

RUTGERS THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROL KAIN

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Donald Koger: Okay, today is Friday, April 30, 2021.

Carol Kain: Yes.

DK: This begins another oral history session with Carol Musselman Kain. My name is Donald Koger and I am located in Piscataway, New Jersey and Carol, if you would not mind introducing yourself again?

CK: I am Carol Kain, and I am living in Washington, Warren County, New Jersey.

DK: All right, and thank you again for talking with me again.

CK: I think we can do that quite well actually.

DK: You are a pleasure to talk with, so you make it easy. So, last we spoke, we were getting to the end of your military career. So, I would like to ask, before we move on past that, is there anything else that you would like to revisit or anything that we might have missed?

CK: I am looking over here, my shadow box is over on the wall here, so I am trying to make sure I did not miss any. Well, let's go through, do you want me to go through my chronological order of where I have been?

DK: Yes, you might as well, that will kind of tie everything together to give.

CK: I am going to move myself closer to the shadow box, because this even has dates and everything else on it. So, okay, I don't know if you, wait a minute, it says, "Closed Captioning has been enabled." Can you still hear me?

DK: Yes, I can hear you.

CK: I don't need that list there, okay. All right, I don't know if you can see this or not. There's my shadow box.

DK: No, I don't have, the video's off but that's okay.

CK: Okay, well I will read through. Okay, I started out, my basic training was at Recruit Training Command Orlando, Florida. 10 September through 12 November 1976. Then I went to my Yeoman A School which would not, that was for my MOS, put it in your language, from November '76 until January, probably about middle of January of '77. They don't have exact dates on that. Then, I went to Commander in Chief Pacific, also known as CINCPAC, at Camp H.M. Smith in Hawaii from 9 February '77 to 9 February '79. How I did that? I don't know. Then I came back to the east coast, to The Pentagon attached to the Defense Intelligence Agency. I was there from March of '79 until September of '81. The reason for the gap in the middle, from January to, oh, of course I was on leave in between there. [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. From 1941 to 2002, the commander of the United States Pacific Fleet was known as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific (CINCPAC). Commander in Chief Pacific is a Joint Service Command. Camp H.M. Smith is a Marine Corps base in Aiea, Hawaii on the island of Oahu. It was established in 1941. The Pentagon is the headquarters of the Department of Defense. It is located in Alexandria, Virginia. It was completed in 1943.]

From there, I went to the Naval Military Personnel Command, which was known as, had been and is again, known as BUPERS, or the Bureau of Personnel for the Navy. ... I was there from September of '81 to July of '83, where I processed the twenty-to-thirty-year Fleet Reserve retirements. Fleet Reserve is basically people go out, say they retire at twenty years but you actually go in an inactive reserve so that if a war or something came up and they needed to reactivate people, they could pull us back, pull back in an all-ready trained group of people to fill the shore billets and send everybody else overseas or wherever they needed to go, sending out the young, the kids. I only ever heard of one person being recalled. That was during Desert Storm because they were pulled back in to become an instructor, so that the instructor could go and actually do the job of what he was teaching everybody else how to do. ... That's kind of how when the hospital ships are manned up. They take active duty from different hospitals from up and down the shore, or the east coast and west coast, to man up the ship and then they bring up the Reservists to fill the shore billets that are vacated by those people that are going onto the ships. Again, because that way they have a crew who knows what they're doing. Not to say that Reservists don't but they don't get the Navy side of things as well because they're not living it every day. [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. 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. On August 7, 1990, President George H.W. Bush ordered a buildup of American and coalition forces in the Persian Gulf region after Iraq invaded its southern neighbor, Kuwait. After Iraq refused to withdraw from Kuwait, American and coalition forces invaded Kuwait to remove Iraqi forces and pushed into southern Iraq in what was called Operation DESERT STORM, or the Persian Gulf War.]

Okay, next I went to Personnel Support Detachment, Keflavik, Iceland. I was there from September of '83 to October of '84. I couldn't come home in September '84, because I had to wait for the new fiscal year. So, I would've been stuck in Iceland if I didn't. Then, I went to Personnel Support Activity in New London, Connecticut at the submarine base. A personnel activity base, they oversee personnel support detachments. Like, where I was, we had eight personnel detachments under us, scattered around New England and Argentina to Newfoundland, Canada. The detachment, or the activity for, we covered Iceland when I was there, they came out of Norfolk. So, I don't know how they break it all down but after PSA and then I went to, it's called, we call it NADSAP, Navy Alcohol and Drug Safety Action Program and it's basically a level one alcohol, not really a rehab but its an alcohol education program. It's

kind of like, it's a five-day class that you can earn a couple college units from the University of Arizona. This is if it's still going on. I don't know what they're doing now but they bring sailors off the different duty stations into, trying to prevent them from getting involved too much with alcohol and hopefully staying away from drugs too. So, it was, but like I said, level one alcohol education. [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. Naval Submarine Base Groton is a Navy base in Groton, Connecticut that was established in 1868. It is the primary submarine base on the east coast. Naval Station Norfolk is a navy base in Norfolk, Virginia that was established in 1917. It is Headquarters of the Navy's Fleet Forces Command.]

After that, where did I go? I went to Norfolk, Virginia to the USNS *Pawcatuck*, which was a floating gas station. I was on that one for a year. From November '89 to November of '90, it was a one-year tour of duty which counted as two years of actual time for sea duty because we were gone so much. We were away from home port for over eighty percent of the year. That doesn't mean we touched dry land because we spent a lot of time in and out of Puerto Rico in Cuba, at Guantanamo. ... A fun stop at Saint Thomas in Virgin Islands, and we did one fun stop at Port Everglades, Florida which is basically down in Fort Lauderdale but that, of course after they saw the condition of our ship, they wouldn't let us tie in. We stopped there twice. The second time, they wouldn't let us tie up pier side because the ship was so bad. It was so rusty looking, they didn't want us to, something looking that bad, they didn't want it pier sided in Fort Lauderdale. [Editor's Note: The USS *Pawcatuck* (AO-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* (T-AO-108) from 1975 to 1991. The ship was scrapped in 2005. Guantanamo Bay Naval Base is located in southeast Cuba. It has been in operation since 1903.]

... From there, after that year was up, went to the USS *Holland* out of Charleston, South Carolina. Actually, we were tied up at Goose Creek, at the Weapons Station. ... I was on there from, when was I on there? January of '91 to October of '92. So, the reason for, only like over a year because actually, not quite two years. That completed my sea rotation which is a minimum three years. With that trip, that's the one I rode it from Charleston to Guam. Spent three and a half months on Guam and then I flew back to Charleston to shore duty and I was there from October of '92 to September of '95 when I retired. [Editor's Note: The USS *Holland* (AS-32) was a submarine tender that was in service from 1963 to 1996. The ship was scrapped in 2013. Naval Support Activity Charleston, formerly known as Naval Weapons Station Charleston, is a Navy base near Charleston, South Carolina that was established in 1941. In 2010, it merged with Charleston Air Force Base to form Joint Base Charleston.]

DK: One thing I do not think we talked about which I am sure people would be curious is, during the time that you were in was kind of getting to be the end of, someone argues, kind of the end of the Cold War because then the Soviet Union collapsed. [Editor's Note: The Cold War was an era of heightened tension between the United States and Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991. The two nations attempted to spread their influence and opposing ideologies to other nations around the world and also threatened each other with nuclear weapons. It ended when the Soviet Union collapsed and dissolved in 1991.]

CK: Oh, yes.

DK: So, how did kind of the echoes of that reach you and how did that impact your time in service?

CK: '89, well let's see, the Wall came down in what, '89, they brought it down. Well, I guess to back it up a little bit, when I was in The Pentagon, is when Ronald Reagan got elected and before that, of course it had been Jimmy Carter, and Jimmy Carter being, even though he was a veteran, he was a Navy Academy grad but he was also a Democrat and that didn't help. It's like the Democrats always cut the military budget and that caused problems because even when I was in Hawaii, one of the guys I worked with, was a Marine sergeant with three little girls, and for a short time anyway, he went on food stamps because. [Editor's Note: The Berlin Wall, erected in 1961, surrounded the democratic-capitalist West Berlin within communist East Germany. Its deconstruction began in 1989. Ronald Reagan, a member of the Republican Party, was President from 1981 to 1989. He lived from 1911 to 2004. Jimmy Carter, a member of the Democratic Party, was President from 1977 to 1981.]

