

WOMEN VETERANS HISTORICAL PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Louise Quadri Doak

INTERVIEWER: Beth Ann Koelsch

DATE: 19 June 2017

[Begin Interview]

BK: Today is June 19, 2017. My name is Beth Ann Koelsch, and I'm here at Jackson Library in Greensboro, North Carolina, to conduct an oral history interview for the Women Veterans Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Louise, if you could state your name the way you would like it to show on your collection.

LD: Louise Quadri Doak.

BK: Okay. If you could tell me when and where you were born, and a little bit about your family; siblings, parents, what they did.

LD: Born in 1952 in Jackson Heights, New York.

BK: What's your actual birthday? We like to put that.

LD: October 8, 1952.

BK: Okay. In Jackson Heights, New York.

LD: Yes, we lived there until 1961. I have an older sibling, Anton Quadri, and Nancy Quadri, a younger sibling. We lived there through 1961, then my dad got a new job and we moved to Cresskill, New Jersey. We were a home state of New Jersey until 1983. I attended school in Cresskill, New Jersey. It was a small town of eight-thousand people; very [close] knit community. I was involved in all sports: bowling, the tennis club, the basketball club, [You Gals?] Young Girls Athletic Association, hockey, tennis. I was much into a lot of sports during that time frame, and so were my siblings. Public school was really great, it went up to fifth grade, and then I went to junior high seventh grade, eighth grade, and up through senior year.

In sixth [fourth—LD corrected later] grade, I picked up an instrument; I played the violin. Nobody in my family is musically inclined. I don't know where I got it from, but I picked up the violin very quickly. Then when I reached high school, I decided to pick up another instrument; the e-flat baritone. I had an outstanding coach in the band, so

I played the violin in the orchestra for about six, seven years—with the Cresskill High School orchestra—and then I transferred over to the Cresskill High School marching band and concert band, where I learned how to march and play the instrument along with everybody else. We performed different concerts for all our families.

At that time, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I was thinking of being a nurse, or I liked, really, working with children, so during my high school summer years, I was a group leader for about four or five years in the summer, I think age thirteen to about eighteen or nineteen, and I liked working with children.

BK: A group leader for camps?

LD: Camps in nearby Cresskill, New Jersey. I think it was Old Tappan, New Jersey. I did that for about four or five years and I enjoyed it a lot. As far as thinking about college, I'll be honest, I wasn't thinking about college. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do.

BK: This is great. I just want to make sure we don't miss anything before we get to college.

LD: Okay.

BK: Did both your parents work outside the house?

LD: My mom was a stay-at-home mother. She was always there at 3:30 [p.m.] to give us cookies and milk and whatnot. My dad was a supervisor for all different automobile companies; Pontiac, Chevy and so forth. He worked in New Jersey when we moved to New Jersey.

BK: I'm sorry, the automobile supervisor of the production or the sales?

LD: Controller of—

BK: Distribution?

LD: Yeah—Well, not with sales but a comptroller; just accounting department.

BK: Okay, where the cars are.

LD: Yeah.

BK: What year did you graduate again?

LD: High school? Nineteen seventy-one.

BK: Okay. Besides the band, were there academic subjects that you liked?

LD: I took college academics all the way up to Algebra II. I took all the requirements to go to college, but I'll be honest, I didn't know what I wanted to do.

BK: Were you worrying about it before you graduated, or were you just like, "Let's graduate and figure this—"

LD: Well, my brother came home from college and said, "What are you doing? Aren't you going to college? Mom says you're not interested." My older brother, who's two years older, sat me down and said, "You've got the courses. Go." I listened, and I went to a junior college; Penn Hall Junior College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. I still didn't know what I wanted to do, but I took classes.

BK: Academic classes or business?

LD: Yeah.

BK: Academic?

LD: Yeah.

BK: Okay.

LD: Just liberal arts. I graduated with a diploma, but by the time I graduated, the school shut down, so I decided to go to the school next to it.

BK: Next to you or next to the school that closed down?

LD: Next to the school that closed down, because that school, kind of, took it over.

BK: Okay. What was the name of that school?

LD: Wilson College. Now, there I only took a couple of classes for two years because I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do.

BK: And you lived there? You lived on campus?

LD: Yes, I did. Both colleges were all women, so that was unique. I tried to do some dating, but it was a little hard. You'd have to travel two hours to go to another college to date. I didn't graduate because I only had a couple of classes in each of those two years because I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do.

Just to backtrack a little bit, my brother went to OCS [Officer Candidate School] in '71 and then, after college, he was a ship driver and he did that for twenty years. He encouraged me if I didn't know what I wanted to do that maybe you might want to go into the military and decide then. So in '75, I went to the recruiting in Hackensack, New Jersey, and I think I did the CACHE program where you could get in but it was delayed entry.

BK: I'm sorry, the what program?

LD: They called it the CACHE program.

[The U.S. Navy CACHE program allows people who want to join the navy to sign up, but not have to report for duty for up to 180 days]

BK: CACHE.

LD: Back then they'd say "CACHE," C-A-C-H-E, something like that. It's a delayed program, meaning that I'm thinking about it, but I'm, like, on a waiting list for five, six months. So I worked in Englewood, New Jersey, just various jobs. I was a temp [temporary worker] with an accountant and all.

BK: And you knew you wanted to join the navy. Did you consider any other branch?

LD: No, because my father was in the [U.S.] Navy in World War II, and my brother was in for twenty years, and then my cousin was [U.S.] Coast Guard, so it was [U.S.] Navy all the way.

BK: Okay, got it.

LD: But when I broke the news to my mom in '75, she was kind of taken aback. She really wanted me to stay home and pursue, maybe, teaching or something. I said, "Well, no, I just don't know what I want to do. Maybe I'll just go in the navy."

BK: But your brother and your dad were happy?

LD: Oh, they were ecstatic. The women in the family weren't. I mean, the big thing was she didn't want me going into the marines or army. She wanted me to stick navy, so I[?] encouraged her.

BK: So you signed on the dotted line before you told your parents?

LD: No, no.

BK: You told them first?

LD: This was in the interim, meaning that it was a delayed entry, I still had a way in or a way out. I didn't actually enlist until February '76. While I was working in Englewood in accounting, I got a call saying, "You're up. You got to let us know you want to enlist in Newark, New Jersey, or you don't." I just so happened to get a full-time job I was offered in Englewood, Cliff's [Convenience Store?], and I declined because I didn't really want to stay at home. I wanted to grow as a woman, and I wanted to see the world and see where it's going to take me, so I declined that and I enlisted.

BK: Did they offer you certain jobs?

LD: Yes. I put in for yeoman [a United States Navy enlisted job rating for administrative and clerical workers], dental—which I knew nothing about dental—yeoman, and CTA, Cryptologic Technician Administrator [Cryptologic Technician, Administrative].

BK: Why did you choose—

LD: Because it was in the admin [administration] field. It's crypto but it's the admin field.

BK: Right. But what about dental?

LD: I had to have three, so I just threw that in there.

BK: You just threw that in for good measure.

LD: Which I'm glad I didn't—Actually, my dad was a dental tech in World War II.

BK: So it wasn't completely random. What about your friends in college or back in high school? How did they react to you joining?

LD: I really didn't consult anybody but my immediate family and my brother. Once I left high school, I didn't keep in touch with anybody in high school. I was friends but it was more cordial, but more family, cousins, aunts and uncles; more family-oriented than a lot of friendships. College, everybody went their separate ways. How my college knew what I did—I went back in—Well, this is 1990, I don't know if you want me to go up that far yet, but I did go back to my college and I briefed them on what I was doing in my life after college.

BK: Okay, well, we'll get there.

LD: Yeah, later.

BK: When you enlisted, was it for a certain duration?

LD: Four years.

BK: Four years, okay. In Newark?

LD: I enlisted in Newark, New Jersey.

BK: Do you remember the exact date? It would be on your—

LD: February twelfth, I think it was, 1976. Then, of course, my mom and everyone was so happy, they got banners all over the house and the cars of "U.S. Navy," "My daughter's in the U.S. Navy."

BK: That's great.

LD: They were happy about that.

BK: Where did they send you away for—

LD: I put in for Washington D.C. for my first—Oh, well, let's backtrack. I got A Schoo— After boot camp—

BK: Where was your boot camp?

LD: Orlando, Florida.

BK: Orlando, okay. Alright.

LD: It was challenging, boot camp.

BK: What made it challenging?

LD: Because we had a strong CC [Company Commander]. People actually got hit in the head with a broom.

BK: Wow.

