Kathy Reynolds
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
The Dartmouth Vietnam Project
November 4, 2020
Transcribed by Charlotte A. Driscoll ’21

DRISCOLL This is Charlotte Driscoll. Today is November 4, 2020. It's 9:15am, and I'm conducting this oral history interview for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. I'm conducting this interview via Zoom video call with Ms. Kathy Reynolds, and I'm in Hanover, New Hampshire. And Ms. Reynolds is speaking to me from Woodstock, Vermont. Ms. Reynolds, thank you so much for speaking with me today.

REYNOLDS It's a pleasure. Thank you.

DRISCOLL Thank you. Let's start with where and when were you born?

REYNOLDS I was born in Buffalo, New York. August 7, 1942.

DRISCOLL Do you have any siblings?

REYNOLDS I have two sisters, Barbara [Grande] and Susan [Inchiosa]. Unfortunately, both are deceased. And I don't have any immediate family available to me now. I have plenty of nieces, and grand nieces and nephews. And they're all in western New York.

DRISCOLL Right. Are Barbara and Susan older or younger?

REYNOLDS Barbara is my, was my older sister. She was 13 years older than I. And Sue was three years younger than I.

DRISCOLL Were you all close growing up?

REYNOLDS My sister Barbara was pretty much in college by the time I got around to being social. My sister Sue and I were very close. Because we were living in the same house. Barb was

in the dorm and away from the house most of the time. That was when they didn't have a pandemic.

DRISCOLL Can you tell me a little bit about your early schooling, elementary school. Any memories from then?

REYNOLDS I lived on the West side of Buffalo [New York]. And I went to school at Public School 19. In New York state, they number all of their schools, even in New York City. So, I was at Public School 19. From, not from kindergarten, but from first to the eighth grade. And it was school; I could walk to school. It was kind of fun, had a lot of friends. And then I grew up and I got the choice of going to any Catholic high school I wanted to go to. Mostly because my parents [Denny and Gladys Reynolds] didn't want me running amiss from what we were taught. So, I went to Mount St. Joseph Academy in Buffalo, but they were in North Buffalo. I took the bus to work, to school. Either I took one bus and then walked down Main Street, or caught the second bus, mostly in the winter during the snowstorms. And really enjoyed it. Four years at Mount St. Joe's, played basketball. Volleyball. A lot of ball.

Was a Spanish major. You had three years of Spanish in school and two years of Latin. And languages were my major pretty much. And then I went into the convent. I waited a year because I wanted to be a nurse. And so I went in with a nursing assistant at Sister's Hospital, which is essentially across the street from Mount St. Joe's, and that was a very enlightening experience for me. I worked OBGYN and learned a lot. I learned a lot of my hands-on type of stuff with patients. After that year, I went into the convent again at Mount St. Joe's. It was the mother house of the Sisters of St. Joseph on the other side of campus. I was there for seven years. I actually continued to play tennis, and I continued to play basketball. And, I had good friends, as many friends, as you can in the convent. It's a very disciplined order. Convents are just disciplined. At year six and a half, you start thinking about your final vows, and then what your

occupation was going to be as a sister of St. Joseph. And they had two missions. One was education and one was medicine, nursing. I had—I've always wanted to be a nurse and I was told that I was going to be, my next occupation was going to be the Spanish teacher, the Spanish teacher at Mount St. Joseph Academy. Replacing the retiring Spanish teacher there. And I did not believe in—even then, back then, I just didn't believe that was God's will for me. So I got out. My mother was thrilled. Everyone was thrilled. [Laughter]

And I adjusted. It took me a while to adjust to the smallness of being in a home when you're used to the cathedral ceilings and in the largess of a convent. And I went to, I applied for school, for college, at D'youville College, that's D'Y-O-U-V-I-L-L-E College in, again in Buffalo, New York. But it was, at that time, it was an all-girls school, and it was just getting off. It had a master's program in nursing. And I went there, and they gave me credit for my education at Medaille College, which was the Sisters of St. Joseph college. M-E-D-A-I-L-L-E College. And they gave me credit for that. So, I had one year of credit. So I went into the nursing program for three years. At that time, the Vietnam War was starting to get together. It was in 1968. So, I went into the ... Where was I? At D'youville College. There was a recruiting program by the Army. And, I went into what they call the student nurse program. Which at that time, if you took three years of money in stipends from the Army. A two years of, I'm very sorry, two years of stipends from the Army, then you got to pay back three years of military to pay that back. With my education finished, the war was finally coming up and I went into the Army in 19 --- Actually, I went in in 1967. Went to basic training.

DRISCOLL What year?

REYNOLDS Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

DRISCOLL 1967?

REYNOLDS Yeah.

DRISCOLL Do you remember what time of year you -- when did you graduate nursing school?

REYNOLDS I graduated nursing school in 1967.

DRISCOLL And was there a delay between when you graduated and went to basic training?

REYNOLDS No, unfortunately. Or, fortunately, there was no delay. I did have a long distance friend. So, I met up with her. She didn't – I thought we were going to go together. But she didn't, she didn't pass psych in graduation. So, I went into basic training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas right after graduation. I got there probably around ... Fort Sam Houston around September.

DRISCOLL Perfect. Before we dive into that, I'm really excited to hear about everything. Can we rewind a little bit and just talk some more about your time in the convent and your childhood. Starting off, what was driving your parents' decision do you think to send you to a Catholic school? Did you ... yeah, what was driving your parents' decision to send you to Catholic school?

REYNOLDS I think—I never asked them why that because they were pretty dogmatic. My father was very dogmatic about it. I was very active. My dad was—my mom and dad were bowlers. They were bowled on the same team. I would keep score. My dad was a baseball coach, a hardball coach. My mom would keep score for that. And I was very active with all the guys. We would play football out in the street in front of our house. And you know, and because they always came over, because of dad, and they played hockey in the backyard. You froze over the backyard and they would play hockey back there. So, I was really close to all the guys, and I really enjoyed it. My girlfriends were furious because they didn't

have the same opportunities. [Laughter] And I think that may have driven my father, you know, to say you're going to go to a Catholic school. And at that time, most all the Catholic schools were either women, girls or boys. Now, Mount St. Joseph Academy was directly across the street from Canisius College, an all-boys school. Which was... well, it was good to have a party across the street from me.

DRISCOLL [Laughter] Definitely.

REYNOLDS So I think that essentially was what was driving what drove his decision. He unfortunately died during my freshman year [of high school]. He was our softball coach. We worked in a community softball league, all girls, and he was our coach, our team coach. He had a heart attack. He came back to coach, and he wasn't supposed to. And, he had another heart attack, went into the hospital and died in the hospital.

DRISCOLL Oh, no.

REYNOLDS And, it was a huge loss for me, because he was my buddy. Taught me everything I knew growing up. I played chess. His hobby was tropical fish. So like, like most fathers and husbands, and dads, he went downstairs in the basement and he made all of his big tanks, his tropical fish tanks, raised all of his fish and we never saw him. [Laughter] My mom was a New York Times crossword puzzle expert. So, she worked crossword puzzles, and she knitted and stuff like that. My sister and I were pretty close. So, we sort of hunkered down on the other side of the house. It was a happy childhood. I mean, I lost my father then. My mother had always been a strong woman. And, she did a really good job of taking care of us.

DRISCOLL Yeah. Were you there when he died?

REYNOLDS I was, where was I? Yes, I was at Mount St. Joe's. I walked down to the hospital. At that time, my mother had a strangulated hernia. And she was two floors above my father

in the hospital, in the same hospital. And they wouldn't let my mother visit with him. So, you know, I, my older sister wasn't there yet because she was in... Where was she? She was in Glens Falls, New York. She had married, had one child at that time. She was coming in, my sister Sue was there with me. And we went to see my dad and he was ... Back then they had an oxygen tent. And he was... we had made other visits, not when, only when he died. We would come in after school and visit with him and he was awake and alert. And he ate what he called nothing soup. He was on a salt free diet, liquid diet. And, he was doing well. And then we got the message from the sisters in school. I had the sisters in school, my sister went to a public high school, Lafayette, and we met, and he was dead. And my mom couldn't visit. So, we went and spent some time with him and the doctor. And then the doctor and my sister and I went upstairs to my mom's place, up to her bedroom, her hospital room. And he wouldn't let her, he wouldn't let her see him. And finally, she was so insistent. He actually let her go to the funeral and go to the wake. And we had an Irish wake. And, I don't know if people know what an Irish wake is.

DRISCOLL I'm sorry. I think that connection I've just cut out. Could you just repeat what you were saying about the Irish wake?

REYNOLDS The Irish wake? An Irish wake has a lot of alcohol involved in it.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately one minute.]

DRISCOLL I got right up to when The other women in the convent had... Sorry, in school, when you had just found out that your father had passed. I think, and then the connection went a bit unstable.

REYNOLDS Right and I didn't go, I didn't go. I learned that. So, I walked over to the hospital. It was probably not a big walk. Took the

same walk my dad and I used to take through Forest Lawn Cemetery, which was a great shortcut between the school and my house. So, I walked to the hospital, saw my mom with the doctor. He finally relented, and he wouldn't let her go see him then, but she was allowed to go to the wake. The wake was at the funeral home very close to our house. And there was... I cannot remember the name of it, but there was a restaurant there. And, in the back room... It was an Irish wake. Irishman celebrate death with alcohol. And all my father's buddies were there. All of our neighborhood was there. And, my mom got to come. She came in a wheelchair. We brought her in. She didn't, couldn't walk much. And, she had to go back to the hospital. After that, the funeral was that next day in the funeral home that was essentially maybe, we call them blocks on the west side, three blocks away from our home. And it was, it was packed. Just packed. My mom came. This time she walked. She came in and then sat down. And she walked by, she walked by the coffin, and the casket, and my dad. Someone had put a deck of cards in his casket. And he had Friday nights, they had this progressive. this—Every Friday night one in the poker team would sponsor a poker game. In our house, no one was allowed to be in the living room because the guys were playing poker. So, I mean, it was a good relationship. It was a really tight knit community for me and my sister and my mom. She came home to a community of nothing but wonderful friends. So there.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately four minutes.]

DRISCOLL

Kathy was describing some memories from her father's funeral. First of all the community came together and your mother had left a deck of cards, or one of his friends had left a deck of cards in the casket. And that memory seems to really stick out for you. Can you keep sharing a little bit more about it?

REYNOLDS Well, yes. For me, and probably for—my mother's mother was still alive. And she lived in a place called Williamsville, New York, which isn't far from Buffalo. It's probably maybe 20 miles away. And my sister Sue and I used to spend summers there. And she came. She came to—my sister Barb went out and picked her up, and she came to live with us. So that mom had some support with her two maybe crazy teenagers. And, so my grandmother was living with us. So it was my grandmother, my mother, and my sister Sue, and myself. Barb, I don't believe ... The only time I've ever been overnight with my sister Barbara was when we would go up to Glens Falls. And then, I'd see my nephew Michael and, you know, we would do things. She taught me how to scramble eggs and things like that. But most of the time she had her own family and we really didn't get too much exposure. It was good for my mother to be back in the house and to be back in the community. It was, at that time that the girls, forever. Now, this was, I was 16 years old. And I got—back from the Army on R&R, maybe, well, I was probably 30.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS About 30 years old, and they had continued. They played. They played Pinochle every Wednesday night.

REYNOLDS At my mom's house, and it was so cool. It was just so cool. And they laughed and they had a good time. So, it was the community that got my mother back on her feet. Definitely not this person, because by the time I got out of the convent, the convent, yes, because I had abandoned her. Essentially for seven years. My grandmother was there. And then, when I got out of college... My grandmother died when I was, I think a junior in college.
Yeah, about a junior in college. And then I went into the Army. And then I spent time I had, I had probably two weeks between graduation and then leaving. So there were plenty of parties to say goodbye to me. And, again, a good, a good neighborhood, a good community of friends that I knew my

mother was going to be taken care of. And she was, she was.

DRISCOLL Good. Can you speak a bit about your decision to go into the convent?

REYNOLDS I don't—I, you know, I always felt that that was my calling. I had a, I had a good—one of my teachers, from the time I was in high school, from the—I was a freshman in high school. She was really close. She was my mentor. She you know, 'cause I was kind of a wild gal. She, you know, she kept me grounded. Sister Mary Helen. In fact, I would drive her once I got my driver's license. I guess I was a sophomore then. I would drive her out to her brother's house. Oh my god, don't ask me. I can't remember what I had for breakfast this morning. But he lived in Pendleton, New York, which is probably a half an hour, 45 minutes away. And then he would have lunch for her ready and we would sit down and eat lunch. So it was really a nice family feeling. And so I stayed very close to her all through four years. And then, when I was probably in my senior year, I asked her. I said, "What do you think about me going into the convent?" And she was the one that said I think maybe it would be wise if you took a year off. Because I told her I wanted to be a nurse. And she said that decision won't be up to you when you get in the convent. So, I did that. And I think I told you, I was a nursing assistant and enjoyed every second of it. And I knew that. I would test the waters of the convent. And I was a crazy, I was not necessarily the most sedate person.

DRISCOLL How so?

REYNOLDS I have, there are, what you had to get out of bed and go to bed at the same time as everybody else. It's a very regimented lifestyle. And I've never been very regimented. When it was time to go to sleep, I would be wide awake. So, I would go and I'd sit at the top of the stairs where there was a light and I'd read and then you would hear the stairs creak

down below because there was a mistress of novices. And I get up and have to go back to bed and pretend I was sleeping. And I mean, everybody knew it was me. I mean, stuff like that. And then I get payback because we'd have to go to chapel and pray and meditate. And you would always, we, the novices, took turns leading the meditation. You got out, up in front of the rest of the community, and led the meditation. Mostly, most of the time, it happened right after we were doing the floors of the windows or doing the dishes and stuff like that. So we would unpin our habit, but we didn't have our nun shoes on, we had our loafers on. And so just before that—everyone would be on their knees in the chapel being quiet. And one day, they took my loafers off. And it was my turn to go and lead meditation. So, I had to lead meditation in my stocking feet, which does not make it nice because your habit drags on the floor. So it was a good group of people. And it was a normal group of people, we did what we needed to do. And we had a good time doing it. We had walks, we played tennis, we, they had a thing called collation, so midday we would all go in and eat like a snack of some sort just there would be like some bread and jam or crackers and stuff like that, just a midday meal. It was a good seven years but when I found out that I was going into Spanish and not nursing, I could not take my final vows. And it was a good decision.

DRISCOLL Do you remember when you first realized you had a calling for nursing?

REYNOLDS Probably when my father died. You know, I was surrounded by nuns because the teachers at Mount St. Joe's were all Sisters of St. Joseph. And probably, with that and all of the good graces that people showed me, with— and my friends there as well. It was a really close community, and I was in a close civilian, my neighborhood community. And I thought, I think most of it was being in a community of people who had, likewise, had the same feelings or had the same temperament and stuff like that. But it didn't change me too much. I just figured that that was a good calling. And I was

active in high school. I played basketball almost every day, I played semi-professional basketball after school, and, you know, but I still had that calling. And I think that it was good. It got me a little more regimented than I was, but I don't think the Sisters of St. Joseph were quite ready for me the first couple of years, took some, took some disciplining.

DRISCOLL Do you think that the Catholic high school kind of accomplished what your father was hoping it might?