DK: Oh yes, I can still hear you, I think that is just, it is really windy over here, so I wonder if it is affecting.

CK: Okay, I hit the mouse pad and squirreled it around a little bit and then you came back. Yes, there was a lot of ways that the, like I said, the Carter Administration let the things go kind of haywire for the military because budgetary cuts and all that and Reagan came in when I was in The Pentagon, it was like a breath of fresh air coming in because Reagan, liked the military and he, right off the bat, gave us like an eight percent pay raise which was phenomenal really to get that big. Carter tried to redeem himself and give us not quite as big as a pay raise but it was a little bit too late by that point. ... Later on, when I was in Connecticut and I worked, my one executive officer, who was a supply officer, and had been stationed in San Diego during the time when Carter was President. ... He was on ship and he said that part of the check-in process for new crew members, if they were E-4 and below and had families, part of their check-in process was to take them downtown to get enrolled in food stamps. That's how bad things had gotten during Carter. ... I mean, San Diego, and in California, any of the California ports were expensive anyway, to live. So, knowing that from, and because we'd sit around and figure out where we were at certain times in history kind of thing. So, and of course, Reagan was the one who was telling Gorbachev to "tear down that wall". That was a big thing that kind of echoed through everything. [Editor's Note: On June 12, 1987, President Ronald Reagan gave a speech in front of the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin, where he famously said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Mikhail Gorbachev was the last leader of the Soviet Union who ultimately dissolved the communist nation.]

Bringing it home a little bit here, a family member of ours, right here in New Jersey. She was from Germany. Her husband had been from France. ... They met in Canada because he was her French tutor but she taught German, I think she taught German at Moravian College in Pennsylvania. So, when the wall came down, she had been in Germany when the wall went up. So, when the wall came down, a former student of hers had been over there and brought her back

a piece of the wall, a chunk of the wall. So yes, it's like, it can hit closer to home than you realize, you know. How did it really impact me? Other than, I don't know because I didn't ever. I don't ever remember when the wall wasn't there to begin with and the Cold War business, when I was in Iceland, I did get to ride into a P-3 Orion which is basically a surveillance plane. That was, they would fly to go looking for submarines that were in the wrong neck of the woods, around Iceland because even in Iceland. Well, the base was an agreed area, it was not a secure base. We had a KGB office on the base. Yes, and we were told what to do if we were approached by anyone but we, no one ever really bothered us and if we went into Reykjavik which is the capital city of Iceland, they took us on a bus tour of the area during our orientation week so we can see what was where and all and the Russian Embassy. It had so many antennas sticking out from it, it looked like a porcupine. I mean, it was just antennas sticking up everywhere. From the roof, from the side of the building, it was crazy and that's really about as close as I got. I mean, I guess it is a pretty close connection to things going on that were still during the Cold War, because that was 1984. But I never had any encounters with anyone that might have been a little shady or anything, so. [Editor's Note: Moravian University is a private university in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania that was established in 1742. The Lockheed P-3 Orion is a four-engine turboprop surveillance aircraft utilized by the United States Navy since 1962. The KGB was the Security Agency, or intelligence agency, of the Soviet Union from 1954 to 1991.]

DK: All right, and then you get out in 1995.

CK: Yes.

DK: You had a young son at that point, so were you working when you first got out of the military?

CK: Well actually, here's what we did. We retired in September of '95. November of '95, my parents had said, "Why don't you move back up here to New Jersey so you can figure out what you want to do next?" So, we moved. Patrick and Dan and I, we all moved home, back to my parents' house, the same house that I'm sitting in right now, so we could figure out what we wanted to be when we grew up, so. That was an adventure in itself, even moving out, because we were pulling a trailer. We had a little commanche jeep pickup truck. Well, the trailer, the U-Haul we had rented, it was probably a little too heavy for the truck. So, as we got near Richmond, Virginia as we got up, we kind of, the little engine that could kind of ran out of steam. So, we ended up stuck at a motel. We got there Thanksgiving Eve and of course I was driving the car that we had with Patrick. Well, the truck wasn't going to go any further but we couldn't get my dad down there with his truck to bring the trailer up until the day after Thanksgiving because my sister, who was living in Clark Summit, Pennsylvania, had them up there to her house for Thanksgiving. So, on Thanksgiving Day, Dan stayed in the motel and I put Patrick in the car and we drove to New Jersey which was kind of nice. It was because there was nothing on the road and it was just Patrick and I. I didn't have to worry about Dan. I left him to his own whatever. I think he said he had hot dogs for Thanksgiving dinner.

... Of course, I told my mother that we were coming. I asked her was the house babyproof and she's like, "Oh yes, it's all fine." I walk in and of course I laughed when I got here because it was no means ready for, by this time, a one-year-old, because Patrick's birthday is November

27th, so it was like right after, like right after Thanksgiving Day. So, we got here and, on that Friday, Dad and a friend took Dad's truck to Richmond to pull the trailer up, and then of course Dan had to drive the truck on his own up here. At least that way, he didn't get lost because Dan could not navigate to save his life. He would get lost. So, we got here and trying to figure out college and all that. We decided we were going to go back to school. ... So, Dan ended up actually, well, Warren County Community College didn't have the program he wanted but their sister school is Northampton Community College over in Bethlehem. So, he ended up going to school there and I ended up going to school as much as I could at Warren County until I ran out of classes I could take and then I switched to East Stroudsburg University. [Editor's Note: Northampton Community College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania was established in 1967. East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania is a public university in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania that was established in 1893.]

In there, then we ended up buying a house in Kunkletown, Pennsylvania which is kind of between Stroudsburg and Bethlehem so that we were splitting the difference on commuting. So, that's what we did. He got two associates and then I got my bachelor's. ... It's easier to go to college when kids are little than when they have a social life. So, but the hardest thing for me was all of a sudden, my social network was cutoff almost, my support system was cutoff that I had in Charleston. Because now you don't even have the military behind you. All of a sudden, you're back in, well, it was probably easier for me than Dan because at least I was moving home. So, I still had people here. I had classmates here. I grew up here. So, but it was still difficult to get established. Here I was going back to college, I was thirty-eight years old, you know, and you go to school with a whole bunch of young kids. It was kind of a bit of a stretch but it had it's, it had its good points too but I was not in any clubs or anything like that at the college because I had, I finished college, pick up my son from daycare and go home. So, and we worked it most of the way through that I went, mostly the night classes, as long as I could and Dan went day classes so that we didn't have to worry about daycare. ... My dad, I don't know, he got a bug under his butt one time and said, "Well, we're not babysitting." And I'm like, "Nobody's asking you to." Nobody even, where did that come from? It's like, and so yes, they never had to babysit for us at all.

... Then, we graduated May of '99, both of us, June 29th, Dan had his forty-third birthday, July 1st, Dan was in the hospital for quadruple bypass surgery. So, that kind of changed the flavor of things because he had already started working in addition to going to school. So, all of a sudden, he's out of work because they had to split his chest open. ... I really couldn't go to work because of Patrick because he couldn't take care of Patrick. So finally, what I ended up doing, I did get him into daycare or with a babysitter. I don't remember which it was at that point. I think it was daycare that I was working for Manpower Temp Offices. I worked temp jobs for a while, just to get us through that time period because the only income at that point, we had then were our retirements, luckily, we had two of them. So, you just do what you got to do to survive. Sometimes you rob Peter to pay Paul with the bills and all that, you may have to pay them on a credit card and then the next time around, you pay it because we had to worry about food, gas, and diapers. That was the three main things to worry about to keep going. So, anything above that, we just, you learn to budget really good if you don't know how to already. Which, I think, by the time you're in your thirties, most people ought to know how to do that.

DK: You also taught after that, right?

