

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARY JO RICE-MAHONEY

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kathryn Tracy Rizzi: This begins an interview with Mary Jo Rice-Mahoney on April 4, 2019, in Westfield, New Jersey, with Kate Rizzi. Thank you so much for doing this oral history interview.

Mary Jo Rice-Mahoney: My pleasure.

KR: To begin, where and when were you born?

MRM: I was born in the Brooklyn Naval Hospital in Brooklyn, New York, January 2, 1947.

KR: What do you know about your family history, starting on your mother's side?

MRM: On my mother's side, she took time to do some genealogy after she retired in Savannah, Georgia. That's where my mother's side of the family's from originally. I met cousins and aunts and uncles down there. We went every summer, my brothers and I, as grade school into high school kids. My sister was older and working every summer. From my mother's work, I know that my great-great grandfather from Georgia fought in the Civil War for the Confederacy, which surprised me, to no end. I know that her three brothers--there were four, her and her three brothers--my three uncles were in the military in World War II, and her father did not perform any military service.

My grandmother, my mother's mother, lived in Brooklyn, and her father grew up in Savannah, Georgia. His father, very interestingly, my great grandfather, we discovered, in Savannah, there was an institution for boys called the Bethesda Home for Boys. We found out that my great grandfather had been placed there by his mother. My mother and I were working on our genealogy, when I could get a vacation and go down, intriguing. We went to the Bethesda Home for Boys. It's now, I think, co-ed. I called them first, and I said, "Do you, by any chance, have any archives?" "Absolutely." My mother and I go, a very small room, very old looking with furniture, and beautiful. The lady that escorted us there brought down this big book, and she placed it on a big podium and opened it up. My mother and I went down with our fingers and there it was, from all those years ago. It said his name, and he was placed by his mother on such-and-such a date. I think that was it. Then, it was only eight or nine months later, we found that his mother came back and took him home. She was a widow at the time that she placed him there. We could only guess as to why this happened. I'm thinking he was maybe junior high age, and we were thinking, Mom and I, he may have been placed there because they had programs for the boys to teach them life skills and we think he learned baking or something to do with that, but he did not pursue that.

My great grandfather became very well known in Savannah, Georgia. He became a topographer and was very active in the community, and he organized the first labor union for topographers in Savannah, Georgia and was very active in that whole movement, which I think was very difficult to accomplish. It was a lot of obstacles to overcome, and he even knew--we found this from newspaper articles--he even knew or worked with Samuel J. Gompers, who was very active in the labor movement back then, very famous. I know that about mom's grandfather. [Editor's Note: Samuel J. Gompers (1850-1924) founded the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and served as the president for decades.]

The women were housewives. None of them had working careers, that we uncovered anyway. What else did we uncover? I think that's probably as much as I know about her family. Mom, she was the oldest and had the three younger brothers. There was another brother who passed away in infancy, and they were all born in Brooklyn.

Oh, I wanted to tell you this. My mother's mother, my maternal grandmother, was in Brooklyn, New York. Grandpa was in Savannah, Georgia. I was so curious, and I said, "How on Earth did you meet each other?" Well, Grandma had a sister who had a friend and they were going to take a steamer down to Savannah, Georgia for a vacation, and that's what they did. Somehow, they met my grandfather, and he and my grandmother were attracted to each other and established a relationship. Eventually, my grandfather moved to Brooklyn and established himself there, and he worked. His career was with the Farrell Shipping Lines in New York. Years ago, I was very interested, I haven't followed up yet, but I called--and I didn't have technology. I called, and sure enough, the Farrell Shipping Lines was and still is, I think, in existence and, yes, they have an archives area. I explained that my grandfather worked for them for years. I have a picture of him in his office and would they have pay cards, pay records, anything. They said they might, "You're more than welcome to come and look," but I've never followed up yet. I am going to get to New York to follow up on Grandpa at the shipping lines. [Editor's Note: Founded by James A. Farrell, Sr. in the early twentieth century and then continued by his sons, Farrell Lines operated as a shipping company. Currently, Maersk Line Limited owns Farrell Lines.]

Grandpa came to Brooklyn and started his career. Grandma's sister always lived with them. They had a brownstone, three stories, four stories, in Brooklyn, on Eighth Street. Aunt Ella, Grandma's sister, always lived with them, and Grandma never worked. She was a homemaker and mom. My father was career Navy, so we would get to go to Brooklyn on vacations, mostly at Christmastime. I think it was always at Christmastime, and we would go to visit Grandma and Grandpa and our aunts and uncles and cousins. That's about what I know on my mom's side.

KR: What do you know about your family history, on your father's side?

MRM: My father's side, I know less on. I know piecemeal, because my cousins on Long Island have done extensive genealogy work. They've sent me copies of some stuff, but I haven't read it and I haven't gotten into it, but I'm fascinated. At all the family get-togethers, they would all sit around--my father was one of ten, a huge family we have--and they would, for years, all these decades, sit around at the family parties and Irish as Paddy's pig, so the storytelling would go on and on. I would grab pieces of paper and napkins, and I'm writing down. I have them all and have not written them or organized them, so anybody else could read them.

I know that my father was one of ten, from Brooklyn, and his father and his mother came from Ireland. My grandmother, Bridget Hughes, came from Ireland to New Orleans, and Grandma went to New Orleans because she had an aunt who ran a boarding house there. Bridget moved in with the aunt, and I have yet to figure out how Grandma in New Orleans found Grandpa in Brooklyn, but he came from Ireland. He may have come to Upstate New York but wound up in Brooklyn. He was, yes, that's right, he was a cooper. He worked making barrels, and then he also did--my father would use this term--stationary engineer. It had nothing to do with trains or

engineering. We'll have to Google that, but that's what he did. He, unfortunately, passed away when my father was three or four. [Editor's Note: A stationary engineer operates industrial machinery.]

My father has one memory of his father. They were in a brownstone in Brooklyn. His memory is--have you been to the brownstones ever? They have the big stoops with the big steps. My dad remembered sitting on the stoop with his father and he was between his knees, looking at the brownstones across the street, being very afraid and feeling so secure because of his dad's knees. I'm going to cry. Grandpa died when Dad was little. There were seven daughters, and then they had three sons. Uncle Tom was the oldest and then Dad, and Uncle John was the youngest of the boys. Grandma was a widow with ten children. I have some Kleenex here.

KR: I have a napkin.

MRM: Oh, I've got it. I've got it right here.

KR: Oh, sure.

MRM: Thank you very much. Grandma did not ever go out to work, but the older daughters stopped whatever they were doing in terms of schooling, or if they had jobs, they continued the jobs. The three oldest never married, because they were very busy earning money and helping Grandma raise the younger children. That was Aunt May and Kay. I think Sally was the next oldest. Sally did marry though. May and Kay never married. They did the raising of the other children and helping Grandma.

My grandfather, I never met. My grandmother I did meet. I was very little. I never had conversations with her. I wasn't oldest enough, but I do have a memory of her in her bedroom and I guess she might have been sick by that point or just not able to party with the family anymore. They always told the story that Grandma would be with the family when the party first started, the get-together. She was always very, very well dressed. She was beautiful. She would partake in the conversations, and then she would very quietly say goodnight and she'd go off and she'd have--they would say--a dishcloth over her arm and apparently some kind of libation under the dishcloth and go into her room [laughter] after saying goodnight to everybody. I remember Grandma Bridget, I was in her bedroom and she was in her bed. I was little, so her bed was huge to me. It was beautiful, old, wooden [with] the headboard, and Grandma was propped up with her pillows and her beautiful flannel nightgown. I guess the adults were talking. I was mesmerized because behind me--I was at the footboard--was her dresser. You're probably not [old] enough to ever see these, maybe, but she had, on her dresser, a beautiful doily and she had a globe, like about this [hand-held size]. It wasn't the snow kind, but in the globe was--I don't know if it was a preserved rose or some kind of red rose, and I thought that was just phenomenal. I was mesmerized by that. That's my memory, Grandma in her bed, beautiful as ever, and her rose in the globe. [laughter]

She passed, I don't know how old she was when she passed away. I don't know how old I was, but I remember that she passed away. I forget where we were stationed, and I remember Dad flying to go to the funeral. I probably was not even grade school, maybe in kindergarten, but

they didn't have pre-K. I may have been that old. Grandma passed away, and then it was the ten adult children and their spouses, except for May and Kay, and then all the cousins started arriving. Everybody was in Brooklyn for a very long time, and then eventually--Grandma had died--everybody moved out to Long Island. All the aunts and uncles moved out to Long Island, including May and Kay.

They continued to be single. They lived together for the rest of their lives, and they were fascinating to me for their careers that they had. We would go to visit Aunt May and Kay. Aunt May, I'm named after her. I don't know how they got May, but her name was Mary Josephine. We would go to visit them, and Aunt May would give us, the three of us, me and my brothers, from her office, pads of paper and pencils, and we thought that was such a great deal, wow. She worked in some kind of medical office, I guess, I don't know, for a doctor or what. I was old enough. She knew I wanted to be a nurse, and she had one or two or three medical kind of textbooks that she would let me look through, fascinating to me, at that age. That was May and Kay, and everyone else married out on the island with their children and then the children grew. All of our aunts and our uncles have passed away on my father's side of the family. I forget who the last one was to pass away. Uncle John was the first, he died younger of, I think it was, colon cancer.

Now, all of the grown children are out on the island, and we do have a family reunion every Fourth of July. We used to have it on the Fourth of July. My cousin Mary Jane and her husband Ed have the party. They have a nice, big house, right out on the Long Island Sound, and they used to have it on the Fourth of July. Then, we wised up. The traffic was a nightmare for anybody coming. They're all out there. It would take us two and a half, three hours, but we go religiously. They now have it the week somewhere before the Fourth of July. I think it's now always before the Fourth of July. I think that's about it for my father's side of the family.

