WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Lisa Gibbs Potts

INTERVIEWER: Therese Strohmer

DATE: 14 May 2016

[Begin Interview]

TS: Today is May 14, 2016. My name is Therese Strohmer. I'm at the home of Lisa Potts in Hubert, North Carolina, to conduct an oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina of Greensboro. Lisa, could you state your name the way you want it to read on your collection?

LP: Lisa Gibbs Potts.

TS: Okay. Well, Lisa, thanks for inviting me into your home. It's beautiful here.

LP: Thank you.

TS: Why don't you start out by telling me a little bit about when and where you were born?

LP: I was born in 1962 in Denville, New Jersey, and I was the second child. My family—My mother was from Ohio and my father was from New Jersey, and he grew up right across from the Statue of Liberty. And they mar—they met in college and then settled in Denville, New Jersey. I was born there in 1962.

TS: And then, did you just have one sibling; just you and another?

LP: We had a total of five.

TS: Oh, you did? Okay.

LP: I was the second. Four girls and one brother.

TS: Where's the brother fit in the hierarchy?

LP: The brother's number three, right in the middle.

TS: Oh, that's probably a good spot for him, then. [both chuckle]

LP: Yeah, a safe spot.

TS: A safe spot. Exactly. How long did you live in New Jersey?

LP: We lived in New Jersey until 1969 or '70 when my mother's brother, my Uncle Bobby, which we all loved—my Uncle Bobby was killed in Vietnam. So it was August of '69 and we went back home to take care of my grandma and be with her family.

TS: Okay.

LP: So yeah, Vietnam era.

TS: Oh, wow, that must have been really traumatic, though, as a young girl.

LP: Yes. Yeah, it was. It was hard on the whole family, and picking up and moving. So that was probably my first recollection of military, my first introduction.

TS: Right. Not a very pleasant one at all.

LP: No. No.

TS: Well, what kind of memories do you bring with you from growing up in New Jersey, since you were just seven when you left?

LP: Oh, my Uncle Jerry. I remember that. Well, and Uncle Bobby, he came down right before he left for Vietnam and he had his motorcycle. He was young and came down and he would go—we'd go to Seaside Heights [New Jersey], or my father and mother would take us across to the Brooklyn Zoo, and you could go to the Brooklyn Zoo or to Chinatown. And you'd have lobsters in the tank and go to Chinatown and go across. So it was pretty exciting; it was city.

TS: Oh, it was in the city.

LP: Yeah. Well, you'd go across to the city and, of course, New York, the city, was exciting and there were the beach down there. But I was still pretty young. We had a—We had a toboggan and we lived on a lake and when the lake would freeze over—we had a big German Shephard, and my dad would tie that toboggan to the German Shephard and put us kids on that toboggan and let him pull us around the lake.

TS: That's a great memory.

LP: Yeah, it was. And our house was right on a lake. We had a little raccoon that had fallen out of a tree, and we named him Geronimo and he lived in one of those Charlie's Chips [Charles Potato Chips] cans, when we were kids.

TS: [chuckles] Did he survive?

LP: Yeah, we ended up giving him to a veterinarian, because we had him for a while but he was—

TS: Still a little shaky?

LP: Yeah. Pet raccoon, and when he got bigger he was—had to go to the vet. I don't know, at least our parents told them they gave him to a vet.

TS: That sounds like a good story for them to tell you.

LP: But we did a lot of ice skating on the lake and it was good memories. Good memories there.

TS: So it was kind of a rural environment where you lived and then you went—or suburban, maybe?

LP: Yeah, it was actually, like, a man-made lake just outside of Elizabeth in Denville there, and it was good memories, and it was a little neighborhood built around a man-made lake with a rock in the middle. My dad had a little sailboat with a sunfish on it, and he would take us out and drop us off on that rock when we were kids and then, leave us on the rock. We'd say, "Come pick us up." [both chuckle]

But it was a nice neighborhood, really nice. The Franclemonts[?] lived next to us and it was really a small, tight-knit—We ran around—

TS: Little small community, right.

LP: Yeah.

TS: And then you moved to?

LP: Ohio.

TS: Ohio. Was it Columbus that you moved to?

LP: We went to—We stayed with my grandma for a while and that was in Hilliard, Ohio, right there by the train tracks, and my mom has a big family there. She had lots of brothers and sisters so we went there. It was going from the city to the country, and grandma had blackberry—My grandmother had a farm house there and the train tracks went through the back and we'd go back and—blackberries. And they'd have a cow. It was going city to country for sure.

TS: Is that where you got hooked on animals and country-living?

LP: I have always loved horses, and when I was a kid I used to read Chincoteague and Assateague—You know *Misty of Chincoteague* and *Brighty of the Grand Canyon* [children's novels written by Marguerite Henry in 1947 and 1953, respectively]? I loved the horse books and stuff but—

TS: Yeah. I'm saying that because we're in this beautiful log cabin home on this gorgeous property with goats, and is there horses out there too? I didn't see—

LP: We have goats. We have horses. I got a little mini horse named Ernie and my horse, Tinker, she's—I've had her for twenty-three years now.

TS: Oh my goodness.

LP: Yeah. And Tinker—I bought her in '93 from my friend, the one who is a warrant officer as well. And we have chickens and we have potbellied pigs and then our dogs.

TS: Yes, beautiful dogs. Yeah.

LP: Golden retriever, Avery. He came from Ohio.

TS: Did he come from Ohio?

LP: Yeah, he came from Ohio.

TS: Well, now, you started school in Ohio, or maybe you transferred?

LP: I started school—Let's see, I was nine—seven, eight years old by the time I went there, so I went to school mostly in Ohio.

TS: Mostly in Ohio. So you're out in the country, and did you have to walk, take a bus; how'd you get to school?

LP: Well, we pretty quick—we trans—we got a house after that—there's a transitional period—

TS: Oh, the initial transition.

LP: And then we went to Westerville, Ohio, so I grew up most of my life in Westerville, Ohio.

TS: And where's that by?

LP: And Westerville is right outside Columbus. It's northeast of Columbus, and my parents moved there because they were all about education for us. My parent—My mother is—She should have been a teacher. She's always been—We played a sport, we played an instrument, and we went to school.

TS: Okay. Very structured.

LP: Yeah. And very—she was very patient with teaching us as kids and always made sure we went to the best schools, and Westerville was a triple A school system. They moved there so we'd have the best schools, and it was just a great town.

TS: It was a great town?

LP: Yeah, Westerville. And it still is. It's a very good school system.

TS: Good. Now, what did your folks do for a living?

LP: My father worked for—He was a draftsman, and so he worked for a—Ashland Chemical Company as a draftsman, and my mother had five kids, but she also had worked as a police dispatcher in the evenings.

TS: Did she really?

LP: Yes. She would go and sometimes work in the evening—

TS: Get away from you all.

LP: Yeah. [both chuckle]. And this was in our teenage years, when we're old enough, and so you didn't get in trouble at night because mom is—first call was going to mom.

TS: Maybe she had a plan. Oh, that's right, yeah, because she was taking the calls. I see what you're saying, okay.

LP: She said, "No, we don't need to send an officer out. I'll take care of them kids." No.

TS: That's funny.

LP: But we lived in a nice neighborhood in Westerville. And so, my mom raised kids and did a good job at it.

TS: What kind of things did you guys do for fun?

LP: Soccer.

TS: Oh, okay. That's early, playing soccer.

LP: And we went to church. We went Sunday mornings, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. So we went to church three times a week and we had a great youth group. And that's where my best friend, Kirstie would—back then it was Eileen—but my best friend

growing up—and we did Girl Scouts, we did—I went from Girl Scouts from here to being a cadet and then becoming a scout leader.

TS: Oh, wow.

LP: To making all of my mistakes with—we're not to take Girl Scouts because you spend more time—

TS: Corralling them?

LP: No, protecting them. But we had great adventures with the Girl Scouts and we'd go to Old Man's Cave [hiking area located in Logan, Ohio] and different places—

TS: Did you do camping?

LP: Oh, yeah, we went all over, and we had a great scout leader—my friend, Mrs. Sticksel[?]—she was just a great scout leader. So we got to go a lot of places.

TS: Neat. Yeah, it sounds like your mom and dad made sure you guys kept busy.

LP: Yeah. But you mentioned soccer—

TS: Yeah, soccer. Because it's early to be playing soccer in the United States.

LP: Oh, yeah. And in Ohio State, you know the Buckeyes?

TS: Yes.

LP: National—We have the Buckeyes. Yes, I'm sorry, Michigan, but we have the Buckeyes [both chuckle; TS is from Michigan]. But it was Ohio—peewee football was what everybody did, and the women, the young girls, were all the cheerleaders, and you had football, or you played softball. Well, in our town, my father and a group of the people there—He said, "Well, I have four girls and they want to play sports too."

So he joined, what was at the time, the Westerville Amateur Soccer Association, and peewee football reigned as king at the time, but he said, "I have four girls and I need something for them to do." So he learned to referee and he joined an organization—which is where Governor [John Richard] Kasich was then just in Westerville—and they brought about a soccer program where the girls could play, too, and so we all were very into soccer. We helped referee, we grew up playing soccer, and I actually—when I went even to college, I continued to play college out at Pepperdine [University] at Malibu [California]. So soccer was a big part of my growing up. And I was good at it too.

TS: Yeah, that's interesting. Oh, yeah?

LP: I was captain of the soccer team in college—I mean, in high school—and when I got to high school, all the people I grew up—on my soccer team, because we were co-ed—

Well, they had a high school varsity but women didn't have a varsity, so several of us girls who played in the amateur program were able to start the very first varsity soccer team for the women. And they were the state champions, I think, not too long ago.

TS: Is that right?

LP: And we started the first one.

TS: So you're a pioneer for soccer in Ohio, then, huh?

LP: In the high school, yeah, in Westerville.

TS: Westerville. But still, even that's early because you're talking '70s and—

LP: It was 1970s, yeah.

TS: Yeah, soccer was not a big sport at that time.

LP: Yes.

TS: In that region, for sure.

LP: Oh, yeah. And with football, it's always been the football was the focus but—

TS: That's right. King. Now, did you enjoy school?

LP: I loved school.

TS: Yeah? What did you love about it?

LP: I love—I just love studying. As a history major, you—now—But in school, I've always gotten good grades. I always—

TS: Good student?

LP: Yeah. I always loved to study. I don't know. I'm just—I like to study.

TS: So you enjoyed going to school.

LP: I did.

TS: Now, did you have a favorite subject at that time, or subjects?

LP: I've always loved history, and I don't know why, but history's always been—

TS: Yeah. Do you think about what might have attracted you to history?

LP: I had—I loved languages, too, and I have to say, sometimes it was the teachers. When you can remember your teachers and stuff, like when I went—my Spanish teachers, Ms. Veter[?] and Señor Guillermo and Ms. Buckholt[?] and stuff—I can remember those classes. I can actually remember things that we talked about, like Senator—Governor Kasich coming in and teaching an American Government class to us and stuff, and those things held interest to me. I didn't do—I didn't remember mathematics so well, but I did well in them but I didn't—

TS: But it wasn't your thing, right?

LP: It wasn't my thing.

TS: But you could get a good grade in it.

LP: Yeah, yeah. But I can remember those classes, and some of them, like American Government, always—And I think it's a little bit of that growing up in a Gold Star family from Vietnam, that my mother, on Memorial Day, we went to the graveyards and she, to this day, will take her grandkids and great-grandkids to go sing at the veterans' home. She always wanted to sing the army song because her brother, Paul, and her—George and Mike—they were all army. She has a lot of brothers who—they came out of that generation from World War II, and then to Vietnam and served. And just great military and patriotism, I guess you could say.

[Gold Star families are the relatives of U.S. military members who have died in battle]

TS: Right, right. So you grew up with that kind of background.

LP: Yeah, and I think American government and history and that kind of background.

TS: Kind of, maybe, made a connection with your family in a way, too, that kind of resonated.

LP: Yeah. But I was trying to think, what's the army song, the Green Berets—"The Ballad of the Green Berets"—that's the one she always wanted us to sing. I'm like, "I'm a marine now."

TS: I know the "Off We Go—"

LP: No. "The Ballad of the Green Berets;" the John Wayne song [correction: Barry Sadler].

TS: I know what you're talking about; I can't think of the tune. But I cannot sing. I probably can't even hum.

Now, as a young girl, then, growing up and you have—Let's see, what's happening in the world at that time? We had [U. S. President Richard Milhous] Nixon, his impeachment—his resignation—he actually wasn't impeached, sorry—his resignation, and Watergate. Was that a world that you were aware of at all?

