

1 **First Lieutenant Merriann E. McBride McKillip talks about her service in the U.S. Army**
2 **Reserve Ordnance Corp and women in the military**

3
4

5 Vivian Peterson: This is a Women's Overseas Service League oral history project, uh, uh,
6 uh, on a, about a speech given by Merriann E. McBride McKillip, M-c-B-
7 r-i-d-e M-c-K-i-l-l-i-p. She lives at 1054 Hayes, H-a-y-e-s, in Irvine,
8 California, zip 92720; telephone 714 area code, 786-6705. Merriann was
9 born in Anaheim, California, on December 21, 1964. She was
10 commissioned in 1986 by the Ordnance Corps U.S. Army Reserves. She
11 had duty in Japan, Korea, Honduras, and stateside for numerous exercises;
12 served on a mobilization team when Operation Desert Storm/Shield. And
13 my name is Vivian Peterson. I, uh, live at 2319 P (as in Paul) Via Puerta,
14 V-i-a P-u-e-r-t-a, Laguna Hills, California. My telephone number is 714
15 area code, 830-9894. Merriann gave a speech at our meeting on Saturday,
16 November 5, 1991, in, uh, at the Glendale Federal Savings and Loan in,
17 uh, Laguna Hills, California.

18

19 Female #1: And as we got acquainted about that time the war started over in Saudi
20 Arabia and then we understand [inaudible 02:13] that was involved and so
21 we were in the pleasure of having Merriann McBride as she was listed on
22 our publicity, but she went and got married so now her name is Merriann
23 McKillip. And so [inaudible 02:30] little bit tell you about her
24 experiences as to what, what women are doing in the army or in the
25 military right now. Okay. I'm her mother. I'm her mother.

26

27 Merriann McKillip: Of course, mine was scheduled. [laughter] Yeah. She shorted me 3
28 minutes.

29

30 Female #1: Yes. I did short her. I promised her a year [inaudible 02:53] and I only
31 gave her [inaudible 02:55]. [laughter]

32

33 Merriann McKillip: Good afternoon. My name is Lieutenant Merriann McKillip and I'm in
34 the United States Army Ordnance Corps, which is, my area of expertise is
35 maintenance, um, not only missile munitions maintenance, tank
36 automotive maintenance, um, almost anything but aviation maintenance.
37 So the soldiers that work for me include mechanics, um, electronic, uh,
38 electronic equipment, generator, um, almost anything that needs a wrench
39 to fix it is, is what my guys and my girls do. Um, I was commissioned
40 through the, uh, Army ROTC, uh, Reserve Officer Training Corps, um, in
41 1986 from Cal State Fullerton, locally. Um, in the past 7 years, I've
42 traveled to Japan, Korea, and Honduras in different training capacities. I
43 spent two 3-week tours in Japan for an exercise called, exercise called
44 Yama Sakura. It was a, what's called a command post exercise. It's a

1 computer-generated war that we react and proact to. Um, in, in Korea,
2 every year there's an exercise called Team Spirit (Team Spirit '87, Team
3 Spirit '88), and that's an exercise with the Korean government and the
4 United States Armed Forces, um, kind of preparing for the defense of
5 Korea in, if in the event of, uh, of an invasion from the North. Um, I was
6 there in 1986, no, 1987 I was there for 6 weeks. In 1988, I was there for 4
7 months, uh, on-site support.

8
9 I spent 3 weeks in Honduras for an exercise called Fuertes Caminos or
10 Freedom Road and that was in 1988, 1989. And the, the United States
11 Army, um, Engineer Corps was building a railroad through Honduras to
12 facilitate the, the, um, the growth of the country, uh, just allowing the, the,
13 uh, civilians in Honduras to be able to get around their own country a little
14 bit easier. We also built schools while we were down there. And I was
15 part of the maintenance support that supported the engineer company with
16 keeping their equipment running.

