

**Interview of retired U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Jeannette Marshall
on her twenty years of military service**

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5 Ruth Stewart: This interview is being held at Air Force Village 1, San Antonio, Texas on
6 February 16, 2004. Uh, Jeannette Marshall is being interviewed by
7 Ruth Stewart, assisted by [Mary Ann 00:16] Rogers.

8
9 [00:18] Jeannette, start by telling about your early life. Where were you
10 born and where you went from there?

11
12 Jeannette Marshall: Well, I was born in Sheridan, Wyoming, way up in the cold country and,
13 at 10, I went to California. Had my education mostly there and I trained at
14 St. Vincent's Hospital in Los Angeles and worked with a Sisters of Charity
15 there and had a good training at Los Angeles College, so I came out with a
16 3-year degree. And, let's see, I did private duty and general duty and then
17 I had an early marriage and was married for 10 years. When that failed,
18 why, I jumped into the air force at the last minute because I was getting to
19 the terminating age [throat clearing]. I was 37 but, at that time, they were
20 taking people after 35 because of the Korea conflict.

21
22 Ruth Stewart: [1:27] What year was that?

23
24 Jeannette Marshall: 1952.

25
26 Ruth Stewart: [1:30] Okay.

27
28 Jeannette Marshall: And I went in in September of '52 at Bergstrom, Texas and I went to flight
29 school soon after and then my first assignment was Japan. And I flew Air
30 Evac from Korea to Japan during that time, 2 years of flight and had a
31 thousand hours in unpressurized flying, which accounts for my deafness.
32 [laughter] Let's see, and, during that time, the most interesting flight I had
33 was one to Vietnam where we took out the French. I don't think many
34 people now realize that the French were trying to protect Vietnam, too,
35 and I picked the first load out, it was about 104 patients – all [inaudible
36 2:33] and mostly amputees. And, we took them to the Philippines and
37 ROM'd in the Philippines one night and then went on to Japan, which they
38 were picked up from the Stateside Air Evac to [Japan 2:50]. But, that was
39 an interesting flight because I couldn't speak French, nor could they speak
40 [laughter] English, but they were so delighted to get out of the country that
41 anything would have passed as a language. And, they couldn't understand
42 why we didn't have wine for them. They drank up everything we had on
43 the plane as it was, and it was a very interesting flight. We had French
44 nurses and doctors along on the trip, so that alleviated some of the

1 problems. And, the rest of the time, I was taking the injured out of Korea
2 to, back to Japan and those were always interesting flights. And, our
3 planes were pretty crude compared to the Air Evac planes now, but we
4 managed. And, let's see, from there, I...
5
6 Ruth Stewart: [3:50] Before we go on Jeanne, how 'bout telling us about your life and
7 career? What were, how did you live?
8
9 Jeannette Marshall: Well...
10
11 Ruth Stewart: [3:57] What did you eat? Did you have any interactions...?
12
13 Jeannette Marshall: We had Quonset huts and, uh, we had a potbellied stove and we had a
14 Westinghouse electric oven and, when Syngman Rhee left the electricity
15 on, we could bake things. But, often, we'd start a cake and the electricity
16 would go off, but we'd leave the cake in the Westinghouse oven and it
17 would be [inaudible 4:20]. [laughter] So, we had some very interesting
18 meals, to say the least. We also had a fire once at K-14 and the Koreans
19 were lined up against the fence because they thought they were going to
20 be able to confiscate some of the materials, like refrigerators and things. I
21 don't know what they would do with them [inaudible 4:45] electricity
22 didn't work [inaudible 4:47] but, uh, we had papers all over the side of the
23 mountain from that fire and trying to assemble that and get it back to
24 shape was a, a real chore and was a, quite an excitement, I guess, for
25 everybody concerned. We had 2 nurses that were stayed there, temporarily
26 relocated, and then the other girls would fly in and we'd rotate. The others
27 would take them out. So, that was the program there. And then, from
28 Japan, we flew as far as Guam and the Philippines and Iwo Jima and
29 northern Japan and southern Japan.
30
31 When I first got to Japan, the interesting thing was they changed the script, the money, and took
32 all our script and said they would reissue the new money and then they
33 assigned me to go to southern Japan and I flew down there and was met
34 by, a, a Japanese man that drove me to the base. And it was in the middle
35 of the night and he stopped the Jeep and got out and I didn't know what in
36 the world for, [inaudible 6:14] cross in the night and, here, I had no money
37 and I'm left in a foreign country and I didn't know what in the world to
38 say or to do. But, he was just relieving himself and he hopped back in the
39 Jeep and on we went. Nothing damaged [laughter] except my pride, I
40 guess. And, uh, let me see, that's about all the interesting things there. I
41 did meet my husband...
42
43 Ruth Stewart: [6:43] Now, did you live on the economy in Japan?
44