CK: Well, of course I student taught and then I was subbing for, I substituted for a while and then we actually, I applied at an alternative high school because the public schools and I, didn't get along so well because I was still too structured, I think, from the military and they were too liberal for my blood. .. The alternative school you're teaching the kids who are on probation and cannot go into the public schools or they're, you know, it's a big challenge and you get kids in there who are bipolar or every letter of the alphabet for their issues. I said ADD, ADHD, ABCDEFG, that kind of a spectrum. ... Because then you still have issues, more prominent issues with drugs. You have kids who are in foster care. We have kids. We had a young lady who used to cut herself. You just, it's different from than in the public school, definitely. But we did that for two years until, or I did that for two years and I was there until we got ready to move to Florida in '05 because we went for work. At that point, Dan had been working at Picatinny Arsenal with Johnson Controls and he was offered two choices. It was either Cape Canaveral, Florida or Fort Huachuca, Arizona which is thirty miles from the Mexican border and I'm like, "I'm not doing the desert." I didn't want to go to Florida. [Editor's Note: Picatinny Arsenal is an Army installation that conducts research and manufacturing operations. It is located in Morris County, New Jersey. It was established in 1880. Fort Huachuca is an Army installation in southeast Arizona, fifteen miles from the border with Mexico. It was established in 1877. Johnson Controls is a corporation that offers fire, HVAC, and security services. It is headquartered in Cork, Ireland and was established in 1885.]

I just, I was not happy, I had been in that house for nine and a half years, by this point, when we ended up moving. We lost my mom in '04, and so this was a year later and so dad was ending up here by himself which was tough because I remember Dan saying, "Well, you can come and visit Florida." Dad's like, "I have no use for Florida." So, I wonder where I got that from? ... So, it was hard. He had to learn his survival here. But prior to us going to Florida though, it was October of '04, the veterans' group, the other group I belong to the Gem Vac Veterans that meets in Glen Gardner, well they were the main core of this gathering but there was, in Hunterdon and Warren Counties, they were putting together a bus trip for World War II veterans to Washington D.C. to see their memorial, the monument. ... They can bring along a guest and Dad invited me to go along with him to, mostly the veterans thing, and also to help him navigate and all that because it involved a lot of walking. So, Dan sat here in Pennsylvania with Patrick and I got to go for the weekend. It was all expense paid. One night in a hotel. We didn't have to pay for anything, unless you wanted a t-shirt, a souvenir, or whatever. The banquet dinner, the guest speaker was Robert Dole, Senator Robert Dole, which was awesome because he also was a World War II vet and I had never realized. His right arm was injured during the war. He still, even at that point, I mean, somebody went to grab his hand, to shake his hand, and it's like, you can't do that. Not with the right hand you can't because the neuropathy from it, I mean, it was still painful for him but it was still. I mean, that whole experience was good. [Editor's Note: The Gem Vac Veterans is a non-profit veteran group that met in Gem Vacuum Inc on Route 31 in Glen Gardner, New Jersey. World War II occurred from 1939 to 1945. The United States entered the war on December 8, 1941, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Robert Joseph Dole is a disabled World War II veteran and retired Republican politician who represented Kansas in the House of Representatives and then the Senate from 1961 to 1996. He was the Republican candidate for President in the Election of 1996 but lost to incumbent Bill Clinton.]



... That's how dad actually started getting involved with Gem Vac Veterans because of this bus trip. There was a lot of World War II nurses on there. I got to know some of these ladies then, I met them, but later on, when I moved home, I got to actually get involved more with them a little bit but unfortunately, they're all gone now too or very old, because they were even kind of rickety back then. So yes, then we moved, in '05, then we moved to Florida and we were down there for. Well, Patrick and I were down there a full three years. Dan was like two, almost two and a half years, when he passed then and his was service connected. It was cardiac arrhythmia and issues that started while he was on active duty but we know our military medicine are good on putting band-aids on symptoms. So, they didn't look at his overall health and say, "Okay, this is going on, this is, this is and put it together. That something is causing problems. So, when the VA got a hold of his records, finally, I mean, it was instant fifty percent right off the bat because they figured out somebody screwed up. So, and life goes on, you know.

DK: Yes, that is a shame when care gets delayed because they do not look deep enough.

CK: Oh yes. Well, he didn't. There were times of course where he could've done things to make it better for himself but we know how guys are about going to doctors, you know. Are we guilty? [laughter]

DK: No, I always go.

CK: Uh-huh, and it's like you don't go to doctors and when you do it's like, oh yes, I'm just gung-ho this and I don't eat wrong foods. My husband favorite place to go was Whataburger in Florida and of course he smoked since he was thirteen and the only time he stopped was the five days he was in the hospital for his quadruple bypass. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Whataburger is a fast-food chain specializing in hamburgers that was established in 1950 and is headquartered in San Antonio, Texas.]

DK: That must have been a long five days for him.

CK: Well, half the time, he was probably doped up pretty well so he didn't realize what was going on but by the end of it, yes. [laughter]

DK: When did you move back up to New Jersey? Was that around 2009?

CK: '08, November of '08. That seemed to be our moving time. We left Charleston in November of '95. We moved from Pennsylvania to Florida in November of '05, and we move back to Florida in November of '08. We got here like November 19th. Of course, we left Florida on a seventy-five-degree sunny day on the 17th. We arrived to a blustery, snow flurry, twenty-nine degrees on the 19th, you know, and I got out of the car and I'm like, "God, what have I done?" [laughter] It was so cold and we were not really dressed, because we were travelling in a vehicle so we didn't have our layers on and stuff. So, we weren't quite prepared for that and then I had to come in the house and get two bedrooms ready for both of us because dad couldn't do it. He was almost eighty-seven then. So, one thing about us moving home was dad used to go into the Warren County pharmacy for his prescriptions and when I started picking

them up for him, one of the ladies in there said that she could tell a difference in him when I moved home because his spirits picked up. He wasn't kind of, so mokey. So, because he had company, because the first time I went grocery shopping and I came home with bags of food and Dad was like, "Why are you bringing all of this food into this house?" I'm like, "Well, unlike some people who live on cereal and milk," he said, "We like food." And I said, "I have a fourteen-year-old," by that point that liked food. I'm like, "I'm not living on milk and cereal, forget it." But he didn't mind it because he got spoiled. For twelve and a half years, I spoiled him rotten. Even after we took him off the road because the biggest thing was losing his independence and going to the gas station every morning for his coffee with the guys. I'm like, "Dad, I will get up in the morning and I will take you to be at the gas station at six o'clock in the morning to go hang out with your guys and get your free coffee." I went down to QuickChek to get mine. I had to pay for mine but I did that for at least two and a half years. I would get up to take him, so he could go. Because most of the guys in there, at the gas station, he taught and these guys would be telling stories about school and then dad would say, "Well, let me tell you how it really happened." [laughter] So, I mean, he couldn't have had a better ending to his life.

DK: Yes, that is a heck of sacrifice on your part, dedicating all that time.

CK: Well.

DK: And keep him able to still see his buddies.

CK: Oh yes.

DK: I did work for a while, when I first moved home, January of 2009, I started working, I worked five years for Home Instead Senior Care as a caregiver, and got licensed as a home health aid. ... I had to quit that because of my back, so I ended up in 2014 and in January, I had lower back surgery, so I had to stop because even though technically with caregiving, you're not supposed to lift over twenty-five pounds. That's a bunch of hooey, it doesn't work that way because you're helping people up off those seats. You're helping people getting dressed. You're helping them in the shower. You're doing their laundry. I had one client who, I would go, to do her laundry but she wanted me to bring it back wet so she could hang it up in the bathroom to dry. So, here I am dragging back, I mean, a laundry basket is heavy enough but throwing, wet clothes. That's like forty pounds of clothes all of a sudden, you know. So, I had to, I wasn't really ready to stop working but your body, you got to listen to what your body says to do. So, but that also helped when it came time to taking care of dad as things progressed. Knowing what to do. So, like I said, we do what we have to do. [Editor's Note: Home Instead is a company that provides in-home care service for seniors.]

DK: Yes, that is still, that, yes, that could not have been easy to take care because your dynamic kind of changes.

CK: Oh yes.

DK: He was taking care of you when you were on your way into the world.

CK: Right, yes.

DK: Then your dad.

CK: At the other end, yes. It's getting, I mean, him getting used to me taking on, taking care of him because the, you have to worry about dignity and all that stuff too, so.

DK: Yes.

CK: We did it.

DK: Yes, and you mentioned it but driving for him, I am sure, was a difficult change because the whole American thing to buy cars became popular.

CK: Right, right.

DK: We want to be able to just go and get that cup of coffee. So, that could not have been easy for you or him to go through that change.