17
18 In 19-, in August of 1990, my unit came up on the list of units that were
19 scheduled to deploy to Operation Desert Shield. Um, I'm, I'm right now,
20 I was at that time a member of the 489th Light Equipment Maintenance
21 Company out in San Bernardino, California, as a reservist. I was activated
22 to come in and get my unit ready to go. In September of 1990, it was
23 determined that our unit was not going to go, but I was ordered to active
24 duty at the Headquarters 63rd Army Reserve Command in North Alameda
25 to assist in the mobilization of other units. In addition to being an
26 ordnance officer, I have a secondary in personnel and in administrative or
27 AG, Adjutant General's Corps.

28
29 Um, as part of this mobilization team, I assisted in the deployment of 22
30 units, 3 of which stayed within continental United States, 19 of which
31 went to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, United Emirates, and, and some into
32 Kuwait. Um, we had a total of 2700 soldiers deployed. Of the 2700, 350
33 were female women, women soldiers. Um, that was a small portion of the
34 total 65,000 women that deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield
35 and Storm, but, um, those were our local people. The types of units that
36 we deployed into Operation Desert Shield and Storm included
37 transportation units, quartermaster which was a supply, not only general
38 supply and field service companies, but also water purification units. Um,
39 also we had field, the field service companies included bakery sections,
40 graves registration and now they call memorial services, um, laundry vac
41 units, and, um, renovation which is the repair of canvas equipment and
42 tents and uniforms. We also had maintenance units both forward direct
43 support units that go right out there and fix the stuff right on site as well as
44 general support which is where they evacuate the equipment farther back

1 to be fixed. Uh, we also had several medical units from, from the
2 California, Nevada, and New Mexico areas deploy. And we had a military
3 [inaudible 07:35] and we also had instructors from our reserve school
4 deployed to assist in the training of soldiers in-country and in the
5 continental United States.
6

7 The types of jobs that the female soldiers held during Desert Storm
8 included that of drivers. They not only drove, uh, pickup trucks and what
9 we call the [inaudible 07:55], like a Bronco. We also had them driving the
10 huge hea-, uh, they're, they're like a heavy equipment transport truck.
11 They drove big rigs is really what they were doing. Um, we had
12 mechanics working on everything from, uh, paint trucks to tank turret, um,
13 generators, trucks, um, electronic equipment, communication and signal
14 equipment. Anything that was broken, they were fixing. The female
15 soldiers were deployed as military police. They went over there and
16 worked at port security. When the ships would come in with all of the
17 equipment, these women were, were part of the military police detachment
18 that pr-, provided security at the port. We also had the soldiers go over in
19 the areas of cooks and bakers in the field service company. They did
20 admin services. Um, they provided support in memorial services. They
21 were, um, and there were very few casualties on the American side, but
22 they did also support the processing, collection, and administrative support
23 for the, um, the Iraqi's dead so that was an area that the, the female
24 soldiers from our own local unit, um, were involved in. And we also had
25 our own soldiers involved in medical support. They worked in the combat
26 support hospital, evacuation hospital, and the general hospitals that were
27 deployed overseas.
28

29 On the active duty side, we had soldier support in signal communications.
30 They worked as com-, communication satellite, um, operators. They
31 worked in aviation areas. They only aviation area that was cut off to
32 women during Desert Storm was that of the Apache helicopter. They
33 worked on transport. They, um, flew helicopters into the area to, for
34 evacuation. Um, the helicopter, the female helicopter pilots in the United
35 States Army went everywhere the men could go except into the combat
36 world with the Apache helicopters. They were also involved in field
37 artillery and air defense artillery. You've heard a lot about the Patriot
38 missile. That is one battery that women are allowed into in the air
39 defense, in air defense artillery branch. And there were women batter-,
40 women commanded batteries in Desert Storm.
41

42 Vivian Peterson: Hm. I had no idea.

43

1 Merriann McKillip: Also, for the first time in history, women were put into – or not put into,
2 but women were already in commander positions and in senior non-
3 commissioned officer positions. And it was the first time in history that
4 there was not a question whether or not a, whether or not the women
5 should go in that capacity. During Grenada in 1983, there was an MT
6 company from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, deployed to Granada in the
7 first wave. It was turned back because there were women in the units.
8 The women were turned back and said “You can’t go with your unit.
9 We’re not sure if we’re going to send you or not strictly because you’re a
10 woman.” Three days later they said “Okay. Now you can go.” [laughter]
11 When they got to Granada, they said “No. You’re not supposed to be
12 here.” And they sent them back again. [laughter] Three days later, they
13 turned back and finally allowed them in the country. And at that point,
14 they needed to make a decision, the military needed to make a decision as
15 to whether or not the, um, soldiers in the military, female soldiers in the
16 military were going to be [inaudible 11:15] and be kept during time of
17 peace and when the [inaudible 11:21] sorry, honey, you got to stay home.