[The Watergate scandal was a major political scandal in the United States in the early 1970s. It followed a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C. President Richard Nixon's administration's attempted cover-up of its involvement led to the resignation of Nixon on 9 August 1974]

LP: It's really weird, and I'll say that I was aware of it but I felt like I grew up a little bit—The Vietnam era was very different in my experience from what a lot of people say because were not far from Kent State.

[The Kent State shootings occurred at Kent State University in Ohio on 4 May 1970, and involved the shooting of unarmed college students who were protesting the Vietnam War by the Ohio National Guard. Four students were killed and nine others wounded.]

TS: Oh, that's right.

LP: Yeah, we were right below Kent State. And even my Uncle Paul, I remember hearing him say that he came into school one day—he was going to Ohio State University—and he came into school one day and they said, "We're going to have no classes today" or something, "because of protests."

But our family was so under—I don't want to say invested—but we had grown up so much appreciating military service, that I don't think as growing up during that era that I ever felt what people now say, that the terrible protests about Vietnam, and here I was, right there. But I always had a family that had—that was very respectful of that generation.

TS: Well, we didn't have the kind of access to communication and news and constant 24/7 blaring at you. You actually had to, probably, seek out news in a way that you don't have to so much today.

LP: Yeah, and I remember—I don't know. I guess, I don't remember, though, being affected by that.

TS: Right.

LP: As we study it now, the way we look back at it, that it was a period of political unrest and protests, but that's not the way I was raised in it.

TS: And you're a teenager growing up, living in that bubble, right?

LP: Right.

TS: Well, what kind of idea did you have for yourself? Did you think about what did you want to do after high school? Were you thinking about that?

LP: I always wanted to go to college but I never knew if I could afford to go to college. "Can I afford this?" And I was very fortunate to get a scholarship, and I was also very fortunate to have the people in my life like I did, like the Sticksel's[?], and the church that supported me, because I—even going to college out at Pepperdine when I went to college, I still had to work. I typed papers at lunch, I ironed shirts for the guys in the law—in the school of law. I typed papers for them for a dollar a page or whatever. And I worked down in a store at night to make the money and stuff. We didn't have a lot and with five kids, I remember my mother handing me five hundred dollars, which was a lot of money to my family at the time to send one of five kids off to school to get out there. And I always wanted to go to school.

TS: Did you think about what you wanted school to do for you?

LP: I don't think I really did. I started out, I was going to be a communications major, and I don't know that I knew what I wanted school to do for me, except for that I wanted to do something with my life and school would help me do that.

TS: Okay, yeah.

LP: It's like I wanted to—I wanted to do something, and I loved studying, so I think I went to college thinking, "I'm going to get a career and do something."

TS: Do something. It wasn't like your heart was set necessarily on a particular career, but you wanted to get the degree and then figure it out along the way.

LP: Yeah.

TS: So what happened when you were at Pepperdine?

LP: Well, I had been dating my boyfriend since I was sixteen; Doug. I had been—We had been dating since we were sixteen, and Doug went to Ohio State University and I went to Pepperdine, and long distance love letters are great but we really wanted to get married. [chuckles] So as much as I loved school and I had my best friend out there—Kirstie was with me—but love was calling me back, so I came back to Ohio. And we decided we were going to join—actually my husband—now husband, then boyfriend—but he was going to join the army—or join the military—so we could figure out how we could make money and get our degrees. I still wanted to get my college, so the GI Bill, that's where

that came into play. And so, Doug—while we were talking to the recruiters—we were there together—my sister, who had joined the Marine Corps just a few years before me—

[The GI Bill provides educational assistance to servicemembers, veterans, and their dependents]

TS: Oh, is that right? Okay.

LP: Yeah. My oldest sister.

TS: That's right. You had mentioned that earlier. That's okay.

LP: My oldest sister had joined the Marine Corps in 1980, and so her recruiter—which, ever since I've been referred to as "Cheryl's[?] little sister" because she had such a great reputation as a marine and in the Marine Corps. She worked up at Headquarters Marine Corps [Arlington, Virginia] and stuff, so many of the colonels [?] and stuff afterwards referred to me as "Cheryl's little sister." [chuckles] Even when I was a Chief Warrant Officer, Five, I was "Cheryl's little sister."

So her recruiter came over and said, "We're really trying to increase the Marine Corps from 2, up to 5% of women." They were trying to increase the percentage of women at that time in the Marine Corps, so they offered me a five thousand dollar bonus if I could go through boot camp and I qualified. And I got through boot camp and through my MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] school and they said, "That sounds like a pretty good deal."

So my boyfriend—then—he—Doug didn't join the armed forces and I joined the Marine Corps, and so I went off and he dropped me off at the airport—they all came to the airport, my family and Doug—and I flew off to boot camp, to Parris Island [Marine Corps Recruiting Depot, South Carolina]. Scariest day of my life [chuckles].

TS: Now, what did everybody think about that decision? You got married and joined the Marine Corps pretty close together, then.

LP: Yeah. I think everybody understood because it was an opportunity, and I wanted to get school and I needed to get out and find that path.

TS: Right. So they were very supportive?

LP: Oh, yeah.

TS: And you said you had this military family background.

LP: Yeah. My dad's side—His brother, too, was a marine and stuff during the Korean War. My Uncle Bill, he had come down here, and he actually served here in Edenton, North

Carolina; he was down here; he'd come during Korea. So the military was very cherished—I want to say cherished—very appreciated by both sides of my family.

[The Korean War began when North Korea invaded South Korea 25 June 1950, following a series of clashes along the border. China and the Soviet Union supported North Korea, while the United Nations, including the United States, came to the aid of South Korea. By the end of the war in 1953, there were approximately 36,574 U.S. casualties and an estimated 1.2 million deaths overall]

TS: Do you know why your sister picked the Marine Corps?

LP: She—I don't really, but I think she had a friend, too, in high school that went in the Marine Corps, and I think a lot of times you don't really know why you pick that service, but you go in there and you know—I remember one of the things my mom said. I was not—I was sort of outspoken as a child. I tested my mother constantly and she's—and Cheryl was a good marine—my sister was a good marine—and she was—My mother said, "You will never make it in the marines." Probably because I had such a sassy mouth. [chuckles]

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: And how long was your sister in?

LP: Yeah. Four years.

TS: And how long were you in?

LP: Twenty-eight years.

TS: There we go.

LP: But it was that challenge, because I always needed the challenge. Like I said, I always had to have a mission and a challenge, and I could be obstinate, but that sort of set the course. Then I had to do it.

TS: Well, tell us about Parris Island. And this is '82. You're twenty, or going on twenty?

LP: Yeah, just about—Yes, twenty; I was just about twenty. And I want to say that's the quietest I've probably ever been in my life [chuckles].

TS: Is that right?

LP: I was terrified of my drill instructors. I tried not to get in trouble but—

TS: Now, did you have male or female instructors?

LP: All female.

TS: It was all female going through and it's still that way, right?

LP: It—I don't know. I don't know now with the changes, but at that time we were very segregated with boot camp, and you didn't see too many men; very few. But like I said, I was terrified at the time. When I got there I thought, "What am I doing?" And it didn't take me long, though, to settle into it.

TS: Did your sister give you some tips or hints or warning?

LP: She did, but she was at headquarters at the time and she was getting ready to get married, and I remember she got married while I was in boot camp and I always felt—I wish I could—

TS: Because you couldn't go. Right.

LP: Yeah. And I actually got in trouble for it because I had a little wedding announcement that was in the paper that came in a card, and we had our little foot locker that you could keep your memories in, and so I—my sister was a marine and she was at headquarters so I taped it up on that foot locker. When we had our inspection that day and they saw my picture taped up there, I got in trouble so bad. They said, "You don't have personal pictures and stuff up there. Those go inside your thing. We don't want to see your pictures." [both chuckle]

TS: So you're going through basic. You said it was a challenge being quiet, but was it difficult physically at all?

LP: Oh, yeah. It was physically challenging. I was a soccer player, though, so I think physically, it was more settling into that routine of—I can remember sleeping at attention and not wanting to get under covers, so I had my rack [bed] made up perfectly. And I think that's—I don't know if I really slept because I would wake up in the exact position I went to bed. And we were all in it together, though. I can still see my boot camp buddies' faces and Theresa Fo—I can remember them. How many places have you gone in your life and you can think back to thirteen weeks that you've known somebody, and I can still see my bunkie [bunk mate], Theresa Fox, and her face. It was those moments that bind you together; sheer terror, to exhaustion, to getting it done, and staying out of trouble.

TS: Right. Did you guys have to do a big run or a big exercise [unclear] or anything?

LP: We ran all the time.

TS: Did you?

LP: Yeah. I went in—I lost probably twelve pounds in a thirteen-week period and I was only like, a hundred and thirty, maybe a hundred and twenty-nine pounds when I went in.

TS: And you're pretty fit [from] playing soccer.

LP: Yeah. And I was a good soccer player, captain and—

TS: Well, you did go to a humid climate, too.

LP: Yeah. Parris Island was humid and they kept you on a strict diet. Well, not a strict diet but you ate and got out of the chow. You got in line—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Strict schedule for eating.

LP: Yeah. Short schedule.

TS: Was there anything that was emotionally difficult at all?

LP: I don't think so. I've always been pretty independent, so emotionally, it was just more the fatigue and wondering more about, "Did I pick the right path?" But I knew pretty quick when I went in. When I went in, I was looking to get my GI Bill and to get myself in a place where I knew where I was going to go with life, but I—

TS: And you had that bonus to look forward to.

LP: I liked the marines pretty quick.

TS: Did you?

LP: Yeah. I did.

TS: Okay.

LP: Oh, yeah. I had that five thousand dollar—And I was going to get to get married. So my goals, it was—help me to meet my goals, but I took to being a marine pretty quick.

TS: What was it that you liked about it?

LP: I liked the challenge. And I liked—Yeah, the challenge. I think that's all I can really—

TS: That's alright. Well, when you signed up, did you sign up for a particular job that you were going to get at that time?

LP: I did. I was going to be an air traffic controller.

TS: Okay.

LP: Didn't work out that way [chuckles].

TS: It didn't. Why not?

LP: That's what you think—That's what I thought I was going to be. That's why I thought I'd signed up, but it just turned out to be one of many opportunities in what I had signed up to be.

So when I came—When I was in school, I tested well on my [Defense] Language Aptitude Battery test and they screened me for going to Monterey [California].

[Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB) is a test used by the U.S. Department of Defense to test an individual's potential for learning a foreign language, and thus determining who may pursue training as a military linguist]

TS: For language school?

LP: But it would have been a one year, unaccompanied without your dependent, and one of my—one of our goals was to get married so we were—we wanted—That was a big thing for Doug and I at the time. So I pretty much ruled out going for one year unaccompanied to Monterey to do language tests—language training. So I went to administration, and I haven't regretted it since because it's been a great field. And that's where I ended up; I ended up in administration; personnel administrator.

TS: Where did you do your initial training at?

LP: My initial training was at Camp [Gilbert H.] Johnson [satellite camp of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina]. It was the Marine Corps Service Support School at the Personnel Administration School, which became like my second home, because over the years I went through entry-level, NCO [non-commissioned officer] course, Independent Duty course, Advanced Personnel Administration and Personnel Officer course. Always—

TS: All at Camp Johnson?

LP: And that's where most of my training and my instructors and my instruction as far as skill set, came out of Camp Johnson. It was always like second home to me, which is why, when I ended my career, that's where I retired.

TS: Excellent.

LP: Yeah. And that again goes back to my love of study. I was always a student, even in school, so I loved the school house.

TS: Were you always putting in for the training or did—

LP: I would take any job they'd train me to do.

TS: Really?

LP: I loved the knowledge of—if they sent me to legal officer's school, if they—I went to chaser's school and learned how to become a cross-country chaser.

[A chaser is involved in transferring service members from their unit, who have been sentenced to the brig (military prison)]

TS: Was there any particular training that you received that you really enjoyed more than any other?

LP: I don't know. I like school.

TS: You liked it all? Just learning.

LP: Yeah, I did. And I was always in the administration field so most of my training was related to that—was related to administration or legal officer or—I did do some crypto [cryptologic] training for Communication Security Material Systems, which got me into a whole other set of jobs with counterintelligence. I ended up in a counter intelligence vault. I just—

TS: Seems like you embraced all of the different opportunities that you had.

LP: I do. And I still do. I love to learn things about history or training.

TS: Where did you get to go for your first assignment?