I know my father and his three brothers were in the military during World War II. I don't know what everybody went into after the military, except Mary Jane is a nurse. There are several of us nurses in this family. It's ironic. We took a picture of ourselves one year at the party. Mary Jane's husband Ed worked in the medical products field for years and years and years. I'm seventy-two. My sister is seventy-five. They are in their eighties, early eighties. They're the over-the-hill gang, and their children are all grown and have children. Some are out on Long Island; some are in California. My cousin Ellen is in Jersey, out in West Jersey, and my cousin Bernadette, from my father's side of the family, is in Westfield. We get together as we can. I think that's all I know about my dad's family. These notes, I have tons of snippets of things, and it's fascinating to read that. I laugh. One day, I'll get them collated or whatever.

KR: Yes, put them into a scrapbook.

MRM: Yes, and make it so anybody can read it in the family.

KR: I am curious about the military service that various members of your family have had. Can you tell me about that?

MRM: I can tell you that my great-great grandfather, Ezekial Harris, who fought in the Civil War, my mother found a newspaper, a real short thing, it was a column, and it was just listing Civil War veterans and their pensions, so Ezekial Harris is mentioned with his pension. I know his unit is in this letter that my cousin--my cousin went to the archives in D.C., and he wrote this many page, handwritten letter years ago to family members and it got handed down to me. I know his unit. I know he went to--I'm blanking on the name--but they had these annual, I think they were annual, Civil War reunions in Chatham [County] or Savannah. Chatham is on these ribbons, but he went to these reunions. My mother put together, when she retired, besides the genealogy, I'll tell you about that, but she put together twenty-one binders of everything from the 1800s to modern day. They're beautiful works of art, and she made me be the keeper and also besides that, all the eight-mm home movies. Ezekial, in this letter, my cousin did write some things about his fighting in the Civil War; that's Ezekial.

Then, my grandfather did not go into the military. My mother's brothers, I have pictures; I think they were sailors in the Navy, from their uniforms, and they were in the military only for World War II. That was that military history, and it ended with my uncles. I do have one cousin who was career Army. I have one nephew, my brother Pat's younger son, did go into the Navy for a couple years I think.

My father's brothers, two brothers, Tom and John, they were in the military during World War II also, and I do not know what they did. I know they and my mother's brothers were enlisted in the military. My father started in the military, believe this, out on Long Island, in a Reserve unit, a Reserve cavalry unit. I said, "Dad, does that mean you rode horses?" He said, "Yes, we rode horses." I don't know what that unit did out there. I don't know what year he joined it, how long he was in it, but he decided he wanted to be a pilot. I have the paperwork of his--and all the stories from my mother and from my father--of him joining the Navy. He was sent to flight training down in Florida. We have a big picture of his entire squadron. See, I'm used to Army terms. [laughter] He was Navy.

He graduated successfully, and he became a pilot. He was a flight instructor for a while, right away, and then he started flying. He was career, for twenty-three years. He flew during the war. After the war, I'm trying to figure out what age I was, probably when I was in grade school, they transferred him from flying to a desk job. They had a term for it, like flying a desk, because they hated it, the pilots. Flying is in your blood, like nursing, and I cannot imagine what that transition had to be, or if they ever even really, really fully transitioned. Then, Daddy was always a desk pilot for the rest of his career.

My sister was born in Florida in '43. Then, I was born in '47 in Brooklyn, New York, but we were only in Brooklyn, New York because--and I never understood [this]; now, [for] my father, I have all these questions--however, we were there because Daddy was sent to Princeton University to attend Princeton University. I was born. My father never graduated from Princeton. I think we were there a year or two at the most, and then my father received orders to--hold on to your hat--Africa.

My sister was six, I was two, and my mother was seven months pregnant and gets on a plane, gets us all on a plane with Dad, and off we go to Africa, French Morocco, Rabat. Mother was

seven months pregnant, as I said, so they did not have a base there. We lived in an immense, gorgeous, palatial villa, and we lived with two other naval families that my parents had literally grown up with in the Navy. One couple had two children, so they were like siblings to us. The other couple never had children.

Mom's seven months pregnant, and she goes into labor. Dad was flying still at that point. She goes into labor, and Dad takes her to, it was called, a clinic. Mother had to bring her own linens. They get the bed made or whatever, the table [laughter], and she goes into hard labor. She starts delivering, and the doctor is at her feet. My brother Mike is born, and he had a club foot. The foot is bent up, and the doctor was so concerned. There was no bassinette. It was a big wicker basket on the floor. He turns around, with, I guess, a nurse, and he's examining Mike and his foot. The nurse takes Mike, so the doctor turns around to finish up with Mom. This was the only thing Mother ever heard the doctor say in English. He turns right around, and he says, "Oh, my God, two babies." I said to Mom, "What did you do?" She said, "I jumped up on my elbows, looking in between my knees and I screamed, 'What did you say?' He said, '*Deux*. Two babies.'" [laughter] It was fifteen minutes between, and, sure enough, my brother Pat was born.

Pat was a little bit less developed than Mike. Mike was huskier. I forget what they weighed, but they weren't seven or eight pounds. They were less than that, I'm sure, but Pat didn't even have his fingernails yet. He didn't have his eyebrows and eyelashes yet. He was smaller than Mike, much smaller than Mike at birth, and kind of caught up height-wise, but Mike was always huskier. Pat was always outgoing and social and getting in trouble, not big trouble, but you know. Mike was always very quiet, very shy, very reserved, very good in school. Pat couldn't care less about school. What were we talking about? My father's side ...

KR: You were talking about your father, and you were saying where your father was stationed.

MRM: His military [career]. That was Africa and the big deal. Because Mike had a club foot, we had to leave sooner than Daddy's assignment would be finished. We have pictures of all this. In our palatial villa, we had a man that worked for the families and two women. Tahib was the man, and Hada and Iesha were the two ladies. They adored all of us children, adored. The parents would go out to the officer's club for parties and things, and we would all be at the top of the stairs. The minute they were gone and the door was closed and the cars was gone, [laughter] Tahib would turn around and say to us, "Coke, Coke?" We would, "Coke." We would bend the rules when Mom and Dad were gone. We did have to leave earlier than usual. We have pictures and movies of the boys in the wicker basket and us girls and Mom, post-delivery, not very long post-delivery, and the Navy plane at the Navy airport and Dad in his uniform and all the friends were there. Tahib was there, not Hada and Iesha. They were getting us onto this Navy plane to fly us home to the States, and we did go back to Brooklyn, lived with Grandma and Grandpa while Mom and Dad had Mike followed by an orthopedist. Mike had to wear the metal brace with the screw shoes that would be changed, and he's perfectly fine, always was after they healed his foot. That was Africa. Then, we came to Brooklyn, and we were all born by then.

I think the next station was Tennessee, Memphis, Tennessee. The quarters were not houses or homes; they were converted barracks. I remember just snippets. Pat and Mike were toddlers, but little toddlers, walking. On some half of the barracks, it was a big two or three-story

building, and I don't even remember what our place looked like. I do remember Pat wandered over where they were doing construction and drank an orange juice can--we don't know how much--of turpentine. That was the first adventure with Patrick off to the emergency room. Also, I remember my sister got to go downstairs to a wonderful birthday party and I was very angry because I didn't get to go, but I could hear it all. That was Tennessee, and I don't know what my father did there. I don't know what his assignment was or how long we lived there. This is written down, at home.

After Tennessee, I know I started kindergarten when we were stationed in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and we lived in a house, not on the base or anything. We lived in a house with other attached houses, right smack on the beach and I mean right smack on the beach. I forget how long we lived there, but it was heaven. I think my father had an administrative job by then.

Let me back up. Before I started kindergarten, we lived in Oceana, Virginia, and we had a private home. The excitement I remember from there is my sister was in school already. I was not, and I was jealous. She went to school one day, and I proceeded to walk out the back door and run away. I didn't run away; I just wandered. I wanted to go to school. I think about it now and oh, my God. Somehow, I wandered into what was a small, family owned, it was like a grocery store. They had fresh produce, and all I remember is my mother found me there. I don't know if the police were involved. I don't know how the homeowner connected me to my mother maybe, I mean, the store owner. I don't remember going home with my mother, but I remember going up the stairs to the backdoor. At that point, Mother felt comfortable enough to be very angry, and she was reprimanding me. I could've cared less because the shop owner had given me a pocket full of candy. [laughter] I didn't tell my mother, and I didn't care what she was scolding me for.

Now, the other event in Oceana was--I'm not in school yet--it was Christmastime, and my sister wanted a dog desperately. I don't even know how Jill arrived at the home, but it was Christmas. I remember the Christmas tree was up, and she was a beautiful puppy, a Collie. We all loved her desperately and wanted to be the ones holding her. [There were] slippery hardwood floors, and she could not walk or try to run. It was hysterical. I remember the other thing about that home, fascinating. It was old enough that it had a back staircase from the kitchen, upstairs. I don't know if there was a servant's bedroom or something up there. That was fascinating to me.

Then, we were in Ocean View, living at the beach. I'm starting kindergarten, and I hated it. There was a lady who drove her car with me and maybe two other children. I don't remember how many, and she would drive us to our kindergarten. It was horrendous every morning. My mother would bring me out to the lady's car, and we didn't have seatbelts back then. I would be in the car. The window was down, and I was screaming, sobbing, crying. This woman, every day. Eventually, I fell in love with my kindergarten teacher, so I didn't care anymore about mom. I had separation anxiety, but I was also upset because Pat and Mike got to stay home. Kindergarten was great. Ms. Kelam, I loved her. She got engaged while she was our teacher. That was big excitement. We just knew it was exciting. We didn't know what it was all about.

The other excitement was while we lived there, Pat and Mike were in diapers, and we were always down on the beach. Mother was always there, but maybe Mom was there and she wasn't

looking because there were other moms who came. One of the boys, I think it was Mike, wandered into the water by himself, and Mother had not seen it. Jill ran right into the water and grabbed him by the back of his diaper and yanked him back up to Mom, or halfway up to Mom, and Mom realized what was going on. That was wonderful.