18
19 So, um, during the next 10 years or the next 9 years, they made the
20 decision that, um, women could do the job and, um, when Desert Storm
21 came up they didn’t question whether or not that female commander or
22 that female NCO should go in that capacity. If the female commander was
23 there, she was sent. Uh, also in Panama, you know, 6 months earlier in
24 Operation Just Cause, um, it was, women proved themselves on the, in the
25 combat zone with the, um, the military police company that was sent was
26 commanded by a women, Captain Linda Bray, and she was involved in a
27 direct firefight on a position that was not expected, um, and it was realized
28 that they could do the job just as well as any other soldier.

29
30 Some people have asked me if the women in Desert Storm were treated
31 any differently, strictly based on their sex. Um, I spoke with some friends
32 of mine who did go overseas and one of my friends was Lieutenant [Ann
33 Hurry 12:26]. She is a maintenance control officer with [inaudible 12:29]
34 maintenance company direct support forward were, um, out of Fort Bragg,
35 North Carolina. She’s a West Point graduate from 1986, 1987, and she
36 and I were, um, best friends in officer basic course. And, um, she gave me
37 these accounts. She said that when it came down to it, the male and
38 female soldiers didn’t have anybody else to depend on but themselves and
39 that the male soldiers realized that they couldn’t do it alone. And she said
40 the more time they spent in the desert, the, the discrimination tended to
41 disappear. There were less accounts of harassment, less accounts of disc-,
42 discrimination because the more time they spent together, um, the more
43 the women proved that they could do the jobs that they were required to
44 do. She also said that once they, once they say combat zone, everybody’s

1 getting an extra \$110 a month. They're all doing the same job for the
2 same pay and they were treated fairly and they were treated equally.
3

4 Um, she also pointed out that the, um, that the wom-, that the female
5 soldiers in Desert Storm showed the Arabs that women's place is not
6 always in the home or behind the veil. She said that, um, she had – her
7 unit, her unit was, um, visited by several Saudi and Arab generals and
8 dignitaries and, and from other foreign countries as well and they were
9 impressed by the job that the female soldiers were able to do, that they
10 commanded the unit and that they commanded their section and that the
11 male soldiers treated them fairly and equally.
12

13 And the restrictions that you heard about with the sleeves down you
14 couldn't look the male, the Arab, male Arabs in the eyes. You couldn't
15 work out in the open and you couldn't work without your DCU, the desert
16 camouflage jacket on. Um, those restrictions tended to go away. She said
17 that by October of 1990, most of those restrictions had gone by the
18 wayside because the, the Arabs realized that the female soldiers weren't
19 going to run downtown in tank tops and shorts and disrupt their religion
20 and their culture. So after, after that October, things kind of calmed down
21 and they didn't seem to have a problem with the female soldiers per se.
22 She said that they had problems with their, their own commanders
23 worrying, still worrying about that. You know, it was, it was still coming
24 down kind of like latent, uh, latent regulations from above. They, they, it
25 was still being pushed down that soldiers shouldn't be outside without
26 their jackets on, but in 130-degree heat it seemed pretty ridiculous.
27

28 Um, overall since 1975, the training of soldiers, both male and female, has
29 changed. When, um, they opened up the, the, uh, quota for women in the
30 military in all of the armed forces, they realized that they needed to train
31 the male and female soldiers on the same level. Basic training is still
32 separate for the enlisted soldiers. For the officers, once you're an ROTC
33 cadet, you go through training right alongside the male soldiers. When
34 you go through your basic course, your advanced course as a cadet, you
35 train right along with the male soldiers. Every, from, from sun up to sun
36 down, you're in the same steps they are [inaudible 15:42] swim test,
37 jumping off, you know, rappelling down 80-foot cliffs. Everything is the
38 same, and you're supposed to do it just like they do.
39