LP: I graduated honor grad [graduate] in my class so I got my pick of duty stations, and at the time, Doug and I were getting ready to get married, and so I said, "Here's the pick of duty stations. Where do you want to go?" And he saw Hawaii on that list and I said, "We're going to Hawaii!" [both chuckle]

So we went to Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, and it was probably the best pick I could have made because I had the best leadership to start off as a—far away from home, first time we've really left our parents and left the security of

home, but the leadership I had there were all Vietnam veterans and just post-Vietnam and they treated us just—Doug and I just had the best leadership. I think it started us off great. I was a career marine from the time I left their hands.

TS: Oh, really?

LP: Oh, yeah.

TS: Okay.

LP: I don't think we ever looked back. From the time I left Kaneohe Bay, I don't think I had ever any doubt that I would retire a marine.

TS: What do you think it was that they influenced you in that way, to get that kind of feeling inside about wanting to be career? So early, really.

LP: Oh, yeah. When I got there and—it's hard the first time when you're overseas, you're away from home, and it's first year of marriage no matter—Doug and I had dated since we were sixteen—

TS: That's true. Never lived together though.

LP: Never lived together like that, and to have to be that far away from home in those first years of being married, and trying to go through those first years. Well, my sergeant major and my staff sergeant and my sergeant and my captain were like family to us. The sergeant major and his wife would cook on the weekends and they would have us there. I babysat for his kids, but we were—It wasn't just like you went to work for them and they treated you nice. But they looked after you like you were young adults who needed family. And to this day, on my birthday, I get the "Happy Birthday" from those people. They came to my retirement ceremony after twenty-eight years and they—

TS: Well, and they've been long out, I'm sure.

LP: Oh, yeah. Yeah, but they always—they were immediately family and I always think of them as that. You're at that age where you're—

TS: Impressionable.

LP: Yeah. And you need guidance.

TS: Guidance.

LP: Doug and I are first year married, in Hawaii, it's expensive to live, and you just need that—

TS: Well, what did Doug get to do, then, for his work? Because he's following you around then, right?

LP: Oh, yeah. So we get there and we had—Doug's mother, who—I have got the best mother-in-law ever. I really do. I'm not just saying this for this but she is. She had helped us get a little Honda when we got there, and we bought it at an auction. And we went over to Hawaii and Doug got a job as the Mister Softee Ice Cream Man [chuckles], driving the ice cream truck with the little thing. So he worked over there in Waikiki Beach and around those areas, I think, [unclear] and stuff, but he worked the ice cream truck and—

TS: That's a great gig in Hawaii, I would think.

LP: Yeah, we thought we were adults, but man, when I look back, we were babies. [both chuckle] And then he bought—after a while, he got a motorcycle and he worked that. He got a motorcycle and I had a car and I worked a lot. As a marine, I worked a lot.

TS: What was the—besides this mentoring that you had at a really young age—best part about being in Hawaii?

LP: Oh, being in Hawaii. [both chuckle] But we learned—Doug took up surfing. I tried it once and almost drowned and sat on the beach a lot.

TS: Did your reading, right?

LP: Yeah. And we had a lot of family that came and visited, so we got a lot of time to get the family—which was nice. Doug's little sister, Shelly[?], came over and his brother, Brad, he came and visited and we—it was like having a vacation—and also, his mom came over. But yeah, it was great, and you're—really the first time to be on your own and be in such an exotic place, but after three years we were ready to get back close to home. Well, we missed our—We have such a big family.

TS: Oh, right.

LP: Now our family's, with the kids and everybody, I think there's twenty-five of us, because the kids have kids, and the kid's kids have kids, and we love our family, but after three years, you miss family.

TS: Well, did you get to put in for a specific assignment or anything then, or did you just get sent somewhere?

LP: I did, in fact. My leadership trained me so well that I ended up getting pulled up to the station headquarters.

TS: Oh, while you were in Hawaii?

LP: Yeah, I got pulled out from my leadership, but I ended up going up to the station headquarters in Hawaii and that's—I got put in the vault.

TS: This is the counterintelligence.

LP: Yeah, I ended up in counterintelligence and the communications—it's called CMS [Cryptographic Materials System?]—but secure keying[?] materials, and that was, as I mentioned earlier, during the time of the [John Anthony] Walker [Jr.] and [Jerry Alfred] Whitworth spy trials, which was an enormous project because we had to change over every piece of keying material and really re-do all of our security.

TS: Explain to people who may not be familiar with that spy trial, who you mean by Walker and—

LP: It was the navy military—some members who had comprised our security—our communication systems, and we found out that these systems had been comprised and given over to—They, of course, were in the Cold War so it's the time of high spying.

[The Cold War was a state of political and military tension after World War II between powers in the Western Bloc (the U.S., its NATO allies and others) and powers in the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and its allies in the Warsaw Pact)]

TS: Was it like the Soviets or was it for—

LP: It was the Sov—There was a whole series of codes.

TS: Yeah. Was he working at NSA [National Security Agency] then?

LP: He was out at California in the navy.

TS: Right. I remember he was in the navy. I can't remember where he worked.

LP: Yeah. I'd have to—

TS: We can look it up. That's okay. But just to give some background a little bit. So you got involved in that?

LP: And in the Marine Corps, at that time, we had the MAUs; the Marine Amphibious Units were deploying out of Hawaii. So I worked with a master sergeant, Pritchard[?], who did all of the counterintelligence briefings, and that was part of the job, and we kept all of the classified information in the keying materials. So as soon as we—As soon as it was known that that keying material was compromised, we had to change over all. And there's a lot—That means every bit.

TS: Was that a part of what you had to do, too, then?

LP: Yes.

TS: Okay.

LP: Just to change over all that stuff and destroy stuff that may have been compromised and put new stuff in, so that we made sure everything was secure and people could talk and sail freely on the seas and not—

TS: Right. Well, that was probably pretty intense kind of work at that time.

LP: And pretty long hours. I can remember doing a lot of long hours at that time.

TS: Now, were you there when the marine barracks were bombed in Beirut?

[The 23 October 1983 Beirut barracks bombing were terrorist attacks that took place in Beirut, Lebanon during the Lebanese Civil War. Two bombs simultaneously stuck separate buildings that were housing Multinational Force in Lebanon peacekeepers. The attack specifically targeted American and French service workers, and resulted in the deaths of two hundred and forty-one American and fifty-eight French peacekeepers, six civilians, and the two suicide bombers]

LP: I had just left Lejeune, and my sister and her husband were actually here at Camp Lejeune, and he went out with the response with the—He went out with the unit that went to Grenada and then went to Beirut; did the invasion of Grenada and then went over to relieve the marines that were—And that was October 23 of '83, and Doug and I had just left here in February of '83. We had just left school at Lejeune but my sister and her husband were still here.

[The Invasion of Grenada was a 1983 U.S.-led invasion of the Caribbean island of Grenada.]

TS: Yeah. And we had talked a little bit, before we started the tape, about the impact that particular experience had—that event that took—

LP: Oh, yeah. At Camp Lejeune, it was in Jacksonville here—that was—all those marines were home here, their families. And until you've been a casualty officer, it's hard to explain that impact on a town. It's not just a marine in Beirut, it's a wife and a child, and the next door neighbors, and their church family, and the guy he shops at the corner at the store. It's a whole community, was impacted in October of '83. And I've done seventy-

eight casualties over my career so I know the impact. The impact goes beyond the wife and the child, the immediate, and it goes deep into whole communities.

TS: How did you get involved with having to do causalities? Is that part of the work you were doing at a particular place?

LP: I was train—personnel administration, and it's funny because my first master gunny [informal abbreviation for gunnery sergeant] I worked with up there in Hawaii used to—personnel casualty used to be part of our combat thing for admin. You did casualty administration and keeping records of not only the enemy—of not only of our casualties but also enemy casualties and stuff. But in personnel administration they teach you to be a Casualty Assistance Calls Officer [CACO] and to keep casualty reporting. That's part of our job, to keep those duties. They're very important duties to us.

TS: Right.

LP: These are our families and stuff. So that was part of my training, and when I became a warrant officer, it became part of my duties to be a CACO and to help casualties—families of casualties, and to process—there's a lot of—

TS: I was reading about the Gander crash not too long ago, where so many were lost in that, and how they all had their records, because they were going from one place to their next assignment, and they all had their records with them, and how difficult that was to help identify, things like that. And I was thinking—It made me think about how, "Do they still do that? Do they still travel with their records?" But things are so electronic now, it would be different, but yeah.

[On 12 December 1985, shortly after takeoff from Gander, Canada, en route to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Arrow Air Flight 1285 stalled, crashed, and burned about half a mile from the runway. The flight was carrying U.S. troops from Cairo, Egypt, to their home base. Two hundred forty-eight passengers and eight crewmembers perished]

LP: Yeah, and now the—we all have so much different stuff—your DNA medical testing and everything that's so different and that's, like I said—

TS: I didn't even know they did that.

LP: Yeah.

TS: It's a whole different kind of ball game.

LP: Yeah, from when we came in. But Beirut—I remember Beirut was my first introduction to that—It was a big thing for a marine. That was really—The global war on terrorism began well before that—

TS: Right. 9/11.

[The September 11, 2001 attacks, or 9/11, was a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda on the United States on the morning of 11 September 2001. The attacks killed 2,996 people and injured over 6,000 others]

LP: Beirut was a terrorist attack on marines in a—sleeping in their barracks in Beirut on a peacekeeping mission, so that—the marines have long been toe-to-toe and nose-to-nose with what we face today.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: With the War on Terror?

LP: Yeah.

TS: Well, when you left Hawaii, where did you get to go after that?

LP: From Hawaii I went to independent duty in Michigan—at Selfridge Air National Guard base in Michigan—and I served there in personnel administration. We were a—We trained the reserves.

TS: Oh, okay. Is that what you did there?

LP: Yes.

TS: I was looking at your little brochure you lent me to follow along here. I see you reenlisted aboard the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor.

LP: I do, and I have actually a great picture of that. I got to raise—I reenlisted. Like I said, from early on I think I always knew I was going to be a marine, then, for a long time. I went—So my reenlistment ceremony, I got to go aboard USS *Pearl Harbor* and raise my flag on the mast that is still coming out of the water from the *Arizona* there.

TS: Is that right?

LP: At the memorial, yeah.

TS: That's pretty neat.

LP: Yeah, it was beautiful too. Captain Pike[?], he was my reenlisting officer and we raised that flag.

TS: Well, you went from beautiful Hawaii to beautiful Michigan. [both chuckle]

LP: To Michigan. Beautiful Michigan. We love Michigan.

TS: Yeah. Well, you weren't too far from where you grew up, then, so that was probably easier to see family and things.

LP: It was. We ran home every weekend.

TS: Did you really?

LP: It was the best. Yeah, and we were still young—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: How many hours drive is that? About four?

LP: It was about three. We were north of Columbus [Ohio], so from Detroit we had—of course, it was probably four but we made it a little less. Doug and I would go on the weekends, and we used to call it "Midnight Acres" because we'd leave on Friday night from work and if I didn't have drill that weekend and stuff, Doug and I would run down there. My brothers and sisters who were just in that age where they were having babies.

TS: Right.

LP: And so, we would have kids everywhere and hang out at my mother's house and just have a really good time. We'd have bonfires—

TS: Now, did you pick that assignment?

LP: I did, because usually on your first reenlistment you'll get a—you have options; you could get a duty station choice or you can get a lateral move. So I—And you don't always get your choice, but to entice you to reenlist they'll give you a duty station option, and we chose that because it was the closest to home. And we had been in Hawaii for three years. Just married. We wanted to get back closer to home.

TS: How did you enjoy that assignment, outside of being so close to your family?

LP: It was really good. It was really rewarding. And again, we made great friends there. We used to go to—we call it Camp Jarhead—but we'd go to deer hunting camp in the Upper Peninsula [of Michigan] and—

TS: Where'd you go up there to hunt?

LP: Yeah, we went into the national forest. We had a place up there in the forest and we had a big CP [Command Post] tent.

TS: Yeah.

LP: And if I could remember the name of it right now.

TS: That's okay.

LP: Great Lakes[?], was it? No.

TS: It's okay if you don't remember.

LP: Yeah.

TS: That's fine. Up in the U-P [Upper Peninsula].

LP: Up in the U-P, or in Antrim County, and we had some great friends, Lynn[?] and Dan, and we loved to go up there and go hunting. Beautiful, beautiful hunting area and fishing. We'd go fishing. We could fish right there on Lake St. Clair. We actually got into ice fishing where we'd drill auger holes in the ice and sit and do that. But we had really great friends, made good—You always do.