REYNOLDS Yeah, yes. Actually, yes and no. The Sisters of St. Joseph had Medaille College, which was a separate, on campus, but a separate building, a college. It was three floors. And, it was taught by the Jesuits, which is another issue. [Laughter] I mean, Jesuits have great education. I mean, they're educators. And as well as—I had a Spanish teacher, because that was my major. She was from Cuba, and it was a sister. And she was the best in the world. Just the absolute best. I learned so much Spanish and so much about the language and the culture from her. So in a way, it was another piece of community. And it's, so she and they, the Jesuits, contributed to this closeness of a community. So yes—but I think the deal breaker was nursing. I had to be a nurse.

DRISCOLL That makes sense. So can you talk a little bit more about when you moved back, when you left the convent and moved back home? And what that was like when you started nursing school?

REYNOLDS It was an overwhelming feeling. Because, as I said, the house was, we lived in a big house, but it was tiny compared to living in a community of huge rooms, tall rooms, expansive rooms, wood floors, spotless. Nothing was out of place. And I went home, of course, my younger sister was there. And everything was out of place with her. [Laughter] Everything was out of place. But you know, it wasn't a difficult transition. When I was home, I learned how to drive again, because I didn't drive in the convent. And I had the

family car, and then I got my own car. So that I could go to my rotations in college, my different rotations. And then I, when I started nursing school, I wanted my own apartment. And my mom said, “Okay,” and I had a friend in school. Her name was Mary Callahan. We were in – she was a year ahead of me. And so, she needed to go through rotations as well. And I'm going to talk—I'm going to leave this and then because my dog is up here with me and Okay, he would love to get out of here. Sounds good. Oh, come on.

DRISCOLL Let's go.

REYNOLDS He's my partner. He's my partner in crime.

REYNOLDS Anyway, so we start our own apartment. My mom and my grandmother back filled us. And from that, we both got to go. Mary had her car. I had mine, and we had a place that was a little bit closer to our rotations. Different hospitals, different public health affiliations and stuff like that. And that helped me a lot that helped me transition. I didn't live on campus, but a lot of my friends were there. So I learned—I played Pinochle every night after class. And we, you know, it was a long time ago. You know, we didn't, there were no drugs. There was no alcohol—well, there's alcohol, but not on campus. And we enjoyed each other's company and another sense of community. And, leading myself in this thing, no wonder. I used to tell a friend of mine, I said, “I'm not a joiner.” She said, “Think about that statement.” [Laughter] But anyway, I got through, college was great. College was just fun, good people. I continued playing basketball, semi-pro basketball. I continued, I played tennis, almost every day during the summer. And a lot of things, a lot of fun, a lot of sports, but a lot of education, good teachers. And then I was in the army student nurse program. So at that time, it was generous. About a $700 a month stipend. And then I got all my books, all my classes, all my tuition was paid. And then I finished college, and it was, I still have the pictures of the graduation that, as I was going through pictures, and all the friends and all of the people. It was fun.

DRISCOLL That's special. How old were you for those two years, at that point?

REYNOLDS I was seven and ... six…twenty three ...

DRISCOLL 23?

REYNOLDS 23 or 24... 1967... [Laughter] Is my math... And I graduated in 1967... 58 ... 9. So, I was nine years, I was eight years ahead of my classmates.
In a chronological age. So I was pretty much, I wasn't mentally older than they were. I was, you know, I was chronologically older, but I was surrounded by youth. And younger kids, younger folks. And once I got into the Army, yet again another community, I was with my peer group. You know, so I grew up out of college, and was with my peer group at Fort Sam Houston.

DRISCOLL Lovely. One more question before we talk about the army and basic training, or maybe two. You mentioned you had a friend who wanted to join with you but didn't get her psychology credit. Can you talk a little bit more about her?

REYNOLDS Her name is Anna [Louise] Gerac.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS She's a Cajun, Louisiana, lived in Lafayette, Louisiana, north of New Orleans.
Oh, she—crazy. Oh, she was she was, we were a good fit. We called, she called herself a raging Cajun. And she, I mean, her culture was so totally different than mine.

DRISCOLL Yeah, yeah. I can imagine.

REYNOLDS Southern, the accent, the whole thing. We, she joined us six months later. In Asaka. In the dorm, she had a room where I finagled a room down the hall from me. And we had a great

community there too. And Anna is still probably my best friend. She lives 45 minutes away from me with her partner. And we still remain good friends.

DRISCOLL Good. When did you first meet?

REYNOLDS [Pause] I don't know. I think we met in the mail. we were reaching out to, the recruiter gave us the names of other student nurses that were in the program. And he said you're probably going to be assigned with someone who has to go, who has to be in a three-year program rather than a two-year program. So gave me the names of the graduates in a three year program. And, I think that's how we met. And back then, we never, we never really met. We just wrote letters. And there was no email. There was no Zoom. There was no, there was nothing. So we wrote letters. And [pause] that's all. She said—We— I was going to drive to Louisiana. And we were going to go to Fort Sam Houston together. And I didn't get to do that. So she passed her psych. She came into Japan. Putting this together. Came to Japan. She took an escort, an Army escort, into, she flew into Tokyo and landed. I don't remember when she came, six months after me. And she ... was a raging Cajun. We did everything together, the whole group, our whole floor in the dorm did everything together.

I, we moved from Asaka. We had a group. Did we have a group! [Laughter] We had a group, guys and gals, docs, nurses. There were 18 of us, I believe. And we've moved, they had—the Army had just put up, taken over a place, in a place called Tokorozawa, Japan. It was about 20 minutes away from the post, the army base.

DRISCOLL How do you spell that?

REYNOLDS T-O-K-O-R-O-Z-A-W-A. Tokorozawa, And in Japan, they don't pronounce their Rs very well. I was always "Leynolds." [Laughter] They have a problem with Rs in their language. But I got a car when I was out there, when we were all out

there, we all got situated. And these were studio apartments. Side by each, joined by a bathroom. So, Anna and I called ourselves flush mates because we shared a bathroom. But we all, we both had our own rooms.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS I was deep into music at that time, and we shared everything, I had stereos and everything, and we would open up the door, our doors, all around us so that the rest of the group could, you know, hear all of the music too. We have little bonfires in the evening outside behind us. Yes, there was alcohol involved in that. I pulled out of the tequila club, the worm club as we called it, because we used to drink tequila and you, if you finish the bottle of tequila and actually swallowed the worm, you became a member of ...

DRISCOLL The worm?

REYNOLDS Yeah, there's a worm at the bottom of high end tequila. Don't ask why, I have no idea. Again, because this is Japan. So, we had a really good time. One of the folks was a chaplain. And Father Bill was, he was great. I mean he joined right with us. He was with us every night and every meal. He was with us. No, no collar, no nothing, just a real human being. We had a good time. Because we did, in the hospital, we never saw each other at all. I was in neurosurgery, Anna was in general surgery, which was across—we could see each other and whistle for each other saying "Hey, I got one coming to you!" You know, a patient type of thing. But we never got to work together or see each other, until we got home. All of us.

DRISCOLL And then, so you were working in Asaka and living in Tokorozawa, or did you go live there?

REYNOLDS Yeah.

DRISCOLL Okay, so it wasn't like you were living in Asaka and then living in Tokorozawa?

REYNOLDS No. We moved out of the dorm, and into our little studio apartments, and that was it. We would commute in, go into Asaka, into the 249th [General Hospital in Asaka, Japan] and do our jobs. Now some of us were on 3 to 11. Not, 3 to 11. But 7 to 7 we worked, or 7pm to 7am. And some of us didn't. And it was 12 hour shifts, sometimes after our 12 hour shift, on the day shift, we would go into Leo's, which was in right outside of Tokyo. And he had—

DRISCOLL Who is Leo?

REYNOLDS Leo, L-E-O. It's Leo's, and he had a restaurant. And we had, we would come in and he would have everything ready for us, we would make a call and tell him we were coming in and there would be seven or eight of us coming in. And I had switched my beverage from tequila, 'cause that was boring, to scotch. [Laughter] And I was the driver! And of course it was just fun. I don't think any of us ever got drunk. But Leo was part of the family.

DRISCOLL Not drunk at all?

REYNOLDS Ah, no, because we had like four or five hours before we had to get out of bed again. And, you know, if we were in regular shifts, we wouldn't have to do that. So we had to meet, you know, we had to do it. We had to have our uniforms ready, which means that a lot of preparation is going to work in the Army. Anyway, the community survived and work was difficult. Work... neurosurgical intensive care is ... [there] were two halves, there was a 36 bed intensive care unit, which had very seriously ill patients. Those who couldn't move were in what we call either in a Stryker frame, which is a, it's a platform bed that you put the top on, and two of you turn it so the patient now is on their stomach.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS Head down and taking the pressure off the back.

DRISCOLL Do they turn forward or sideways?

REYNOLDS Sideways, sideways. So it's just a, it's like a flip. It's just a flip. So that, and then that takes the pressure off of them and gives their lungs a different expansion. That was every two hours. Each patient every two hours.

DRISCOLL All 36 of them?

REYNOLDS No, because we had some in beds, real beds. Probably maybe five in real beds, who could ambulate, but had head surgery, spinal surgery of some sort. And then we had circle electric beds. And these went, circle electric beds where, if you're in a bed, there's a frame over the top that you can move around in, if you can move your arms. If you can't, you take that frame and you bring it down. And with a remote, you turn the patient forward, so they're on their stomachs now. The Stryker frame is side to side. The circle electric bed is around, goes around.

DRISCOLL How do you spell Stryker frame?

REYNOLDS Stryker. S-T-R-Y-K-E-R

DRISCOLL And then circle electric?

REYNOLDS Circle, as in the circle, electric bed. And that was every two hours.

DRISCOLL For both types of beds?

REYNOLDS Yeah.

DRISCOLL For every patient?

REYNOLDS And then some of the patients in the beds, we had to physically turn them and put pillows behind their backs. It was a never ending struggle. For 36 patients and we were always full.

DRISCOLL How many of you were there?

REYNOLDS There were six nurses. And four medics, and two docs. One of the docs is usually in the OR, and the other one would make rounds and write reports and write prescriptions and do the daily agenda of care for the patients. And then we had... Go ahead.

DRISCOLL And so were there two, kind of, sets of that amount of people one for neurosurgery one for intensive care?

REYNOLDS Yes. And then the step-down unit which was attached by a utility room. A stainless steel, spotless utility room, I'll tell you about that later. And then the patients in the step-down unit were all bed patients, they were ambulatory. And they were recovering, from usually minor things. Sometimes they couldn't go back. They couldn't go back to war. They couldn't, they did not have the psychological component allowed to go back to war. So they were there. Some of them were recovering from, you know, injuries that were not severe. Some of them were in a sling, most of them were ambulatory. Most of ‘em—

DRISCOLL They were able to walk?

REYNOLDS They walked, that's the only thing that they, that was the only qualification to be able to get into the step-down unit is to be able to walk.
And they had, they could take a pass in the Army, you can get a pass. Because in the Army, everyone has to be accounted for. And so if they want to go somewhere, if they wanted to go somewhere, say they wanted to go to the mess hall, they wanted to go eat, they didn't want to have a tray. Then they'd sign out, say I want to go to the mess hall, and

then they could leave, then they come back in, they would sign back in again. And the difference in the two is that we had total control in neurosurgical intensive care, and no control over 19 and 20 year-olds in the step-down unit, and we were young nurses. And they were at war. And they still had no female component other than the nurses over in Vietnam. So keeping track of them was ... it was like having a butterfly net. [Laughter] You just didn't know what, you had to ask: "Where is so and so?" Because they had a door they could go out.

DRISCOLL Okay, so they would just leave the hospital or?

REYNOLDS They could just leave the hospital. There are no secrets because they're in, what we call pajamas, but they're in blue scrubs and a gown. And so they're—and, no boots. So they're kind of obvious out there.

DRISCOLL I can imagine. Would they go into a store, and walk around?

REYNOLDS Yes, well, they go to the PX. They go to the PX.

DRISCOLL What's the PX?

REYNOLDS A post exchange. That's where soldiers – they can get snacks, they can get socks, they can get a radio, stuff like that. They take money. And it's usually fairly inexpensive. In the VA hospitals. There's a post exchange in a VA hospital. And it's where you meet people too. I mean, yeah, it's a very popular place to meet, that and the mess hall, or what they call now the dining facility.

DRISCOLL Yeah, that makes sense. Do you remember any specific instances, any specific shenanigans?

REYNOLDS Yes, I mean, we were a good group in the ICU [Intensive Care Unit], in the neurosurgical ICU. We were a great group. And we were in the army. So there are always inspections in the army. Always stand at attention. And some white gloved,

officer, big time officer, would come in. Right? Now, we are, we are full of bloody stuff. We are very full of bloody stuff. But our medics were just the cream of the crop. They were great. So we were having this inspection. And they come in, in an entourage. And they introduce themselves. Everybody stands up at attention and says we're about to start this inspection and it's very formal and there's a note taker and stuff like that. So they go through the inspection in the neurosurgical ICU. And then they're going through over to the step-down unit to look at that unit. Right? We have to go through the utility room.

DRISCOLL The stainless steel room you were mentioning?

REYNOLDS The stainless steel utility room with spotless counters. We go through the utility room, and—I still see it—on the counter on the left. One of our chief medics put a bunch of peanut butter on it. And put it down.

DRISCOLL Not in a jar or anything?

REYNOLDS Oh, no, no. Just took it out and put it right in the middle, a large jar of it. All peanut butter with a bedpan next to it. So this officer stops, and he calls the chief medic up. He says, "Sargent? What is this?" And the chief medic goes, "Shit! Sir!" [Laughter]

DRISCOLL [Laughter]

REYNOLDS Our life! His whole entourage just fell apart. He even broke a smile. But that happened so often.

DRISCOLL The officer broke a smile?

REYNOLDS Oh, he was smiling. And then, he got his composure back. Right? He said, "Take care of that mess!" "Yes, sir!" And it was done.

DRISCOLL That's really funny.

REYNOLDS That's how you survived. You know, and I say this, I say this a lot to my partner. And she understands it much better than I because she has spent tours. She's been deployed four times. In Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, and actually went down to ... where did she go? I can't remember it, now, it's gone. It's down in South America , on a medical mission.

DRISCOLL What's her name?

REYNOLDS My partner's name is Lesley [Watts, Col., retired]. And I tell her in this pandemic, I said, "It's awful. It's just awful." And I don't know how people who have never been alone, and never been in the military, have learned how to survive this. And we both agree. Right? We live in it. We have a pod and we're really close to our pod. And last night, we went to an election party, right? The whole pod is there. And ...

DRISCOLL How many people are in the pod?

REYNOLDS The pod has seven people, we had one extra. But he is—just like, two days earlier, tested because he knew he was coming. He knew he was coming because he's the boyfriend of Jefferson. Who is our friend.

His daughter. It's her boyfriend, so Tess and Jefferson are daughter and father. This guy is Nemo. And his name is Nehemiah. And they call him Nemo. He tested so he could come over the house. And he has his little piece of paper showing Jefferson he could come. So anyway, the pod at that time was eight.

