

RUTGERS THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROL KAIN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an oral history interview with Carol Musselman Kain on February 26, 2021. I am Shaun Illingworth. I am in Hightstown, New Jersey and Ms. Kain, can you tell us where you are today?

Carol Kain: I'm in Washington, Warren County, New Jersey.

SI: Okay.

CK: As opposed to the other Washington Townships in the state. [Editor's Note: There are a total of five municipalities in New Jersey with the name of Washington.]

SI: Yes, there are a number of Monroes and Jeffersons around the state. [Editor's Note: There are two municipalities in New Jersey with the name of Monroe. There is one municipality named Jefferson in New Jersey.]

CK: Yes.

SI: Dan and Sean, do you just want to say your full names and the town you are in?

Daniel Hawkins: I am Daniel Hawkins and I am in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Sean Choi: I am Sean Choi and I am in Cresskill, New Jersey.

SI: All right, great. So, to begin, can you tell us where and when you were born?

CK: Born in Hunterdon Medical Center in Flemington, New Jersey, November 3, 1957.

SI: Okay. For those reading this interview, we should note, the Oral History Archive has also interviewed your father. We are going to cover some of the same ground here but if they are looking for a life history, they may also look at your father's interview as well.

CK: Yes.

SI: Can you tell us, in your own words, a little bit about your parents, their names and then what you know about their backgrounds?

CK: Oh, I know a lot about their backgrounds.

SI: Yes.

CK: My father is Harold Edward Musselman. He was born and raised, born in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, December 27, 1921. My mother, Kathryn Alice Steiner Musselman, was from Taylor, Pennsylvania. She was born April 29, 1924. They met at East Stroudsburg State Teachers College because by that point, my father and his family had moved to East Stroudsburg. That's really where he grew up. My mom grew up in Taylor, Pennsylvania. They met in Glee Club and a couple other classes and when my dad got drafted for World War II in

1941, he had invited my mom to the Christmas dance but stood her up because he had gotten his draft notice. So, he had to write to her from boot camp which was, I think was in Texas, to let her know that he wasn't going to be there for the Christmas dance. [Editor's Note: Honesdale is a borough and county seat in Wayne County, Pennsylvania. Taylor is a borough in Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania. East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania is a public university in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. It was established in 1893 as East Stroudsburg Normal School. In 1927, it adopted the name East Stroudsburg State Teachers College. It received its current name in 1973. World War II occurred from 1939 to 1945.]

When my parents came to Washington, dad was hired at Washington High School which is now Warren Hills and he taught from there from 1951 to 1979. Mom was also a school teacher and she taught elementary education and substitute. Then she transferred to becoming a librarian at the old Belvidere, the Warren County Library and that's where she retired from. What her aunts always said was that was a job that retired school teachers always did because my mother always wanted to be a librarian. She didn't want to be a teacher originally, so she ended up doing that. But my, I don't know how much of the background that you really want me to go into. [Editor's Note: Warren Hills Regional High School is a regional high school in Washington Township, Warren County, New Jersey. It was established in 1967.]

SI: No, we know quite a bit about your father from the other interview. Maybe a little bit more about your mother, anything you know about her family background or her early life?

CK: Well, her early life, her mother died when my mother was seven years old and my grandfather's parents who were Swiss immigrants also living in Taylor, PA. So, he and my mother moved home. My mom was an only child living in a house with seven adults. So, a spoiled rotten single kid who married a spoiled rotten youngest child, because my dad was the youngest of seven. She was a Depression-era kid but she said she never remembers them being poor because there was always someone in the household that was working, so they always had things, enough to survive and everything. My grandfather worked for the railroad; he was on the DL&W [Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western] Railroad as a machinist. So, actually when World War II rolled around, my father was in the Army and my grandfather at age forty-four enlisted and was a First-Class Machinist Mate, which for the Army types and everybody else, that's equal to a Staff Sergeant. So, he was in the Pacific, my father was in Europe. My mom was one of the few hundred women, I think, that were at East Stroudsburg State Teacher's College during war time. There was very few men there and she finished college two years ahead of my dad because she had gone straight through and he had to come back and finish and when they married in August of 1947, they then went to work two years in Maryland, in East New Market, Maryland where they taught school. Then, from there, they went out to State College, where my father got his master's degree at Penn State and from there, they came here to Washington. So, they bounced around a few times.

But I'm actually living in the house I grew up in. My father built this house in 1953. When Dad passed away, I bought the house from the estate. I have a brother and sister, and so I bought the house. I'm sleeping in the bedroom I grew up in. [Editor's Note: The Great Depression occurred from 1939 to 1941. The Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western Railroad was a railroad that extended from Buffalo, New York to Hoboken, New Jersey. Its route went through northeastern

Pennsylvania. It operated from 1851 to 1960. Penn State University is a public university that was established in 1855.]

SI: So, you are the youngest of three?

CK: Yes. I have a brother who is seventy now and a sister who is sixty-seven and don't tell her I said that. [laughter] I'm sixty-three.

SI: Well, tell us a little bit about growing up in the area you still live in. What was it like when you were growing up there? What are some of your earliest memories?

CK: Well, when this house was built and I was little, there was basically six houses on the road from here, we're a half a mile away from Route 31 and there were very few houses. The original house, when they first moved in here, they were on a party line of like seven people. This is very much a farming community; our neighbors were cornfields on all four sides, across the road was a dairy farm and there were frequent times when we would have cows in the backyard if they got out. There were three other families here that had any kids, so all within shouting distance, we could ride bicycles or whatever, to go to their houses. So, it was like typical 1950s, early '60s kind of growing up in this house. I mean, we could go out in the backyard and sun bathe and not worry about neighbors poking around, not that we did as little kids but we had a garden. There's an acre of land. The whole back quarter was garden. At that point, in the early house, my grandparents, my mom's dad and her stepmom lived in town. So, my grandfather would come out and work the garden and if mom had a substitute teaching job, they periodically would take care of me but I had an Army of babysitters that I would go to. I don't know. To me, it was like a typical, if you see stuff about 1950s, early '60s, kind of growing up, it wasn't quite Maybury, but it was a very, and actually, in town, was a very booming little town. We had everything you needed here because there were no malls. The malls didn't come about until, well the first one would've been Palmer Park Mall over in Easton, Pennsylvania, which was probably late '60s, early '70s at the most, but it wasn't a very big mall. The Lehigh Valley Mall went in 1976 when I was a senior in high school. So, we didn't have a need for malls. The community was very prosperous. Like I said, we had farms everywhere. [Editor's Note: Route 31 is a state highway that extends 48.93 miles from Trenton to Buttzville, New Jersey. Maybury, North Carolina is the fictional town used as the setting of *The Andy Griffith Show*, a television series that aired from 1960 to 1968. The Palmer Park Mall is a shopping mall in Palmer Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania which is near the city of Easton, Pennsylvania. It opened in 1973. The Lehigh Valley Mall is a shopping mall in Whitehall Township, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. It opened in 1976.]

Now, in Warren County alone, you could probably count on one hand, the farms that still have dairy cows. Everybody has either gone to beef cows or crops. They're not even farming for, with animals anymore, which is really sad because I miss that. Now, the farm across the road, and the farm that was next to it, are Hawk Pointe Golf Course, and right now, as we speak, there are eighty houses going up, which are, like for fifty-five and over. There'll be about twenty of them right across the road from my house and another sixty of them between here and across to the main part of the community. You can't look across and see the Ford dealership over on Route 31 from our house anymore and so that kind of stuff has changed. I mean, it's all still a lot of

small-town feel, but it just, there's a lot of things that I miss. I mean, I can't go out and walk on the road out in front of our house because it's a speedway. Once they figured out it was a bypass from 31 to go up towards Hackettstown without going through Washington to get there. So, it's changed but it's home. I left here in 1976 when I went to boot camp and other coming back periodically, I was gone for thirty-three years before I moved home with dad and he was almost eighty-seven then. So, I moved home so he didn't have to leave his house. ... So, I spent twelve years with him, taking care of him, because mom died in 2004 from leukemia and so like I said, he was here a lot by himself. I don't think he realized or he didn't let on that he really needed somebody home with him but people saw a change in him when I did move home. His spirits lifted because he had been here so long by himself. So, that's pretty much in a nutshell, I guess. [Editor's Note: Hawk Pointe Golf Club is a private golf club in Washington, Warren County, New Jersey. Ford is an automobile manufacturer that was established in 1903.]

SI: Well, in terms of what you did for fun or what interested you the most as a child, it sounds like you did a lot of outdoor activities.

CK: Oh absolutely, yes.

SI: Yes, was there organized activities or was it mostly finding your own things to do?