TS: Wherever you go.

LP: Yeah, you find your good friends and we made some good ones up there and lived—But yeah, hunting was a big thing. And then the reserves. You get a new respect for the reserves, too, because I think now, more than ever, you see what the reserves—

TS: Right. Have been able to do.

LP: Yeah. Well, they're in the rotation with the global war on terror just as—almost as much as active duty.

TS: Oh, okay. I was trying to see where you were at when the Gulf War happened, but you went to Colorado, then, after that.

[The First Gulf War occurred from 2 August 1990 to 28 February 1991. Codenamed Operation Desert Shield for operations leading to the buildup of troops and defense of Saudi Arabia, and Operation Desert Storm in its combat phase, it was a war waged by coalition forces from 35 nations led by the US against Iraq in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait]

LP: I was on recruiting, yes. So I went from recruiting duty, I went out—I mean, from independent reserve duty—training independent duty—out to recruiting duty in Colorado, and that's when the Gulf War occurred.

TS: And you were there?

LP: I was.

TS: Do you want to tell us about that?

LP: That's where—It was funny because this was where my dream—my dream billet [a specific personnel position, assignment, or duty station] in the Marine Corps almost came true because I had been—

TS: Almost?

LP: Yeah—I had been out there and, again, great hunting, great fishing, we learned to ski, we love to ski. We would go to Loveland and Vail and Beaver Creek [cities in Colorado], and I got to drive out at President [Gerald] Ford's [the 38th President of the United States]. He lived out at Beaver Creek, so I got to be a marine driver out there.

TS: You got to drive for former President Ford?

LP: Not for him, but I was with the—I augmented the driving staff because they had the World Economic Forum there, and at his estate out there, it's beautiful country. The marines would augment the drivers. So I got to drive a Russian—a Russian diplo—one of the Russians, and I've got his card here somewhere.

[The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a Swiss nonprofit foundation, based in Cologny, Geneva, that focuses on improving the world through global economic success]

TS: That's pretty neat. And this was at—

LP: It was like the G8 [Group of 8] Summit—economic summit.

TS: Was this at the Air Force Academy or is the marine billet there?

LP: It's a Marine Corps recruiting station so it's a recruiting duty.

TS: Okay, out in Colorado.

LP: Oh, but I was detached from there to go augment President Ford—Yeah, they took—

TS: Oh, I see. I got it.

LP: And I think the best thing, again, we did—we would go elk hunting and we could go up in the Rockies. And Doug and I used to go turkey hunting way up above the—into the Rocky Mountains, and trout—we'd go fish the rainbow trout up in those old mining areas and stuff. We even got lost in the mountains one night over in—

TS: You did?

LP: Oh, yeah. We ended up coming out finally—We finally found a road the next day about thirteen miles from where our car was.

TS: Oh, my goodness.

LP: Luckily, some woman picked us up and gave us a ride back to our car. But we would go on adventures there, and Colorado's just beautiful country and we loved it. The best thing, though, we had, I remember a man, Frank Bales[?], he was a marine from, maybe, Korean War, and we had the—General Schmuck, and the Frozen Chosin marines, and we had the Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Colorado, and they were the best bunch of marines that took care of us. Because we're out there on recruiting duty, but then I would volunteer to help them do work for the Coordinating Council, and Ambassador Holly Coors gave us the Coors Brewery to have meetings there.

[Brigadier General Donald M. "Buck" Schmuck, was a U.S. Marine Corps brigadier general who served with distinction during World War II]

[Frozen Chosin refers to service members who fought in the Battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War]

[Holland "Holly" Coors was an American conservative political activist and philanthropist who had been married to Joseph Coors, the president of Coors Brewing Company]

TS: Oh, okay.

LP: They had their council meetings and General Schmuck would fly in and pick up the Frozen Chosin guys who had served in Korea—the famous guys—and they were in Wyoming and they had—I think he was living in Hawaii—and they would all meet there, and then I would do administration for them and organize their things.

TS: I'm not familiar with the Chosin Frozen.

LP: The Chosin Reservoir. So it's—They're not even—They're just a very honored group of marines who—

TS: What would they do?

LP: When the Chinese overran the—

TS: No, no, I get what they did militarily, but what was it they were doing now with them?

LP: The Marine Corps Coordinating Council was like a veteran's—it was a veteran's organization that—just for—They'd get together and—just as you would the Marine Corps League these days and the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars].

TS: So it's a veteran's organization.

LP: Right, and they would gather, and it was also a time when—you got to remember after every war, and in times of economic challenges—

TS: Turmoil?

LP: —the Marine Corps is always suspect to get cut and folded into the Department of the Navy, probably more so at times than others. The Marine Corps Coordinating Council also, too, kept alive that tradition of why the Marine Corps is important. Why it's important for the nation to have a Marine Corps, and just talk about keeping that legacy alive, and as a historian, I can appreciate—

TS: Right. I never really thought that there was much concern about losing the Marine Corps or just cutting it in size.

LP: Oh, yeah. Well, you can cut a lot of money by just making us a branch of the ar—of the navy, or you cut a lot of structure and stuff, but they have very specific roles that are very important roles, and I think, now more than ever, you see from the—I always say, if you go to the worst places in the world—and I don't mean places that are bad because they're bad places, but because people have done bad things—

TS: Bad things have happened there.

LP: Yeah, I'm talking where people have just been oppressed. I've work in Haiti and Tunisia, and we did Sierra Leone and Liberia, when things are falling apart—

TS: These are all what you've done since the—

LP: After the Marine Corps. Yeah.

TS: After the Marine Corps.

LP: But you always find marines and missionaries in the worst places in the world.

TS: Oh. Yeah. That's interesting.

LP: Yeah, but the Chosin Frozen marines were part of that group of marines who were in the Marine Corps Coordinating Council, and it wasn't—it was more of just a support for the Marine Corps and a veteran's organization.

TS: Okay. So you're in Colorado when the Gulf War breaks out?

LP: Yes.

TS: How did that affect you?

LP: For me, it wasn't so bad because—it was very traumatic because everybody—They knew everybody was going. This was going to be a full-up, everybody's going to mobilize and deploy. And for those who found themselves in the tankers or the infantry or the marines, the first thing all these marines want to do is get back to Lejeune or [Marine Corps Base Camp] Pendleton [Southern California] so that they can be—

TS: But instead they're on recruiting duty.

LP: They're on recruiting duty. And recruiting is by far an important part of what the marines do too. They pick the quality and the back—the continued growth of the Marine Corps. So those folks who are sitting there said, "I want to go back to my tank. I want to go back to my artillery. I want to go back to my weapons." And you're stuck in Colorado on recruiting. It was a tough time.

TS: Well, that letter that you read me from the tanker, had he been a recruiter in Colorado?

LP: He was the commanding officer and he was—

TS: Oh, of the recruiting department?

LP: He had come—No, he was the commanding officer of the whole station.

TS: Okay.

LP: So he was the CO [commanding officer] of the station and he was a tanker. So the frustration lev—the personal frustration level of having trained your whole life to be ready for when you're needed, and then being on recruiting in Denver when the war came. But he was out there and he was there the day they crossed the breach and they went in.

TS: He got himself transferred out of recruiting?

LP: Yeah. But that's—when I got that letter, I knew that his soul was right, because you put your training into being prepared to do that when your country needs you and you're like, "I'm ready! Let me go."

TS: That's right. That's right. I may have to take a picture of that letter. Right around this time you go from enlisted to being a warrant officer, around '92; a little after the Gulf War.

LP: I was selected—and I just—that's what I was going to say earlier, is that I just got my dream billet.

TS: Oh, yeah, yeah. Sorry.

LP: Yeah, I got sidetracked too.

TS: That's okay.

LP: But Mr. Frank Bales was one of the genuine guys—He actually was part of this Marine Corps Coordinating Council that served in Korea with these guys, and then he had stayed to work out there for the federal government, and he had recommended me to go work for Lieu—for the [U.S.] Marine Corps History Division out of San Diego [California]. And so, I finally was getting into my history—my passion for education and for being a marine, I was finally going to go to San Diego and I was going to work for Lieutenant Colonel—Lieutenant General Victor Krulak out there. And I got this letter, they were getting ready to transfer me, and, "You got selected for warrant officer."

[Victor Harold Krulak was a decorated U.S. Marine Corps officer who saw action in World War II, Korea and Vietnam]

TS: Oh, so you didn't even apply for it or did you—

LP: I had my application in but it was my third time, so I was ready—and here I got this job to go to the history division, and then I got selected for warrant officer, so I ended up going to the basics school to become a warrant officer.

TS: Could you have turned that down?

LP: I could have but I always had the opportunity to get my history degree [unclear], but being a marine—I decided by then, being a marine was my career so I wasn't going to turn down a warrant officer.

TS: You'd been in about ten years at this point.

LP: I had—let's see. That's '82 to—

TS: Ninety-two.

LP: Yeah. Was it '92? Yeah.

TS: Explain for those who don't understand the difference between enlisted and warrant officer, and maybe commissioned officer.

LP: Yeah, okay. So enlisted—A commissioned officer—let's start there—you have to have a four year degree. So to be a commissioned officer, you had to have a four year degree, and that's one of the reasons why I went warrant officer, though, because you have an age requirement too. They don't want real old lieutenants, I guess. [chuckles] But when I first applied for the Meritorious Commissioning Program, I was too old. By the time I got eligible, I would've been too—Because you couldn't be more than twenty-seven by the time you went into the commissioning program. And it's pretty—going through Officer Candidate School, and by the—you would reach a certain age by the time you got to colonel. So you had to have a four year degree and you had to be a certain age.

[The Meritorious Commissioning Program allows commanding officers to nominate highly qualified enlisted Marines in the regular Marine Corps and the Active Reserve Program, who do not possess a baccalaureate degree, and who have demonstrated exceptional leadership potential, for assignment to Officer Candidate School or subsequent commissioning in the Marine Corps]

And in enlisted ranks, you can enlist and you didn't have to have a degree. You had to have a high school education but you didn't have to have a degree, so I went in enlisted, and I'd only had that one year of college out at Pepperdine, and then I did a lot of college when I was in Hawaii. I had that good leadership and they made sure we went to school too. They were almost as strict as my mother [both chuckle]. But I went to college at University of Hawaii and stuff. So I had kept with my school and I kept up my college education, but the first time I put in for the commissioning program, they said I was too old. So the next year I applied for warrant officer and I wasn't selected. And then the third year—Now, a warrant officer is—you don't have to have a degree but you're selected based on your technical expert—your [unclear]—so you have to have at least ten years in as an enlisted person, and then they select you from a competitive field based on your technical skills. So you're rated against other people who are in the same field.

TS: Yeah, that's pretty neat, because it's, I think, confusing for some people to understand what—

LP: Yeah, the warrants are in between the commissioned and the enlisted, and you can—and after eighteen months, you become a chief warrant officer and then you're commissioned.

TS: At different levels. Up to five, right?

LP: Right, but you sit in between—

TS: Is it up to five, right?

LP: Up to five now. At the time I came in, there was only Chief Warrant Officer, Four, and they had limited duty officers, but now they actually have the rank of Chief Warrant Officer, Five. They've done away—limited duty officers, you would go to Chief Warrant Officer, Three, and a limited duty officer meant that you could become a commissioned officer—you could go to captain, lieutenant major, lieutenant colonel—but you were—you're restricted to a lieutenant colonel.

TS: Okay, so you can only go so high.

LP: You could only go so high in commissioned, and they did away with a lot of the fields in limited duty officer to save money for commission strength when we got cut backs. They always build us up and get numbers high for war and then you go through that painful draw down and structure cuts, which is so unfair.

TS: Which is coming up, right?

LP: Oh, yeah. We've been in the process now. We've cut some twenty thousand, I think.

TS: Oh my.

LP: Painful reductions.

TS: Well, how was it different for you, personally, to be a warrant officer then, once you finished your schooling for that? Did it change anything about the type of job you did, the supervisory level you had? Any of that?

LP: It did. I mean, I was now—Instead of working in a shop, I was now running a shop. So I had marines working for me, and I think that's the hardest learning curve, is you want to think you're a super sergeant and stuff and then all of a sudden you become a warrant officer. You're a super staff NCO and you're the best at what you did and you want to try to be—but leadership's a whole different—You've got to learn some humility and it takes a while.

