WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Mary Virginia "Ginger" Jacocks

INTERVIEWER: Therese Strohmer

DATE: May 6, 2011

[Begin Interview]

TS: This is Therese Strohmer, and today is May 6, 2011. I am in Jacksonville, North Carolina, and I'm here with Ginger Jacocks. And we're here for a—[coughs] Excuse me. Oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Project at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Ginger, how would you like your name to read on your collection?

MVJ: Initials M.V. Ginger Jacocks.

TS: Okay, excellent. Well, Ginger, thank you so much for meeting with me today. Why don't you start out by telling me when and where you were born? [extraneous comments redacted]

MVJ: I was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. On the 8th of March, 1950. In a snowstorm, which is unusual in Louisiana.

TS: I would think so! I would think so. And now, do you have—what kind of family did you come from? Large family, small family?

MVJ: I'm the oldest of five girls, and all the rest of—my mother is deceased, but my father and my four sisters all still live in Louisiana with their families.

TS: Is that right? So you're the oldest of five, total?

MVJ: That's right, yup.

TS: Okay, and now, the place where you grew up, was it rural, in the city, suburban?

MVJ: It was rural, it was—we say we're from Zachary, Louisiana, which is a little town—it's bigger now than it used to be, in East Baton Rouge Parish, so basically, from the middle of nowhere in Louisiana.

TS: [extraneous comments redacted] Well, Ginger, what'd your father and mother do for a living?

MVJ: My father was a building contractor, sometimes for other people, sometimes he had his own business. My mother was an accountant, lot of times she was basically a live-at-home mother, but she worked part time keeping books for people, and then when I was in high school, she started driving a school bus. That way, she could go some of the same places we went, and haul us around on band trips and all that type thing.

TS: So she kept a good eye on you.

MVJ: That's right.

TS: So were your sisters kind of all close in age, then?

MVJ: Yes. [chuckles] My youngest sister was born eight years and ten days after I was.

TS: Okay. So that's a—that's a pretty tight, close spread there.

MVJ: I understand it was a deal my mother and father had, that they wouldn't have any children 'til my mother was a certain age and they wouldn't have any after she was a certain age.

TS: Oh, is that right? So that was—

MVJ: That was the way it worked.

TS: Well, what was it like, growing up?

MVJ: Oh, it was—I would say that my sisters were and still are my best friends, my mother was probably—she was very much a mother and a disciplinarian, but at the same time, was a best friend to us. You know, my father worked usually six days a week, so we all took care of the yard, which I would much rather do than be in the house doing stuff. You know, we lived on ten acres, so most of our play was running around out in the field or there were some old Civil War-era trenches and things back in the back of the place, and we considered them to be hills. I mean, Louisiana, it doesn't take much to be a hill.

TS: That's right. [laughs]

MVJ: So we'd go out and, you know, play, climb trees, run around the—

TS: Did you ever find any old Civil War-era relics and things?

MVJ: Oh, whenever it rained!

TS: Whenever it rained?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Why, what happened when it rained? It just washed up, or—what kind of things did you find?

MVJ: Yeah, little mini balls or belt buckles, things like that. Would wash up.

TS: What'd you do with them?

MVJ: Oh, my father used to collect them, and then he'd give them to the museum at Baton Rouge or whatever.

TS: Oh, interesting.

MVJ: You know, it was just something—I didn't realize until I got older what a find you had—

TS: Not everybody had that on their property.

MVJ: Yes, it was always there, I grew up with it.

TS: That's true, yeah, so it wasn't anything novel to you. Like, oh, let's go find some belt buckles today.

MVJ: Yeah. You'd hear the boats, the boat whistles sometimes on the Mississippi River, they'd go down, and especially on foggy days, you just knew that that was the battlefield, and you know. It was just part of the way you grew up.

TS: So thinking back, then, you kind of did live in a real historic area, for the time.

MVJ: Yeah. Not really knowing it, but yes, we did.

TS: So, what kind of—besides going in the trenches that were hills, what did you do for fun?

MVJ: Well, I was a Girl Scout, so you know, we did a lot of camping, I mean wilderness-type camping, and hiking, and the friends I had in that, you know, we all liked doing the same things, so we were out in those things, spend my summer usually playing softball. Mowing the yard. [both chuckle] Not necessarily for fun, but—

TS: Right, the chores you had to do and things like that.

MVJ: And it was a lot of mowing, so that, you know, but that was fun, after a while, there was a way to—when you live with that many people, it was a way to be by yourself.

TS: I understand, I understand.

MVJ: We always had a garden, so you know, I always enjoyed being out working in the garden and doing things there. My grandmother—one of my set of grandparents lived across the road and had a small dairy, so we could go over there and help my grandfather milk the cows, or I'd go with him on the trailer to push hay bales out to feed the cattle and things like that. It was just a good, rural country life.

TS: It's interesting, because since you didn't have any brothers, you know, you had to do all the chores, I guess, that would have been traditionally for the boys or whatever. Baling hay and things like that.

MVJ: Well, my father was a Boy Scout Scoutmaster before I was even born. And stayed that way—he's still affiliated with the Scouts to this day. So, he was always involved with the boys. He always took pride in being what he called the most prominent male chauvinist in the area. But at the same time, he always instilled in us the feeling that it didn't matter that we were female, we could do anything we wanted to do, whether it was play ball or grow up and be a policeman or be whatever. I remember when I was little, he would say he was going to be the president and I could be his secretary of defense.

TS: [laughing] Is that right?

MVJ: You know, it was—it was just a life where it really didn't matter, you know, we could all change a tire, [chuckles] we could all take care of all those things, because—you're right, he wasn't there a lot, we took care of it, you know, if he needed help, he'd yell, and we'd all go out and—all of us, and work with him, in turn.

TS: That's neat. Now, what about school, how'd you like school?

MVJ: I—I liked school, being a small town, a lot of my teachers were the same ones that taught my mother and my father. So, of course, I went through the thing of "Well, gee, you're as smart as your mother," or "Thank goodness you're not as bad as your father," or, you know, unfortunately, then my sisters had to be built onto that and then compared to me also.

TS: That's right.

MVJ: So, you know, I just always liked school. My mother really instilled a desire in all of us to do the best we could. You know, if any of us came home with an A minus, my father would want to know why it wasn't an A. You know, if it was an A, why isn't it an A plus, type thing, so you start—you started out from the beginning, there was never any doubt that expectations weren't great. And at least for myself, and I know my sister directly under me, we never had a doubt that—

TS: What's her name?

MVJ: Marie. The expectation was that we would go to college, but that we'd be expected to get a scholarship to go, and—

TS: To be able to pay for it?

MVJ: Yeah. At least a partial—you know, scholarship, and for all of us that didn't really—well, for most of us, that didn't end up being a problem, it was just something that we went along with.

TS: You just knew that was the program, right?

MVJ: That's right.

TS: Had your father been in the military?

MVJ: He was in the navy in World War II.

TS: Was he? So, it's interesting that you said he—you know, if he was the president, you'd be the secretary of defense. Now, why would he make you the secretary of defense, at this young age?

MVJ: I think at that time, if he'd have said secretary of state, that wouldn't have meant a thing. You know, we wouldn't have had any idea what that was. [laughing] But you knew what defense was, it had to do with military and things, so it was just something you could associate—associate with. And my grandfather had been a Marine in World War I, and so, you know, there was just a knowledge of military and—

TS: Military background in your family. I see. Well now, was there anything, any particular subject in school that you liked, or a teacher that you liked, or anything like that?

MVJ: Well, I'm one of those people that loved the math and sciences. And you could have the English, history, sociology—all that other stuff. However, unfortunately, you had to do all that.

TS: [laughs]

MVJ: And of course, I loved physical education. From the time I was probably in the sixth or seventh grade, always thought I wanted to go to medical school and probably be in medical research, not necessarily, you know, be a surgeon or anything. And then when I was a senior in high school, I decided—I'd been on the high school volleyball team, and then my senior year, I was co-captain. And I just really liked physical education, even though it was the only course I'd ever gotten a C in, but you know, because we had a teacher I really respected that was hard, that expected you to do—to do things. And all of a sudden, for some reason, I don't know, I guess it was a dream or something hit me in

the head or something, I said "You know, I think I want to go to college and major in physical education. And get a minor in—" Well, I thought math, art, science, either one.

TS: Right, something like that.

MVJ: So, that's kind of the route I took. And that's why I picked the school I went to, and everything.

TS: What school did you pick?

MVJ: I went to Southeastern Louisiana University. Which, at that time, was, and may still be, one of the key physical education undergraduate schools. Now, LSU [Louisiana State University], of course, was where you'd go if you wanted a graduate degree, probably. But it's the same school Robin Roberts [national newscaster] graduated from.

TS: Is that right? [chuckles]

MVJ: Yep. Of course, she was after me. [both chuckle]

TS: Well, I want to go back and—so, you're growing up in the '60s, really.

MVJ: Yes.

TS: And there—you know, you had President Kennedy assassinated. Do you remember that, remember anything about the Cuban Missile Crisis or any of that [unclear] duck-and-cover stuff?

MVJ: I don't remember—I don't remember the Cuban Missile Crisis that well, I mean, I remember that it occurred, but it wasn't something I really concerned myself with, to be honest.

TS: You were pretty little. Yeah.

MVJ: I do remember when he was assassinated, yeah. I was at school when we found out. And it just so happens that night, that we were with another family, where we were butchering a hog and making sausage and everything—it had been planned, and I mean, that's just one of those things you remember. That that was—

TS: That's what you were doing that night.

MVJ: Yeah. And listening to the radio. Yeah.

TS: Interesting. Do you remember thinking about it at all, or just that it happened, if you have any—

MVJ: Well, yeah, I—I had definite feelings about it. I mean, I personally thought it was a pretty bad thing to happen. And I say that, that sounds strange. However, there were a lot of people in that area at that time, that—felt that because of integration issues and things like that, that that was being forced on us, and that thought "Gee, maybe this'll take care of that, we won't have that."

TS: Won't have to deal with it.

MVJ: And I was very counter to that, you know. That's probably the first memory I have of that type of conflict.

TS: Little political.

MVJ: Well, yeah. And the racial thing.

TS: Well, did you go to a segregated school?

MVJ: Oh, yeah.

TS: Yeah?

MVJ: I didn't—wasn't until I was in college that I was ever in school with blacks, we didn't integrate down there until—well, while I was in college.

TS: When you were in college. Did they have any civil rights activity happening in your area when you were growing up? Like marches or sit-ins and things like that?

MVJ: Unfortunately, I can't recall any civil rights marches. I do know there was a good bit of Ku Klux Klan activity. And you know, coming home one night and finding a cross burning and—not directly in front of the house, but pretty much right in front of the house.

TS: On your property?

MVJ: It was—

TS: Your parents' property?

MVJ: It was on the highway property, but right in front of our driveway.

TS: I see. Was that like a message to your family?

MVJ: Well, I don't know. If it was, it was one I didn't catch, but—

TS: Yeah. You never really—it's nothing you talked about?

MVJ: No. My father would have probably taken care of that on the side if he thought there was something really to that.

TS: I see.

MVJ: I mean, not go after anybody, but through legal measures or stuff like that.

TS: Right.

MVJ: He would have tried to keep us out of any of that.

TS: Right. Keep your family safe and all.

MVJ: Well, and probably, in some ways try to shield us from knowing or understanding what all that was about.

TS: Right. Well, that's interesting. Well, when you went to college, then, you were going for your physical education, and maybe math or science. So is that the plan you stuck to?

MVJ: Yes and no. [both laugh]

TS: Well, tell me the yes part first.

MVJ: I stuck to the physical education.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: And started out with a minor in math, and then I got bored with math so I switched to science. But you know, and I took every science I could get my hands on, and then end of my sophomore year, I picked up a double major with physical education and then [pause] medical technology, really. And I followed that through and I really enjoyed the heck out of it. Of both of it.

TS: What was it that you liked about it?

MVJ: I just liked the sciences, I liked—you know, the—physical education, I really liked the coaching and the involvement with all of it, but what I really liked about physical education, I found, was the kinesiology and the physiology part. And all of that.

TS: Science connected to that.

MVJ: Yeah, yeah. So then, my senior year, I ran into the dilemma of—they had student teaching, and then you had your internship, for the other, and there was no way—I mean, I couldn't afford to stay—to stay in school, so I did my student teaching, got my degree

in physical education, just kept my minor in science with all kinds of sciences that allowed me to teach pretty much any science I wanted.

TS: So was that your plan, to be a teacher, then? Was that—

MVJ: [pause] Yes. And when I graduated, though I already had in my head that I wanted to further my education, probably looking at physiology of exercise type things.

TS: Why, what was it that made you interested in that?

MVJ: Just because of what I just talked about, all the—you know, learned that it was more research-oriented, and scientific, and I just enjoyed that part, you know. And I enjoyed research, I still do. So, I taught for a year.

TS: So, what year did you graduate from college?

MVJ: I graduated in ’72.

TS: Seventy-two. What year did you graduate from high school, then?

MVJ: Sixty-eight.

TS: That was an interesting year to graduate from high school. So there’s a few more cultural things going on, too.

MVJ: Well, yeah. Besides me graduating.

TS: Besides—[both laugh] right, well, in the context of—1968 was a pretty volatile year. Because we talked about Kennedy earlier, so you had Martin Luther King Jr., and you had Robert F. Kennedy.

MVJ: Yeah. Of course, you also have to keep in mind—

TS: Vietnam.

MVJ: Well, I was going to say, with Vietnam, with all those things, I used to always say, Louisiana could be about four or five years behind the rest of the country. Because everybody else was complaining about Vietnam and marching and Louisiana, we’re just going along like it’s just getting started, you know. Real patriotic and standing behind everything. I don’t think that’s quite five years anymore, it’s probably just two or something, but. [laughs]

TS: Well, you talked about, at that time, a lot of people talk about seeing it on the television and following it there. Did you do that at all, or? Did you have an awareness, I guess, of what was happening?

MVJ: Oh, yes. Had an awareness, but I didn't—I just never watched that much television. So, it wasn't something I was riveted to, and then I went to summer school right after I graduated from high school, because I wanted to go ahead and go, right out of the chute, just get started. So. And I didn't have a television then, that's when, you know, you shared dorm rooms, you didn't have all the stuff you have now. You had a television down in the main sitting area and that was it.

TS: That's where you watched it from.

MVJ: So we didn't watch that much of that stuff.

TS: Well, was there anything there in your—during that year, '68, so. Up north, you know, you've got some riots going on, in the urban—

MVJ: Yeah, and I was aware of them.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: You know, but like I said, we—at least, the people I was surrounded with, the other students and everybody, were pretty much—our country is in Vietnam, this is what the president wants us to do.

TS: So did they have any—I don't know, did anybody ever comment like, oh, it's [unclear] out there in San Francisco, and the hippies and all this, did anybody ever talk about it?

MVJ: No. I think we just kind of lived in our own little—little world and didn't worry about—[chuckles]

TS: And just went to school and did your—

MVJ: We just figured we were right and they were all wrong.

TS: [chuckles] There you go. So, you—after—so then you went to college, and then you graduated in '72, and then you went into teaching, then?

MVJ: I taught high school, physical education.

TS: Where'd you teach at?

MVJ: At Baker High School, which was one of the main rivals to the high school I went to, so.

TS: So what town was that in?

MVJ: In Baker. [laughs]

TS: Oh, okay.

MVJ: Another little town in East Baton Rouge Parish. But it was a larger high school than what I had gone to. So there were three women's physical education teachers there. I taught and I coached volleyball and some basketball and softball. You know. And the drill team. The deal was that I couldn't be hired unless I was willing to take the drill team, which—had never done precision drill before, but they wanted—that's where they wanted them to end up, to be able to perform at halftime. And, well. I had been in the band in high school and we did a lot of precision marching, so.

TS: What'd you play in the high school?

MVJ: Played—started out with trumpet, and then I went to French horn.

TS: Neat.

MVJ: But, you know, so I was pretty confident in my marching stuff, and—except for the fact that, of course, even women coaches then, you didn't get paid extra for anything. That's just a men's thing.

TS: Oh, just the men got paid for the extra coaching?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Is that right?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Actually, I didn't know that.

MVJ: We even—we even bought our own equipment if we didn't have enough, because we thought it was that important to get the girls involved. And they wanted—they wanted to be involved in things like that. But—so that lasted a year. It didn't—'til I told the principal that I didn't think he knew how to run a school, that women deserved to have the same breaks as the men. We didn't see eye to eye on that. He reminded me that I didn't have tenure. I told him that was okay, I was going to graduate school, which—as I said, I'd thought about somewhere down the road, I hadn't really thought of it—

TS: At the time?

MVJ: Right then, however, the decision was made in a few seconds, and—

TS: Oh, is that right? So—

MVJ: Well, I mean, for me.

TS: For you? When you got the reaction, you mean, back, or?

MVJ: Well, I just didn't even wait for a reaction. Just once I told him that, I wasn't going to back out and change my mind. I mean, there's a little stubbornness to it.

TS: Okay. Well, you're the, you know, oldest child. [laughs] So. So you had—so you decided—did you know, at that moment you were talking about, what your future plans were going to be, or were you making it up as you were going along there?

MVJ: Well. I had decided that at whatever point I went back to school, I wanted to get a degree in physiology of exercise, a master's, and then go on and work on a doctorate. Because I wanted to do research, and some of the key universities or medical centers, or you know, wherever. And at that point in time, I knew that you could not really do that without a PhD in that field. So I went back to—and one of the other women physical education teachers who was standing there with me, and she felt the same way I did, except she was getting ready to have tenure, so she was kind of—

TS: Oh. [chuckles] A few steps behind you, then, right.

MVJ: She stood up, and she had never thought of going to graduate school, but she stood up and said "Well, you can find two new teachers, I'm going too." So.

TS: How about that.

MVJ: So we called in sick the next week and [unclear] the school to make sure we could get into [laughing]—into a graduate school and try to apply for whatever teacher assistant jobs or anything we could find.

TS: Right.

MVJ: So, that's—that's kind of how I had my one year of teaching, and that was it. And I loved teaching, I loved the students, but I always thought that it'd be so much more pleasant if you could do away with the parents.

TS: Well, that's difficult. [laughs]

MVJ: Yeah. It's kind of that chicken and egg thing.

TS: That's right, that's right. Well, so, did you go to graduate school?

MVJ: I did.

TS: Where'd you go?

MVJ: I went back to Southeastern Louisiana University. And where my master's was in physical education, but it was with an emphasis in physiology of exercise. Because there was a kinesiology and exercise physiology professor there in the physical education department that I knew had come down from some place further up north, I can't remember where. And I thought he really knew what he was doing, and you know, I knew all the people there, so.

TS: Right, because you'd been there before.

MVJ: Yeah. So, you know, I went back and took all those classes and all the statistics I could get, and—

TS: And how long did that take, for you to get your master's?

MVJ: It was—I went full time, so it took me—well, started in the fall, classwork took me a year, basically. However, because I wanted to go on and get my PhD, I wanted to do the written thesis part, which nobody had done it in the physical education department in years and years and years, I can't remember how many years. So, doing that took me a little extra time, you know, to finish it, to present and defend it.

TS: Sure, right.