CK: When we were kids, they had, the midget leagues and all that were out there but that was not our thing. From 1960 until 1966, Dad's summer job was as a forest ranger up at the Worthington State Forest, up at the Delaware Water Gap. So, our summers were spent up there. We became river kids. We were not Jersey Shore kids. I could probably count the times on one hand that I went to the Jersey Shore even at this point in my life. Because we went where the job was and we lived up there in the old farmhouse and there was another family that was there who, the husband had been a former student of dad's and dad hired him on to come up to be forest ranger. So, we all grew up, we had a free run of the camp as kids only two major rules, was one, you didn't bother the campers, and two, you didn't go swimming other places other than in the swimming area with adults around because you had river currents to worry about. [Editor's Note: Worthington State Forest is a New Jersey state forest within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. It was established in 1954. The Delaware Water Gap is a water gap where the Delaware River cuts through the Appalachian Mountains at the border of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is overseen by the National Park Service. It was established in 1960.]

At home, we had our yard chores and things like that. My mom said she was a lazy mom, that's why she had three kids for household chores, we all learned to cook, to sew, to garden, to mow the lawn. There was no discrimination between genders as far as chores went. We all learned how to do, so it was a lot of family related things. Of course, being my parents were school teachers, school teachers hang around with other school teachers and their families. ... So, that was another part of our friend core. We had our bicycles. We did not have a swimming pool. We did not have air conditioning. Our swimming hole was about a mile for here, a couple of bachelor gentleman who owned a farm, that had a man-made pond that was spring fed and that was the swimming hole for the neighboring local farm kids and it was ice cold of course because it was from a spring and that, of course that doesn't exist anymore because when they built

houses up on the mountain over it, they messed up the spring that was feeding the pond. ... At the end of the day, like three o'clock in the afternoon or later, it's like begging dad to take us to Hogan's to go swim because we needed that and we'd go there. There might be another half a dozen people there or whatever, just, it was a small, our own little community and one of the families that went there, the wife was also a school teacher with my dad, and they had horses, so at the ripe old age of five, I was learning how to ride horses. ... My sister being a couple years older than me, she was there first and one time I went with dad to pick my sister up and the daughter put me up on the horse and then, it was like, that's it, she's hooked so. ... Who knew at this age, which is, that's back at the other end of the spectrum here, who knew I would be involved with horses again because I'm part of one of the veterans horse programs.

So, but we had our, as far as other things to do, we had pretty much free range. If we were not on chores and whatever, we could take off and go. Sometimes alone, sometimes maybe two of us together to go wander. We didn't have to worry about predators, any of the two-legged kind. One of my best friends to this day lived like a quarter-mile from us and she and I would meet to go ride bicycles or whatever, and even before we were in school. Well, her mom had also been a school teacher and we would go either to her house or she would come here. In the winter time, we were inside, playing store because she had, their family had had a turkey farm called Frontier Farms which is what our land was taken from, my parents bought an acre from her grandfather and she still had the cash register from the store which was basically like an old adding machine with the big crank on the side and then the drawer would pop open. So, there was a money machine but it looked like a huge adding machine. So, we played store and come into our house, we'd play school. When the weather was good, we were outside. We just, we didn't have organized playdates. It's like, well maybe, we'd call to say, "Hey, do you want to play like now, kind of today," because somebody would have to probably, when we were little, we had to be driven there but as we got older, we'd get on the phone and say, "You want to meet and go ride bikes." Across the river into Hunterdon County in New Hampton and they had the Old New Hampton General Store with, right inside the front door was the candy counter and you could go in with a quarter and come out with a little brown bag full of candy because a lot of it was either penny candy or two-for-a-penny candy. So, and we didn't have to worry, mom didn't have to worry about the candy because we'd burn it off. None of this, restricting kids from the sugar because we worked at, we didn't have all of these ADD, ADHD, ABCDFG kind of things going on. If they existed, they weren't labeled kind of thing. I mean, we had, we were free range kids, instead of free-range chickens. We were free range kids, you know.

SI: You mentioned having to do chores around the property. What kinds of things would you do?

CK: Same as anything. I started washing clothes at five years old. I remember having to jump up on the side of the washer to reach in to pull the clothes out and then drag the basket outside to hang. We didn't have a dryer. We had to hang things out, so we did laundry. We did yardwork. We did weed and garden. We cleaned. I mean, same thing anybody does now but we just, as a family, more, it was more family teamwork, you know. My brother started using the electric mixer when he was very little because my mom taught him how. I mean, at a point, where he still called it the, "Motor Go," because he got to make the motor go on the mixer and if the kids are taught, they can do it without worrying. I was using the stove at five years old. We mostly

learned how to bake first because that was more fun. Television was not on all the time. It came on, maybe if mom wanted to listen to the news while she was making supper or something like that but we had the television with three channels and the rabbit ears on top. I remember, I was in kindergarten when John Kennedy was assassinated and I was, mom had the television on because she would iron in front of the television and there's another lost art. But mom would have the television on and all they're showing is the funeral and everything that went along with that and I remember asking her, wanting her to change the channel to something else and so she did. She showed me all three channels, had the same thing going on but just from a different camera angle but it was ABC, NBC, CBS, and that was your television, black and white. We never had a colored television until I was probably twelve. ... That was the same time we got the dryer because we got it from my grandfather who moved from a house into an apartment. [Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 in Dallas, Texas by Lee Harvey Oswald. The American Broadcasting Company, or ABC, is a television network that was established in 1943. Today, it is owned by The Walt Disney Company. The National Broadcasting Company, or NBC, is a television network that was established in 1926 as a radio network. Columbia Broadcasting System, or CBS, is a television network that was established in 1927 as a radio network. The three networks are known as The Big Three.]

What else did we do? That's pretty much. I mean, general housework, we dusted, we cleaned, and when Dad first had a recliner, my sister and I would kind of fight over who was going to clean the living room because when dad would lay back in the chair, you'd hear the change fall out of his pocket. So, we'd fight who was going to clean the living room because whoever got to clean the chair, got the change. It's kind of like when you washed clothes and there's money in the washer, well, that's the tip for the laundry lady, you know? We learned to do lawnmowers, that's how we learned really. We learned on the. By the time I was in high school, we had a Gravely lawn tractor, so you learn judging your spacing and backing up and doing all the stuff with that. ... If dad was working on lawn mowers, whatever kid was handy and he needed a hand, it didn't matter, girl or boy, so we all, like I said, we all learned how to garden. We all, just every day stuff just like everybody else. We, one thing that was different for us, because we were school teacher kids, was that when we were out in public, there better not be any arguing or fighting, or carrying on. No temper tantrums, you went out in public, you toed the line because of dad's reputation. You could still go in the town and there's a lot of people here yet that my father taught. They're now the first group of the first year from '51, they're eighty-eight, eighty-seven, eighty-eight years old now. But then, you look through yearbooks, I could go through those first couple yearbooks when he started and pick out the parents of a lot of my classmates because he did multiple generations which is kind of cool. I like to go back and look through and say, "Yes, that's so and so's mom, that's so and so' dad, who's married to this and that." There's one of the former students that actually setup a family tree for Washington. You go on ancestry and there's the family tree of who's married to who and you got people that I went to school with, their families have been here for generations, much longer than we were ever here. ... It's really neat to see that and people putting pictures up on Facebook about, and remember when kinds of things. To me it's a lot of fun, I like to do that. [Editor's Note: Gravely is a manufacturer of engine powered lawn and garden tools. It was established in 1922.]

SI: Okay. I think Daniel has a question.

CK: Yes.

DH: I just have a question talking about, since we are on the topic of your early household, your early life, what that was like, being free range kids. What was the, what I want to know, was how religious was your family because I remember reading that both your parents were Presbyterian, living in a very cliché almost sounding, rural community in America, farming community, and with school teacher parents. [Editor's Note: Presbyterianism is a Protestant sect of Christianity that was established in the 1700s in Scotland.]

CK: Yes.

DH: What was that like? What was the kind of religious life of your house like?

CK: Well, we went to church, we still, I'm still at the same church that I was baptized in actually now. I never transferred out of the church, I stayed with this, they put me on the inactive list but my father actually is a preacher's kid. My grandfather was a circuit preacher that although when he was very small, my grandmother divorced him because on his circuit, he tended to get a little bit too cozy with some of the widows evidently. [laughter] That's our skeleton in the closet but, and my mother was raised in the Lutheran Church, up in Taylor, the church is still there. [Editor's Note: Ms. Kain's telephone rings.] No, I don't have to get that. The church, well, they always called it the old German church because that was while the Lutheran church came out of Germany, so that was how she was raised but we really did not, I mean, we went to church and we went to Sunday school and we did all that but we were not, we weren't bible thumpers as the expression goes. Like, and in the summertime, we didn't go as often because one, if we were not here because of being up at the river, and I don't think we were anymore religious than most of the families around here were, just a good Protestant family. That answer your question? [Editor's Note: Protestantism is a branch of Christianity that was established in 1517, when the German priest, Martin Luther, protested against the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Out of Luther's protests and teachings came Lutheranism. Today, there are many branches of Protestantism, or sects of Christianity that are separate from the Roman Catholic Church.]

DH: Yes, it did, thank you.

CK: Okay.

SI: So, when you were growing up, were you going to the same schools that your parents were teaching at? I know you went to the high school your father taught at, were the elementary schools where your mother taught?