And it was—we have, it's probably not part of it. But we have this thing that we do, roses and thorns. It's a game we play. In the army. It's called three up and three down: three good things that happen, three bad things that happen, or good but done better. So we go around roses and thorns. And it gets to Jefferson. And he has to say it because we all believe it. He said his thorn was his daughter, because she

has been very difficult to track down. She travels with a different pod. And that's, it's all her group. And she's really shouldn't be in our pod. But she can't be separated from her father. So yeah, so far it's been safe.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS Anyway, he said and he said, my roses are always the same. It's this pod. It's the laughter and it's the fun. It's the trust. And it's the companionship that's keeping me alive. And it's true! You learn how to function as a team, wherever you are, nursing in, as a student. I mean, you know each other, you know, excuse this, but you know, each other's bowel habits pretty much because you're so close. And it's a survival thing. And this pandemic, we're, as we talked about earlier, with the red zones and the yellow zones, there's really no place to go. We can't get out of Woodstock, without you know, without disobeying the rules.

DRISCOLL Is your partner Lesley, is she a nurse or a different position?

REYNOLDS She is a nurse practitioner. We both have our master's degrees in nursing, minors in nursing administration. She's a family nurse practitioner, but throughout her tours in the military, she's always been a commander. When we first met, we met in the military. At the, we call it the 3-5-2. The 352nd Combat Support Hospital.[1]

DRISCOLL Where is that?

REYNOLDS This was in Oakland, California. We met in California. And we went through all the field exercises there. She was in the medical surgical floor. I was in the intensive care unit. And we did everything, we put all the tents up together. We did everything together, as again, a community, a group of soldiers, and there were like, probably 600 of us. When we would go.

[1] Ms. Reynolds major was nursing, adult health, with a minor in nursing administration. Ms. Watts' major was nursing; she also took her Family Nurse Practitioner boards.

DRISCOLL What year is this, about?

REYNOLDS It was…1991.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS 1991. And she was in med search, then, for a until... Boy, it's hard keeping track of her. Because I was in, I had already gotten out of the active duty Army.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately thirty seconds.]

REYNOLDS I got out of active duty. And then I was a reservist at that time, and she was a reservist. And so we did all of our things, going into the field, doing our annual training, doing our stuff, pretty much again, at the 352. We went off into our own sections and did it in the sections.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS Then after reserves, she, as a reservist, she was tapped for the Gulf War. And she got tapped to be part of an engineering unit. And that was in 1992. A Tennessee engineering unit and they went to Kuwait to set up, to set up... It wasn't a hospital ... They were a detachment of people who were controlling what was going on in Iraq and Afghanistan.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS And they were building it. So she was what they called the battalion surgeon of 6,000 guys. She was actually an administrator, and a nurse practitioner. So she went into the nursing area, the first thing she did was put a package of condoms down on the counter. No one would ever do that.

And that was her introduction to her staff. [Laughter] It was like, because there were females, there were females there. And that was her introduction. And she never once, well—never once ever told me of anything that she had to defend in her unit with a sexual abuse. Out of 15 months she was there, and made good friends. And from that point on, was always a commander. She left there, she went to she came back into the reserves, which they had to for a minimum of two years. And then after her time home, she went to Chester, Pennsylvania to be a battalion commander. After that, she was a brigade commander. These are all medical units, so she understands what's going on.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS A brigade commander and retired from... let me see 1, 2, 3 tours as a battalion commander. Two as a brigade commander. And she started out, when I met her, as a second lieutenant. It's like the very first rung of the ladder.

DRISCOLL Okay, so she went all the way up?

REYNOLDS She ran all the way up to the top of the ladder to lieutenant, to a colonel. And she had to get out of it. Because, again, she ... the president is the commander in chief, and she just could not. She just could not take orders anymore.

DRISCOLL So was that in 2016, that she left the Army?

REYNOLDS No, she left in, what date, what year is this? 2020? She retired last year, after 32 years in the Army. That was it, the end of it. The end of it at the 2nd Med [Medical] Brigade, which was where we both started when she was a second lieutenant. We both started at the 352, which was part of the 2nd Med. Brigade. So she ran a complete circle. It was kind of nice.

DRISCOLL When you first met did anyone know about your relationship?

REYNOLDS I think they, yes. Oh, let me see... She, when we were at the 352. No, no. We both lived, she lived in Sonoma. I lived in San Francisco.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS And we both went to Oakland from different spots. She was recruited across the post by, a teaching unit, the 9th Battalion. And she became the director, the director of medical courses there. She said, she recruited me and said, "Why don't you come over?" And I met the commander and I became the executive director over there because I had the rank. She, as a first lieutenant, became the director of medical courses, which was a huge burden. And she carried it out with the supreme amount of finesse. She could hold her own. We still didn't live together. She was in Sonoma and had her group. But everybody knew of our relationship.

DRISCOLL Yeah. As in your friends or as in your coworkers?

REYNOLDS No, as our relationship, our sexual relationship.

DRISCOLL No, did your friends know? Or did your coworkers know? Or both?

REYNOLDS They knew, but they didn't say a word. Because, in the army, even then. Then, and even now, you couldn't... If it became known, through the chain of command, of your sexual orientation, you would go nowhere on the ladder. Absolutely nowhere. And you were open to being bribed and you were a security risk as well to foreign powers. Because that is not something that the army tolerated. Women weren't allowed in combat. Women weren't allowed to do anything other than nursing and cooking. So, then even with Don't Ask, Don't Tell. It was a Don't Ask, Don't Tell during the Obama – was it Clinton? or Obama?

DRISCOLL I want to say Obama, but I'm not. I'm not sure.

REYNOLDS So, it still wasn't safe. It still wasn't safe. Everybody knew then. I mean we would come together as friends and go out after together. And but, it was silence because no one would go anywhere.

That's the trust that you have in your battle buddies. You have trust, you have to have trust as a team. But she excelled in everything that she did. And she excels now with the VA [VA Hospital White River Junction, VT]. And even at the VA, the VA nurses and staff. They have veteran on the bottom of it, a separate tag saying, veteran.

She doesn't wear one. Because when she sees patients, she wants it to be about the patients, not asking her where she was. So she doesn't even wear it, you know. And she's, as you can tell, I respect her so much. In addition to loving her. She's a good person. And she is a smart leader. Very smart.

DRISCOLL Yeah, she sounds really amazing. Maybe rewinding a little bit back to your service. And then we can also come back to more of the VA stuff and everything as well at the end. But could you tell me a little bit about your basic training?

REYNOLDS [Laughter] Oh, yes, I can. I can most definitely tell you because I was looking at those photos yesterday.

DRISCOLL Oh, perfect.

REYNOLDS [Laughter] It was like, it was so fun. We all came there together as civilians. We had passed our nursing boards, and we were all civilians. And then the first thing you do, they have to give you a uniform. Well, we were nothing we were... I was actually a first lieutenant, because I got rank when I was in school. We went, we had to go to the place that gave uniforms. I can't remember what they call that place, but that you got this armful of uniforms. And boots, socks, t-shirts, hats, the whole thing. So that took all day. And, you know, it was hot in Texas. So we got all of this stuff

up. And then we go back to our dormitories. And it's the first time we know where we are. And this is on the third floor. There are no elevators. Third floor, we are in the dormitories. And so everybody goes through their rooms. And they said, we said, we've known each other now for probably 12 hours. Everybody knows that—We said, "Okay, get your uniform on and come out into the hall." And we had a fashion show out in the hall. And we looked, oh the pictures are hysterical with the caption because back then you captioned it, put a thing on the back.

DRISCOLL Yeah, yeah, yeah.

REYNOLDS "Do you really want to do this?" With boots, we had no idea how to wear a uniform. None whatsoever. So the next morning, we have to come out in this uniform, but we have to go to a particular room and they show us how to wear our uniform.

DRISCOLL Okay, do come out in the uniform before they tell you how to wear it?

REYNOLDS Yes. And that was—

DRISCOLL Interesting.

REYNOLDS That's a very nice word for it. It was, right around now. They call it a Charlie Foxtrot. You know, it's a cluster foo-ey. Charlie Foxtrot. Yes. Okay, all right. But we learn how to use our, how to wear our uniform, our boots, how it's done, right? And so then, we learn, the first thing we did, we go into the lab, because we're nurses. We're going to be used as nurses and used as medics. So we did an active dissection lab. We dissected frogs, we dissected squirrels. Stuff like that to get our hands a little dirty. And that was probably maybe a week, five days. And there we had the weekends off. And then, the next day, the next week, we had to learn how to drill, how to follow commands, you know, like,

“Attention,” and, “At ease,” and “Left face,” and “Right face,” and “About face.”

DRISCOLL What's the left face right face about face?

REYNOLDS When you're standing, I can't do it with my iPad. When you're standing at attention. You stand at attention, you can see my waist anyway. [Stands up and re-enacts] Left face is you turn left, but you have to do it this way. And the right face is just the opposite. You do this way. You don't use your hands. About face, you do a complete circle. About face and you go this way. And you hope not to see the person behind you. Learn these maneuvers. We had never done this before. So the quadrangle where the nurses do their drilling is where all of the male officers have their rooms.
And they all have balconies, overlooking where we're doing the drill.

DRISCOLL Yes.

REYNOLDS Whistling and applauding and laughing. [Laughter] So much fun! You know, it's, you have to laugh because these are professional women. And if you don't laugh at yourself, you won't survive. You just won't survive. And we had, like the guys, we had a drill instructor.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS So, we learned how to do that. It took us a few weeks. [Laughter] And then we went out into the field. They call them, "deuce and a half’s." Those are five ton trucks. And some of the challenges in getting into a truck is the fact that, as women, the truck comes to about here. [Motions to shoulders] The back of it. And you have to get from the cement into the truck. Yeah. With no upper body women, right? The guys –

DRISCOLL You're not allowed to use your arms?

REYNOLDS Oh, yeah, you can use your arms, but your arms are up here.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS That's another laugh. [Laughter] They do it intentionally.

DRISCOLL Really?

REYNOLDS They do it intentionally, just so that you realize that you're not on your own. So it was the—it was in teaching females that you have to be a team. So the guy, the lady, behind you gave you the hands up, you got into their hands, and you got up, then you could push yourself up. And that happened to all of us. And we learned how to do that. And then you sit in the deuce and a half. And they take you out to the field. And this is desert, mind you. Because we're in Texas. And so we're there. And the field, they didn't make us sleep out there. They just took us out.

DRISCOLL Yeah. Did the men normally sleep out there?

REYNOLDS Yeah, they sleep out there. They spend almost all of their time out there. As their basic training is far more rigorous than ours was. We just had to learn how to wear our uniform, military courtesy, and commands. What you do, stuff like that. The other guys had the rocks, they had to go up mountain climbing in 40-pound rucksacks and stuff like that. How to, how to shoot, because officers at that time, and even now, they're only mandated to carry a pistol. They have a holster with a pistol. They can carry an M-16. But most of them don't because you're responsible for it.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS Yeah, that's not good. Anyway. So we go out and there's our drill instructor. We finished some stuff we do. We did go out to the range and shoot our pistols. And that was another hysterical moment. But, because we, and then we learned

how to clean them, which was more fun. And then we were sitting down relaxing after lunch. I think it was after lunch and the drill instructor comes up with this stick. Okay, he's got the stick. Looks like a piece of licorice. She says, “Ladies, this is not a straw. This is a coral snake. Do not touch it. It's poisonous.” But anyway, it was exhausting. We were totally filthy, filthy dirty.

And we got back, we went directly to the dorms, took showers, and that was the extent of our field service.

DRISCOLL And that was one day, going there every day, or?

REYNOLDS Going every day. We went there for the week. We went there for the week. And it was another week away. It's a week, a week. So that's three weeks. We're there for six weeks and don't ask me timelines on all of that stuff.

We eventually learned military courtesy. We eventually learned what it was like to go to the mess hall and how to wear our hats, when to take them off. Stuff like that.

DRISCOLL Did you have any nursing specific training at that time? Or no, since you'd already had that training before?

REYNOLDS No, no. None at all. What did we learn? They had started teaching us some of what the field hospitals in Vietnam were using for their casualties, and I don't know how much civilians know, but you know, that there are, there are nurse practitioners and physician's assistants nowadays, right. That all came from Vietnam.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS Because medics were male. And had to bring the patients back.

DRISCOLL So they went out into the field?

REYNOLDS They went into the field, brought the patients back into the hospital where the nurses would take over. That wasn't efficient enough for nurses. And nursing in the military and nursing in combat is entirely different than nursing in a genteel society. You, timing is so important. So the nurses would go out with the medics.

That's where they learned all their – we did learn first aid. I have a first aid pack and we learned that in basic, but we never used those first aid packs. The medics had them. And, but we would go out with them. We eventually carried a pack. And that's how nurse practitioners and nursing assistants, advanced nursing practices happened. It was thanks to Vietnam.

DRISCOLL Okay, interesting.

REYNOLDS So anyway, we did learn the Stryker frame. Because that's what they used to turn immobile patients. They did not have a circle electric bed because you never could tell, because they were on generators and didn't want to use up the bandwidth of a generator.

DRISCOLL Yeah, yeah, that makes sense. So you trained with, just to learn how to operate those?

REYNOLDS Yes, that's about it. And you know, most of us, you know, I've always been a critical care nurse, and in the reserves I was an ICU nurse. So I taught people on a field ventilator, how to use a field ventilator. Other people taught, we had respiratory therapists, Army, and that taught them how to Ambu, or use an Ambu bag,[2] how to ventilate a patient, how to intubate a patient, and we would do that in the reserves. Tracheotomies, how to trach [perform a tracheotomy] a patient. So, I mean, we had a great education, and we were ready for our assignments.

[2] A bag valve mask used to provide manual positive pressure ventilation to patients.

DRISCOLL Okay. Interesting. Do you remember what your first day was like when you arrived in Asaka?

REYNOLDS It was hot, was very, very humid. It was a long ride, because we landed in Tokyo and they brought us in a shuttle, which was essentially a cameyed [camouflage] school bus.

And we came down. It was a Pan American Airlines. Oh, my God. I still don't remember what I had for breakfast. [Laughter]

Pan American Airlines because they had the contract for the military. The military flights and everybody would come in, and then they'd fly into Tân Sơn Nhất in Vietnam. With, they'd stop in Japan and go that way. Anyway, we came into the airport, got into the bus, took our hats off like good soldiers.

It's a long ride in Tokyo is a very, very crowded town.

DRISCOLL Yeah, "town."

REYNOLDS The joke is the taxi drivers used to be kamikaze pilots during the war, because they could get through this. I mean, you didn't even want to look, you didn't even want to look getting there. But the school bus was pretty good. So we got through the gate, and at the 249, the 249th General Hospital. And they dropped us off at headquarters, and then we had to go and do our Army thing. We had to go in. We met the chief nurse who's usually a full-bird colonel, and stand at attention and salute, and report, report in. We learned how to do that in basic training. You reported in, and then we got our assignments. In the Army, you don't do anything without a set of orders. We got our orders. And we went with an escort to our assigned places. So we went over to, we went, it was across the post over to the neurosurgical intensive care unit in through the side door. And I met the staff and I met the head nurse, Willie. And I met –

DRISCOLL Do you remember his last name, or her last name?

REYNOLDS Nope. Big guy. Big, I'm talking, should not have passed the PT test. Huge. [Laughter] Big Guy. He's from the South, and he was wonderful. He was the most gentle gentleman ever. He was great. As a male nurse in 1968. You figure that out.