1 Jeannette Marshall: I did meet my husband...What?
2
3 Ruth Stewart: [6:46] Did you live on the economy in Japan?
4
5 Jeannette Marshall: No. We had on-base housing and that was Quonset huts.
6
7 Ruth Stewart: [6:52] Mm-hm.
8
9 Jeannette Marshall: But, dressed up pretty well, pretty comfortable. The nurses had one of the
10 bigger ones on the base and, all had nurses that were stationed at various
11 places, but the head crews were there at Tachikawa [inaudible 7:14] Air
12 Evac was sent there. And we kept bridge games going all the time, 24
13 hours a day, because there were nurses coming in and out and there was a
14 foursome waiting. [laughter] So, that was our interesting pastime. And we
15 had a very lively club at Tachikawa and so our social life was active and
16 that's where I met my husband, which I later married, after I got back to
17 the States. And I went back to California, stationed at Edwards and lived
18 there 2½ years. And my husband and I got married while I was there. You
19 want me to go on? [laughter]
20
21 Ruth Stewart: [8:05] Well, what were you doing at Edwards then? Tell us about that.
22
23 Jeannette Marshall: I was the Ward Nurse at Edwards, had a general medical ward. And then,
24 from there, I went to Germany and I was stationed at, at [inaudible 8:21]
25 and my husband was a Base Commander at [inaudible 8:27], which was
26 90 miles away [throat clearing], and no Autobahn. And it was down in the
27 Harz mountains and when we went back and forth, he dropped behind us.
28 His [inaudible 8:42], as they called them, were trucks and he went their
29 pace, so it took about 3 hours to make that 90 miles. And it was a drudge,
30 but we managed it. And then we transferred to Ramstein and we got to
31 live together there. So we finished up our German assignment and then
32 were sent to [inaudible 9:05], California.
33
34 And then my husband retired, and he had had 27 years in the air force and,
35 having been born in Belfast, he knew he wanted to go back to the British
36 Isles and he never had an assignment in Texas and he had 27 years in the
37 air force. As soon as he retired, I was assigned to Wilford Hall and, from
38 there, I went to [inaudible 9:32], so he became a camp follower anyway.
39 And then I finished up my career in England and came back to retire in
40 San Antonio, where we would build a home. And we've lived here ever
41 since. My husband passed in '77 and I had, we had built a house right next
42 to the Air Force Village and watched'm build it and said, "You'll never go
43 in there where all those old folks are all there," and here I am, a resident
44 and happy to be here!

1
2 Ruth Stewart: [10:14] Well, you look very happy and well care for.
3
4 Jeannette Marshall: Yes, I like it. I like the security and the safety and the, and the friendships.
5
6 Ruth Stewart: [10:23] Mm-hm. Um, tell us a little more about how your nursing career
7 went throughout all of this. You started out as a flight nurse...
8
9 Jeannette Marshall: I started out as a flight nurse and then was the Ward, and then I went into
10 clinic work and I was very fond of the clinic work. In fact, one of my
11 clinic nurses was [Diane Hale 10:43], [whose general 10:44] retired and
12 was in charge of the Air Force Nurse Corps at one time. [inaudible 10:52]
13 delightful person that, she'd been out to sea several times. Um, let's see,
14 from there, I went to, when I went to England I was [throat clearing]
15 Assistant Director and the, uh, Director was [Lee Williams 11:11], who
16 also was a personal friend of mine. And we decided that, if our friendship
17 lasted through that assignment, why, we would have [inaudible 11:22] and
18 we got along fine. And then, uh, [Mary Burns 11:28] came after [Lee
19 Williams 11:30] retired and I worked with her until I finished up as
20 Assistant Director of Nursing at [inaudible 11:38].
21
22 Ruth Stewart: [11:43] Uh, Jeanne, tell us a little bit about some of the challenges that you
23 had, uh, from the medical side of things. You mentioned that the cabins
24 were not pressurized in the aircraft...
25
26 Jeannette Marshall: Yeah.
27
28 Ruth Stewart: [11:52] ...but what other limitations did you experience?
29
30 Jeannette Marshall: Well, um, there were limitations in carrying the [litters 12:01] on the
31 airplane because, if you had a full load, it's hard to get 4 [litters 12:07]
32 stacked. They had very little space in between so you had to make
33 allowances for eating and the turning or positions that happened to be
34 changed and you did a lot of improvising.
35
36 Ruth Stewart: [12:25] Mm-hm.
37
38 Jeannette Marshall: And, [inaudible 12:30], I brought 2 boys up from [Ashita 12:33], which is
39 south Japan and [inaudible 12:36] that had had a swimming accident and
40 had broken their necks and they had head weights on, you know, traction?
41
42 Ruth Stewart: [12:45] Mm-hm.
43