CK: Actually yes, where I went, Port Coldon Elementary School, we all went through there. At that time, when I still started school, it was K through 8. When I was in first grade, my mother taught kindergarten because the teacher took a year sabbatical that the rest of, that everybody and his brother had. Then, when I was in second grade, my mom taught third grade and so these are kids I've grown up with and then they turn around and a lot of them ended up having my dad as a teacher in the high school then. He taught earth science and biology. So, Warren Hills came to play. They opened up in the fall of 1967, so then the elementary schools went to K through 6.



... We went on through. I remember one year, when mom was subbing and she would sub at the high school and my brother was a senior, my sister was a sophomore, dad was there. Mom got a call to go substitute and it turned out it was in the school library, at the high school. ... I was on spring break from school. That was before they made everything so everybody is off at the same time. So, I went with mom to school that day, so the entire family was at the high school for that one particular day while mom was subbing, which was a lot of fun because my brother and my sister and myself, we were all in Warren Hills Marching Band, and well my brother did two years Washington High School, then when it switched over, but so I knew a lot of their classmates because of their activities and because of dad and everything too. So, it was fun for me because I knew so many people there and I knew the teachers because within the school, I mean, the teachers were an extension of my family really because especially the ones we were really close to. Some of them even helped my father build this house, so.

SI: Daniel?

DH: Oh yes, actually since we are on the topic of school actually, I wanted to switch over, (??) what was it like attending Warren Hills Regional Junior and Senior High School in the 1970s? What was that like going through the junior and senior high school experience in America at this time in New Jersey?

CK: Well, okay, number one, starting when I was in seventh grade was the first year that girls got to wear pants to school. Up until then, if you wore pants to school, like in the winter time you'd wear pants put on long pants because it was cold outside but when you got to school, you had to switch over and be in a dress or skirt, which was common for a lot of these school areas later at that point. I had friends, later on, who went to school in the borough. Those kids walked to school, the girls in dresses in skirts, because that was the rule, they couldn't. You didn't go to school in pants and my, the thing is, and it was not blue jeans, they had to be coordinated outfits or pant suits or that sort of thing. Most of the boys did not wear blue jeans, they wore pants, I mean, my brother in high school, they had senior dress up day, or school dress up day. The boys would wear shirts and ties and sports coats and the girls all in nice dresses and all that. By the time I was in eighth grade, my sister and brother were out of high school already because they graduated. My sister was a senior when I was in seventh grade. When I started eighth grade, Dad was tired of fighting with me about wearing pants, so I wore pants pretty much the whole year because I was happier that way. Still quite, I'll say a lot of a Americana attitude. A lot, I mean, the patriotism I've seen, has gone downhill, in the schools and for that matter, in our country, we've really gone downhill a lot. What was it like in the schools though? I mean, I don't know how to make a comparison of anything other than that going away. I wish that I could get a hold of some of the music that I was taught in elementary school, like the books because starting with kindergarten, you learn "America the Beautiful" and then comes "The Star-Spangled," little kids singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" but kids were learning these songs in school, very patriotic, a lot of, Arlo Guthrie kind of music. I probably then, I forget, Arlo was the younger one or the older. The father was Woody Guthrie. [Editor's Note: "America the Beautiful" is an 1895 patriotic song by Katharine Lee Bates. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is the national anthem of the United States. It was written as a poem in 1814 by Francis Scott Key. It was officially adopted as the national anthem in 1931. Woodrow Wilson "Woody" Guthrie was

an American folk artist who lived from 1912 to 1967. His son, Arlo Guthrie, is a folk artist as well, who is now retired.]

SI: The father was Woody, yes.

CK: The father was Woody Guthrie and he did, "This Land is Your Land" and a lot of reaching out to, like he travelled the country on trains with the people who are really down and out as far as employment and everything because it was Depression-era. That was part of the Depression-era. So, that music carried over into school. We had a lot of, well, early Bob Dylan type stuff really. You had, I'm searching for the word for the type of music because right now my brain takes a hike once in a while. [Editor's Note: "This Land is Your Land" is a 1944 folk song by Woody Guthrie. Bob Dylan is an American folk singer who came to fame in the 1960s.]

SI: Like folk music?

CK: Yes, would be more like because you had Peter, Paul, and Mary, and you had that kind of music. I mean, we took that into scout camp. That's another thing I left out. We were all involved in, my brother in boy scouts and then my dad and then my mom and my sister and I did the girl scout side. So, but that music, we were singing those kinds of songs at girl scout camp. ... The teacher, my music teacher at school, her favorite composer was Steven Foster which is all-America music. ... Those kinds of things stick around with you, we didn't have. I think some of that should still be around. I mean, they've gone, they've changed everything to make everything generic. It's like, I'm sorry, there's still boys and there's still girls. I don't know about. I'm not going to get into the other side of things because I have other opinions that people might not like but there's too much political correctness from my point of view. The, I don't know, it's, I don't know how to compare it. [Editor's Note: Peter, Paul, and Mary were an American folk group that was active from 1961 to 1970 and again from 1981 to 2009. Steven Foster was an American composer who wrote songs such as, "Oh! Susanna." Foster lived from 1826 to 1864.]

We had rules to follow, most certainly, in schools I've taught, I went and did my student teaching pretty much a couple years out of the military and I was over in Pennsylvania and the schools were too liberal for me. The kids did not have rules to follow. I had kids in the classroom who would disappear for half an hour and it turns out he was sitting in the, this one kid was in visiting with one of the Vice Principals. The kid went out on the lavatory pass, he was with the vice principal, he was laughing because he things he's pulled something over on me because he vanished for half an hour and I was not real happy with the faculty in that school which is part of what what turned me away from. Well, I did not teach in public schools for a long time. I subbed for a long time, with the schools but my, I got hired into a private school, an alternative high school which is where the kids who are on probation or who kind of really don't fit in well with the public schools too disruptive and that sort of thing. I taught there. Those kids had rules. I was hired because I had the teaching degree. I had the military background. They wanted someone who had a little strength behind them, not necessarily physically. I'm not a big person. I'm five foot, two. So, that experience for me was not good in the public schools. I substituted when we, because when we moved to Florida then, I was substituting down there too. Some of it was okay but I just, it just turned me away from wanting to teach. I love to teach. I don't like a lot of the extra, they say BS, that goes along with it. There's just too much other stuff that does

not fit with my way of thinking. I mean, you figure nineteen years of active duty, it kind of structures you in ways that most people don't have, especially when I went in at eighteen. I spent the first nineteen years of my adult life in the military. That's going to make a big difference in my way of thinking. Yes?

SI: Sean, yes.

SC: Moving forward with that, what made you decide to join the military?

CK: Oh, wow.

SC: Is that something you always wanted to do and why was it the Navy?

CK: Well, for one, when I first started looking into it, my father gave me two choices. He said, "Navy or Air Force?" Because back at that point, was post-Vietnam and my dad said, "Because the Navy and the Air Force take better care of their women and in a lot of ways, I still think that they do." Why? Well, I went with, a girlfriend of mine, this is in early part of my senior year, like the beginning of the school year and one of my girlfriends who was also in marching band with me and she played flute and she was looking into the military and in the Navy to possibly go in as a musician. So, she wanted someone to go with her, so I went with her and while I was there, I'm looking at things and I'm reading and I took some information home with me. ... As it turned out, her father would not let her go and she was not, she would've been eighteen, closer to the end of the school year. I'm a November birthday, I was early on, I don't know if that had any influence in it. It was easier for me, even if my father had not signed the papers for me. By November, I was eighteen, I could have signed them myself to go. ... I was at a point, like I said, I was eighteen most in my senior year, so my dad and I especially, we were butting heads a little bit because here, I'm the youngest child and I'm about, and I'm wanting to go and they're trying to hold, keep the little girl home, you know. So, I was ready to get out of Washington because at that point, the restless teenager was looking for a way out. So, I would, my father did sign for me, because by the time I went for my physical, I was actually eighteen already but the paperwork got signed, I was still seventeen. And he's like, "Well, four years is a long time," and I was like, "Yes." Then of course I ended up staying, so but that was pretty much why I wanted to get out of here and I was ready, and my grandfather had been in the Navy and he was all gung ho.

One of my grandfather's brother had been in, he was in the Merchant Marines and he was like, "Good, the best thing for you" kind of thing. So, although two of their sisters were still alive, the one of them when I got confronted at their house, I was washing dishes and I couldn't. ... I was kind of stuck in the kitchen, you know, and the sisters came out and I said to my mother, I'm like, "Mom, help." ... She's like, "You might as well tell them." By that point, I already knew I was going in. the older sister says, "She's either going to be a WAC or a WAVE." And the other one, the younger one, she said to the younger one in Swiss to shut your mouth because the younger one would have responded without thinking first. She would have, at first, she wasn't real happy about it because old school thought on women in the military were either they were going looking for a husband or they were prostitutes kind of thing which maybe it was a lot, I don't know, but like I said, they came around to my way of thinking about it. It was like this was

the '70s, things are different now than they were during war time, so she had time to cool her jets down a little bit, but anyway, I ended up going because I just had that need to go, to leave for a while, you know. [Editor's Note: The Women's Army Corps, or WAC, was the women's branch of the Army that operated from 1942 to 1978. In 1978, women were fully integrated into the military. The Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, or WAVES, also known as the United States Naval Reserve (Women's Reserve), was the women's branch of the Navy during World War II. After the war, it was demobilized but then revitalized in 1948 when women's branches in all the services were authorized. The term WAVES went away in 1973.]

