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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Doris Allen
Conducted by Laura Calkins
May 11; June 7, 2004
Transcribed by Eunice Lee**

1 Laura Calkins: Well, I'll do a little introduction now. This is Dr. Laura Calkins
2 of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University initiating an oral history interview with
3 Dr. Doris Allen, U.S. Army retired. Today's date is the eleventh of May 2004. I am in
4 the Special Collections building in the interview room on the campus of Texas Tech here
5 in Lubbock, which is actually Dr. Allen's home state of Texas. Dr. Allen joins me by
6 telephone from Oakland, California. Good morning.

7 Doris Allen: Good morning.

8 LC: We've already spoken for a little bit but I wonder if, for the purposes of the
9 interview, we could begin at the beginning. Can you tell me where you were born and
10 when?

11 DA: Ooh, none of your business when I was born. El Paso, Texas, I was born
12 1927 on the ninth of May, which is mother's day. That was yesterday in the time of this
13 interview.

14 LC: So I again wish you a happy birthday.

15 DA: Thank you.

16 LC: Lucki, I want to ask you about your—

17 DA: Let's refer to—you said Doris Allen and then you didn't say that I'm called
18 "Lucki," that might be important.

19 LC: Sure. And you spell it L-U-C-K-I.

20 DA: Yes.

21 LC: Where did that name come from?

1 DA: That name came from a meeting of my sister. Well, we were always some
2 weird together, we were teaching school in Mississippi. She at Alcorn College and I in
3 Greenwood, Mississippi, at a high school. She always did come up and get me and we
4 played music all over the state. But anything she—always something bad would happen
5 to her like the hood of her car would blow up or somebody would steal her car or
6 something really bad would happen to her, but every time something bad happened to her
7 almost immediately something good would happen to me. The kids said, “Oh, you’re a
8 jinx,” and somebody said, “Yeah, but you sure are lucky.” Those incidents came up and
9 like four or five times, you know, really did. They would say, “You’re such a jinx, but
10 you’re a lucky pluck, that jinx ain’t nothing.” That was back in like 1949, ’50 I think,
11 ’49, ’50.

12 LC: Now is that the sister who’s visiting you?

13 DA: No. We’re not—she’s not visiting. We live together.

14 LC: Oh, okay. She lives with you. That’s the sister “Jinx?”

15 DA: That’s the sister “Jinx.”

16 LC: Okay. Does she go by Jinx at all?

17 DA: She goes by Jinx. She goes by Jewel also. Incidentally she was my
18 commanding officer at Camp Sumner in California in 1954.

19 LC: Really? Wow. We’ll have to extract a few more details if you don’t mind
20 about Jinx and her career as well. But maybe you could flesh things out a bit by telling
21 me about your parents. What did your parents do? What did your dad do?

22 DA: My father was a barber and it’s important to say with white (inaudible.) I
23 say that because in back in those days, you understand, there was quite a bit of prejudice.
24 My family—my mother looked Caucasian and she kept telling folks, “I’m not Caucasian.
25 I’m Negro.” They wouldn’t believe her at that time. My father had work to do, my uncle
26 also. I went to school in a regular Negro school with all black kids. We spoke Spanish
27 because it’s in us, and we learned that language. Mother and father were just some
28 wonderful, wonderful people. Mother was a domestic for a moment, mother was a cook
29 and she cooked for some very big folks, brass, et cetera at Ft. Bliss and also for—well,
30 they knew lots and lots of people. Be that as it may. There weren’t many Negroes in our
31 town at the time, but it was, whatever that was, it was okay. It was wonderful. We had a

1 wonderful time. My grandmother lived with us. My other grandmother lived across
2 town, but she was a wonderful lady too.

3 LC: Had your parents been born in Texas?

4 DA: My mother in Yorktown, Texas, right outside of San Antonio there, and my
5 father in Missouri. I don't remember the exact place. He moved to Texas so we were out
6 there.

7 LC: How did his family come to move out to Texas? Do you know the
8 circumstances?

9 DA: I don't know that. We were having so much fun in life. Didn't wonder
10 about it. I know that we're descended from some Richard Allen who started the African
11 Methodist Church, but that's cool water under the bridge.

12 LC: Bishop Allen who founded the AME (African Methodist Episcopal)?

13 DA: Yes.

14 LC: Okay. Was that through your father's family?

15 DA: Through my father's. Yes.

16 LC: Well, Bishop Allen is a very well known figure in nineteenth century, very
17 important man in the evolution of the Protestant church really in the United States.

18 DA: Thank you for knowing.

19 LC: Oh, I do. I actually do know. I had cause to look into his work in the AME
20 church when I was interested in the reconciliation after the Civil War between the
21 Methodist Church and the AME and the figure who was involved, the white leader who
22 was involved in that, his name was Otis Haven. He was an ally of Bishop Allen's. It's a
23 very interesting story of cooperation and reconciliation. Lucki, let me ask you a little bit
24 more about your mom. You said that—was it her mother who lived with you or nearby?