MVJ: Do all that stuff. So, but essentially what happened, I finished my classwork. I didn't have any money left, so I knew I couldn't go work on a PhD, because I'd pulled out the one year teacher's retirement I had. I'd borrowed a little money from my parents.

TS: They didn't offer you anything for tuition, or going—

MVJ: Well, they did, but it didn't work out. It was just the state, you know, the financial records, going through parent stuff, going through this that and the other, and it got so cumbersome and mixed up that it just got to where it wasn't even worth the—the hassle of doing it. Now, my friend that went with me got an assistantship to work in the gymnastics program, and the swimming program. But at the same time, I did my thesis on something where it required having subjects available, and lots of equipment. I needed a swimming pool available, I needed access to this and access to that. And I wouldn't have had a lot of time to do other things, but they gave me, you know, the pool at certain hours with lifeguards, at no cost, they gave me the equipment for all the EKGs and the treadmills and the [unclear] oxygen—

TS: So for your research, you had all that.

MVJ: Yeah, I mean, all that was made available, and you couldn't beat that.

TS: No, that's great.

MVJ: Couldn't beat that, yeah.

TS: So what was next on your horizon, then, since you had—

MVJ: Well, that's when—

TS: That money-source thing.

MVJ: Well, that's—that wasn't until probably my senior year of college that—

TS: For your bachelors?

MVJ: Yeah, for my bachelors, going back, that I knew, at least there, that they started allowing women in ROTC, but that was just the army ROTC. I didn't want to go into army. I mean, I just had no interest in it.

TS: Why?

MVJ: I don't know. It was just so big. [laughs]

TS: So big? That's interesting.

MVJ: Well, I don't know, it just—you know. It was just something that never really appealed to me that much. But then, I started looking around, and I went down and talked to all the recruiters for all the services. But with my background, they all wanted to talk to me about some type of medical-type thing. And I didn't want that. I mean, basically, I was just like all these other people going in the service. I knew there was a GI Bill there, and if I could get that, then maybe I could do what I had to do there to get that, and then I could get out and go work on my PhD. [laughs] [unclear] So that was my plan.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: But when I talked to the recruiters, the Marine Corps—of course, Marine Corps doesn't have any medical fields, so.

TS: They weren't asking you to go in it.

MVJ: Well, plus, they wouldn't promise you anything.

And they're the ones—it was, I think a gunnery—a staff NCO [non-commissioned officer] at the recruiting station who said "Well, you know, really," he says, "You don't want to go in enlisted," he says, "You need to talk to the officer selection or the woman officer selection officer. And they're in New Orleans, so let me make an appointment." So, did that. The woman officer selection officer came down, I met with her.

And she said "Well, you know, the Marine Corps doesn't—we have a lot of people applying right now, a lot of women. A lot of them have master's degrees," for the size coming in, for women officers. And she said "Yes, we'd like to have you apply," she says, "But I can't tell you that automatically you will be accepted." And she says "And then, once you start training, generally the attrition rate is close to fifty percent."

Well. Being the type [of] person I am, that just egged me on. I thought "Okay, that's what I want to do."

TS: Because it was a challenge, right?

MVJ: It was a challenge, yeah, and it was small. At that time, I think there were only—like, maybe four hundred women officers in the whole Marine Corps.

TS: Probably not even.

MVJ: Yeah, and maybe not even that. Yeah. It may have been closer to two hundred or something, I mean, you know, it was—

TS: Yeah, I think in the '90s there were, what, six hundred.

MVJ: Yeah, you're probably right. So there's probably between two and three hundred, you know. So once I knew about the statistics and all that, I mean, you know, the classes weren't big, there were two women's classes a year. So, I went, took my physical, raised my hand, you know. Did my thing, they said "Well, okay. You're in, now, but you just have to wait. We'll let you know when, you know, if you can do the fall class or you have to wait," and, you know, whatever.

TS: I see. Well, let me interrupt you for just a second. For the other services, did they suggest officer candidate school too, or?

MVJ: Not really.

TS: Really? That's interesting.

MVJ: Now, maybe if I had—

TS: Asked about it or something.

MVJ: Asked about it, or—delved into it—

TS: But they didn't say—

MVJ: But on the Marine Corps side, he was forthright, right out of the gate.

TS: Interesting.

MVJ: You know, "Hey, you don't want to," you know, "Don't take that route." Which—

TS: Huh. So how long did you have to wait to find out whether or not you're going to be selected? Oh, and what did your family think?

MVJ: Well, let's see. While I was doing all this, I hadn't told my family, and so I waited until I raised my hand and did all that, and then I went back and told them. [chuckles] Of course, my mother says "If you were going to do something like that, why didn't you do it before you spent all this money to get this master's degree?"

TS: Your mother's very practical.

MVJ: Oh, yes, yes. She's the money person.

TS: Oh, that's right, the accountant—that's right. How about your dad?

MVJ: I think he kind of felt the same way. But you know, they were—they knew I was pretty much—I was going to march down my own road whatever route I took, so. You know, everything was fine. And up to that point, I hadn't really given any thought to the fact that my grandfather had been a Marine.

TS: Oh, really?

MVJ: But—and—he wasn't living, but my grandmother thought it was the greatest thing that had ever happened.

TS: Is that right?

MVJ: And I was the only one of her grandkids that ever went in the Marine Corps. So, you know, that was kind of a point of pride.

TS: How about your sisters?

MVJ: You know, I think mostly they always thought that I could do whatever I put my head to doing, and if that's what I wanted to do—

TS: Did your friends have the same view? And I'm thinking about, it's Vietnam.

MVJ: Yeah. Well.

TS: Era.

MVJ: But it was kind of winding down, too, by that point.

TS: Well, we didn't know necessarily.

MVJ: Well, we didn't know necessarily, but it appeared to kind of be winding down. So, I think maybe there was some concern there. But not overly. And I think they looked at it as "Oh, Ginger's going to go out on this adventure, she'll be back." Because that's one of those hometowns where everybody comes back to, you know, it's just—

TS: Oh, I see. Huh, interesting, okay.

MVJ: But I don't—I don't recall anybody saying "Gee, Ginger, why are you so stupid, why did you do this?" I mean, I didn't get that reaction.

TS: Well, I mean, not that they'd give you a hard time necessarily, but that not a lot of women were joining the military, I mean, as a percentage.

MVJ: Well, and that was kind of an anomaly for, even going on there—

TS: I mean, like, what were your friends doing at that time, you know?

MVJ: Well, you know, most of them were either married to whoever they dated all the way through high school and they were all having kids, or teaching school or working at the bank or, you know. They were doing things I thought were boring.

TS: Well, you thought math was, you know—[laughs]

MVJ: Well, not all of it, just, you know—just the stepping stone part of it, just—

TS: Ah, the fundamentals, let's get to the good stuff, okay. Well, so, what—when did you find out that you were accepted?

MVJ: Well, officer candidate school started in October. It was probably early September that they called and told me I was accepted and I would be getting orders, you know, this is what you have to do, all that type of stuff. At that point, I still had not—as I said, I had finished all of my classwork for my master's, and I'd really finished writing my thesis, but I had not defended it yet.

TS: You hadn't defended it yet? Oh.

MVJ: So, once I found out when it started and everything, I got with them and they set up a special board, so I went in and was able to do that. Get all of that out of the way. Of course, I still wouldn't graduate until December, with the graduation. But—so I got that done. So it was kind of—once I found out, I kind of had my to-do list of things I had to get done at a certain rate.

TS: Yeah, you were busy.

MVJ: Yeah. And then, off I go—I had never—I had only traveled laterally from where I lived, you know, I had been to certain parts of Texas, and we'd go to Biloxi every year and go deep sea fishing, for vacation. That was my, you know—that was kind of my north-south. I mean, I hadn't—I basically hadn't been much beyond—any further north beyond the boot of Louisiana. In fact, my father used to always say, "Anybody that lives above the boot of Louisiana is a Yankee." Just—that's north. [laughs]

TS: [laughing] I had not heard that before. Okay.

MVJ: So. Here I am, I jump in my car, and I'm going to—and I found out I could drive up to Quantico.

TS: That's definitely—

MVJ: Wouldn't have much of an opportunity to use the car, but I mean, that was—

TS: Right, to get there.

MVJ: However, I kept waiting for orders, waiting for orders, waiting for orders.

I call the women officer selection officer, and she said "Oh, they should be there, let me check." Call back and say "They were put in the mail."

But I said "Well, what if I don't get them."

She says "Well, go ahead and go," she says, "They'll have—"

TS: They'll have them there.

MVJ: That's right. I said, well, what will I have to do when I—I said "I know they'll be—" I had never been on a military base. I said "What happens when you get to the gate?"

She says "Well, just tell them," she says, "They'll take care of it." So, off I go.

TS: So did you—you left without orders? Haven't received them. Interesting. Okay. So how did that go?

MVJ: Well, I—thank goodness it was October and I went up [Interstate] 40 and across Tennessee, because like I said, I had never been through the mountains and the leaves were changing, and I, you know—

TS: What kind of car were you driving? This is important.

MVJ: [unclear] Chevrolet—a Chevelle. Yeah.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: But I remember I called home and I said "God, I can't believe it. I've never seen anything this pretty before. You know, this is really, really neat."

TS: Sure.

MVJ: Well, that was kind of the good part of the trip, and then I get to the gate—well, I stopped at a hotel, spend the night so I could get dressed, you know, put on my little dress and all my stuff. Like you were really supposed to do then. I mean, I guess you probably still do, but you'd never wear slacks then.

TS: Right, right.

MVJ: I get to the gate and I explain to them, and they look at me like I've lost my mind. You know, so "We don't know, just pull over," they get on the phone, do all this, then they tell me where to go, and I drive—I follow these directions, I drive up to the woman officer's school. Park in the parking lot, I go in the building. Of course, I look around, I have no idea what I'm looking for.

TS: Right.

MVJ: There's somebody on duty, of course, you know, [unclear], give them my sad story. They call the captain. [both chuckle]

And she comes down, she says "What do you mean, you don't have orders?" Blah blah blah. You know. It starts off right from the beginning, making you feel that inch tall, you know. So we go in and she makes calls and she does this that and the other. She finally says "Well, yes, you are supposed to be here."

TS: That was probably a relief to hear.

MVJ: Well, yeah, I mean, you know, I thought "Oh, gee, I can't turn around and drive home now." This is—but, so, I got, you know. Found out where I was supposed to be, got my gear, went through, and I can't even remember the steps of, you know, getting uniforms, all that. I mean, it happened, it just seems like you blink and it's done. But you know, from there on, I was there. Up north, in Virginia. [both laugh]

TS: That's right. [unclear] get out of that area. Well, did—so, in those initial days, did you have like an expectation of what you thought you might have to do, and then what you actually did do?

MVJ: As far as in officer candidate school?

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: Well, I knew it was going to be difficult. I mean—

TS: What part did you think was going to be difficult?

MVJ: Well, from what I'd been told before I was selected, it would be academically difficult, it would be physically difficult—

TS: [unclear]

MVJ: I mean, just the whole thing.

TS: Was it?

MVJ: Well, I really kind of enjoyed—[laughs] OCS. I—you know, the academics, I didn't think were that bad. The drill fell right in, it was the same thing, almost to the T, the same drill, basic drill movements that we had when I was in high school, and that I taught at drill team. So that wasn't difficult, and a lot of people had trouble with that. I didn't have trouble with the physical fitness part, because I had just always been really physically active anyway. So, no, to me—I guess I grew up with regimentation and just kind of fell into line. Except, you know, I knew the expectations were high, I knew that a lot was expected from us by the captain and the master sergeant, all the people that were there, that rode us like crazy. But you know, I mean, that's what they're supposed to do. I do remember, because you had initial interviews, and I'm sure they still do this, with the company commander. You go in, sit down—well, I don't remember if you sit down or not. Probably not.

TS: [laughs]

MVJ: And have a one-on-one, you know, "why did you decide to come here, what do you expect to get out of it, what"—you know, just kind of, to try to get the feel.

TS: Probably a little screening, too.

MVJ: And I remember telling the captain, she says "Well, are you going to make it?"
And I remember saying "I'm either going to make it or die trying." Well, to me that's just kind of a natural response. It wasn't until I was training recruits that I realized a comment like that you don't take lightly, so.

TS: Was a little scary, from the—

MVJ: So I probably shouldn't have—

TS: You were being determined.

MVJ: I was being determined, you know, but it wasn't until later that I realized how that really could have been—

TS: Misconstrued there, yeah.

MVJ: But no, I enjoyed OCS.

TS: What about being away from home and up in Yankeeville?

MVJ: Well, now, that part was a little different.

TS: How so?

MVJ: I'm probably the only person that ever went to Quantico that would go out and run and thought "Gah, it's not humid enough here. I can't breathe."

TS: [laughs]

MVJ: Everybody else is complaining about how humid it is, and I—

TS: You needed your gills, huh?

MVJ: That's right, you know, it's just what you're used to. But no, you know, I thought it was relatively simple. I mean, luckily, academically, I'd never really had a hard time as long as I sit there and I pay attention and I take notes, I'm not a person that really had to study too hard. So that part wasn't difficult.

TS: How about when you put your uniform on for the first time?

MVJ: Well, then you get that feeling of pride, of, you know. And then you worry about, gah, how do you salute exactly right, you know. [laughs] And—but thank goodness, we were the first class that went in that did not get the National Defense Ribbon. Which, for Vietnam era. Which we didn't realize was such a good thing, because you know, all those have to be parallel to the deck, and you don't have parallel pockets. All the pockets on the women's uniforms were slants, and things. We had OC pins, just had officer candidate pins. And it was bad enough getting those parallel to the deck. And every day you had your inspection, and that'd be something they'd drill you on. So after it was over, we'd always say "Boy, sure am glad we don't have any ribbons we have to worry about." [chuckling]

TS: Just to make sure that you get them all parallel.

MVJ: Right. Yeah, putting the uniform on was a special thing. Of course, shining the shoes was kind of a hassle. Because then you didn't have—you weren't allowed to wear Corfams [Corfam is a type of artificial leather].

TS: Right.

MVJ: And so, everything was spit-shined. You know.

TS: Did they allow you to wear Corfams in the—in officer training school, now, in basic?

MVJ: Probably not, I don't know. I couldn't—

TS: I'm hoping not. [laughs]

MVJ: Well, a lot of things—you know.

TS: They change.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Well, what—now, at what point did you learn what your job was going to be?

MVJ: My military occupational specialty?

TS: Yes.

MVJ: That's not until basic school.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: Once you graduate from OCS, which I did like a few days before Christmas. In fact, I graduated from—I got my master's degree the day after I graduated from OCS, but I wasn't there for it. But I did get my diploma. So, did that, had a break, had leave, Christmas, came back, started basic school. Then the basic school, you fill out what they call the dream sheet.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: Where you put down the top three things—occupational fields you would like to go into. And then the top three places you would like to go. Now, how all that's selected, I don't know. And I really didn't know what I wanted to do. So I went in, and talked to the company commander, who was a different one than I had had in OCS.

I said "You know, I really don't know what I want to do," I said, "I know some things I do not want to do, and I do not want to be in administration, I don't want to be in communications or drive trucks," you know, any of those things.

And she says "Well, have you ever thought about intelligence?"

Said "No, what do they do?" [both laugh] So we talked about it a little bit.

TS: Right.

MVJ: And she said, you know, every year—at least at that point in time—out of the basic school, two women would be selected to go into the intelligence field.

And she said "First of all, I have to ask you, you have to have these really high level of investigations." She says, "Do you have anything in your background that might keep you from getting that."

And I said "Not that I know of."

TS: Right.

MVJ: And we talked about it, we talked about what I liked to do, and she says "I really don't know that much about intelligence, but from what you're saying, you like to do research," and she says, "I think that's kind of a lot of the type things you do, the type of analytical mind you have to have."

I said "Okay, I'll put that down." So, as my number one choice. Yeah. And then I didn't give it any thought until all of a sudden I got—found out I was selected for that. Then, it's—and at that time, women in the Marine Corps were not allowed to go below the Fleet Marine Force, or—that MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force] level, where I was assigned to Norfolk, my first duty station.

TS: What do you mean by "the low"?

MVJ: You could not go to a division level below that.

TS: Why?

MVJ: Because, that—you may have to go to war or deploy or be someplace. You wouldn't want women being involved in that type of thing. And—

TS: So the higher level, the—is more administrative?

MVJ: It's more—well, it's more the higher headquarters. So, you know.

TS: You're not going to be deployed.

MVJ: You're probably—I mean, may have to deploy with billets, but not as many, because you're in the rear, pushing stuff out.

TS: I see.

MVJ: A lot. Now—or that's the way it's supposed to be. Now, I ended up in some of those deployable units. Didn't do any—deployed for some exercises. Came to Camp Lejeune. Froze to death for an exercise. [both laugh] But—

TS: Froze to death, okay.

MVJ: Well, I mean, the water buffaloes [water tanks] were frozen. The guys couldn't even shave.

TS: Oh, really?

MVJ: It was cold. [chuckles]

TS: All right.

MVJ: But, you know, that was—and then, quickly, you know, in about three years, that changed and women could go down to division level and I mean, by the time I left Norfolk, you could have women at division. You couldn't go below that. So it just kind of crept down gradually.

TS: Yeah, because '74, then, that's the year after the all-volunteer force began. So that started, '73.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Okay, so yeah, so other things started opening up. Did you want to say anything about your basic?

MVJ: Um—

TS: Was that different—how was it different?

MVJ: The basic school? Well, the basic school really is—it's kind of a continuation of OCS, except you're already—you're commissioned.

TS: Right.

MVJ: So you take on different leadership billets and lead your fellow lieutenants to do stuff, if you do more land nav[igation]—you just get more involved. Do a lot more military justice, all that military admin stuff that every officer always says "Gee, I'm not going to pay attention, because I'm not going to have to do that," and every officer ends up having to do it. [both chuckle] So, you know— [telephone rings]

TS: Nuts and bolts kind of thing.

MVJ: Yes.

TS: Oh, here, let me pause for a second. Okay. [recording paused] Okay, sorry about that.

MVJ: No, that's all right.

TS: So, in the basic, was there anything particularly difficult or challenging or easy, or—

MVJ: No. That—the only—not as far as the course material. What happened there, because you're basically the same group with a few additional ones—

TS: Oh, the women that you were—

MVJ: That had gone through OCS. But, so you're commissioned out of OCS, as a reserve officer. Out of basic school, they can augment to the regular Marine Corps, out of basic school. I think ten percent of the top twenty percent, or something like that.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: So all of a sudden, now, you know, we've all worked really hard together to get each other through and everything, but now it becomes a little more cutthroat, because people want that augmentation. Well, you know, that—that just caused some extra friction.

TS: Right, little tension.

MVJ: You know, sometimes a little more than other times, but.

TS: Right.

MVJ: You know, and—and I still complain about the way that went. [both laugh]

TS: Why?

MVJ: Well, because I was number two in the class and they could take two of the top four, but I didn't—I wasn't one of—

TS: You weren't one of the ones in the augment?

MVJ: And the two that got selected were both married to Marines. And I thought that was not quite kosher.

TS: Right. Some biases involved in there.