LD: Like the woman next to me. The woman was strict.

BK: [chuckles] Yeah!

LD: We had discipline. And she'd tear beds apart and mattresses. I don't know if everybody did that but we just accepted it. It was part of it. Very, very strict.

BK: How did you react? Were you expecting that?

LD: I didn't say two words. I didn't say two words when the girl next to me got hit on the head. She was kind of mean. Strict is one thing, but then mean and going overboard. But I ignored it because she hit the person next to me; I was glad I didn't get hit. But it was arduous. Boot camp, walk, sing, and carry your things. I had to hum because I was not much of a singer. It was good training, with the swimming and the book learning and everything like that. Plus, I was a little older than everybody else. I was twenty-three, so I think I was ahead of the game. After then boot camp, I had to put in for three choices, a guaranteed school, which—because I had some college education, I was guaranteed a school. I got accepted to CTA School; Cryptologic Technician, Administrator School.

BK: And where was that AIT [Advanced Individual Training]?

LD: Pensacola, Florida.

BK: Okay.

LD: I was happy about that. That was either a two or three-month A-school there, where—that's where I learned all the administration; the typing and the correspondence and everything that goes along with it. But there was one catch. I had a high-level clearance, which I didn't really put in for, but as a CT, you had to qualify for high-level clearance; Top Secret/SCI, Special Compartmented Information. I thought I was just going to be strictly admin.

BK: Right. What did that entail?

LD: Background investigation by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], and all my neighbors back in Cresskill and college were all asked questions about me.

BK: Did they pass you?

LD: Well, it took an extra four or five months to get accepted for the clearance. I graduated from A School, but then I was transferred to the career counselor's office until my clearance was approved.

BK: So you're doing administrative work?

LD: Admin, working with the career counselor. He did not want me to go. He liked me, so he wanted me to stay.

BK: Well, that's good.

LD: Well, but the idea to get a clearance is to work in your rate, not so much out of your rate, so it took, I think, another six months. I was down in Pensacola—

BK: For over a year?

LD: Maybe eight months; maybe about that much total. Then when I finally got it, they said, "Okay. Now you're eligible. Now put in for three duty stations." I put in for San Diego, California, Hawaii, and Washington D.C. All hardship duties. I got accepted to San Diego, California.

BK: Nice!

LD: I'm an east coast girl and I went west. Of course, the lifestyle out there is more casual than out east, where we always used to wear dresses and really dress up much. It was a

two-year tour because I was still single. It was '76 to '78. Let's see, my job was in San Diego on 32nd Street, CMIO, which is Communication [Security] Material Issuing Office. I worked in the vault[?]. I packaged classified material for all the ships that were in port in my area. I also was on duty for 24/7 [twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week] in case they needed some key cards or any classified material. We'd have to go there and get it and go to the ships, which I enjoyed immensely. I was at that job—

BK: I was actually going to ask you. You did enjoy it. Was it what you expected or better?

LD: No. I enjoyed it for about a year, and then I went to my chain of command. I wrote chits [request for special permission] to go and work into the office part of the CMIO, and it got declined three times.

BK: Oh, my.

LD: They thought I did such a good job in the other area, they wanted me to stay, but also, I'll be upfront with you, a male guy, most junior to me in the military, got the job. I was not happy. That's why I kept on putting chits in, and I was very pro-active back then. After putting a chit in three times, and encouraging chain of command that it was more than my turn, I finally got my turn to work in the admin part, where I was a locator clerk for eight months. I located all the ships, and where they could be, and when the ships were going to be in port and all. Loved it. I enjoyed it immensely.

BK: Did you have to use some technology, I would imagine?

LD: Well, I had maps and I had grids and all like that. I had someone train me, of course, and I enjoyed it immensely. I knew where every ship was.

BK: How did you know where it was? I mean, you knew where it was supposed to be on the maps, right?

LD: Civilians work in the office to help out with the communication on it. Also, I went to— For one week before I got that job, I went to CMS school for a week—Communication Material Service—to learn about where the ships are and the classified material; where it's going to be and all. We had charts. We had liaison with all the officers and the civilians to tell us where they're going to be in port, or when the ships were going to be leaving, because this was on 32nd Street; all the ships were around us. Ship-to-ship would—The officers would let us know when they're leaving and when they're going to be back in port to pick up the classified material. I did that for eight months.

BK: What was the timeframe on that one?

LD: Let's see. From '76 to '77, approximately.

BK: Okay. Do you have a particular story that was a great day or a bad day, or one of each?

LD: When someone lost classified material in the vault, production stopped. It was a microfiche [a flat piece of film containing microphotographs of the pages of a newspaper, catalog, or other document]. Whether you're working as a clerk or working in there, everybody had to stop what they're doing. That was bad. That was really bad. We had to go climbing up steps and looking through every piece of classified material. After many days, someone did find the classified material. It was microfiche. It was underneath the stair in the vault.

BK: Did they decide someone dropped it or someone put it there?

LD: No one knows, but nobody got in trouble. But that was the most arduous—

BK: So that was days?

LD: Oh, yeah. It could have been even maybe a week; maybe about three to four—a week. But everybody had to stop what they're doing. Even if you had time off, you didn't have time off. We had to find it. But it slipped under—It's a big vault. It slipped under one of the containers to hold up all the classified material.

BK: How big is the vault?

LD: Gigantic. It's almost as big as a football field.

BK: About how many people worked in there?

LD: Six.

BK: Oh, but all the material, I guess—Did you have a guard? How did you get in every day? Was there a guard, was there special codes?

LD: Oh, there's guards around there. We all had our code to get in there and all.

BK: How did you get along with your coworkers?

LD: Some were kind of unique. [chuckles] Some were not as dedicated; some came late to work. I wanted to be a supervisor, I just had to wait a little longer than anticipated. I was getting up there. I made—Let's see, when did I make E—I made E-4 at that time frame. I was getting restless in there. Let's back track. Nineteen seventy-eight, I was supposed to leave, but I got involuntary extended.

BK: Oh, why?

LD: The navy ran out of money to transfer. I was disappointed.

BK: Where were you supposed to transfer to?

LD: I didn't put in orders, but I was supposed to leave to go overseas in '78. So then I said, "This is not going to help my career by still being in the vault clerk, so I put in a chit to work at the Technical Guidance Unit in Navy Radio Receiving Facility.

BK: Okay. Why did you choose that? Let's start there.

LD: They had an opening for an A-Brancher there; CTA. So I got it, and I wasn't there too long because I was supposed to leave in '79, so I might have been there six months, and then when '79 came, I extended for another year.

BK: Okay, just one year?

LD: I start liking it. After involuntary extending, I extended until 1980. So from late '78 to '79, it was Technical Guidance Unit. I was their administrator there. I worked with all men. In fact, the first duty station, I was the only woman.

BK: Wow, that must have been—

LD: So that was challenging because—just because I didn't have anybody to talk personal or socialize or anything like that. After Technical Guidance Unit, I worked in the admin and career counselor's office until '80. That's where all the A-Branchers worked and I worked for a career counselor—

BK: A is the administrator branch?

LD: Yeah.

BK: Okay, I just wanted to make sure.

LD: TGU [Technical Guidance Unit] for the last year, and then the admin office. They rotated us, but I had to put chits in to finally move out of where I was, which was like twenty, twenty-five miles away. Even though it was different duty stations, it was within transferring distance, so I liked that much better, actually working in an office.

BK: Why?

LD: Than in the vault.

BK: Just because the vault is depressing.

LD: Yeah, I outgrew it. I outgrew it. I still never made supervisor in those four years there, but I did work in the career counselor's office for the last six months, and there's where I took advantage of being in the career counselor's office. I put in for Rota, Spain, and I got my choice because I did all the liaison myself. I didn't have the career counselor do it or anybody else, I did it by myself.

BK: Before we go to Spain, did you have any mentors or anything while you were in California.

LD: There was nobody, unfortunately, in the military at that time that I really looked up to but my brother. He was actually stationed in California. He switched over to ship driving to airedale [a sailor who works on or around aircraft], so he's at Moffett [Federal Airfield] in California.

BK: Okay, did he give you any career advice?

LD: Oh, yeah.

BK: Did you talk to him a lot?

LD: Oh, yeah. I did. As far as looking up—My chief petty officer was probably the best one that really did help me out, but as far as anybody else, I had no female friends. After going to an all woman's college for all those years, I didn't have not one female friend.

BK: That must have been difficult.