When you're a brand new warrant officer, you think you know everything and you think you're the greatest thing since sliced bread and butter, and that you know everything and none of your marines are doing it right. [both chuckle] And you keep trying to tell them how to do it right. And then it takes a little while for you to learn humility and a few errors along the way, and to teach—Let them make their mistakes and guide them in doing it and not try to do everything yourself, because you'll be like, "Just give me that. I'll do it." No, you—now you're training them.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Let them fail so they can learn.

LP: Yeah, and you're a trainer and a leader. So that's the hardest adjustment, I think, is going from that. Because a lot of people in Officer Candidate School—and you know you're coming in to lead marines, but having been on the working end of it where you're a technical expert, you want it to be just right.

TS: Right, exactly.

LP: "I didn't get here—My reputation's on the line as well as yours," so you want to make sure that—So sometimes the biggest error is to say, "It's easier for me just to do it myself." When you're a young warrant officer, you want to do that.

TS: That's very interesting to think about it in that way. Sometimes, I guess, when you're in a managerial level, the trouble isn't really with the job, it's with that level of managing people and figuring out how to do that. Would you agree?

LP: And changing the—yeah—changing the mindset that you're no longer now—that your reputation isn't only on how well this job gets done, but also on what you share with these marines who are going to follow behind you. Because you're now training them to become the next warrant officers and the next—or the next pool of who's going to be the leadership, so if you don't teach them—and I wasn't as good as my sergeant major and my staff NCOs that trained me and my guys, but you had to have a little forgiveness in there, but also a little bit of expectations element. And that's a hard adjustment because, like I said, you've built all that time on your reputation because you're a hard worker and you do good work, and now to put your reputation in the hands of those you've trained is—

TS: Sure. It makes you pretty vulnerable in a way; you lose a little control.

LP: Oh, yeah.

TS: Yeah. That's interesting.

LP: Or accept a little responsibility. Lose control, or you're accepting responsibility not only for your own actions but for what your marines do.

TS: That's true.

LP: And that's hard to do because now you don't have as much control. [chuckles] And they'll do some silly things, let me tell you.

TS: Well, now, is this when you went to the amphibious ready groups, after you became a warrant officer?

[An amphibious ready group is a group of service members trained to complete amphibious operations using Navy warships, known as an amphibious task force, and a landing force comprised of U.S. Marine Corps members]

LP: I went to [Combined Arms Training Center] Camp Fuji, Japan.

TS: Okay.

LP: I went from Warrant Officer [Candidate] School—

TS: Oh, right here! Okay.

LP: Yeah, I went from Warrant Officer School and I did my personnel officer course training, and I went to Camp Fuji, Japan, and I was actually headed to [Marine Corps Base] Camp [Smedley D.] Butler [Okinawa, Japan], and Doug and I—We thought we were going to get to go on accompanied orders to Okinawa, and they said, "Just get over there and you'll be able to get your orders to accompany to Okinawa." Well, we thought we were going to spend three years on Okinawa, and in the middle, one of the civilians over at Camp Fuji—which is a beautiful mountain, gorgeous and just by Tokyo, below Tokyo. I don't know if you've ever seen Mount Fuji.

TS: I have not. Only in pictures.

LP: The Japanese have a famous saying that, "Everyone must climb Mount Fuji once but only fools climb it twice." Well, we were on the side of Mount Fuji. But Doug and I were headed to Okinawa and this civilian—the adjutant [military officer who acts as an administrative assistant to a senior officer] over there at Fuji got a job as the executive officer at Camp Zama [U.S. Army post in the cities of Zama and Sagamihara, Japan] so they needed somebody quick.

My orders got rerouted to Fuji, which was dependent restriction—restricted—so we had just left—We had spent thirty days of leave with our family in Ohio. We had put our car up on blocks in my grandmother's barn. We had the dog in the kennel. We got him all those shots to go to Japan, and that's that beautiful little Shetland Sheepdog, my Sheltie.

TS: Aw. Yeah.

LP: So Doug has his golf clubs. We shipped all that stuff to Okinawa. Put all—Sold our house; put all of our stuff in storage. We get to Chicago O'Hare airport, and we're at Chicago O'Hare and they said, "Your orders got changed."

TS: Oh my gosh. You're all ready to go? I mean, you're on your way.

LP: We were on our way. We're flying to Okinawa, and they said, "Your orders got changed to Camp Fuji."

And so, we're like, "What do we do?"

They said, "Well, you can bring your husband." My sponsor said, "Just drop him off here in Okinawa and when you get over to Fuji—Once we hire somebody, you can come back to Okinawa."

Doug's like, "Don't drop me off on some island with a bunch of marines."

So he went back; we rented a car. And I'm in—We're in the airport in Chicago. We went over to Glenview Naval Air Station. We figured it all out. We said, "Okay, we'll rent a car." He went back and was staying with his mom, and this was in September. So finally, by December I said, "Okay. Come on over here." He came over and he stayed from December to February, and we went to see Hiroshima and Kyoto and went and visited around and he visit—He came over and visited for a while and we finally figured out, "Tell us where we're going next."

And they said, "Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, is the only place that we can get you." So he went over here. He came to North Carolina, found a house. So when I came home we'd have a place.

TS: How far ahead of time did you know that you were going to come to Camp Lejeune?

LP: Well, six months.

TS: Six months. Okay.

LP: Well, they changed me to a one year; instead of a three year tour, they changed it to a one year tour.

TS: Oh, right. Because it was unaccompanied?

LP: Yeah, so—Well, we were going to do an accompanied over there, we thought, but somehow communication—

TS: Wow. Like, that is totally last minute order change for sure.

LP: Yeah, and I think the problem was, though, you're the brand new warrant officer and you need somebody who can fill a GS-13 [General Schedule; the predominant pay scale for federal employees] job as an adjutant, and you're the new warrant officer coming in. Talk about fire—what do you call that?

TS: Trial by fire.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

LP: Trial by fire. Throw you right into being an adjutant of a camp with infantry guys. It was all infantry officers and I'm a brand new warrant officer. I'm like, "Please don't let me mess this up." [chuckles]

TS: How'd you do?

LP: I did well. I got promoted again, so.

TS: Well, you had talked a little bit, before we turned the tape on, about how your promotions went for you. Do you want to talk about that for a second?

LP: I don't want to sound—All my promotions—

TS: You can brag, Lisa.

LP: I know. I will say again, this is Sergeant Major Eslinger[?], [unclear]—

TS: The guy from Hawaii?

LP: Yeah, my Hawaii leadership and Sergeant Stump and all those guys, is that I had every promotion meritoriously because—and I think they learned that leadership from early on, that you set your goals, and even from now I've always been a goal-oriented person and I did things with purpose. But all of my enlisted ranks, I was meritorious—PFC [Private First Class], lance corporal, corporal, sergeant, accelerated staff sergeant. So I [unclear] selected to staff sergeant, and then in [unclear] when I got picked up for warrant officer, and then I got promoted all the way to Chief Warrant Officer, Five, which is the highest you can go without ever getting that degree.

TS: That's right.

LP: So if I had just paid more attention to my education. [both chuckle] But now I'm getting my master's, so.

TS: That's right. Well, still, Warrant Officer, Five is pretty darn impressive, I think.

LP: Yeah, it is.

TS: Alright, so you come back to Lejeune and then what happens? What kind of work are you doing now?

LP: When I came back to Lejeune, I was with 2nd Supply Battalion. I was still a pretty young warrant officer earning my wings.

TS: Okay. Yeah, well, you got a good trial there.

LP: Yeah. So I went to 2nd Supply Battalion and, again, I had great leadership there. My XO [executive officer] guided me well and taught me some good lessons, like, working long hours does not mean working effective hours; teaching me more of those next level skills of, you've got to be organized and planned and effective as well as dedicated. [chuckles]

TS: Right, right.

LP: So being more structured and organized and having—be more planning-focused on what I was doing. I always remember that. He was a good XO.

And then I got—went up to be the group personnel officer, and when I went to the group personnel, I had the opportunity—right when women were starting to be—when they opened up women to go into the Marine Expeditionary Unit—and the first ship went out with two of the girls who I deployed with, Julie Mathis and Priss—Priscilla, two lieutenants. They were lieutenants at that time, then got promoted to captain, and it was really an opportunity—

TS: Priscilla Papkie[?].

LP: Papkie, yeah. It was really an opportunity for me at the time because you got to experience what was so important to the Marine Corps doctrine at the time. And you know I loved the history and I love the organiz—knowing—from the Chosin Frozen and the Marine Corps Coordinating Counsel, I loved to hear the stories and understand what the whole big picture was about.

TS: So this was more into the warrior culture?

LP: It was. And not even that, but into the Marine Corps philosophy of war fighting.

TS: Okay.

LP: And you really can't understand it until you are out with a Marine Corps Expeditionary Unit, or for a deployed unit, where you see how those integrated pieces come together to do operations and exercises. You can't always see them from the office, but to get out there on an expeditionary unit or an exercise or in an actual—we did—our MEU [Marine Expeditionary Unit] did the noncombatant evacuation operations in Sierra Leone, which were the largest since the Fall of Saigon.

[The Fall of Saigon was the capture of Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, by the People's Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (known as the Việt Cộng) on 30 April 1975]

So we did—you can see how that—and there's one thing between knowledge and—don't want to sound like [Carl Philipp Gottfried von] Clausewitz [Prussian general and military theorist who stressed the "moral" and political aspects of war] here—there's

one thing about learning about things and experience. To be able to see how it works, and how they do ship-to-shore maneuvers, and splashing the track out of the back of a—there's a difference, just the experience of it.

TS: Right. Absolutely.

LP: So that was such a privilege.

TS: Tell me about the actual experience, then, for you.

LP: I would say it was something you couldn't replace, as far as understanding and seeing marines and what they do, and forever I will believe in the marines and the mission and what they do for other countries and—from my experience there.

I mentioned earlier, marines and missionaries, you're going to find them in the most needy places in the world. Whether there's an earthquake—I mean, my work in Haiti isn't—my unit, the 22nd MEU that later went down and responded to the earthquake and stuff. So I think beyond war you have a greater appreciation for what it means to be—what the partnership for peace and those things mean.

TS: Interesting. Well, what ship did you get to go on?

LP: I was on the USS *Austin*, the USS *Carter Hall*, the USS *Kearsarge* and [chuckles]—

TS: That's a good list there.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

LP: I think those were the primary ones. The *Carter Hall*—Yeah. And the *Austin*. The *Austin* was the oldest one in the fleet, and for a woman, the worst part of being on a ship is the smell of men [chuckles]. My mother-in-law used to always send me these little girl mag—you know the—

TS: With the perfumes in them?

LP: *Women's Day* [magazine] and the perfume [sniffs], and I'd just say, "Thanks, mom."

TS: What a great idea.

LP: Yeah. And some of the wives—Nikki[?] and stuff—they would send me Bed, Bath and Beyond [an American-owned chain of domestic merchandise retail stores] type things.

TS: Right. All smell nice.

LP: Like, "You need this." Yeah.

TS: So you were on the Mediterranean? The Black and Adriatic Seas, is what it says here.

LP: We did. We did Black Sea Ops [Operations]. We were in the Adriatic for—this was during the Balkans—that time in the Balkans there—and we were actually in—We went into Albania—into Albania there—and Macedonia, and then the Mediterranean. The marines are always in the Mediterranean. That's our—That's our mission, so we're forward deployed. One MEUs coming home, the other one's going out, so we were twenty—always deployed in the Med [Mediterranean].

TS: And how many months were you deployed?

LP: We would do—We would go out for six months and back, and then out for six months, so.

TS: So you were on, like, on and off deployments coming back to Lejeune?

LP: There's three Marine Expeditionary Units on East Coast. So you have one preparing to go out, one deployed, one coming home. You're in a continuous cycle.

TS: Oh, I see, so it's a cycle of three.

LP: Yeah, we have 22nd, 24th and 26th.

TS: Okay.

LP: And then the West Coast has 11th, 13th, 15th. And then there's one in Okinawa. So we have a continuous presence forward for the Marine Corps.

TS: Okay. And so, that was during the Balkan era of conflict?

LP: Yeah. Operation Joint Guard, Joint Forge, Joint Endeavor.

TS: Were you ever afraid? I mean, did you have any fears?

LP: No. You train so much as a marine. I mean, you do at the point—I can remember one of the young lieutenants, first time they took fire coming over there, he had his face all painted, went to bed with his face painted, like just was—came in so excited and just nervous. I don't think I was ever really fear—I had more fear a lot of times in Japan than I did with the MEU.

TS: Oh, yeah? Why?

