Defense University, they did get shipped out. Females shipped out and stayed for years. But I was never—I was never called.

TS: Did you want to go?

JH: Oh, I would have gone, but I didn't want to because of my partner.

TS: I see. Was your partner not in the military?

JH: No, not in the military.

TS: Did you ever have a partner in the military?

JH: No. No, I didn't.

TS: Do you know if that was like a conscious or unconscious [decision] or just circumstances?

JH: Probably mostly circumstances, but, like I said, you didn't really fraternize with other gay women because they would turn you in. And so I was very stand-offish to other gay women in the military.

TS: So, that's like sort of protection: to build up a wall by turning in someone else. It took the pressure off of you, so to speak?

JH: That's what they would do, yeah. Yeah. So, the very people that you would think you would have camaraderie with and support from were the very people who you had to most worry would turn you in.

TS: Would you say you were more worried about like a gay woman turning you in than like a guy?

JH: Yeah.

TS: That was a bigger concern?

JH: Yeah, definitely another woman.

TS: Wow, interesting. Well, how did you like your last assignment? You were at the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Arlington for the last—

JH: Oh, that was another—

TS: —couple years?

JH: I am famous for getting these cush jobs.

TS: Yeah! You've got a few of them. That's true.

JH: I was—I was a consultant to this million-dollar—multi-million-dollar project.

TS: This was the one that was attached to what is now called Verizon?

JH: Yes.

TS: Okay.

JH: And what I was called in for was as a computer specialist to advise the folks that were designing this network. So, I worked very closely with the contractors, and then I reported to one department, but then I did my consulting with the officer who was in charge of the actual network program. And so I was kind of master of my own fate, creating my own work, my own job and investigating different things. And probably the funniest story out of that is: I was trying to tell the leadership that we needed to plan for the internet. So you have to realize, this is—

TS: Before the internet.

JH: This is—Well, the internet is available because the internet came in about, you know, ’86, ’87, but the World Wide Web didn’t hit until ’93.

TS: That’s right.

JH: So this is a little bit prior to the World Wide Web, and so I wanted to put in fiber cabling to the building and have this incredible pipe coming in for all this data transmission. And the leadership was saying, “What for?”

And I was trying to say, “The internet! We’re going to be doing business by the internet. We’re going to be assigning people by computer and doing this.”

And they just about laughed me out of the building. But that’s what got me the job offer from Verizon, from Bell Atlantic, because they knew that I was a visionary looking at the possibilities of technology. And sure enough, today they do orders by the internet, sailors communicate with email to their detailers, and no more phone calls and all this letters and stuff. So, it’s a whole different world. And that’s what I saw in ’92, and they laughed me.

TS: But you got your civilian job.

JH: Yeah, got my civilian job.

TS: Out of that vision, too, right?

JH: Yeah, yeah. And that was great. That was a wonderful job.

TS: So, you talked a little bit, too, about the Clinton era.

JH: Yes.

TS: So, did you have hope then that the ban on gays would be overturned?

JH: Well, as he was going through his campaign and he stated that he wanted to rescind the ban on gays in the military that unleashed this fervor of debate and controversy. And so what I faced every morning at general officer’s quarters was people making these comments about gays that, again, were not true, were totally based on fear, did not recognize that there are already gays in the military. And there were so many times where I wanted to just stand up, you know, at the table and say, “That’s not true. I’m gay and look at this: you give me medals and awards and you assign me these tough jobs and I do well. And it’s not true!” But then I would have been kicked out because that was before “Don’t ask, don’t tell.”

TS: Right. So, listen to Colonel Cammermeyer again, right?

JH: Yes.

TS: Was this before or after her talk with you?

JH: This was before and kind of right at the same time because I actually lobbied up on Capitol Hill for rescinding the ban on gays in the military, while I was still in the military, during the March on Washington in ’93. That’s how I met Colonel Cammermeyer.

TS: I see. Was that a little scary for you?

JH: Oh, very, very! Very emotional, very scary.

TS: Why’d you do it?

JH: Because I believe that it’s on a totally unfounded policy. It’s very similar if—You being a historian, if you compare the arguments for blacks serving in the military and gays serving in the military, the logic and the arguments are the same, and so we haven’t learned from history.

TS: Was there any particular award or medal or something like that that you received—that you earned that you’d like to talk about?

JH: Probably the one I’m most proud of is that I got the Navy Commendation Medal, and that’s for exemplary performance in something that’s just, you know, over the top. And while I was in Pensacola, I was the health and fitness coordinator for the command, and I designed a program so that not only did we do our testing, but we had ways to help folks get better in their performance and those that didn’t pass could get better. And it was kind of the model for the navy. So, that was the basis of my thesis at the postgraduate school: was productivity as the result of physical fitness. And so I did real well on that. I mean, the numbers just jumped off the page. It was one of those ones where the results totally supported the hypothesis.

TS: Unlike—[laughs]

JH: Oh, unlike my first study. But very proud of that commendation medal.