There was a big, floating log out there one day. One of the young boys [from] a couple of houses down jumped into the water into a giant jellyfish, the big, huge kind that you can die from. I remember that, and we went down to see him. He was almost naked on his sofa, and he was covered in calamine lotion with the fans blowing and I remember that.

After Virginia Beach, first grade, where was I in first grade? I don't remember first grade. We all went to Catholic school. It was first, second and third grade that I don't remember, or fourth grade, very well. I remember the school. I remember my teacher was a nun. I fell in love with her. She was wonderful. What I remember about that experience--I think that was still in Virginia somewhere--we went out to recess and, somehow, I had something, chips or something like that leftover. I had them on the thing under my desk, and I was trying to eat them in the classroom. [laughter] Dad was in administration by then, for sure, and that's the only thing I remember about where we were then. Those were the grades that I'm missing, so that was the school, I'm sure.

Then, I start to remember. Fifth grade, we lived in Coronado, California. Dad was stationed at the naval air station in Coronado, had an administrative job. We were in Catholic school. My sister went to school in San Diego every day. She was a freshman in high school in San Diego. My brothers and I went to the Catholic school not far from our house, and the Catholic church was right across the street. I was in fifth grade, and my brothers were two years younger, so whatever they were in, third. I remember the house perfectly. We had a joyous time in Coronado. We did some sightseeing, like Balboa Park in San Diego, and we'd go out to the naval air station and see all the planes. It was just delightful. We walked to school; it was just a delightful time.

What I remember is every day we would stand outside in the beginning of the school day, and we would salute the flag and sing the anthem or whatever we did, the *Pledge of Allegiance*. We'd start the school day, and then we'd go to recess, the whole school. It was small. I remember my brother Mike came up to me at recess. Now, get this, she'd have been put in jail today. He was crying, and I said, "What happened?" "Sister jabbed my pencil in my head." I said, "What?" I looked at his head. He had a crew cut. They always had crew cuts. Sure enough, he had I forget how many pencil stabs, lead stabs, in his scalp. I was livid. However, we had to finish the school day, and I was only in fifth grade. I could get angry, but I couldn't say anything. We got home, and we told Mom, who told Dad. My father, he was a wonderful, wonderful person, wonderful father, wonderful husband, wonderful military officer, but don't you mess with his family and/or the military. Don't bad mouth the military. He found out what happened. He got in the car and went up to the convent, and he was livid, livid. I have no idea what transpired. We were not kicked out of school, and I don't know what happened to that teacher. I have to ask my brother Mike whatever happened to her, did she still teach them. I said, "How did it happen?" at recess. He said she was walking up and down the aisle. I don't know if they had a test, math, or something. He did something wrong, or he said something

wrong, and she picked up the pencil and just jabbed it in his scalp. He still is traumatized from that.

What else happened in Coronado? My sister was in high school. I did fifth and sixth grade in Coronado, California. Mom was a homemaker. She stayed a homemaker all our years, until college, [laughter] until college tuition hit the family. That was Coronado.

Daddy then received orders to Oahu, Hawaii, and [it was a] phenomenal time of our lives. I look back now; I should've been older. We went to Hawaii on a plane, civilian, commercial plane, and it was a big to-do. We were very dressed up. I had a hat. My sister and I had a hat on. We had dresses on. I wasn't wearing stockings, my sister was, she was, and we had our dress shoes on. My mother was dressed up. My father was in a suit. My brothers were dressed. We had a lovely time on the plane. I don't remember the flight very much. We arrived, and all my father's friends were there, Navy friends. They greeted us. We stayed in a hotel, one of the very famous, big, beautiful hotels right on Waikiki Beach with a gorgeous view of Diamond Head, and it was like, "This is heaven. What's not to love?" Of course, Daddy had to start work right away. We did not get to our quarters for maybe a month or two. Now, get this, our quarters were on Ford Island in the middle of Pearl Harbor, I mean, not for nothing. Anyway, back at the hotel, I have to get you through the hotel part, and we're living *The Life of Riley*, us kids. Mom had to be a mom, and Dad's going to work every day. I became extremely ill, very, very, very ill. Every joint on my body was ten times its normal size. I was running fevers. They took me to a doctor. [Editor's Note: *The Life of Riley* was a radio and television comedy show that aired in the 1940s and 1950s.]

They wound up admitting me to Tripler Army Hospital. Now, Tripler is way up on the mountain, and it was a good long drive from the hotel and even a longer drive from Ford Island because we had to take ferries from the island to the mainland, to Oahu, and then drive. They had to admit me to Tripler Army Hospital. Daddy had an administrative job still, and Mom was a homemaker. I was in the hospital for a month. They could not figure out a diagnosis. They worked me up for everything, including polio. I mean, [it was] excruciating pain. At one point, they were giving me what's called aqueous penicillin. It's an injection, and it's white. It's very thick, and it hurts tremendously. I had to have several of those in my gluteus maximus, and I'm telling you, I'd just scream.

They wound up diagnosing juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. They had no medications like now, and all they could give me was massive doses of aspirin, which is what the pediatrician diagnosed me with having and that's what he explained to Mom and Dad would be the treatment. He said it can be very dangerous because it's a blood thinner and it can cause ulcers, so just be on the lookout. It worked wonderfully. I had no side effects from it. [laughter]

When I was in the hospital, when I was very, very ill, I don't remember getting any pain medication at all, and what I craved was them putting me in a boiling hot water tub bath. I would just sit there for as long as the water would stay hot, not warm, it had to be hot, and they would do that, God bless them, I don't know how many times a day, on the day shift, the evening shift, the night shift. Then, when I got better and was out of bed, I remember sitting on the window sill or the ledge, and big windows and looking down--they had an air conditioner, of

course--looking down, there was a cement, big walkway. It was an overpass of something down below, and the sun was beating down on that cement. I guess I was cold in the air conditioning, and I was craving to go out and sit on that cement, craving it. I also learned to, for everybody I knew, take tennis balls and yarn and make octopi, braiding the eight legs. I don't even know how if my mother taught me that or somebody in the hospital, and my mother brought me all of the supplies. It was great because it kept me occupied. I was fascinated. Everybody was getting these presents. [laughter]

I had to be hospitalized once [in] seventh grade, once in eighth grade. We were in Hawaii for seventh, eighth and ninth grade. Daddy was in administration, as I mentioned. In one of those hospitalizations, when at the point I was very, very sick--it must have been right after I was admitted--I had a nurse come in to take care of me to do something, and I was horrified at that age because she was horrendously mean. She was not physically mean. She was not verbally abusive, but she was a mean woman. She was not young. She was older. She didn't have gray hair. I thought, at that time, whatever age that was, how on earth, when people are sick, they need people who are nice to take care of them. I remember deciding, at that time, when I grow up, I'm going to be a nurse, and I'm going to be sure that people are nice to the patients, to sick people. I never obsessed about that, but it was in the back of my head, all those years.

Seventh grade and eighth grade were fine, except for the arthritis. That was in Saint Patrick's grade school in Kaimuki, Oahu. For my brothers and my sister and I to get to school, we would get up at zero-dark-thirty in our quarters, wonderful homes. I'll tell you that story. Tell me if I shouldn't be telling you this part, all these personal stories. We would get up at zero-dark-thirty. Mother would have a hot breakfast every day, and we would get on a bus outside of the back of the house. We still had Jill, the Collie. The four of us would get on this bus, and we would go up to the launch. We'd get off the bus, and we would get on the little launch with our friends. I don't know how many of us fit on this launch. The launch would take us over to the military launch base dock on Oahu, and we would get off the little launch. We would all troop over to a bus. That bus would take us to a really big bus depot. It wasn't like a bus station or anything. There was no big building, and there were many buses. We would all get off this first bus. We would all get on our bus to school. Now, my brothers were, help me with this, I was in seventh, they were in fifth. We were little kids doing this by ourselves. [laughter] Our mother didn't even come the first day. Our sister couldn't come with us, but that's another story.

I'm going to Saint Patrick's myself; Catholic schools always. My brothers went to another Catholic school, but it was another bus. I forget the name of their school, and I know it. It's in my head. They went to their school in their uniforms. I went to Saint Patrick's. [laughter] I really am going to get personal here. I remember one time, in my time at Saint Patrick's, my mother gave me a starter bra. I don't know if I was excited at home, but I had the bra on going to school and I hated it. As soon as I got to school, I went to the ladies room into the stall, and I took my bra off and I put it in my book bag. That was it for that part of my personal story of seventh or eighth grade. [laughter]

That school was wonderful. In my classroom, I was the only *haole*, which is the Hawaiian word for Caucasian, and I don't remember sensing minority kind of thoughts ever. We were one big happy family of seventh and eighth graders. The nuns were phenomenal--and I forget their

order--but they were phenomenal educators. I remember my fifth grade teacher especially, and the principal, I mean, my seventh-grade teacher especially. One of our courses was Hawaiian history, and it was fascinating, absolutely fascinating. We did take American history; I remember that book. Seventh and eighth grade were wonderful, no big stories other than the bra and my arthritis.

Graduation was wonderful, oh, my God. We had to do mass, of course. We all wore, the students, a white hat, a beautiful hat, not a stupid looking hat, and a beautiful white dress. I think my mother made my white dress, but they were all the same. She must have had a pattern or something. I don't think we bought it. They were full, like I had a crinoline on underneath, and white heels, little heels. I think I may have had stockings on. We had the mass, and we had some kind of a something in the church because they gave out awards. I received [laughter] the Heart of Gold Award. I don't know. I guess it was my fellow students that voted or something. I don't think it was the faculty, not many of them knew me, only two of them. I have a picture of me going up in the church, walking up and shaking the priest's hand and getting my [award]. I have the little banner. I still think I have that banner in a scrapbook somewhere. That was exciting.