CK: Well, my sister came home for that weekend. She said, "You want me to be the bad guy?" I'm like, "Yes, I have to live with it." She came home to take the keys, you know, so yes, that was a tough one. But like I said, it just, I mean, he flew off the handle on it. He did and once I said I would get up and take him to the gas station. He's like, all of a sudden it came out, I was like, "Oh, what did I just commit to?" At the same time, I was also as a church deacon, I was running the food pantry at my church. I was the one going to the grocery store to buy the groceries to bring back to the church for the food pantry. So, I was taking on a whole, I had a full load on me as it was, all at the same time, between that and the church, but I worked around it and made sure that everything was cool around here at the house and Patrick was still in school then, so that was okay. That worked out because he was still doing his high school things. He graduated in, well no, well, he graduated in 2013. So, before that, we were doing all the. I mean, he did the school plays a couple times, and all that. ... Just, and then he started, he did his college all online. No, he did two years community college. He did Warren County Community College on campus because I wanted him to see what the campus was like, how it was different from the high school but his bachelor's he did online.

DK: So, he got to see all sides of it. He got to see the in-person campus as well as the online version.

CK: Oh yes. That is good exposure, and one thing I liked about the online, was every month was a different class because so it wasn't like he was trying to juggle four classes at a time over a semester. It was like, "Okay, March is done. April, we do this and May we," you know, and it was year-round. He had one break in the middle there like one month that he didn't have to. So, I dragged him off onto a mission trip with the church. But that one, I think that's the one he went willingly on. One of them he went willingly because of, well, earlier on, in '09, I had taken him on a mission trip with us that I wanted him to go and he went, I think he went kind of grudgingly on that one but the second one he went. ... So, he could make up his mind, does he

still want to do all this which he does not, which is fine, but at least he has the experience of doing that because I tried to make sure he's exposed to all kinds of things because we have Autism Spectrum in here. So, I just wanted him to make sure that he's exposed to different things like anybody else. You have to do for different experiences because that's part of life. So yes, I've gone through all of that on top of everything else. So, but as they say, God doesn't give you anything more to handle than he and you can do together.

DK: So, were you involved in the church throughout your whole life or was this something you picked up after the military?

CK: Well, the church that I belong to now was the one I grew up in. I was baptized in that church all the way through high school. Went in the service, I kind of fell away from church. Although, when I went to Iceland, I did get involved up there because there was a group of us who had flown over on the rotator together, and got to know each other and the irony is, we all joined the choir and everything else in Iceland because you have to find other things to do because you're isolated. But then when I came back now, I kind of fell away from it again but I never transferred out of my church. So, when I came home, they just had to reactivate my membership. So, actually, I've been a member of this church since 1973. [laughter] Well, my dad was like at the fifty-seven year membership on the, no, he's longer than that. He was probably over the sixty-year mark for this church. But yes, because they counted my inactive time because I never transferred. If I had transferred out, I would've had to start recounting all over again but it was a good piece to get back into going, just to reconnect with the world up here, you know.

DK: How does one go about, how did you become deacon? What was that like?

CK: I was asked, the membership committee, I was asked to become one if I wanted to do that. It was like a monthly meeting and it was like, we run the pantry. Well, I'm, we say, once a deacon, always a deacon, even though I'm inactive right now. But we have the food pantry, we have the deacon's handle, like the ushering, and the collect, at the end of the service, take the money to put in the safe from the collections and just different church activities that are involved. There are deacons and then we have what are called session which they make other rules too. We have, also we handle, from deacons, we didn't. I don't remember if we did this last year or not, but we had been collecting, like at holidays, at Christmas, for, there is a, it's called Freedom House, it's at Glenn Gardner. It's kind of like a halfway house that we put out. They send out a list of items that, possible items for Christmas that we people can purchase and contribute, so that these guys and gals have Christmas gifts. So, we coordinate that. We have different suppers and things to raise money for different activities within the church. We right now have, actually, there's an ongoing fund to raise money for air conditioning for the sanctuary, so that's. Like I said, right now, I mean, we've been so inactive in the last year, we're just now starting to try to rebuild things a little bit because like the mission team is starting to reactivate this year. Our project, in July, is going to be fixing, redoing the kitchen on the church manse, the pastor's house and probably work outside on things too but mostly in the, gut the kitchen and start all over again which is kind of cool because we've never actually done a project from start to finish like that. Usually on a mission trip, we pick up where somebody else left off. So, having done them since 2009, I kind of learned a few extra skills that kind of come in handy.

Everything, I'm good with a paint brush but I can also mud and spackle and hang dry wall, so. I've learned a few other skills. [Editor's Note: Freedom House is a center for individuals recovering from substance abuse. It was established in 1986.]

DK: Those are great skills to have.

CK: They are, I even had to use, resection of dry wall which is now Patrick's room, and had to mud it and put it back together again. It could've been a little bit better but it's in a spot that you can't see too well anyway but it turned out all right. It could've been a little smoother but it's all right.

DK: So, this mission team, that is mostly like community service? Are they doing mostly local projects?

CK: Normally no, this year we're doing it here at, like I said, at our church or at the manse. First year, I was here, we went to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The second year we did here. There's a program called Hope in the Hills of Warren as in Warren Hills that we did local houses. That was a two-week thing. The first week, they had a work camp with like about three hundred plus kids and adults from fourteen different states that were here, put them up in the high school and they started on projects within the sending district of Warren Hills High School. ... Then, the second week, the churches picked up, the local, like our, like we all worked together out of my church. ... So, between the two weeks of projects, they did, we did work on eighty-one houses. Everything up to and including painting an entire house outside. Then we went to Nashville. We've done, we did Jamaica, Queens one year. We've done Endicott, New York. We did Myrtle Beach, Charleston, Sumter, South Carolina, two trips to West Virginia, which I missed the first one because that was when I had my back surgery.

This all started with Katrina, Hurricane Katrina. The first one they did was to Mississippi. What's the town? Robin Roberts off of *Good Morning America*, it was her hometown. They redid the library. I mean, we've done, we've gutted houses, we've rebuilt stuff. Water does a lot of damage, you know. My grandmother always said, "You can stop a fire but you can't stop water, you know." So, we've done, there's not too much. I would think that we haven't done. The one year we went, I think that was the Myrtle Beach trip and they had a trailer and we called it the roach motel. It was a house trailer and that trip we had with us, an electrician. We had a contractor, a guy that does glass. I mean, we had people that were doing, not plumbers but they know how to do plumbing. I mean, we had, the skill levels that go with us to start with and then you throw in the ones who are doing the painting and the drywalling and everything else. It's pretty amazing what comes out and what people learn over the years, you know. ... We've done gardening, just landscaping because, some of the houses, if they've been flooded out, their yards look like trash. So, we've done all kind of that stuff. What are you interested in mission work? [Editor's Note: *Good Morning America* is the morning television program of ABC that began airing in 1975. Robin Roberts has co-hosted the show since 2005. Roberts was born in Tuskegee, Alabama and grew up in Pass Christian, Mississippi which is located on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Hurricane Katrina was a Category 5 hurricane that made landfall over Louisiana and Mississippi on August 29, 2005. Pass Christian, Mississippi was almost completely destroyed.]

DK: I was curious as to what it was because a lot of times when I hear the word mission, the people are picturing.

CK: Overseas kind of stuff?

DK: Yes.

CK: We keep it local. It costs us less for travel.

DK: Yes.

CK: We caravan when we go too. Usually, if we go out of the area, we take like five or six vehicles because we get divided up into several teams. We might have two or three teams of going to different projects to work on. So, this one here at the church was going to be the first time we really all managed to be able to work together but yes, I mean, we try to keep it home. Like I said, there's so much work that needs to be done here in the States.

DK: I think it is important to note because I am not sure that everybody who hears the word mission thinks about the amount of community service work you are doing. Like when I first hear the word mission, I always just think of the religious side, spreading word as opposed to necessarily like doing.

CK: Hands on stuff, yes.

DK: It is really interesting to hear about that.

CK: And it's not always us doing the work. I mean, you do not realize what you get back from the people that you are doing the work for because even stopping to sit down and talk to the, because the homeowners are usually there when we're working or we at least get to meet them and that's just as important to sit down and talk to them and hear their stories because some of them you wonder, how did they survive some of this stuff that they have been through. ... Yes, some of their stories are eye opening. There's a group, over in Belvidere, at the Presbyterian Church over in Belvidere in New Jersey that they make quilts. They used to call them ugly quilts but these are not ugly. They make, I mean there's, look, there's a whole team of them that works on it. In fact, there's a couple from our church that's part of it and usually like once or twice a year, they'll bring in extra people to help finish the quilts because you have to tie them off so that they don't shift around. So, we've got, I've been over and a bunch of us from the church have gone over to help work on these things so they give us about thirty or forty quilts to take with us on these mission trips to distribute to our families and we leave the rest of them for the church that is housing us basically for them to distribute as they see fit.