DRISCOLL This is April? May? Do you remember?

REYNOLDS About April. I think it was spring because the cherry blossoms were up. So I met them. I met, we had a civilian nurse there, as well. And I can't remember her name. She was great. She was there all two years. And she lived down at Zama, Camp Zama [in Sagamihara and Zama, Japan] which was right down the road from us. And it was where the families lived. Families of the soldiers assigned to the 249th. There was a great school, there was a grammar school there for the kids. Daycare.

DRISCOLL So these are American families that moved their whole family over there during the war?

REYNOLDS Yes. Yes. So there were six of us. But there were, like, between shifts, there were six total, three work the night shift, three work the day shift, and then we rotate.

DRISCOLL In the neurosurgery unit?

REYNOLDS In neurosurgical intensive care, and as well as the step-down unit. And then Anna, when she got here, had to go through the same thing. Report in. And then she was escorted over to the surgical intensive care unit, and go through that whole thing. So it was a meet and greet. Because we had to go find our rooms.

DRISCOLL Okay. Were you, you were assigned rooms, I assume?

REYNOLDS Yes, we were all assigned rooms. But not Anna yet. [Laughter] So we all had rooms. And we were, I was on the

third floor. Actually right next to the telephone. So everybody will go by my room. Doors were always open. You just had to know who we were. We needed to know each other. And because we were essentially not even working together. But we really needed to communicate and explore. Because you still didn't know what was, where the rest of the, what was there. We went to headquarters and we went to our units. And now we're in the dorm. So we were there. And we all met each other. We all decided to meet in the mess hall. And we did almost every night. There was really no other option. We had studio rooms, twin beds, pretty large actually for the army. And then a number of bathrooms in the hallways. And, the people working the day shift tried to be very, very quiet. So that the night shift people could get some rest. So it was kind of quiet in between. We would go over to the O Club, the Officer's Club which was another adventure.

DRISCOLL Was that within the hospital or just outside?

REYNOLDS It was part of the post. We were all, we were all contained in barbed wire.

The 249, it was a warehouse, a Japanese warehouse that the United States government requested and they made it into a hospital. And that's essentially what took so long for us to get there. Because it took so long to convert it. We had no presence in Japan at the time.

DRISCOLL Yeah. So how long has it been operating before you arrived?

REYNOLDS Just.

DRISCOLL At the hospital?

REYNOLDS The Tet Offensive was in '67. And we were there in April of '68. So it was probably, I don't think it was a year old yet. But it was good that they were there ahead of us because they had to open it. We would meet the people that were there first in the officer's club. And that was another community. I

learned how to use chopsticks from one of the best waitresses in the world. And that was another laughable affair. You know.

DRISCOLL Please tell if you like.

REYNOLDS I had more food in my lap, than I had in my mouth. [Laughter]

DRISCOLL Yeah, understandable.

REYNOLDS But today, to this day, whenever I go to eat Thai food or Chinese food, I always have chopsticks. Because it's, it's not a routine. It's because I want to eat it at home. But it feels good to be able to be part of the culture. It's fun. But then the old club used to be our standby. We'd say, okay. We never went to the mess hall at all. So because they had an NCO [non-commissioned officer] club too, and we couldn't go to the NCO club. And the NCO's couldn't come to the O club. It was very segregated.

DRISCOLL Yeah. So did all the women go to the O club? All the nurses?

REYNOLDS Well, there were some female NCOs. And some—all the female officers did, yes. And the male officers, all officers can go to, they could be in the engineering unit, you used to go to the O club. Now it's called, I don't even know what it's called. They don't have Officers' or NCOs' clubs. They all can come together.

They learned in Vietnam. How to keep a team together.

DRISCOLL Do you remember any kind of interesting moments? Like, gender politics, did the men treat, how did the men treat the women?

REYNOLDS I think, I mean, I don't, I dated a guy there almost exclusively. And—Denny Falloni was from outside of Chicago [Illinois].

DRISCOLL Okay. Did you start dating when you first arrived or after?

REYNOLDS Soon, pretty much when we moved out to Tokorozawa where we had a little more freedom. There was no presence of a command structure in Tokorozawa, it was just us.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately twenty seconds.]

DRISCOLL You said you had a little more freedom?

REYNOLDS Freedom. There was no command presence there. It was just us. We had our own O club, because there were only officers out there.

DRISCOLL How many of there were you out in Tokorozawa?

REYNOLDS 17.

DRISCOLL Okay. And how long were you living in the hospital before you moved?

REYNOLDS About—about six months. That was about it. And then word on the street was that they had this new place that was opening up just down the road. So, of course, nurses can get anything. If you're a female in the army, you can get anything, absolutely anything. Of course payback can be a you know what, but you could get anything from anybody. So we got the inside track. And our whole pod got to go. The guys that we met at the O club, you know, the gals that were working, we all got together. I mean, none of us were, as I said earlier, none of us worked together.

DRISCOLL You were talking a little bit about the boyfriend that you had, starting then?

REYNOLDS And we were dating. And I cannot remember any time other than, I mean, it was, everything was platonic. They must, the guys, I know. We had a conversation in the Army. It's called a briefing.

DRISCOLL Who's we? The entire –

REYNOLDS The nurses at Fort Sam Houston, that, some of it is “you cannot date an NCO because you're an officer.” You could not do anything with an officer except salute type of a thing. And so I don't know what the guys got, but we were big. We were really a big base. And there was nothing. I mean, we go to the O Club, and we would drink, and laugh, and cry on each other's shoulders. But there was nothing, there was nothing other than, what you call that, consensual relationships. There was no abuse at all. No harassment, no abuse. And I find that to be so interesting. In this particular climate where that's all you hear about.

DRISCOLL And so we are no instances, kind of, of harassment or anything like that?

REYNOLDS No, nothing. We would, I mean, the step-down–step-down area for neurosurgical ICU. Some of those guys needed, needed a hand, and they did have a bicycle rental. They're not a rental, you could just, you didn't have to pay for it. They had bicycles there. And many times I would go out, and one of these guys’ names was Dave, I still remember because I just saw his picture. Go for a bike ride around base, sit on the bench, they had a pond, sit on the bench. You know, every time an officer or senior officer went by we both have to stand up and salute. And so, you know.But you would do that just to be able to talk to them. Yeah, just to be able to have, they have some female companionship because they just were so lonely.

DRISCOLL Do you remember what you spoke about with them?

REYNOLDS Family. Ask him about his family. Ask him, you know, in our unit, which is probably one of the saddest things that ever happened there, we would get from Vietnam, the cookies that were sent to the soldiers in Vietnam, followed the soldier like, a week later, and came to us. So we had a while of the cookies, and all of the candy and all of the Christmas ornaments and all of the everything that was being sent. Some soldiers never made it.

DRISCOLL Care packages?

REYNOLDS Care packages that never made it. And so it was difficult too when we would get phone calls. See, I lost this in my head when we were talking earlier. When we would get phone calls from attorneys, saying that the wives left back home were divorcing their husbands because of their injuries. Some of them were quadriplegic, some of them were paraplegics. And it was awful. Not one of us wanted, not one of us would speak to them at all.

DRISCOLL Yeah. How did they find out eventually?

REYNOLDS The Red Cross. The Red Cross is very, very active in keeping families aware of trauma, of where their loved ones are. Whether they be in Vietnam, where in Vietnam, they don't know, they just know that they're safe in Vietnam. When it came to being, we called it OCONUS, which means continental United States.

The 249 was OCONUS. It was part of the United States. So they could find out that they were at the 249th General Hospital, and then go into an operator, and then the operator, unknowingly, would send the call to the unit. And I—that stopped probably after the first year, because nobody could take it. But these guys, these guys
wanted to talk about family because they had no opportunity. You know, they couldn't tell the family where they were. They couldn't tell the family anything other than, and this was

all by mail, other than “I'm doing fine.” Well, “I'm doing fine” could have been just a pile of poop. You know?

DRISCOLL Did you take any of these calls from attorneys that wanted...?

REYNOLDS Yeah.

DRISCOLL Did you take multiple? Or do you remember any of them specifically?

REYNOLDS No, I don't. I remember my response. Because, you know, I was an army officer. And this is a civilian.
And I, my response, was typically, and it was a number of phone calls, was typically, "I'm sorry, you're a civilian. And I am in the military. And I am not allowed to give you any information. So please, go back to the operator and ask to speak to the JAG officer." And JAG officers, the army equivalent of a lawyer, military lawyer.

That was, that was when it wasn't the night shift, And I was tired. I said, and then I would say something stupid, like, "Listen, go make some money somewhere else." And just hang up.

DRISCOLL And just do something else. Yeah, that makes sense.

REYNOLDS It was awful.

DRISCOLL Do you remember any conversations you have with soldiers where you have to tell them kind of bad news from home?

REYNOLDS No, I would never do that. That would be a liaison, a civilian liaison, that came out of the American Red Cross. I would be with them. They had the language, and the culture, and the expertise in delivering that type of a message.

DRISCOLL Yeah, that makes sense.

REYNOLDS And normally, they were so young.

DRISCOLL 1:39:52 The liaisons were?

REYNOLDS Well, they were too young for anything happening to family back home. The biggest thing is they would ask about, you know, PFC [Private First Class] so and so. "Is he here?" And, you know, I can say yes or no. Yes, that's alright. I could, because I look in the computer and see well, "No, he's not here," or "Yes, he is here. He's over on blabbity blah place." So, and this would happen mostly in the—no, in both units, in both units. They care so much about their buddies. But you know, with the saying, "No, they're not here." It could be, it could be anything.

DRISCOLL How did you keep in touch with your family while you were there?

REYNOLDS My mother was the best cookie maker in the world. I had chocolate chip cookies about every two weeks.

DRISCOLL Amazing.

REYNOLDS Actually, I still have one of the plastic boxes that she sent them in, in my cupboard downstairs in the kitchen. We talked, we wrote letters a lot. And that was essentially the only way, then phone calls on the phone in the hall. And they were free for me to call and then it was the time difference. And, to me, that was the most important thing, keeping my head above water, to be able to talk to my mother, you know, to be able to talk to my little sister, you know, stuff like that.

DRISCOLL How often did you speak?

REYNOLDS Oh, as long as we wanted. Unless somebody was tapping you on the shoulder saying, "It's my turn." Sort of like when you, what you see in jail. You know, when you see people in the jail and the guy the prisoner behind you is waiting in line.

DRISCOLL Would you speak, how often would you speak?

REYNOLDS Every Sunday. That happened, that used to happen until, every Sunday, until my mom died. We would call home. I'd call. In California, I'd call home every Sunday.

DRISCOLL Nice. Did you speak with your mom or your sister about any of the details of what you were seeing with the soldiers?

REYNOLDS Nope. They knew that I was in intensive care. And with that, they knew that the patients were sick. But there was no detail. I can, I could talk about names. I have this one guy, I'd say. And he is just a real pain in the butt. He does this and he does that. But you have to keep it light because they don't want to worry about you. And you know, and they keep it light on the other side too, because they don't want us to worry about them.

DRISCOLL That makes sense. What do you think are some of the most common injuries that you saw?

REYNOLDS [Pause] Well, it's 50-50. Many head injuries and many spinal cord injuries.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS And most of it was ... The Vietnamese were very creative. Back in Củ Chi [Vietnam]. They, that's where they started digging the tunnels.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately forty seconds.]

DRISCOLL You were talking about that, they started digging tunnels?

REYNOLDS Yes, they dug tunnels that would make the cartels jealous. They, and Vietnamese are small people anyway. They had

everything. They had food. They had, they had food, they had water and I do have. Hang on. My battery is low.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, Ms. Reynolds' iPad began to lose charge, so she joined the call from her computer. This process took approximately five minutes]

DRISCOLL You were talking a little bit about the tunnels and they could survive, kind of fully, in there. They had water and food and everything like that. At the beginning of the Tet Offensive.

REYNOLDS The Vietnamese are—they're tiny people. I mean, not tiny tiny. And they had a mission. They were relentless. Being attacked by an anthill. They would never stop. We would never be, we couldn't fit in the tunnels. Couldn't attack them in there, they would just pop up, and they had guns. They were, they were supplied by the Chinese. And they had guns. They had some rockets. Rocket launchers. But why they all had, why the soldiers all had spinal injuries? I don't know. I don't know. Because—they had, I get my wars mixed up, but they did have things like tripwires. That they would booby trap. And, and they would store all of their arsenals in these tunnels. And I mean you could never see a Vietnamese soldier because they were invisible.

DRISCOLL Yeah. And so what was the, your patients' journey from getting injured in the field to arriving in your unit? Do you know what that looked like?

REYNOLDS They were injured in the field. And depending on where they were, and where the closest hospital was, field hospitals everywhere. But we were only in South Vietnam. The 8th Field Hospital [Nha Trang, Vietnam], pretty much, was right in the midst of it. And so they would, from the hospital, it's a lot like M*A*S*H [Television show that ran from 1972-1983 on CBS]. They would be put into helicopters and be taken to Tân Sơn Nhất Airport, which is on the Vietnamese coast. It's an air force base. And then it would fly from there to Tokyo, attended to by the Air Force nurses. Yes, and then they

came by helicopter. They came to us from Tokyo, and we can pretty much hear them coming in.

But you knew even though you didn't have to, because there was a night shift and there was a day shift. You pretty much knew that you were going to come in a little early.

It's just the stuff that happens. But they, with the brain injuries—most of the brain injuries, where you never really tried to put a brain injury under. You want to give them a sedative.

So they would come in but they're usually in a comatose state. When they got to us, into neurosurgical, you know, if and when they woke up, they would want to know where they were. And, you know, that was a hand-holding time. You know, introduction time. Spines were sedated to keep calm, keep them from moving all around. They weren't, they weren't unconscious. But they were sedated. They would, they were told, if they were conscious, they were told at the other end. "We're set. We're going to bring you to Japan now. You'll be in Japan. Okay. And that's going to be Americans taking care of you." Type of a thing. And then, when they got here, got to us, they would say, we would say, "Okay, you're okay. You're safe now."

DRISCOLL Yeah, yeah.

REYNOLDS I'm going to talk to you as well as–I do not run a veterinary hospital. I have a cat who wants to come in now. Hi. My cat's name is Kiki.

DRISCOLL Hi, Kiki.

REYNOLDS Yeah. Just woke up. Alright, so their journey, usually there's, I've never heard anyone say how awful it was.

DRISCOLL 1:56:05 So didn't they didn't speak of it?

REYNOLDS 1:56:07 No, never. They were just happy to be where they were. The next part of it was, "Am I going to be okay?"

DRISCOLL How long was their journey, just in terms of time, do you know?

REYNOLDS Absolutely. Well, it's across the China Sea. Probably around 6 hours.

DRISCOLL Start to finish?

REYNOLDS Yeah. You know, once they got in the helicopter, and they were still in country, they, they wouldn't rest until they got into the, I think it was a C47, where they were medi-vaced out.

Those are close quarters, close. Those are bunk beds, bunk beds. In a supply airplane. So, if anything, they were just uncomfortable. Because you couldn't do anything.

DRISCOLL What were the sort of criteria for being stable enough to be able to make the journey?

REYNOLDS Oh, well, the first, the first priority is to have beds for the next set of soldiers who are coming. Who are wounded. You had to have the bed space to take them. The second thing is they don't have the facilities to completely treat the patient. They don't have fancy ORs [operating rooms]. They don't have the equipment that requires electricity that won't go off type of a thing.