40 On the, uh, enlisted side they have, um, separate basic trainings at
41 different locations and then once they go into their advanced individual
42 training, which is where they learn their MOS or skill, they do, um, they,
43 they are integrated and they go through the, the training right alongside,
44 they're in the same platoon, same squad with their, with their male

1 counterparts. Uh, and when I, when I send my soldiers to training, um, as
2 a platoon leader and as a future commander, they go through the same
3 training. The only time that they are separated is, is in [inaudible 16:23].
4 And, you know, when I need to – and, and at times during Desert Storm,
5 male and female soldiers shared the large, GP medium and GP large tents.
6 They just threw a blanket up if, if necessary, threw blankets up and they
7 had separate quarters but the same tent and that did not pose problems as,
8 as was expected.

9
10 Uh, out of 467 MOS skills, in military occupational skills in the United
11 States Army today, only 37 are closed to women and those are in the
12 combat, uh, combat areas, um, which shows that there's been 35 different
13 positions that have finally been open, been open to women in the past 4
14 years. And, um, I guess that kind of brings us to the present. Does anyone
15 have any questions for me? Hm.

16
17 Vivian Peterson: [inaudible 17:18] 35 that are still not open. [17:21] Is that front line?

18
19 Merriann McKillip: It's, it's mainly in the infantry skills, um, it also includes, um, in, in field
20 artillery, armor infantry. A lot of the field artillery positions are closed to
21 women. Air defense artillery because it's farther back tends to be more
22 open to women. Like I said, in the Patriot batteries and in, um, some of
23 the, the large missile, missile batteries they are open to them.

24
25 Vivian Peterson: [17:48] What have you been trained in?

26
27 Merriann McKillip: I've been trained, um, in the maintenance area. I, um, kind of had some
28 real different positions. Um, in Korea I was a loan agreement officer
29 during Team Spirit '88, and for 4 months I signed for [inaudible 18:03]
30 war stock, jeeps, trucks, water buffalos [inaudible 18:07] [laughter] and,
31 um, I signed for all this equipment and then remand to, uh, the units that
32 were there for training. And they kind of create like a, a big scenario of a
33 war and they're, they had actual support. They broke vehicles, so we
34 fixed them. Um, they needed to be fed, so we, we transported food and
35 petroleum to them. And so it was a live mission for a period. The actual
36 exercise was only 2 weeks, but you have 2 months build up before the
37 exercise and then 2 months build up or build down after the exercise to get
38 equipment repaired and turned back in.

39
40 Vivian Peterson: [18:47] Who took the [inaudible 18:45]? Who had to sign for it?

41
42 Merriann McKillip: Oh, I had to sign for everything. [laughter] Yeah. And you know the
43 only thing that was really lousy, I had to sign for 600 sleeping bags. And
44 [inaudible 18:58] soldiers, the, the Korean soldiers that showed up to, as