25 DA: No. My father's mother lived with us. My mother's mother lived like
26 across town, but we were always—she was always in our lives. We were always a very
27 close, close, close family.

28 LC: How many children were in your family?

29 DA: There were five children. The oldest brother and then the second brother
30 died. We determined he had aluminum poisoning.

31 LC: Do you know how that came about?

1 DA: Well, we used to use aluminum pots and stuff in those days. I don't know.

2 LC: At what age did he die?

3 DA: I was one. He was six. Then I had another brother, Richard, who has also
4 gone on—Richard, Jr. also gone on—and then my sister. So there were five of us.

5 LC: Okay. Now, let me just ask one more question about your father. He was a
6 barber. Did he have training or did he come by that growing up in the trade?

7 DA: I'm glad you asked that.

8 LC: This is a very important profession for black professionals.

9 DA: His father was a barber. So my dad took his father's tools and went down
10 on into central in San Antonio and walked in with his set of tools. He was just a kid and
11 he walked into the first barber shop and said he wanted to use the barber. The barber
12 looked at him and said, "Well, do you have any training son?" He said, "Well, no but—
13 no." He said, "Well, okay, you take that back to your chair there." My dad said he
14 messed up the man's hair so badly, but because he was nervous. The barber told him,
15 "You get out of here boy." My father went out the door, walked down the street, and
16 walked into a barber shop and said, "I'd like a job." The barber said, "You have any
17 training son?" My father said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Okay, take that back chair." I think
18 he must have been like—I think he was fourteen or fifteen, real young. From that
19 moment on he was a barber. Then he did it on black hair, if you will, of Negroes and
20 then he moved to El Paso and became a barber on white folks.

21 LC: Did he have his own shop in El Paso?

22 DA: Yes, he did.

23 LC: How did he come to get a shop? Where was it located? Do you remember?

24 DA: Yes. Downtown. His first one was located on Texas Avenue, Texas Street
25 at that time, but yes, he owned a barber. He worked a long time and then he—on those
26 people he worked on and I don't know exactly like what time that was, but then he
27 opened his own shop. From the time I knew that my father was my father he had his own
28 shop. Then as he got much older he went to work with another barber in the really heart
29 of town. He was just a few blocks, but by that time he was—everybody called him REM
30 or Mr. Allen. He was friends with—one of his best friends was Tony Llama, the boot
31 man.

1 LC: Really?

2 DA: Yes. AB Pope or ABP Motors, R.E. Lee, which is the biggest contract in
3 town, and all of those folks.

4 LC: Now, were those customers of his?

5 DA: Those were customers and friends.

6 LC: Okay. So he kind of crossed some barriers. He was able to get through and
7 actually have friendships with some of these men as well? That's very interesting. He
8 must have been quite something, and his name was Richard Allen, correct?

9 DA: Richard Allen.

10 LC: Okay. What was your mother's maiden name?

11 DA: My mother's maiden name was Davidson, Ella May Davidson.

12 LC: Ella May. Okay. That's a beautiful name. Did she have—?

13 DA: That's M-A-Y.

14 LC: Ok. As opposed to M-A-E.

15 DA: Yes, because my sister's M-A-E.

16 LC: Okay. Lucki, did she have other brothers and sisters?

17 DA: My brother had—not my brother. My mother had three half brothers.

18 LC: Okay. Did they live down in El Paso as well?

19 DA: No. They never did. They lived in—one of them lived here but the other in
20 California, in Oakland. The other two lived in Jefferson City, Missouri. One of them
21 taught at Lincoln University for many years.

22 LC: I was just going to ask you whether—

23 DA: He was head of the agricultural department.

24 LC: Go ahead.

25 DA: Go on.

26 LC: Was his last name Davidson as well?

27 DA: Hammond.

28 LC: Oh, Hammond. Okay. But he taught at Lincoln?

29 DA: Taught at Lincoln.

1 LC: That's really interesting. So, your family though was quite a happy one it
2 seems. In the material that you sent me you said that you kids didn't really know that
3 you were poor.

4 DA: No.

5 LC: Were you in fact poor now that you think back on it?

6 DA: Was I what?

7 LC: Were you kids brought up, you know, kind of close to the poverty line or
8 were you doing alright?

9 DA: Oh, no. We didn't have any money, but we weren't poor.

10 LC: Okay. I'm with you.

11 DA: No, we—no.

12 LC: Now, you said that you went to the black school, that there were segregated
13 schools.

14 DA: It was only one—there was only one—we could've gone to the Mexican
15 school, but that was not proper.

16 LC: That was not done.

17 DA: No. That wasn't proper. There was no passing. No. We went to black
18 school, which is fine with me. Douglass High in grammar, in fact Douglas Elementary
19 High in grammar, grammar in high, and all the grades were there.