We usually stay at a church that is set up for volunteer groups to come in because some of these, we've done mostly through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the churches are, if they have a good kitchen, we take our own cook with us. Our pastor's wife has done a lot of the cooking although she hasn't, she didn't go last year. She got kind of got burned out on it but we stay in a

church. We take our blowup mattresses and sleeping bags and all that and hopefully they have, we require air conditioning to sleep in because when you've been out in the hot, especially down south, you need to come back to be able to let your bodies acclimate again, to cool down. We have to have shower facilities and a good place, like a kitchen facility. ... I mean, it's really not asking a whole lot, if you think about it. We've gone, Nashville had a really good setup. I mean, they had, some of these places have had, they make bunk beds out of lumber. They might have mattresses on them or not. We still have our blowup mattresses that we take along and everything. So, we go, we've got it pretty much down to a science most of us, especially the ones that will go every year. By now, we ought to have the list memorized in what we need to pack but I still, it's like I still want the list because Murphy's Law, couldn't forget something. So, I have a collection of t-shirts from every trip because we always make a new t-shirt for that next venture. Yes, I have a stack of work clothes and a stack of play clothes for after when you come back. ... Just, and actually half the fun is the traveling and the time spent back together afterwards because you get to know your church members from a whole other point of view. [laughter] It just brings the family unit together, the church family together, and it's something I like to do and it's always been my one week getaway. My brother would come home to stay with dad and Patrick. Although, this time, since we're not going anywhere, where my brother could still come home to spend time with Patrick because then Patrick, my brother can go through books. Need any books? To be able to have the time, we'll be able to come home and sleep in our own beds which kinds of takes away from the cohesiveness of the group but it's still fun and get kind of, start us getting reconnected back to normal if there is such a thing. [laughter]

DK: All right, so sliding back just a bit, were you in New Jersey or were you in Florida when 9/11 happened? [Editor's Note: On September 11, 2001, terrorists of Al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, hijacked four planes, crashing the first two into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, the third into the Pentagon, and the fourth crashing into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. 2,997 people died that day.]

CK: We were in Pennsylvania.

DK: Oh, okay, I was way off.

CK: Well, we were only an hour away. We lived, we were in Kunkletown, Pennsylvania, which is southwest of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania but we're still in the same county, Monroe County. So, we were really straight out from New York. Patrick was in first-grade. He was six years old. He was about almost seven. ... We had a lot of kids in the schools whose families, they had family members either living in or working in New York City. So, there was a lot that, and they didn't even say a whole lot during the school day. They didn't want to upset kids because the school building. He was in was kindergarten, first, and second grade. So, they didn't really broadcast it within the school at that point to them unless families came and took kids out. I don't know. I do remember in the grocery store, meeting a couple of family there that had just moved out from New York because that's what a lot of them did. It's kind of like now with COVID, they're all moving out from the city but like Patrick's school principal sold a house in five days. Put it on the market and the house was gone because people wanted to get away from the disaster because it, that, I mean, it took a long time to clean up that, all the ash. I mean, ash

gets into the air systems and they're still having people who are developing cancers from all of that because it got into their lungs and they weren't told about it. So yes, we had, there was some impact from that but I remember sitting in front of the television, it seemed like for days, watching.

Especially, the hardest thing for me was The Pentagon, because I didn't know if I knew anyone that was there, that was on the list. So, I had to wait to see who scrolled the list of who was killed at The Pentagon to resolve that. Fortunately, there was no one that I knew on the list, not that it made, not to make it seem any less important but I know that the side of The Pentagon that got hit they were doing construction work in it, so there was not a lot of people working in that and also, the side of The Pentagon that it hit was not on the parking lot side which is good because if it had been, on the one side, I forget which actual side it was, but on the one side is where the bus and subway runs under the building. The bus stop and the subway stop is underneath The Pentagon. So, if they had hit that side, that would've done a whole lot more damage structurally and body count wise. There would've been so many more people that would've got killed. I mean, the escalator that went from The Pentagon concourse down to the buses and the train was like a couple of floors down below, at least. It was a lot of really long escalator. You wouldn't want to walk it if the escalator wasn't working. [laughter] But I used to come in on the other side. The side that got hit was, well one side of The Pentagon, is a helicopter pad, but I don't think it was that side. It was another one that was more open. I don't know if it, I don't remember but anyway, that was a harder thing.

Now, I do remember, where I was when it happened because I had taken Patrick to drop him off to school and I came home and I'm thinking it's like almost nine o'clock. ... I'm like, "Well, I'm going to miss *Good Morning America* because it goes off at nine o'clock." Get home, turn the television on now, and *Good Morning America* is still on and Charlie Gibson is on. ... The first plane had hit and I sat there and I watched the second plane hit. ... I'm getting on the phone, I'm calling my mom, calling my sister, calling my next-door neighbor. I get, and look at the television, the Twin Towers had been hit in New York City. I'm like, "Get off the phone, go turn the television on the *Good Morning America* channel, on ABC." ... It was like, I couldn't break away from the television, it just really and from that, in conversations, Dan and I started having, it's like, "Okay, this has happened." We're both Fleet Reserve. "What is going to happen if they start activating people?" He already had heart surgery, so physically, I was the healthier of the two of us. I had my bachelor's degree already because he said, "Well, if you get recalled, they'll have to give you a commission this time." [laughter] So, which wouldn't have been bad for retirement purposes, you know, but then too, we both could've actually gone active because they could've used him as an instructor or shore command, even though he had had the heart surgery. I mean, so these kinds of conversations were going on and like I said, Patrick was six years old though. We would've, that would've really changed a whole lot for a lot of people if they had to recall people. [Editor's Note: Charles Gibson is a retired journalist and news anchor who co-hosted *Good Morning America* from 1987 to 2006. He then anchored *ABC World News Tonight* from 2006 to 2009.]

DK: Now, Patrick would have been too young to really understand what was going on.

CK: Yes.



DK: But what was it like to, I do not know if you waited a while to try to explain it to him or what was that like?

CK: A lot of times when they're that little, you kind of wait until they ask. Since then, he had chance to watch some of the video play because as you got older, they talk about it and so I don't really remember him asking a whole lot about it because they were saying not show it repeatedly to kids because they would think it was happening over and over again, when really it was only a one-time thing and they recommended it not being on for them, let them watch it once and turn it off kind of thing. So, that they don't think that it's happening today, tomorrow, the next day, over and over, because that would be confusing to them. ... He gets in his own little world sometimes and a lot, if I was watching the television he may have been in his room with like videos in or something because we had a lot of movies and he had a little work table in his room, I mean sit there with his play-dough, or whatever, working at stuff and listening to his movies.

DK: Let's see, is there anything else you would like to add to that? I mean, looking at that event from somebody who had been in the military.

CK: What, as far as the possibility of being recalled and how they might react to it, or what?

DK: Yes, was that the, I guess that would be the main thing that was on your mind with regard to that.

CK: That was a biggie for us, because like I said, we were both not yet at the thirty-year mark obviously. Let's see, from '95, to 2000, where were we at? '95? 2005. It would've been past the point but still, there was always still that possibility, really. I mean, I especially, me being administrative, it's not like they're going to have me out running laps or something. Were we at? See, because I got out in '95, twenty-year was not until '96 really. 2006, seven, eight, nine, ten. That would've been past the thirty-year mark by that point. I don't remember but I still, I mean, it still came up because we just, you just never know what's going to happen. Well, no, 2011. I'm trying to, if Patrick was in kindergarten. September 11th of, well, that was 2001. Okay, so we were not at the thirty-year mark. We were four or five more years away from the thirty-year mark, so yes. Those conversations were very real because thinking about, because now, it's like when both parents are on active duty and you have to have another person to be able to take your child if you both get deployed at the same time, kind of thing. So, we had to hash through a lot of that kind of stuff. It's like, "Okay, where would we go?" Or, "Who would be the next option kind of thing?" "Where would Patrick have to go, if both of us were recalled?" So, that was, because it's like even like now, what to do about someone to help him when he gets, if something happens to me, somebody to help him go on with life and that's all the autism stuff. So, what do you think? What do you think?