... One of my girlfriends, one of my best friends, whose, she's since passed away, five years ago, and found out she was going. So, we got even closer friends because we started hanging around together. Not getting into trouble but getting into mischief a little bit more before we went. ... Just I found a lot of other people that I knew that were going in, and a couple of the girls who had gone in the year or two ahead of us from older classes, who when they came home, we got to sit down and talk with them and the one thing they said is, "Don't go to Orlando in August in the summertime." Well, that was where bootcamp was, and Orlando, even in September was very hot. We had a lot of, what they called black flag days which if the temperature was over ninety, they'd fly the black flag over the grinders, so that we did not PT on those days or we went at it early. They were actually getting us, right after breakfast, we'd go out to do PT before it got stinking hot. ... Of course, my husband, the one I met later on, when he went to Orlando in 1974, he fell in love with Orlando and when I went in '76, I said, "God, please don't send me back there." Although, we did end up there for three years at one point but yes, Florida is just too hot. The sad thing is, because they closed Orlando down, part of the base realignment and closure and that was a big mistake in my view because you can train year-round down there, outside. ... Now, everybody is up at Great Lakes and it's a little cold in the winter time. So, I don't know, did I answer your question? [Editor's Note: Naval Training Center Orlando, Florida was in operation from 1940 to 1999. It was utilized as a site to train new Navy recruits. In 1993, the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure Commission decided to close the base. New recruit training ended in 1994 and the base was fully closed in 1999. Naval Station Great Lakes is a Navy station in Illinois that was established in 1911. Since 1994, it is the only Navy base that hosts and trains new recruits.]

SI: Yes. Did you go in having any idea of what you might do or I know some people could work out something with their recruiter?

CK: Oh, I had a school, yes.

SI: Okay.

CKJ: I had a school definitely, because that was the one thing and of course we had been told, make sure, anything the recruiter promises you, make sure that it's in writing because that's the only way that that promise is going to come true, is if it's on the contract and I did have one, my first choice was as a Navy Yeoman which was administration and my second choice was Personnel Man which handles the enlisted records. Yeoman also handles officer records. So, I went as a yeoman, and what amazed me, and that school was in Mississippi, but I got there and before you actually got put in a classroom, they sat you down for your typing abilities, for a

typewriter, the predecessor of the computers, and so I sat down and I had already had two years of typing in high school. So, I sit down and I'm typing away and the guy next to me stop and looks at me. He's like, "You already know how to type?" Because he's on with the headset learning how to do the keyboard stuff before getting to school. I figured everybody had to know how to type before they went to school but it wasn't the case. So, I mean, I think I spent ten minutes in that room getting evaluated for typing before I was put into a classroom. So, that's how I ended up there.

SI: Well, tell us about the process of reporting, getting your physical, going down to Florida. That whole journey. Was it shocking to you all or was it pretty much what you thought it was going to be?

CK: Well, there were always little surprises but I, when I started the process in the fall of '75. I had my physical in November. That was a little weird, I mean, because just military doctors and all that kind of thing and you're sitting in a room with a whole bunch of other ladies who are going through the same process at the same time. ... The irony is, I had already had my physical that was prior to my, I think it was prior to my SATs that I took for high school and while in high school so while it took time to take those testing, I didn't really care too much because I already knew where I was going. I was supposed to go into what they called the delayed entry program like right after Christmas. Well, I had been up to, with our ski club from school up to Greenwood Lake, New York. I think that was when I did that. I sprained my ankle. So, I got delayed. I had to wait two more weeks to go to swear in, in a delayed entry program. How that works, I mean, I actually didn't go to boot camp until September of '76 but this was January and what they did, it was kind of putting you into an inactive reserve status and it does have an impact on pay raises once you're on active duty because my actual pay entry base date, the date that my pay was, pay raises were for longevity, were activated, started with that January date in '76, when I actually didn't go active duty until September of 1976. So, I was getting the longevity pay raises. I got them nine months before I actually hit that point. So, it made a significant difference.

Between January and September, there wasn't a whole lot. It was finish school, do all the things that seniors do and everything. Then, my active service date was 10 September of '76, so that day, the recruiter came here to get me and it was, I think, I was the only one from this area at that point, that specific point and then met up, there was a couple of other ladies from the AV station which was in Newark. We met up. We were all going at the same time, so we actually, the three of us flew down to Orlando together. They put the girls on the plane. Most of the time they put the guys on a train to send them, I don't know why, maybe it was cheaper that way because it was usually more guys going. ... Actually, a friend of mine, he and I were actually babies in the church nursery together and we've gone through all of our life things through high, elementary school, high school. We were at boot camp together at the same time even. It's like, that's a long stretch of time to be on that track with a person that you've known for so long. ... We're still good friends. He's in Texas. ... Then, we get to Orlando, and you don't really have much in the way of, a whole lot of luggage, although the ladies had to go with a suitcase. Because we were not issued seabags yet, so we had to go with certain things. There were certain things we were told to bring and when you get there, most of the time, they got locked up in the store room with the suitcases anyway. But like you could bring your own underwear and that sort of thing. So,

that was all we really had was a suitcase, because they didn't start issuing the ladies the seabags until I was there for five weeks. So, I was not in that loop. Although, I bought one because I needed to because all of the uniform issue that you got would not fit in that suitcase. We're talking about the hard sided luggage, Samsonite, you know. No wheels on the bottoms, no fancy, I mean, if you go now, if you had to take a suitcase, you could get the soft sided ones and seem to fit a lot more in them. [Editor's Note: Samsonite is a luggage manufacturer that was established in 1910.]

But got there, at the airport, they had buses from the Navy base that were there to pickup the recruits to take them to the base. I think the biggest shock at that point was the temperature change. It was hot. I didn't have a coat or anything anyway, but still it was from, up here in September, you didn't need a coat so. Went with blue jeans and a t-shirt and sneakers and that was basically your wardrobe. You didn't have a wallet. You didn't have a lot of extra paraphernalia to take along with you. I remember getting there when not getting there in time for evening chow. So, I went without supper that night. ... All, sleep was not sound that night because all night long you're hearing people coming in to the birthing. You have a room and it's got about eighty women in an open bay barracks is what it was and with that many people, you're hearing them coming in at all hours of the night. ... The next morning you wake up and you have to stand on the line in front of the bunks and everything and you look around and it's like, "Where did all these people come from?" Because most of them had not been there when I got there that previous evening. Then began the real culture shock of really realizing, "Oh, what have I done kind of thing," starts to cross your mind and all. I don't remember sequence of events as far as but we started with going through medical and they start with your shots and blood tests and blah, blah, blah. ... I remember a couple of ladies who actually got to go home early. They did not stick around because when you get there, testing everybody for pregnancy test, so a few of them had to turn around and get sent home.

But, oh, the other thing was too, when I went through, they only formed up one company of women per week unless it was a week where they were setting up a drill company to do the marching drill kind of company and that happened to be the week that I was there, was, I had a sister company. ... The difference, what they did, if you were from, I think it was from five foot six to five foot eight, or something, or around there, if you were within that height range, they went to the drill company. So, if you were below that or above that, you went to where I was. So, we ranged from four foot ten, all the way up to six feet tall in my company. ... Of course, they always put the tall ones at the front of the company for marching. So, all of us short legged people are in the back of the company, trying to keep up with the long-legged ones. That was an interesting change but I don't know, besides the medical, like I said, we all got. We went to medical once a week, for shots, and some days you went, you went up to the line, you had to, they used the guns, the shot. You'd get one arm, and then you take a step or two forward and then they get you in the other arm at the same time. So, there were days, we were coming out of there pretty sore because they usually had more than one vaccine in a load. I don't know how they do that but, and we were actually there and became guinea pigs for the swine flu vaccine in 1976. Everybody in boot camp got the swine flu vaccine out in the fleet, they got it voluntarily, if they were willing to go along with it, not everybody was required to. But if you were in boot camp, they tested it on everybody. Who knew what? We had no idea what they're giving us.

They just line up; you got vaccines today. One thing that was, I was in the first company of women to be issued pants with my dress uniform.

SI: Okay.

CK: I made history. [laughter] What's on your mind?

SI: I was curious, you must have had a drill instructor, do you remember that?