LP: Because a MEU is so well structured, organized, and trained. They get special operation qualified before they go out, and you train and you train and you train. And I think a lot of people don't understand that when they go out there, they just don't go out to war; that

there's a lot of work-ups [predeployment training] and there's a lot of training, and that even when they're home, they're not home. They go to [Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center] Twentynine Palms, California to train; they're in the field.

You could be at home and spend five days away from home because you're out there training in the field, and making sure that those arms and the weapons and the training and the tactics and strategy are all just perfect, so that when you have to execute a mission, if somebody's life depends on you in an embassy, you're going to execute exactly as you were trained.

TS: Right. Now, did you go through all the field exercises too?

LP: I did. [chuckles]

TS: Did you have a weapon that you had to carry all the time?

LP: I carried—At that time, I carried a Beretta 9-millimeter pistol and I got—I actually—my friend that you met earlier, my other warrant officer, she was a weapons officer so she got me a nice leather—a soft leather one out of the armory—

TS: A holster?

LP: A holster that I could wear—

TS: Up high?

LP: Yeah. Women need to find a nice place that it works right for them sometimes, because the men can strap it—

TS: You can't just put it on your breasts. [chuckles]

LP: That's right. And it has to work to a women's body. So I always slept with it and I'd have it here—this was my—

TS: Okay. Interesting.

LP: She got me a nice leather one that was soft that I could work smaller to—she had me hooked up so I could—But, yeah, I had a 9-millimeter and I still have it.

TS: Do you?

LP: I bought—Yeah. As you can see, I have many weapons in my house.

TS: You don't want to make a wrong move here, no. [both chuckle]. No, it's wonderful.

LP: Yeah, growing up a hunter and my husband making his own—

TS: So you were always comfortable with shooting, then?

LP: Yeah.

TS: I suppose if you're out there with elk and getting lost in the woods in Colorado where there's lots of dangerous animals.

LP: Yeah.

TS: Alright. So then you transferred out of that to [Marine Corps Air Station] New River [North Carolina] in '99, and you went to the Osprey Squadron?

LP: I did. The Marine Corps' very first MV-22 Osprey Squadron; first one in the Marine Corps.

TS: Now, what was your responsibility there?

LP: I was the personnel officer but I also did the manpower, so we were building a lot of the troop lists and stuff, and we were transitioning from the CH-46, the Sea Knight [helicopter], into the MV-22, which is the Marine Corps' new tiltrotor [aircraft which uses one or more powered rotors to give it more speed and range than a helicopter].

TS: And what do they use that for? What do they use the Osprey for?

LP: It is troop—It's transport—combat transport and lift. They're medium-lift [refers to the weight the aircraft can carry]. You have the Sea Stallion—the CH-53 Sea Stallion—that's our heavy-lift—but the MV-22 Osprey, if you go back to the Iranian hostage crisis, we've needed—The Marine Corps has always needed it because some of the missions we do, lives depend on being able to get in and get out fast—when you're doing special operations or when you're doing non-combatant evacuation operations, rescue operations—So the Osprey can hover like a helicopter and come down on top of a building, and then it can get out of town fast like a plane.

TS: Right. So it can [unclear] purpose there.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

LP: So it can transition and get you home quick. And it also can extend your range, so you can be sitting offshore and reach deeper into countries than we could before with our range; faster, timewise.

TS: Didn't they have some accidents with the Ospreys for a little while?

LP: They did, and I was—I was a casualty officer.

TS: Oh, was this when you had to process some of the casualties?

LP: Right. I was a casualty officer for both the one in Marana, Arizona—we had a—and this was before I came here to New River but I was already with the MV-22. Before we got an Osprey here we had—Our marines were the ones still doing the testing and evaluation, and so we had a crew that was coming to us at New River that was training out in Marana, Arizona, that crashed. Which is where—Marana is the airport where the first Air Force One plane was—the first ever Air Force One—

TS: It was built there or—

LP: It was—It's inaugural—I think it was—let me—

TS: Like, it took off from there?

LP: Yeah, they did the big unveiling. You know how they do introduction of the first Air Force One aircraft there, but it was at Marana.

But yeah, we had a very tragic accident out there with nineteen that we lost in Marana, and then we had one here in December of 2000, and that was four; we had two pilots and two crew on that one.

TS: Okay. Yeah.

LP: And that's tough times. It was a tough, tough year. I think, total, we lost twenty-three that year in different—it was like nonstop. Well, that was—those ones, and then we had a motorcycle accident and one of a—great, great man just died of the flu. One of our pilots, a young major, fit as can be, and had a bad case of the flu and it got in his lungs and—

TS: Pneumonia?

LP: Yeah. It just seemed like a nonstop year. It's one of those years that really try your team, and that's when you find each other too. But it was—yeah, tough, tough years. But you know what? Every now—every day, those Ospreys fly over my house.

TS: Oh, do they?

LP: And I see them in combat. I'll see them on the news and stuff, and I say, "These people did—It's because of them." Because we needed it.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Right. That it works now.

LP: Yeah, and we needed technology. You can't rely on Vietnam era technology to win wars today and stuff, and so if you don't—if you don't, you put—But it's not without a price. It's not without a price.

TS: That's right. Now, so you would have been there when 9/11 happened.

LP: I was. I was actually flying to Kansas City that day.

TS: Were you?

LP: All of the administrators were headed to the Marine Corps Total Force System conference in Kansas City, Missouri, and my plane hadn't left yet. A lot of my younger warrant officers had gone before me out to the conference in Kansas City. This is where we determine all of the pay problems and work out all the logistics of administration. Administration is an important field in the Marine Corps because you're not only doing pay but you're doing all this manpower, and how are you going to source a war when you're running a war on two fronts in Iraq and Afghanistan? It gets tough.

So we had headed out to the MCTFS conference and I had work to do; I'm a workaholic some days. But I was taking a later flight and some of my marines ended up in Canada. They got—

TS: Oh, diverted.

LP: Yeah. They were diverted and they ended up—and some had already gone to Kansas [City] and some of us hadn't left. So I was actually headed over to the air station and I heard it on the radio and I went into the Marine Corps air excha—to the exchange over at the Marine Corps air station and I just went to the TV department and just stood there and watched it like—We're like, "Yeah. Yeah."

TS: When did you know you weren't going anywhere? I mean, to fly.

LP: Oh, oh. I immediately went back to the office. I was—didn't even consider—The priorities of the day just changed. I wasn't going to a conference today. I was waiting for word. Okay, now what?

TS: Do you think that there's a Marine Corps before 9/11 and a Marine Corps after, as far as—

LP: I don't—I didn't really see a difference. The biggest difference we've had—because like I said, marines have been in the terrorist business since 1983, and probably before. I mean, we were already on peacekeeping when Beirut got bombed. We've been nose-to-nose with terrorists since October of '83; 23 October '83, they were on our unliked—They came off of our Christmas card list. [chuckles]

TS: Right.

LP: But the biggest difference that I have seen since 9/11 is Homeland Security makes it difficult. You can't get, like—You can't get on base without ID [identification] card checks. In our own base we have to run security, where we never felt insecure on our own base. And the community—There's a bigger wall between our community and the base, because we used to have the Fourth of July—

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Was it an open base before?

LP: No, it wasn't open but—

TS: Well, there were some open bases and things like that. You could just drive right through them.

LP: Yeah. We weren't—Oh, they could. The civilians, they could drive right through. If you were going to Sneads Ferry down the coast, you could come in the back gate and you could go to work. They'd let you pass through. You say, "I'm just going down [Highway] 172," and you could get a pass through base. You can't get a pass through base anymore.

TS: Right.

LP: But there's more of that, that sometimes it seems like it's tougher for—we could have concerts and Fourth of July fireworks.

TS: Invite in the community.

LP: Invite in the community and we could do stuff. Now the cycle is so brutal. I mean, these poor marines. They go out for a year or six months, and they come home for six months, and they go out and their families are just—It's a hard cycle they're going through right now. And fifteen years of it, isn't it now? Fifteen years of trying to keep a family together with young kids. And that's the biggest change I've seen is that homeland effect; what's happening at home.

TS: Well, you're getting close to twenty years. Could you have retired soon after this?

LP: I could have. I could have, but by the time I could have retired, we were in the middle of a war and it was not going to be a retirement time.

TS: There's no way you were going to do that.

LP: I could have but—

TS: But you didn't want to.

LP: No. No. And there's—I probably would have stayed thirty but I got just to the point where my bones—

TS: [chuckles]

LP: I was really having some injuries in my bones because I got osteoporosis real bad.

TS: Oh, yeah. That's going to hurt you.

LP: Yeah. That did.

TS: Well, you and your husband got to go back to Japan?

LP: We—I went back.

TS: Just you?

LP: Yeah. Yeah, in fact—And, actually, it wasn't my turn to go back to Japan, but with all the stuff that was going on, and some people fell out of their rotation to go back to Japan, I went back to Japan for a year.

TS: Oh, so it was just another year.

LP: Yeah.

TS: Okay.

LP: Just a one year. I just went on one year unaccompanied, because by that time I had just come off the MEU and—

TS: Right. And you hadn't seen your husband that much anyhow, right?

LP: No, and I didn't think we were deploying again, and all of a sudden I get orders to Japan. I'm thinking, "So back to Japan."

TS: Yeah. How was it that second time?

LP: And that actually was a good tour. That's—I was a little bit older and it wasn't my first real year separation from Doug.

TS: It was like a ten year difference, I guess.

LP: Yeah. And the—What was I going to say? I got into the Marine Corps martial arts program. I actually got my tan belt, my green belt, my grey belt, and my brown belt. So I really got into the martial arts program.

TS: All in a year?

LP: Yeah. I did all of my martial arts training and started my black belt, and I rode my bike, and I went—So I just kept that focus and get through the tour and—It was a good tour though.

TS: What was it that made it a good tour?

LP: I got to work with the MEF, and that's where I first met one of my bosses—

TS: You got to work with the what?

LP: The Marine Expeditionary Force up there, and one of the—again, leadership. One of the lieutenant colonels there, who I didn't work for directly at the time but who later I would work for at the division when we went to Iraq and Afghanistan, he went forward as a G-1 [Administration and Personnel staff section] and I worked from the rear; from the base back here feeding people to the forward. I think it was a time when I learned a higher level again. At each step, you learn different levels of management that helped prepare me for what was coming up for me in Iraq and Afghanistan, managing manning documents. Because I—Earlier, I would have never been able to do that, but having that one year out there where I learned a Marine Expeditionary Force level, a next higher one and what it was composed of, prepared me for that next one.

TS: Right. So then when you left there you—Let's see. Where'd you go? You went back to New River, or went to New River?

LP: Yeah. I came back to New River for a short time and then was transferred over into the 2nd Marine Division.

TS: Is that the [Marine Corps Air Station] Cherry Point [North Carolina]?

LP: I went to Cherry Point—

TS: Oh, here, I see it. And back to Camp Lejeune.

LP: Yeah. Yeah, I went up to Cherry Point for just a year to backfill a marine who had gone forward to Iraq. When war happens you move a lot to—

TS: You get plugged around.

LP: Yeah.

TS: And you're a small force so you don't—It's not like you have a lot of extra people sitting around [chuckles].

LP: There is no fat on this force, that's for sure; we're trim. But yeah, I went to backfill a CWO 5 [Chief Warrant Officer 5] who went out to Iraq and I went up to Cherry Point. And then when he was coming back, they brought me down here to 2nd Marine Division. And that was probably one of the points where I almost retired because I had a massive operation and—hip-to-hip, cut me open—and that one—I didn't know if I could continue on and I didn't want to accept that next promotion to CWO 5 if I couldn't—

TS: If you couldn't keep going.

LP: —if I couldn't fill the duties in that. And so, that's—I almost retired then but I recovered. And I was like, "Okay. I'm going to be okay so I can do this." And I came down to 2nd Marine Division, to G-1, and worked manning documents. And manning documents is working—who's going to fill what—It's working the force forward in Afghanistan and Iraq. What billets—

TS: That are going to need to be filled and how many.

LP: Yeah. Individual augments, and trying to find those right people, because we were doing things—not necessarily Marine Corps admissions like finding people to do governance—to build governments. [chuckles] We're not usually in the governance business but we are, so we had governance on there and police forces. We had to train the Iraqi police and the Afghanistan National Army. We're training armies and training police to try to take care of and defend themselves, and that's not something that's easy, and you have to recruit from your reserves and find police officers, who may be a state trooper in Ohio, like my young nephew. He's in the Army National Guard but he's a state trooper too. You have to find that right people to go out and teach them not only to be—to defend their own country but also to be police forces and governments.