1 part of this, this joint force didn't have anything. I mean they showed up
2 with the uniforms on their backs and the trucks that they were driving in
3 and that was it. So we had to provide them food, uh, you know, shower
4 facilities, and sleeping bags. And I'm trying to explain to this Korean
5 captain that this is a hand receipt and he's going to need to sign for these
6 and then I want'm back, you know. And, I mean, it, it was, we didn't
7 have, uh, anybody to, um, interpret for us to translate so I went out there
8 every night to make sure they hadn't left. [laughter] We, I think out of
9 100 sleeping bags, we only had 6 that found their way into a, into
10 permanent status and I think we wrote those off as a gift to the Korean
11 government. [laughter] We, we, um...
12
13 Vivian Peterson: [inaudible 19:48].
14
15 Merriann McKillip: I think that was it. Th-, those 6 left in the middle in the night and I never
16 did find out where they went.
17
18 Vivian Peterson: Let me ask you a personal question.
19
20 Merriann McKillip: Sure.
21
22 Vivian Peterson: [19:57] Do you plan to stay in the military?
23
24 Merriann McKillip: Yes. I do. I plan to make it a career.
25
26 Vivian Peterson: [20:00] Is your husband military?
27
28 Merriann McKillip: No. He's not military. He's not employed. He's presently an architect
29 student in his senior year at Cal Poly Pomona. And he's very proud of the
30 fact that I'm in the military and he supports me in every way as a, as a
31 military spouse, but, um, he's not, he, he himself is not interested in it
32 though I should say.
33
34 Vivian Peterson: [20:21] Are you still in the reserves?
35
36 Merriann McKillip: Right now I'm active reserves, um, and I, I, I'm pending, um, orders for a,
37 for a 4 or 5 month or 5-year period. I requested, I've requested to go on a
38 program called Active Guard Reserve which would be as a full-time
39 support for a reserve unit.
40
41 Vivian Peterson: [20:39] Are there any problems with like rapes there?
42
43 Merriann McKillip: Very little. I've, I've talked to, um – I'll tell you. The, the, the problems
44 with rape that they had were handled in-country by the leadership there

1 and it was no different than any, any other place. It wasn't accelerated due
2 to the, due to the war and they were handled with, um, court marshals in-
3 country. Uh, we didn't have any rampant problem with that. And one
4 thing that I noticed in the news, they really played up when the thing
5 about, um, women being in combat roles when it was in the, on the
6 congress, congressional floor, they brought up the fact that there were
7 numerous pregnancies during Desert Storm.
8

9 Vivian Peterson: Yes.

10

11 Merriann McKillip: I wanted to address that and I wasn't sure if I should bring it up. The, um,
12 the women, a lot of the women that showed up pregnant in Desert Storm
13 and Desert Shield actually were deployed pregnant. They were deploying
14 so many soldiers through such a quick mobilization process that a lot of
15 them were not tested properly when they left. My friend that went over
16 there in August of 1990 was at Fort Bragg, which is an active component
17 post and they are, they are, because of this, the type of unit they are,
18 they're supposed to be ready to go in 24 hours. And she was given 24
19 hours' notice and then was deployed. They didn't do any sort of medical
20 screenings because it was assumed that they were ready to go. It turned
21 out she was 3 days' pregnant when she deployed.
22

23 Vivian Peterson: Three days. [laughter]

24

25 Merriann McKillip: And she stayed until she – she left in August and she came back in
26 January of 1991. Didn't tell anybody, just finally right after Christmas she
27 said "Excuse me. [laughter] I need [inaudible 22:16]. They're all good to
28 go and they're all settled in and I think I need to go home for a few
29 months." [laughter] And she had her baby in May.
30

31 Vivian Peterson: Aw. [inaudible 22:23].

32

33 Merriann McKillip: She had no idea when she left [inaudible 22:26].

34

35 Vivian Peterson: [inaudible 22:26].

36

37 Merriann McKillip: She didn't want to come back until her men were all set.

38

39 Vivian Peterson: That's right.

40

41 Merriann McKillip: Most of her, most of our sol-, most of the female soldiers that found
42 themselves in that situation stayed until the last moment before they came
43 home. And a lot of them, um, within the restrictions of the war were able
44 to go back and join their unit after a 6-week maternity leave.