CK: Oh yes, she was an Aviation Shore Keeper Second Class, last name of Dalton. ... At that point, we also had an Assistant Company Commander who happened to be, she was an Airman Apprentice that she was waiting on a school seat. So, they borrowed, brought her in as the assistant. So, she was basically a couple weeks ahead of us beyond her own bootcamp. But then, let's see, then they switched it around and they started having just like two full blown company commanders per unit and then when they started integrating the companies, some of them had a man and a woman company commander. Just to me, that kind of, I think they should have kept well enough alone but people survived, so but yes, we just had the one and we were her first company actually. ... How we learned that was because she had to shadow us when we went to classes and everything and she had a stack of notebooks in her hand for her own whatever, her bibles for the job. I mean, but very nice lady and still very old school. We were taught, one thing that was, back then we were still taught to be ladies. We were not, we, hair length couldn't be shorter than an inch or an inch and a half long. You still have a head of hair so that they knew you were a girl, you know. ... Just, this is the end, this is in the '70s, this is post-Vietnam. There's still a little stigma about women in the military and all that, and yet, things were changing because they were opening up other jobs to women that had not been.

Traditionally, you were corpsman, hospital corpsman. You were a yeoman, personnel man, storekeeper, mess management specialist, or cooks, and a couple other jobs. Well now we had enginemen. We had machinist mates. You had electricians, a few other things were opening up to women and a lot of that kind of thing came about, actually, from Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She was a big push, when she still was in, I don't remember if she was in Congress or Senate, she was in politics before she went on the Supreme Court. But she was a big push for a lot of the equal rights for women, opening up things in jobs for women, which also, I want to back track a little bit, Title IX, the girls' sports. She was part of that too. I know my classmates had a big opportunity for the girls' sports for basketball was opened up. My sister's class, she was in '71. They were still doing intramurals, I think, for that year but then a couple years later, then they opened up. A friend of mine who was two years ahead of me, I think, was the first girl in Warren Hills to run track. So, that was all that kind of stuff going on, the Title IX stuff. So, there's, we got the controversy about the transgender guys who want to run with girls' sports but if they're transgender, they're still, they still have guys' DNA. They don't lose their DNA just because they are in process of switching over. The DNA doesn't. It's still a major factor in the process. But anyway, back to the other side again, Ruth Bader Ginsburg opened up a lot of jobs for the ladies in the military and the Navy actually, when it came to equal rights, the Navy were the first ones to really get the ball start rolling with that. There were a lot of changes. [Editor's Note: Ruth Bader Ginsburg was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court from 1993 to 2020. From 1980 to 1993, Ginsburg had been a Judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the

District of Columbia Circuit. Throughout her career as a lawyer and judge, Ginsburg supported and advocated for women's rights. Ginsburg lived from 1933 to 2020. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 forbids gender discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funding. It had a big impact on increasing women's athletics.]

SI: Well, tell us what a typical day would be like in training, what a physical training and a classroom training, what was it?

CK: A lot of it, yes. We have, well, I don't, I couldn't tell you what time they rolled us out of bed because that was early, probably O dark thirty somewhere. ... After chow, then we have PT, as we progressed later into, by November, things are actually, Orlando does get a little chilly as you get into the fall, closer to winter time but we started out early PT, classrooms. The worst part was going out and you're sweating like crazy and then having to go to school all sweaty. Showers didn't come till nighttime. You didn't have to go through; you didn't have the opportunity to necessarily to go back and cool off to go sit in a classroom somewhere. Sometimes you were with your sister company most of the time we were in class to be a company of guys with us because we had a whole bunch of brother companies. They started out, they didn't just gear up on one day of the week. Women came in and they scheduled to have however many women for a Friday arrival. The guys, they would have a transient unit until they got enough guys to make a company, then they'd start a new company up. So, but a lot of times, we had class with a guy company. Of course, they're on one side of the room, we're on the other, no fraternizing, and even in the chow hall. That's how I learned to eat with both hands on top of the table. You were not allowed to eat with both hands under the table. So, if you happen to be sitting next to a guy at the table, they didn't want anything going on at the table. So, lovely to look at but that's about as far as it went too. Or, you can talk to them once in a while but the fraternizing didn't happen, unless on Sundays at church. You could talk a little bit to some guys. We had a couple, actually, one of the girls in my company, her husband was also in boot camp at the same time. So, they were allowed to sit together in church and there was a couple, like the Sunday afternoon, when we really did not have a lot going on, some of the girls would go down on onto one of the grinders to go do some exercise or whatever and they happened to do it outside his barracks window so they could see each other at least while they were there but that was, kind of a fun little thing that they managed to do for them just to keep things going for them.

SI: So, there was no prohibition on married women serving then?

CK: No, no, you can be married.

SI: Okay.

CK: In fact, when I first went in, women, if they got pregnant, they could stay in but they had to ask permission to stay in. A few years later, if they were pregnant, they had to ask permission to get out. So yes, there were no maternity uniforms for anybody. The Navy was the first to start that and that would have been around like 1979, somewhere in there, that we started. Marines were always the last ones. They were the last ones to get maternity uniforms. One thing that happened in boot camp though, was with the training while we were doing, like firefighting



training and all that. Well, my birthday fell in boot camp on November 3rd. I graduated on the 12th. My birthday was spent learning about tear gas. First hand, we had to go into this, into a, they had, it was like a ship's compartment but it was out on the grinder and everybody had to go in with the masks on and when you're in there, they set off the canister. You had to take your mask off and you had to sing at the top of your lungs. ... If you didn't sing good enough, they'd make you sing all over again because they wanted you to get the full impact of what you were exposed to. Tear gas does that, it makes you (??). It was interesting. It was a birthday I'll never forget because I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing.

But then, like I said, everybody had to do all the positions on the fire hoses, so everybody had a chance to be all the way at the front and all the way at the back. They had it rigged up. A hose rigged up like, it would've been on like an excavator, like real high up in the sky. ... They opened up the water on it full force to let you see what a wild hose looked like. I mean, they opened it up and it's coming out full force and that hose was whipping around like you wouldn't believe and that's, so that you knew that wouldn't let go of that firehose no matter what because you could kill people with it because that's how dangerous really it could be. So, that was one of those eye openers, especially for me, a kid who from here, that you didn't see that kind of stuff really.

What else went on in boot camp? I was in the recruit chorus. You couldn't have any other jobs within the company if you were to be in the chorus. You couldn't be a squad leader, any of those other positions, so we were allowed five of us to go for the chorus which was a mixed chorus, and we had a civilian as our director and of course because she was a civilian, it was a little bit more relaxed because and it was in the church too but the whole thing was a little bit more relaxed and we were a pet organization of the commanding officer of the base, of the recruit training command. Because you had ROTC, you had NTTC, which was the Navy Technical Training Command, so there were schools there but Captain Fisher liked the chorus and that we sang at the Navy Ball that year. So, I don't know how many other years people did and we even got to go off and sing at one of the retirement villages. It might have even been The Villages outside Orlando because there's all these communities down there. ... That was a lot of fun especially because, I remember us doing, at least for the Navy Ball, singing songs about different states in the United States because we were from all over. So, I mean, we did like Oklahoma. We did just songs about all the other, songs about Texas and wherever we were from and so that was a lot of fun. Kind of a lasting memory. [Editor's Note: Reserves Officer Training Corps is a military officer training program utilized by the Army, Air Force, and Navy. ROTC programs are located at universities around the United States. The Navy Ball is an annual ball held by the Navy League of the United States. It is always held on October 13th, the birthday of the United States Navy.]

SI: Did you become friendly or close with anybody in your training unit?

CK: Well, actually, I'm still in touch with, she would've been our recruit chief petty officer. She was like ten years older than me and she lives in Alabama. I've seen her a couple of times and I ran into her when I was stationed in Hawaii. She was over there and everyone. In fact, I wrote to her not too long ago in the fall. ... Then, there was girls from school, from my company, who went to the same school that I did, so I was able to keep in touch there. Or actually become

better friends with them because you're not in training. You're in a different kind of training mode. ... From that crew in school, when I went to, I went from there to Hawaii. There were six of us that went to Hawaii at the same time. There were four of us that went to the same command and two went to other places on the base, on Pearl Harbor. ... One of the ones from, at CINCPAC [Commander-in-Chief Pacific], I'm still in touch with her as well because she's a Jersey girl as well too. So, I even got to see her here. Did I see a hand go up? Nope, I guess not. [laughter] [Editor's Note: CINPAC HQ is at Camp H.M. Smith, Aiea Hawaii. It is a joint service command- army, navy, air force, marines.]

SI: Sean, do you have a question?

CK: Oh okay, I thought so.

SC: On the subject of Hawaii, if I read the pre-interview survey correctly, you said your first assignment was with the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet?

CK: No.

SC: No?

CK: Commander in Chief-Pacific.

SC: Oh, okay.

CK: Pacific Fleet is Navy. CINCPAC is joint service.

SC: Okay.

CK: But the commanding officer of CINCPAC was a Navy admiral, so yes.

SC: I was going to say, how was going right from boot camp and your MOS training, right into Hawaii? Was there a transition, that you went in this door or was it just smooth sailing?