TS: Interesting. Wow.

LP: Yeah. So all those pieces. And they come from all over the place. We had state senators. We had business people. We had chaplains.

TS: So you're pulling a lot of that from the reserves?

LP: Yes, and civil affairs. A lot of it from your civil affairs group and the reserves because not only do the reserves understand marines—

TS: So it's not all military? Civilians too?

LP: Civil affairs—they're not—We had some civilians. Specialized.

TS: Okay. But just civil affairs military.

LP: But they're all—do pre-deployment training, and the only ones who are going into combat roles are ones who are military or federal trained services.

TS: Right. I understand.

LP: But yeah, that was—so that was probably my most challenging, besides—Emotionally, the Osprey Squadron was the most challenging with the—going through that introduction of a new aircraft and such tragedy in one year, but physically and work-wise, 2nd Marine Division G-1 Operations was challenging. And even though I was sitting here at Camp Lejeune, there were some days—fourteen, eighteen hour days trying to figure out one guy who's going to fill this billet.

TS: This is 2006 to 2009, so that's at the height of a lot of activity in the war, right?

LP: Yeah. Just around the surge time, and 2nd Marine Division, we were rotating with the West Coast, the 1st Marine Division, 2nd Marine Division, bringing in reserve units, recruiting out the—we brought in whole—We called back some people who had been out two or three years, and we had to bring them back out of the ready reserves, the stand by. You did your four, six years and you think you're safe and you get that, "Welcome back to Camp Lejeune." That's not always a happy call.

TS: No, I'm sure not. They're trying to get on with their life.

LP: Yeah, and they're in the middle of college or they got this great job and they just got called back and that's hard. That's a hard call, yeah.

TS: Yeah. Well, did you go to Iraq or Afghanistan?

LP: I did not.

TS: But you're helping to set all the tools in place and manage the people.

LP: I was—Yeah. I worked, I would say, the rotation—

TS: The chessboard? [chuckles]

LP: Yeah. Exactly. That's a good way to put it. But trying to fill to make sure that they have exactly what they need forward, as far as manpower, that they have—If somebody came home on emergency leave—because things happen; bad things happen at home and at war. There's things that happen here and you got a wife, you need to bring somebody home. Well, I've got to backfill that marine who left or—

TS: There's constant flow, both directions, right?

LP: Oh, yeah, there is. And there's constant need and there's changing needs. You don't go there with one game plan and think it's not going to change, because it's very—"Yes, I told you I only needed ten yesterday. I need a whole battalion today." [chuckles]

TS: Right. Okay.

LP: Where are we going to find it? We've got a new game plan.

TS: That's right, because you're getting your orders from everywhere, for what's coming down.

LP: But being manpower, you also have to keep the human side. When's the last time—It's not just a number, it's a name there. It's, when's the last time this marine went out and has he had enough—

TS: Break between.

LP: —and is—who's due? It's not just even about fairness, but the right person at the right time. I had one lance corporal came back and a week later he said, "My mom said I can go back." [chuckles] He wanted to waive his dwell time [the amount of time that service members spend in their home station between deployments to war zones].

I said, "What would your mother say if I sent you back over?"

And he came back in my office and he said, "I called my mom. She said it's okay. I can go back."

I said, "You're not going back. Go back to your unit." He was ready to go right back over.

TS: Yeah. Well, it was probably hard to transition, I'm sure.

LP: From combat to back. Yeah.

TS: Yeah. I would imagine. I can't imagine at all. Not a single bit.

So then your last assignment, your final one before you retired, you want to describe it?

LP: It's a Marine Corps Administrative Analysis Team, and we're—we have two teams; we had at the time; now they only have one. But we had a West Coast and an East Coast and I had everything east of the Mississippi [River]—our team, the East Coast team—everything east of the Mississippi, Germany, Europe, Puerto Rico. Then we did—we were—I don't want to say auditors—that makes us sound like the IRS [Internal Revenue Service]—but we would administrate and assist and we'd inspect the payroll to make sure marines were getting paid right, to make sure that money was being—

TS: Like a quality control, sort of?

LP: Right. But mostly to make sure that marines were getting taken care of. If they were in combat and they got combat pay; if they were wounded, that they got the right entitlements. We spent a lot of our times out at reserve centers and travelling up and down—I've driven this coast from north to south—the whole East Coast—many a time.

TS: Oh, that's right. You said you spent a lot of time just on the road.

LP: Yeah. Our teams would be three hundred days a year on—in travel. And they're always in a white van, driving with the camera on you; government van with the camera, driving up and down the coast. It wasn't like you could take a nap [both chuckle] and stop for lunch. You just—

TS: Keep going.

LP: You were government inspectors.

TS: So you're being scrutinized as well.

LP: Oh, yeah. And you got to be—You've got—If you're not the model then you're not the inspector.

TS: That's very true.

LP: We didn't take a plane if we could drive cheaper.

TS: Gotcha.

LP: So unless gas prices were high, we weren't flying anywhere. We wanted gas prices to go up so we could fly sometimes and stop driving to Florida—drive to Miami every other week.

TS: No, thank you. I get it. You decided to retire then?

LP: I did. I retired in 2010.

TS: Two thousand ten. Now, how was that transition from twenty-eight years in the Marine Corps to the civilian world?

LP: Yeah. I found a mission in the church and—

TS: Oh, yeah. Did it happen quickly though? I mean, was that transition really that easy?

LP: It was more I had to have a mission, and they asked me if I'd go to Haiti, and it was hard to say no having seen places that needed America to be America, needed marines to be marines, needed missionaries. And so, I went down there. I spent about four years, and not just Haiti, but doing mission work with the church, and I became the mission chair and stuff.

And went back to school. Finally got back to college, got my Bachelor's done. I finally got that degree. I called my best friend and said, "I got my degree." I finally did it.

TS: How do you think your life is different because you signed up for the Marine Corps when your husband was supposed to go in the army?

LP: Yeah. We would have never thought that we'd be here thirty years later, but now we had our thirty-third anniversary and we're still in the marines and we love it here. This is home now to us. And it's hard because we're both from Ohio, we grew up there, we went to school together, but this is now home. And he's worked here in the community.

TS: What do you think would have happened if you hadn't joined the Marine Corps?

LP: I have no idea.

TS: It's hard to say?

LP: Yeah, and I don't—I mean, my family is all there, and I've got four or five of them now work for Ohio State University. I've come and gone.

TS: I have to pay attention to that when we have the football games now [both chuckle].

LP: Yeah, yeah. Actually, one works for OSU [Ohio State University] Athletics right there—But I think we would have stayed around home and got jobs, and I don't know that I would have ever finished college.

TS: Yeah. Maybe not, yeah.

LP: Yeah.

TS: When you went in, in 1982, then you went out in 2010, how do you think that the roles of women, or attitudes for women being in just the Marine Corps, from your experience—not just in general from the historic perspective—but from your experience, did you see any changes?

LP: It was hard because I never—I always, sort of, integrated well before I was even in—being a soccer player from a young age sort of—and I think that's a lot due to my parents. That never made me say, "This is your role as a girl." My father actually went to the city council and said, "Hey, I got four girls. What sport do you have for them?"

TS: He was advocating for young girls, even at a young age.

LP: Yeah. And even in the military, I never felt like—now, there was some policy things, like in funny things like having to wear high heel shoes and skirts when you're in a formation of uniforms. I mean, I wore skirts when I go to church, go out with my husband. I'd liked wearing skirts, but then you get out on a wet field where your heels are sinking into the mud and you have to—But when I came in, you weren't—didn't wear slacks. You wore a skirt and pumps.

TS: All the time?

LP: All the time. And I was driving for—I'm trying to drive as a driver and I'm kicking—you're a girl—you'd kick off your shoe under there because your heels getting stuck on there. "Now, you want me to be a good driver or do you want me to look nice?" [both chuckle] It's sort of that—It was that just odd sense because you knew that in those days women were expected to wear skirts because it was considered the more formal, proper thing to do when you were in a uniform. But it wasn't a uniform; it wasn't uniform with the men. They issued us all these slacks and you couldn't wear them.

TS: Right, right. But were you happy to see that policy change?

LP: It hasn't really; we still have the skirts and they've hardly changed at all. Now they're allowed to wear their slacks and stuff. But it's just funny that we still pay money for skirts—for a military skirt.

TS: Because I guess the jobs that you're doing aren't necessarily appropriate for that kind of wear.

LP: Yeah.

TS: But some of them are, I guess; some of them probably are. Well, would you recommend the service to young women today?

LP: Oh, yes. Yeah. This morning I just met a girl, we were doing the Hope for the Warriors run and we had all the marines out there and stuff, and there was a young marine, her name was Sam, she was out of Tennessee, and she just got out of boot camp and she's waiting to pick up her school over at Camp Johnson, and I was like, "I remember that was me back—"

[Hope For The Warriors is a national nonprofit organization in the U.S. that provides assistance to combat wounded service members, their families, and families of those killed in action]

But there's so much more opportunity and stuff. Now, there's some tough—and I would say policy should not—they should not put these women—force them by policy to do things, because there are things you can open to them but sometimes you can put them in bad spots.

TS: Are you talking about the issue of combat?

LP: Yeah. Because—To be in infantry, you've got to go through infantry training, and one of the girls I just met, she graduated. She was one of the few who got through and graduated well in infantry combat training. It's not that you can't do it, but what are you doing to the

women who fail a formal school and don't graduate? Not everybody can do those physical standards of that, and there is a difference. Like, when we run PFTs [Physical Fitness Tests], you don't run male times—I mean, I just watched the Hope for the Warriors; the top male finisher for today came in at nineteen, the top female finisher came in at twenty-one.

TS: Right:

LP: It's different, a little bit.

TS: Well, there's age times, too, right?

LP: Oh, there is. And that—the girl you met earlier, Daria[?], she finished third in the master's [division?]. Over forty, you're in the master's.

TS: Good job.

LP: We don't call it age, we call it master's. We're mastering the literature.

[Speaking Simultaneously]

TS: Mastery. Sorry. I'll have to change that on my form here.

LP: Remember, we're mastering the literature.

TS: That's right. That's right. Back to the combat issue, because it's so hot right now, do you think that if a woman can do it, she should be allowed to do it?

LP: I think if a commander needs a woman and she can do that job, the commander should be able to put—I can show you in there where I was—

TS: What if the commander just needs a marine and a woman can do the job?

LP: Fine.

TS: That's fine?

LP: But it shouldn't be policy driven.

TS: What do you mean by that? Like, "We need ten women and forty guys." You mean like that? It's just, like, the best marine for the job?

LP: Here's the thing, is that, you shouldn't say you need to put women into marine combat training, necessarily, because you put some at a disadvantage, not so much an advantage,

is that if you have 10% who can do the job, what about the 90%. You've still got to qualify and you've still got to—It's like if you went in unqualified on the range. It's going to give you a bad record. You want to grow marines and put them where they're going to best serve. So if you have somebody who can do the job. And I'll give you the perfect example: women weren't allowed on aircraft carriers, but when you have to change out keying material and you just had a spy compromise all your things, you're going to take that female, make her a—when I served counterintelligence, women couldn't—I couldn't hold the MOS at counterintelligence because it was a male restricted one. But I could go aboard and do the job of changing it out.

TS: So you did the job, you just didn't have the MOS for it?

LP: Right. I couldn't hold the MOS—but I couldn't hold the MOS because that MOS had to be trained to do forward deployment combat skills, which—

TS: So you couldn't deploy in the job but you could do it outside of that parameter, right?

LP: Yeah. There were pieces of it I could do, like communications security or crypto—maintaining crypto files, stuff like that. But they could employee me there and I could help the counterintelligence community because I had the skill sets to do it. It doesn't mean I should be put forward and put my life in jeopardy because I'm not trained to do what they're trained to do.

TS: Right. I understand.

LP: Yeah. And I just think sometimes that you put—You try to make good decisions about equality but then you hurt—You put them at a disadvantage sometimes. I was trying to think of another—That's the one thing that I always felt bad, though, is because, physically, the standards for infantry are very tough. And you've seen the news probably, of the two army rangers that have done it.

TS: Three.

LP: Three now. And they—you can tell that they are very physically able to do it, but there are maybe—what percentage that may fail that course. Because they're not going to say, "You're a woman who can do it."

When you get to boot camp, they go, "Admin, Admin, Admin. I need two of those. I need one comm [communications]. I need this." You're going to plug a billet, and what if you get selected for infantry and you're not that 50% who can.