MVJ: Well. No, I had been in a little trouble for partying and stuff [TS chuckles], but at the same time, you know, when I asked the reason, it was—I was told that those people were—they were more sure of those people probably wanting to stay in the Marine Corps. And—than some of us that didn't really know what we wanted. And of course, I never knew if I wanted to stay at that point or not.

TS: Right.

MVJ: I wasn't going to tell them that.

TS: [chuckles] That's right. Well, what—for people who aren't familiar with what the difference would be, can you explain why it was more coveted to go augmented?

MVJ: Well, when you're not a reserve, then you're regular, which means you don't have to re-enlist, you're just there as long as you get promoted. If you're a reserve officer, you would have to put in to be tran—to be accepted into the regular Marine Corps within the first so many years. So—and then, it's a competition that would go before a board at Headquarters Marine Corps, and they can augment a certain number.

TS: So you want to get the competition done as early as possible not to—

MVJ: Well, that way, you know, you have a small group, you don't have to compete with hundreds of people. Because then, it changes every year, based on—

TS: Needs of the—

MVJ: The needs of the Marine Corps, and you know, changes imposed by Congress and DoD [Department of Defense] and all these other things, and—

TS: Now, did men have to go through the same whole thing?

MVJ: Oh, yeah, every—yeah.

TS: It's all—it's an officer-level aspect of it.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: So you didn't get picked. But did you—what, did you get picked for intel?

MVJ: Oh yeah. Got picked for intel—

TS: Oh yeah, what did you put on your little dream sheet about where you wanted to go, too?

MVJ: Well, the only places, really, for intel that I could have gone was Norfolk or Hawaii.

TS: What'd you write down, which one did you want to go to?

MVJ: Well, I put down Norfolk. And I'll tell you why, because I wanted to go to Hawaii, however, I talked to the master sergeant about it, and she said "Lieutenant," she says, "You know, you don't make a lot of money right now." She says, "Hawaii costs more," she says, "If you're going to stay in the Marine Corps, you'll have plenty of opportunity to get to Hawaii, because women—you can't go down far, I mean, you're going to have

to just stay in the—you know, either between Norfolk or Hawaii. So wait until you're making more money, and then you can go and have a lot better time."

And I thought "That makes a lot of sense. I can go have a lot more fun there."

TS: And did you ever make it to Hawaii?

MVJ: No. [both laugh] Only TAD [Temporary Additional Duty].

TS: I just thought we'd get that out on the record for you.

MVJ: Then they opened it up, so it was—all bets were off.

TS: That's right, that's right. Well, where was your—so, after you did your basic, and then you went to the intelligence corps. Was there anything special that happened there, besides learning your job?

MVJ: There were ten students, two (Marines—MVJ added later)—eight navy officers.

TS: Men, women?

MVJ: Well, all the navy ones were men, and then there was one other Marine who I had graduated, you know, both of us were out of the same basic class.

TS: Oh, okay, so those were the two women.

MVJ: We were the two Marines, and we were about the only two Marine students on the whole base. So everybody knew who you were. [both laugh]

TS: That's right. So, was that okay?

MVJ: Yeah. It was—it was interesting, and because of the amount of students they had, I didn't like it at the beginning, but I learned to really like it. They went port and starboard [refers to shipboard watch schedules, which traditionally referred to the two watch groups as port and starboard], so we had class that went from 06:00 to noon every day, and other people had to go from noon to 18:00, so we went in and all of our classes were classified, we were in the special compartment information spaces, all of our notes were in that, so once they locked the library up at 18:00, you couldn't study anyway. So, it just ended up being kind of a fun time, there.

TS: So, that's something we haven't talked at all about. What—you probably didn't have a whole lot of time in your basic or your OCS for doing any—no, she's shaking her head, transcriber. So, the—but when you got into your—so, the intel school, you did have some time.

MVJ: Oh yes.

TS: And also, I actually forgot to ask you about your housing accommodations when you initially went in.

MVJ: Well, in OCS, we had, I think—there were rooms, but no doors on 'em, so basically you had a space and there were two bunk beds in each room, so there were four people.

TS: Like a quad, sort of?

MVJ: Yeah, and you know, but it was open to the passageway. And you had a very small closet, just enough for your uniforms, because you didn't have civilian clothes to keep anywhere. Any of us that had them would go put it in your car or whatever and keep them there.

TS: [chuckles] Until further notice.

MVJ: That's right. And then you had a footlocker that you were issued, and that was—

TS: That's what you had.

MVJ: That was it.

TS: What'd you think about that?

MVJ: Well, you know. It—well, it didn't bother me, I mean, I had grown up—[laughs] with so many of us, so many girls in one place anyway. That that part was—of course, you had your community showers and—

TS: Lack of privacy, I guess.

MVJ: Yeah. And that part didn't bother me. And really, getting up early, I'd always done that, that didn't bother me. And usually I was ready to hit the rack by the time it was time for taps, so really, that wasn't a problem, you know. The only problem might be your standard thing of, if you had to be on the top rack or you had to be on the bottom, you know. [chuckles]

TS: Oh, yeah, those kind of dynamics.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Logistical issues and—

MVJ: Yeah, other than that it wasn't bad. Then when you went to basic school, though, you had been commissioned, so you were in bachelor officer quarters there at the basic school,

and we each had our own room. So, I mean, it was a small room, again, didn't have room for TVs or—it was kind of like a dorm.

TS: A dorm, but by yourself.

MVJ: Yeah. So that, really, was pretty nice, that was the most freedom—well, that was the most freedom I had ever had.

TS: I was going to say, was that the first time you'd ever had a room to yourself?

MVJ: In my whole life, that's the only time—that's right. [both laugh] I hadn't really thought of that until right now.

TS: That'd be all right.

MVJ: Yeah. Maybe that's why that seemed so good. [laughter]

TS: Because you were sharing a room, I'm sure, growing up.

MVJ: Oh yeah.

TS: And so, what kind of things did you do on your—on your off time? Did they have like a club that you went to, or?

MVJ: Well, I was going to say. OCS, there wasn't a lot of—there was very little liberty time, except you might, on Sunday afternoon or maybe Saturday afternoon if everything had worked really well, you might have a couple hours. You could go into Quantico Town, which, if you've ever been at Quantico, Quantico Town is an actual little town within the base. But they don't have to be military, you know, it's a—has a marina down there, it's its own town. The gate goes around, but there's not guards on it. I think in the United States it's the only town that's inside of a military base.

TS: Huh, no, I didn't actually know that.

MVJ: So there's lots of little pubs and sandwich shops and stuff there. And you know—and it was easy to walk there. So.

TS: Now, you had mentioned something kind of in passing about when you didn't get selected for the augmentation that you had—you were saying something about, I don't know if you used the word party or something like that, what'd you use?

MVJ: I don't know. I was hacked off. But I don't know—oh, well. Yeah, I had been in a little trouble for partying—

TS: Oh, okay.

MVJ: —One night, that was at the basic school. And at the basic school, because you have the officer quarters there, there is an officer's club, which is used predominantly by the students and the staff there. A few of us stayed there really late. [laughs]

TS: Is that why you got in trouble? Was because of the time?

MVJ: Well, yeah, but it was also because of the staff that was there with us, that—you know, and then—because they were staff, they were able to convince the people at the bar to keep the bar open past the time it was supposed to be, and of course the officer of the day came by and just made notes of who was in there and what was going on. You know, so it ended up being—you never want your name in the log book.

TS: No, no. So that's the kind of incident.

MVJ: It's that type of thing, you know, not getting in a fight or getting in trouble or falling down drunk.

TS: Well, I didn't know if you were standing up on a table, you know, doing a dance or something, I don't know.

MVJ: No.

TS: No, that didn't happen. Okay.

MVJ: That may have been worth it.

TS: [laughs] To get written in the log book like that.

MVJ: That's right.

TS: But just sitting around—okay. Well, so after your intel, you went to your first duty station.

MVJ: Yeah, well, I went to Norfolk first.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: On—for on-the-job training, because I had to wait for my special compartmented—for my clearance stuff.

TS: Oh, for your clearance.

MVJ: Which, you know, took about six, seven, eight months, something like that. So I went there OJT [on the job]. Did—

TS: Non-clearance things.

MVJ: Well, even though I was supposed to be in the—well, because I had a secret clearance, so I could have gone—

TS: But not the SCI [Sensitive Compartmented Information], though, at that point, right.

MVJ: And I was supposed to be in the G2, OJT [on-the-job training], however, the chief of staff called me in and said "You know, Lieutenant Jacocks, we have a little problem, there's already a female in G2. So we'll give you your choice, would you rather go work in the comptroller's office until you go to school, or in the G3?" And I didn't want to go in the comptroller's office, I knew better than that, so I told him the G3. And I went down, I was the G3 training officer for six or seven months or whatever.

TS: So what is the G—what's the difference between G2, G3?

MVJ: Well, G2 is intelligence. G3 is operations and training.

TS: Okay. [audio file 1 ends, audio file 2 begins]

MVJ: So, you know, basically I was the one that, when you got quotas for schools or things like that, you would send them down to—because, under that command, [unclear], the Second Marine Division—these commands down here, you know, so you would send out the quotas and get the information, make sure billets were filled for schools, and—

TS: So you did that about six or seven months?

MVJ: Yeah. But I learned an awful lot doing that. That, you know, I wouldn't have.

TS: Yeah, the ins and outs of that kind of—

MVJ: Well, that, and—more about the different commands, where they were, how they operate, who does what to who.

TS: Did some intelligence gathering.

MVJ: And I worked for a colonel who eventually ended up being CINC [Commander in Chief], so. I mean, you know, who—because I had to draft my own messages on the days that we did actual hard messages, you know, that put you through the ringer making sure you did it correctly, and knew all the acronyms and that things stayed concise and if something could be abbreviated, you didn't send it out in full.

TS: That's right.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Save time, save space.

MVJ: And if you sent it up there, he'd mark through it and send it back and you'd start over. [both chuckle]

TS: So you learned a lot.

MVJ: I learned a lot. Yeah. And I learned how to do staff work there, which I think is invaluable, and you hear about it a lot and they talk about it in schools, but until you sit down and you put the packages together, and actually do it, you don't really know how to do it.

TS: So, what—when you finally got through—your clearance had come through, well, your SCI [Sensitive Compartmented Information] part of the clearance, come through, then—

MVJ: Then I went to intelligence school. At Lowry Air Force Base [Colorado], and then I came—went back to Norfolk. Where—

TS: Now, when you say intelligence school, okay, so that's a really broad—

MVJ: Yeah. Well, it's the Naval Air Intelligence Course.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: At that time, Marine Corps did not have any—our own intelligence schools. So, the men were sent to the army school at Fort Huachuca [Arizona], and the women were sent to the Air Intelligence Course. With the navy. I think with the idea being that, as long as you're going to be in a high level anyway, it's okay for women to know about air, but we don't need them to know too much about the ground stuff.

TS: Really? Interesting.

MVJ: Even though—now, because of the way the Marine Corps is, they should have the MAGTF com [Marine Air-Ground Task Force command] stuff, air-ground logistics together. All of your schools, you learn all of it. You know, and you have to know all of it, and at a high level, you have to understand the whole—whole thing.

TS: So you get the broad picture.

MVJ: That's right, you get a broad picture. It's just that the men would go to the ground school and of course the lieutenants would then go to the companies—the lower tactical levels.

TS: When they first got their intel—

MVJ: Yeah, and work their way up, whereas the women were kind of stuck at the top.

TS: [chuckles]

MVJ: With the colonels and the majors and everybody, so that made it kind of a weird world for lieutenants.

TS: I guess maybe there're some benefits and challenges with that.

MVJ: Well, yeah. I mean, there's—I think, at least at that time, you had the—well, I think for women, and I think it's still this way today, but not to the same extent. You have to prove yourself anyway, in whatever job you're in. The difference is, with women, that once you transferred, you had to prove yourself all over again, whereas for men, they'd build a reputation as they worked their way up, and they built a credibility as they went, and it took a lot of years before women didn't have to kind of re-build that and re-prove yourself at every—every stage of the game.

TS: Do you think sometimes, too, that if you had—if a woman made a mistake, it reflected on all women, whereas if a man made a mistake—

MVJ: Yeah. We used to say, it was—being a female Marine was living in the goldfish bowl, because everybody would know—

TS: When you did something, screwed up?

MVJ: And at that point, you still had Woman Marine companies.

TS: You weren't, like, attached to other companies, or—how was the—how did the hierarchy go?

MVJ: I mean, you worked—you worked—work-wise, you were integrated, though, like at Norfolk, they didn't want more than one female in a section, but you know—but they grew out of that. But command-wise, administratively, you belonged—your company was just women. And the women's quarters, for enlisted—well, they didn't have their own barracks, but they had their own—

TS: Section?

MVJ: —Floors, and that. Because—

TS: Can't have co-ed.

MVJ: That's right, yeah.

TS: So, how was that—do you think there was some efficiency lost with that, or? As far as the former—[unclear]

MVJ: I think—I think when everything was totally segregated that way, like everything else, it was plusses and minuses. On the minus side, there was often distrust among the men about what was going on, or you know, if a female did something wrong, because they were going to be disciplined or whatever in their own unit, what was going to—

TS: But they wouldn't know, because it's not through that unit, it's through the chain of—

MVJ: On the women's side, though, at least at that point in time, most women would tell you they would much prefer to work for a male boss than a female boss, because the women would be so much harder on the women. Keep your thumb on them, and don't let them mess up. Because of the goldfish bowl thing. If you mess up, it's going to be a reflection on all of us. And—in some ways, that was good, and I'll tell you that as long as you had segregated companies and the women were all together, the camaraderie was there, everybody knew each other. The word got passed, people took care of each other a little bit better. That was something that was lost when that—

TS: When the full integration came in?

MVJ: Yeah. So I mean, you know, there's—it goes both ways.

TS: Huh. Well, when you got to your first duty assignment, which was—

MVJ: In Norfolk.

TS: In Norfolk. The Marine Amphibious—

MVJ: Yes.

TS: What was that like?

MVJ: Well, because that was such a senior headquarters, being a second lieutenant there was [laughing] a little overwhelming for—

TS: Well, you learned how to salute.

MVJ: Oh, you do learn to salute. [both chuckle] But at the same time, I think you learned a lot because the expectations were high. I mean, you know, I never—until I was a major, I never filled a billet that called for my rank, I always filled one—you know, when I was a second lieutenant, I filled captain's billets. I filled lieutenant major's billets.

TS: Why?

MVJ: Because it was always a short MOS [military occupational specialty] and they needed people, so you know, your responsibilities were always higher than what you were—

TS: What your rank was.

MVJ: What your rank was. And—

TS: Was that common throughout the—

MVJ: Within that specialty, it was.

TS: Within intel?

MVJ: Within intel. Because it was always so short, you always needed more than what you had.

TS: Did they just need to hire more? Maybe? I don't know, I'm wondering.

MVJ: Well, I think the emphasis—the emphasis is on the war fighter, it's on, you know, getting your infantry guys, your tankers, your artillery, your pilots. You know, I mean—

TS: Less so on the intel side.

MVJ: Yeah. And I mean, until—it's just, the schools were long, took a long time to get the clearances, which means—

TS: Put a lot of money into.

MVJ: Money, yeah. So, just wasn't a community that—the Marine Corps had a hard time, if you want to call it, growing its intel community. When I first went into it, it was called a—it was a restricted MOS, which meant that you didn't have any unrestricted officers in it, and you didn't have the G2, the colonel—

TS: What does that mean?

MVJ: That it was probably an infantry officer or somebody else who wasn't an—it was always a he then—that was not an intel officer. All the officers—

TS: So what does that mean, by unrestricted? You can't have unrestricted, what does that mean?

MVJ: Unrestricted—you have certain MOSs that were considered to be restricted, meaning that only certain people could be in them. In the intelligence field, that restriction was, they could only be limited duty officers, warrant officers, and women, because we were always restricted. [chuckles] So, you know, that was it, and then your actual G2, your highest ranking person, usually did not carry the MOS. It was somebody else, so your

professionals were the ones, except for the women, were all prior enlisted, had grown up in the field, through the ranks, which was a good way to learn, you know, you learned a lot, you kind of had to take your foot out of your mouth a lot of times. But you know, it wasn't until probably the early to mid '80s that they opened it up and started allowing other officers to come in, because they realized that, hey, we've got a problem here, we'll never grow the numbers that we need.

TS: [unclear]

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Well, did you—in this—were there a lot of women in the field at the time that you went in?

MVJ: Well, like I said, they basically made about two a year. So I mean, you knew the names, if not—well, among the women officers, you pretty much knew the names of all the women officers anyway, wherever they were, but for intel, you know, I mean, you were normally in an office where you were the only female, maybe one other. But you knew who they all were, and [unclear] your rank, because you were spread out over—

TS: Right. Well, initially, then—

MVJ: And most of them didn't stay in, so. [chuckles]

TS: Most of the women?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Didn't stay in? Did most of the men?

MVJ: Well, because most of them, when I first went into it, were all LDOs, I mean—

TS: LDO stands for?

MVJ: Limited Duty Officer.

TS: I see.

MVJ: They could only go to the rank of major anyway. And most of them had been in twenty, I mean—what I called the old grizzled guys that were, you know, majors.

TS: Yeah. So how was your receptiveness of the intel field to, you know, you as a woman in the—coming in?

MVJ: I didn't find a problem with it, within the section itself. As long as—I think, as long as you were open and realized that you needed to learn, and you didn't mind having somebody junior to you try to tell you some things, you just had to learn which of them to listen to and which ones not to.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: And, as you did that and proved yourself, then usually, the more senior people would give you more responsibility and it, you know, would just grow. But I didn't find that I had, personally, had a problem.

TS: Did you have anybody that stood out, like as a mentor?

MVJ: [pause] Yes. There was a major, Dick Voltz who was there, not when I first got there, but he came in and if he told you to do something, he expected you to do it. But if you had a question, needed guidance, he was more than willing to sit down and help you and get you in the right direction. Get you there. And, that's who I learned a lot from.

TS: Now, so you're in—let's see, so by the time you got there—[unclear] So you were there through '78 at your first assignment.

MVJ: Yes.

TS: Can you—and I know you probably can't talk, if you were in intel—your clearance, can't talk about everything, but are there some things that you can tell us about the job that you did do?

MVJ: Well, I started out as an analyst, which most people do.

TS: Analyzing data.

MVJ: Yeah. And there, you had—you had a three-star general that ran the command. So, you know, you had daily briefs and all that—analysts were involved in being the briefers. Doing that type of thing. Of course, it just so happened that that three-star general was Lieutenant General Barrow, who later became Commandant, but more importantly, had grown up and still had property about ten miles south of where—or north of where I lived.

TS: Is that right?

MVJ: So, and—but he was one of these old Southern gentlemen who kept that Louisiana accent, kind of the plantation accent type thing. And people would always come out and they'd say "Ginger, did you hear him? What did he say?" So, I ended up being a briefer a lot, even though it wasn't that difficult, you know, and it was really kind of amusing, because in intel school, they kept telling me, you know, you need to work on getting rid

of this accent, which, believe it or not, I've gotten rid of a lot of—and talk faster, which I did. I mean, you'd stand in front of the mirrors and do it.