CK: Well, for one, this is a major flying experience. I had flown to boot camp and prior to that I had flown one time, one other time. Of course, I had, after my A school, I went home on leave and I didn't tell my parents when I got home, where I was going, but I had to go home and change my wardrobe because it was now January and I went home to go repack for summer, perpetual summer. So, that was an experience and then I flew going to Hawaii, I had to go to Los Angeles and when I got there, I had to change terminals. Here, I am flying a seabag, a suitcase, a carry-on bag, in a uniform which was, I don't remember if I wore pants. Whatever I had on, you know. But that was just the whole process of you're carrying the stuff, you're not wheeling it on something and like I said, I had to get on to one of the little shuttles at Los Angeles to go to another terminal. Thank God, the guy driving the bus was so nice and helpful. ... Then, of course once he gets your stuff checked in, that's all well and good but and then getting to Hawaii. I got there in the middle of the night. My sponsor who, they had been told I was coming on another flight. So, when I got there, there was no one there from work because

that's where the sponsor program is there to help you make that transition because I knew nothing about all that, but I got there and she had left a note for me. I guess, they took me to the transient barracks from Pearl Harbor and she had left word there but saying about getting on the bus that would take you to Pearl Harbor up to Camp Smith, which was where CINCPAC was, not saying about leaving my luggage there for me to come and get it later. So, I'm dragging all this stuff, trying to cross traffic in the morning at seven o'clock in, never been here, where am I going? I was kind of a, little bit of a basket case, I guess, because I didn't know what. It's like "What have I done?" So, it was a learning curve. I mean, that's how you learn. You do it. You pick up your bootstraps and you go. ... Fortunately, she showed up and the girl that was my sponsor was at the bus stop and we went and she got me on the right track and got me, my stuff back to the barracks and a friend of hers who had a car, that hadn't left for work yet, we took her to work and we took her car to work to Camp Smith. [Editor's Note: Camp H.M. Smith is a Marine Corps base in Aiea, Hawaii on the island of Oahu. It was established in 1941.]

... It went from there, and yes, it was joint service because, I mean. My then supervisor was a female Marine staff sergeant. My sponsor, Jackie, was an E-4 Yeoman. We had her boyfriend who happened to be in, working in the same office as an Army Spec 5 and then a Marine Corporal, and then me. So, and my department head was an Army Brigadier General. So, I mean, I had a little, I learned everyone else's ranks really better before I learned the Navy ones because everybody else's are all the same for three services. Air Force is a little bit different but the Navy's were, I had a little harder time with the Navy officer ranks. I didn't even do well with them in boot camp. All I knew, my theory is, if it's got a lot of gold on it, you sure as heck better salute it and that was kind of my philosophy.

SI: What are your basic duties at this first station?

CK: I was basically, I became the gopher. Actually, the office that I was working in was a vault, a secure vault, CINCPAC being Commander in Chief Pacific. That means they're operating and it was a personnel division. So, we're talking about controlling documents really that nobody had the time, it had security clearances for the job but all your worried about is control numbers and documents, to make sure that you get the signatures, like when people come in to get a document and they sign it out and they do that. It was administration. It was an admin office and I said, I became one of the primary gophers because I was a junior person. When you're at the bottom of the pile you do the dirt jobs. We took turns, my roomie, Jackie and I. I was actually supposed to be Jackie's replacement and she extended for nine months. So, we overlapped nine months but that worked out really well because I learned a lot from her and when I got my car, I had a 1963 Ford Galaxie 500 and this is in 1977. I paid seventy-five dollars for the car and a retread tire and a new water pump. The Marine corporal that I worked with put it in the car for me, so I didn't have to pay to get it done. I just paid for parts. [Editor's Note: The Galaxie 500 was manufactured by Ford from 1959 to 1974.]

... That's how, in the barracks, everything, that's how I got my car worked on is the people, the guys in the barracks. I'd get the parts and a case of beer, they didn't get the beer till they were done, otherwise the job didn't get done but that's how you operate, is kind of a barter. ... They used to say bartering in the military doesn't exist, well that's a bunch of bull because it does because that's how you get a lot of things is bartering and I still barter. But yes, CINCPAC, it

was a good, I liked being a gopher though because it was like all the stops I had to make around the building. It was like the gossip grapevine. You'd find out what's going on. Also, CINCPAC houses FMFPAC which is Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. So, I got to meet a lot of other people, the Marines and all. In fact, it turned out, years later, when I came back here and I belonged to the Gem Vac Veterans in Glenn Gardener and one of our guys that was down there was a retired Marine colonel and he's since passed away but he was at FMFPAC when I was at CINCPAC but we didn't know each other then. He probably wouldn't have cared less because I was like a, I went from E-2 to an E-4 while I was there but he was in the same building with me. So, I don't know if we had a couple of people, we both knew. Actually, he did, he knew my boss. He knew my staff sergeant boss, so, he doesn't ever know who's going to cross your path where, you know. [Editor's Note: The United States Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (FMFPAC) was established in 1941 and is headquartered at Camp H.M. Smith in Aiea, Oahu, Hawaii. It falls under the command of the Commander, United States Pacific Fleet.]

SI: So, you mentioned your sponsor, was there anything involved with that relationship other than just kind of showing you the ropes in the beginning?

CK: Well, in the beginning I mean, but like I said, that's who I ended up working with. She was the one who was supposed to, and actually we ended up roommates in the barracks eventually too. So, and with my car, she didn't have a car, I did. I had the car. So, like on payday, one of us would go fill up the gas tank and then halfway through to the next pay day, like when it was down like a half a tank, the other one would go. We'd fill it halfway. ... Then came payday, the person who had just filled the halfway, filled it all the way and the other person took on. So, we kind of, we shared the car. Fridays we'd go, especially around pay day time, we'd go over to the EM Club, the enlisted club, where they had really nice dining room in there at that time but it's not there anymore. ... We'd go get our supper and we'd get baked potato and salad bar. That was our meal because for one it didn't cost a lot and usually by payday, we were counting pennies. We kept a coin jar and by the end we'd have enough money to make it through. So, we'd go eat and then we'd go in the club and we might have to buy one drink and the rest of the night we were good. We didn't have to pay for any more drinks because there were not a lot of women over there at that point. I mean, there was, it was increasing but there still was not a large population of women on the base. ... So, you had the guys off the ships who were in the club and they would be showing up with drinks or pitchers of beer, whatever, just to be able to sit at the table or go dance with you or, probably wish they could get more but they didn't. [laughter] ... We'd go and we were within walking distance of the club. It was maybe equal to about two blocks but it was pretty much open field in the road and that way we just go from the club back toward the barracks but that was like our Friday night. They usually had a band. For the longest time, they had a band that was called Yellow Rose because they were from Texas. They were very good actually and then, what else? But it was just this great big open, the club was just like a great big open room and there was huge floor for dancing and all and lot of cowboys, lot of cowboys from, literally from Texas and Oklahoma. My roommate was from, Jackie was from Nebraska, so it was fun. On the weekends, we'd go to the, different beaches all over the island and it was basically like a 7:30 to 4 kind of job. Well, actually, the early person had to come in earlier than that but basic daytime was like 7, or 7:30 to 4, because after that, you were on your own. So, you go home and become, be a civilian in the barracks, you know.

SI: What other things would you do for entertainment?

CK: What, in Hawaii? Well, eventually, I acquired a bicycle. So, I ended up, one of the guys in the barracks, used to like to, he went jogging and I would ride my bike along with him so that I'm not a runner, never have been. So, I would ride my bicycle along with him while he was jogging. Of course, that, at one point landed me with a broken foot because I was in a crosswalk and a guy coming up to the crosswalk, a gold Mercedes-Benz, on the submarine base, he was drunk. He was looking to the left and doing, a California stop. He looked to the left and was turning to the right and I was on the right and I ended up with a, my foot hitting the bumper of the car. So yes, I ended up in a cast for a while. What else did we do for fun? A couple of the guys, if we had motorcycles, I would get to go, one guy in particular had a pretty good-sized bike and you just go, just it's like, "It's going to be a nice day tomorrow, let's go," and we just take off and go ride around the island somewhere. Movies. We did movie night one night. There was a bunch of us because we also housed, the barracks housed the medical hold people or transients, well some of the, if they were off the ship for whatever reason. ... We were going to go to the movies downtown and I don't remember if that was to see *Grease*, because I think *Grease* came out when I was over there. So, I was the only one who had a car. [Editor's Note: *Grease* is a 1978 musical film starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton John.]

So, we loaded up the family here. I drove and there would be, then there'd be four or five guys in the car and one of them usually paid, somebody paid for my way in, so I paid for the gas and they bought my movie ticket. So, we did that. Another thing we, they had a dirt track stock car, figure 8, over there. So, another guy had a little pick-up truck. He had a big thick cushion in the back for whatever. ... We'd load up, there'd be about twelve people in the truck because you didn't have to worry about seatbelts and all that other stuff. That was before it was so crucial. Load up the family, stop at McDonald's on the way, stop, get our food and get off to watch dirt track. ... The best part was the Wicked Wahines. A Wahine is a Hawaiian word for women. So, these were the women drivers and they were pretty good. They were crazy. Just watch demolition. So, that was probably. I mean, it was a very laid-back kind of lifestyle. I mean, it was, but it was fun. We had, at work, what we, for different holidays or whatever, we have potluck. We have a buffet. What a way to learn about food culture from other countries because we had our own little United Nations because you had, for one, you had all the military people. The civilians that were there, you had Japanese. You had Chinese. You had a little bit of Heinz 57 mixes. One of the Air Force guys, his wife was Thai. The Filipino, oh my gosh, that's where I learned to eat some of these other foods because you could go and sample everything and it didn't cost you anything. I love pancit. I love lumpia. That's both Philippines. Just whatever was there and you just go down the line and sample and my, of course then, my roommate and I, Jackie and I, we'd go, if we went out to eat somewhere, if we went Chinese. In Hawaii, they don't give you silverware. They give you chopsticks whether you want it or not. You have to ask for silverware but that to me, that would almost be like demeaning, because you're there, the best thing to do is to just go and learn the culture. It was fun though. Like I said, I was nineteen years old up until I was twenty-one, when I was in Hawaii. What better, I mean, you can't ask for much better than that. [Editor's Note: Wahine is the Hawaiian word for woman.]