TS: Maybe the selection process should be fixed and select the people who go through a different type of testing process rather than just taking the test.

LP: The recruiting.

TS: Maybe there's a physical test you take that's different that puts you in a different field. I don't have the answers. I'm not pretending. [chuckles]

LP: Oh, yeah, it's tough. And I mean, I think women should have every opportunity to do anything that they can. I never looked at myself—It's funny, because the only time I really felt really obvious that I was a woman was when we were on the ship—when I said we were one of the first ones—and they'd come around, they'd give the Japanese and people would come tour our ship, and they'd knock on my stateroom, "And here's one of our females." Like you're a part of the tour.

TS: Right, right. Exactly.

LP: Or when we went to cold weather training—

TS: So you're kind of like a token?

LP: Yeah. Well, not—

TS: Token as far as being a woman on a ship, not as far as the job you did.

LP: An anomaly. Like you're an anomaly instead of—Yeah. But another place was in cold weather training at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, and you had to build those ice huts and you had to live in them. Well, I was the only female so I didn't have a buddy. Usually they made sure you didn't get hypothermia. So I'm over here in this separate little women's camp all by myself. I have my own little thing, by myself at night, and every now and then a guard would come to make sure—

TS: Check you're alright?

LP: Yeah. But I couldn't be in the bivouac [an improvised camp site or shelter that is usually of a temporary nature] area, the male designated area, so if you're in that weird transition period where you're one of one, and you don't have—you get cut from you unit because of your—

TS: So you get kind of isolated?

LP: So not only did they integrate but they segregated us too. They said, "We're going to put women out to cold weather training because we're going to send you to Norway."

And then all of the sudden I find myself in Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, by myself. I'm like, "Is this integration or is this—I'm over here in the women's camp."

It does cause hardship, too, because the engineers now have to build a women's facilities. You get out there and you're, "Okay, this is where women go." So you go over there and privacy—

TS: Some studies have shown that some of the—I think one of the good ones has been done on—to reconfigure cockpits for women, has also helped for men that are of smaller

profiles, so then they are able to now qualify. Certain ethnicities and things fit a smaller stature. So they say that as they design them, they figured out that it's not just helping women, it's actually helping men in a different way that they never really thought of.

LP: Yeah. And there is a difference—there is a change in the family structure, if I can say it that way, but the dynamics, when you have male and female units, that that family structure becomes less fraternal and more of a—I don't want to say that—but it becomes a very—much more a family type structure, if that makes any sense.

TS: Yes. Well, I think some people have described how, like, the guys in their unit treat them like a sister.

LP: That's what I mean; more of a family instead of just like a fraternity organization.

TS: Right.

LP: It's when you throw a female in it you have in there not only—I used to tell them, "If I wanted to be a mother, I would have had my own kids" because sometimes you feel like, sort of, a mother/child, too, as you get older. When you're a Chief Warrant Officer 5 it's like, "Don't call me mom, it's ma'am." [chuckles]

TS: That's right.

LP: But it's more of a family. That's what I'm trying to say. It's more of a family structure.

TS: I understand the point you're making, yeah.

LP: And there's—And it helps some because you get some who struggle too. And there's some who don't want to look weak to their male counterparts.

TS: Okay. So they'll come talk to you.

LP: Well, who will be less guarded and say, "Yeah, I'm just really depressed today." And in a time like this when you're in fifteen year—fifteen years of rotations and combat, you got to find a little bit of softness even in the male heart, or the female.

TS: Right.

LP: And that it's—because you live in a special, special culture where courage is tested daily. These kids go out there and—just to live in fear. When you get in combat and to live in fear and then come home, you've got to be able—And we even see it with—in peace time. When we had the Osprey crashes, sometimes you got to cry. But you've always got to—we always say, "Mission first, marines always."

TS: Right.

LP: That you got to have that, and I think that adds a little bit to it, where you have that feminine interjection in there that makes it a little bit more of a family structure than just—but it's good. It's a good structure.

TS: Well, let me ask you about another topic that, actually, totally changed the whole time that you were in. In '82 when you came in there was no policy like "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." It was just if you're found out to be a homosexual, you got kicked out. And then, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" came in, in '94, and then it was removed. Was it just after you got out or just before you got out? I can't actually remember the year it was removed.

["Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was the official U.S. policy on military service by gays, bisexuals, and lesbians. The policy prohibited military personnel from discriminating against or harassing closeted homosexual or bisexual service members, while barring openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual person from military service. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was repealed 20 September 2011.]

LP: It was after; just after.

TS: Just after. What do you think about that whole idea of homosexuality in the military?

LP: And I would say, again, it's policy that—we all—It's the official policy that was there because we always knew. I mean, there has always been that unwritten understanding that—who you are. You live with these people.

TS: You mean, like, you know you're working with gays and lesbians?

LP: Oh, yeah. And not only that, but there was always an unofficial acceptance of—you live in barracks and you live on ships for six months, you know people as people. But there's also a—you don't need a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" to know that, but the policies, I guess, reinforce what we know to do is right.

I remember they sent one to work for me one time, because he was a very outspoken—came out and was outspoken about his sexual orientation—and he had gotten in some trouble in Russia. And they sent him over to work for me because he was in an infantry unit when he came back and they were afraid there would be some problems and stuff. So they sent him over to work with me, as a female, to send him over there. But it was policy driven down that they pulled him out of his unit for fear that he would have something happen to him. That they would take it out—somebody would—

TS: Like his unit would just turn on him?

LP: Yeah, or somebody would beat him up or something because he came out and said, "I'm gay." I think we sometimes get under—people do stupid stuff and it's usually young folks and—you know what I mean? If you had teenagers or twenty year olds and stuff, sometimes they'll do dumb stuff, but the majority of people do the right thing. I think

leadership—I knew from the day I was in boot camp, we had lesbians, we had gay people in the service, but we didn't do any—have any policies till—when was it?—the nineties?

TS: Well, there wasn't a policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" but there was a policy—I think in the eighties—that if you were gay and somebody said you were or whatever, then you got kicked out.

LP: Yeah.

TS: Do you think not having a policy and just letting people be open—I guess, because really the policy is now you can be open.

LP: Yeah. [unclear] policy. But that's the way it sort of was before they made the policy, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

TS: Well, it wasn't really because you got kicked out if you were found out.

LP: Only if you—Yeah. Well, not if you were found out but—

TS: But you could be accused too.

LP: Oh, really?

TS: Yeah.

LP: I mean, I served with a lot of people—

TS: I think it was the stigma, depending on what unit you're in.

LP: Yeah. And it may have been different for men from women. I mean, I did thirty years and I always knew—I had friends—I have very good friends who—I knew and stuff, but it didn't make a difference, because it's like talking about what nationality your husband is or something. It just was people and it didn't have anything to do with marinehood and being—our mission and what we need to get done each day. It's not like we went and talked about our sexual—[chuckles]

TS: Right. That's not what you're talking about.

LP: We went in and we did unit—Yeah.

TS: You're working.

LP: Yeah, we're working. So I didn't ever—I mean, it was out there but I didn't ever see it as a problem.

TS: It wasn't a concern for you.

LP: Never heard it—Never really—And the only time I did is the one time that they moved somebody to me because of a—and it was more of a outspokenness about it.

TS: Right. Trying to protect him from—

LP: No, he was being outspoken about it; about coming out and saying, "I'm a gay marine," and stuff. They didn't want any conflict because he was outspoken, so they said, "We're going to move you over here." And he came to work for me and he was a great marine. He did whatever and—

TS: Yeah. But this was during "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," so he told—

LP: This was in the nineties.

TS: Yeah. He could actually—He could have been kicked out for telling.

LP: Yeah. But he was—Yeah. He already had some other issues that were—it was a complicated—

TS: That's okay.

LP: Yeah.

TS: Well, let me ask you about this. What does patriotism mean to you?

LP: Oh. I'm a fan of Frederick Jackson Turner [American historian in the early 20th century]; Frontier Thesis. And I think American exceptionalism has been greatly abused. That it doesn't mean we're special, doesn't mean we're better than anyone else, but it just means we're uniquely American. Which is why I love history, too, because I love my family's history and I appreciate who I am because I know the struggles my parents went through. I know what my uncles and my aunts and who sacrificed and what they got—went through to get here. So I think that American exceptionalism in the Frederick Jackson Turner—means we're spec—we're unique. We're not European and we have embraced this thing of liberty and democracy, and what's it mean. Not to the rest of the world, but what's it mean for us? How do we—And what's our responsibility to the rest of the world?

[The Frontier Thesis, or Turner Thesis, is the argument advanced by historian Frederick Jackson Turner in 1983 that American democracy was formed by the American frontier]

TS: Right.

LP: If this is our core and this is our heritage and our founders and I'm sort of that—Clausewitz—I don't know. I think though—Now I've lost the question.

[Carl Philipp Gottfried von Clausewitz was a Prussian general and military theorist who stressed the "moral" and political aspects of war]

TS: Well, that's okay. It's patriotism.

LP: Oh, yeah.

TS: But let me ask you in this way. Is there anything that you think civilians don't understand or maybe misinterpret about either being a marine in particular, or being in the military?

LP: I think it's—Okay, if we look at American history, there have only been thirty-four years since the founding of our nation that we have not been at war, in conflict. We have been—whether it's—And, like I said, I go to breakfast at 8:30 on Saturday morning with a guy who fought in '65 in the Dominican Republic, or in Vietnam, or who lost both of his legs in Afghanistan or Iraq. And there's a sort of forgetfulness—I mean, we all—you hear it all the time, that we support our veterans, but ask one defense industry for a dollar to build a museum for these marines here—to say—or now I volunteer and I do a lot of volunteer work and they're try—But I think there is a little bit of a disconnect between that we're still a country at war and that these marines go out every day, past my house; busloads of marines go to Morehead City.

TS: Is that the shooting that we hear in the background? Was that from them?

LP: Yeah, probably. Right across, yeah, we have ranges all around us.

TS: Is that? Oh, okay. I was wondering. That's for the transcriber.

LP: But there are thousands—Yeah, for the transcriber, there are thousands of marines. But busloads of marines drive by my house every day on their way to deploy or to train, and they come home and it's one of the few—you've probably seen the banners on the front gate of Lejeune and stuff. But every day, somebody's heart's broken, and I think it's lost on the world.

We say we understand the sacrifice, and we see our veterans and we respect our veterans, but it's hard to really know that pace that they're in right now. Fifteen years of coming and going and leaving your—kissing your baby and your wife good-bye and coming home. It's so brutal and so important; how important they are, not only to America but to the world. I've been out there and I have had people—I had a woman in Romania beg me to take her baby. "Please, take it on the ship with you." In Romania, there were babies in rooms. We would go try to take care of these people or—

TS: That was when the [Berlin] Wall first came down and the Soviet block was splitting up, right? There was a lot of—

LP: Yeah.

TS: Interesting.

LP: And what it means—What is our responsibility? I mean, we appreciate what we have but there's also a responsibility. Just like I said, I could have taken a job and gone on and stuff, but I try to give back now and do volunteer work in the community and say, "I've gotten a lot from my career as a marine. What do I owe back now? What am I going to leave for the next generation?" Which is why I find—The only reason I study history—I don't have to work anymore, I don't have to go to school, but I do it because there's something special that we're leaving and that is really what our heart is. What the next generation—What are they going to think who they are?

TS: Right. So leave a legacy for them to understand.

LP: Get to know where they came from. What's been given for what they have, for what they've got; what we have.

TS: Would you do it all again?

LP: I would. I would do it over again.

TS: Yeah?

LP: Yeah. I sure would. And that's why—

TS: I don't really think I needed to ask that question [chuckles].

LP: That's why I continue to work now. I volunteer with the [Carolina] Museum of the Marine, and we just built that beautiful Eagle, Globe, and Anchor [official emblem and insignia of the U.S. Marine Corps] statue they put in down there, and it represents so much of that global mission and the nation. But that's why I continue to serve; I just don't get paid. I work twice as hard now and don't get paid.

TS: Well, I know your dog probably wants to go out, but is there anything that you want to add that we haven't talked about? Would you like to mention anything?

LP: No. After so many years, I could talk a lot, but.

TS: Well, any last words, then?

LP: No.

TS: No?

LP: Yeah. Just that I appreciate all the leadership in my family. That's really made me the marine—been the heart and my soul.

TS: Came from that very beginning, right?

LP: Yeah, it's been the heart of my being a marine.

TS: Well, Lisa, thank you so much.

LP: Thank you.

TS: It's been great visiting with you.

[End of Interview]