LD: You're sick or you're on your monthly, you're on your own. I remember just laying on the couch for part of the day because you just couldn't put in for sick for any Tom, Dick or Harry, so I remember just sitting there just sick.

BK: Did you live on—

LD: For the first six months I lived on-base, and then I outgrew it and I put in for my own apartment. That's when I lived at the beach; the navy receiving facility beach. It was a one-bedroom apartment. I don't know how I afforded it, but I got myself a car. My leading petty officer co-signed it and he helped me, but he was not at the duty station more than six, seven months and he got promoted to chief and got shipped out to Adak, Alaska. He would have been a great mentor but he wasn't there that long. But he, of all the people, enlisted, he helped me get a car and helped me get an apartment and be more independent.

BK: Just way back in your college days, were you living at home or were you just in the dorm?

LD: Oh, in the dorm. All women.

BK: Okay, so this was kind of the first time that you were—

LD: Actually on my own? Yes, and my first car that I owned. I borrowed my dad's car just here and there, but I never had anything on my own.

BK: Wow, that must have been pretty exciting.

LD: It was because I was independent. I had a little Honda and it just got me back and forth to work and some social.

BK: You were about twenty-five, twenty-six?

LD: Well, I was twenty-three when I enlisted so, yeah, a couple years later than that. What social did I have there? I did go to—They had Navy Day in Los Angeles [California] for Disneyland. They would close the park at midnight and have it for all the enlisted free.

BK: Did you have friends that you went with?

LD: Yeah, we'd all go up there.

BK: Just the guys from the office—

LD: Male friends; no female friends.

BK: Guys from the office or did you make friends?

LD: Guys all in the office, and some other ones I didn't know. I took advantage of living in San Diego; the zoo and the parks; Balboa Park and all like that. It was more with the guys. On Fridays, we'd always go to a sports bar and just eat and drink, eat and drink.

BK: Did you feel close to any of these guys?

LD: No.

BK: Just people from work, someone to hang out with.

LD: Yeah. Played the game. They were all nice but—

BK: You guys weren't going to be keeping in touch forever?

LD: No one close, no.

BK: Okay.

LD: I didn't keep in touch with any military.

BK: Your main responsibilities there were—Okay, we talked about that. I just wanted to make sure—

LD: Well, the career counselor, I was in charge of—with the Education Service Office, their work grades to get promoted. They had a certain amount of requirements they had to do; education, their workbooks, a typing test; all tests I had to give them; the Chief's test, the

second class—All the tests I had to give to be a career counselor. Now, admin, it was just admin support and SSOs, Special Security Office, the people's clearances, basically, in those four years.

BK: And so, you reenlisted for another year?

LD: Okay, 1980, I called my brother in California. I said, "If I'm going to reenlist, there's no way—"

BK: And are you in Spain now?

LD: Not yet, no.

BK: You're still in California.

LD: Still in California in 1980. He says, "Where do you want to go?"

I said, "I got orders to Rota, Spain."

He said, "You did? That's great. You going to reenlist?"

I said, "Yes, there's no one worth—They're nice—The officers are very, very nice, but I'd like you to reenlist me." He was living in California anyway.

He said, "I'd be honored."

BK: What rank had you achieved by then?

LD: By then I was E-5 [Petty Officer Second Class]. He accepted and he came down and reenlisted me for four years in Rota, Spain. The attached pictures that I gave you—We had a nice ceremony outside, which is near the beach, Navy Radio Receiving Facility, and then we had a lunch at a restaurant.

BK: Okay.

LD: It was great. We had the officers enlisted, my brother and his wife came down. My family wasn't able to come down; they lived out on the east coast. So thinking of just spending four years in, and I thought about it, and I said, "I really like it. I want to stay in another four years."

BK: Because you liked your work?

LD: Yeah. Then I went to Spain.

BK: Okay, Rota, Spain. That sounds pretty exciting.

LD: Yeah, I went under GUARD 2000. There's a program—GUARD 2000—you're guaranteed—you're allowed, I think, one or two in a career, so I took it right away.

[The Guaranteed Assignment Retention Detailing (GUARD 2000) Program offers two guaranteed assignments within a 20-year career time frame for active duty USN, USNR-R (FTS), and USNR members in return for a 4-, 5-, or 6-year reenlistment]

BK: And what does that mean?

LD: It's a guaranteed reenlistment, meaning that you're going to get one of your first two or three choices. There's a guarantee.

BK: Got it. Alright, so Rota, Spain. What was that like? First time out of the country, I'm guessing.

LD: You think you'd be nervous, but I wasn't. I went to FAIRECONRON Two [Fleet Air Reconnaissance]. It was a squadron. VQ-2 Airedales. I worked in the security department, which I loved. I gave out clearances to qualified individuals. At the command, there was about seven-hundred people; fourteen females.

BK: Well, that was better than.

LD: Yeah.

BK: How did you get to Spain? Did you fly? Did you fly and take a ship or they just—

LD: I got orders to it and the navy paid for it. They paid for my flight from California to New Jersey, my home of [unclear].

BK: Did you get to see your folks before you went?

LD: Yes. And then to Spain. They paid for it and—paid orders. So after visiting family, I went up there not knowing anything about it. I did live in the barracks for a while because I was a newbie up in Spain. I did have a person that helped me adjust to life in a foreign country. I went to a lot of classes to see what the rules and regs [regulations] were, and their police were called the "la guardia." They're very strict military police that you don't say 'no;' you've got to listen to them.

BK: Is this still [Francisco] Franco in charge of Spain?

[Francisco Franco was a Spanish general who ruled over Spain as a military dictator from 1939, after the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War, until his death in 1975]

LD: Yeah.

BK: Okay. It's Francoist Spain.

LD: Right. My orders were for two years; '80 to '82. I got into the barracks about six months, and then I put in for a little house, and I lived in Porto de Santa Maria in Spain for a while.

BK: Did you learn to speak Spanish?

LD: I pick up a little bit but not very much.

BK: Okay.

LD: All my neighbors were Spanish but they all spoke English.

BK: Okay. What was the name of the base?

LD: FAIRECONRON Two, VQ-2, Rota, Spain.

BK: Okay, you did say that. I just wasn't sure if that was the name of the base.

LD: The most interesting part of that was every morning, no matter what your paygrade was, you put your earplugs in, we had to go up and down the runway to pick up debris so the planes would be safe. We used to have inspections and all, and parades. It was really a interesting two years, supposedly. I'll go-on on that.

BK: Did you like marching?

LD: I didn't mind it at all. In Spain I made a lot of friends. There were fourteen women so I had maybe one or two women friends, but I mostly worked with men. Sometimes it was more challenging than others, that some would be a little mean or some would be a little harder on you, but I never got preferential treatment or anything like that; I just tried to be myself. But I could see the competitiveness of everybody that was junior than me or senior. I made some nice friends. I went to twelve bull-fights with some friends.

BK: I guess you liked bull fights, then, if you went to twelve of them, or is that what everyone did?

LD: No, it was just nice to go to twelve bull fights. I enjoyed going to them. One time, the matador didn't do too good. I think he inadvertently killed it, and almost got whacked on the head; they would through their cushions out and boo the matador if he killed it or didn't do a good job. They almost got whacked in the head on that one.

BK: [chuckles] Okay, wow. You spent a lot of time not getting whacked on the head, or barely not getting whacked on the head.

LD: I enjoyed it; not everybody—I don't know where I picked it up, I just love the Spanish culture. I went to a lot of fairs, a lot of different malls in Seville to shop. Then, in '81, I wanted to be resourceful. I went on a thirty-day Eurail with a couple people.

[The Eurail Pass allows pass holders to travel in and through up to twenty-eight European countries on nearly all European railroads and some shipping lines]

BK: Is this sort of R&R [rest and recuperation (or recreation)]?

LD: On vacation. I took a thirty-days leave.

BK: Leave. Okay.

LD: I took a month Eurail trip from Rota, Spain to Italy.

BK: And you said you went with friends?

LD: A couple of friends, yeah.

BK: Okay.

LD: A couple of friends, and stayed in each country maybe two or three days, at hostels or bed and breakfast. One time I had to stay at a hotel because we weren't able to get a room. But we went from Rota, Spain to Italy to Naples—Paris, France for three days. My electric dryer broke because I did the wrong connection. I think it's supposed to be twenty whatever.

BK: [chuckles] Those are hard to keep up with.

LD: I did some touring there; went to the Eiffel Tower but I was too nervous to climb it. But I did take pictures of my friends going up there and we toured around. It was very nice education. I lost my beautiful \$500 camera in a Coca-a-Cola shop in Paris, and it just so happened the guy knew I came in and ran down the street and gave it back to me.