Because they'd say "When you go back to Norfolk, you've got to be able to brief a general."

And I'd say "I don't have that problem. The general there—we understand each other perfectly, it's everybody else." [chuckling]

TS: "They don't understand us" right? That's too funny.

MVJ: But—

TS: Is that one thing, though, that you did find, in—throughout, you know, the twenty, twenty-three years, right?

MVJ: Yes.

TS: That—if somebody was even from the same state as you, right, you often had a bond, just—

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Isn't that interesting, about the military, in that way. If you're someone from Louisiana, you know, it's like "Where are you from?" People say state, and then you kind of break it down.

MVJ: And you know, like even—like, he was still there when I got my orders to Parris Island. Of course, Parris Island is out in the swamps and everything. And he found out about those orders, and he came down and he said "Now, Lieutenant," he said "You're going to really like going there," he says, "It's like being at home." [both laugh]

TS: Was he right?

MVJ: Well—the humidity was about the same, and the bugs. But we don't have that much salt marsh right where I grew up, you know. You didn't have that smell when the tides go out and come in, you know.

TS: Oh, right.

MVJ: But it was similar in a lot of ways, yeah. No hills. [chuckling] But yeah, anyway, I was analyst, and then I became the officer in charge of the imagery interpretation team, which was interesting.

TS: Why was it interesting?

MVJ: Well, you've got—and I don't remember, I think we had like eight or ten people on the team, mostly sergeants and then staff NCOs. And almost all of them had served in Vietnam, doing everything. So here you are, you know, number one, female, number two, having done nothing in combat or anything, and not really trained—I mean, in intel school, you do some things with imagery, but I mean, you don't have the MOS. So, but they helped—they helped me—I knew what was expected, I knew how to do it. I couldn't automatically look at imagery and tie it together and say "Gee, that's a Soviet T72 tank, and that tower is, you know, fifteen meters high" or—but I learned to do that.

TS: Right. Well, it's not an innate ability, I wouldn't think, necessarily. So.

MVJ: No. No. But it was interesting, working, you know, with those guys—

TS: Getting tips from them.

MVJ: And being in charge of them wasn't always that much fun because they were some troublemakers, too.

TS: Yeah. What'd you do when that happened?

MVJ: I don't know, I'd just call them in and—I mean, I have to say, I've had gunnery sergeants, male gunnery sergeants, stand there and cry as I just [chuckling]—

TS: Really?

MVJ: I learned a long time ago that especially, you know, men tend to yell and use profanity a lot, stuff like that. I don't—I don't use profanity, I don't—

TS: You mean male officers, when they're chewing somebody out?

MVJ: Well, sometimes, or staff NCOs. But I mean, it's just, the men—the male mentality is kind of, you know, goes that route.

TS: The bull in the china shop, sort of thing.

MVJ: Yes. And what I learned on the women's side is, if you really want to make somebody, you know, you're really going to—I don't want to say—really drill them down, to feeling like nobody, but sometimes you—

TS: But that's what you mean. [chuckling]

MVJ: You know, you talk softly to them, so they have to listen to you to hear. And you just stand there and stare them straight in the eyes, never turn your eyes away, it's kind of like a mad dog type thing, you know, you keep your eyes on them, keep your voice soft and low. And if it's something really bad, not with a lot of compassion, I mean, it's just to the

point. And I always found that that kind of—a lot of times, you end up with people apologizing and "Well, you know, this is why I did it, this—" So you get into the excuse thing, and then—and I really didn't care about excuses. I was trained better than that, just, you know, black and white, okay, that's—[chuckling] you know. But I never had any problems disciplining anybody.

TS: No?

MVJ: You know, at the same time, that same person that I may really hit and write a really bad fitness report on or something, if—if I thought they needed to write a rebuttal, I would be sure and tell them that, and sometimes, some of these people that weren't very good writers, I would even get them to bring it to me in the rough and I would go over it and smooth—and help them.

TS: Right. To make it sound a little better.

MVJ: Correct it, and smooth it out, to—because I wasn't trying to crucify anybody, you know. I wanted it to be fair, and I wanted them to see me as fair. And I think for the most part, that was—that's the way it usually worked for twenty-three years.

TS: Interesting. So.

MVJ: And a few times not, but that was usually later, and you know. Different circumstances.

TS: More risk in the—I mean, for the person that's on the line.

MVJ: Well, usually in more serious—oh, yeah.

TS: That's what I mean, is more—

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: The fight back is probably greater.

MVJ: Yeah, much more to lose.

TS: Right, because of—yeah. That's quite interesting. So you had—were you finding that you were enjoying this kind of work?

MVJ: Yeah. I also found that one of the things I liked about the military was that you changed positions often enough, and frequently enough, that you didn't get bored. You know, you didn't have to quit a job or move because you didn't like it, because sooner or later, it was going to change.

TS: What kind of things were different? I mean, within—you mean within—even at Norfolk, your first assignment?

MVJ: Well, like that, and then I also, while I had the imagery interpretation team, I also picked up as the assistant collections officer. So, working with collection plans and doing things like that.

TS: What's a collection plan, what is that?

MVJ: A collection plan is—you determine—you have a set amount of information about—we'll call it the enemy, it could be anything, though. You identify where your gaps are, what is it you need to find out. Then you decide how you're going to collect information, to fill those gaps. And you have to look at what intelligence collection assets you have, and usually at that level, you're talking about having to request support from higher assets. Of course, at that time, you didn't even mention satellites or anything. You know, I mean, there weren't that many, but you didn't—I mean, you didn't acknowledge that they even existed. Or aircraft or some type of signals intelligence, listening post, thing—you know, but you determine "Well, I think this can be collected this way, doing this," so you try to task and fill out your plan of—what—how do you close those gaps in your information. And that's still the basic—

TS: Method.

MVJ: —thing you have to do for collection and intelligence.

TS: So it's the allocation of resources directly to whatever, like, specific needs you had for that intel?

MVJ: Yeah. And I mean, ideally you work with your organic assets first, what belongs to you. But if you're sitting here in the United States and you're trying to collect on something far off, you don't have anything organic, you're going to put in—put in there. So. Then you have to request assets, and that means build a plan and give everything priorities, try to build a case, because when you submit your request up to DOD [Department of Defense] or whoever's going to collect, or whoever you're asking to collect, then they have to look at all the requests they have. They only have a certain number of assets, so they have to measure what their priorities are.

TS: So if you're a good writer in persuading, you might have a better chance of getting your—

MVJ: I think that has something to do with it, yeah, yeah. [TS chuckles] You have to build—that's part of that staff work thing, you know.

TS: Oh, building the case for—

MVJ: Build your case, yeah.

TS: Now what are you thinking about the Marines and your future graduate studies that you wanted to do originally when you joined?

MVJ: Well.

TS: About this time.

MVJ: While I was at Norfolk, I was still toying with "Well, is this what I wanted to do, yeah, I really like it, but," you know, all those questions that come out. And of course, I'm still a reserve officer while I'm there, and then I put in for augmentation, only because I had somebody tell me that, you know, it's kind of the Marine Corps way, "You're not good enough to be in my Marine Corps," at a social thing, not—you know. And I was thinking, well, you know, gee, I'm just doing this, I think they should give me more responsibility and let me do this.

TS: Oh, right.

MVJ: Blah, blah, blah, and, you know, it's time for augmentation, I don't know if I'm going to put in for it. Why do I want to stay in the Marine Corps?

And this senior person said "Well, you know, that's all right, you're not good enough to be in our Marine Corps anyway."

And I went home that night and talked to my roommate, I said "You know what?" I said "I don't care if I want to be here or not, I'm going to put in, and I'm going to show this person that I can get selected." [chuckling] And I did, and I did, so.

TS: So, do not put your back against the wall, I'm thinking.

MVJ: Well, you know. Don't throw up a challenge.

TS: Or a challenge, that's what I mean.

MVJ: I'm a sucker. [laughs]

TS: So did you get it?

MVJ: I did. So I was augmented, I think shortly after I made first lieutenant. It all happened about the same time. But, yeah.

TS: So where did you go after Norfolk?

MVJ: After Norfolk, I went to Parris Island and trained recruits for what was supposed to be a three-year tour, turned into a four-year tour.

TS: Why?

MVJ: [pause] Again, we get back—and the Marine Corps still trains its women recruits, they're segregated, so the women are by themselves, you don't mix men and women in the recruit training at all. But, you know, when I came in, because women couldn't go down to these lower units, you weren't trained in any field skills, women weren't allowed to shoot, pistol or rifle, you know, you just weren't allowed to do any of that stuff. Unless you had to be a pay officer or something like that. Which—

TS: Where you had to carry something.

MVJ: Which, you know, when you got orders there, then you had to qualify for pistol, because you had to be the pay officer for your recruits. So you had to go pick up money and you know, make sure you were armed so you could shoot the floor out of your car or whatever [chuckles]. And I was always concerned about being in my private vehicle, carrying money with a weapon, but you know. But at the same time, about a year after I was there, and I was there as a series commander for the first two years, which means the drill instructors—there's two series in a company, and you had two platoons in a series, so you're the officer in charge of these two platoons. The drill instructors worked for you. But I ended up on this committee to look at starting some field training for the women. And to try and develop a program of instruction to do this. And we worked on—I mean, you know. Research had to go into it, everything had, all—everything had to be in its exact place, how many hours of this would they have, how many hours of this, who would teach it, the whole thing. And we worked on it, and then this General Barrow, who I'm talking about was from Louisiana, was now commandant of the Marine Corps. He personally wanted to approve this program of instruction, because the army was training women in the field, Fort Jackson. Politically, there were things that went on, good and bad, and all this, so he wanted to be very well—very aware of exactly what was going to go on, when it was going to go on, what was going to happen.

TS: So what were the concerns, I mean, what were the worries about?

MVJ: Because women were only allowed—and I'm sure you remember—women were only allowed to be trained for defensive combat. Women were not allowed, in any of the services, to do anything that could be construed as offensive.

TS: So firing an M16's defensive. Sort of.

MVJ: Well, it can be, if you're setting up defensive positions. It's offensive if you're out on a patrol pursuing somebody. [both chuckle]

TS: Right.

MVJ: You know? So, when you looked at the things that were going—you know, learning to go to the—do the low crawls through barbed wire, probing for mines, throwing grenades.

Things like this. It had to be written. And all those things can—you can build a case that they're all defensive. But they needed to be—

TS: Documented somehow.

MVJ: Documented and presented that way. So we thought we had—well, that wasn't—that was approved after my two years—as soon as I became the command S3, training officer.

TS: So it was around '80?

MVJ: Yeah. So, the problem is, all of our drill instructors—the women drill instructors—we had a few males that were assigned as drill instructors, but none of the women had been trained for any field skills, because I mean, we're all in the same—in the same boat. So, the general—commanding general at Parris Island called in myself, and the lieutenant colonel who was our CO [commanding officer]. And told me that I was—and he was right—I was the only one left at that point who had been there to plan this thing.

And he said "You know, we have to train the drill instructors." He said "You can either voluntarily or involuntarily be here for a fourth year." And I—and the colonel was supposed to be leaving.

And I said "Well, I will voluntarily do it, if Colonel Entriken will extend." I said, because we've worked together, I enjoy being her S3, but having a new commander come in—I'm not going to just off the top of my head say "I will voluntarily stay for that." So she agreed. And we stayed and we went through this whole process of training the women drill instructors, getting them out, getting the male drill instructors to train them, you know, going through the rappelling and the—I mean, everything, it was all fun, but tiring, you know. And the series commanders—I mean, everybody in the command, we made sure everybody went. I had to make sure they were all trained and kind of a checklist of "Okay, these drill instructors are ready to do this." So then, the very first series went to the field.

TS: So, what year was that, that that started, then?

MVJ: It was probably early, early '82, or at the end of '81. So. They went to the field and carried out this program, which, schedule-wise, everything worked perfectly. However, there were probably more reporters out there than we had recruits. We had reporters from Europe, from all over the place. And the commanding general wasn't—was on TAD[temporary additional duty] someplace. So the deputy one-star [general] was out there, and I was out there representing our command, so we ended up having to do a lot of interviews and everything. But, a lot of this stuff, I mean, the pictures—and I thought there were some pretty neat pictures, but the pictures, and not necessarily stuff from our interview, but what they wrote in the articles and everything, painted a picture that could be construed as training for offensive combat. So, that series came out of the field, like say on a Saturday. On a Monday morning, main general was back, the colonel and I were called into the general's office. The commandant had called him, and we were given the option to totally curtail the training, not doing it anymore, or to tailor it so that they

would still do some of these things, but a lot of it would be observing and learning through, you know, having the guys explain, but they would still stay out in the field when they do all this. Well, we knew that if we just totally did nothing, it was a total step back, you'd never have your foot in the door. So, you know, we just kind of pulled some things back and then gradually built things in where we could. But that's why I was there a fourth year. And I'm glad, I loved the tour. I hated the first year until I got through my thick skull that hey, you know, so you're going to work seven days a week, from four-thirty, five o' clock every morning 'til probably eight o' clock, nine o' clock every night. But what you've just got to accept is that's just the way it is, whether you're going to enjoy it or not. So, once you got through your head that that's the way it was going to be—

TS: So it's a pretty grueling tour, then, with a lot of hours.

MVJ: Oh, it was. And that's—but you knew that, I mean, you were told that when you checked in. You know, I was told that you can count on being a series commander for at least two years, this is going to be your schedule. You're going to pick up your first series this Saturday, they'll be here—at that time, eight weeks, they'll graduate on Monday, you'll have two days off, then you can get your drill instructors [unclear] to do this, on Saturday, the next Saturday morning, you pick up your next series. Count it through holidays, it doesn't matter, you can count—two years later, that's exactly—I mean, I knew my schedule. That's—that was the schedule. Yeah.

TS: Did you volunteer for this, originally? I mean, I know you—

MVJ: Oh, no. [chuckles]

TS: So you're selected?

MVJ: Well, yeah, I guess you are. I mean, you know, the monitors[?] in Headquarters Marine Corps call down, give you the orders.

TS: Yeah. Is it something that—is it like a required duty? For—

MVJ: No, it's what we call a 9910 billet. Which means, regardless of what your military occupational specialty is, every officer fills 9910 billets. Which means it doesn't matter what your MOS is, you're going. It's a command—

TS: So it would be Parris Island—

MVJ: It's a command billet.

TS: I see.

MVJ: Which is good, I mean, it's good doing it, and yeah, I mean, they wouldn't select somebody they didn't think could do the job, I mean, you know. I don't know that you're hand-selected for it, because I was never in that part of the Manpower part of it. But yeah, it's a pretty—people that aren't—that don't meet the quality, don't stay there long.

TS: Did—so when you got done with that, did you get a choice of where you wanted to go or anything like that, because of the—

MVJ: Well, I'd been—on your fitness reports, you always put down choices. You know, where you'd like to go. And I'd always put down that I wanted to go to the Defense Intelligence College. So, that's where I got. Now, I did call the monitors a few times and remind them that I—

TS: That you had that on your list? [laughs]

MVJ: That's right. [chuckles] Hey, how about—so, yeah, you know. I got to go there, to the graduate school for—

TS: So that's like just advanced training, sort of thing? What—

MVJ: It's kind of like a college, and it's a—it's not just DOD, it's all the government agencies, intel folks, can send people there. You can get a master's degree out if it. I didn't, because you had to write a thesis, and I figured I'd already written one, I wasn't going to do that.

TS: [chuckles] So that's about a year that you're there?

MVJ: Yeah—nine or ten months. Yeah.

TS: And where was that at?

MVJ: That's—well, it's at DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] in DC, it's over on—

TS: That's close enough.

MVJ: Over in Anacostia. I can't remember—yeah.

TS: That's fine. Washington D.C. When—because I know that you don't get away from the East Coast very much there for—

MVJ: No.

TS: But after—so after this school, then you did get away from the East Coast.

MVJ: Yeah, after that, then I went to Japan, Okinawa, for a year. Unaccompanied tour, of course, since I'm not married, it was going to be unaccompanied anyway, but I mean—that's why it was a one-year tour, it was an unaccompanied tour. And there, I was the G2, the intelligence officer for the 3rd Force Service Support Group.

TS: And is that someplace that you also wanted to go to?

MVJ: [pause] I wanted to go to Okinawa, I didn't particularly want to go to the FSSG [Force Service Support Group], but once I got there, the general called me in and they had a few intel personnel there, but all they did was take care of clearances. They really did not have an intelligence section, per se, even though they called it that. And the general called me in, and told me that I was there because he wanted to build an intelligence section, and he wanted to really do intelligence and send people out on the floats with—the Marine—at that time, Marine Amphibious Units. And to have an intelligence capability. And he had talked to the G1, the manpower side, and they were working with Headquarters Marine Corps, and we would be getting people, and I could work with them and do that.

So, looking at it that way, I thought "Boy, this is an opportunity, you know, kind of build from the ground up." So yeah, that ended up being a nice—there were a lot of things I did not like about that tour, but that part of it was a professional challenge that I enjoyed. I met a lot of very capable and talented young intelligence people coming out of school, lance corporals and corporals and then, you know, a couple of sergeants and staff sergeants coming in. That, you know, I really—working with them was fun, it was just a good experience. You felt like you were doing something, and you know, and we did the same thing. Intel briefs for the general and all this, except I had the corporals and sergeants briefing, and I would flip the—at that time, flip the slide, the transparencies.

TS: Oh, right, the transparencies.

MVJ: Yeah. [chuckling] So that's been a while—

TS: Forgot about those, yeah. That's right. The little—like, grease pen—

MVJ: And then answer any questions if they got in a—if they sunk themselves in a hole.

TS: That's neat.

MVJ: Well, that grease pen was—that was pretty handy sometimes.

TS: Yes, it was, that's true! Well, you had—let's see, I'm trying to see what years here. '83 to '84.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: What was going on in the world?

MVJ: Well, during that period of time, and during that year, we had the Beirut bombing. And then we had Grenada. [Beirut bombing refers to the October 1983 suicide bombing of the barracks of U.S. Marines and that of France's 1st Parachute Chasseur Regiment, with a significant death toll. Granada refers to Operation Urgent Fury, a United States-led invasion of the Caribbean island of Grenada with a duration of October to December of 1983.]

TS: I was thinking that—

MVJ: And, the Korean 007 was shot down. [Korean Air Lines Flight 007, which was shot down by Soviet interceptors on September 1st, 1983]

TS: Shot down—was that '83? '82, '83, I'm trying to—

MVJ: It was '83 or '84—

TS: It wouldn't have been '84, it would have been '83.

MVJ: It was '83, because it was right after I got there—

TS: Right to Japan? That's what I was wondering—that's what I was thinking, if that happened when you were over there.

MVJ: Because I got called in in the middle of the night because I was the one that had access to some of the stuff that—[unclear]

TS: Because there was a lot of tension in that.

MVJ: Oh, yes, there was. And then I was also involved in—I can't remember the names of the exercises in Korea, because you always have exercises in Korea. Forces from Okinawa go over and support them, where the US—I can't remember which US submarine ran into the Russian sub—

TS: That's right.

MVJ: During the—

TS: An exercise. Yeah.