1
2 Vivian Peterson: [22:46] Are a husband and wife allowed in the same unit or is there
3 restriction?
4
5 Merriann McKillip: There, at this time, there are, there is no restriction with that, but they do
6 have to have a family care plan. We, in, just in the 2700 soldiers I
7 deployed, we had several husband and wife teams or husband and wife
8 families that deployed together. Um, we do have a problem where, um,
9 we had a lack of a family care plan. They had not identified someone to
10 take care of their children...
11
12 Vivian Peterson Oh.
13
14 Merriann McKillip: ...in the, in the event of mobilization. If that could be corrected, they both
15 went. If not, um, I would give them the option. I, I gave them the option
16 of transferring one of the members into another unit until they could get
17 the family care plan taken care of.
18
19 Vivian Peterson: Hm. [23:29] Is there a quota system on enlisting in that you're going to
20 have X number of thousands of soldiers that so many are women and so
21 many are men or is it first come, first serve so to speak?
22
23 Merriann McKillip: Yeah. I asked that of a recruiter and what she told me was that month to
24 month their requirements change.
25
26 Vivian Peterson: Oh.
27
28 Merriann McKillip: Maybe one month they need a certain IQ or a certain geographical location
29 or a certain sex or a certain weight. Um, but overall, there is no real quota
30 specifically for that. Um, the, the number of women has just in the past
31 years is up too I think. I think it jumped in 1975 through 1980. It jumped
32 from like 18,000 of the original, um, [inaudible 24:17] converts, you
33 know, that they converted over to the branches of the 58,000.
34
35 Vivian Peterson: Hm.
36
37 Merriann McKillip: And it jumped. It's, it's growing, growing rampant. I mean, there's
38 hundreds of thousands of female soldiers in the military in all branches.
39
40 Female #2: [24:31] Can I ask you a question? Did the different ethnic groups get
41 along well in the military? I, I'm, I'm just a retired school teacher and
42 there's been a lot of discussion amongst teachers I know from different
43 areas [throat clearing] who maintain that the children are not interacting as

1 well as they might from the different, so many different eth-, ethnic
2 groups.
3
4Merriann McKillip: Mm-hm.
5
6Vivian Peterson: [inaudible 24:50] everybody was white.
7
8Merriann McKillip: Mm-hm. They say that in the, you know, the military is, is a microcosm
9 of the world around it. And we've had problems in, in different areas.
10 We've had problems with race relations and, and...
11
12Vivian Peterson: [25:07] You do? Really?
13
14Merriann McKillip: Yes. And in Desert Storm I understand of the attack coming back, um, we
15 did have problems with different racial groups depending on the makeup
16 of the unit.
17
18Vivian Peterson: [25:17] Were they calling each other names?
19
20Merriann McKillip: Calling each other names, getting in fistfights, just...
21
22Vivian Peterson: Just the usual. [laughter]
23
24Female: Yup. The usual.
25
26Female: [inaudible 25:22].
27
28Merriann McKillip: Men...
29
30Vivian Peterson: They always fight.
31
32Merriann McKillip: Right.
33
34Vivian Peterson: [25:24] But I mean the women. The women don't do that.
35
36Merriann McKillip: Not, not as much. I have to admit, I went through basic training at Fort
37 Knox Kentucky, and this was ROTC Cadet mind you. And I had 9 girls in
38 my unit and of the 9, 7 of them were black and it was a reverse
39 discrimination.
40
41Vivian Peterson: Uh-huh.
42
43Merriann McKillip: Um, they felt that because they were black they were being treated
44 differently and that they had to do more work and this, that, and the other

1 thing. As it turned out, it was because there were more of them than there
2 were of us that they were pulling more duty. It was all the same...

3

4 Vivian Peterson: Yeah.

5

6 Merriann McKillip: ...amount, but the, the impression was that we were getting off, you know,
7 without doing something. And, um, I don't think it ever went to blows,
8 but it – there, there was friction there. And that was back in 1982, or no,
9 1983. And I think it's gotten a lot better. There's a very strong, uh, EEO
10 system in the military, Equal Opportunity Employ-, um, they, it's not
11 really tolerated. My first [inaudible 26:22] [coughing] that I was in-,
12 involved in [inaudible 26:24] was the 489th. It's out in San Bernardino,
13 California. And my first platoon was 95% Hispanic, the other 5% was
14 black, actually, I guess 4%. And I had 1 – I had 2 white soldiers.