Ventilators but, you know, if the electricity is off, then you bag them. So the priorities essentially, are those that can be saved. What they call it is those who are "expectant" which means expected to die are last.

DRISCOLL Triage priority.

REYNOLDS There you go. I forgot about it, ski patrol. [Laughter]

DRISCOLL Yeah. My one piece of knowledge. [Laughter]

REYNOLDS I hope you don't have to use those on ski patrol. [Laughter]

DRISCOLL So do I. We, we've done the exercise, but I hope to never have to use those tags. I think my odds, hopefully, are good for that.

What was I going to ask next....Did you... so they would arrive in the hospital stable enough to have made a journey, but like with serious enough injuries that they needed the fancy operating rooms, or at least reliable electricity, operating rooms. What were the sorts of surgeries that they had to go through?

REYNOLDS I'm not, not an OR nurse. But they don't have things like—okay. Ventilators... let me see now. There's a certain piece, if you're if you're wounded. There's a certain piece of equipment on a ventilator that allows you to stay expanded, your lungs stay expanded while they're bringing you in, it's called CPAP. It's with people who have, what do you call that night thing?

DRISCOLL Sleep apnea.

REYNOLDS Sleep apnea. Yeah. Hey, you're good! [Laughter]

DRISCOLL My grandmother's CPAP machines. [Laughter]

REYNOLDS But they don't have that, that component. They use [inaudible]. So yes, if they're intubated, they're going to need a ventilator, that has some more nooks and crannies and accessories than in the standard one. In terms of final—the field hospitals stabilize patients. If you have a spinal cord injury, they keep you very, very quiet. They keep you on a board. They take care of anything they can take care of, but they can't take care of your spine. So they stabilize you, they coordinate with the air force saying, " This one—Can you

take this one?" Depending on how many really critical patients they have on an airplane. They'll put an ambulatory patient in who, you know, has a broken leg or something like that. So it all depends on what the patient needs other than stabilizing. It's like the second phase of medical care.

DRISCOLL That makes sense. Did the types of injuries or the severity of their injuries change over time as the war went on? Yeah, did it change over time when you were there?

REYNOLDS Actually, our patients got, our patients were really compromised, as the war went on.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately twenty seconds.]

REYNOLDS So anyway, our patients got sicker. I believe it's because of the sophistication in the transport. Medics were able to get to the patients. Helicopters were able to get the patients back into the field hospital. Or, if they were already stabilized, they would take them, just take them to, if they had, if they had the opportunity, and they had the order to take them to Tân Sơn Nhất, to the air force base. But I think because of the sophistication of the talent they had over there, the medics, the nurses, the doctors. I think that we got the patient's really, probably maybe even six hours from their original injury. So they're stable. But nobody did anything. You know. They pack their wounds, they tape them up and then they get them out because they need to be out and taken care of.

DRISCOLL The logistics that go into that. I can hardly imagine. When we talked before you told me about one specific story you remember about a boy that, or a man that, came in comatose, and something that happened with him. Could you talk a little bit about that?

REYNOLDS That’s probably my most wonderful—I don't know, I think maybe the peanut butter was the most fun. But this fellow's

name was Jerry, Jerry Politovich. It was a young guy. And strong. Big Guy. Not fat big, but just muscular. Bad head injury and was comatose when he came in. Other things that needed some band aids, but other than that, it was his head. His pupils were fine. Neurologically seemed stable. You know, he took a lot of care mostly because we had to do his PT in bed to keep his arms and his legs mobile. And turned to keep them healthy.

DRISCOLL So he was in—Which kind of bed was he in?

REYNOLDS He was in a circle electric bed. And actually, once we—well then we ran out of, I believe we ran out of circle electric beds, and the ones that were awake and quadriplegic, or paraplegic, needed them so we eventually transferred him into a regular bed and did everything manually with him.

He, oh God, he was with us, probably for, I don't know how long, I want to say it was a long time. I think it was probably a week, maybe a week-and-a-half, maybe. And then I was working the night shift. And all of a sudden there's this howl. And this screaming and this howl. And I thought all of us were going to be incontinent in the nurse's station. [Laughter] We were like, trying to find out where this noise was coming from. Some of the guys over in the step-down unit were coming out too. Here's Jerry Politovich. He got up, arms flailing, screaming, swearing. I mean, like, crazed out of his mind. I said, I turned around and trying to be funny, I said, "Well, we did a good job with his PT, didn't we?" He's all over the place, you know. Finally he calms down a little bit. Hands on hands, you know,

DRISCOLL Is he sitting up or lying down?

REYNOLDS He was thrashing in the bed. Thrashing back forth. But you don't have side rails on the bed. He could have made it on the floor. He was, he finally calmed down, because, actually, some of the soldiers that were in the step-down unit came first and talked to him, soldier-type, talk to him.

DRISCOLL What did they say?

REYNOLDS "Okay, buddy. Everything's okay, buddy. Hey, easy does it now, easy does it," Type of stuff, you know?

DRISCOLL Yeah. Yeah.

REYNOLDS And, you know, they give him a little ooh-aahs type of stuff and give him a good talk. And he settled, they settled him down. Really, really down. So it took a while, it was the day shift came in and he was finally quiet and looking around. Just eyes and a little head movement. And so he said out loud, he said. "Where am I?" That was all. And so –

DRISCOLL Had he asked that up until that point?

REYNOLDS Nope.

DRISCOLL It was just kind of screaming and cursing?

REYNOLDS Oh, yeah. He had a really good vocabulary. [Laughter] But when he said that, we all went over to him, because he was settled. And we had him, actually had him restrained at that time, because we didn't want him out of bed. Some light little restraints.

And we said, "Hey, Jerry, you're in Japan, you're going to be okay."

"Japan?"

I said, "Yes."

"Japan?"

He kept repeating, "Japan,"

I said, "Yes, you're in Japan and you're gonna be okay."

“Am I gonna die?”

“Not on my shift, you're not.”

“Okay.”

“When do you go home?”[Laughter]

DRISCOLL When do you go home? Asking you?

REYNOLDS And when the day shift came in, everybody stood around him and applauded. Everybody gave each other high fives. And it was a win.

I don't know where he is. There are days when I've always remembered his name. I tried really, really hard. When we came home, the Vietnam, the nurses' Vietnam Memorial was dedicated in Washington [D.C.]. And then there was a parade.

All the nurses, all the evac hospitals, all the field schools in Washington, D.C. And we were lined with wheelchairs. It was so deep in terms of soldiers applauding us as we were going by and I had a sign. "Jerry, are you there?"

DRISCOLL Oh, really?

REYNOLDS I couldn't use his last name. "Jerry. Are you there?" But I had no takers on it. But that was a very moving, very, very moving ceremony.

DRISCOLL Were you ever able to kind of find anything about him? Have you looked for a Jerry Politovich?

REYNOLDS I looked on Facebook. I looked on Facebook. I looked on—yeah, because he would be, he would probably be in his 60s now. But I mean, who 60 year-olds, what 60 year-olds –

Wow. I shouldn't say that. That's because I'm on Facebook so, [laughter]

DRISCOLL You never know.

REYNOLDS You never can tell. But I haven't this year. I haven't been there to see if he's, if he's around. There are a lot of military sites that I can still get into. See if he's a member of any one of those groups.

DRISCOLL That would be, I guess, really special if you were able to find him. Were there, what was kind of the normal course of action? Jerry, obviously, was sort of an exception to the rule in terms of what happened, what would normally happen if someone came in a coma in the hospital?

REYNOLDS We would, if there were other injuries, we would take care of them, you know, whether it be a broken bone somewhere, or we had one, a skull injury. But he wasn't comatose, [he] was injured enough that he was having problems with his diction. And he had a dislocated shoulder. And I still remember the bed he was in. One of the surgeons, he was, I don't know, a captain. I think he was a captain. He said, "Here, hang on to this." He gave me a stethoscope, and he got up on the bed, and he put his foot down on the soldier's shoulder. In real life –

DRISCOLL Oh my.

REYNOLDS I was gonna pass out. [Laughter] He relocated his shoulder. And , after the screaming, I mean, not that that's okay. It's not okay, but he was a captain, and I didn't know what he was doing until he started. And then that was the end of that. You have to give somebody some sort of pain medication, even in the military in a combat hospital to put his shoulder back. And then, either the next day or two days later, we put him. He came in, he had the garbled speech. I don't know, almost like a stroke. But it wasn't a stroke. It was just garbled speech. We couldn't do it, we couldn't wait for him to recover

from that, but he was awake. He could not appropriately. And relocated his shoulder and he went out the next day. And that's pretty much what they did. If you stabilize patients, you get them where they belong. Get them home as fast as you can.

DRISCOLL Yeah. And they would fly? Would they fly direct from Tokyo back to the US?

REYNOLDS Yes, they go from Tokyo, sometimes there's an Anchorage, an Alaska stop, Because if you go over the pole, it's a lot shorter. There's a couple [of routes] because, back then the planes didn't have refueling in the air. So they had to, they had to stop at places and get some fuel.

DRISCOLL Yeah, that makes sense. I guess, pivoting now back a little more to sort of social life in the hospital and stuff. You said you managed to get Anna a room near you when she eventually arrived. How did you manage that?

REYNOLDS I sort of stretched the truth a little bit. And I talked to the logistics guy, the guy who does all the planning and everything. And I said, "Listen, we've got, we have two rooms left on our floor. I have a really, really, really close friend, a neighbor friend of mine. We came in together. And she flunked her boards because of psych," I said, "Now she's coming in. And she's coming in, like, tomorrow." I don't know when it was. I said, "Do you think you could get her in one of those rooms?" You have to turn on the sweetness, you know. [Laughter]

He said, "Yeah, ma'am. I think I could handle that." And that was all, you know. I mean, and in the army, you, military people will do anything for each other. Anything. You never burn a bridge. You don't mess with somebody, you know, and if somebody, I asked this guy and if anything, he needs to come back.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately ten seconds.]

REYNOLDS If he needs anything, and he comes to me, it's an IOU. A, “Sure, I’ll do anything I can." And that's how you work, especially when you don't have anything. You know. Between units. I ran out of four by fours. Maybe, I don't know, four by fours. You know, I would call over to the ICU. I said you have an extra box of four by fours. We're out. "No, I don't, but I know who does," type of a thing. You know? Stuff like that.

It really is a, it's great teamwork.

DRISCOLL Definitely. So how did your relationship with Anna evolve once she arrived?

REYNOLDS We played a lot. She was in Tokorozawa.
And well, and that happened only because she was a close friend. Right? My neighbor, actually. We joined together!

And, but she, we were in Tokorozawa. And all of us there just came together. We ate at the O club, you know, every night. And yeah, that was pretty much it. We were, we were battle buddies, but we didn't do too much together. I was dating Denny at that time. Denny Falloni.

DRISCOLL Denny or Danny? Is it Danny or Denny?

REYNOLDS Denny, D-E-N-N-Y. Dennis, we called him.
And so, and he wasn't part of the crowd. You know, he wasn't part of our pod. And, I mean, he'd come over to Tok. [Tokorozawa] And we, you know, drive into Tokyo or something and go to dinner and stuff like that. You know, because we didn't have an exclusive club.

DRISCOLL Yeah, yeah. [Laughter]

REYNOLDS Actually, two of them got married. Not there, but, Ben and Sharon [correction: Bill Wilson and Sue].

DRISCOLL Ben and Sharon?

REYNOLDS They got married in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was from a farm. And he was from a town, and they got married in Milwaukee. And mom and dad put all of us up. They had renovated a barn. Which was like, much better than the dorms. [Laughter] And we stayed upstairs in the barn. There was a bathroom. There was everything. There was a refrigerator. All of us were there.

DRISCOLL The 17 of you?

REYNOLDS All 17 of us were there.

DRISCOLL When did they get married?

REYNOLDS Probably... She had Non-Hodgkin's and had to go home early, had to go home early to get treated for it. It's an automatic medical discharge. So he stayed and then he went, he was due to end his service. He went and they got together somewhere around Milwaukee, but not at her parents' home. They got married a year later. It was so fun having everybody together.

DRISCOLL So at that point, you were all discharged and living in the states?

REYNOLDS Yeah. We were all civilians.

DRISCOLL That's exciting. What were other things that you did, kind of, in your free time when you didn't have work in Japan?

REYNOLDS We, well, Tokyo is a pretty big town.

But around it is, there was, there are a bunch of parks too, amusement parks, fish hatcheries, a lot. They're big on fish,

rice, and stuff like that. We all had bikes, and a car. And we had a friend whose name is gone now [Sharon Jackson], we called her Red, a redhead. It's that breakfast thing again. She had a red Mustang. And we would alternate cars. And some days we would all go to, well, how many of us were off. Some days, we would go to a park, and enjoy, and go to amusements and meet people, and eat vendor food. Sometimes, we take bicycle rides, and you know, go through the rice paddies and stuff like that. One time, and I don't know, maybe it was later on. Maybe it was later on, because it was a weekend and we weren't working. So yeah, may have been later on. We all got over to the east coast and we watched the sunrise. We all watched sunrise with mimosas and champagne and our orange juice. Then played along the way and drove all the way over to the west side to watch sunset.

DRISCOLL Fun. That's a good day.

REYNOLDS Anna and I did spin off. What did we – Oh, we went to, we went down to the, it's called the Inland Sea, on a little day cruise. And we went to Kyoto and stayed in a, I don't know what they call it anymore. It's like an inn but they care for you, you can get a massage. We would go into Tokyo and have facials. Oh, that was so bad. But we go there and then we get back on the boat and then take the cruise down. We finally got down into a Hiroshima and Yokoshima.I get my "amas" and my "imas." We went to Freedom Park. And it's a place of quiet with absolutely nothing but profound silence and respect. Well, here we are Americans, you know, now and you didn't even get a preparatory briefing on this. It was all about as soon as you got there, you were quiet. I'm actually getting goosebumps on myself. Because of the serenity of the place. It's beautiful. And the Japanese people are to this day, the most generous, respectful, cultured people that I know. Americans, they all did this to you, they all bombed you. Actually, even then, some for us, one little girl comes to me and she takes my hand because she can't

talk. Takes me off and it's like a quartz area, all completely, beautifully shined.

DRISCOLL You said this is in the Freedom Park?

REYNOLDS And she takes me over to the trees and she said, "Can I practice my English?"
And I said, "Yes. You spoke very well." Do that. And she said—she thanked me, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you." Mom and dad are waiting for her. And they were applauding or type of thing. I mean, they're just, they're such a wonderful population.

DRISCOLL That's really special.

REYNOLDS In Japan, you, there's no tipping, because then they have to pay you back in some sort of service.

DRISCOLL Yeah, I have a friend who lives in Tokyo and she says she's like, lost her wallet, and in the middle of the big city, it'll come back to her the next day someone will return it. It's just amazing.

REYNOLDS Absolutely. Yeah. I, my fri – Anna, they went back to, they went to Tokyo, she and her partner. They've been together about the same time Lesley and I have. Tokyo and then rented a car, God bless them, and went to Tokorozawa to see what it looked like and went to the 249th which is back into being warehouses. Type of a thing. They did all of that. We, in one of our spare moments. We, all of us, we got the day shift, went up by Mount Fuji. And that was fun. That was a fun trip.