Then, there was the eighth grade graduation dance, and it was parents and the children. We had to take the ferry, get in the car, get on the car ferry. Then, we had to drive to this restaurant, and it was way out to wherever. My mother had made me--she was a wonderful seamstress--a gorgeous, gorgeous, unbelievably beautiful material, almost like an iridescent, but not quite, in like a satin, but not quite. The pattern was beautiful, and I just can't get over that material. I will remember it forever, and I was so thrilled and so excited. Mom and Dad and I get in the car, and off we go. We get to the parking lot, and Dad's parking the car. All the other girls [were there], and there were guys too in our class. Everybody's walking into the restaurant, and all the girls have their white dresses on. I was heartbroken, and I was totally mortified. I started crying. I was refusing to go into that. [Editor's Note: A cell phone rings.]

I was refusing to go into the restaurant. We sat in the car. My father calmed me down, and my mother calmed me down. They said nothing about going home. That was not an option, I know. [laughter] I'm going to start crying. I just love my father so much. So, Daddy and Mom calmed me down. He said, "Listen." He said, "You haven't done anything wrong. Nothing's going to happen to you." He said, "We're going to have a great time." He said, "Mary Jo, if you could get through this, you can get through anything in your life." I remember those words as clear as yesterday, and by the way, he was absolutely right.

We got out of the car, and we went into the restaurant. It was just joyous. I remember nothing except they had a band I guess--they didn't have DJs [disc jockey] back then--and they had dancing. I had never danced in my life, and my father got up and invited me to dance. We go out to the dance floor. Of course, I'm a nervous wreck. I have such butterflies in my stomach. My father takes me, and we stand there for a moment. He gets the tempo, and he said, "You just follow my lead." So, I did. I didn't do bad, and, oh, my God, I was the bell of the ball because whatever dance we were doing, part of it was you stop and you break and you take a couple of steps and then you come back together again. I've seen it in old movies. I know it was a dance;

there was a name for it. I was so excited. None of the other girls and their fathers were doing this very intricate dancing, oh, my gosh. That was my eighth grade graduation.

Then, high school, I remember being very nervous about high school. I, of course, went to my sister's high school, and it was Saint Francis Convent High School in Manoa Valley, Oahu. I'm telling you, this high school, I thought my brothers and I had a trip. Well, to get to the high school took, I swear to God, it took ten hours. We, of course, wore uniforms, and our uniforms were white blouses with puff sleeves, three blue buttons for the Holy Trinity. Are you Catholic?

KR: My children are.

MRM: Oh, they are. [laughter] Okay, you'll get some of this. [laughter] A baby blue, like a shark skin material, skirt, below the knee, with ten gores to it for the Ten Commandments, and we wore white nursing shoes. I can't remember if we wore white or blue socks, but who cares. That was our uniform for the high school. I don't remember my freshman year. I don't remember my teacher. I don't remember much about that. I don't remember the school at all. I remember my sister started a diet. It was the first time I ever heard the word diet, and it was a kind of powder that you kind of mix, Metrical, I even remember the name. How's that for seventy-two years old? I remember nothing about ninth grade, it's safe to say.

I had no more arthritis in ninth grade. It was wonderful. I was in remission. Wait a minute, my sister had to have graduated while we were there, and I remember nothing about that. My God, I have to call her tonight, because it would've been a family celebration, obviously. I remember nothing about Betty Ann's graduation, but she did. I remember because Daddy received his next set of orders to the Pentagon. He was on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, big deal, in the Pentagon, to me it was. I have since found out, it was probably, his was a lower job. [laughter] However, we were all very impressed.

We moved to Arlington, Virginia. Daddy was working at the Pentagon. [It was a] huge change in our family life because we did not live in a house. We lived in an apartment. I don't remember where we lived before finding the apartment, how Mom and Dad found the apartment. I remembered that we moved into this apartment. It was a lovely three-bedroom apartment, not a huge apartment building. It was three floors. We were on the top floor, end apartment, three bedrooms, a nice living room that opened into a dining room area, and it has a smaller-sized kitchen, compared to what we were used to.

Of course, I then was a sophomore in high school. My sister was starting college, and my brothers were in grade school. My big jealousy was we'd go on our summer vacation to Savannah, Georgia, Mom, Pat and Mike and I and Betty Ann. Daddy had to stay and work. My mother took my sister on the biggest shopping trip for college clothes. My sister came home with just a gorgeous wardrobe, and I thought, "What am I, chopped liver here? Why?" [laughter] Well, Betty Ann, I was always jealous of her [to] some degree as I got older. So, Betty Ann, she was always working, and, I'll tell you that part of the story later. She had this college wardrobe. She got on a train by herself with all her luggage, and off she goes to Saint Mary's College in Indiana. Notre Dame is right across the street. What town is that in Indiana?

KR: Great Bend?

MRM: South Bend.

KR: South Bend.

MRM: Thank you, thank you. She goes off to college. She had a roommate, and they got along famously. She majored in English. She was there for four years. She did come home. She came home at Christmas. She never got to come home at Thanksgiving. It was too big a trip, but she came home every Christmas and she came home in the summers because she had a job every summer. In college, she worked in the library. She had a wonderful set of friends, and of course, Notre Dame friends, they had a great time. She eventually met Dave, who was at Notre Dame, and they became engaged and they got married her senior year. Now, some of this was verboten and she of course became pregnant with my first nephew and was pregnant through senior year and I think through graduation. There was a big to-do about graduation, whether they were going to let her graduate or walk. Really? Come on. She's wearing a gown. [laughter] What is it, a sin? So, anyway, she did go through graduation. She delivered my nephew out there. Dave was a year ahead of everybody, so I think he was already working. They lived in an apartment. We went out, all of us, Mom and Dad and the twins. I don't remember the hotel we stayed in, because Betty and Dave had a small apartment, and it was all very exciting, just the thrill of the century. He was a gorgeous baby, David. After David graduated, she graduated, had the baby, and then they moved to--I went to visit them all the time by myself. I'll remember it eventually, but they had a townhouse.

Now, we were still living in Arlington. Oh, I forgot the biggest part of this story. We moved to Arlington. Daddy starts his job, and for the first five days of his job, he feels terrible. So, he's walking around--we lived out in the community, not on a base--and he really felt sick. He went to, I think, three physicians. He was walking the sidewalks. I don't know how he found these doctors, and they diagnosed him, "Oh, you have the flu." He just felt worse and worse and worse. Well, somebody finally diagnosed him as having had a heart attack, and he was walking around with this heart attack. They rushed him to Bethesda Naval Hospital. I forget how long he was there. He survived magnificently. He was there a while, and I remember he was in an oxygen tent.

He was such a comedian. He and his friends, I remember some friend brought him chocolate covered ants, they brought him a fake eyeball, and I forget what else they brought him, but Dad offered the candy to the nurses or the medics, and, PS, some of them ate them. He put the fake eyeball in his naval and had his gown down and I don't know what they were coming in to do, and of course the nurse sees the eyeball and screams. [laughter] Everybody laughs for weeks. Daddy came out magnificently. He was fine. He had his job at the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but he had complications after that. He had several episodes of pericarditis and inflammation of the sac around the heart and serious stuff when it's your heart. The Navy, eventually, medically retired Dad, while we were living in Arlington, and he had been in the Navy for twenty-three years.

I was still in high school. I remember Dad having a very difficult time transitioning to civilian life, and I don't know how I picked up on it. He went into real estate; he did that for a while. He

couldn't stand it. Some of it, my sister and I thought, was he did not care for working for somebody else so directly. I guess he had a lot of autonomy in the Navy. I think that was part of it. He did real estate, and he did something else. Eventually, he went to American University, and he graduated with a bachelor's degree. I think--I was talking to my brother the other night filling out that form; I didn't even put it down--I think it was urban planning, but I'm not sure. I think it was that. Then, he didn't use that. He didn't work with that. He worked with a vinyl company at one point, but he kind of floundered around. He was trying to find himself and something that he enjoyed. He eventually found what he enjoyed. He loved cooking. He loved cooking. I don't know how he got into loving cooking. I know he cooked for us. He cooked dinners for us. Later on, he went to the Culinary Institute [of America] in Hyde Park, New York and loved it. It was a two-year program. He said he hadn't been through anything as intense in his life, including flying a plane. He never did anything with that either though, but cooked. He cooked all the time.

I was still in high school. I went to Denis J. O'Connell, Bishop Denis J. O'Connell for sophomore, junior and senior year. Pat and Mike were in junior high at that point. Betty Ann was in college. Mom, big change in the family, Mom went to work, and she was a bank teller not far from our apartment. It wasn't different during the day. It was different during the summer because she wasn't home and we were old enough to take care of ourselves. Sometimes, it was different in the evening if she had to work late and Daddy was cooking supper, and it was just a change in our family routine and structure. I never asked Mom how she felt about that. I never even thought to ask her how she felt about that, but it was because Betty Ann was in college and they were trying to pay college tuition. Of course, Daddy was medically retired and he was a hundred percent disabled, so I think he got a pretty good high percent of his salary as his medical pension. That was early Arlington, Virginia.

[There was] not too much excitement with Pat and Mike that I can recall. Mike continued to be shy and studious. Pat was not. [laughter] I remember, they and their buddies formed a band, the Town Criers. They were excellent, and they won the statewide championship, the Town Criers. I never went to hear them, but I just know that they were wonderful. We have pictures, and I kick myself for not going to ever hear them. I don't think there's any videos [taken]. I'm going to ask them if there were ever videos taken or family movies. That was Pat and Mike's big deal, and they were getting gigs. They were getting paid.