BK: Oh, that's pretty nice.

LD: That was nice. I remember that vividly. Then I went to Amsterdam, Holland, and bought like six sweaters because their sweaters back then were very inexpensive.

BK: Okay. I just wasn't sure if it was really cold when you went or if it was for—

LD: It was in the summer so it wasn't too bad, so we went on a couple of boat rides there. Went to Munich, Germany and Stuttgart [Germany] for a few days on each other of

those, and we were able to stay at people's houses, which I didn't grow up going to people's houses or staying overnight with anybody, but I did; stranger's houses.

BK: How did you find their houses? How did you find them?

LD: That's a good question. When I got off the train, they had a list of places that were available.

BK: Right. Got it.

LD: Here I am, only twenty-nine or twenty-eight, nothing bothered me, so I said, "Okay." We stayed in Munich and Stuttgart, visited a lot of museums there.

Now, I had one experience that I did not like in Germany back then. I went on a bus tour, and you're supposed to put money in for the bus. I didn't put it in right away, and there was a meter maid, or whatever they were called back in Germany, walking up and down. It was translated into English—She was German—that you needed to put your money in. I said, "Oh, okay, I forgot."

She goes, "No, no, no. You're supposed to do it before the bus left." And in translation, "You owe me twenty-five dollars for a fine for not putting your coins in on time."

I said to him, "I really don't have that much money. I'm in the military," blah blah blah."

And he translates, "You either give me the twenty-five dollars and the dollar, dollar and a half—" I owed for the bus "—or the police station's across the street."

I'm on a high-level clearance; no way I'm going to be trapped in a foreign country. My bus fare was a \$1.50 and my fee was twenty-five dollars for not putting in my coins before the drivers left. So that's where I thought I was taken advantage. But having a high-level clearance and in the military, was not going to take the chance of getting arrested.

BK: Right, that makes sense.

LD: So I gave the twenty-five dollar fine for a \$1.50 bus trip. I learned my lesson. When I took the bus back, I put it in right away.

BK: Germans, I guess, are a little less loosey-goosey.

LD: Yeah, a little more in Spain.

BK: So you went back? That was your last stop on your Eurail adventure?

LD: Oh, no. That's right. We went to Oslo, Norway for three days; stayed at this single parent, woman's house for three days. Let's see. Copenhagen, Denmark; stayed there for two days. Oslo, Norway, I said a couple days. Then took a boat or ship from—Oh, we went to Zurich, Switzerland also. And also Sweden. Then Helsinki, Finland; we took a boat over there and then a boat back. It was a Eurail but the boat was included with the Eurail. I got

a nice taste, brought back a lot of souvenirs from all the different countries. And left with two people; I think I came back with eight people because I met other people from all the other countries. It was a nice experience.

Then when I got back, I was due up for orders, but then again, the navy ran out of money. So I go, "Well, what are my options? I'm just here for two years. I really enjoy it a lot."

"You extend for a year, we'll give you thirty-days free basket leave." Thirty-days free leave, meaning in addition to my thirty that I accumulated, they'll give you another thirty.

BK: It's called basket leave?

LD: Basket leave.

BK: I wonder why it's called that.

LD: Free leave. A gift. Basket leave. So I took it. I took advantage of it. That year I extended—In 1983, I put in for instructor duty to go out of rate for a little bit. I was an instructor for six months on the base to help all new incoming navy personnel and their families.

BK: To sort of acclimate and—

LD: Right. I worked in the classroom and I taught for six months.

BK: That sounds fun.

LD: It was—I enjoyed it a lot. After that I went back to my duty station, VQ-2. I gave out clearances, make sure they could qualify, but I still had another six to eight months, so then I was selected to be a Collateral Duty Alcohol[ism] Advisor.

BK: Collateral Duty—

LD: Alcohol Advisor. I helped military men, and the few women that were there, to overcome their obsession with alcohol.

BK: Was that a voluntary or—

LD: I was selected. I went to a school for it.

BK: Right. Were the people that were in the program, was it voluntary?

LD: Oh, no, it was mandatory.

BK: Okay, so that's challenging because you don't quit unless you want to quit.

LD: Right. I worked with them for about six or seven months, in addition to my other jobs. Which, I could have stayed there another year; I loved Spain very much. They did me well. Then in Spain, I got a Navy Unit Commendation for our squad, we got the Meritorious Unit Commendation also, and the Sea Service ribbon, in addition to good conduct that I got with my brother. After three years of just doing everything I wanted, I just felt really good in my career that in '93—

BK: So you were three years in Spain?

LD: Correct. It was a two-year duty and I got extended. Then I was up for orders again in 1983, but it was too early to reenlist, so I extended to 1986; a three-year tour. I put in for Washington D.C in '83. I've gotten all my choices I've put in; I've gotten them. I did not depend on my superiors to get me the duty station; I did it myself. I'd go out of the career counselors' office and call the detailers from Spain, and did it on my own.

BK: What do the detailers do? They say, "This is what we want?"

LD: They see where you qualify. I said, "I'm going up for E-6 [Petty Officer First Class]. I want an E-6 billet [a specific personnel position, assignment, or duty station], then eventually I want an E-7 [Chief Petty Officer] billet;" to go one billet ahead of your job.

They said, "I've got this opening at SPAWAR [Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command], Space Wars, in Washington D.C."

I said, "Oh, that sounds exciting." So I took it.

BK: I'm sorry, it was what?

LD: Called SPAWARS, Space Facility—Space—They called it SPA? SPO, S-P-O? Space. Oh gosh, it's SPO, S-P-O, but I forgot what the 'P' stands for.

BK: Okay. And WAR?

LD: It's space. Space Command, I should say.

BK: Okay.

LD: I worked in an admin office for about—Let's see—Two years I worked at an admin office. I worked for two captains; two wonderful captains. I enjoyed it immensely; just doing admin work for military and civilians. I got all the correspondence that went to both captains. That was enjoyable. Social life was terrible.

BK: Because?

LD: It was all career because—I found D.C. very nice but all professional. I'll be honest, I didn't date, from '80 to '86, anybody. There was no opportunity. The men that were there were either married or divorced or whatever, but in my career, there wasn't room for it,

due to the fact that—knowing my brother and his situation, that I needed a hook-up or get together with somebody, that their duty stations were going to be compatible with mine.

BK: Right. Now, is this before—I know that military did not used to do this, but basically sending dual military marriage to the same duty stations.

LD: Right. If your enlistment and PRD [projected rotation date] matches. Mine never matched anybody. If I was going overseas and I was dating somebody in the military, they were due back here. They'd try, but if you're on opposite ends, it's quite difficult. I tried. I was engaged once, very early, but we broke up quickly because I got orders to California and my boyfriend got Iceland. Then he got London, and then I got extended to San Diego for an extra two years, so it never worked out.

BK: Right. Okay.

LD: I enjoyed the lifestyle, being single.

BK: Okay, so you're in D.C. working for captain—

LD: Two captains that were outstanding. I did all the culture, went on trips with some of the military and civilians, but just very cordial. I made a few friends but not too many. Well, I was trying to go up for E-6, and even though I made E-3 or E-1 to E-2, E-3, -4, -5, E-6 took me two years. I needed to get a little bit more experience in SSO, Special Security Office, where I did it, but I did the [unclear] side; now I needed to do the Top Secret SCI side. I actually went to a function and talked to a captain and said, "I really need to elevate my career. I would love to work down in Crystal City [a mixed-use office center in Arlington, Virginia]." At that time, it was a captain and Admiral Manley[?], who's a former astronaut in Columbia. I said, "I would really love to work for them and work for SSO in Crystal City."

He said, "Well, it's kind of expensive because you've got to pay a hundred dollars a month to park, and it's about forty-five minutes from where you live."

I said, "Yes, captain, but respectfully, I would love to. I will be more than willing."

He started thinking about it, and a few months down the road, I get this call from my supervisor saying, "You got it, just as long as you pay your fees and whatnot."

I got transferred over there, and as soon as I got that job and went up for E-6, I got it. But it took me two years to get E-6. I was still lacking some more supervisory experience, which I didn't get at my other duty stations that had a lot of independent work. So I finally got E-6.

BK: And are you supervising people?

LD: I had one person, a civilian, which was a mini-[unclear]. I did that for a year and a half. I was very close to a lot of people. At that time, I met a lot of nice civilians, but they were all married or ten, fifteen years older than me. So I was at a crossroads—

BK: Now, every time you enlisted, were you thinking, "Oh, I'm going to make this a career," or are you taking it one enlistment at a time?