1 Jeannette Marshall: And we had to sit on the floor and hold the sand bags while we took off,
2 so the sand bags wouldn't swing and distort the traction on their necks and
3 that was exciting because you knew their life was in your hands. And, gee,
4 I can't think of things – I will tomorrow.
5

6 Ruth Stewart: [13:09] Mm-hm.
7

8 Jeannette Marshall: Think of more exciting things.
9

10 Ruth Stewart: [13:13] Did you always feel like you had sufficient medicine and
11 equipment wherever you were stationed?
12

13 Jeannette Marshall: In [inaudible 13:19], we didn't have it and made do. And it was an, uh,
14 outstanding the way you could work out things and the corpsmen were
15 marvelous to help. They were well-trained in those days and you couldn't
16 do without them. You know, they just were your right hand practically.
17 And we had everything in that small medical kit – all the kinds of
18 bandages and immediate medical attention that we could, we were
19 authorized to give or if there was anything special they sent it with the
20 patient.
21

22 Ruth Stewart: [14:04] Mm-hm.
23

24 Jeannette Marshall: And we had transfusions going and IVs going, and we had to learn to get
25 one going if it clogged up.
26

27 Ruth Stewart: [14:17] Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
28

29 Jeannette Marshall: And so you, you learned a lot fast, sometimes without any help or
30 guidance, sort of on your own, but it was worth every bit of it. It was very
31 rewarding.
32

33 Ruth Stewart: [14:31] Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Your career was rewarding and therefore
34 [inaudible 14:35].
35

36 Jeannette Marshall: Yes, I think so. Very rewarding.
37

38 Ruth Stewart: [14:38] Mm-hm.
39

40 Jeannette Marshall: I was sorry to get in so late but, better late than never. They kept telling
41 me in personnel that they had to get me out when I was 55, and, okay.
42 Well, 55 came and they extended me for 2 years.
43

44 Ruth Stewart: [14:53] [laughter]

1
2 Jeannette Marshall: To make up for the 20, I guess.
3
4 Ruth Stewart: [14:58] Well, that was to your full advantage, certainly.
5
6 Jeannette Marshall: Yes, it certainly was. [Retention 15:02]-wise and, and satisfaction of
7 having folks there with us for 20 years, too.
8
9 Ruth Stewart: [15:12] Did you ever feel any sort of discrimination or feel like you were
10 treated as not quite a member of the team?
11
12 Jeannette Marshall: You mean the air force team?
13
14 Ruth Stewart: [15:22] Right. Mm-hm.
15
16 Jeannette Marshall: No, I think we were recognized, and the flight crew were basically
17 attentive and courteous to us in Air Evac and the doctors and medical team
18 were always, I think, generally speaking, receptive to the nurses and
19 helpful. And it wasn't the [alien 15:49] service like it seems to be now.
20 They, you know, don't work together like teams. They're all separated
21 into different groups now. I don't know about the military, you know, how
22 it works out there, but I know they have beautiful equipment. I've been in
23 the, some of the newer planes. Not recently, but 5 or 10 years ago, and
24 saw how well-equipped they were compared to ours. But I think we
25 helped'm learn what they needed.
26
27 Ruth Stewart: [16:26] Right. I'm sure you did. You paved the path for many women.
28 Were there...?
29
30 Jeannette Marshall: Well, we weren't aware of it.
31
32 Ruth Stewart: [16:34] Were there numerous incidents throughout your career that, that
33 you laugh about now?
34
35 Jeannette Marshall: Oh, I'm sure there were. We had lots of good things happen, you know?
36 We'd write up fake [inaudible 16:51] something on a flight. I remember
37 our last flight in Japan, we wrote a pseudo-history on make-believe
38 patients and turned it in to the office, which put them in a tizzy because
39 they couldn't understand what had happened to the patients [laughter] but
40 it was our farewell gesture and it was fun. And, let's see, I can't think of
41 any other things that we – in England, when anybody retired, the thing to
42 do was to have a, a Rolls Royce limo for the event and that was always a
43 big [beef 17:35]. [laughter]
44