TS: Excellent.

JH: And that’s what that one photograph is.

TS: That we have.

JH: That’s where I was getting that medal, yeah.

TS: Okay, so that’s at Pensacola where you received that.

JH: Well, I did the work at Pensacola, and then I actually got the award while I was stationed at Monterey.

TS: Oh, right, in postgraduate school. Okay.

JH: They always know where you are. [laughs]

TS: Now, during your time in the navy, did you feel like with what you have—you've talked a couple times about the restrictions for you as a woman. But overall, did you feel like you were treated fairly in the jobs that you had, in the opportunities that were presented to you, things like that? How did you feel about that?

JH: I think other than situations that we've already mentioned, that I had the best of bosses and the most forward-thinking of leadership, so I never felt that because I was a woman, I was being specifically discriminated against. But the military wasn't ready to embrace women in combat and that was kind of stupid. I think things should be based on whether or not you can do the job. I was at a cocktail party once and this admiral was saying, "Well, I wouldn't want to have to depend on a woman carrying me out of the foxhole."

And his aide said to him, "Admiral, you'd never be in a foxhole." [laughter] Everybody got a good laugh out of that one.

But as long as you meet the physical qualifications to do a job, then why can't you do it? Gender doesn't make any difference.

TS: Right. So, today you look at the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and what women are doing, and—so, you know, we have combat pilots. How do you feel about that?

JH: We have ship drivers, we have pilots, we have folks serving in forward supply stations, we have ground troops that are female—it's about time, and there's no reason that they shouldn't be there.

TS: And if you had a daughter or, you know, nieces or young women that came to you and asked you about joining the military, what would you say to them?

JH: I would share openly and honestly, like I've done with you, the plusses and the minuses. There are some wonderful, wonderful benefits, but there also is the consideration that you will be put in harm's way. So, most of the time when you work for corporate USA, you're not having to worry about being assigned to a war zone. But if you sign up for the military, there is a huge percentage that you will be assigned and be in harm's way. So, that's where it's not the same as a regular job.

TS: Do you think you would give them—you would say your plusses and minuses any differently to a man as you would to a woman? To a young—

JH: No.

TS: Same kind of speech?

JH: Yes, exactly.

TS: So what—the word "patriotism" gets tossed about and bandied about a little bit. What is patriotism to you, Joyce?

JH: Well, having lived abroad and gotten a different perspective on America, I think that increased my appreciation for our freedoms and what they stand for: that I can disagree with my government and not be shot, I can protest against my government and not be shot or jailed, that I have that freedom, and that is precious. That is precious. And I think you can still be a patriot and be very patriotic and have great patriotism and disagree with the policies of your government. But I don't think that America's way is the only way. I also don't always think it's the best way, and that's from having perspective of, you know, living overseas. But I think our history speaks very well that the system works well over time, and so I'm real grateful that I'm a U.S. citizen.

TS: Now, is there anything that—because we've talked about quite a lot, and I think we've covered it. Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you want to add?

JH: Well, I'm very hopeful that the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy against gays serving openly in the military will be rescinded this year. It was—it's hard to describe the emotion I felt when the Joint Chiefs of Staff were saying, "Yes, it's time for this to change." And now it's Congress saying that they don't think we should make a change. So, here you've got the military saying, "It's time," and yet Congress is kind of digging its heels in, saying—I think some of the strongest opponents are saying, "Because it's wartime, we don't want to throw this change upon the service."

And my response is simply, "We're already there. It's not going to make any difference." I think the thing that's going to be the most challenging is on-base housing so that a gay couple could be living in on-base housing, so that will be a change to the culture and the espoused family values that the military holds. But again, it's just treating your personnel equally and fairly now. But benefits: that's going to be a minor consideration. But I think the hardest thing for people will probably be the on-base housing.

TS: Why do you think that will be more difficult?

JH: Because I think the gay couple will stick out, and it's going to be hard to have that general acceptance that it's okay for them to be there because they'll be visible.

TS: Like a validation of things that people maybe haven't agreed with in the past.

JH: Right. So, I just view that as the biggest challenge but—

TS: But you think it's coming very soon?

JH: Yeah. A good friend of mine works for the Servicemen's [sic—Servicemembers] Legal Defense Network and just follows—just following the news reports, that will probably happen this year.

TS: Excellent.

JH: So, I certainly hope so. It's very scary to think that because I'm gay, that I could be brought back to active duty for the sole purpose of being court-martialed because I'm gay and lose my retirement. So, if they rescind that policy, I won't have to have that fear.

TS: So, if you were going to sum up your service years, what would you have to say about it?

JH: Neatest thing I ever did. Neatest thing I ever did. My only regret in any dimension is that I couldn't have been myself as a gay person and served.

TS: Anything else you want to add?

JH: I can't think of anything; we really covered everything.

TS: I don't know if we got everything [laughter] but we got a lot, so. Well, thank you, Joyce. I'll go ahead and turn it off then.

[End of Interview]