LD: One enlistment at a time.

BK: Okay.

LD: I did attend that one-week SSO school in Norfolk [Virginia] when the captain approved it. I did have to go to a school for about a week.

BK: And what does SSO stand for?

LD: Special Security Office.

BK: Got it. Okay.

LD: Also, to enhance my career—I'm looking at my notes—I did hometown recruiting for two weeks in Cresskill, New Jersey; I went back to my old high school. What it is, I worked at a recruiting station for two weeks and helped all the recruiters. In fact, my short stay there, I recruited one individual, and I was on cloud nine. I was back in uniform. I met my old career counselor that helped me try to achieve my goals while I was in high school, and I talked to her students there as a recruiter. I did that for two weeks, and I enjoyed it immensely.

Then at the end of '86 I—or actually, end of '85, beginning of '86, I did get selected to go to San Diego for, I think, two weeks to drive dignitaries, VIPs [very important persons], navy admirals, [and] I think the flag secretary of the air force. I was so honored. There were two of us who got selected, where we drove them from the Officer's Club to meetings to the ships and whatnot. I was elated. It was San Diego, which I think they knew I was there for four years. I knew the streets. I knew everything. I drove them. I picked them up at the airports, and here I am in a carpool with all the dignitaries. You'd be surprised how admirals and—They were just so down to earth. I was just so honored.

BK: What do you drive? What kind of vehicle does—

LD: Kind of like limos.

BK: Limos? Did you have to get special training for that?

LD: No.

BK: No?

LD: Just put me in a car and drive.

BK: Wow.

LD: Just had to know the routes and the times when to pick up all the dignitaries.

BK: Was that nerve-wracking in the beginning? I would imagine.

LD: I was concerned, but I was just so elated being selected that—I don't know. I wasn't nervous, really.

BK: That's great.

LD: I was just so proud to be selected. Then I was at a crossroads. I was ready for reenlistment in '86, and I wasn't sure if I wanted to get out, because I felt like I hit a breaking point that—I'm E-6, I'm going up for Chief Petty Officer, and my rate closed—my CTA closed—and they were only rating one person at a time. Every year, they were only rating one person.
I went, "I know I'm good, but there's a lot more people that are probably even better than me."

BK: Is this a budget thing too?

LD: Yeah.

BK: Okay.

LD: So I was at a crossroads. I wasn't sure if I really wanted to stay in or not. So I consulted my brother. I said, "You know, I'm seriously considering getting out, but then again, I'm back where I started back in '76; single, in D.C, and not married." Okay, I had a nice career. It would have ended abruptly.
So my brother said, "Well, try to hang in there."
I said, "Well, if I'm hanging in there, would you like to honor me and reenlist me again?"
He said, "Well, I'm doing a lot of flights. I wouldn't be able to stay for lunch or take pictures or anything."
So I put in for a reenlistment, and I put in for Misawa, Japan."

BK: And how do you spell that?

LD: Let's see, Misawa. M-I-S-A-W-A.

BK: Okay.

LD: That was going to be a two-year stint, '86 to '88, so my brother reenlistment me. It was very disappointing. My first three, four months I was quite sick. I couldn't speak, I didn't have no voice, and they wanted me to take more leave and I couldn't. I just didn't have that much. I don't know what I picked up or whatever, but I started out on the wrong foot.

BK: Right. That's a long time to be sick.

LD: Yeah, but I still worked. I just didn't have—no voice. It was terrible. There was an air force base, I tried to get medical, but nothing worked. I stuck it out, but I was disappointed. I was supposed to be an E-6 billet, which I was, but it's training again; education, like with the career counseling.

BK: That's hard to do with no voice.

LD: Yeah. I didn't like it, and I'll be honest with you, I didn't like the staff there, but I had a lot of people junior to me and, unfortunately, I finally made rate, E-6, First Class Petty Officer, and I felt like I was going backwards. Responsibility wasn't as much as I thought it should be. My peers were junior to me, and it was all male in the office; I'm the only female. I was up in arms. I'd go to my LPO [lead petty officer], the chief and whatnot, and it's like, "I need more responsibility." I didn't like it. It was the worst duty station. Career-wise, it was horrible because I wanted to be a supervisor to go up for chief, and they just wanted me to be in charge of training, which I've done that so much it was just being repetitive and going backwards in my career.

The people in Japan were great. I stayed in the barracks for six to eight months, and then I finally said, "Well, if I'm going to be out here—" It was an eighteen-month tour, which later on I'll show you what happened, but after eighteen months, I got my own apartment, which was very nice. I had a two-story apartment for [unclear] outside of Misawa, Japan. The people were great, but the job—I hate to say it—it was beneath me. It just wasn't me and I put in requests to do different jobs, be a supervisor, and I got passed over. It was just impossible. I went to command master chief. "We'll see. We'll get you another job." They got me another job. It was worse than the one I had. I was just doing straight admin, not in charge of anybody. I was like, "I think I made a mistake in reenlisting." It was very isolated back then.

BK: Why do you think that you were passed over or weren't given responsibilities?

LD: I hate to say it, but the men that were junior than me, or equal to me, seemed to get the positions beforehand, but I never, never put it in anybody's face. I just put a chit in and said, "Respectfully, I would like to move up," whereas my other duty station, I put in, maybe sometimes it was declined, but finally, they would. But after ten years, I felt like I was going backwards, so I was not happy. It was not a career anymore, it was just a job to pay—just to make ends meet and whatnot. I did no travelling back then. It was very, very expensive. I stayed in there. I can't even say what was good about the jobs because there was really nothing. It was just going backwards. The responsibility was lack and I'd say, "Hey, this guy is junior to me." It didn't matter. It was just not suitable for me. So I made the best of it.

BK: You said it was an air force base?

LD: Yes, it was an air force base.

BK: What was the name?

LD: Naval Security Group Activity, Misawa, Japan. It was an air force base, but I worked at it with navy and air force people.

BK: Got it. Okay. So eighteen months, you're disappointed.

LD: Of the lack of responsibility in the job, if I was going to continue making it a career. Well, unfortunately, I got extended again for another six months because they ran out of money.

BK: [chuckles] Seems to be a theme in your career.

LD: Well, you call on [unclear] or my parents—I was still single and it's like, "I'm disappointed, Mom. They've extended me again." I was really—The job was terrible. The people were great. I got a long with everybody in [unclear]. The culture was great, but the job was crummy. I had responsibility, but not as much as I wanted to. If I was going to be a chief petty officer, I needed to have more responsibility and more directing and counseling with the military personnel. I had the minimum.

I worked it out. I had various admin jobs and I did security inspections. They put me in charge of that. I was in charge of it, but I didn't have any subordinates. That's what I was lacking. I did very good at all my jobs. it's just I wanted to have somebody like I did a little bit at my other duty stations.

BK: Now, were you given reasons why [unclear]?

LD: No, it was just that this person has it and that's it.

BK: That's it?

LD: It was cut and dry.

BK: Don't question.

LD: No question. I even went to command master chief, he says, "Well, we're just going to put you here and that's it." That's it.

I never said, "Oh, that guy shouldn't get—" I just kept it professional, but I knew in my heart I was passed over due to the fact that I was a woman.

My goal—I did take the chief exam. I passed, but I didn't get selected, which I wasn't upset because I knew I needed more, and they only made one a year, so it's like—So I narrowed it down. I said, "My first ten years in the military were great, but those two years were really—" passed over more responsibility by junior petty officers, male. I worked very hard but was not real thrilled with any these jobs. The training department was less responsibilities and repetitive. I was going up for chief and it was just the lack of responsibility.

While I was out there, I tried to do some volunteer work, working with children at orphanages. I did that for the last six or eight months. I played different sports to keep busy. Volunteer work. In fact, I almost stayed there and adopted a child.

BK: Oh, wow.

LD: But the Japanese people frown on a single woman to try to adopt children. I had a five-year-old boy that I was very, very close to and it didn't work out. Plus, I would have had to stay in Japan for another four or five years to show them that I was a suitable parent, so that went out the door.

BK: And you said you didn't really make friends there? Just a few.

LD: Oh, that command, I did make some female friends, and I'd consult them. They were T-branches [Cryptologic Technician, Technical]. She was in a little different—T, technical branch, and she didn't experience this as much as I did.

BK: Experience?

LD: The lack of—She was a supervisor. Lack of experience or lack of mobility to move up in a rate.

BK: Got it.