DRISCOLL Definitely.

REYNOLDS It's a, it's a great country with absolutely wonderful people in it. And they ski there too, you know?

DRISCOLL Yeah, I do. I do. Always wanted to go. How do you think the Japanese civilians perceived you all as members of the military?

REYNOLDS That—I don't know, because they are experts at hiding their emotions. Just experts at it. So, I don't know. I would imagine. As nurses we, we thought, we were very comfortable around them. Because they were very comfortable around us. There was no --There was nothing because they are a culture of respect. You know how many families live together? Great, great, great-grandmothers are living together because their unit, a cohesive unit there. We did not feel on at all. And I felt uncomfortable saying that I was going to go there. I didn't know what to expect.

DRISCOLL When you were first assigned to go to Asaka?

REYNOLDS Ahh, yes, there, and but mostly going to a place as spiritual, I'll call it, as Freedom Park. It was, it was just, I didn't know how people were going to treat us.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS In Tokyo. We were essentially in the outskirts of Tokyo on Asaka. We met vendors. We met everybody. I actually spoke Japanese.

DRISCOLL Oh, you did?

REYNOLDS I could actually read it and speak it, but basic, you know.

DRISCOLL When did you learn that?

REYNOLDS Oh, as I went through, as I went through town. And that waitress, the waitresses, the waitress at the O club who taught me chopsticks.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS Excellent English, and helped me with my, with my Japanese. But it was a wonderful, you know, for all of the pain of the brutality of the war. I couldn't have been in a better place than at the 249th. And in Japan. They were, they're very civilized, and very cultured people. In most of our, most of our people at Camp Drake, were Japanese, you know, the people that were making the food, the people that were taking care of everything.

DRISCOLL That makes sense. Did you have ever any patients that weren't US soldiers?

REYNOLDS No, only military, no civilians.

DRISCOLL That makes sense. [Pause] So what kind of happened, what happened with your relationship with Denny?

REYNOLDS He ETS'ed [Expiration—Term of Service]. We went out together for about a year. And then it was, he and he, he got out of the army. He was there for, he was not a nurse. He was an, he was like an engineer. Like in the engineering thing on drawing boards and stuff like that. But he had a two-year tour, and he was gone. No big deal. I mean, we were so busy that, you know, you did everything you could to survive.

DRISCOLL Definitely.

REYNOLDS And that's about it.

DRISCOLL Have you ever connected with him, later when you come home?

REYNOLDS No. It wasn't all that—I mean, I stayed with a lot of people, stayed connected to a lot of people. And actually one of my friends came to visit me in Japan.

He was laughing at me. He taught me how to play racquetball in the states. His name is Dave, David. And he

came to visit. Don't ask me how he got there. No, I flew in but how we got on base. We had a couple of great racquetball games. [Laughter] I beat him, but it was fun, having a civilian on base.

I had an impromptu, an impromptu visit. I dated this guy when I was stationed in South Carolina. At Fort Jackson. His name is John. And he had already had two tours in Vietnam. Behind the lines, he was in special forces. And I was there only like six months, and then I was gone, and he was ready to go back to Vietnam. So I was gone. I said bye to Sherry, my roommate, and then got to Japan, and the next thing I know, I get a phone call from the gate saying, "You have a visitor, his name is John Boland." I stopped, I said, "Okay, tell him I'll meet him at the O club." [Laughter] I knew I needed a support system around me. And, as it turns out, he went AWOL [absent without official leave but without inent to desert] out of the United States. Came to Japan to see me.

DRISCOLL Wow, and you didn’t—you had no idea?

REYNOLDS No, I'd be aiding and abetting a felon. [Laughter] But he wanted to go to Japan, wanted to go to Vietnam again. So, I'm sure it was his PTSD.

Because he’d been there, done that. And he still had it. He still had that adrenaline flow of being in Vietnam. So I, the MP’s [military police] came and got him soon as soon as they heard his name. There must have been a watch list out. But then I had the FBI talking to me and –

DRISCOLL Oh, my. So, he had—when were his tours? Do you know, roughly?

REYNOLDS I don't know. I was in South Carolina for six months. I met him within the first month.

DRISCOLL When were you in South Carolina?

REYNOLDS 19-1968, 1968.

DRISCOLL So before, yeah, before Japan?

REYNOLDS Before Japan? Yeah, I went there right from Fort Sam Houston. I was in charge of a medical surgical unit while they were building the 249th.

DRISCOLL Got it. Okay. Yep.

REYNOLDS And as soon as he met me at the O club, the next morning, he met me at the pool. Don't have—I have no idea. That sync didn't make any sense. But I do know that the MP's came, they took, the folks told me the MPs came and got him out of his barracks and I don't know what happened to him after that. Then, the FBI checked in with me.

DRISCOLL Where was he staying when he came to visit you?

REYNOLDS Wherever. He had a line for everything. He could pretty much BS his way into anything. So, you know, he was in uniform. So, and he was a captain and he could – It was nowhere near the female quarters.

DRISCOLL What were the FBI asking you about? Do you remember your conversation?

REYNOLDS Same thing you asked. "Did I know anything about this?" and, "Did he tell you anything about where he was headed?" "Did he have plans..." But I, you know, in all honesty, I had no idea. Frankly, my dear, I really didn't give a damn.

DRISCOLL Sure.

REYNOLDS I didn't want to be associated with him.

DRISCOLL His problem, I guess.

REYNOLDS Yeah, it is his problem.

DRISCOLL So you were there for two whole years. Do you remember how you felt leading up to when you knew you were gonna leave?

REYNOLDS I was excited to leave. Many of my folks, our tribe, only had a one year duty station there.

DRISCOLL Got it.

REYNOLDS And as nurses we had two [years], because they can't transition nurses as easily as they can engineers. Many of them had already left, and I'd had enough goodbye parties. We had a goodbye party at my –

DRISCOLL For you?

REYNOLDS Yeah. We went to Leo's.

DRISCOLL Oh, lovely. What did you, what kind of food did you have at Leo's?

REYNOLDS Well, we had, what did we call them there? Here they're called shish kebabs. And then different soups with noodles in them. And oh, well, of course, we all had nori. We learned how to roll all of our own sushi. We had nori papers. And that's one of the exercises Leo would teach us how to roll types of sushi. And then, let me see, I think the most infamous thing and you can cut this out of your interview. [Laughter] So I, I was there, and I didn't have to, I was off and I met the day shift there.

DRISCOLL I think right as you said, you started saying the most infamous thing, and then it cut out for a second. What were you going to say?

REYNOLDS You can cut this out if you want. I was not working that day, because I was [inaudible], and I met the day shift at Leo's. We come together and then more than just our tribe,

everybody on the day shift, because I mean, we had a good group of people. And I had, I always drank scotch, right? And Leo was always good. He always had me a glass of scotch, right there, right? Well, I got to the point where, when I told you that we were never drunk, well, this one particular time I took the bottle from Leo and I poured it in the ice bucket. And I was drinking with a straw out of the ice bucket. [Laughter] And I didn't have to go to work the next morning.

DRISCOLL Yep, yep. What was the occasion again?

REYNOLDS My retirement. Yeah, I mean, I got home. Somebody drove me home. I don't remember, I think Anna or somebody took my car back to Tokorozawa. And I was already there. Anyway, it was a great party, I had cake, and I had ice cream, and I had all the food, and lots of—lots of fun. You know, it was a long day. We didn't get out of there ’til like, midnight or so.

DRISCOLL Out of Leo's or out of the hospital?

REYNOLDS Out of Leo's.

DRISCOLL Nice. And it was the night shift and the day shift that were able to be there?

REYNOLDS The day shift and the night shift got there a little, the day shift got there, and the night shift got there probably right around eleven o'clock. Because we went down to 8 hour shifts, then instead of twelve. So, three shifts in, in the five day workweek. That's after two years. So yeah, we were down to a regular rotation.

DRISCOLL Okay, got it. That makes sense. Do you remember while you were while you were in Japan, did you have any kind of conversations about the politics of the war and the overall thoughts on the mission as a whole?

REYNOLDS No. Never questioned what we did. You know, it was all about the soldiers. It was all about making sure we did our job. You know. We never got any information. Media then wasn't like the media now. So we had the radio station “Stars and Stripes,” I think it was called and it was all very matter of fact. Like, you know, like the which war was it? Nothing like, they had the media, the cameras when they were doing an invasion coming up the beach, and CNN was on the beach taking a picture of it. I mean just how did they find out about this?

Anyway, it's, there was nothing political, if anything, there was just fun. And you know, we would learn when the new albums were coming into the PX. And both Denny and I like country music. So we would, first one in line to go grab the albums, you know. And that caused a fair amount of consternation, because the other guys wanted the albums but we'd record them because we had those little baby cassettes. You know?

DRISCOLL Yeah. Definitely. There must have been a fair amount of pride with having it be your album, though, being first in line.

REYNOLDS It was a simple life. It was a simple life.

DRISCOLL What, I guess, now I want to talk about, sort of, life when you got home. It's been almost three hours, if you want to take a quick break, and then ask a few more questions? Or we can keep going whatever works for you?

[Audio deleted: Paused the recording for a five minute break]

We are back recording after a short break. And I'd like to ask Kathy about what she remembers about her journey home from Japan?

REYNOLDS Well, let me see. We had a briefing about the problem in the United States and hating the Vietnam War. And the regulation was always if you're in the military, you always

traveled in uniform. This time, you don't travel in uniform, you go home in your civilian clothes. So that was sort of anticlimactic. It's like you're supposed to be ashamed of what you did.

DRISCOLL How did people react to the briefing?

REYNOLDS I think we, we pretty much knew what was going on at that point, because it was really, a lot of the protests had become violent. And some people being not just injured but killed. And so, we understood it, you know, as good soldiers do. We understand what you're told, but it was difficult.

I do remember ... Because Anna was, Anna was still there. She hadn't, yeah…she's six months behind me. And I flew home with another buddy. And we played Yahtzee on the plane. It's a long ride. [Laughter] It's a very long ride. Anyway, we played Yahtzee. I landed, and we went through Alaska. We got to walk around a little bit, which is always nice. And then later to Travis Air Force Base.

DRISCOLL Okay. In California?

REYNOLDS Yes, around Sacramento. So, it was very quiet. There was no one around because not one of us was from California. And I liked California, I had no idea what was going on, anywhere, but I liked the climate. So I said to Anna, later –

DRISCOLL When did Anna arrive back?

REYNOLDS Oh, no, I'm wrong. I'm wrong. Because I knew I didn't travel with Anna. Anna's mother had a brain tumor.

And Anna had to go back to Louisiana, like two months before I did. And her mother died. So, ah see, that's the reason, I thought... Do you see what happens after 40 years? 45 years. So she was in Louisiana. And I was at Travis. Sorry?

DRISCOLL You were just on the base staying there or?

REYNOLDS No, I was on the flight line. I had to go, you're mandated to go to your home of record, and my home of record is in New York. Go to Washington D.C.

And then check in that's all. So when I, when I got home, I called Anna and said, "I'm home. How are you doing?" Type of a thing, and I said, you know, "Have you thought about going to California?" "Not recently!" So, we actually put together a plan. I went home, my family was thrilled to see me, and I was thrilled to see them. All of them. You know, I wasn't really acclimated to doing anything. I first had to learn to drive on the other side of the road. And I had to [Laughter] I had to get clothes. Because I had been in uniform for two years. No, I had things like shorts and stuff like that, but I had to get adult clothes. But my family was great. You know? They helped me out. It was okay.

DRISCOLL Were they happy with your decision to have gone into the service?

REYNOLDS I don't think they minded me going into the service at all—well they did, but, as long as I was in Japan, and no one was going to kill me, they were okay with that.

They, and they were, you know—my God. My mother was–my friend said that she had a shrine on the mantel. All of my pictures. No, she was very proud of me. And so it was genuine. I got a car. I was dating. Don't ask me where I met Ray. I have no idea where I met him. Don't know! But we had a good time, we had a really good time, I was dating, sort of got the feel of civilian life.

DRISCOLL Yeah. Were you living at home in Buffalo?

REYNOLDS Yes. in Buffalo in my home, my first home.

DRISCOLL With your mother?

REYNOLDS Yeah. She's, she would never leave the neighborhood.

DRISCOLL And what were your sisters up to at this point?

REYNOLDS Susan was, what year is this?

DRISCOLL 70?

REYNOLDS Yeah! It was 1970. Good for you! You have better memory than I do. 70, yeah, and Susan was... she was married. She was married. She was living outside of Buffalo in a town called Tonawanda. Very Indian oriented in the Northeast, as you've probably already figured out. Of course some Indians in Colorado too, I think. Native Americans.

Anyway, so she was married. I don't know how many children she had at that time. I think just one. Because those are my nieces and nephews from that side. And Barbara was married, and where was she? Ralph, her husband was—

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately thirty seconds.]

DRISCOLL Your sister Barbara was married.

REYNOLDS My sister Barbara. Ralph, her husband, was a music teacher. Started out, and he went to, when he was, they were living close to the Adirondacks. Worked at Cornell University. And then, he wanted to get, I think Barb wanted to get closer to family because, you know, she didn't have anyone out there to help her with the kids and stuff. So they, close to back to the Buffalo area. And he took a job at one of the high schools where eventually all of his children went. So they were both married and doing fine. I was home with my mom and my grandmother.

DRISCOLL [Cough] OK.

REYNOLDS Bless you.

DRISCOLL Thank you.

REYNOLDS And so I got settled. I don't think I gave the military too much of a thought. After, I guess, I took about six months off, and I went to work at the VA in Buffalo, which was very, very good for me. Very grounding for me. Made friends there. And then, Anna and I eventually—I think, I worked there for about a year.
I said, "I think I'm going to go to California."
She said, "Well, okay, where do you want to go?"
I said, "I want to go to Stanford."
She said, "Oh, okay." [Laughter]
She said, "Let me know how that works out."

DRISCOLL Have you been in communication this whole time?

REYNOLDS Yes, we talked a lot. Not a lot. I shouldn't say that because I was working and I worked rotating shifts and she was working rotating shifts. She had finally finished her army duty, and she was out and about, working. I don't remember where she was, I should ask her that. But yeah, we continued our conversations. I was—I have to stop playing with the mouse.

DRISCOLL Yeah, it's easy.

REYNOLDS Yeah. What we eventually did was, I got to—I Interviewed at Stanford. I called, made out an application, sent the application in, and came in for an interview. So I flew out, had the interview, and got hired for the cardiovascular [unit] —well, at that time it was the intensive care unit at Stanford. And then, so I said, "Okay," and I had to start. I don't remember the start date. It was in 1971, maybe 2, something like that. Maybe halfway through 71. Anyway, so I flew back home, got my stuff.

Anna quit her job. So I got all my stuff. What I didn't send, and I drove, what we were going to do for Fort Sam Houston. I went in through Louisiana, picked her up, and we drove across Texas and got into California.

DRISCOLL Down, across, up again?

REYNOLDS We did the whole thing. It was fun, though. It was a great way to explore the United States. Just a great way.

DRISCOLL What made you so keen on Stanford, on California ,having not really spent time there previously?