Pat was always having problems in school, and it was always a problem for Dad. Report card time was not a happy day, and we know now that Pat suffered--and still--had severe ADD [attention deficit disorder]. He wasn't hyper. I think he has dyslexia. He had ADD. His older son has it, and Pat and Kerry found it was when Matt was in high school and Pat and Kerry somehow found a high school that specialized in students with this disability, so they talked to Matt about it. It would be a boarding school for him, and he said yes, he wanted to go. I'll have to ask them. I know it was at least one year, it might have been two, and it was extremely expensive. So, Matt thrived from that experience. All into his adult life he's thrived. He's extremely successful. So, Pat always had the academic difficulties. Mike excelled; Pat was very social. They weren't dating back then. I think they had girlfriends then, in those years, but not like big romance kind of stuff. I remember they had girlfriends, and I remember we teased Mike

because one of the girls had a crush on him and he was so shy. [laughter] Eventually, he came out of his shell because he had a girlfriend; he liked this girl.

I was in high school, and I do not remember my graduation at all. Is this crazy? It was a [coeducational] high school, and it's large. It's even larger now. The girls were on one side at that point, big, the boys were on the other side, and we could mingle at lunch. I was extremely shy, very, very shy. I guess I evidenced leadership skills because I was voted on to the student council, and we had to be the hall monitors in between classes. We wore the little ribbon off our shoulder, very impressive to me. I don't remember how [graduation] happened. I don't have any recall of this stuff. This is killing me about my high school. I have to call my classmates [laughter] and find out how did we do that. It had to be Catholic in some way. I'm sure we had a mass. Oh, we had a convocation.

Well, anyway, I graduated. My sister was out of college at that [point]; she had the baby and then was married. I graduated from high school. Pat and Mike went into high school. I wanted to be a nun. We were living in the apartment, and I had the ironing board out every night ironing my uniform for the next day, and big family discussion. Well, it was between me and my parents, and they were explaining to me that under no circumstances would I go into the convent. I was crying at the ironing board, and I couldn't understand this. Sister Mary Nativity, my biology teacher, was going to be my sponsor. I have a vocation; this is very important to pay attention to. Of course, my parents were probably laughing their elbows off behind my face, but under no circumstances would I go into the convent and that was that. I said, "Well, I have to tell Sister Mary Nativity." They said, "Yes, you'll have to explain that to her and it's not a bad thing. We love the nuns and we love the Catholic Church, but we don't feel that you are old enough to make that kind of a decision for that kind of a commitment for your life. You have to go to college first." So, I got through that emotionally.

The next step was I remembered I wanted to be a nurse. I did not excel academically. I was about a "C" student, happy as a lark. I loved my subjects, most of them, except math, not a good thing in my life, math. I remember fifth grade in Coronado, Dad was trying to teach me decimals. To this day, I couldn't do decimals if my life depended on it without a calculator. We were looking, we were figuring out where I wanted to go to college. I wasn't a homebody all the time, but I loved being near home, of course, and I was not good academically. I applied to Catholic University in Washington, and I applied to Saint Joseph's College for Young Women in Emmitsburg, Maryland. I was not accepted at Catholic U. and I was accepted at Saint Joe's. They had one of the highest-ranked nursing programs in the country at that point. I was thrilled, my gosh. We got to go for a tour when I had applied, and it was beautiful, truly, and it still is, in Emmitsburg, Maryland, which is twenty minutes from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Pat and Mike were in high school.

Dad was not happy in the marriage. I guess Mom was not happy because Dad wasn't happy, and we knew they were not happy. Things weren't happy in the household, in the apartment. Saint Joe's accepted me. Mom and Dad took me up there to begin freshman year, big deal, big deal, a new wardrobe. [laughter] I was thrilled. We had to buy things for my room. [I had] no roommates freshman year. We had to buy the bedding and we had to buy a rug and we had to

buy curtains and we had to buy a trash can. I had a desk in the room--we didn't have computers--but whatever else. The car was packed. Mom and Dad and I go off.

It is a beautiful college. There is the most gorgeous avenue up to the campus, Catholic, it's all Catholic, and there's this proverbial statue at the head of the avenue. The chapel is right behind that, and the dormitories are over here, all beautiful, all brick. It was founded by Elizabeth [Ann] Seton, who's now a saint, in I think it's 1809, she founded it. The town of Emmitsburg is extremely small. If you blink, you miss it. The college campus, the mountains, the Blue Ridge Mountains are not far away, and it's just a beautiful area, rural.

We had, first day, when everybody moved in, Mom and I fixed up the room and everything. I guess my brothers came, my brothers came with us, and my dormitory was here and a beautiful grass campus and then there was the student center. So, Dad was going to hang the curtains. I don't know what happened with Mike and them. They probably came with us. We go over to the student center to get a break, to get a soda or something. I remember I was with Mom and we are walking across the sidewalk, across the beautiful campus to my dormitory, and my window faced the student center. [laughter] [It was a] very warm day. Huge old windows, the window was open. Dad, in this booming voice, was cursing, trying to hang the curtains. I was mortified. I wanted to just get in the car and go home. Mother said, "Nobody knows him. Nobody knows you. Let's go back to your room. He'll calm down and he'll get the drapes up," the curtains rather. So, they go home, and I don't remember crying. I was very excited.

We have pictures, and everybody was dressed up. This college sent out dress code kind of stuff. One of the things we all remember very clearly--and we laugh about it every reunion--was the term DAFs. You had to wear DAFs, which was dressy, attractive, flats, no sneakers--well, not when you were on campus going to classes or anything. Mom and Dad go home.

I start my freshman year, and I am loving it. We weren't even in nursing at that point, but I just knew I was going to be a nurse and this was my pathway. So, Mom and Dad and Pat and Mike go home, and I loved freshman year. I did fine. I made it to sophomore year. Sophomore year got a little more clinical. I think that's when we had "Anatomy and Physiology" and some of the other heavy-duty courses for me, who was not an academic kid.

Sophomore year, the big family change was that Daddy moved out of the apartment. My parents separated. Daddy was driving me back from a weekend at home, and he informed me that he was separated from Mom and that he had a place of his own. He had an apartment at first. I remembered being horrified, not horrified, but I was sad. I remember that on the way to college, on this old country road, two-lane road, there was like a convenience store, nothing was like 7-Elevens or anything like today, and Dad pulled in there. I guess we got a soda, or we took a break. I don't remember much else of that conversation. He dropped me off at school.

He loved my college. He adored my college. He adored my friends. He had a lifelong friend from Brooklyn, [from when he was] three years old, Sol Codispoti, who was a Marine, a career Marine, and he told Sol all about my college and my friends. We were always with Sol and Fran, and they had three daughters. We were like siblings together. I remember he brought Sol

up to my college [laughter] sophomore year, and Sol was excited. I don't know if it was parents [weekend]; it was something.

Anyway, sophomore year, I had a very difficult time after that drive back with Daddy. I wound up being on academic probation for a semester, which meant I had to go talk to the director of the nursing program, Sister Aloysius, who was I'm sure [was] a wonderful, fantastic human being, but she was the director of the program and that's a big job and she scared the heck out of me. I sat with her, and she explained that I was on academic probation for a semester and that meant things. I don't think you could go off campus in the evening or after classes. There were some things attached to that, so it really got my attention. Of course, they had to tell your parents, and it's on the records. I really knuckled down the best I could. I now know I had ADD, too, I'm sure. I know I had it, because of the way I functioned as an adult in my career. I really knuckled down.

I had a roommate sophomore year, Jackie. We were living next door in freshman year; that's how we came to live together sophomore year. Jackie is phenomenal--she was and still is--and she went into the Army Nurse Corps. I'll tell you that story later.

Sophomore year was with Jackie. We had an excellent, excellent time. We were going to mixers over at Mount Saint Mary's, [which] was our brother school, right up the road. It's still there. It's very famous. They had a very famous basketball team when we were there, and we would go to the games. They were crazy fun, and we would get on these cattle cars to go to the mixers. I'm still shy though. I would talk to everybody, but I was just shy with the guys but social as all get out with that limitation. We would go, and the girls would be on one side and the boys would be on the other side.

I remember, one of those years, I think maybe junior year, the Righteous Brothers were coming to play a concert. Well, all of us were berserk and getting tickets. We get there, and the Righteous Brothers were two hours late. To this day, I hate them. I hated them that night, and I still [do]. Their music is beautiful, but I can't stand them. I think that was unbelievable. There wasn't a problem. There was no weather problem. They just didn't get it together. That was another college experience.

What else happened junior year? Oh, junior year was very exciting because we started our clinical experiences. Now, we were in Emmitsburg, Maryland at the college. The nuns' hospital was Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C. Junior year, you had one semester on campus and one semester in Washington at the hospital, in the dormitory, our quarters there. What a thrill. We had our white uniforms, our white stockings, our white nurse's shoes.

Junior year, we had our capping and pinning ceremony, to die for. Oh, my, the cap, whoa, it's a beautiful cap and it has a blue and gold ribbon around it, gorgeous. We had, at the convocation, I think it was both together, the pinning and the capping. I think to this day, at that convocation, we had one of the former students who was a nurse, and she had gone into the military. I think she was an Army nurse, not at the time. I think she had been. I'm still trying to research this at the reunions, but I do it piecemeal. So, anyway, we had pinning and capping. That was a big deal. We started our clinical. I was just in love with nursing. I was so in love with nursing.

I remember my first patient like it was yesterday. I don't remember her name. She was very elderly, terminally ill with cancer. She was this big around [very thin], delightful, delightful woman. She was on Demerol for pain, and she needed an injection. It was my first injection, and my instructor was with me in the med room. You would not have any interruptions during med [medicine] time in the med room, pouring meds or preparing an injection. We get it all prepared, and it's on the tray. I'm a nervous wreck. The instructor comes with me, and off we go to my patient, whom I adored. I went in, and she was in extreme pain, I now understand. I mean, I understood that very well. I went to give her the injection, and there was a considerably long needle on the syringe. I found the landmarks, and I injected and I hit her bone. She didn't jump; she could care less. The instructor said, "Go ahead. Inject the plunger," and I gave her the injection successfully. I walked out of that room, and I could've fainted in the hallway. [laughter] The excitement of junior year was clinical. We started clinical, and we had all mainly clinical subjects when you were on campus. I don't think anything exciting happened on campus.