MVJ: And that was really kind of interesting, because I was on a special team in Korea watching real-world activity to give people a heads-up that we're involved in exercises, so you know, that was—[chuckles] that was interesting, I'd never, you know, been involved in things at that level.

TS: Right. Was that—that would have been really interesting, but a lot of—

MVJ: Well, I was going to say a lot of tension, but it depends on who you are. I'm not a person that gets—you know, I do my job, I report it, because intel, all you do is report, try to give your judgment on what's going to happen on something, you know. You're not God, so you're not going to make it happen. You give it to the operators after you make a decision. So, you know, you just stay attuned, and don't—

TS: Well, can you talk a little bit about, at this period of time, I think we forget sometimes, in this—in the mid '80s, with the tension with the Soviet Union, and—I'm sure you know that[?], and the—between Gorbachev, and—actually, it wasn't Gorbachev yet.

MVJ: No, it was—

TS: Chernenko? Or Andropov? I forget which one. [Yuri Andropov was the leader of the Soviet Union from June 1983 until February 1984, Konstantin Chernenko from April 1984 to March 1985.] Brezhnev was already gone.

MVJ: I'd have to go look at my little room with all my stack-dolls, what order they're in.

TS: Yeah. Oh, is that [unclear] you have. But there was a tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

MVJ: Oh yes.

TS: With the Cold War at this time, and these kinds of things happen, like you say, and the terrorism with the Beirut bombing. So, can you describe to somebody who's a civilian to try to get a feel for what it was like to be in the military at this time? It's not Vietnam, it's not—you know, we're not at war, it's a cold war.

MVJ: Well, I think because most of us, at least, I was a captain then, you know, most of us at that rank and that level of experience had never been in when it wasn't a cold war. You know, you were diligent, you read the traffic all the time. Traffic being the message traffic from all the agencies in D.C. and everywhere. You'd—people in the intelligence field are closely linked to their maps, so you know, you'd read traffic, you'd look at the maps, you'd look at the geographic proximity of things to each other, and try to draw a mental picture of what does it mean, even if you're not in a job as an analyst, you have to go through, just to stay on top of it. What do you think these things mean, and of course you're reading analysis from people saying what they think, but one of your challenges is not to automatically accept—I don't care if it's CIA or where it is. Don't automatically accept what other people say. If you look at it and kind of do your own analysis, what is it? Because that's what you have to tell your boss. Always looking at it, if you know your command's mission, how could your general and your command be impacted by that? So—which means that the picture for them is going to be different than the picture given to the president or to somebody at a lower level, because your references are different.

So, at—we were always—you were just trained to be wary of everything, to read it, to read into everything. If you read something in the newspaper and then you're reading the message traffic, you know, what are the similarities, what's not there, and a lot of times, intelligence, you learn as much by what's not provided to you as what is. And then, you know, trying—try to understand the history of the enemy, where it's the Soviets or the Chinese or whoever it is. Because their history—how do they make their decisions, you know, all of that goes in. It's—a lot of times they say "Think like the enemy" if you're an intelligence person. And that's kind of really what you do, but to do that, you have to understand that enemy. Their history, their culture, where they come from. So it's kind of a constant study, of that research thing, you know, when you have time, you sit down, you just try to learn more, new avenues, personalities, leadership, different countries.

TS: Did the—was there a—when the Marine barracks was bombed, that was a different dynamic than we'd really seen before. Was that—and so, I may not—and I know you're not in every piece of intel.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: But you're a Marine, and that—

MVJ: So you're closely linked to the bombing there.

TS: Right.

MVJ: And I mean, we knew about it as soon as it occurred. Our commands were—everybody was pulling alert, called in from liberty or wherever they were. Just in case, because nobody knew what was going to happen. And nobody had, initially, really knew who the perpetrator was. Did the Soviet Union have something to do—you know, just what are the links here, who's doing what to whom. So, yeah. And the same thing with the KAL [Korean Airlines] shoot-down, everybody was called in and put on alert duty. Watching, waiting to be told what's going on.

TS: Right, because they actually said it was one of our spy planes, initially, right, our [C135?]. And yeah, so that tension that's in the air. So yeah, this—you're actually in Japan during an interesting time, things going on. Did—and now, here you're in about ten years. [pause] [both talking simultaneously]

MVJ: I'm trying to think, ten years, give me a year.

TS: It's 1984. [chuckles] Sorry, give you some context.

MVJ: Eighty-four, '94, okay!

TS: Oh, and you did say—so, how did you like Okinawa? You said there were some things you liked, some things you didn't.

MVJ: I enjoyed the culture, the Okinawan people. There were just some command things I didn't—you know, that was during a time that you worked five and a half days a week, of course, there wasn't anything else to do, but.

TS: You didn't get to do anything on your off-time, or there wasn't any off-time?

MVJ: Oh, no, just about every Saturday afternoon, a bunch of us would run with the Hash House Harriers—

TS: With the what?

MVJ: They called it the Hash House Harriers, it's a running group, and they have them in the States now, too. You know, it's kind of a club you join, the runs can be anywhere from three miles to ten to, you know—through the countryside and you have people, it's called Hash House Harriers because you have people that play the role of the hare. And they have chalk or whatever, and drop it, and you run, you have to follow the trail wherever it goes, and they put in fake trails and you know, you just run until you get to the end, wherever that might be. So that's kind of, you know. Then have a little beer, have a good time.

TS: We hadn't actually talked too much either, about, you know—you are a Marine, and you have PT and—did you have it every day? Did you—how did you—I mean, just kind of—maybe, different places, it was different.

MVJ: I was going to say, every place was different. You know, at Okinawa, because it's small and everything is together, usually you would have a unit PT, I think probably the company, once a week, five o' clock in the morning type thing. And then our section would have PT one morning a week together, and then usually at noon, everybody'd go out on their own and run. And that's what I prefer, because I'm a person—I prefer to PT at noon, go out and do my own thing. But—but you have to go with wherever you are.

TS: Without being with everybody else, just like taking care of—

MVJ: Yeah, yeah, to me, to be able to go out and run is kind of like riding that lawnmower when I was a kid. It's time you can get out and be by yourself, be in your own world, you know. I don't particularly care to run with somebody, because I don't care about talking or anything, I just kind of like to think and let my mind go.

TS: It's your own time.

MVJ: Yeah. I kind of still do that, except I ride bicycles more. [both chuckle]

TS: Had you run much before you got in?

MVJ: Well, when I was going to graduate school and stuff, because part of my study group was running.

TS: Oh, is that right?

MVJ: So, I'd go out and run with them. You know, so I had always kind of—

TS: Kind of run.

MVJ: Yeah. I mean, I wouldn't—I am not a runner, and I would not call myself a runner, but I enjoy going out and—

TS: That's a runner, to me, see.

MVJ: —and running, and being, you know, like—I always liked going out and doing the 10Ks(kilometers) and—

TS: See, that's a runner, to me. [chuckles]

MVJ: Well, then I guess—

TS: It's all relative.

MVJ: Okay, under your definition, then, I was a runner. But—[both chuckle]

TS: No, just to me.

MVJ: Okay.

TS: Not saying necessarily that is the definition.

MVJ: Okay.

TS: So—so, anything else you want to say about Okinawa? Your time there?

MVJ: No. I think—yeah, it was a good tour, I enjoyed the people for the most part, I enjoyed the challenge. We did have an intel section by the time I left, another intel officer came in, took it over. So, you know, I was—

TS: So that worked out.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: And then you went—

MVJ: And then I went to Quantico, to Marine Corps Development and Education Command, really to the development center, where I was the head of the threat analysis branch.

TS: So what happened there, what—

MVJ: Well, what happens in the development center, was—that was the major part of the Marine Corps that looked at, what did we need to develop, how do we do it. I mean, we had the intel section, the mobility section, all kinds of different things. That's when they were first starting to look—and the Marine Corps is behind the [U.S.] Air Force, much behind, with computers and—you know, because most of us thought "Well, the Marine Corps is mobile and tactical, we'll never have all these computers to drag around." Well, you know, that's not the way it worked. So, the people there are the ones that go out and work the systems, work with the contractors, and do all the stuff, and work for years and years and years, develop the new tank or the new—

TS: So a lot of R and D [research and development] stuff going on here?

MVJ: A lot of R&D stuff. The threat analysis branch, for everything that's developed, there has to be a threat analysis done. You know, what are you developing to counter? What's the enemy, what are they going to be doing, you know, if you're going to have armament on it, what's going to be countering that, so, you know, how—what do your ballistics need to be, to do.

TS: Well, did you find this job interesting, was this interesting?

MVJ: Yeah, I did. Again, a lot of research stuff—

TS: I would think you would like that job.

MVJ: Because with that, you're looking—because of development time and things, you're writing things for "This is what it's going to be ten years down the road, or fifteen years down the road." So, I mean, you know, it's a thing—a lot of people in intelligence don't like doing that type [of] thing, because you're sticking your—

TS: Neck out, I guess.

MVJ: Your neck out, I mean, you're putting in writing what you think is going to happen, and there's no crystal ball that's going to be there. So, but to me, that's what intelligence is about, and I enjoyed being able to do it that way.

TS: Well, looking back, how right on were you? On some of your guesses for the future?

MVJ: I—a lot of it was pretty good, you know.

TS: Yeah?

MVJ: I can't tell you for what systems, necessarily—

TS: Oh, that's okay, no, just in general?

MVJ: Yeah, yeah—now, we didn't see the wall coming down and some things like, you know— [referring to the Berlin Wall, probably]

TS: Right. Not sure how—

MVJ: Though we were maybe looking at some terrorist-type things, and some of that countering—countries where some of your own—they might have some of your weapons, and things like that.

TS: Interesting.

MVJ: Which, you know, we thought was kind of an interesting way to look at it, then, and that's turned out to be pretty realistic. [chuckles]

TS: Yeah, that's true, that's true. And so, this was like a three-year assignment?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: And—now, how, along the way, how are you doing on your promotions and your—

MVJ: Everything's kind of going as scheduled, yeah. Kind of—I'd say, I mean, you know, Marine Corps, like everybody else, they had your fitness report system, my reports were always good. Things were where they were supposed to be. And again, I was usually filling billets senior to what I had [in terms of rank], so couldn't be too bad, you know.

TS: And so, at what point did you think "I might stay in and make this a career"?

MVJ: Oh, I probably—I think probably at around the ten, twelve year mark.

TS: Which is about where we're at, I think.

MVJ: Yeah, I think I—I think I kind of said, you know, I like this, I'm going to stay here and do this, but I don't want to hem myself in a corner. If I ever get to the point that I'm not happy and I don't like what I'm doing, I don't care if I have eighteen, nineteen years, I want to be able to walk away from—

TS: Wow.

MVJ: I'm glad I never—I didn't run into that, and I don't know if I would have done it, but that's what was in my head, and that's what I told people.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: This is—yeah.

TS: Right. Because that was a way you could go forward knowing that you had an exit plan.

MVJ: Well, I figured I still had GI Bill. [laughs]

TS: There you go! You could still get into graduate school, and—that's right, that's true.

MVJ: And at that point I still remembered some of that stuff I had learned in graduate school.

TS: [laughs] So, what—was there anything else you wanted to say about that development education?

MVJ: No, I think, you know, it just—it was a good tour, and I learned a lot, and hit heads a lot with people, but that's part of it and I liked that part.

TS: You liked that challenge?

MVJ: Yup.

TS: Trying to make your ideas be the one to win over, and things like that?

MVJ: Yeah, you know, I like being able to go up against—

TS: You don't have to be so humble, you can tell me a good juicy story. [chuckles]

MVJ: No, probably the only thing that happened there that later kind of cleared that up was, at that time, the intelligence instructors at the Marine Corps Command Staff College, were just a few of them over at the college, and they weren't faculty advisors or anything, all they did was do intel. And they were short some, and there was this lieutenant colonel, he may have just been a major—no, he was a lieutenant colonel then, who, when we'd have our staff meetings with the intel division at the development center, and he was the head of one of the other branches. And we had some civilian workers there too, which—that was the first time I'd worked with civilians in the military. And he'd continually let everybody know—and this guy had been in the Marine Corps thirty years already, you know, he'd been enlisted. But the most worthless things in the Marine Corps, number one was civilians, number two was the woman. So—and he had lots of combat experience, lots of—so, he headed this team that then moved over, went over to the Command Staff [College].

And I kind of wanted to go teach at Command Staff, and I was told "No, you can't do that."

And I said "Well, why not?"

And he said "You don't have enough ribbons, the things you've got to—you don't have the combat experience to stand there and have the credibility. Command Staff teaches people to be war-fighters, you've got to—"

Said "Hey, I know my intel as well as anybody."

And he said "Yeah, but so-and-so and so-and-so," these other guys, basically my peers.

And I said "Well, they've never been in combat."

He said "But when you look at the ribbons, they appear—you know, it looks like they've been somewhere."

I said "Yeah, they floated around out on the boat." I said "They have all those, what I call 'I was there' ribbons." I said "Yeah," I said, "I can go over and teach."

"Nope, can't do that, don't have the credibility."

So, he and I—our paths crossed numerous times after that. And we ended up being friends, and he decided I knew my intel.

TS: [chuckles] So that—is that part of that proving yourself over and over again, sort of thing?

MVJ: Well, he was an exceptional case, I think, that—you know, not all men in the Marine Corps are that hardnosed about it. And he kind of took pride in that, too.

TS: About women being in the—

MVJ: I mean, let's face it, that—wanted to be the gruff old—old guy, but. You know, it turned out.

TS: And you did get to go to teach at the Command Staff.

MVJ: Oh, but he was gone, he didn't have anything to do with that.

TS: [laughs] Okay.

MVJ: But yeah, that was—when I got there, I thought, "Oh, Colonel Houle" [chuckles] Except that by then, I'd already proven myself to him.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: Because he ended up, during Desert Storm, he didn't get to deploy, because he was the G2 at the MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force] here, and they didn't deploy as a command. But with the reports and things, and some of the things we did there we ended up with our analysis being right and higher headquarters being wrong a lot, so we kind of—I kind of won him over on that. And then going to Gitmo [Guantanamo Bay, Cuba] and he was still the chief—or the G2, so he was the person I had to go to with twenty-four hours and say "This is what I need." And we talked about it, we went over and I executed, and he thought we did a good job, so I—that was one of my successes.

TS: Excellent. So, what did you—after you did the development, you went to—as a student—

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: —to the Marine—

MVJ: Yeah, Command and Staff College.

TS: Command and Staff College. So what kind of thing were you doing there?

MVJ: Well, as a student, you're—you divide into conference groups, and this is the way they still do it. So you had ten to twelve students, mixture of courses, mostly Marines, but you have—each conference group has a representative from every other US service, plus a lot of times, another US agency, and usually a couple of foreign students. And you know, you work through—everything is operational level there, so you work through planning, exercise for planning for MEF-level, or joint task force.

TS: Different scenarios and things?

MVJ: Different scenarios, playing different student roles, and working through that. So it's a—you know, it's a step up in your education. As a military person.

TS: Now, someone has told me, like, as an officer, you have like, boxes you're supposed to check off along the way on your career. But—and this is where, I guess, I wonder about mentoring, and how do you know what boxes you're supposed to check off, and you know, where do you learn this along the way, does everybody, or, you know?

MVJ: No. Hopefully, early on as a lieutenant, [pause] hopefully you have people that will help you, you know, as they rate you in everything you know, that having command at different levels is important. Now, for women, that's harder than for men, because the tactical levels have so many more command opportunities. Now, that's not necessarily the case, but it used to be. Then, just like—well, now, it didn't used to be the big thing, but joint—joint tours is a check box.

TS: Joint tours with what?

MVJ: Within services at your joint headquarters, or wherever, so that you work with the other services. Work more big-picture things.

TS: I see.

MVJ: But all of those, the primary military education for each of your schools. You know, for officers in the Marine Corps, you have—of course, OCS, basic school, that's a given. Then amphibious warfare school, or an equivalent someplace else, which—well, I did

amphibious warfare school, the correspondence, but the equivalent was the school at DIA that I went to, intel post-graduate school. Then your next one was Command and Staff, and then one of the war colleges. And you know, it's different levels. Amphibious warfare school is a captain-level, major, junior lieutenant colonel students for Command and Staff, war college is lieutenant colonels, junior colonels. So, you know, you get selected, because selection for those schools is a little—

TS: Tight, probably.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Because not everybody can go.

MVJ: They select them—you know, they select them, they want so many in different military occupational specialties, you know, that—they want a spread of certain types, so.

TS: So it's not like all intel that's at the school at the same time as you.

MVJ: Yeah, I mean, you want a spread, so that everybody can—part of the big thing is learning from each other, also, because it's a lot of seminar-type things too.

TS: I see. So, and so you can learn, okay, when I'm in this command, this is what kind of things we're interested in doing.

MVJ: Yeah, and when you do an exercise, you know, within your group, you—maybe not the first couple, you do things that you're familiar with. But as you learn more, then you may do an exercise where, as an intel officer, I may run this exercise as the aviation officer. Or the supply officer. Or the commanding general, or the chief of staff. I mean, you know, you play different roles, and you have—so, everybody crosses over, and then whoever's playing the intelligence officer, who may be an infantry guy, then he can—he can talk, you know, I mean, we just kind of cross-pollinate and try to help each other out to get there. You know you have somebody you can talk to. [audio file 2 ends, audio file 3 begins]

TS: So, we're going—we're kind of going through your career, here. And I think—your next—you go to Camp Lejeune, come here.

MVJ: Yes, 10th Marines.

TS: The 10th Marines, and that's in '88?

MVJ: Yeah, so that's an artillery regiment.

TS: Really?

MVJ: Yeah. And I was—I was the first female intelligence officer allowed to go down to the regimental level, was the S2.

TS: How was it that you were able to get that assignment?

MVJ: Well, they had—there wasn't anything in the law precluding it at that point, but the general feeling of the Marine Corps was, if you have a female in a position in a unit like artillery or infantry or anything, and the unit has to deploy, if they go by ship at that time, the women weren't allowed aboard ship. So that creates a problem. So before they allowed me to be there, the commanding general of the 2nd Marine Division had to call up the chain of command and get approval from the commandant and everybody that if, in fact, 10th Marines deployed as a regiment, I would be allowed to deploy through whatever means that the regiment did. And as soon as I checked in, I had an appointment with the general, he sat me down and explained that to me, told me not to screw it up. This is—yeah. So, and—and I had the option, pretty much, of going there as the S2, intelligence officer for the regiment, or going to the division as the assistant G2. Which, I knew what the assistant G2 did, I wanted to go down and do some of that other—more tactical stuff.

TS: Well, what was it that interested you about that—this particular—

MVJ: Just because it hadn't been done, and it was—it was more at the tactical level, it was dealing more with actual tactical level intelligence. And things I'd never done, but I wanted the opportunity to do it.

TS: So did you have any kind of resistance from anybody to put you in this slot?

MVJ: Probably at that point, the only resistance was—remember this officer I was telling you about at Quantico?

TS: Right.

MVJ: Well, now he's the G2 at 2nd Marine Division. However, the assistant G2 at the time, I had talked to on the phone, and he's the one that said "I think I can make this happen, if you want me to try to push it."