DK: Yes, I am just nodding because that is very evident of mom instincts.

CK: Yes.

DK: You take care of your story continues to say you take care of people.

CK: Well, that's kind of, yes, because you have kids and you never stop worrying about kids. ... Obviously, God knew what he was doing only giving me one because he knew I was going to be doing it on my own.

DK: Yes, then you also took care of your father which was a noble thing as well. So, bringing things a little closer to now. It is 2021, so we have been dealing with COVID for a bit now.

CK: Yes.

DK: So, what are some big changes or things that happened recently that you would like to share?

CK: Things that have happened recently. Well, thanks to my father, I now have a new truck. Unfortunately, having to lose dad to get it but I'm working on trying to make the house my own because this is the house I grew up in. If you know anyone looking for a twin bed that's a captain's bed. People want something for nothing and it is on marketplace on Facebook and I am not going to put it for free. I rather split it up and use it for firewood before I make it free. Figuring out what's here that I don't want anymore because it's not mine. You know what I mean? Or, it's been here and it can fulfill the use for someone else, elsewhere. I have furniture to try to get rid of. I have books to get rid of. I have about seven or eight rubber containers full of pictures of all, everything that goes back to the early 1900s, all the way up to what I have now from all the family archives. I've got more bibles in this house than I know what to do with because they go back to my great grandmother, her German bible. I have, it's moving in slow motion. I wish it would move a little bit faster but fortunately, with my church getting ready to have an indoor yard sale on June 12th, they are going to be recipients of, right now there's only three boxes of things that are ready for them but it's going to, if, every once in a while, I walk through the house with a box. We got to every room and put a couple things in it from around, that I know that I don't want anymore and would go to the church sale. The proceeds from that indoor yard sale and vendor sale, that goes back to the mission team. That's our sale to make money for, well, for when we travel. For when we go out and have, usually when we're on the road, we go out and have a dinner paid for by the mission team or we'll get something extra for the families that were working on their houses and stuff like that, so. Yes, those, I can sit here in his room right now and look and see a lot of things that can go into the box. So, and that, and then I go outside and I have an acre of property to take care of as well but I do have someone who comes and mows but I'm not real happy with their mowing yet. So, we'll see how they do the next go around. There's always something, it's a sixty-seven-year-old house. I got windows that need to be replaced. I got two storm doors that really need to be replaced and you know, the things that would come with the house, and especially an old house. So, you're looking like you're ready to fall asleep.

DK: No, I was looking down at my notes.

CK: Oh, okay, okay.

DK: I do not want to miss anything.

CK: Downwards, I guess, is he paying attention or what?

DK: No. [laughter] Yes.

CK: I got a whole pile of wood outside. I need to have the wood pile restacked and there's more that's out there that needs to be split and added to the pile because I have a wood stove here. So, if the power goes out, I have heat and I have a gas stove so I can still cook. The advantages of having a gas stove and a wood stove because if I want to make baked potatoes, I can cover them up in foil and throw them in the fire, yes. I still, I have a small, well, my garden is shrinking this year but between what I have on the table from my garden and then also for up at the horse farm because I had been the one supplying the plants for the vegetable garden up there. Right now, I have about forty-three tomato plants because I start them from seeds and Murphy's Law that most of them, they germinate but the pepper plants, they're not doing anything, I'm going to have to buy them at this point. On a good day, I go outside and dig in the dirt and the inside the house things don't get done. [laughter]

DK: Now, have you always done the gardening thing or is that a recent?

CK: Oh no, when we were kids, it was like, if you want to eat, you got to garden. So, actually, when they built the house, my mom's dad and stepmom used to live in town and they would come out, my grandfather would come out and garden the whole back quarter. Everything from, well, there was like a small orchard, different fruit trees and we had strawberries and my grandfather had a very green thumb as well as my father's mother. She was also very good with plants. So, we learned early on and then I remember, when we were like in upper grade school and into junior high school it's like dad coming in on a Saturday or during summer time, waking us up with the birdies practically, tell us to go up to weed before it got hot. So, we were not allowed, we didn't sleep in, in the summers. We still had to get up and go out, and there was a yard to keep up. If you want to live here, you're going to work here. ... With three kids, my mother always said she was a lazy mom because she had three kids to do her housework. [laughter] But we all worked, we all mowed grass, weeded, we did all that outside stuff but we all knew how to cook and sew, and clean too. So, it was, I mean, depression era parents, I mean, we canned, I still canned some stuff. I don't do a lot yet. But and we had one of the great big Ben-Hur chest freezers which is, you probably never saw one of them before but they're about the length of a sofa and deep. I mean, that got filled every summer. Mom would make casseroles and freeze them. She'd make pies and freeze them because we had four sour cherry trees, so we had lots of cherry pies. We worked and when we got old enough, we all had summer jobs.

DK: So, with producing a lot of your food at home, did you feel that you were in a better position than a lot of people who say, eat out a lot more during, last year when a lot of the things were closed or you could not go to restaurants. Were you better stocked than some other people as far as?

CK: Oh, absolutely better stocked because growing up here in the winter time, we had no neighbors. So, in the winter time, we've been snow bound here in the house with not able to go

anywhere and be stuck here for a couple days with no road access. First, I remember when the snow plow was actually a road grader because they didn't have the big plows yet when we were kids. So, we always had food and mom always shopped sales and then when Shop Rite started early on years ago with the Can-Can sales, we'd load up on stuff and between that and canning and freezing, yes, we were always good. So, when this happened, the irony is, okay, December before it's shutdown, is when we lost the dog but I had been buying the bundles of paper towels to cleanup after the dogs. I had paper towels, a couple big bundles of that. My shoulder surgery, I had a friend who was coming in to help take care of dad because when I had, my surgery was a year ago January. ... So, I had stocked up on food then as we were watching and things were starting to happen and it was like, "Well, things aren't sounding so good about the virus." This is like January when I finally was able to, well, I started driving again in February. So, Sarah, my friend and she was coming to take care of dad and me both. We made up a list of what we needed to have and we stocked up, for her and for me and for the duration. I made sure mostly what I needed for dad. I always have gloves, the latex gloves. Any cleaning stuff, any supplies that Sarah needed for taking care of dad. And even, making sure there was an extra bundle of toilet paper, whatever, but by going to various, to different stores, you could keep it normal, looking like normal shopping but you're not really because nobody knows that you've already bought something at another store too. But even after things shutdown, one of my girlfriends, she owns Country Fresh Farms, about a mile up the road from me. She has milk. She has eggs. She has bread. She has produce. She has plants. Her daughter makes pies, I mean there's, you name it, oh, and even meat. Meat and chicken because she gets her meat from a guy who raises beef and chickens, over in Port Colden on the other side of town, so it's local. I know where all my local sources are. So, I really had little need to go into Shoprite. I don't go to the big package stores. I went for over a year without going into Walmart and the only reason I went into Walmart was to buy canning jars for one of my girlfriends that's in Georgia that she couldn't get them. So, we bought. I went in, got canning jars and left the building. So, for all intents and purposes, I haven't gone to Walmart in almost a year and a half, except for that one little blip. So, if you know what's in your area, you can know where to go and get, you know?

DK: Yes, that is good. I know a lot of people were caught off guard because they depend on much larger networks that were disrupted.