REYNOLDS I think it has, I know it has a lot to do with, I know that Dr. Shumway, Norman Shumway[3] was there. And he was on a transplant program. And I love cardiac nursing. I've, ever since my father died, I've been focused on the heart. So, I liked that, I liked the fact that it had a university attached to it. It's in Palo Alto, California, which is like, at that time was almost like Woodstock [VT].

DRISCOLL More rural right?

REYNOLDS It was very, well it was, it's a college town. I think there was a lot of hippie stuff happening because it was California. So I said, "Let's do Stanford because I had no interest in Southern California." She said, "Oh, okay." So we go to California, we stay somewhere. I don't know. She stayed with friends in, I think it was Menlo Park or something. I stayed elsewhere. And then we found a place. Yeah, we found a place in Menlo Park. It was two bedrooms, a really nice place. So we got moved in. And then she was, I don't remember where she was working. It wasn't working with me. I don't remember. Anyway, we all had our friends. Friends, and you know, they were all in apartments scattered around that area. So that we had a really good circle of

[3] Professor emeritus of cardiothoracic surgery at Stanford School of Medicine. Dr. Shumway performed the first successful human heart transplant in 1968.

people. Then we moved into a five bedroom house, like two years later.

DRISCOLL You and Anna did?

REYNOLDS All of those friends. I mean, we had like, all of us, and we're still friends. I was at Stanford for probably, in cardiovascular surgery, probably seven years, eight years maybe.

And enjoyed cardiac surgery a lot. And moved through, throughout the state of California. I moved to the, to the seashore, which was south of San Francisco. Had a job. Got a job at UCSF, University of California. The medical center there, in the ICU.

REYNOLDS And I wasn't there very long, probably.

DRISCOLL Who were you living with there? Did you move with anyone to Seaside, California, or did you go on your own?

REYNOLDS No, I met, actually my first partner, Ellen [Scarr]. I met her, she was a nurse in—don't ask me where she was a nurse. But she lived in San Francisco with a roommate. And then we moved, we met each other, and then after a while, we found a, we decided to move to the coast. And we did, we did. We bought a house there. I was with Ellen for probably about ten years.

DRISCOLL Okay, so kind of in the mid 70s to mid 80s?

REYNOLDS [Pause] Probably. Probably late 80s. Moved from there to San Francisco. I was waiting for the cardiovascular intensive care unit at Kaiser in San Francisco to get built, and to be opened. That's why I went to UC. So I went there, and I interviewed there. And I spent—I retired from Kaiser, San Francisco. Just a really, really great time in my life.

DRISCOLL Yeah. So you were in Stanford, and then a few—and nursing elsewhere, and then UCSF, and then Kaiser?

REYNOLDS Correct. I took a year off, I took a year off at Stanford. Because I'd been in nursing for a while. I became a baseball umpire.

DRISCOLL Oh, really? [crosstalk] The sports thread.

REYNOLDS I enjoy sports. I spent a lot of time outside. But, I started with men's games. And then started doing teenagers' games. So I spent a year umpiring, much to the jealousy of so many of my friends in my life. But then I returned to Stanford and then went to San Francisco. Then to the seacoast, then to the UC [UCSF], and then to Kaiser.I met Lesley in 1991. And—.

DRISCOLL And you separated from Ellen, for a few years at that point, or?

REYNOLDS Yes, about, yeah, probably around two to three years. And I was in graduate school at that time, and Lesley was in graduate school. She was in Sonoma State and I was at USF [University of San Francisco]. And it was kind of a long distance relationship.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately thirty seconds.]

REYNOLDS Where was I? I met Lesley in nineteen—-1971.

DRISCOLL 1991?

REYNOLDS Ninety-one! And I was in, probably, we had a good time. We enjoyed each other's company. I was living in San Francisco. She was living in Sonoma, the long distance relationship. I graduated from graduate school.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, Ms. Reynolds printer started making noises.]

REYNOLDS So Ellen, and I were living in San Francisco. And we wound up selling the house. And then we divvied up all of the little goods that we gathered in ten years.

DRISCOLL And, was it, did you separate on good terms or?

REYNOLDS Oh, yeah, she's still a good friend. She's still a good friend. You know. She did not, She did not approve of Lesley. Because Lesley came with me to the house because she'd never been to the house in San Francisco. So she came with me, and helped carry stuff and, you know, help with what we were going to offload.

DRISCOLL So you were separated for a while and you sold the house after that?

REYNOLDS Yes. Well, we sold the house while I was in graduate school. Ellen and I were breaking up. So I moved out of the house, to an apartment, a 1, 2, 3 bedroom apartment with Francie [Gunder] in law school. So it was great. I was around the corner from where I was in graduate school, so all I had to do was walk around the corner. It was a really good apartment.

DRISCOLL And what degree were you getting again? Remind me.

REYNOLDS My master's degree in nursing administration.
So, after we both graduated, bought a house in San Rafael, California. And we, our long distance relationship was just a little bit shorter. It was in Marin County. And then after a while, a year later, Lesley bought a house in Sonoma. [Laughter] We were still apart. We both to this day, I have to tell you, Charlotte, to this day, we live in a big house. We live in a very big house. I think I am kicking it. I think I don't know what I'm doing. Now the printer’s off. Anyway. So, we've always lived in a big house because we really enjoy our space. We have separate lives. But you know, we always eat together. We always sleep together, but love freedom.

When was it? 1998. In 1998, I decided I was going to move to Sonoma.

DRISCOLL From Marin?

REYNOLDS From San Rafael. And because I just didn't like the way San Rafael was going. It was a new bedroom community on a commute into San Francisco that was almost unbelievable. It would take me two hours to get from San Rafael to San Francisco. Getting across the Golden Gate Bridge. It was really hard. So we eventually moved in together. To a house—

DRISCOLL In Sonoma?

REYNOLDS In Sonoma. We eventually, uh, she eventually sold that house and we... I had a motorcycle accident. Actually, the almost – it was in 1998, in October of 1998. I almost lost my leg, and was non weight bearing for six months. It was, it was hard. Because for two people who like their space, here I am. She was calling me "Timmy." "Timmy, I have some saltshakers you want to fill." Because I couldn't weight bear. You know, and I had this recliner, and I had the nurses coming in to take care of my leg. And I was in a—it was awful. It was just awful. Because I'm never sick and she took care of sick people at home. And so we both tried our best to come together and do things. And we did. We eventually bought our house together in Santa Rosa. Big house. And, again, met more friends, better friends, good friends, and had a lot of good parties.. So my life was all about being out of the military. And it was okay.

DRISCOLL In Sonoma? Do you remember—so you were in California for almost 30-40 years? Yeah?

REYNOLDS 70 …

DRISCOLL … to 98?

REYNOLDS Yeah [correction: Ms. Reynolds left California in 2001].

DRISCOLL Do you remember—again, rewinding—when, early 70s, obviously, California was kind of a hotbed of social activism and anti-war protests and stuff. Do you remember any of that stuff happening? Yeah, let's start with that question.

REYNOLDS No, when I was in California, I was in the sophistication of Palo Alto and Stanford. It was a very academic arena, and not very political at all. We, you know, you read about what's happening. But I was never involved in any of that. I do have a poster. I have a poster down in the library in the house. And it's a big poster. We call it the war room. Because Lesley's poster's in there too.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS It said, "Women wore more than love beads in the 60s." And it had a set of dog tags. And it, and I love that because, you know. Yeah, just love it. You know. And the other poster I have in my library is the one I got from leaving when I left the 9th Battalion as their commander and it was a poster of Johnny Carson, who was a host of whatever, a night show host. And, he—it was a poster of him. And he says, "Happiness is having two olives in your martini when you're hungry." Two of them, side-by-side.

DRISCOLL Next to the 1960s women dog tags one?

REYNOLDS Yep, yep, yep.

DRISCOLL I'd love to see them.

REYNOLDS They're great posters. [Laughter]

DRISCOLL How did you speak to your—when you first met Ellen and moved in with her, how did your mother react to that?

REYNOLDS Whoa,, that's going way back! My mother, my mother was a redhead. Okay? And a little five foot redhead. My father was six feet. And she's a little five – and she ran my father around like he had a ring in his nose. So my mom was a little Spitfire.

I came home, when did I come home? I came home from something. I was in the States. I was in the States, so it was after the Army when I came home. And I talked to her, and I said, "Mom, I have something difficult to say." You know? And I, I hadn't preached. I hadn't rehearsed any of it, you know? And I said, "Mom, I am gay." And she looked at me, and she said, "Honey. Oh, that, I'm no fool." And that was the end of that. It was done. It was done. I, you know, "Live and let live," is what she always professed. That, and, "I raised my children to get out of the house." She was always a success-minded woman.

DRISCOLL Definitely.

REYNOLDS So if she was, she was good with it. So, yeah, she—

REYNOLDS But actually my first partner partner, she wasn't really, it was my experiment, I think I'll call it, was Toni [Minville]. A Louisiana girl. She was a nurse at Stanford, on the same campus but not in the same building. And I traveled with a bunch of folks in her apartment complex and would always go over to their pool and stuff. And, Toni came home with me once. And, she met Jerry, my sister Sue's husband.

DRISCOLL Okay.

REYNOLDS Yeah, you didn't, you've haven't heard about Jerry. But Jerry was the man. He was the nicest guy in the whole wide world. He built motorcycles for a living. He was, he was a great man. And anyway, he loved Toni, he absolutely loved Toni. He took her for a ride on his motorcycle. He still, before he died, he still talked about Toni. She was, she was a good gal. But you know, you meet all of these people, and you

have them in your life, and you go through different places in your life. Somehow you lose contact with the ones back here—because you're so focused on the ones up here. Going through those pictures was so reminiscent of the life I knew back then. Well, my mom was cool with it, she loved Toni, she loved Ellen. She loved everybody.

DRISCOLL Nice, nice. Did you tell her before Toni or while you were with Toni? Before Toni?

REYNOLDS Before Toni.

DRISCOLL And did you always know do you think?

REYNOLDS Obviously not, no. If I played it by the book, you know, you don't suddenly become lesbian.

[Laughter] That's not a choice. [pause] There is not a, I'll just say, there's not a rock I have not overturned. I have looked up every rock in my life to make sure that it's the right rock.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS And it was the natural, the natural transition was women. It's not that I don't like men, I just, Jefferson. Jefferson is a six three gay guy. Nicest guy in the whole wide world, we hug and we, you know, dance and do all that stuff, and he's all man. Type of stuff. No, he's got three [inaudible], sorry. Jack is in Colorado. [Laughter]

DRISCOLL You said he has three ___. I didn't hear the words?

REYNOLDS Yes, three kids. I thought I said he has two. But those are the two that I'm most acquainted with, because they're on the East Coast. Jack is in Colorado.

But anyway, its a—in California, the only way you could be gay. You would go to a gay bar. And women had gay bars and men had gay bars. And they had bars on the windows.

And it was, it was serious because there was a lot of, that's the only political unrest that I've ever been acquainted with. It was gays. Gays are, in San Francisco, are— it's part of the identity of San Francisco. In the Castro you're comfortable. You can be anything in San Francisco. But, you know, at the beginning of that, the only way that you could act out your lesbianism or your gayness is in a bar. Where you danced, and you had a good time, and you met your friends.
And then eventually, at least in the gay, the lesbian bar that we frequented, I can't remember its name. Pretty soon the straight guys were coming in with their girlfriends. Because they had the freedom to dance as a couple without she being hit on by other men. And other guys came in with their girlfriends. And eventually, we opened the doors of that to make it a general bar, so everybody could come in. And that's how San Francisco became so gay. It was just, it was just... Yeah, the rioting, the police. All of that. The police department is a lot better in San Francisco than it used to be, but there was a lot of abuse going on. Within the gay community, or because of the gay community. No one really wanted the gays to take over San Francisco.

DRISCOLL Was the bar in San Francisco, in the Castro?

REYNOLDS No, no, it was not in the Castro. It was outside of the Castro down on Fillmore.

DRISCOLL Got it. Where you were at, was everyone happy that, this sort of, straight couples were coming in? Or was it, at first, kind of – ?

REYNOLDS No, it was okay. It was okay. You know, it was San Francisco. And I think that was something that, I was just there at the same time, that was what needed to happen.

It just needed to happen. I mean, you know, there are all sorts of cultures in the gay community. You know, especially with the men. There are the leathers, you know, the guys that were leathers, and then there's the drop-wrist guys, you

know. And the leathers are really, really all physical. And it's not unlike anything that's not in the straight community. You know, there's leather in the straight community.

You know, there was a lot of a lot of decision-making and choices to make at that time in San Francisco.

DRISCOLL How so? What do you mean by that?

REYNOLDS No, I didn't say that. What did I say? I said, well, I said there were a lot of decisions and choices to be made.

DRISCOLL Yeah.

REYNOLDS In San Francisco, I don't think I said about how soon, but maybe?

DRISCOLL Oh, no, sorry. How so?

REYNOLDS Oh, how so! Well, I'm sorry, I thought you said how soon.

DRISCOLL No worries, sorry.

REYNOLDS I just happened to be there. I mean, whew— it was, where was I? It was the 80s. 70s into 80s. And I think enough was enough. You know, gay women started to get out of jeans.

They had permission. Maybe it was because of the straights coming in. The permission to be women. And that's the most important part of opening up San Francisco.

It was like, it was colossal. It was the, probably the most important time in my life is to watch all of this unfold. You know, women got to dress like women, and, my God, gay men dressed better than women do. They decorate better than women do. [Laughter] It's really, it's been a wonderful. [Cough] Excuse me. It's been a wonderful lifetime.

DRISCOLL Do you remember any, you were saying there were moments of political unrest. Were you present at any kind of specific instances that you remember?

REYNOLDS I was present. I was not involved. I was present. The one gay bar, the one lesbian bar, before it was opened up. They all had, all bars had, who do you call it? I'll call them bouncers. Just to tell people when the police were seen.

Well, at this particular time, all of a sudden, the door in this place, which was closed—all these policemen came in, barged in with clubs in their hands. And they said, "You are not allowed to mingle. You're not allowed to be here like this." Like this. And I had nothing to do with it. I was like, off to the side. Most of us were off to the side. There wasn't, there was no violence. They just broke in. There was no reason. There was no reason, there's not against the law.

But police departments have changed a lot, throughout the United States, maybe not all of them.

DRISCOLL Yeah, I guess. Recent events. Would you—were you angry at the police for showing up like that?

REYNOLDS No, I was scared. I was scared. But I was not angry. All they did was barge in. Destroy some chairs to make a lot of noise.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately twenty seconds.]

DRISCOLL You said the police came in, destroyed some chairs ...?

REYNOLDS Yeah. And then turned around and left as quickly as they came in. And helped straighten up. We helped straighten up stuff and then got out. I mean, didn't want a repetition. That's the only time. I believe it happened a lot in in the gay bars, the guys.

DRISCOLL Yeah. So this was at the lesbian bar?

REYNOLDS Yeah.

DRISCOLL Is it the same one that you had, that you were talking about earlier that you went to all the time?

REYNOLDS Yeah. I can't remember the name. But I can't remember the bar's name. You see what happens when you remember what you *did* have for breakfast. [Laughter] I can't remember the bar's name.

DRISCOLL No worries. I wonder if it's still there.

REYNOLDS Probably not. It's so developed. Everything is so developed.

DRISCOLL Yeah, the city's definitely changed.

REYNOLDS It's a little like Dartmouth there. You know, UCSF has taken over all of the property.