The interesting thing we are discovering now at reunions and [as we are] getting older is we lost contact with our classmates, the French majors and the chemistry majors and the English majors. We lost contact with them for a whole semester and then for a whole year. For senior year, we were down at the hospital the whole year. I didn't realize at the time what an interruption in our class relationships that was because we really bonded with the nurses, and some of the nurses had really bonded with the other majors because they had them as roommates. I hadn't. I had Jackie, who was a nursing major. We've just discovered that since we've been reunion-ing and getting older, but we are bonding now with everybody. It's amazing how we have bonded through the years, getting to the reunions and trading life stories. People are on Facebook, and we have our own little thing, website. I don't know these things. [laughter] I'm not even into that stuff yet. I don't do Facebook.

However, junior year was a thrill, and senior year was the bee's knees. Oh, the experiences we had. We got to observe in obstetrics. I'm telling you, Kate, it's such a miracle. We didn't assist; we just observed. I thought, "My God." Then, one night, in the dormitory, the end stairwell faced the hospital, and I'm out there in the stairwell for some reason. I don't know what I was doing. I looked out the window, and you could see right into a delivery room. You could see the delivery going on, and I'm screaming down the hall. A couple other gals came running. We're watching this delivery through this window, and, again, I'm like, "Oh, my God, this is such a miracle, my God." I was fascinated, so that was obstetrics.

What else was I really interested in? I was a wreck on peds [pediatrics], forget it. I was a wreck for the rotation. I felt terrible that these kids couldn't tell you what was wrong with them. I could not give them medications. I did, but I was a wreck the whole time. You had to swaddle the infants. They are screaming crying. They're trying to inhale, and you're trying to inject the liquid in the cheek. [There were] other little kids, and they had to be in their cribs. I hated peds, so I couldn't wait to get through that. I loved adult med-surg [medical-surgical nursing]. We had our psychiatric rotation. I did not care for it. It was very upsetting to me, and in some way, we went to a very old, lock-the-doors psychiatric kind of hospital and it was depressing. It was upsetting to me. I remember one of the patients who had what's called a conversion reaction.

She was not physically ill, but she was paralyzed physically, I think on one side. It was all psychological. I was fascinated by that case but not enough that I would ever think about psych.

We had our graduation. Why am I not remembering that? Pinning and capping. We all graduated together, and I know there was a mass. All the family was there. Oh, it was at the college. We had a convocation in the auditorium. We had the mass. We had the big convocation with speakers. We were in our caps and gowns. That's right; it's all coming back to me. Mom and Dad came and we children were older, but we're trying to figure out their separation and are they going to be mad at each other, are they coming to the graduation? Family events, it just was awkward. Mom and Dad were fine at the get-togethers. Mom had a real tough time with it, but Dad did okay through it, I think. We got to graduation. After the convocation, everybody went out to the restaurants in Gettysburg. Emmitsburg had nothing but a hamburger shop, but we went to it and we loved it and I'll think of the name. We all went out for dinners.

Junior year, my father had always said, "Mary Jo, you have to be a Navy nurse. You go into the Navy nurses. You will love it." Oh, I'll tell you that as a P.S. [postscript]. We thought about it and I thought about it. He was really talking it up but not pushing me, and they always let us make our own decisions, us kids, taught us to be independent in decision-making. I don't know how this all came about.

[Five] of us decided to go see the Navy nurse recruiter. I don't know how we found this person. I don't know where. It was probably in D.C. I know it wasn't anywhere in Maryland. We go to the Navy nurse recruiter. All I remember is the [five] of us going in and I don't know if it was a nurse officer in uniform or what, but whoever it was, it was the attitude of, "Don't call us. We'll call you." The [five] of us left that office saying, "Who the hell do you think you are?" Right across the hall was the Army nurse recruiting office. We go in, and it was a sergeant who could not have been nicer, answered all our questions, told us all about the Army Nurse Corps and all of us filled out the paperwork. He took us, he drove us to everything we had to do. You had to go for a physical. You had to go for this interview, here, there. We all signed on the dotted line, and we took the oath. That must've been toward the end of junior year. [Editor's Note: In the Army Student Nurse Program, for every year the Army paid for college education, the nurse would pay back two years in service after graduation.]

For six months of senior year, we were PFCs [private first class]. We were paid seventy dollars a month, and we thought we were hot stuff because Jackie and I, one of our breaks, we took a trip to Puerto Rico with our Army pay and it was fantastic. Six months before graduation, we were commissioned second lieutenants. I don't know if it was all [five] of us. It may have been. My father had administered our oath. We have pictures of it. He was not in uniform. He was in a suit. It was some military office somewhere, and I have to go find that picture and find out how many of us were there. Dad administered our officer oath, and we then became second lieutenants and were receiving second lieutenant pay, big deal. We didn't have to do anything with the military until graduation, which was wonderful.

We had a glorious graduation. We had a big party the night before, and I drank Manhattans because that's the only drink I knew about because my aunts and uncles and parents drank them

at all the family get-togethers. Not a good night. Well, the night was great. [laughter] The next day was horrendous, horrendous. I had gone to a beautician. I had my hair teased in a do, and the next day, somebody knocked on my door [laughter] and said, "Mary Jo, you have a visitor in the student center." I got up. I couldn't even put a brush through my hair and I got a scarf and I just tied it around my hair and I just made it over to the student. I don't even remember who was visiting.

After graduation, we had to take our licensing exam in your home state, so mine was Virginia, Arlington, and I remember I took the exam fairly quickly. I remember it was a nightmare. It was so long. I think there were five sections to it. There was med-surg. There was psych [psychiatric]. There was peds. There was maternity, and there was--it'll come to me. It was a nightmare. I was exhausted before I even got there and stressed to the max. I don't remember how I got there, where it was. I just remember it was very long. I swear my mother drove me or Dad. I finished the exam. I went home, and I had a job.

I had a summer job, oh, at that camp. It was a camp for gifted children in Maryland, the Maryland Center for the Arts. I don't know how I got that job. I was not licensed, but I was the camp nurse. I knew that I had limitations on what I could do, but I had to go through all of the camp applications to see who was on what meds. I had to have the meds in the little room [in the] clinic, and the kids had to come to me to take their meds. They were not injections or anything. They were their pills. They didn't even have inhalers back then. Everybody had allergies; it was unbelievable. Nobody else had anything serious. However, before the children even came, there was the camp director, wonderful guy, older than I, handsome as all get out, wonderful personality. I forget his first name. One of the very first days, he's down on the dock. We had a big lake, I think. He's down on the dock with a sledgehammer doing something, and, don't you know, he brought it down on his toe. Somebody's screaming for me. I go flying down there. They were panicked. He was okay. He looked okay. He wasn't going to pass out, but his toe looked like he could've amputated it. I did what I had with whatever first-aid kit, and I said, "We have to get you to the doctor or ER" [emergency room]. So, off they go. That was my big deal for camp, no other excitement.

I'm waiting for my licensing results. They finally came back, and I was, "Whew." Everybody was screaming, excited. The deal was the [five] of us were going to be on the buddy system, and we were going to go down, we were going to do all this together, basic training, and go to the hospital, whatever hospital. Everybody lived in different states. I was the only one in Virginia, and I got my results first. I got my license, and I got my orders from the Army to go to basic training, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Nobody else was going except me, and I didn't know what to think. I thought, "What happened to my buddies?" [Editor's Note: Located in San Antonio, Texas, Fort Sam Houston has served as the Army's primary medical training facility since World War II. In 2010, it merged with Lackland Air Force Base and Randolph Air Force Base to form Joint Base San Antonio.]

KR: Why?

MRM: They didn't get their license at the time I did. They were living in Pennsylvania and Connecticut. I thought, "I'm going by myself?" I'm calling them, and they're saying, "You're

going?" I'm saying, "I've got to go." Well, P.S., off I go to basic training by myself. I don't remember who took me to the airport. I don't remember the flight. I don't remember how I got to the base, but I remember getting to the base because it was late at night. I don't know if I was in a taxi or what, but I remember we got to the gate and I told the fellow that I was Lieutenant Rice, Second Lieutenant Rice, and I was an Army nurse and I was there for basic training. I guess on the orders it said where to go, or he knew where to go. I go and sign in at my room, in the quarters. That was that night. I was exhausted. I had suitcases. I had a duffel bag. I didn't have uniforms yet, but I had a lot of crap. I thought I had to bring the world, my entire household.

I arrive for basic training, and this was 1968. It was the summer. I had graduated, got my license, and I don't think it was the winter yet; no, it wasn't. I go to basic training, and I'm all by myself with nobody. I don't know a soul. I don't even know how I knew where to go the next morning or how I got breakfast. How did I know where to get breakfast? Basic training starts, and I'm in my basic training class. I don't know how I found all this out, but I did. Then, the structure is there, and we had formation. You can go to the mess hall. Then, we had our formations. They issued us our uniforms.

After the [five] of us went in the Army Student Nurse Program, three of my classmates went into the Navy Nurses Corps. That was very different, very different. One of them--oh, one of our classmates was fully funded by the Army, but it was a different program and she was with us for freshman year. Then, she was at the university that the Army sent her to, that they had their contract, and she was there for three years and it was very academically strict. Then, they graduated. They [women in the Navy Nurses Corps] went to Rhode Island for their basic training, and we're getting horror stories, the [five] of us, waiting for our licenses, before I went by myself. We were getting horror stories; I mean, strict inspections every day of your locker. Your underwear had to be folded in thirds. Your bras had to be folded in quarters. Your uniforms had to be hung with this seam hanging out. I was panicked. That's why I was so panicked going by myself especially.