CK: Lately, I'm off of Amazon. I was on Amazon Prime because with dad last summer, we were having a hard time getting a lot of stuff but we managed little by little to reload because when dad went in the hospital and my sister came home, the day after he went in and we were worried about trying to get dad out of the hospital. I'm like, "Well, I got a wheel chair. I got mask, gloves, and PPE gowns." I said, "We're going to go." We were planning The Great Escape. So, I mean, I have supplies and frankly, from after all of that, I still have a lot of supplies. I have no intention of getting rid of it because you never know. ... I think, so many people were caught off guard because they don't prepare. I've lived in areas with hurricanes. I've been around, yes, typhoons. Haven't been, actually, even tornadoes. In Charleston, tornadoes would go through there once in a while. So, I've been around these storm areas. I know, and just growing up, my parents were always prepared, always had, when you took, mom's thing was you take the last bottle of ketchup off the shelf, it better be on the grocery list for the next time. That's how you know what, I'm still trying to teach my son that. If you take the last of something, like when we ran out of bread and like this morning, I went looking for

bread and there's no bread. It's like, "What happened?" But to be able to, or to have the supplies available to make it if you really need it that badly. Like I said, it's a Depression era mentality that I grew up with and my mom was raised in a house with seven adults during the Depression. Her grandparents, her father and aunts and uncles, so yes, she learned from the best of them. So, I try to get through, one of my girlfriends, like before the shutdown in December, or whatever, I'm like, "What are you going to do if the power goes out? How do you heat your house? How do you cook?" She's like, "Well, I'm coming to your house." I'm like, "No you're not." I said, "How are you going to get? You need to be able to care for yourself in your house." So, at Christmas now, I do a little gift bag and in there, something that's like for preparedness kind of stuff. Like one of those candles that burns for a hundred hours or whatever it is. Those kinds of things and I think she appreciates it but it's not something that she'll think about buying. So, that's just my mentality. [Editor's Note: The Great Depression occurred from 1929 to 1941.]

DK: Yes, during the height, a lot of people were trying to make bread for the first time but I am guessing you had some baking experience before.

CK: Well, I didn't make bread. My sister was the bread maker actually. She used to make the best raisin bread with icing on the top and it's like a fight, when she'd bring it out of the oven to get the first piece off the end, you know but you got to be careful because yeast can do things to your body, if you get too much of it. But even without just having, without bread. I mean, there's so much else. You really don't need a whole lot of bread. I mean, I've got rice and potatoes and all that kind of stuff around. I can live without bread. I like bread but I can live without it. It's not like an urgent thing but of course with dad, I mean, we pretty much, well whatever dad wanted, dad got pretty much. He was spoiled rotten anyway but there was always enough around. The freezer was full. I just, I have a hard time understanding how people cannot go, how they can go through life with not being prepared but that's just me. That's just the way I was raised. And what, you'd be one of the ones that's not prepared? [laughter]

DK: I was not mentally prepared but physically I had stuff. So, we were not too bad. I wasn't too ready for the shock, I'll admit that. [laughter]

CK: I have stuff that's the Patriot Supply, that kind of stuff, the twenty-five-year shelf life. I have some of that stuff too because if you have to evacuate, what's the first thing you're going to take? You got to take something that doesn't take a whole lot to prepare and it will be around a while. You can live off, I can live off the canned goods for a while and not worry but I got about at least a dozen jars of bread and butter pickles downstairs yet. [laughter] That I made last year. [laughter] I used to bring them up to farm all the time or the church suppers. So, I would usually go through them all. I mean, one year I made like twenty-six pints of them but I started bringing them up for lunch up at the farm. I guess I'm about due to start bringing some back up again. Were you up there yesterday?

DK: Yes, yes, and it rained right before I left just for a little bit but not too bad.

CK: Okay, did you see the pictures? You saw the pictures of Ruth with Ben?

DK: Yes.

CK: Out in the pasture? He so needed that for him to. I was amazed that he laid down like that and she was able to spend that time with him. She really needed that though because Monday is when she found out that her uncle had died from the COVID. The thing is, about, was it Norway, I think? Or, was it Holland? Wherever her uncle was, that basically, the seniors, if they get sick, their basically expendable. That's their whole attitude about all of this which is really said. I mean, I can't imagine. I could not imagine that, not giving him the help that he needed.

DK: No, but since you bring it up, would you like to talk a little bit about the farm and the horse program and whether or not.

CK: We can, we can.

DK: Yes, if you would like to.

CK: I mean, I have been with it since it started. The open house was my Navy anniversary. Coming up on September 10th will be forty-five years since I came to boot camp. Rocks don't live that long, you know. [laughter]

DK: So, did you.

CK: What do you want to know?

DK: So, did you find, was the horse program helpful during, because I know it creates another, similar to church, like a community network to support each other.

CK: Right.

DK: Was that a source of support during the shutdown when a lot of things were closed?

CK: Oh absolutely, I mean, we didn't go up for a long time. I mean, but Ruth started the page on messenger for the purpose of keeping us connected because she knew, or we all knew, there was going to be that missing link in there that we really needed to have that. When spring came around, and she mentioned about people needed to go to the farm to be pleased to be able to go, you know. ... So, I went up with dad. I took sandwiches up so we could eat up there. I went to, the first time, to check, well one, to go see Nicky but also, I started cleaning up the garden bed to see what I needed to bring up for, to get it ready for planting. So, the first time I went up, I went in and weeded everything out. ... Then, I collect up eggshells so that is another layer that goes on. ... I've already done that this year and now, and then I went up, I had taken up a couple bags of top soil because where the garden is, used to be a chicken pen, so the soil in there is not really good. So, every year we kept adding a little bit more. Really, what we needed to do in the fall or late, toward winter, is put a load of horse manure in there just to have it time over the winter to rot and fertilize things a little bit. But last year, I think I took a couple bags of miracle grow to get it started, just to beef it up a little bit but that was a major thing and the one time we were up,

we saw Amy and got to talk to her a little bit. So, but other than that, we didn't go up a whole lot. ... Then, when after my, like I said after my dad went in the hospital and my sister was here and my brother in and out of several times, and we got to go up and hang out up there a little bit more and then what else? But yes, mostly, we just went to, just to get a horse nuzzle once in a while.

DK: You have been with this particular horse program since this one started, right?

CK: Yes.

DK: How did it start? How did it come to be?

CK: Well, Ruth had been, she would have been with another program down in Old Wick, and one of our, and I'm not sure how she found out about Gem Vac Veterans because she started coming down there to tell us about, Mainstream is the other place. ... She got to know us in there and some of the, looking for, I think, veterans to get in there to start, to go to the program down there at the other place but it got to a point where she was not allowed to do what she wanted with the veterans. They were because they were not, the people that were running it, were not afraid of, "Well, what if this happens, and what if this happens?" They were just not in tune with veterans very well. ... One of the guys from Gem Vac well, Mike Moretti, Sergeant Mike Moretti, actually went to the other program and at 93 years old, Michael actually rode for the first time in I forget how long. But he rode at ninety-three years old and he was one of the major contributors to the horse farm. ... Unfortunately, he passed before we opened up the program. He had received a quilt of valor. That night he went home and he wrapped up in the blanket and laid down on the couch and died. He'd had heart issues. So, after that, Ruth was worried, so anybody else who was receiving a quilt was told that they were getting the quilt because they weren't sure if that brought on his heart attack or not. It probably did not. It probably was just that that was his time but it was, it made other people uncomfortable that maybe this was a cause. We didn't want any more surprises. So, all the rest of them, that got quilts, they had been told about them.

... Then, another contributor was Jim Phinney, who was also an Army Veteran, I think he was Army. He was a Prisoner of War in Japan. Mike Moretti had been in the Mediterranean, and the plane, he was a bomber. He was a top bomber? I think, I don't know much about the airplanes but the front gunner on the airplane. Anyway, he had been three times they'd been shot down in the Mediterranean. Then Rich Ehlert, Richie was a Navy, amphibious Navy. He, on D-Day, crossed the English Channel seven times bringing troops across, and on the return trips, they would take the wounded and dead back to England, and then the fourth one was my dad. It was the four cowboys. Then, anyway, Ruth started looking for, when she left Mainstream, and started looking for another place and she prayed a lot on this one, and she looked up on, she looked up online and there were a couple other farms she had found but they fell through. ... Someone else told her about Drakestown. ... She had seen it online but somebody, this other person handed her the pamphlet for Drakestown and it's like, pieces of the puzzle started falling together. [Editor's Note: D-Day was the Allied invasion of Normandy, France on June 6, 1944 during World War II. Drakestown Equestrian is located in Long Valley, New Jersey.]