15

16 Vivian Peterson: You were the token WASP, is that right? [laughter]

17

18 Merriann McKillip: Yeah. I was, I was 1 of 3 and, um.

19

20 Vivian Peterson: I say that because I know you [inaudible 26:43].

21

22 Merriann McKillip: And these, these guys when they, when I first walked in there they
23 [inaudible 26:50] they thought they saw me coming. And it took me about
24 2 months before I sat down [inaudible 26:55] and I kind of told them how
25 [inaudible 26:58] cabbage. That I was not right off the street. That I
26 looked real young, but that I'd been around and that this was the way we
27 were going to play this game. And, um, to this date I have, they still call
28 me for, for advice and support even though I've, I've moved on to the
29 battalion level. I'm still within the same battalion, but I've moved on to
30 the S1 slot at battalion. And they still call me to say "You got to talk to
31 this platoon leader I've got now. He's not doing [inaudible 27:22]."
32 "Wait a minute. You've got to train him like you trained me." And, um,
33 they, they're like family, so.

34

35 Vivian Peterson: Hm.

36

37 Merriann McKillip: But I have to tell you I did have to get involved in keeping them from
38 hitting each other a couple of times. [laughter]

39

40 Vivian Peterson: [27:36] What percentage of the women are married that are in the service?

41

42 Merriann McKillip: That's – I know within the 60s [inaudible 27:42] it's probably 50%.

43

44 Vivian Peterson: Really.

1
2Merriann McKillip: And it's, it's like any other situation. You know, the younger soldiers,
3 um, most of them are not, um. As they get older, a lot of them are. And a
4 lot of them are married – a lot of them are dual-service families. They
5 have both peop-, both family members are in the military reserves, the
6 army reserves.
7
8Vivian Peterson: [inaudible 27:59].
9
10Merriann McKillip: Um, I dated a couple of guys, though, in the army and I wouldn't marry
11 one. [laughter]
12
13Vivian Peterson: You chose the right one I'm sure. I'm [inaudible 28:09]. [laughter]
14
15Merriann McKillip: The question was what did I do, um, for the deployment and in the
16 mobilization of the unit.
17
18Vivian Peterson: I was going to ask you that.
19
20Merriann McKillip: Um, we, we had 3 different mobilization sites locally. And what that is is
21 it's the active duty sites where we sent our units so that they could be
22 medically screened, that they could receive additional combat skill
23 training, that they could receive additional field MOS skill training, um,
24 before they deployed overseas. And most of our units went through one of
25 these 3 sites. One was Fort Ord, California, up in Monterey, California,
26 one was Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and the other one was Fort Irwin,
27 California, out in the Mojave Desert.
28
29 And so one of my jobs was to, before the unit was deployed, it would
30 come up on a list, um, saying this was the unit that was going to be sent
31 and they received their alert notice. So when we received that alert, we
32 knew that within 3 days they would receive an order. At that alert, we
33 would go out to the unit and one of my jobs was to screen their personnel
34 with their, their manning roster and identify who was deployable, who was
35 not deployable, and who I was going to have, what shortages they had
36 skill-wise. And then I had the authority to cross-level soldiers up to a 500-
37 mile radius, so I would call Private Snuffy's unit and say Private Snuffy is
38 now needed in this unit and you will have him transferred over in 24
39 hours. And that soldier has 48 hours to get his equipment packed and
40 ready to go and he'll be going with this unit.
41
42Vivian Peterson: Hm.
43

1 Merriann McKillip: So we were cross-leveling people all over the place. We were switching
2 them from a California unit moving into a Las Vegas unit, then they would
3 go on to Huachuca. If they were in a – maybe their skill was needed and
4 they lived in Alaska but they were part of a unit here, we sh-, we ship
5 them down and they went with the unit here. So we did a lot of cross-
6 leveling of people during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. In addition to that,
7 I was a liaison with [inaudible 30:16] army and with the mobilization sites
8 to make sure that if they did have problems, we could, we could correct
9 them. Um, but some of the non-deployable problems we had, um, funny
10 enough it wasn't the pregnancies that they talked about, a lot of it was
11 preexisting conditions, preexisting injuries that were not noted in their
12 medical file. The guy would show up and you found out he had a, a heart,
13 a heart murmur that he really didn't even know about. He wasn't
14 deployable. They would send him home. Maybe – oh, one thing that was
15 funny. If they had braces and could not take them off... [dictation ends]
16
17
18/mlc