So I said "Yeah, go with it," and that's what—that's where it went. So, and that ended up being a good tour, I learned a lot, was in the field a lot, you know, every spring, every fall, we were at Fort Bragg for a month, out there in the tents doing night moves and doing all kinds of stuff with the artillery, which served me well when I went to Desert Storm, because I was familiar with artillery, and kind of the distance when you hear artillery, and things like that. So, other than that, it would have been kind of a foreign concept.

TS: Really wouldn't have had any context.

MVJ: I mean, yeah, I knew artillery, I could give you ranges, I could do all of that, but I didn't have any personal experience with being out there. So that gave me that, and I think gave me a lot more confidence in myself, in the field and in that environment.

TS: Was there anything that was particularly challenging for you in this position?

MVJ: A few of the male officers that always wanted to make sure on a night move that we got a tent up for me, because I was the female, or that did this that and the other. And I could lay down and sleep on the ground just like everybody else, I didn't need a tent. So, you know, gradually that went away.

TS: So the guys didn't have tents. And they were putting—

MVJ: Well, if you had time you did, but if you're making a fast move, generally you don't. Now, one night in a thunderstorm, we decided to put my tent up, because all the primary staff officers rate a CP tent, a smaller tent, has a little vestibule in front, so that you can work out of it if you need to, is the reason, but we put it up for the rain, and then—and the intel section is relatively small. So, my guys were going to end up having to sleep in the vehicle or whatever. I told them the heck with it, so we came in and we all stayed in the tent. Well, the next morning, it's good and clear, and my master sergeant goes out first, then I guess the corporal, and the sergeant major's out there.

And I guess he's watching, and then I come out, and the sergeant major says "Well, my, what is the S2 section doing these days?"

I said "Sergeant major, I'm taking care of my people, we all had a dry place to sleep last night." [chuckling]

So, no, I mean, it wasn't—wasn't something that was difficult to handle, but it was just a mindset that you kind of had to get past for them. Because there had been women in there before, but they were always the adjutant or administrative position, so they never moved with the operational moves, you know, they were always the rear in the tents and everything back there. So, it was just kind of—you had to let these guys learn that it wasn't that different, they just had to get used to it.

TS: Like you said, you've been a Girl Scout.

MVJ: That's right. And that Girl Scout experience served me well, lots of times. [both chuckling]

TS: Did it?

MVJ: Oh, yeah.

TS: I'm sure your dad gave you good tips, too, for—I mean, when you were younger, a younger girl, with his Boy Scout Master experience, so.

MVJ: Yeah. I mean, I could handle myself out in the field, pretty much, you know. I wasn't too concerned about that, it's the humans you've got to worry about.

TS: In what way?

MVJ: Well, just, I mean—I can handle the animal, the things you just—the nature, the things of nature.

TS: Sure.

MVJ: But, you know, humans have their own mind, you never know what they're going to be doing, sneaking around in the dark, doing all kinds of [chuckles]—whether it's jokes or whatever, you know. Throwing tear gas in tents and things like that.

TS: Did they do stuff like that?

MVJ: Yeah, not just to women, I mean, but that's just something that—

TS: No, just—

MVJ: That they do to people occasionally.

TS: Yeah. Is that Marine humor?

MVJ: [pause] Yeah. Get a really big laugh out of it as the tears are running down your—[both laughing]

TS: Well, I don't know, I didn't have that kind of experience, so—so that was, you say, a good experience, to—and for the future, too.

MVJ: It was a good experience.

TS: Did you enjoy the tour?

MVJ: I did. After, I guess it was probably about a twelve mile forced march, we did over here at Camp Lejeune, which is a pretty sandy place, and going through a lot of the areas, and I think you have to lay all your stuff out ahead of time in your pack, to make sure everybody's carrying whatever they're required to take, so everybody's weight, you know, you're carrying fifty, sixty, whatever the poundage was. Regardless of who you are, and of course for the women, you know, the packs, then, at least, weren't made necessarily to fit all that well or anything, and I got back from that hike and I took my boots off, my feet were bleeding so bad, and I had heard a rumor that the G2 down at 2nd FSSG [Force Service Support Group] down the road might be getting ready to retire.

So, with my boots off, I called him, and I said "Chuck," I said, "This is a rumor I've heard. What's going on?"

He said "Yeah, that's true."

I said "Who's going to replace you?"

He says "Right now," he says, "The general wants somebody to replace me, but headquarters thinks they're going to just leave a staff NCO here right now, because everything's so short."

And I said "Well, you think there's a chance I might be able to get in there?"

He says "Let me go up to headquarters and talk to them."

So he did, and that's what happened, but it was—it was that forced march and my aching feet that drove me to it. [chuckling]

TS: [laughs] That you made that phone call.

MVJ: That's right. [both laugh]

TS: So you got that one. And so, why was that—besides the fact that you had done that march, what was compelling to you about this position?

MVJ: Well, number one, at 10th Marines, it's the S2, you have a colonel as a CO. FSSG, it's the G2, you have the general. I mean, it's a bigger command, bigger section, more responsibility. I mean, you know, within a MAGTF[Marine Air-Ground Task Force], within the Marine Corps, got your division, which is your ground element, your wing, which is your air, and then your logistical element is—was the Force Service Support Group. They changed the name now, but it's still the same, basically.

And friends of mine up at the division headquarters, they said "Ginger, are you sure you want to go down there? General Krulack is the CG and he's really—he's really hard."

And I said "That's fine, as long as—I don't mind somebody hard, as long as they tell me what they expect." So I went up there, and things went fine. He was a really hard—he was very exacting, but he told you what he expected of you, and I think, in a weird way it was helpful, in that probably the second weekend I was there—and he hadn't been there that long—is when Iraq invaded Kuwait. So, and from that point, even though we didn't know if we were going to deploy, in the G2, we started working, I mean, and he would come over and spend at least thirty minutes to an hour every day sitting there in front of the map with us and talking. We'd be going over all this, and of course the staff meetings almost every day, and the briefs. And so, in a way, it was to my advantage, because we started out with something real and something to focus on.

TS: Instead of some theory of what might happen, right?

MVJ: That's right. And that really, I think, kind of hardened that relationship, and made us respect each other. Of course, him spending so much time over in the section, because I had an awful lot of junior people, but they worked hard, we got everything done, and they learned at the same time not to be afraid of the general, to be able to talk to him.

TS: The junior officers?

MVJ: Yeah. Well, even—the corporals and the sergeants, if they were there, because usually, the scenario would be, he would come over, and he and I would talk about, well, what's new, and what do you think this needs, blah blah blah. Then, he would get them involved, bring them over to—you know, "Corporal So-and-so, what's this on the map?" And you know, expect a regular conversation with him. And then, "Well, what do you think that means?" And you know, they would just go through this until they built up their confidence in themselves, but also their ability to talk to him and not feel like "Oh, it's the general, I can't—"

TS: Give him my opinion and things like that.

MVJ: And the general knew that these guys—that we were all working together, and you know, it just built up the whole credibility of the section as a whole, and developed that relationship between the commanding general and the section.

TS: So did you have—you didn't probably have a lot of time before—I don't know—because that was like August of—

MVJ: That was August, and we didn't deploy until mid-December.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: And I'm trying to think—

TS: Did you go over on [Desert] Shield, or just on [Desert] Storm?

MVJ: Both.

TS: Both, okay.

MVJ: But he announced, on the Marine Corps Birthday [November 10], at the ball, that we were going to be going. Now, some of us knew, a few of us knew, on the staff, but we weren't allowed to have told anyone.

TS: Right.

MVJ: That we were going, and approximate—well, we didn't know exactly, but it'd probably be some time in December, and this is kind of what they were thinking about doing. So we had, I think, ample time to get ready. Now, there was a rush in the command in August, there was a MEB [Marine Expeditionary Brigade] that went out, a brigade aboard ship, and our section had to pull things together and provide some manpower for that. So that was my first thing of making the decision of capability and who's going, keeping an eye on, well, if we go, what do we need back—you know, kind of the split of manpower, and the—

TS: So do you think you have to, like, send somebody out that you can communicate really well with to tell you what you might need, too?

MVJ: Oh, well, really once they go out on that command, you don't even—

TS: They're there.

MVJ: Yeah, they're under a different command.

TS: Oh, I see, okay. So it's not to prepare for you to go—oh, okay.

MVJ: And they stayed aboard ship, as a matter of fact, the whole time, and they were the ones that—for a while, it appeared there would be a possibility of amphibious assault into Kuwait, and they were the ones that were being looked at for that.

TS: I see.

MVJ: But you know, it was—that was kind of my first taste of handling the manpower management thing, and deciding, hey, you know, these guys could go—I could send them out and they could get killed. Who am I going to send? I mean, you know, it's really—

TS: Yeah, right, no, exactly, it's the—who's going out to be on the line there.

MVJ: And, you know, hey, so-and-so, you have—and that was fast, a fast turnaround, you know, you've got two days and y'all will be leaving, you've got to go tell your family, you need to do this, that, and the other, make sure your will's up to date, you know.

TS: Did you think about that at the time? That it was happening? I mean, it's so—how did you feel about making those decisions? Not that you couldn't do it, but how did you feel about it?

MVJ: I'm not sure I can—I'm not sure I really had much feelings about it, it was mostly just a mental process of working through it. But being aware of who had families, who had—yeah. Who had this, who had that.

TS: You kind of, like—you know, they talk about decompartmentalizing [sic, compartmentalizing]—

MVJ: But at the same time, looking at capabilities, and hey, this person will be able to do the job. And so, yeah, that was the first thing, and then—and the whole time after that, then we knew there was a possibility we were going to go, but you know, there's back and forth, and then it was the thing of, with the Marine Corps, at first we're not going to let women go over there, or if they go, they're going to have to stay at the port in the rear

and do things, and then that changed, and General Krulak was one of the reasons for that, sent a "personal for" [to the commandant of the Marine Corpsdep] "My command can't operate unless my women go. I have women in key positions, plus I've got a lot of motor transport, I've got—" I mean, you know, it's a—

TS: So you think by that time, a lot of the women were integrated in positions where they needed them to operate?

MVJ: Oh, yeah. Well, even, just by—

TS: Even with support?

MVJ: Just by numbers. They didn't—if you took the women out, you wouldn't have had the manpower to carry out the missions you needed to do. And when I was on the staff, at least in our command, I was [MVJ corrected later] a primary staff officer, intel officer, the G1, manpower, was female. Staff secretary was female. But you know, the one and the two and the staff sec[retary], he wasn't going to go without them. And then, you know, within some of the battalions, some of the company commanders were women. As far as in the motor transport battalion, and I'm sure the medical battalion and stuff too. So.

TS: When you hear people talking, like outside, political—you know, the political realm, about this conflict within the military, because they're talking about it from outside. And there's this conflict that the men don't really want the women in these positions. And then you go through an experience like this, you know, where is that reality for—

MVJ: I think you still hear that, however, I'll tell you—once we were deployed out there, it didn't matter if it was a male or a female. And I can especially tell you, once you put on what we used to call MOPP [Mission Oriented Protective Posture] gear, but your suit for chemicals and things, when the alarm is sounded and you have your gas mask on in that suit and those stupid-looking boots and all that stuff, you can't tell who's male and who's female, and everybody's got the same nervous look in their eyes, because you think it's real, and it may or may not have been, but you know. So, everybody's got the same fear factor, everybody's got everything going on. Everybody, male or female, is there to work for the person above you, but also to take care of the people under you, and to make sure everything happens. And I think—I don't think, at least in our command, there was any doubt of any of that, until maybe after everything was over and then everybody's twiddling their thumbs with nothing to do, and that's when things get dangerous, but you know, as long as everything is life and death, if you want to put it that way, and you don't know what's in front of you, and what might happen, then, you know, I think it's all a matter of capability. And I know, as far as intelligence, male colonels, everybody, would come see me, they would ask my opinion on intel matters, it wouldn't—it just didn't matter to them. And as far as the general was concerned, if it had to do with intelligence, it was ours. If I passed it down to somebody in the section other than myself, then that was my—my thing, and if not—but it was my job to get done. And we did it. [chuckles]

TS: And so, what was it like being over there, besides that aspect of it? I mean, just the physical being over in—I don't know where, were you deployed to Kuwait?

MVJ: Well, we flew in—well, no, we never really physically got into Kuwait, but that—we flew into Al Jubayl[Saudi Arabia], to the port, and we were there until right after Christmas. Then we left to go out to the middle of nowhere, to a little place on the map that's called Al Kabrit [Saudi Arabia] that was just flat and nothing there. We put up, you know, the tents, the whole combat service support area there was about north-south, about four miles, and then about eight miles east-west, so I mean, you're talking a big area, with your fuel farms and your ammo dumps and everything that you want to make sure is all spread out. We had our combat operation center underground, and you know, we were in tents that were dug down with the camo netting and everything, you know, you couldn't see—if you just stood up, it just looked like flat desert, you didn't know where anything was. Probably one of the more difficult logistical things was leaving at night and trying to find your tent. And the G1 and I shared a CP tent, we were inside the berm because they kept primary staff inside to get to the COC [Combat Operations Center] faster. And usually at night, you know, you'd be there all day, and then after chow, you'd just go back and stay 'til whenever. It's not like you were going to go to a movie or anything.

TS: [chuckles] Yeah.

MVJ: So, you'd wait, and there were some—well, we kind of had a routine, because she couldn't see that well at night, and of course, you can't turn lights on, you know, you had your red filters on your lights, but that doesn't help a whole lot. And so, before you went to the tent, we knew when you came up out of the COC, Combat Operations Center, there were a set of latrines right in front, so we'd go there first. [unclear] So, we'd go to the top, she'd get right behind me, and I had little reflective things on the back of my helmet, so she'd kind of stay right behind me, and we'd just walk together, and I knew what angle to start at, and you'd run into them. So we'd be there. One night, I stopped real fast and she stopped, and then I heard [metallic smacking sound] hit of helmets. The chief of staff had followed us out, and he didn't know I'd stopped and his helmet hit hers. [laughter]

He said "What are y'all doing?"

"We're going out here to the heads."

He said "Well, that's where I'm going, too."

Of course, it's all one thing, so yeah. So at least we knew he was there. But anyway, that was kind of the routine, so then when we left there, we knew "Okay, we're going to go at such-and-such an angle," and then I learned where the com wires crossed, so if you catch your light on the ground, you could find the com wires, and then you need to turn—you know, it's just a [unclear] following and everything, because—and it was dark out there, it was dark. There was just nothing, you know, and every now and then, you'd be in the tent and you'd hear this crash and somebody would have walked into the hole the tent was in, fall in there, or, you know. We had a guy that was supposed to be going out to

take up defensive perimeter, and had gotten lost and fell in there one night. We just took him back to the COC and let him stay there and called the command to send somebody else out, because he was miles off and he had gotten turned around and I mean, once you do, you're just done for.

So that was a—living-wise, that was a challenge. Of course, showers—it was probably a month before the field showers were set up, and then they would only run them like once a week. Or something. Because you had to truck water out, and nobody—you didn't know—

TS: So you had to conserve all that, too, for—

MVJ: And we had bottled water, but the general wouldn't let us drink it, because we didn't know if there was a chemical attack or something like that later, that would be more important, so we had water and we called it "ropul" water, the reverse osmosis water they'd pull out of—out of the gulf there, and purify the water and put it in the water buffalo, so.

TS: How was that?

MVJ: I don't know, kind of got used to it. I'd—Ruth Ann and I went over and drank it for quite a few weeks out of whatever water buffalo we were getting it out of until we walked around on the other side of it and said—saw that it said "non-potable water".

TS: [chuckles]

MVJ: Then she got really concerned. I said "Hey, you know, hasn't hurt us yet."

TS: You're still there! [both chuckle] That's right.

MVJ: But you know, and then we found an old tub out in the desert, some Bedouin probably left it out there, plastic tub, and we brought it into the vestibule of the tent, we found an old piece of plywood, fixed it up so we had five—five-gallon water cans we'd carry over and fill up, bring over and we'd fill it up so we could kind of take a sponge bath every—I don't know if it was every night or every other night, as we tried to, you know—and then you'd go out—I learned that I could wash my hair with two canteens of water. Wet it with one, soap it down, and then, you know—

TS: Rinse it with the other?

MVJ: Rinse it with the other. But couldn't dry it or anything, but it didn't matter, you had helmet hair all the time anyway. So you know, things like that, you just kind of—

TS: How about the sand?

MVJ: Well, yeah, the sand could get pretty rough. You know, we'd clean our pistols every night, get everything clean and ready, but the sandstorms could be monstrous, I mean, yeah. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face.

TS: What would you do, then?

MVJ: You just cover your face up with something and—you had goggles or whatever you could wear, we always had with us, because you always had to carry your NBC [Nuclear, Biological, Chemical] gear and of course your weapons and all that stuff. So, you know, you had all this stuff in a sack, it seemed like you were carrying around everywhere anyway, so you had your goggles and all that, and put them on. And then once you had the oil fires, then you had the same problem that—depending on the direction of the wind, because we were really—

TS: Oh, the oil fires, yeah. Forgot about that.

MVJ: We were really close to the border, so.

TS: Right. And where were you at again, you were at?

MVJ: We started out at Al Kabrit. Which was about twenty-five klicks [kilometers] south of the Kuwaiti border.

TS: So is this in Saudi Arabia? Or?

MVJ: It's in Saudi Arabia, because that's before attacks, so we couldn't be in Kuwait.

TS: Oh, right, right.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Sorry. [both chuckle] That's right, okay.

MVJ: But at that point, we were the northern-most Marine Corps command. Anything in front of us were Saudis and—

TS: Okay. Closest to the border, then.

MVJ: Yeah. Which is kind of odd, to put your logistics up there furthest, but that was a conscientious decision in that it takes so long to develop that stuff. After—on the 29th of January was when they had the incursion and the Iraqis came down into Khafji and everything in Saudi Arabia, and we weren't so sure we weren't getting ready to be overrun, because they came within about ten miles of where we were. Our reports getting over the radio. Well, this is the intel section at work, just—we were picking up reports every place we could to plot—[unclear] good, because nobody was telling us anything.

TS: Right.

MVJ: And I had convinced the general before that, that until the radios were needed, to please let us have extra radios so we could just monitor different nets. So, we're monitoring the nets of the reconnaissance forces and contact and stuff up, forward. So you know, as we'd get those reports, we'd write them down. But it looked like we were being enveloped from the sides, and we knew that they knew we were there. Because, well, just because of where we were and we knew that what their intelligence collection capability was when we first got there. So they knew there was something there, even if they didn't know what it was.

TS: What it was.

MVJ: But, you know, after that night, then of course all the generals put their heads back together and started doing some planning and stuff again. And after that, then we moved further northwest, to get closer to the border, but we were over—once they decided to have a two-prong Marine attack, two different divisions entering different places instead of in trace, one behind the other. Moved over to get in a position where we could support both divisions simultaneously. I don't remember how many miles, I mean, that was about a day's move, to go over there and re-set everything up. We got it done. Really, we were in two different places. And then, once the ground attack started, and things, needless to say, were going pretty well, it made it through, breached the mine fields, and all of that. The general wanted to have what we call a jump command post move forward, and then into Kuwait. So he had gotten the staff together, myself, and—out of our section, myself and one of my staff sergeants was going to go. Since the general was going, and I have, you know. And then that night is when they decided they were going to call the ceasefire.