Well, I got down to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and this structure started. We had our classes. We had our formations in the morning, maybe in the evening, I don't know. I think we were on our own for lunch, but all had to be back for formation before classes in the afternoon. We had three inspections of the different uniforms. They wanted to make sure we knew how to get the insignia on and wear them properly and that they were tailored properly. It was the dress uniform, it was the fatigues, and it was the mint green. It was ridiculously stupid looking. [laughter] We had three inspections the whole time. It was a party, and I'm thinking, "What's not to love about basic training?" We didn't even have that much physical training requirements. We had it, and it was only jogging, running, a timed run, timed sit-ups, timed push-ups, based on your age. There was a chart. There was some of that, but not a lot. I'm telling you; it was just a wonderful time. How long? It wasn't six months; it was maybe eight weeks, but I was so relieved. I'm writing and calling them. They were at their first duty station by then. They are not believing me, and the other [four] are so relieved. [laughter]

I graduated from basic training successfully, loving it, loving the Army, loving nursing. Of course, we get our orders before we graduated from basic training. I don't even remember the

gals that I knew in basic training. I may though; I may get to that. I get my orders, and my orders are to Fort Dix, New Jersey. So, we graduated. I had a car at that point, of course, and I drove myself to Fort Dix. I think I took leave to go home, see the family, and then I went to Fort Dix. [Editor's Note: Established in 1917, Fort Dix in New Jersey merged with McGuire Air Force Base and Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst in 2009 to form Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.]

When you arrived at a duty station on orders, on your first day, you reported to the chief nurse; you went into the office of the chief nurse and you reported. You were at attention, and you introduced yourself, you saluted, "Lieutenant Rice reporting for duty, Sir," or, "Ma'am." Then, they would give you permission to sit down, and then they'd chat with you. They, I guess, at that point, told you where you were going to work, what unit you were assigned to, or they might ask you what your preference was. I arrived at Fort Dix, and I signed into the quarters. They were right across a field from the hospital, Walson Army Hospital. I met the chief nurse, I reported in, and I was assigned to orthopedics. [Editor's Note: Walson Army Hospital opened at Fort Dix in 1960. It closed in 2001 and was demolished in 2016.]

I had not had orthopedic experience in nursing school, nor had we had ICU [intensive care unit] experience. We observed in obstetrics. We observed for three days in ICU, and we didn't have hands-on. I got to the orthopedics. The hospital is L-shaped, an A and B side, I guess. During the day, I was a staff nurse on one side, and everybody else was a staff nurse on the other side. You had a head nurse, and you had your ranking sergeant, your ward master. They were wonderful. They were the lifeline of your ward, but you didn't mess with them. I went to the orthopedic ward; I reported to the head nurse and met the ward master. There were fifty patients on one side and there were forty on the other and all of them, 99.9 percent of those ninety patients were returnees from Vietnam. I don't think we had any female patients that I remember. These fellows had massive wounds and injuries. They had casts, and they had, back then--I think they still use them--what's called a spica cast and it's a body cast, here down, and then it would fully cast the leg of the fractured femur.

KR: From the chest down.

MRM: From above the nipple line down, and it would stop at the groin on one side and it would go all the way down to the foot on the other. They used that for fractured femurs. We had, these were very injured guys, and they were young. I'm like, "Okay," we're talking no time to breathe here; we're running like crazy. You had however many other staff nurses, and you had your medics. There were junior medics, and there were the more senior medics. The day shift was more heavily staffed because you had surgeries going on. The guys had to go to their PT [physical therapy]. It was just really a lot more going on and then less going on in evening shifts, so you had fewer staff but busy as all get out. The visitors were there. Then, night shift, you had maybe fewer than evenings, but you were still busy. You were still passing meds to--oh, on the night shift, you covered both sides, so it was ninety patients. There were medics on one side, but you were the nurse for the ninety. It was very, very busy.

I learned incredibly. I fell in love with orthopedics. I couldn't get enough of it. I joined the Orthopedic Nurse's Association. I soaked up everything the doctors ever said. They would do

grand rounds once a week. That's when the charts back then were in metal folders, and then they were in a metal rack they hung and it was on wheels. On Fridays, when they had grand rounds, it was like extremely formal, and the sergeants, the medics and sergeants, the ward master, they were like drill sergeants that day. I used to feel bad for the patients. I thought he was not doing it right. To the guys who were better and ambulatory, he was getting them out of bed and stand at the foot of your bed at attention. The guys in bed had to stay in bed. The doctors made their rounds, the older doctors were teaching the younger doctors, and going through the chart, and the nurses were walking around, like the little handmaidens we were.

That was Fort Dix, and I got there, I think I got there in October or early November, because we all met each other in the [bachelor officers] quarters and everybody had different jobs. There were guys, I don't know what they were doing, what their, not assignment, what their MOS [military occupational specialty] was, infantry or engineers or whatever, what have you. We were all in the quarters. Everybody had a single room, and we had more fun than you can shake a stick at just in the quarters because we'd all go to somebody's room for spaghetti.

Thanksgiving came around. Well, we all took different assignments for Thanksgiving, so that would be November of '68, and my job was to make the stuffing and stuff the turkey. I was going to do this very professionally. I got hold of sutures, suture material. I don't know who got the turkey, but I had the turkey in my room. I guess it was in the pan, and I'm so excited and I'm suturing up this turkey. I hadn't put the stuffing in. I had to cut the sutures. [laughter] My great idea, stuff the turkey. They had something in the grocery store that you wound around; I forget how I closed it, but I did. That was Thanksgiving, and it was wonderful. We had a huge blizzard. People were spending the night in the hospital. We had to walk--the snow was feet deep--and we had to walk. We had to get to the hospital because we could. People couldn't drive from farther away, and I remember the big blizzard. It must have been that winter or into the winter into '69. That was a big deal.

KR: Mary Jo, what were the patients saying about the war?

MRM: That's very interesting. They did not talk about the war, and I don't remember asking them about the war. I don't remember them talking about the war. They may have. I probably had to know a little bit because of what I had to learn about their injury and they may have said something. There was no PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] talked about. There was no psychological issues, except one I'll tell you about. Remind me if I don't think of it. I don't remember them saying much about the war, until they found out--let me get to that point. That was Thanksgiving.

I guess in January--it must have been January-ish--in the chief nurse's office, there was a file cabinet, and every nurse had a manila folder. When you came on your shift, you went to that to check for flyers or whatever, orders or meetings you had to go to, committees. I went in on evening shift, and I went to my folder. I pulled out the papers, and it said, "Information for officers reporting for duty in Southeast Asia." I didn't know what that meant. The evening sergeant was there. I said, "Sarge," I said, "What does this mean?" He said, "What is it?" I said, "Information for officers reporting for duty in Southeast Asia." He says, "Those are orders for Vietnam." I said to him, "Sergeant, what's Vietnam?" He looks at me like, "Are you for real?"

He said, "Lieutenant," he said, "We're in a war in Vietnam. It's a country in Southeast Asia." I said, "We are?" I said, "Wow." He may have said a little bit more and I had to get to duty, so I took these papers and put them in my whatever I was carrying around. I don't remember really being impressed with all this.

The rumor mill went around the ward like wildfire, and those guys were ticked off. Those patients were furious, and some of them were telling me things, not warning me with gory or worrisome things, but just telling me, I guess things like, "Be very careful, Lieutenant." "Watch out for who you talk to." I remember that very clearly; they were very angry in the ward.

My reporting date to Vietnam was the 19th--we just were talking about this--it was, I think, the 19th of March, '69. I had a cousin that I did not know. I'm packing like crazy in the apartment; mother's helping me. Somewhere out of somewhere, this cousin appears in uniform, in the Special Forces, who knew us. We had never met him. I'm even forgetting his name, and he appears in our apartment. He had been to Vietnam, and he's telling me about Vietnam and some things to take and some things to do and some things to not do. I don't know how long he stayed in the apartment, and he left the apartment. I never saw him again and my mother never saw him again, and she didn't know him, how he was a cousin of ours. That was bizarre.

I'm packing like crazy, and somewhere, like one day or two days before I'm having to leave, my mother's father dies in Savannah, Georgia. He had had bone cancer. My grandmother had been taking care of him. My mother was working in Arlington still. She was going down as often as she could, and he dies. I was in a huge quandary because I have to leave for Vietnam and my grandfather has died. My mother's by herself. Wait, that was '69. Where would my brothers have been? When would they have started college? I graduated in '68. They were two years behind me, so they were in college when I was in college. They were in freshman year when I graduated, or sophomores. At any rate, Mother was going down by herself. I don't know what Pat and Mike were doing; they couldn't go, or mother said to them not to come, not to interrupt whatever they were doing. I felt horrendous. I didn't know what to do. Mom said, "You have to go. You're in the military. You go. You have orders to Vietnam. You go." It was a horrible time in my life.

I don't remember who went first, but Mom went to Savannah. I go off to the airport. I remember getting to San Francisco, and I would be calling Mom when I could find her in Savannah with the funeral going on. Of course, that left her mother there by herself, and they had a wonderful home way out in the country, three or four acres of land right on the Vernon River, right on the river. That is the river that, I'll think of his name, the songwriter wrote, "Moon River" around, the Vernon River. Mom goes there, and I'm on my way to Vietnam. I remember San Francisco. I remember getting there. I don't remember if I stayed overnight or got right on another plane, and I remember landing in Vietnam. [Editor's Note: "Moon River" was composed by Henry Mancini with the lyrics written by Johnny Mercer. Audrey Hepburn sang "Moon River" in the 1961 movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, and Andy Williams also recorded "Moon River."]