DRISCOLL Yeah. There's one landlord that has everything.

REYNOLDS What's that Anonymous building [Anonymous Hall]?

DRISCOLL I'm not sure.

REYNOLDS [Laughter] I heard that the other day and I was like, "What the heck the Anonymous building?!"

DRISCOLL [Laughter] Why would you call it that?!

REYNOLDS I don't know.

DRISCOLL Yeah. All I know is I'm woken up every day by construction. And that's okay. [Laughter] That's all really interesting. What would you say was kind of like the biggest, how exactly did the environment… You mentioned that the gay women, were

sort of, it was okay to be feminine over the course of time. Were there any other big cultural changes that happened?

REYNOLDS In San Francisco, there's always a coming out, wherever you are. It depends on the neighborhood, it depends on the people you're talking to. There's always a coming out situation. I think the reality in San Francisco was being who you are. Just being who you are. And, you know, let it be.

It's gonna happen. Just let it be, if you have no control over it, other than just being yourself, something has to change.

If you're comfortable in your own skin, and you're comfortable being around people.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, Ms. Reynolds printer went off.]

Anyway, I mean, so yes, there was some moments of discomfort. Most of it, was like, in San Francisco, there's a Chinatown.

And, very difficult in Chinatown, and staring and pointing and stuff like that.

DRISCOLL If you walk down the street with your partner, or?

REYNOLDS You don't usually, no. It's become better in these days, but even then, there's two women walking down the street, no touching, no anything, just having a conversation. They would look at you. They just would.

DRISCOLL Oh, really?

REYNOLDS You know. You wouldn't dare go into a neighborhood. And that's essentially what Chinatown is, wouldn't just eat, or go into the Italian section. And make a fool of yourself.

People don't understand your culture. You know, you are who you are, if you want to put your hand on someone's back to let them go in first, I do that with Jefferson. And he does that with me. But you know, people, people who aren't very educated have suspicions. They're not comfortable in something that's different.

You just, it's always a coming out. We live in, we're living in, we're living in freedom now. This is blessed, living like this.

DRISCOLL In Vermont, you mean, or just in—?

REYNOLDS In Vermont, I mean, anywhere. I mean, we have new friends who, we—Lesley and I live on a private road. There are four houses. And two of us are permanent. The others are seasonal. And gotten to the point where we met them. Well the two that are seasonal. We met them, now at least two years ago. They live in Indiana. Lesbian couple. They just had their 20th anniversary. They live down the road from us. Which is kind of nice. They found this place. Indiana, they can't do what we do here in Vermont. Indiana is—they can't—they never go out, never go out to eat. If they go out to eat, they go out with family in order to have the support of a crowd.

San Francisco is great. The pod, our pod, we had a vacation last year. We left Boston and wound up in San Francisco, took a car, and traveled throughout California. And stayed at AirBnBs, and I don't know if you know California very well, but I just love it. We went down to Big Sur, Nepenthe [restaurant]. Went swimming, did the Pacific. And nowhere, nowhere was there any—anything but comfort. It was, it was the best vacation we've ever had.

DRISCOLL Nice, nice. Is your pod primarily lesbian and gay couples or?

REYNOLDS Hmmm. No. [Laughter] I've never thought about it. No. One... Jefferson, and Jefferson does not have a partner. He was married to a man. He—and he dates.

Now his daughter, Tess, another pod member, she is here from Thailand because she had to leave because of the pandemic. She was teaching there. She's on her way to Colorado, and why is everybody going to Colorado?! She's on her way to Colorado. Another pod member, Kurt and Sue. Let me see, Kurt has proposed to Sue three times. And Sue has said no, because her daughter is a senior in college. And as soon as Lily finishes. So Lily is a member of the pod and Curt and Sue are. And then, Lesley and I are. And sometimes, oh, and that's Jefferson's son who is up in college, up in Bangor, Maine. And sometimes when he's out of school, he'll be here for Thanksgiving.

DRISCOLL Nice.

REYNOLDS Once he tests, and he's negative.

DRISCOLL Yep, yep. Definitely a consideration this year.

REYNOLDS I know it is, isn't it?

DRISCOLL All right, going back in time, and we'll kind of... So I think earlier, we got up to like 1998. And you had your motorcycle accident.

REYNOLDS Oh, God, yes.

DRISCOLL When did you move back east again?

REYNOLDS I left Stanford—not Stanford! I left Kaiser. I could, I retired from Kaiser. And then, Lesley and I decided that we needed to probably move back closer to home. Back to the family. And I took a job—at that point I, we lived in San Rafael. We lived in Santa Rosa. And I took a job at a hospital that was opening a cardiac program, and they needed a Director of Cardiology to put the two unknowns, and the two hostile forces, the cardiologist and the cardiac surgeon, together. Try to do that. And I was there, just about for a year while we

sold the house and then moved back east and that was in 2001.

DRISCOLL Okay. Got it.

REYNOLDS So, I flew. I flew to the east coast. And we bought a house—we were looking at a house in Grantham, New Hampshire. And we went out to see it, and saw it, and said, we're moving here. So I went out to close the house. I'm Lesley's DPA. In the Army, you can sign both names. I have her power of attorney. So I flew out, closed the house up, got the documentation. While Lesley stayed in California. And then, she came and drove. We had a—I always camped. I'm a camper. A tent trailer. I'll wait 'til you unfreeze until I finish this. [Crosstalk] So we came up with a tent trailer. Came out, and had the dogs, and I met her in Phoenix. It was 114 degrees in Phoenix.

DRISCOLL Oh, my.

REYNOLDS And we drove in, a hot spell all the way across the south. But it was a good, it was a good trip. We met friends along the way.

DRISCOLL When we spoke earlier, you were talking a little bit about how you had some dinner in Hanover [New Hampshire] at some point. Deciding when you were going to move? At the Canoe Club?

REYNOLDS Where do you get this memory from? That was when we, yes. That's when, at the very beginning, going back—we had moved. But in the introduction of where we were going to move back east—she showed, we came out together for her to show me Hanover.

DRISCOLL Because Lesley's connected to Dartmouth?

REYNOLDS She is, she was born in Hanover. Went to Hanover High, went to the Ray School [Bernice A. Ray Elementary School], went to the, did the whole Hanover thing.

And so she was showing me the town and what it was, because I never knew what the Upper Valley meant. She said, "It's the Connecticut River right over there." And, you know, "Oh, the Connecticut River Valley?" "Yes." I said, "Okay." Now I got that education. We were sitting at the Canoe Club, in the window. And that's when I noticed that there were no people of any other color than white in Hanover. And she said, "Well, that's because school's out." [Laughter] I said, "That means that they don't live here."

DRISCOLL Just four years.

REYNOLDS How do you, I mean in California. I truly, I don't see color. I have no idea about color because, California, if you took the mental space to figure out what color somebody was, then you wouldn't have a communication line for them because you're stymied. So, I said, "Well, I know that there's people of color in Buffalo." And she said, "Kathy, do you want to go back to Buffalo?" I said, "No. I don't. My family's there. But it's only a six hour ride to Buffalo." [Laughter] So we moved to Hanover, and that has become so apparent to me. And now, every time in Woodstock. There. Oh, my God. Let me see. No colors. It's all white. But I think I've seen maybe a dozen black people enjoying life being here, not just you know, working at the inn and doing stuff like that. Buying houses, living in houses, and being part of the waitstaff in different restaurants and probably because of school. You know, it's getting there. It's sort of like San Francisco with the gays. You know, it's just a little day late and dollar short, because you have anybody here. Yeah. I think it's true. It's not good to generalize. But probably most black people don't like snow. You know, their culture, and their food is all about easy living. You know, and I love, oh, my God, you could give me, I really wish I was close to a lot of black families

because they eat so well. They eat so well. It's like being in Louisiana. Those people eat so well.

DRISCOLL Did Anna have, was she big into food from Louisiana?

REYNOLDS She, um—and I'll just tell you one way because there's—its going to be very succinct. When I picked her up, I had to teach her how to make mashed potatoes.

DRISCOLL Yeah, that explains it all.

REYNOLDS That said. No, she's big into food. Yes. I mean, she can make a good gumbo now. And she makes a good etouffee. But it's taken some strains to get her behind the stove.

DRISCOLL I know you had sort of some involvement with the VA in White River Junction. What did that look like?

REYNOLDS Well, my provider's there. I go to the VA. And the difficult part about the VA is I have military insu – and I have Medicare. Medicare Part A and Part B. I have a PPO plan from Kaiser as part of my retirement package. And I also have TRICARE for life. The VA does not recognize Medicare. So…

DRISCOLL The VA doesn't?

REYNOLDS Nothing. So anyway. But my, I'm healthy and my provider is there and I enjoy it there because they have a women's clinic now, they opened it, probably, I guess it's been five years now. They have the women's clinic because women were not going to the VA because of all of the sexual harassment they went through in the military. Didn't want to walk through the lines of men. They've had enough of it. Actually, my provider started this women's clinic.

DRISCOLL Got it. Oh cool.

REYNOLDS Part of the hospital that has a separate entrance, and it's very healthy. It's very healthy. Gays and straights and all women can go there. I, you know, I go there only because you know it's hers. But, when she's in the main hospital, I'll go see her as well. When I worked at VTC, Vermont Tech, as an instructor, I took a class of RN students over for a—one of, their instructors needed to have the day off, and I took them over for a couple of weeks. And that was okay, that was great. And Lesley works there.

DRISCOLL At the VA still?

REYNOLDS She—at the VA in White River. She, to stay on top of her business, which is difficult. She works on Wednesdays, like today, as a nurse practitioner and sees patients. But, you know, that's just to keep on top of her practice. She doesn't have the time to do that, but boy, you couldn't get her away from those patients if her life depended on it. She enjoys them. And they're so refreshing and that's exactly what it is that, they're just refreshing, so refreshing when they see that you're a nurse because they know that the nurses, no matter what war they were in. Some of them are for World War II. Definitely Korea. Think about M*A*S*H, you know, “Hot Lips” Houlihan. But they, they, they respect nurses, and they respect women, you know, the older guys do. And it's the Gulf War that has really, really, upset the applecart.

DRISCOLL Got it. So you said you didn't really face any, or see any instances of sexual harassment?

REYNOLDS No, none at all.

DRISCOLL But, has Lesley experienced that in her time?

REYNOLDS Nope. She has defended women. As her nurse, as, her duties in administration in the military. You'd have to go to the Green Zone [Baghdad, Iraq]. She'd fly to the Green Zone by helicopter and go to a trial. For someone who is accusing

a senior officer of sexual abuse, and she would be the proponent, being there. She was an EEO.
What are they, equal opportunity?

I don't know what it is. I can't remember the name for it. But she was the officer in most all of the places that she was. So whether it be a man or a woman, she would be there and have all of the complaints and act as their advocate.

But she has—I'm pretty sure. There are times when Lesley wouldn't tell me anything. There's also times Lesley can't tell me anything, mostly because of her duty assignments. But because I would, I think she would be pretty sure that I would hurt anybody that hurt her. Even though it would only be by tongue. [Laughter]

DRISCOLL I'm sure. The emotional...

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, the Zoom video connection became unstable for a period of approximately thirty seconds.]

REYNOLDS Switching again a little bit. I was looking at the book that you sent me. The Cartoonist Veteran Project, *A Lifetime of Firsts* from the White River Junction center.[4] Looking at your kind of cartoon a little bit, and there was one specific panel where you, kind of –

REYNOLDS You're quick. I have no idea why they put that in there. None whatsoever.

DRISCOLL The one where you were up at night? Which panel?

REYNOLDS The one where I was, which panel is it? That was Jerry [Politovitch]. Hold it, and it was ... Come on, I can't find it. Where the two of us are in bed together. I can't find it now. I don't know where?

[4] Seitchik, Daryl, and Dan Nott. 2018. “I Got Your Six.” In *A Whole Lifetime of Firsts*. White River Junction, Vermont: Center for Cartoon Studies.

DRISCOLL Third page maybe?

REYNOLDS Jesus. Okay, then it's on the third page.

DRISCOLL Second or third? On the right?

REYNOLDS Oh, there it is! Thank you. [Laughter] I see it. I have no idea where that came from, whoever, perhaps naivete from that, from them knowing that it was taboo.

Because I mean, I'm open about who I am, you know, stuff like that. But I have no idea. I saw that, I went, "Oh, dear." [Laughter]

DRISCOLL I wanted to ask also, I think it was you up awake at night, thinking about memories of the war. And I'm wondering if you, kind of, think you had any sort of lingering trauma or emotional difficulties from what you saw with your patients?

REYNOLDS No. I truly believe no. But as you get older, there are moments. And I rarely, I'm rarely angry. Rarely, and there are moments, a snapshot when someone—most of it is a lie. And it would—someone, I don't know. If somebody reflects something that's not real, or something that's not solid, like, giving me a fantasy of who they are, type of a thing.

DRISCOLL They're lying about themselves to you?

REYNOLDS About themselves. And it's like, something happens to me. And it's like, I get angry. I mean, I can feel it. I can feel anger inside myself. I don't do well with that. So, and I have no tact. I say to people, I'll say something like, "What are you talking about?" Type stuff like that. Because I don't want to be angry. And inside of myself, I say, "Who do you want to fool?" You know here I am the most open person in the world. Trying to make yourself into something you aren't. It's just occasions like that. It has nothing to do with the trauma.

I don't think it has anything to do with the trauma of my work with the soldiers. But I have never been that angry. I was raised in a pretty peaceful house and have very peaceful friends and happy people. And people that try to fantasize of who they are or pretend there's someone else. That's not a happy person. You know. And then what do you want to do to someone like that? You want to turn around and walk away. Those are the people that need the help.

It's, it's hard. But yeah, I mean, I don't have any particular occasion to draw from in my military experience. But I was never like that before the war.

DRISCOLL Okay. You never had that anger?

REYNOLDS No.

DRISCOLL Interesting. Yeah. Do you think there's any other ways the time in Asaka changed you?

REYNOLDS Oh, yes. It made me into a grown woman. You know, I went from high school, to being a nursing assistant, to the convent, to college, with nothing but learning involved in me.

REYNOLDS Yeah. And then I went into the army, and I suddenly was responsible. I was suddenly respectful. I was suddenly conscious of people around me, and just of how important they are. And then I got to Japan. And I learned what a team was. I learned what friends were. I learned what trust was. I grew up very slowly.

The military, I owe a lot to the military. I owe a lot to nursing. It's a great job. I don't know about statistics, but it's a great job.

DRISCOLL We'll see, we'll see what happens. I'm sure I'll think of something later, but I think those are all the main topics and questions that I had for the interview. Do you have anything else that you want to add or to have on the record?

REYNOLDS It's, this has been nice. And I thank you. This has been really—it's good for me to be able to talk to a young person, and it's good to be able to reminisce. Just to be able to relive some of those moments.

DRISCOLL Well, it's been great. It's been great to, kind of, on the opposite end to hear about someone else's experience.

[Deleted audio: At this point in the interview, Ms. Reynolds said she would give Ms. Driscoll a ring next time she is in Hanover for about twenty seconds.]

DRISCOLL All right. I'll pause the recording, but we can stay on the call, but to end it off: Thank you so much, Kathy, for speaking with me. This is the end of the interview for the Dartmouth Vietnam Project on November 4, 2020.