So they called me in that night and said "Okay, we're not going, just stay right here." So—and we did go into Kuwait on day trips to support, because we did have some forward elements we'd sent in to be in places. So went in to do some of that, to be in places and look around, see what was what, and you know. Did all that, I never had to spend the night in Kuwait.

TS: No?

MVJ: No.

TS: Just day trips, huh?

MVJ: That's right. Yeah. Just sight-seeing tours. [both chuckle]

TS: Yeah. Okay. Now, which general was it that you were with?

MVJ: General Krulak.

TS: Krulak.

MVJ: He was a one-star [general] then. He became commandant of the Marine Corps a few years after that, needless to say.

TS: Is that—I was thinking, how many of these generals that you knew became—

MVJ: Two of them.

TS: Barrow and—

MVJ: Barrow and then Krulak.

TS: And Krulak. [laughs] Okay. It's just two.

MVJ: But Krulak's not from Louisiana.

TS: Oh, that's right. So.

MVJ: But he's about my height, so that's okay.

TS: Is he? [both chuckle] Now, were you ever—did, I mean, were you ever afraid?

MVJ: [pause] If I had any sense, I would have probably been afraid on the night of the Khafji event. And that kind of goes into what I was telling you before about, you know, just do your job and keep your head and do your stuff. Because I told the general I thought we were being—there was a possibility that we were being enveloped, and why I thought that, and blah blah blah. But you know, when you've got that big a place, there's no way that you could withdraw with everybody. Unbeknownst to me, there was some thoughts being given to "Okay, if we have to go, who's—how are we going to handle this."

TS: Who gets to go? Right.

MVJ: I never had time to worry about that. Now, after it was over, yeah. And while that was going on, the general called back to the rear to one of the divisions and asked them if they could send some tanks up and put right in front of us. And then he wanted us to make sure and get the word out to all our people in the tents that didn't know what was going on, that if they heard tanks, they were ours, not to worry about it. Because he didn't want everybody out, you know, having gunfights. And probably with that—that's—that probably got—part got my attention, and the, you know, having to—we had just gotten some people from the army, foreign material team come in, and they were staying there. And I was the only one that knew where their tent was, so off I go running off in the dark to find their tent and let them know, you know, kind of what's going on. And then I guess running back from there, I realized, you know, hey, this is—this is getting a little serious, you know. But I mean, you know, we had all—wouldn't say we were scared, but we went

into it knowing that because we knew we were forward, and the original plan had us before the divisions went in, we would have moved up right to the berm, at the border. And we knew what their artillery capability was, I mean, I briefed the general on it daily, and a lot of times, he would tell me what not to tell everybody else, and let's just—you know, you don't want—

TS: Keep people calm.

MVJ: Yeah. And you know, we knew if we did that, we've have a lot of losses. And I'll be honest with you, I made—I kind of made my deal with God, you know. But my deal wasn't for me, it was, you know, my promise I'd never get—upset about it, I wouldn't complain, wouldn't get upset about things, if all my guys could just come back with all their bodily parts and their mental faculties, just—you know. And that was my deal and I let it go. But I had, you know, I had taken care of my will and stuff, believe me, before I went.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: So.

TS: And that's something that the military has you do, too, isn't it?

MVJ: Oh, yeah.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: Now, the G1—one reason we stayed together, she had a six year old daughter, and she was convinced that [pause]—well, and originally, her husband, who was in the military, wasn't supposed to be going over. But that changed because he thought that if he went, they would let her come back. Well, yeah, if he had given it any thought at all, and I thought that was going to be the end of their marriage when he called and told her that, because then her parents had to keep the daughter. And she made sure they were never in the same area together, because she said [pause] "I don't want my daughter to be an orphan. At least have one of us here." But she wanted to make sure we shared the tent, because she didn't want to die by herself. Now, that makes you feel really—[chuckles] really good. And we were friends, I mean, she was senior to me, but I had worked for her before, and you know, it was kind of a different—but with her having a child, her outlook was totally different, and she didn't have nearly the field time that I did, so. She wasn't as comfortable—

TS: In the field, as—

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: She didn't like the little desert mice and stuff running around the tent.

TS: You had desert mice?

MVJ: Oh yeah.

TS: Yeah.

MVJ: And she'd chase them, inside with the broom, and then—now, in the G2 tent where the enlisted were staying, they had pictures where they would use their KA-BARs [trademarked name for combat knives used by the Marine Corps and U.S. Navy], their knives, and they'd stab them, and they would keep count of who had the most—

TS: On their knife?

MVJ: Yeah. [both laugh]

TS: That wasn't happening in your tent, huh?

MVJ: No, we didn't—because I told her, I wasn't going to chase those mice, I could care less if they would go running around there, just let me sleep. [chuckles]

TS: That's right. There were certain priorities, so. So how do you feel about your time [pause] in Desert Storm, and?

MVJ: Well, I think—I think I proved myself, that I was as good an intel officer as I thought I was. Of course, it really helps when you have a general and a chief of staff and different people that echo that and really, you know, let you know that they appreciate what you've done, and let people know that they had analysis that was good. Better than some other, and I mean, you know, it's just a pride thing.

TS: Sure, you take pride in it.

MVJ: But as I told a reporter afterwards, who wanted to know if—because there was only one other officer in the G2, and you know, it was mostly enlisted and junior enlisted people, but like I said, we had formed together, we were a good team, we—everybody knew each other's capabilities and could work well together. But he wanted to know if, if I would have—if I had to do it over, would I want more senior officers to do stuff. I told him I wouldn't have given up—I wouldn't have given up any of those lance corporals or corporals for an officer. Never, you know. That I had sergeants and staff sergeants that were doing captains and majors' work, they were capable, we were doing the job, and I'd much prefer that. I wouldn't have given up any of them for anything.

TS: [chuckles] And what was your rank at that time?

MVJ: I was a major.

TS: Major.

MVJ: But now, talking about Girl Scouts, that—another reporter asked me—asked about living in the field, and had the Marine Corps prepared me for that. Marine Corps didn't really, because as I said, I wasn't trained that way, and once—like a lot of organizations, once they start changing the rules, they don't go back and train the people that missed it before, you just have to kind of catch up on your own.

But I told him, I said "I did fine, but it wasn't—Marine Corps didn't train me, Girl Scouts trained me to be out here, and to live in this desert." I said "I was perfectly comfortable." [chuckling]

TS: And how did that go over when it hit the press?

MVJ: Well, not—most people thought it was a pretty frank—[both chuckling]

TS: Well, it's true, because you didn't have that—that initial training, that—that's funny. Well, I always say that when you're in the paper—Boy Scouts are always getting rescued. You don't ever hear about the Girl Scouts getting rescued.

MVJ: You know, that's a very good point. I'll have to remember that.

TS: [laughs] Yeah. Feel free to use that one. My sisters and I use it all the time. So, we'll read something in the paper tomorrow.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: So then—so you came back from Desert Storm, and how—did you—you have a large family, did—were they nervous about you being over—I mean, I'm sure they were concerned about you. Did they even—

MVJ: I didn't—you know, it's not like things now, we didn't have all these phones and communications—

TS: Right, you're not Skype-ing—

MVJ: We had access to a payphone if you drove back a few hours toward the rear at a PX [Post Exchange] area, but you had to stand in line forever, and then you could only use a short period of time.

TS: Is that like the satellite phones, or—

MVJ: I don't know how they were set up, but you know, I got to it one time, the line was busy, and of course the difference in time and everything is a problem. So I finally just called a friend back here and asked them to get in touch with my sister.

TS: Right.

MVJ: And let her know everything was okay. But other than that, until I got home, I never talked to—to any of them. So, you know, sent postcards. Or letters, I mean, you know. So—so I don't know. I would say that they were very nervous, they probably didn't really know where I was.

TS: Oh, yeah.

MVJ: And what was going on, you know. My sister's husband was in the air force, but he was back in Riyadh [capital of Saudi Arabia], and his biggest complaint apparently was having too much chicken for dinner. I said, well, you know.

TS: Get any chicken yourself? What did you get to eat, where you were?

MVJ: Well, we had what they called B-Rats [B Rations, which are made from canned or otherwise preserved ingredients, unlike A Rations, which do use fresh, frozen, or refrigerated elements], which was, you know, when they had time to set up the mess hall, then they had the big—great big cans that they kind of just throw together and you have it, and we'd have—maybe one night, we'd have green beans and potatoes and maybe chicken or something like that, and the next night you'd have kind of a stew with green beans and potatoes and chicken and tomatoes over it, and you know. So it would kind of—you'd have whatever you'd have, or MREs, if you were moving and they didn't have time to set up. So, it wasn't the best eating arrangement. You didn't have lunch, you had—they'd serve breakfast and then dinner.

TS: That's it, just those two?

MVJ: Yeah. And you didn't have time to worry about another meal, I mean, that took enough time out of your—

TS: Oh sure, yeah, because you're pretty much 24/7.

[audio file 3 ends, audio file 4 begins]

TS: And how much—how many hours a night did you get to sleep, if you got any?

MVJ: I don't know, I would say probably—you'd probably aim for six, but you know, it's one of those where, we'd go over there, and if anything at all started happening, then I'd hear

a little knock on the canvas, you know. "Major Jacocks, Major Jacocks," and we'd get up, and I'd get dressed, and usually Ruth Ann would get dressed and go in the COC with me, because she wasn't going to die there by herself. [TS chuckles] And she knew that if she went with me, she'd find out what was going on.

TS: Ah.

MVJ: So, I mean, you know. And that is an advantage to—

TS: It's true.

MVJ: And she'd go sit there until I went back. [laughs]

TS: She definitely didn't want to be alone, did she?

MVJ: Well, and because it was dark, she couldn't have gotten back to the tent by herself. [chuckling] But you know, they—yeah, it was just kind of like being down the hall, and so, I don't know, you just—you didn't keep up with how long you slept, and I would say that it's kind of like running for six or seven months straight on adrenaline, it just, you know.

TS: Did you crash when you got back?

MVJ: Well, I probably pretty much crashed after the ceasefire and things died down, except then the chief of staff made me the general's awards writer.

TS: He made you the—

MVJ: The—write all the awards.

TS: Oh, the award—

MVJ: For the general, to—

TS: I see.

MVJ: For all the battalion commanders and all the people and, you know. So, had to have something for me to do.

TS: Did you get any awards yourself?

MVJ: Well, I got a—they put me in for Bronze Star, but I got the Navy Commendation Medal. The Marine Corps didn't give any women Bronze Stars.

TS: No?

MVJ: I think that would have been—now, they have, in this—you know, they've kind of cleared that up, but I think that would have been a hard—and the general tried to combat that, after—because shortly after we got back, he left and went to Headquarters, to take over Manpower. And he tried to rewrite it and re-submit and do some stuff there, but it just never—it never got to that point, because needless to say, he had a lot of other things to do besides that.

TS: Right.

MVJ: And I wasn't probably all that helpful, I mean, it just—to me, it was a big deal, but it wasn't something that other people should have to spend a lot of time on.

TS: Right, I understand. Yeah. So, what—do you think that this experience in Desert Storm/Desert Shield, for women, changed the dynamics at all within the military?

MVJ: I know it did in the Marine Corps. And General Krulak helped that, because he would stand up in front of Congress and everything and talk about what the women did. You can—I have [unclear] phones[?]—

TS: Oh, yeah, sure, let's pause it. [recording paused] –usually happens, so. Okay, so the Marine Corps changed—we're back again, sorry.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: So, do you think that—you mean that the capability—the credibility, that word you used earlier, of women was—

MVJ: Yeah, I think the women proved themselves, and we had enough—senior leadership has to find that the women played prominent roles.

TS: Yes. And did—actually, I don't even know, I haven't really asked this question before, but President Bush, H.W. Bush, you know, he kind of—seems like he would have had to have the go-ahead to say to use the women, or was it the generals who, like—and the command—

MVJ: That was just—yeah, because the other commands were having—or the other services were allowing women there, so it was kind of a Marine Corps decision at that—at the beginning.

TS: Interesting. Yeah. That'd be interesting, to look to see what—how those dynamics kind of—

MVJ: Yeah, you know, and I mean, I—needless to say, I can't tell you what the dynamics were among, up—

TS: No, no.

MVJ: —at high levels, and among the stars up there.

TS: [laughs] That's okay. But on your level, you saw a distinct effort to—

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: —include the women.

MVJ: And you know, and I know after that, I know if it hadn't been for Desert Storm, well, I may have still gone to get my [unclear], but I would not have gotten—had command in Europe, I probably would not have been teaching at Command and Staff College, for the same reason that when I was a major they didn't want me there, you know, the credibility thing. I was the first female. [unclear]

TS: So it's like a barrier is broken, and then you move on to the next—

MVJ: Yeah, yeah, you kind of just build that as you go.

TS: So what did you do, then, at Gitmo?

MVJ: There, I was the J2, and the deputy J2, depending on which time. Well, I mean, I was only there once, but people [flew?] in and out.

TS: In and out?

MVJ: And—

TS: Had women been—a woman been in that position before?

MVJ: Well, this was a brand new joint task force. It was November '91 when the Haitian, or—yeah, the Haitians started jumping on the boats and leaving and the Coast Guard was picking them up, they didn't have anything to do with all these people because they wouldn't allow them back into Haiti, U.S. wouldn't allow them on U.S. soil, what you could do[sic] with them? Take them to Gitmo. So, our command had been the second FSSG, and at this point we had a different commanding general, General Krulak had left. We'd been working on a different plan with the Commander in Chief ,Atlantic for a Cuban scenario, needless to say. So we had made a trip to get [unclear] a little bit familiar with it, so they used our command as the nucleus for this joint task force. So that was one where, got the call in the morning and we're told that that night we'd be, you know, be waiting at [Marine Corps Air Station] Cherry Point to fly out. Don't bring any civilian clothes, draw[?] your weapons, get your gear, blah blah blah, don't know how long you'll be there. Probably within six months you'll be relieved, if not—

TS: May be longer!

MVJ: Yeah, you don't know. So, flew out. In fact, the J2 section landed there on Thanksgiving Day. [laughs] That was only because we couldn't get in because of the winds, the C5 and the way the runways are there, with the airspace, we couldn't go down the first two tries, so we spent two nights in a hangar in Charleston. Kept coming back and trying again.

TS: Kept trying again.

MVJ: Yeah. But that was one of the first—we'd done humanitarian things before, but one of the first joint task forces that were strictly there for a humanitarian mission, and figuring out how to house all these Haitians, and that's when we started developing the camps and everything that have been used for years for all kinds of other things. And in the J2 it was interesting, because we didn't really have a mission. Like, nobody knew what our mission was. So I called CINCLANT [The Commander-in-Chief Atlantic] and, okay.

"What is my intel mission, you want me to collect information on—from these people?" Well, it's friendly, so you can't interrogate them, you interview them. But, "get information on what's going on in Haiti, or concentrate here?"

And they said "Well, we're not sure. You write up a mission [statement—MVJ added later] and send it to us." So, we did that, and it was kind of a two-sided mission, one was to collect information and do analysis and provide right[?] up chain of command, but the other was something that unfortunately has become very common now, is almost more of a law enforcement mission of intelligence within the camp, so you can keep your commander informed of what's happening in the camp, and what's—who are the good guys, who are the bad guys, what are their plans? Because, you know, you have these people coming in, they don't have IDs, you don't have anything on them. Stick them in this camp, you've got bad guys in there along with everybody else that's going to try to harm other Haitians or try to take over the camp or, you know, all kinds of other things going on.

TS: About how many people were there?

MVJ: As far as the Haitians?

TS: The Haitians, yes.

MVJ: It grew to a few thousand. And then we had to set up an HIV camp, separate, once they were identified as HIV positive, you took them out of the general population and then their families, if they had families with them, had to make a choice to go live in the HIV camp or stay there. And you know, and you would have deaths from natural causes, there. And the bodies, you can't bury anybody there, because you're in Cuban territory. You couldn't—they wouldn't allow the bodies back in Haiti, couldn't send it to the U.S. unless, every now and then, if somebody had family and they could prove it through the justice—Department of Justice, and that took forever. So the surgeon always had all

this—this refrigerator filled with bodies, and he'd brief us every day on what the status was of these bodies. "We have to do something with them," you know. So, it was a whole different thing. It was more of a human—you know, human intelligence effort. We also had a lot of imagery stuff, because we kept digital cameras going of all the camps so that we could stop images if something happened and get a photo of somebody doing something they weren't supposed to be doing. So then you could send in the MPs [military police] or somebody to grab them, pull them out. So, you know, it was a whole different—

TS: It was pretty fluid.

MVJ: Yeah. But it made it interesting.

TS: Yeah. [chuckles] Every day would have been different.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Remind me about why there was this refugee crisis from Haiti.

MVJ: Well, that's when [Jean-Bertrand] Aristede had just taken power, and you had a group from—I think that was shortly after [Jean-Claude, a.k.a. Bébé Doc or Baby Doc] Duvalier had left. So it was basically a civil war going on. People would come over with stories—a lot of them had watched their husbands—they put tires around them and set them on fire, they'd do things—so people were just leaving their home, leaving everything they had and getting in these boats, and a lot of them not living even to get—get out there, but with the hopes of fleeing Haiti. It was just so much unrest there, you know, and most of them had no idea—they knew the name Aristede, and they wanted him to take over, because he was, in most of them's [sic] mind, the good guy. But they didn't know—they couldn't tell you from a picture, because they didn't have TVs and stuff. So they didn't know who this guy was. In fact, Jesse Jackson came over and addressed them, and a lot of them thought he was Aristede. Except he couldn't speak Haitian Creole. [laughs] And you know, it was just an interesting—

TS: So that—different kind of tour.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: From other things that you were doing. And then you got command in Germany, was that what happened next?

MVJ: And after that, let me see, I came back from there, and then I had a couple of months, and I thought I was going up the road to MEF [Marine Expeditionary Force] Headquarters, and then they called and asked me if I'd be interested in going to Germany to take command of a Marine Security Guard company. And that was one thing they were looking for a nomination from each major command, Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton,

and Okinawa. And so they sent my name up, and I got that. And I had no idea what, I mean, you know, I knew what Marine Security Guards did, but I didn't know a whole lot about it. Basically, you live on a State Department compound and you worked within the State Department, with all your Marine Security Guard dets[detachment] at all the embassies that are responsible for the security of the embassies. And the headquarters was in Frankfurt, Germany, because that was the travel hub.

TS: So is that for all of the embassies, everywhere, or just in Europe, or?

MVJ: Oh, that company, you had different companies, and Alpha Company covered—that wasn't long after the [Berlin] Wall had come down.

TS: Oh, right.

MVJ: So it wasn't really the Warsaw Pact anymore, but it covered all former Warsaw Pact—Russia, Yugoslavia as it was falling apart, Germany, Austria, Turkey, Greece, Finland, [pause]—

TS: That's all of them.

MVJ: Yeah, I mean, that was a lot of countries, you know, and we established a det[detachment] in the Ukraine, because there wasn't a U.S. Embassy there before that. We established one in Croatia once they became not part of Yugoslavia.

TS: So this would have been a different kind of assignment for you from anything else you've done.