SI: Sean?

CK: Yes? Sean?

SC: I am sorry. So, on top of culture, you saw in the survey that in 1983, you actually were sent to Iceland.

CK: Yes.

SC: Was there a culture shock felt there? What was it like going overseas in the military for the first time?

CK: Well, by then, I don't think it was quite as much culture shock to me because one, I went over there, I was twenty-five. So, I'd been around the lot a few times. In fact, well the biggest culture shock was the barracks. I was the senior person. They were calling me mom at twenty-five because the average age, the median age of the military is about twenty-three. You go in at seventeen or eighteen, stay four years. By twenty-three, you're out the door. I was, and you can retire out of the military at thirty-seven years old. So, I was old already for four, as far as military standards go. I was the only single, female Navy E-6 on the base. There was Air Force, a couple who, Air Force was a smaller group and they were an air wing, so I don't know. There was not a whole lot of Air Force women there that I recall but I was the only single Navy E-6 female up there. So, that was kind of, put me in a different light too because, I don't know. It was different from that standpoint. You ever hear, you ever watch, see any of this stuff about Iceland and they talk about different things up there but there's this place called the Blue Lagoon. [Editor's Note: The Blue Lagoon is a man-made hot spring, or spa, in Iceland. It is made up of waste water from a neighboring geothermal plant that is heated to 102 degrees year-round. It is a popular tourist destination.]

The Blue Lagoon is a geothermal pool. It's the runoff water from the geothermal plant and when I was there, it was not a big thing yet, they were starting to have, there was a building there they were, I guess, getting ready to make it into more of a spa kind of thing. But when I was there the building was there and there was nothing else. But you go in the water and the water is warm. The closer you get to the geothermal plant, the warmer the water got. The sediment from the water because we're talking about volcanoes. The water, had a sediment, it was kind of like gritty cold cream except that it was warm and people go there to actually, if they have like skin issues, like eczema, or whatever. ... They would smear it all over their bodies to exfoliate their skin or not. I mean, I was there and it's great for feet, you know. But I went, got to go swimming in there but it's not the kind of thing you go in, you don't go in and get your hair all wet and everything because it leaves a residue but it was forty-five degrees outside and we were in the water. ... Then you have to come out, which is the harder part, because now you're wet and you're cold, but that was different. The heat source in the barracks was geothermal. So, actually it was almost too warm so we were having the windows open a little bit just to let, to cool it off in our rooms. Average warm temperature is seventy, average cold temperature is thirty. Five percent humidity in the winter time. So, it's not really good to your, especially to your cuticles if you're working on papers and stuff because our hands were ripped apart from paper cuts. So, you go home at night, you grease your hands up with Vaseline, put band-aids around it to try to heal your hands up. Culturally, most people in Iceland do speak English. We had a lady who worked at the mini-mart on base and one of the other, one of the husbands, Navy

husbands was in there and he was complaining because like, we got our dairy products from Iceland. So, they're labeled in Icelandic and he's fussing because he couldn't. He was having a hard time differentiating between the different, like the milk or whatever, and the lady who was actually the store manager came up to him. She's like, "I speak five languages and English is not my primary language, so basically get over yourself and learn the difference between the foods, you know."

Iceland has a tradition on Christmas Eve of giving books. So that they, at night, you go to bed, you read. So, that was part of the one cultural thing. Although, there are probably families here that do that anyway but that was, it's kind of like a country wide thing. Everybody in Iceland learns how to swim because you're right there at the ocean. Fishing is great. I got to go out on one of these little boats that I literally felt like I was going to, setting to sea in a bathtub. It was so small but it was great. I mean, you put the lines down and you start reeling them back up because there's about five or six hooks on the line. You pull them up, you might have five or six fish on that line at one time. So, it kind of makes it a little easier to fish. There was a little vendor in the town of Keflavik, that was a hot dog stand. Only their hot dogs are made of lamb which is different and you put all of their condiments on them, are a little bit different than ours but there's still mustard and ketchup and mayonnaise but they just are processed differently, I guess. They have different ingredients in them but they're so good. ... Really good ice cream. Although, it still doesn't beat German chocolate ice cream, the real German chocolate ice cream, but it was still good. It was, I don't know, I guess you have to get in the service and go and do these things and experience it. [Editor's Note: Naval Air Station Keflavik was an American Navy base in southwest Iceland that was in operation from 1942 to 2006. The United States no longer has stationed military personnel in Iceland.]

SI: So, that was your first overseas assignment.

CK: Yes.

SI: But in between you had gone to The Pentagon? [Editor's Note: The Pentagon is the headquarters of the Department of Defense. It is located in Alexandria, Virginia. It was completed in 1943.]

CK: Yes, and then Navy Bureau too.

SI: Yes, tell us after Hawaii, how you got to your next assignment?

CK: How I got it?

SI: Or transitioned to Hawaii.

CK: Well, I requested that I wanted to come back to the east coast. I was having, okay, I got married when I was twenty, to a sailor and things were going. He ended up, he was transferred and things were not going well and it just didn't. It was one of those, I call it my starter marriage because it really didn't last long. It was not. If I had to do it over again, would I do it? Probably not but that's knowing what I know now. But then, if I had done that, I wouldn't be sitting here

right now, probably. So, things, there's one advantage of the military, is if things start going sour, sooner or later, one of you is going to transfer and opportunity knocked and it was my time to transfer. It was two years to the day in Hawaii. February 9, of '77 to February 9 of '79. Anyway, it was two years to the day. So, I'm like, "Okay, I want to come back to east coast." And they're like, "Washington D.C.?" I'm like, "Okay, let's go." I mean, it put me four hours from home. So, I was ready to come back. I worked for Defense Intelligence Agency, if there ever was an oxymoron, that's one. I was a courier, I worked in Special Intelligence Communications Office, which basically is like top-secret and above communications. ... Like I said, I was a courier, so that meant I was running around the Pentagon and we also had runs outside the Pentagon that we would get a driver to take us to. We did the House, the Senate, the War College, the Office of Management and Budget, other DIA [Defense Intelligence Agencies] offices. We got the White House, the old Executive office building which is right next to the White House. So, carrying the lock pouch with certain things in it. So, that was cool. [Editor's Note: The Defense Intelligence Agency is an agency of the federal government that was established in 1961. The National War College, part of the National Defense University, is located in Roosevelt Hall in Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington D.C. It was established in 1946. The Office of Management and Budget is an office under the direction of the President of the United States. It was established in 1970.]

I mean, when you're standing outside of the Pentagon on a day that there was a lot of people in the pool, we'd go, two of us would go do the runs. ... This one particular day, we're outside the Capitol building and the people lining up for the tourists to be able to go in and they're like, "Well, they're not open yet." Well, we go in and show our badge to the guy and just whisk on through. The idea that people, it's kind of cool to think that, well, maybe they think that we're somebody important. We're really not, we're really are just gophers, you know, but just the whole idea, it's like. They look at you like, "Oh wow, that must be someone important. Who was that? Maybe we know who they were, you know." Like if we look at the news and then you see faces, and then you actually see them on the street kind of thing but no, obviously not, we weren't but it was neat to get to go in and see places.