So, she talked, got to talk to Amy and all these. Amy really didn't want to sell the farm. I don't think she really does want to sell the farm. She loves the farm but weather wise, winters kill her anymore because Amy is my age too and her hands are what, are taking a beating and the nerves in her hand and all that. So, now is looking for someone else, hopefully to be able to pick up where we're leading off here, so that we can keep it going because what is it, it's very important and I had mentioned it on the Facebook thing like yesterday and the guys says, "Where are you?" It's like, I said to him, in New Jersey. So, I mean, the people are hearing about more and more of these programs and all but not all of them are free, for one, to the members. Not all of them include the family and not all of them are continuous for as long as you want. A lot of them might be ten or twelve weeks of program, boom, they're done. This goes on for, I've been doing three and a half years. Other programs I would've been in and out of there by this point, you know. I don't have a lot of the issues that a lot of these guys do. I've never been in combat but I've been in the stress of the job can do it for a lot of people. I was not abused like some of the women have been but I've been through just a lot of, just stuff you know. It just kind of, and especially dealing with people who have attitudes, especially the guys having attitudes towards women in the service. ... So, I mean, and of course now having other physical issues coming into play, that makes it, for me, it makes it a lot more important, I think.

DK: Do you have a favorite horse at the farm? I will not tell the other horses. [laughter]

CK: Oh, I worked with Nicky the whole time. I have worked with Nicky the entire time and when I started with him, Ruth was almost ready to move me to another horse and I'm like, "No, I think I'll take on the challenge of him." ... If you see him now versus what he was, it's a big difference. ... I mean, now I'll walk into pasture and he, after calling him a few times, it's like, "Oh yes, that's the carrot lady kind of thing." He knows. He comes up to me and of course, usually if I have on a hoodie, that's where the carrots are and he knows that. He goes looking for them. He starts rooting around my hoodie pouch looking for his handout, you know. ... He doesn't like it. One trick I've learned too, because he shares the pasture with Sammy, is that. Well, Sammy will come up to me, so if I start handing Sammy treats, suddenly, guess what, Nickie's like, "Hey, wait a minute, that's supposed to be for me," and he'll show up. He'll come over to me. A couple weeks ago, up there, it wasn't this last Monday. It was the Monday before. Two Mondays before, because the one before was rain and we were down in the lower arena outside. ... Vivian was taking pictures and Nicky is standing over there with his head on my shoulder and he's like, "Hurry up, he's falling asleep." Because he'll sit there with the head on the shoulder and I can feel the weight of his head on my shoulder. ... She's like, "Is he sleeping?" And I'm like, "Yes, he's sleeping." I said, "Hurry up." There are times when, for a while Patrick, well Patrick's just started working with horses, with MacGyver again. ... He originally had been working with Lauro because Patrick did the first session when I started with the horses but then he knew what to do with the horses and he'd come in and sometimes help me with Nicky. So, I'd stay in there at Nicky's head, had Nicky put his head on my shoulder and Patrick would do Nickie's hooves with me. But Nicky's standing there, falling asleep while he's balancing on me. So, I've been around.

I started riding when I was five years old probably. One of the teachers who taught with my dad, her daughter was in school between my brother and sisters, so really, when I was five, Marty was only like twelve maybe, and my sister started having riding lessons and so I went with Dad the



one time, to go pick up my sister and Marty put me up on one of the horses and Dad's like, okay. That meant he was going to have to start me with riding lessons too. ... That didn't last a whole, whole long time, maybe a couple summers. ... Then, of course later on down the road, you'll get a little, maybe even the same summer, I don't remember but Marty also taught me how to swim in one of the local farm ponds. We had a local farm that it was kind of like the neighborhood swimming hole. You don't have them around too much anymore. It was a man-made pond that was made during the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] program. [Editor's Note: The Civilian Conservation Corps was a New Deal program that was in operation from 1933 to 1942. It enlisted young men to work on conservation projects across the United States.]

But anyway, back to the horses. I went a long period of time without being around horses, without riding. My sister's best friend down the road had a horse though and being as close as proximity, I spend a lot of time at their house too because the younger brother was like my little brother. He's three years younger than me but their horse. I mean, I would go in the pasture at the upper end, which is closest to our house and Silverbell was her name and Silver would come up and she would walk with me across the pasture to the gate, just, I was what, thirteen, fourteen years old kind of, by this point. So, even then, the horse and teenage girl relationship was starting but I really didn't, was not around horses a lot while I was in the service and all that but I've never been afraid of horses. I've always, but, when this opportunity came around to do this because Mainstream did not, they would not allow me to participate in their program because of my back and Ruth said, "That's bull." Ruth said, "Of course you can ride." I just have to modify how I ride. I don't sit, if I'm trotting or cantering, I'm not sitting in the saddle. I'm standing up pretty much. So, that I don't have, especially with trotting, so I don't have that jarring to my back. Walking is no problem. So, it has its advantages there for me too because I have to watch for when Nicky decides he's actually going to jump. He did that to me, last, when was it? It was in December because Joe took pictures of it and I have to see the pictures. Nicky decided, I thought he was just going to trot over the jump. No, Nicky took a, actually jumped over the jump. It was about twelve, eighteen inches high, that's all, but it's like, "Okay." I ride western and Nicky jumped with the Western anyway, he didn't care. So, it's fun. I mean, I just, then with a lot of us, it's like I lose track of time up there. I have, when Dad was going up there with me yet, that was my time keeper. He'd get tired and ready to go. So, that's why we would leave but otherwise, like now, three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Well, three o'clock is pushing the, usually about, how long Patrick is ready to go after that. But I just, yes, I like the farm. [laughter]

DK: Yes, and it sounds like the farm is very beneficial.

CK: How is it with you?

DK: It is very similar. It is very peaceful. It is very interesting. Not something I ever thought I would be a part of but it's neat. [laughter] Let's see, so we have been talking for a while now and I really appreciate you taking the time to share. Is there anything else you want to revisit? Because this might be a good place to wrap up here.

CK: Do I want to revisit? [laughter]

DK: Do you think there is anything else that we should add?

CK: Yes, because with most military people, there are always, like I saw this, this was on Facebook one time, and I shared it, that about veterans, that there's always, they seem happy, cheerful, approachable kind of people but there's always chapters of their life that you will never know about because you wouldn't, people wouldn't understand, which is, I think is so true. Like with my father, I mean, he rarely talked about the Army when we were kids. The one reaction I ever got with him I made a mistake, that one time at the dinner table, saying, "Heil Hitler." ... How a seven, eight-year-old kid would do and he's like, oh my gosh, he just about jumped down my throat on that one but that's really the only time that I remember a reaction of that nature from him. I don't recall him ever watching like Army type shows on television because when the combat was on, that was Korea. He didn't, because that came on earlier in the day, so he didn't necessarily watch, wasn't even home. But like now, that's like *Saving Private Ryan* and all these other movies, he would not watch that because he's like, "I was there. I don't need to see it all over again." Because what, the first fifteen minutes is, or one of the, is it that one? I think it was *Saving Private Ryan*, that one. The whole fifteen minutes of bloodbath. [Editor's Note: *Saving Private Ryan* is a 1998 film directed by Steve Spielberg which reenacts the Omaha Beach landing and subsequent fighting in Normandy, France during World War II.]

DK: Yes.

CK: So, he didn't cross the channel until two months later but he still saw enough. He didn't want to relive it. So, but yes, I think the program is really a good program. I mean, I've seen changes in people up there. Ray definitely has good points about. He had said good things about it. I think he worked with Sonny and just so much of it is the calming factor, it really, I think that's really the biggest thing is the calming factor. ... If you don't feel like really working with the horse but you just need to be with the horse, you can do that. Nobody says you have to go lunge with your horse. I'm even making progress with Nicky on that too because he, I sometimes, they get full of themselves sometimes and he just, but this last Monday, we had a good session. Like I said, I'm ready to get back in the saddle again. I've been ready. [laughter] Oh, you got creatures running around in the background.

DK: Yes, getting ready to look for dinner. [laughter]

CK: Oh, yes.

DK: All right, well.

CK: Oh, it's 4:30.

DK: Yes, it's just like, based off of, but I really appreciate you taking the time to share.

CK: Sure. I don't know what else. I mean, it's kind of hard to cover nineteen years and then some.

DK: Yes, if you think of anything, we can always talk some more or we can make additions.

CK: Yes.

DK: But thank you again for.

CK: Do they need, for like on the records, do they, is it just, everything is all, it's all oral history then right? Are there any picture documents or anything like that?

DK: Oh yes. So yes, we can add. If you have a picture or two, you would like to include, we can put it up with the oral history once it goes up.

CK: Okay.

DK: As we go, we will keep you in the loop with everything. So, let me stop the recording here.

CK: Okay.

DK: Thank you again for sharing.

CK: Sure, no problem.

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

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