MVJ: Oh yes. Well, and it's what I call telephone command, you know, by that time I was a lieutenant colonel but you've got staff NCOs to head up your dets[detachments]. You're responsible for them, but they also are responsible to the ambassador. But all the discipline and all the other stuff and the training and all that has to go through you, and the company—you have to make quarterly visits, somebody does, usually the first sergeant and myself would visit every detachment once every six months, and then in the interim, one of the captains would visit to do inspection. So, once a quarter, basically, they were getting a visit, and part of that was being familiar enough with the memorandum of agreement between the State Department and the Marine Corps, to ensure that all the deals were being kept on both sides. As far as the housing and everything for the Marines, and what was expected. At the same time, that's the opportunity for them to, say, talk to you about "Gee, these Marines," either the discipline is bad, or the train—they need to be trained more, or some other aspect of, you know, room clearing or whatever it was. So you know, it was a time—and I'm not too much into the diplomacy thing, and I had never sat down and talked to ambassadors, but that was one of the things you had to do at all these places. And some of them just chit-chat, and some of them actually have concrete things they want to cover. [unclear] with it,

so—and it's a civilian clothes tour, basically, except for the Marine Corps Balls, you know, special events where—

TS: Where you have to dress up.

MVJ: You wear a uniform, and then back in the company office, we'd wear uniforms once a week, because I—and that was just something I started, because I told them they had to remember how to wear a uniform, and I'd rotate through all the uniforms, so every week, they were different uniforms.

TS: [chuckles] So how'd you like this tour?

MVJ: Oh, I loved it.

TS: Yeah?

MVJ: Because my boss was sitting in Quantico, so—and you see him once a year. Now, you're supposed to talk to him on the phone and everything, once a week or something like that. But you know, for any Article 32, you know, any office hours, any disciplinary things, working with the embassies, you're pretty much on your own, you know, have the authority—it's the first time I've ever been in a position where you could draft your own message to go out, and, you know "Jacocks, do this, or do that, or we're closed in the company office for this day and this is what we're doing. It's also the first place I've ever been where I had the office phone, an extension in my quarters, so that I could be reached at any time. [both chuckle]

TS: No cell phones then, either.

MVJ: No.

TS: No. So you did a lot of travelling, then, didn't you?

MVJ: Once a week, basically. It was probably about three weeks out of the year we didn't—we weren't travelling.

TS: Did you get any fun travel, or was it all business?

MVJ: Did some fun travel, when people would visit. I mean, because you travel all the time, well, number one, you get back on the weekends, and that's when you had to catch up on the work. But number two, you were kind of tired of travelling. But usually with these places, you know, the Marines get to go, you go out in the town, you do—do something.

TS: Right, go have dinner or something.

MVJ: Yeah, yeah.

TS: And, I mean, the impression that I get from embassy duty is that you're—it's a pretty, you know, straight-laced Marine that's out—

MVJ: Oh, it's very selective.

TS: Yeah. So you—I can't imagine—and when you said discipline, I'm thinking "What kind of discipline problems are you going to have?"

MVJ: You know what, it doesn't matter where you are. You always have—we always say, you always have ten percent that's going to be—

TS: Just somebody doing something stupid?

MVJ: Well, maybe something stupid. A lot of times, it's stuff that is very innocent on somebody's part, maybe—you know, we had a guy that fell asleep on the subway and didn't get off and missed curfew. So you still have to nail him, even though, you know, he's—just different things that—I think there was only probably once or twice that there was things that really needed—were bad, that needed to be handled. And that usually involved alcohol or a security breach of some kind or—not intentional security, but—

TS: Inadvertently—

MVJ: Yeah. And unfortunately, that usually had to do with—

TS: That probably didn't go over well with you.

MVJ: Well, with the station chief, or something, you know, so you got other agencies involved with things. So, then you get involved in investigations and stuff like that.

TS: Well, you mentioned alcohol. Is that something that is—as a, you know, an officer, did you see that at all as a problem for—I don't mean like an overall problem in the Marines, but I mean, as people get in trouble for things, was alcohol a factor—like for driving under the influence, or just getting in fights, and—

MVJ: Well, in Germany, it wasn't because most of them don't have vehicles. [chuckles] They all live in one place, and they—

TS: So they're not driving around.

MVJ: Yeah, they, you know—before they go on that duty, they have to sign a paper they will not get married, and they have to be single.

TS: Oh, they do?

MVJ: They will not get married, because they all have to live in the Marine House. Because they have to be able to react within so many minutes if something happens. Now, your staff NCOs can be married.

TS: Married, okay. Interesting. Are there any—

MVJ: But every Marine House has a Marine Bar.

TS: So, can any women serve in these embassies?

MVJ: Oh, yeah.

TS: Okay.

MVJ: Now, I don't know anymore—there used to be certain detachments, some of them in the Middle East and things that were closed to women. Because—it was because of cultural problems. But it was the same thing, we had some that were closed to blacks because of cultural problems, in Africa. Because a lot of your African countries—just because you're black doesn't mean you're looked at as African. So there's a—it's almost like a tribal problem, sometimes. But it's just certain—and I can't tell you because that wasn't my area, but I know that was a problem in assignment of people they had to watch.

TS: Interesting.

MVJ: But you know, we had—not a lot of women, because it's—that's a training station a lot of people fall out of, too. A lot of people don't make it through the training there, it's very physically demanding, lots of weapon, different types of weapon training, martial arts, all that kind of stuff.

TS: Makes sense, to protect the embassy, right?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: I mean, Iran[?].

MVJ: That's right—I mean, you know, you've got—

TS: Shoot, that happened when you were in the service too, didn't it?

MVJ: Yeah, I mean, all kinds of things happened. But no, that didn't—the Germany duty was—that's kind of like ruling your own little kingdom. [both laugh] And then everybody realizes that sooner or later you have to leave that duty and go back to the real world.

TS: How long did you get to stay—two years?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: And so then you went, after that, when you went back to—or, you went to the war college, as a student and then—

MVJ: Yeah, and you know, that's just a student thing. But then you move up from the operational level, you study more strategic level, national security level—

TS: That's where you're talking about the level of—were you a lieutenant colonel?

MVJ: I was a lieutenant colonel, and then at that time the payback for that was to teach at the Command and Staff [College] for two years, because they were trying to kind of improve the reputation of Command and Staff, you know, because your quality—they wanted to make sure they had certain quality on the staff there, because it had gotten to where it was accredited, and they wanted people with master's degrees, and you know. It was a lot of accreditation stuff to make sure everything could run the way it's supposed to.

TS: Did you like teaching there?

MVJ: I did. I didn't think I would, but I enjoyed the heck out of working with the students, and the rest of the staff, I mean, you know, it was kind of like—kind of like having a bunch of brothers. Because again, I was the first female to do that.

TS: To teach there?

MVJ: I was also the first female with the MSG [Marine Security Guard] thing, to have a—to be able to go out for a company, to have a company. I think there's been one since.

TS: Oh, the Marine Security Guard, MSG. [laughs]

MVJ: Yeah, I'm sorry.

TS: No, no, that's fine.

MVJ: But you know, yeah, it's just the people you work with make all the difference, you know?

TS: And now it's—explain—I know we talked about this off tape a little bit. So you weren't necessarily thinking about getting out, yet, of the service, right?

MVJ: No, I wasn't. If after my two years teaching at Command and Staff College I could have gone back to what I call the Marine Corps, Camp Lejeune or someplace to be a G2, intelligence officer, or you know, to a joint command, to being the J2 or something, I would have jumped at it. However, I had orders to the Pentagon for a billet that—I don't

even remember what it was now, but it was what I considered to be a do-nothing billet. You know. And I just wasn't interested, and then as I talked to the monitor and people and found out that if I did in fact pick up full colonel that probably my destiny was to be at Headquarters Marine Corps, then I decided it was time for me to leave. Kind of a leave while you were on top thing.

TS: Right, right.

MVJ: And while you were having fun. [both chuckle]

TS: Is that how you felt about it?

MVJ: Yeah, it was, and I haven't regretted it.

TS: Was there anything—of all these wonderful destinations that you got to go to, which one stood out the most to you, that you enjoyed the most?

MVJ: Besides the real world missions for Desert Storm and Gitmo, then—

TS: Well, it can be those, too.

MVJ: Well, I mean, then they were, because—you know, when you're working a real mission, you've got a strict focus. Nobody's coming in and saying "Make sure your people get to dental today, or make sure they contribute to this." I mean, you know, it's—you have a job, and that's it. And that's one of the things that makes it enjoyable. So, you enjoy those things for that. But the other ones, probably my tour at Parris Island, working with recruits, and my tour teaching at Command and Staff. Just because of working with all the different people.

TS: You kind of went full circle from that, teaching and—

MVJ: Yeah, in fact—in fact, when I retired, they were renovating the actual building that Command and Staff is in, so our last year, we had moved over to a different building that just happened to be right across the street from where I had gone to Officer Candidate School, so when we did my little retirement thing there, I told them that—it's not often, I said "If I had a baseball, I could throw it and hit where I started. And I'm ending right here."

TS: That's right! That's right. Did you ever get to play any sports while you were in the Marines?

MVJ: Not competitively, I mean, you know, pick-up games and different things. No, just playing around a little bit, you know, at Parris Island, we used to play volleyball at lunch, sometimes. And you know, I played some softball, did a little bit of this, little bit of that. But not any organized.

TS: Nothing—yeah. But that was like that recreational opportunity that you had on base.

MVJ: Yeah, I mean, I really—I really liked it. Now, I did—the only time I did use, probably, my degree, was at Parris Island. They didn't have—all we had for physical training was, you know, we'd run on the street, we had track, we'd do calisthenics, things. I thought they needed a circuit course, so I sat down and developed a circuit course. For—specifically for women, though, with measurements that were for women, things like that. And that, I used kind of the physiology and kinesiology type things I trained for. So that was something I was kind of proud of, and it's still there. I mean, they've added a few things—

TS: Now, where is it at?

MVJ: Parris Island.

TS: At Parris Island? Very good, well, when I go, I'll have to check it out.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Now, you talked a little bit about the one time when the one, I forget, he was a colonel at the time. Who didn't want you to do a certain job because of your gender. Was that the only time, or did you ever come across that any other time?

MVJ: No, that's probably the only time I really personally ran across that. Yeah. Up until then, I mean, you knew there were certain things that as a female you were not allowed to do. Whether it was culturally because of the Marine Corps or whatever, you just kind of learned to accept that and then just edge your foot in the door every now and then. [both chuckle]

TS: So, and—cope with it, but maybe not accept it?

MVJ: Well, yeah, I mean, you know. But by and large, no, that wasn't really a problem.

TS: Because it seems like you continued—you got promoted, your supervisors—

MVJ: Yeah, I mean, everything I ever did, you know—Parris Island's the only place that I really worked with women. So, I mean, you know, other than that.

TS: Mostly with other women, things like that.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Well, when you were in command of other—your subordinates, did you have to counsel anyone, or was there any, like, sexual harassment or anything that you had been aware of?

MVJ: No.

TS: Nothing like that? Because you didn't actually command a lot of women, either, did you, necessarily.

MVJ: No, like I say, except Parris Island, but that's a training, I mean, that's—

TS: Yeah, they got no time for anything there.

MVJ: Well, and—yeah, that's so structured.

TS: Yeah. We talked about mentoring, and we talked about your training. We did talk some about changes—if you were to say, okay, the twenty-three years you were in the—what was one of the biggest changes that you saw?

MVJ: Just the opening up of the fields, for women. And the acceptance of women in those fields. I mean, because any time they're opened up, there's always, I think, probably a little hesitation. But you know, as time goes on.

TS: Have to do the proving and then the carrying on.

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: So did you feel that you were treated fairly by the military with your pay, promotion, all that?

MVJ: Yeah.

TS: Yeah. [pause] Talked about a lot of these things. Well, how do you feel about—well, let's see, you got out in '97? So four years after you got out, we had 9/11 happen. How'd you feel about being on the outside looking in on that?

MVJ: Ah—parts of me would love to have been in and involved in the intelligence effort and all that. Other parts of me say "Yeah, you would have been at the Pentagon."

TS: Sounds like that's not a place you really wanted to go.

MVJ: That's right. [both chuckle] But you know, once I retired, I did contract work, and I still do a little on part-time. For a couple of years, doing non-resident Command and Staff courses, really, you know, and training.

TS: So you still had a connection.

MVJ: Yeah. Still had that, and then they moved that job to Pensacola and I wasn't moving. Because I retired to come back here, this was where I wanted to be. But then I got a call and started working at the II MEF simulation center, that does simulated training, as the intelligence analyst. And OPFOR [Opposing Force] specialist, so. You know, I did that until a few years ago, I stopped doing it full time because it was getting really busy, but we were doing, you know, before every group went to Iraq, we were training with them where we were keeping up with all that. So yeah, it's kind of—

TS: You had your hands in it still.

MVJ: You're still staying in it, and then you know, and one reason I decided just to go part-time is because I had become a primary planner, and it was taking as much time as being on active duty and I'd lost my life again too.

TS: [laughs] Right. Right.

MVJ: So, but I still keep my hand in with some of that, when they need extra people or they need a planner for certain things, and certain types of exercises, they'll call me. And it's a—can't beat the deal, it's—if I'm available, I can say yes or I can say no.

TS: That's right, that's right. Now, what do you think now, with your experience and the experience of women during Desert Storm/Desert Shield, and then today, you know, the combat roles that women are playing even though they're not officially in combat.

MVJ: But they are. They are, they're doing a tremendous job, I think they have proven themselves over and over, and you know, I think you still get, at least from the infantry side, a lot of the stuff on "Oh, we can't have women in our unit," and camaraderie, and "Gee, you know, we wouldn't pay attention to our mission because we'd be trying to help her." Well, let me tell you, that isn't the way it works when the time comes, you know.

And I had somebody tell me years ago, a female that had been in Vietnam, she said "Don't believe any of that when they tell you that." She said "I was out delivering the mail and I heard this noise I had never heard before and all of a sudden I'm standing there by myself and the guys have scattered and rockets were coming in." She said "I didn't know what it was." And she said "There wasn't anybody there that was taking—"

TS: Yeah, taking—protecting her from the incoming—

MVJ: Yeah. She said "Yeah," she said "When the time comes, everybody's going to do what they have to do to take care of themselves."

TS: Well, the other—I guess, when you're talking about acceptance of women, the other thing that's kind of controversial right now is the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." It's been repealed, but not implemented. Do you have any thoughts on that?

MVJ: I think there's going to—I think it's going to be—there'll be some hiccups along the way. But I kind of think it's kind of like the women being accepted, and years ago when we had the big integration issues, you know, those things, I think, just melt to the side and I don't think it'll be—in the long run, it will not be that big an issue. There will be some local problems and a lot's going to depend on leadership and how they handle it and how they present it. I think a lot of times, you know, if you have leaders who are going to kind of on the side say "You know, really we don't want these people in here," then that's—

TS: What the people are going to follow.

MVJ: That's what the juniors pick up, and they're going to stand behind it. So I think it just depends on the leadership and how they present it.

TS: And we talked, too, about—you said you didn't get to use—you didn't get to go to graduate school on the GI Bill. [chuckles]

MVJ: That's right.

TS: But you did get to use it for your housing, right?

MVJ: Yeah, I used the VA loan.

TS: And have you ever had to use the Veteran's Administration for anything, for health or anything like that?

MVJ: No, except I am registered with them in case I ever do need something.

TS: Would you recommend the Marine Corps to young women and men today?

MVJ: Yeah. Yeah, but with a caveat, for men and women, that it's got to be something they really want to do. I mean, the Marine Corps is not something that you go into to learn a skill to take you someplace else. If that's what somebody's looking for, I'll tell them to look at the navy or the air force, but you know, the Marine Corps is something you go into for the pride of being in the Marine Corps, and the challenge. If that's what somebody wants, it's there for them.

TS: So you're selling it like they sold it to you. [chuckles]

MVJ: Well, I just think, you know, for skills training, for things—like I said, I think there are other services that do that better than—you know.

TS: Did you have any trouble in—even though we talked a little bit about, you're still connected to the military for a while, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life when you got out?

MVJ: No, I didn't, but because I was working on base, as somebody told me, I didn't have any problem, because all I did was stop wearing a uniform.

TS: Because you kept going back.

MVJ: Yeah, yeah. I just kept the same thing, it's just that I wasn't in a position where anybody—I didn't have the administrative things, nobody calling me in the middle of the night and saying "Gee, there's a safe open, come in and start investigation" or anything like that. You know, nobody calls and tells you you've got to deploy the next day, so.

TS: Well, is there anything in particular that you would want a civilian to know or understand about service in the military that maybe they might not appreciate?

MVJ: I'm—the only thing, I think—well, I can't tell you the only thing, but I think civilians don't understand the camaraderie that develops within the military. You know, it may be years and you don't see anybody, but you still have the friends and the same people are there, and especially—of course, the Marine Corps is very small, compared to the other services, but you're always running across people that, you know, you haven't seen in twenty years, but they're still there, and it's—you can sit down and talk just like it was yesterday. And in the military, you—because you have to, you know, you can depend on the people around you, another big difference is, in the military, there's a promptness that you definitely do not see in the civilian world. People care about time, they care about keeping appointments. Somebody says they're going to do something by a certain time, then it should be expected that that's what's going to happen. And I think those things are different, but I think the camaraderie and the being able to depend on everybody. And if you want to call it the team concept of everybody working for a common goal, and not trying to climb over everybody to outdo them, I think are the plusses of the military over the civilian side. [honking noise in background, extraneous comments redacted, recording paused]

TS: The—one question I have is, what does patriotism mean to you?

MVJ: [pause] Gee, I don't get stumped by a lot of things, but to me, patriotism is believing in your country, but also the leadership in your country. Patriotism means, to me, that when the leadership, being the president, national security advisors on down, make decisions, whether they're the—you agree with them or you disagree with them or you voted for them or you didn't vote for them, they are the ones charged—this is one country, and you follow your—the leadership of your country, and stand up and be proud for it.

TS: You think we've gotten away from that somehow?

MVJ: Yeah, I do. I definitely do. I think—well, as an example, if you are on a military—in a military organization, you definitely would not have a Marine out in front of everybody badmouthing his commander. I mean, because if he did, he's going to pay a price for it.

He or she. But that's no different from when you have the president say something to have people say "Ah, don't pay attention to him, he doesn't know what he's talking about." Well, that—to me, that's the same thing. You still owe him allegiance, you know, we have a democracy, people get elected because they get a majority of the votes. So, you know, that's just the way the system's supposed to work. You don't like the system, go someplace else. [both chuckle]

TS: Well, I—we have covered a lot. You must be—you've got to be tired. But—

MVJ: You have a lot of opinions here.

TS: Well, that's—when you read a transcript or something like that, you know, trying to get the feeling for what it was like to be in, too, so I'm trying to get a little of that. So, is there anything that I didn't ask you or we didn't talk about that you wanted to mention?

MVJ: I can't think of anything we didn't talk about. [both laugh] No.

TS: No, nothing at all? Well Ginger, thank you so much for coming and talking with me today, I really appreciate it.

MVJ: Well, thanks for including me.

TS: It was a pleasure.

[End of Interview]