LD: She was in a different rate. Every rating was different. I grinned and beared it. My goal was actually—I wanted to be a recruiter, but then there wasn't—The billet opened for recruiting wasn't available where I wanted to go. It was due back for the [United] States.

BK: And you wanted to go somewhere else or stay in Japan?

LD: No, I had to go. It's one in, one out, one in, one out in your duty stations. I felt like my career was regressing after ten good years. I put in for navy— [Naval Security Agency] Sugar Grove [Station], West Virginia; a little station; like, six hundred, four hundred, three hundred people, something like that. I was in admin, and then I was a collateral career counselor.

BK: Okay.

LD: But I also was LPO. I got my wish; Leading Petty Officer. But the chain of command, point blank, didn't want me to be the LPO. They wanted a second-class petty officer to be the LPO and me just do career counseling, which you could do that, but the whole idea of me to go up for chief was to have some experience. At that duty station, there were all men, maybe two women in another department. I said, "No way. I don't want to give up the position because the career counselor's collateral." It doesn't mean you have to be LPO, but I was the most senior in the office, so it's my turn.

"Well, why don't you give it up and just do career counseling?"

I said, "Well, that's not a full-time job."

"Well, we want this E-5 to go up for E-6. We'd like him to be the leading petty officer."

And I said, "No, I'm not giving it up." So I didn't. But the mistake was that they gave me a very bad, hard time in my tour out there.

BK: In what ways?

LD: That's a good question: In what ways? Anything I would submit, they'd chop it up and give it back. I had the authority to write memos, letters and whatnot. They restricted me from using my authority, or directing or counseling. I would counsel someone for a career. They didn't have any excuse. They'd go back to the first class petty officer or the chiefs and say, "We don't want you to do—" Just micromanage really bad, just to make it hard for me, because it's really not a hard job. But knowing that I didn't want to give up the LPO job, they took advantage of giving me a hard time as a career counselor.

BK: So payback or trying to—

LD: Yes. I got 4.0s on my evals because I worked for a commander, but the rest of the chain of command and the master chief were not—They did not want a woman career counselor and they did not want a woman leading petty officer.

BK: Wow.

LD: And they made it known. They made it known, because any decisions I made would either be disapproved or—the phrase would be "undermined."

BK: Now, was this a surprise to you?

LD: Yes, it was a big surprise, because I was so excited that I finally got some seniority, and made first class, going to be collateral—a duty career counselor—which is a part-time job—got to lead the office, and it's like one guy kept the safe open purposefully, and as an LPO, you're responsible to make sure your people—but I said—I locked it and I signed it, but the guy purposefully opened it up after we left to get me in trouble. That's what I was dealing with; it's basically harassment. I said to the lieutenant—He says, "You know, Petty Officer Umpty-Ump, that you're responsible."

I said, "Yes, sir. I signed it. Someone opened it afterwards."

"No excuse." He wrote it up in his little book that—blah blah blah—didn't seed[?] the safe, which none of it was my fault. The guy just wanted to—When you want to get someone out of the job, you'll do anything.

BK: To sabotage?

LD: To sabotage it. I've had high level clearance for ten plus years, and here I am, somebody opening a safe and leaving it open overnight, and then I have to get the blame, which, yeah, the LPO, but I signed it that I closed it, and he said, "You signed it but you didn't."

I said, "I did. Someone else after me—" I knew what was going on. You know when you're being pushed out.

The guys wouldn't answer the phones, and they're junior to me, and the chief goes to them, "Let Petty Officer Quadri answer the phones." They wouldn't, and they were junior to me. If the phone rings three times, you've got to pick it up. That was hard to work with them. I'm the LPO. I gave them orders that we all take turns on the phone, but then we had a chief and one of the officers says, "No, I want you to."

You don't want to disobey anybody or let the phone ring off the hook, so you[?] say, "I don't want the guys to answer the phones. They're too busy." Too busy. Too busy. Too busy.

My husband-to-be—which I didn't know—I confide in my future husband. He was a personnel man at another base where we worked, but lower part of the base. It was one gigantic base but different commands. I get advice from him—

BK: How did you meet him?

LD: It was such a small base. At the enlisted club. He asked me to play racket ball, tennis— We did all sports. Very cordial. I get advice from him and he'd agree—I'd confide with him, I said, "Something's wrong with this command." The lieutenant, the chief, the other first class petty [officer], all of them were there to retire. None of them were there to move up in their careers. I was dealing with people that were getting out at twenty or twenty-one years. I asked his advice, not knowing he was going to be my future husband, but he agreed with me and he counseled me.

BK: What did he counsel you to do?

LD: He'd just say, "Hang in there. Be respectful. And I'll see what I can do." So he worked with my boss. Got to be diplomatic. He didn't want to say, "Oh, okay, this." He just made suggestions. And my boss was there just to retire, he couldn't care less. My future husband would talk to him to no avail; nothing changed, nothing got better. It just got worse.

He'd say, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I see it but we've got this lieutenant. Can't really do anything about it."

I was just so disappointed that—My PRD [projected rotation date] was 1990— No, my PRD was 1991, and my rotation date was 1990. So I made friends with Chief Doak, who was then a senior chief that made master chief. I confided with him on a professional level. Sometimes we'd play racket ball together or go to lunch. Very cordial. We never held hands or anything like that. But we did get engaged while we were out there, but it was very discrete. For two and a half years, I never wore the ring, never held hands in public or whatever; go by the rules. But people probably knew because it was a very small command, even though—He worked for a command in D.C., so he was not related to me, as far as a supervisor or anything like that, but he was my mentor.

BK: But you kept it on the down low just because of rank stuff?

LD: Ranks, and knowing that my command was giving me a hard, hard time, just to progress in my career. We got to like each other, then we did get engaged and kept it a secret. But there was nothing good about—I knew I couldn't get anywhere in the job, so I put in a request to separate in 1990. The lieutenant was still there, and then we got a new commander, a woman, who was shocked. I told her everything. If she was there, it wouldn't have happened. Even my husband, right now, twenty-seven years later, said, "If she was there, she would have dealt with it differently, as far as moving people around."

One of my subordinates did go vacation for thirty days and I was in charge for the whole department. For thirty days, did an outstanding job, but then my boss said, "Oh, she did a so-so job," in my eval.

I went, "No, I did an outstanding job." I knew I wasn't getting anywhere. The commander came back to me and counseled me, asked me into come into her office, and I said, "I think I've had it. I'm getting out." Plus, I knew—

She said, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I haven't decided." Well, I knew what I was going to do. I was going to get out and get married, because in order to get something good, you've got to give up something good, but I wasn't getting anywhere. My rating was closed. They'd given me a hard time. I'm not enjoying myself, but I met somebody I really care for, but he was going to be there another year or so. I didn't tell her. I kept it a secret because I knew my husband-to-be was still in the military, even though he just made master chief. I said, "Well, just keep it quiet." Which is a shame. Something like that, you're happy about, but sometimes you have to keep your mouth shut to get something good. She was very disappointed I was getting out, but I said, "I've had it. There's no way that I could see me—I've outgrown the job." I got an honorable discharge after fourteen years, and got married; four days later I got out. I've been married twenty-seven and a half years.

BK: Did you live with your husband on the base after?

LD: We lived off base for about six months, and then we took custody of his two children, which were great, and master chief of the command got a—what do you call it?—we got a house there; on base housing.

BK: Were people that you worked with surprised that suddenly you're back on base?

LD: Yes, but it's funny how they respect you more when you're married to a guy.

BK: Okay.

LD: No one bothered me. Everybody just was in awe that we got married, but all the sudden everybody liked me because, probably, my husband and his status. He was a command master chief. You're going to mess with the wife, you're messing with him.

BK: Right.

LD: He was like a protector, but I didn't have anybody at my command—We had a command senior chief. He didn't do nothing. Now, I didn't say that to him. You've got to be

diplomatic, but I knew it was—The fun part was that the other first class got a discharge, I got separated, and they couldn't replace either one. The office wound up with two guys in there, and it was like there was no one there to transfer, so they were shorthanded. They had to bring someone in—another T-brancher to come in, so it was kind of like a payback that two left and they're not going to replace you because you've been discharged. It wasn't in a rotation. But it's funny how you get married, and then all of the sudden, you're the command master chief's wife and everybody loves you.

BK: Did that make you feel bitter at all? Were you surprised with the change of attitude?