1 Ruth Stewart: [17:36] Oh, I guess!
2

3 Jeannette Marshall: Yeah. We [inaudible 17:41] retired over there so we took advantage of
4 that pleasure.
5

6 Ruth Stewart: [17:47] When you came back here to San Antonio in your retirement, did
7 you...
8

9 Jeannette Marshall: I [quit 17:51] retirement here, yeah.
10

11 Ruth Stewart: [17:52] ...did you work as a nurse anyplace after that?
12

13 Jeannette Marshall: Not after I got out of the service. I volunteered.
14

15 Ruth Stewart: [18:00] You volunteered then? In what way?
16

17 Jeannette Marshall: With different organizations but not as nursing.
18

19 Ruth Stewart: [18:04] Mm-hm. What were your volunteer acts [inaudible 18:06]?
20

21 Jeannette Marshall: Well, let's see, now you've got me pinned down! [laughter]. I'll
22 remember'm tomorrow. Um, well, the WOSL did a lot of different
23 volunteering. We had different sales and things to promote help for
24 different organizations – the blind and the USO downtown [inaudible
25 18:33] and, uh, I remember being in the parades for, um, different events. I
26 had a Mercedes SL with the top down, you know, so that was always a
27 prerequisite and [Terry 18:52] Baker and some of the old ones that were in
28 the high regime then, we would take them up and down with the other
29 organizations in the streets of San Antonio. That was kind of exciting!
30 And, then [laughter], what else? It doesn't sound like there was anything
31 very, very notable now but we thought it was then.
32

33 Ruth Stewart: [19:19] It kept you busy.
34

35 Jeannette Marshall: Yeah.
36

37 Ruth Stewart: [19:20] Any volunteer work is notable. [inaudible 19:22]. Let me go back
38 for just a moment, though. Did you just fly into Vietnam that one time?
39

40 Jeannette Marshall: Yeah.
41

42 Ruth Stewart: [19:29] [inaudible 19:29]? Okay.
43

44 Jeannette Marshall: And it was [after 1931] everything.

1
2 Ruth Stewart: [19:37] Um, what, did you join veteran's organizations aside from WOSL
3 after you retired?
4
5 Jeannette Marshall: The Air Force Nurses. I helped start that; I was on the pilot group that
6 started – there was 11.
7
8 Ruth Stewart: [19:54] Mm-hm.
9
10 Jeannette Marshall: Started here in San Antonio in 19-, it was right after the army started
11 theirs, um, the Society of Retired Air Force nurses.
12
13 Ruth Stewart: [20:07] Mm-hm.
14
15 Jeannette Marshall: Now, and it's national.
16
17 Ruth Stewart: [20:08] Mm-hm.
18
19 Jeannette Marshall: Let's see, that was, you know, sort of interesting to be on that team to get
20 that thing going because we had up to 2,500 members at one time. I don't
21 think it is now but it's still going strong.
22
23 Ruth Stewart: [20:27] Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
24
25 Jeannette Marshall: So, that was [inaudible 20:32]. I didn't join the VFW or any of those. I'm
26 not much of a joiner. [laughter] I had joined the WOSL in '77 and enjoyed
27 all of that. And I was vice president with Doris Cobb.
28
29 Ruth Stewart: [20:52] Mm. Mm-hm.
30
31 Jeannette Marshall: [inaudible 20:55] very interesting group of people.
32
33 Ruth Stewart: [20:58] And still is.
34
35 Jeannette Marshall: Yes. Growing all the time, and I'm glad.
36
37 Ruth Stewart: 21:04] Well, we certainly appreciate this. Is there anything else you'd like
38 to say before we...?
39
40 Jeannette Marshall: No, but I think it's wonderful that they are going to recognize the women
41 in the service and I think the WOSL, especially, you know, not only those
42 in the military [throat clearing], but those in the industry and the USO and
43 the Red Cross...
44

1 Ruth Stewart: [21:27] Mm-hm.
2
3 Jeannette Marshall: ...were recognized and I think we played a very important part. I know we
4 did in, like in Korea, the Red Cross and USO and those were such vital
5 things for those soldiers who we knew [inaudible 21:43] Oh, a consolation
6 winner coming up in support, you know?
7
8 Ruth Stewart: [21:51] Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
9
10 Jeannette Marshall: More so than the medical, I think.
11
12 Ruth Stewart: [21:54] Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
13
14 Jeannette Marshall: Well, that was interesting to be associated with them and hear some of
15 their stories, too.
16
17 Ruth Stewart: [22:04] Well, Jeanne, we really appreciate the time you've taken and this
18 review of your very interesting career in the air force.
19
20 Jeannette Marshall: I'm just very flattered you've asked me.
21
22 Ruth Stewart: [22:13] Thank you!
23
24
25/ab