Oh, and we get to the other, once in a while we get to go to the State Department too. But it was just, I don't know, to me, I didn't know any different, so I mean, I didn't have anything from the outside to compare these jobs to and this is my world and it's like. Like I said, this is what I know. This is what I knew and what I learned. I learned how to do punch cards in the Pentagon and they're looking at me like, "Huh, punch cards?" [laughter] Because we were still doing that kind of stuff. Of course, we did some stuff with punch cards in Hawaii too, not that I was doing the cards but I learned how to do them because we were mostly using them for tracking documents and stuff. We had one of our customers in the Pentagon whose name was Dr. Witt. He was a political science advisor to the President. His pouch had to be delivered to him at six o'clock. That meant you needed to leave the office five minutes prior to make sure you were in his office at six o'clock because if you were late, he'd ream you a new butt. But if you were early, he would also acknowledge that, that you were earlier on time and all that, and that was on the day shift and I went. They put me on a later shift, the swing shift later on and one day I was up in his area of the building to go do a pickup and he passed me and he says, "Hello Carol." And I was like, that made a big impression on me because here was this man who was an advisor to the President which was Ronald Reagan at the time. An advisor to the President and he's



remembering me? That's important. ... I tried to get people to understand that we got newer couriers who came in. Said, "Well, yes, the runs at six o'clock." I said, "You don't understand." I said, "You got to be there at six o'clock." Then he'd come back and get all huffy because Dr. Witt had reamed him out. I'm like, I told you to be there at six o'clock. ... Sometimes you got to go. There's things you got to do with certain people if you want to maintain that relationship with them. That sometimes going out of your way a little bit is not a big thing. Five minutes here, or there, you're sitting on your butt down here and drinking coffee. Anyway, why don't you go on time. Be there for this person, you know, and they just really didn't seem to get it. ... I mean, actually, I was even in the building, on another note, another yeoman who worked down the hall from me, I found out later on, they nailed him for espionage. Do you know what that is guys? I'm looking at, because they were doing stuff. They were sharing information with people in other people in parts of the world that was not United States friendly, so. ... I was like, thinking to myself, I might have given this guy stuff to take down the hall to his office at one point to. It's like, "Whoa." It kind of opened my eyes a little bit on that one. [Editor's Note: Ronald Reagan was President from 1981 to 1989. He lived from 1911 to 2004.]

SI: Did they give you any preparation or training in that regard? Like what to look out for if somebody was trying to get material from you?

CK: Well, I think the first thing would've been to let the higher ups know that somebody is. But the thing is, if the guy's almost, he had this security clearance, he's on the list to sign and come to pick up stuff, you don't know unless you figure. Or, you might let somebody else know and say, "Hey, keep an eye on this guy." Something doesn't, I rely on a lot on my gut instinct on a lot of stuff and so far, it's been keeping me straight on things because my gut instinct on a lot of stuff is good but that one, back then, I don't know how good it was but I would not have even thought about that one. See, you never know. You never know.

But after the Pentagon, then I went across the street to the Navy Bureau, back then, Naval Military Personnel Command. They started out as BUPERS went to NMPC, and then back to BUPERS. They now are housed in Millington, Tennessee. They moved out of Washington all together which is probably a good thing because it got them out, away. It took a lot of the, some of the military weight out of Washington because there was a lot of military there and even though, at that point, we were authorized to wear civilian clothes although, we were not given any clothing allowance for that because we could wear uniforms every day, it didn't matter. But until Reagan came into office, and he wanted to know where all the military was at his inauguration and they said, "Oh, they're wearing civilian clothes." He's like, "Not anymore." He put the foot down to have them go back to wearing uniforms all the time. [Editor's Note: The Bureau of Navy Personnel provides administrative leadership and policy planning to the Navy, like a human resources department. It can trace its history to the 1800s. It became the Bureau of Navy Personnel in 1941. In 1982, it became titled Naval Military Personnel Command and then in 1991, it once again became Bureau of Navy Personnel and adopted the acronym BUPERS. It is also the central location where personal orders are written, retirements processed, etc.(detailers)]

So, when I went across the street, I went to go work in the retirement wing with what we call the Fleet Reserve. The Navy, once you hit the twenty-year mark, you go into Fleet Reserve for ten

years and basically what that is, a reserve pool of Navy people who are already trained that if a national emergency came along, they call you up to the thirty-year mark and put you back to work if they needed. That did happen, I knew of a guy during, I think it was during Desert Storm that they pulled a guy back to become a teacher. I don't remember what the job was but they put him back to teaching because they needed the guy. They took the teacher and send him overseas or wherever they were going. But I processed the Fleet Reserve retirements for almost two years because I was then, getting ready to go to Iceland after that. ... It's amazing. It was just a really fun job because you're dealing with people all over the world because we got phone calls come in all the time. ... One of the calls we used to get, came from Japan and she would have to get up in the middle of the night to call us, so it was the daytime. ... A few years later, when I was in Groton, Connecticut, I ended up working with that girl in my office, because we had started talking about where we had been at certain times and all that. ... She's like, "I think I used to talk to you." Kind of thing. So, you never know when you're going to cross paths with somebody. A guy I was stationed with at NMPC, I ran into him. He was up on Iceland at a detailer trip or something one time. So, I got to see him. There are times though, that it's good that you don't see somebody after he transferred, after he had a bad connection or whatever. But the one good thing about transferring is it allows you the chance to reinvent yourself. If you were of a character that, maybe you were a little bit more wild and carefree at one place, and you realize that's maybe not a good thing, especially as you get more advanced in rank, to go somewhere else and look at yourself and change some of your other behaviors, that's a good thing. ... I think I probably did that a few times. So, anybody got any more questions for right now? [Editor's Note: Enlisted personnel in the Navy who achieve twenty years of service become eligible to receive military retirement benefits known as retainer pay. They officially become part of the Fleet Reserve and are eligible to be called back into service. If an enlisted member completes thirty years of service, they become qualified as a retiree and do not have to be a member of the Fleet Reserve.]

SI: Yes, because we are coming up on four o'clock and I think we will need another session to go through the rest of your career.

CK: Okay.

SI: But I was curious, at this point, you'd been in for a few years, when did you kind of make the decision that you wanted to stay longer, maybe even think of a career?

CK: Well, it started really, okay, I went in '76, I was home, by this time I was back on the east coast and I used to, in high school, I worked at a place outside of Belvidere called King Cole Grove. It's a hot, a small town, bar and grill. ... The family is longtime friends of our family and we're still in touch with them and all. ... I was home and talking to my old boss and this is getting close to 1980 and he's like, "Don't get out, there's no jobs." This is the beginning of, so on every contract. Well, like I say, I was on a four-year contract. I could extend my contract up to forty-eight months beyond that contract. So, initially, I extended to, I think I had to extend to go to the Pentagon because it was more than, in order to have at least two years there. ... Then, I extended again. I think that's when I extended to go to the Bureau. ... That left me, when I left the Bureau, I had seven year or close to seven years in and I extended the next full year because Iceland was a one-year tour. So, I extended to fulfill up to that eight-year mark. Get to Iceland,

reaching the end of the tour and I'm thinking of myself, "If I got out now, what am I going to go back to? Where am I going to go?" I mean, I'm in Iceland, so I'd end up back here in New Jersey and I was like, "Do I really want to do that?"

So, I started talking, I was talking to the detailer about what my options were for the next tour of duty and I was offered the SERE School in Maine as an administrator up there. The Personnel Support Activity in Groton, Connecticut at the submarine base. Or, helicopter squadron out of Norfolk. Well, I had a guy in Norfolk that I didn't want to be around that I had met before. I'm thinking, Maine was too cold but my best friend, the one that went in the Navy around the same time, right around when I did, her husband, (she was out at this point) but her husband was getting transferred up there at the USS *Fulton*. So, I went there. [Editor's Note: Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) School is a military training program that was established in 1941. Naval Air Station Brunswick was a Navy Base near Brunswick, Maine that was operational from 1943 to 2015. Naval Submarine Base New London is a Navy base in Groton, Connecticut that was established in 1868. It is the primary submarine base on the east coast. The USS *Fulton* (AS-31) was a submarine tender that was in service from 1941 to 1947 and again from 1951 to 1991. A submarine tender provides supplies and aid to submarines at sea.]

So, I got to spend pretty much three years around one of my best friends in Groton, so I reenlisted to go there. ... Then I did, from '84 to '87, at that particular duty station and then I crossed to another spot on the base to another, to work with the Navy drug and alcohol program for two more years over there. So, I was five years in Groton, like I said, I got to spend three years with Kathi up there because, and her oldest daughter is my goddaughter, so that worked out really well. ... So, that, by the time I was done there, that was another. I reenlisted in '89 to leave to go to sea duty. I was on an oiler on the Norfolk, Virginia, on the USNS *Pawcatuck*. An oiler being a floating gas station. ... Then, from there, onto the, then I went to Charleston on the USS *Holland*, took that to, rode it, we re-home ported her to Guam. We'll get into that more later on another spot. But then I reenlisted again in Guam which brought me, and which I needed to do and that brought me back to Charleston, which is where the *Holland* had been home ported before, and finished up then in Charleston. So, I bounced around a few times. [Editor's Note: The USS *Pawcatuck* (TAO-108) was an oiler tanker ship that was commissioned from 1946 to 1975. After being decommissioned, it continued to operate under Navy command but with a civilian crew as the USNS *Pawcatuck* (TAO-108) from 1975 to 1991. The ship was scrapped in 2005. The USS *Holland* (AS-32) was a submarine tender that was in service from 1963 to 1996. The ship was scrapped in 2013.]

SI: Yes, well we look forward to hearing about that more next time but do you guys have any last questions about any of the things that we went over?

DH: No, I am pretty good, so far.

SI: Yes, okay.

SC: Yes, I am good right now.

CK: If things get too confusing, stop me, so I can talk.

SI: Sure. No, I think it is very clear. We appreciate it.

DH: No, it is clear.

SI: So, let me stop the recording and then.

CK: Okay.

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

Transcribed by Jesse Braddell 4/17/2021

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