LD: Yeah, I was. Yeah, I was. It was—What's it called? There was a book out a long time ago, *Making Waves*. If I had never made chits or anything like that, I'd probably still be an E-3 or E—I'm serious. In order to get something, you've got to really push. You got to be—Everybody's personality is different. Some will work with you as a team and some won't. Like I said, the first ten years were great. I knew when I had to do the clean up jobs for an E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6, but goshdarnit, when I'm E-6 and trying to go for E-7, I better be moving in that right direction and I really spoke up. I went to the captains and this and that, and it was like, "Well, we don't have room for you here. We don't have room." There were so many excuses. And I got raving evals. It's not like I got dirtbag evals; I got 4.0 evals, recommended [unclear] and I was recommended for chief. It was like, my last two duty stations, what happened? Well, I made rate and I wanted more responsibility and they wanted to keep me down. Then all these other people that were junior to me were getting all the good jobs. They just so happened to be males. Anyway.

BK: Did they allow women on ships then?

LD: Not at that time, no.

BK: Not at that time. Did you know that going in?

LD: Yeah, I did.

BK: Okay. So you left as an E-6?

LD: Yeah.

BK: Did you experience any changes in the branch over the years? Did you see any changes?

LD: There was less respect from subordinates. I had a subordinate yell at me, and I didn't write him up. In fact, I never wrote anybody up in my career. The last two commands I worked at, they were writing-up happy. Every little bit—You blink your eye or you do something this, it was just inexcusable write-ups. I had someone yell at me or someone dis—I counseled them, but I didn't write them up.

BK: Do you think that was maybe as a whole, that attitude, or just where you were?

LD: The mid-to-late eighties, things changed, that subordinates would question what you're doing more than once or twice, whereas, when I went in, as a young subordinate, you didn't think twice. I remember somebody being late for one minute, we all had to stay an hour later, back in the seventies. You worked as a team, as a group. But no, I never wrote anybody up. There were many opportunities I could, but I believe in using my mind and education to help the person.

BK: Do you think they appreciated it?

LD: Oh, yeah. Even though I was ordered to, I said, "Please, respectfully, don't order me to write someone up. I will know if I need to." And in that case, I didn't need to. No, no.

BK: Did you feel like attitudes towards women being in the navy changed throughout your career?

LD: Yeah, the attitudes—Like I said, I did put in a lot of chits. They were declined in my first few years, but I kept on going, respectfully—"Oh, no, we need you here." Declined. Declined. Then when they might have left or retired, I got a new supervisor. So it's just in the last couple—it's just you get seniority—

BK: Right, but in general, in the navy, a lot of times women—

LD: In general, it seemed to dissipate, just disappear.

BK: What disappeared?

LD: Just the respect of women in the navy.

BK: So you think women were respected more when you came in?

LD: I think so, but it took a steady decline, and I can relate it to—that when you speak up or speak out, there's a tendency to—They frown on that. I could have not put chits in to get a different job. I could not have talked to captains or admirals and say, "I'd like to move on," and that was making waves with the chain of command because you wanted to progress in your career. There was always one excuse to another.

That was the hardest part, being accepted as a woman, a dedicated worker. I didn't hop in bed with anybody. I tried to date—It's just kind of hard. If it's not there, it's not there. It was all career and less social, as far as interacting with men on a social basis, until the end of my career.

BK: Okay. In recent years, reports about, and congressional investigations into military sexual trauma and sexual harassment have increased in awareness about these issues. Do you have any thoughts on that?

LD: Well, let's see. I was asked out by a lot of guys. Some of them were married and I would decline, so I don't know if declining put me in a spot where, "Well, she's not going to do this, I'm not going to promote her."

BK: A quid pro quo [a favor or advantage granted or expected in return for something] kind of thing?

LD: Yeah. One guy did try to touch me one time. I just whacked him.

BK: Okay. We talked about the difficulties—emotionally being disappointed. Were there any other difficulties, physically or emotionally, that you haven't talked about? No? What was most rewarding about your experience?

LD: Getting an opportunity to travel and work with different people. I picked all my duty stations. Good, bad, or indifferent, I got all the duty stations I wanted, not knowing that some would be more challenging as far as your career, that you might be passed over. But my favorite duty station was Rota, Spain.

BK: Okay.

LD: They gave me so much opportunity that I was so thankful, and even getting an extra year and thirty-days basket leave between security and collateral alcohol advisor and being instructor duty, and I felt very close to the Spanish people. They took good care of me. I lived off base.

BK: Okay. We're just going to switch over to personal views and experiences. Did you have any heroes or heroines during that time? Were there certain people you admired, either in the navy or just in the culture?

LD: Well, the chief petty officer that helped me out in '76, we so happened to follow each other in duty stations. I was stationed in California, and then Rota, and he got Rota also, like, a year later. Then we both got D.C., at different times. But he was probably the best. I knew him as a chief, and then when he retired, he was a master chief. He was the best. In fact, I stayed over at his house with his family when I left Spain, so yeah. I had good interaction with him, but he was never on the side where I complained about—That was the good years. I didn't have him at my other duty stations, but I had him at San Diego, Spain, and D.C.

BK: Okay. I'm sorry, go ahead.

LD: And he worked great with me.

BK: That's good. Did you have any heroines you didn't know, higher up in the navy or in culture in general?

LD: No. My brother was it. He reenlisted me the second time also. The officers were very nice, most of them, but if my brother didn't reenlist me, I think I was going to get out because he was my mentor. All my life growing up, he took care of me. He was the one encouraging me to go to college, because I wasn't; I had no intentions. He said, "Try the navy. See how it likes." I had no intention of making a career out of it. I wanted to have a family and settle down, which never worked out until now.

BK: While you were in the service, what were your impressions or opinions on the political and military leadership at that time?

LD: Well, we had to support the president no matter what, so I never talked politics, never got involved in any issues or anything that might be going on in the countries or the states. It was all mums. There was no discussion. No TV either, basically.

BK: Okay. Would you say you were—

LD: Screened.

BK: Screened. But did you have feelings about politics or you just didn't really—

LD: No.

BK: Okay.

LD: None at all.

BK: So you were in during a number of big events. Let's see. What about Tailhook? I mean, you were out of the military by then. Were you aware of the Tailhook assault scandal?

[The Tailhook scandal was a series of incidents where more than one hundred U.S. Navy and United States Marine Corps aviation officers were alleged to have sexually assaulted eighty-three women and seven men, or otherwise engaged in "improper and indecent" conduct, at the Las Vegas Hilton in Las Vegas, Nevada, during the 35th Annual Tailhook Association Symposium in September 1991]

LD: Yeah, I was aware of it. Since I've been out of the military, I've been exposed to a lot that had been going on, some in my career, but nothing was talked about. I had no one really to talk to. When you're working with 98% male and no females to confide in—yeah.

BK: Were you surprised or not surprised?

LD: I was not surprised, no. No, it didn't surprise me at all.

BK: What about the hostage crisis in Iran in 1979? You'd been in for a few years. Did that have any effect on you?

[The Iran Hostage Crisis was a diplomatic crisis between Iran and the United States. Fifty-two American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 444 days, from 4 November 1979 to 20 January 1981, after a group of Iranian students belonging to the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.]

LD: That's right, it was back then. Yeah, I was still in San Diego. I was not happy with it at all. I felt bad for the people, and I was disappointed. I was hoping the president could get them back, no matter whatever it took to get them back. But yeah, that one I did get involved a little bit. I think I basically talked to family, not my personnel.

BK: What about when Ronald Regan was shot in 1981?

[On 30 March 1981, President Ronald Reagan and three others were shot and wounded by John Hinckley Jr. in Washington, D.C.]

LD: Well, first let's go back to '80. When he took office, he gave the military a 20% raise, and I was in Rota, Spain, and that was the highest ever, ever, ever. When he got shot, I was demoralized. I hoped he lived because he took office right away and gave the military the biggest raise ever. I was sympathetic to him and his family, and I was glad he recovered.

BK: What are your thoughts on the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy?

["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.]

LD: Well, it's sad that one of my co-worker, nineteen years, got quartered[?]; divulged that he was gay. He lost his clearance and he was removed from the navy, and he was one of my bosses, and he was having a relationship with another guy. I felt bad. It doesn't interfere with your work. We all put the pants on the same way. Whatever. Now—For back then, security clearance, he did not divulge that he was gay. I didn't think you had to tell anybody, but [unclear]—There's no need to tell. It's really nobody's business, is it? It's a private thing, just like religion. But back then, there was no excuse, you're gone. It's personal. You shouldn't be kicked out of the navy, or the military, just because you might

have different values or morals than everybody else. No, I don't believe they need to tell, no.

BK: Right, they struck it down now so you can be openly gay or lesbian. Any thoughts?