I have to tell you. Let me go back to Fort Dix, when you asked me if they talked about the war, and we didn't have "PTSD," that I knew of. I remember I was on an evening shift one night. We had our white uniforms and we had our green sweaters and we had our insignia on our collars. I

was somewhere, and one of the medics came flying to me. One of the patients was out on the window sill. He was going to commit suicide. I said, "What?" As we're running and before we got anywhere near there, I said, "Stop running. Let's all stop." I took off my sweater and I covered my insignia and I took my cap off. I went with the medic, and there was more than one medic. I remember, we didn't go out, nobody went out on the ledge, and I don't know how far out on the ledge he was or a window sill. I don't remember that part, but I remember he came back in the window. I don't remember what we said to him. I don't remember how long we were there, but he came back in the window. I don't know what he did after. They probably sent him to the psychiatric unit. So, there was that going on, in their minds. They had to be having nightmares and flashbacks, all of that stuff we read about.

Where was I? I remember next landing in Vietnam. Now, this is March 19th of 1969, and I landed, let me get these names straight--we should've done this before my chemo--I landed at Long Binh and it was called the repo-depot, the replacement depot. That's where everybody in-processed, and we gals were assigned, it wasn't all nurses, housing in a beach-like thing, a wooden floor, screens, wooden flaps that were propped up on the outside, very rustic. I think we were on cots; I remember that. [Editor's Note: Long Binh was an U.S. Army base in South Vietnam. Its many facilities included the 90th Replacement Battalion, which assigned newly-arrived military personnel to their permanent assignments.]

KR: Hooches?

MRM: Yes, like a hooch. I guess it would've been like a hooch. I don't know what time of the day I finally got to that room, but we were all together. There were like five of us gals probably. There were Vietnamese women who were hired by the American government. They would do the housekeeping and change the sheets and stuff. You would only be there for three days, and you had in-processing briefings during the day, et cetera. I get there in the early afternoon or early evening, and I'm exhausted. I could've slept standing up. I guess I had my luggage. I guess I had duffel bags. [laughter] I don't remember these details.

We were in bed. We were asleep. I think it was two or three o'clock in the morning, and these male voices are screaming like they were being murdered, "You gals wake up and get out here now. Get into the bunker," the sandbagged thing. I didn't know what was going on. We weren't awake. I'm waking up. "Don't get dressed. Just put on your shoes and get out here right now and get into the bunker." We're under attack. They're screaming, Then, I hear it [mortar attack], "Holy God, this is no drill." I think I threw my combat boots on with my nightgown or pajamas, and off we all go. We get into the--what did we call those things? They were sandbagged [bunkers], and they were metal, like an igloo thing. I'll think of the word. We're all in there, and it's horribly hot because we're so crowded. All the Vietnamese women are in there. They take, when they get these things, these yells, the Vietnamese women threw all the things they owned into their sheet. We're in there with nothing, scared out of our minds, and they're like this is old hat to them and they're coming in and they had the most ungodly perfume or whatever it was. We're in there, and you can hear all the stuff going on. I forget how long we were in there, but we were in there for a while. Then, finally, they give the all clear, and we went back. I guess we went to bed.

I remember sitting in classes. One of the topics, honest to God, you're not going to believe this. One of the subjects was, it was only for us gals, "Geographic Bachelors." It was a real class. I didn't know what they're talking. [laughter] They told us all about geographic bachelors, who were the married men in the States and they're here in the war zone and they're married, and they could care less about being married, so be careful, be aware. I'm thinking, "What the heck?" Well, then, it started making sense, and we had the geographic bachelors. We had the Vietnamese culture and how you should behave and act and how you should not behave and act. We met with the chief nurse of Vietnam, and she had us fill out a little, tiny thing, your preferences for hospital assignments. It was a map, this is no lie, Kate, a map of Vietnam with all the hospitals, a dot and the name of the hospital, all over Vietnam, and you could write down your first, second and third choice. Now, you tell me how I reacted getting those papers that night with this evening sergeant. How are we going to know first, second and third choice? What do we know? Well, some of them may have known; I didn't know.

I flew over there, with another Army nurse, Phyllis Royse. We were in basic training together. We sat together on the plane, and we got to Long Binh together. We met with the chief nurse together, or we filled out our sheets. Somehow, we knew each other when we first got there. I forget, I don't know what I filled out on that paper, but the chief nurse of Vietnam assigned me and assigned Phyllis. We weren't asking to be [together]; maybe we did ask to be together.

Anyway, we both wound up being assigned to the 67th Evacuation Hospital in Qui Nhon. If you look at the map of South Vietnam, here's the DMZ [demilitarized zone], and here's the coastline. It's kind of like New Jersey. Here's the coastline, and Qui Nhon is like two-thirds of the way up the coastline, right on the coast, a big city. We get our orders from this chief nurse, and she or somebody told us that we would be leaving at three a.m. on a chopper--you always travelled at nighttime, because you were less of a target--and we would be leaving at three a.m. on the chopper for Qui Nhon so be somewhere with all of your stuff. I know it was Phyllis and I, and I know I had a lot of stuff and we were on a helicopter. [laughter] Somebody else must've been with us. They wouldn't just take two nurses and drop us off, wasting fuel. [laughter] Three o'clock in the morning, Phyllis and I, off we go. What time of the day would have I arrived in Qui Nhon? It was not that long a trip. I don't even know if it was an hour by chopper. [Editor's Note: During the Vietnam War, Qui Nhon Airfield, located on the coast in Central Vietnam, housed U.S. Army and Air Force units, including the 67th Evacuation Hospital.]

We get to Qui Nhon, to the airfield. There was a huge airfield there, and there was an Air Force unit there and they had a thing--remind me to tell you about the Air Force--their club, little club building, on that airfield. Remind me to tell you a story about that.

KR: Okay.

MRM: Phyllis and I arrived. We were on the airfield. I don't remember how we got to the hospital or what time of day or night it was. I know at some point we got to our room. Now, our hooches, it was a rectangular structure like this. There were rooms; ours were double rooms. We all had roommates, and in between two rooms was the bathroom, you shared a bath, and it was all one level. Then, there was a covered sidewalk on the inner side of this rectangle, quadrangle, I guess. There was a sidewalk, and it was covered. There was a wall, not a real high

wall, but you had your rooms and then you had a sidewalk and then you had the wall. Then, you had a grassy area, and then you had a beautiful cement patio with grills. I forget how many rooms were there, not that many.

Phyllis and I got in our room, and we had beds, not cots, we had beds, but they were not like twin beds. They were not comfortable. We had all our stuff. Oh, a footlocker, I forgot footlockers, we had footlockers, duffel bags. I think we had suitcases. Phyllis was a hoot. She was from Kentucky. I'm still trying to find her, because she married and I think her married name was (Ballantine?). I have, I think, pictures of her, one picture of her and her husband. We stayed in touch for a long time and then we lost touch, but I always think about her. She was very quiet and very shy.

KR: I am sorry to interrupt. I just want to check in with time.

MRM: Okay. The car comes at 12:45, and I am right across the street. I drove, because I just can't walk. How do you want to do this?

KR: Let me pause for a second.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

KR: Okay, we are back on.

MRM: Okay, so, Phyllis and I got into our room. We probably slept, and it was probably the next day that she and I went and had our meeting. We reported into our chief nurse, and I forget her name. She was delightful. She put you at ease right away. We're sitting there. We either filled out a form or she asked us our preferences, and mine was orthopedics and Phyllis' was medical. We did all this chitchatting and chitchatting and chitchatting, and finally at the end, she says to the two of us, "I know, Mary Jo, you preferred orthopedics and Phyllis, you wanted medicine," she said, "but we are extremely short staffed in the intensive care unit, so that's where you'll be assigned." Kate, I almost went into shock! I could not believe I was going to be working [in the ICU, that] she was doing this. I never worked in ICU. I don't even know if I told her that, and I don't remember Phyllis' reaction. I remember mine. I don't know if it was that day, maybe she took us over and introduced us to the staff, and we probably got to go back to our room and get unpacked and rest.

The ICU [at the 67th Evacuation Hospital at Qui Nhon] was an immense, rectangular--it looked like a two-story, it was a two-story building, but we had a very tall ceiling with windows along the top. It was a twenty-seven bed ICU. That's unheard of because it was really, when you stop and think about it, it was a major trauma center. We had the triage area, which was another building where the guys were brought off the choppers right into triage. Their uniforms were cut off. Everything was assessed. They were stabilized as best they could. In triaging, they decided, literally, they decided who could not be saved, who could not be resuscitated, who could not be salvaged. That category was called expectant, and they were put off to the side. They were put behind curtains, and we had them in the ICU, behind, you know those, not fancy curtains, you know those metal, like aluminum and they had the white pieces of muslin or cotton

and they were folding, accorded. They would be put behind a curtain, and somebody would be with them constantly, talking to them, holding their hand. I forget all the other categories. Then, the more stable could stay there a little bit longer, but the emergency had to go right to the OR [operating room]. They had to be all cleaned, and they were all filthy, all of them. It was red, red dust, red mud, caked, plus perspiration and no bathing.

How did I get into that? The chief nurse took us into the ICU. It was a rectangular, twenty-seven bed unit, and we had the responsibility for the recovery room. The recovery room was a Quonset hut, and it probably had space for maybe ten or twelve gurneys that would come from the OR into this little Quonset hut. They would just be rolled up on their gurney to their bed slot, and there were oxygen tanks and the oxygen. You'd put the oxygen right on, to do their vital signs, and then you'd monitor them until they woke up from their anesthesia. The ICU staff had the twenty-seven-bed responsibility and the recovery room responsibility. We met everybody, and then we started work. I'll stop there. I'll tell you about work, what that was all like. What time is it?

KR: That sounds good. We will stop here for today.

MRM: Okay.

KR: I want to thank you so much for sharing your stories.

MRM: I feel like I've known you forever. [laughter]

KR: Thank you so much for arranging this room for us to record in. We are in the Local History Room at the Westfield Memorial Library. Mary Jo arranged this for us. Thank you doing that for us.

MRM: My pleasure. [laughter] I have been here before doing my block history.

KR: We are going to stop the recording and continue with a second session in the near future.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

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