LD: Oh, so yeah, that's fine.

BK: What are your thoughts on women serving in combat? They removed that restriction. And they're working on enlisted and submarines also.

LD: Well, back in our times, we were [weren't?] allowed on ships or any others. I think it's great.

BK: Okay. You're very navy-centric, but were you were listening to any music—a certain type of music—or movies or television?

LD: I didn't watch TV very much. Five years overseas, we had maybe one channel. So the socialist[?] bull fights, or shopping; a lot of cathedrals in different in countries. TV was zero, so I didn't—to tell you the truth, didn't listen to any news. There was nothing. Armed Forces Radio Stations kept us up on all the states and countries. Yeah, I didn't get involved unless I got letters from family. That's something in the military—I missed a lot of funerals from a lot of family that passed away, a lot of weddings, a lot of bar mitzvahs, a lot of—just a lot of family things that when you're in the military you're not exposed to because you're gone. You're on a mission. That's what it was, on a mission. I didn't see people for twenty, twenty-five years, until I got out. And I had said once I get out, I'm going to make sure I visit family that we're very close to, and I have. I've met everybody and gotten back—We're closer now than ever, even though fifteen, twenty-five years we didn't see each other. Because my mom would keep in contact with all the family. We're very family-oriented. Friends, at a minimum, but very family oriented. My husband and I got married in 1990, and he stayed in another two years and then he retired.

BK: Okay. We're going to move on to after the military. A lot of people, veterans, it's a culture shock, but for you it's a slightly different culture shock because now you're not leaving the navy—I mean, the navy world—but you're suddenly not in the navy. Did you have an adjustment period with that? You mentioned that you were surprised with how much more respect you got.

LD: Yeah. My husband was two more years in the military, so I was a military wife for two years. If I had a choice, if I did meet somebody, I would have gotten out. I wouldn't want a navy career and a career with a spouse.

BK: Did you have an adjustment period—

LD: I tried to be myself. I was just myself. The change was that I got married to a man that was very well respected, and if you messed with the master chief or his wife, if people tried to, he could intercede where he couldn't before.

BK: Right.

LD: I didn't have anybody on my back to help me.

BK: You said he had two children. Did you work outside the home once you were married?

LD: Well, it was a duty station with three hundred animals and maybe five hundred people. It was a very tiny spot, very remote. I worked at a bowling alley.

BK: Okay. And how old were his kids?

LD: Seven and eleven. I actually was a step-mom to my two kids that now are grown and are great.

BK: Okay. Have you used your veteran's benefits? Your GI Bill, mortgages?

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

LD: Mortgage. The VA [Veterans Administration] medical also.

BK: Okay. What are your experiences like with the VA?

LD: Touch and go. I gave up my spot because another vet was critically ill and they couldn't see both of us, so I gave up my spot numerous times, which is okay because we have other insurance, but I can see the need where they need more doctors, unfortunately. More doctors. As far as the transition from military to civilian, being a veteran didn't help me get a job.

BK: Did it hurt you?

LD: It didn't hurt, it didn't help. It was like I applied for a lot of jobs down here. I was like, "Wow." Same thing with my husband. He was a master chief, got out after twenty-years, and then he got a job for security for six dollars an hour. He had to start at the bottom all over again. No, it didn't help. It didn't hurt. It's just I was shocked that after all my years, and my husband's, that we had to actually start from the bottom.

BK: Did you move to Florida right after?

LD: In '92, after two years [unclear].

BK: And do you have family there or do you just like Florida?

LD: Oh, he was a Florida resident. His family was in Jacksonville.

BK: Okay, so you've been there since then?

LD: Twenty-five years we've been here.

BK: Okay.

LD: This is the first time I've ever talked, and I don't talk about my career that much, except for my brother. I just keep things to myself. This is the most I've ever talked to a woman on it, really!

BK: Okay, just sort of overarching questions now. What would you say if someone asked you, like me, how has your life been different because of your time in the navy?

LD: How am I personality-wise now?

BK: Or just—

LD: Well, I couldn't be myself. I was jovial, loved to laugh and all, loved to cry too. I could not show any emotion in my field because I had a high-level clearance. I kept a lot of things to myself, which could be a hinderance or could help. I just couldn't be myself. I had to work harder than everybody else, for the same job, and try to get the same results.

BK: Did you feel relieved once you left, that you didn't have to be so—

LD: It took an adjustment. I wouldn't take breaks. I never took a break in the military. All the smokers did, but I never took a break. I didn't know what a break was, so when I got a civilian job, they'd say, "Louise, you've got to take a break."
"Oh, we can? We're allowed?" Finally, they'd push me out of the chair to get—I was still with the military demeanor in the way I talked and the way I acted. People had to drag me out to take a break or eat lunch or that. I was really scared to do it, because actually—I won't say it was all work and no play, but it was just so stringent. You didn't think twice, you just kept on going and going and going until the battery dies.

BK: Can you envision what your life might have been like if you hadn't joined the navy, or just don't know?

LD: I would probably be still single, living with my mom and dad.

BK: Okay. Your children, did they serve in the military, or are they serving?

LD: Oh, no. My stepson was in it for about a year and then he got out. He wasn't too happy with it, so he got out.

BK: Okay. Did you encourage them or discourage them or they didn't ask?

LD: Well, they were both in NROTC [Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps] at high school, but both of them decided not to—They're both in hospitality. My stepdaughter works for Disney and my stepson is a manager at Embassy Suites.

BK: Okay. Would you recommend the service to young women today?

LD: Yes, I would.

BK: Okay. Do you want to mention that or talk about why?

LD: Until you actually go in the military, you don't know what you're getting into. Even if I knew all the positives and negatives, I still would have went in. I would say be yourself, be proactive, be respectful, do a good job at work, but in order to get promoted, you need to be very proactive to move along in your job and your career. I would advise to make sure you save your money to get an IRA [Individual Retirement Account], because when you come out you're going to need some money. Take some educational courses. Travel, go overseas for your duty station. Don't whine, don't cry. Just go along with the flow. If you disagree with something, be diplomatic, but be a good listener.

BK: But if someone came to you for advice—a young person, like, "should I join?"—you would say yes?

LD: Yes, because right now, for the last five years, I'm a mentor at East Ridge High School for Take Stock in Children, and I mentor students [in] ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth grade. I'm on my fifth year now with different students, and I have one right now that wants to go in the navy, and I am recommending, but I also say, "Just be yourself. If you want to date somebody, just keep things very discrete. Be a team player, be alert with what you're doing, save your money, travel, do some educational courses but have a little social life, and just enjoy your time and just think of it as a four-year career and see where you're going to go." So, yes, I do have a student right now that wants to go into NROTC, where they'll pay some of the college education, and then go into the military. I am prejudice. Some want to go in the army—the students I work with—but I am prejudice; I encourage the navy.

[Take Stock in Children Inc. is a nonprofit organization founded by Don Pemberton in 1995 and based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The organization aims to provide mentors and college scholarships to low-income students in Florida, in order to help them graduate and successfully enter a career]

BK: Why the navy over the army?

LD: I think it's just better. I think it's a better field to be in the navy. It's just better.

BK: Better opportunities?

LD: I think better opportunities, and I think you could do more in the navy. The rating system, as far as promotion, I think, is better than the army or air force, but I would encourage and help them to broaden themselves—not just navy because I went in the navy—but just leave it to them. Like I said, I'm prejudice because the whole family, but I got to be openminded and say, "Hey, you want to go in the army? What can I do to help?" But this is what you're going to do in the army. Navy is not going to be in the front lines.

"Oh, I want a gun!"

"Well, let's wait and see before you go and want a gun."

BK: Right. So what does patriotism mean to you?

LD: Wow. Honor and respect your president, your vice president; salute the flag; bow down, put your hand to the heart; dedicate yourself within your job for the military; support the military; and continue to be a team player.

BK: Okay. Then my last formal question: Is there anything in particular you would want a civilian to know about, or understand, what it is like to serve in the military that they might not understand or appreciate?

LD: You may not get the job that you want. You may not be able to be diversified in your job or in your career. You're going to have to work extra hard no matter what you want.

BK: Yes, okay. You think extra hard than outside the military, than the civilian jobs?

LD: Yeah.

BK: Did you find that your civilian coworkers got more promotions than you did, do you think?

LD: Oh, yeah, definitely. They got it first.

BK: Okay. Well, I don't have any more formal questions. Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't covered?

LD: No.

BK: Okay. Well, thank you very much, Louise.

LD: You're welcome.

[Recording Ended]