20 LC: They were all—oh, okay. All together?

21 DA: Yes.

22 LC: Tell me about the teaching corps. Were the teachers white, black, both?

23 DA: All black. We had—we were—let me tell you how rich we were. We
24 were—our school is named for Frederick Douglass. We were taught, we were taught
25 Negro history, as you will. Marian Anderson came to the school—

26 LC: Really? Oh, how fascinating.

27 DA: Black people—Countee Cullen, not that one, whichever one was to right
28 that song. Several of the names that I don't remember, but they came to this school, and
29 we learned. Like I said, it's amazing today that we are not taught black history. We were
30 taught like to our, I say, pure bred black history. Phillis Wheatley was—that's our,

1 really, era that we knew who she was, what she did, and the whole bit. So many people
2 don't know those histories now.

3 LC: Yes. It's all having, in a way, to be rediscovered somehow.

4 DA: Yes. It's amazing that they don't, but we did. We had a very rich culture
5 going. My mom and dad, beautiful things that they were, would take us to—like we'd
6 want to go, kids want to go, to Camp Callaway was in town or Duke Ellington or Jimmy
7 Lumpford or the big Count Basie, the big band stuff. Not Count—well, Count Basie was
8 just starting out, but those big guys. They'd come to Liberty Hall. My dad would take us
9 to the dances. So we got to hear all those folks and it was really—we were all there.

10 LC: Now, as you think about it, did those kind of outings where you saw
11 successful African American performers, did that kind of, you know, sort of help you
12 stand taller and walk around in El Paso, which must have been a little tough?

13 DA: No. No, there's no tough in El Paso. There were prejudices but, like, if
14 something would come up we'd speak Spanish with the rest of them.

15 LC: Would you really?

16 DA: Yeah. We didn't have—let me tell you. There was absolutely—but El
17 Paso—I don't know if you know anything about El Paso.

18 LC: Not too much, but go ahead and tell.

19 DA: El Paso was one of those little towns that we had—not many folks like three
20 hundred something, three hundred fifty thousand. It was a small town. Because Ft. Bliss
21 and all the military were there, of course there were prejudices and black and everybody.
22 But oh, yeah. Okay. We couldn't go to—there's one Washington Park. There's a
23 swimming pool. We couldn't go in the swimming pool. We could not use the park
24 except on one day a week. That means on that day was to go to the zoo, that sort of
25 thing. But we were very close. Most of the folks were very close. We all went to the
26 same school. The only thing that—we went to different churches. We had lots of
27 churches. Like I went to the Methodist church, the regular Methodist church, but the
28 Episcopal and the African Methodist church was over in the other part of town. Second
29 Baptist was over on the other side of town. Shiloh Baptist was on a different side of
30 town. So people would, in the areas where they lived, would go to church. But all those
31 other, other events would come up and everybody would go. So, everybody would come

1 to school. We lived on a different side of town to those. We lived more downtown. Like
2 us 1211 East Missouri. So that's just twelve blocks from downtown.

3 LC: Did you stay in that house where you were born? Was that where your
4 parents lived most of the time you were growing up?

5 DA: No. They lived there until my mother's mother gave us her house and
6 property, gave it to my mother and dad when we were still kids. I guess I was eight, eight
7 years old maybe or something like that, seven or eight. My grandmother moved to
8 Arizona because she gave my mom and dad the house and all that property, so that's
9 where we lived.

10 LC: So you had that—was it a bigger place than you had?

11 DA: Oh, very big. In fact, you can still see the house where I was born. They
12 tore down the—I mean they tore down lots of houses and put up a freeway that runs right
13 through there and you can look across, look off the freeway, and you could see the house
14 in which I was born. It's really—my sister went back, sister and I went back about four
15 years, five years ago. We went and really reminisced and had fun, but we still go back to
16 El Paso every two or three years because we still have the homestead property, which my
17 grandmother gave.

18 LC: I see. It's still in the family?

19 DA: Oh, yes. It's still—the family is still there. We use the rental to pay for like
20 burials for my, for my brothers died. We use that money, extra money, for Mom or for
21 the nieces and nephews. It's not a lot of money for income, but its income.

22 LC: But it manages those other things.

23 DA: Yes. Those little things.

24 LC: Lucki, tell me about yourself as a student.

25 DA: I was a terrible kid. I was a terrible, terrible kid. There were only eight
26 kids. I went to school from grammar school, from kindergarten, all the way through high
27 school with six of the same kids. There were only eight kids usually in our classes, but
28 by the time we graduated there were thirteen kids. Three of us went to the same – four of
29 us went to the same college. So that means I was with them a long, long, long time. But
30 I was—I wanted to play. Of course I made high enough grades so that I could be

1 accepted into college. That was high enough. I wasn't thinking about making high
2 enough grades, but I did.

3 LC: So what kinds of things were you thinking about?

4 DA: Oh, I was playing. I wanted to play. I played—wanted to play basketball, I
5 wanted to play marbles, I wanted to play volleyball, I wanted to swing, I wanted to just
6 play. I wanted to run and I wanted to swim. We learned how to swim in the canal and all
7 of that was fun. That's what I wanted to do.

8 LC: You were spending some time at that, huh?

9 DA: Oh, all my time. While my mother was at—while my mother was and Dad
10 were at work my sister would take care of me and when I say take care of me she—I call
11 her my momma a lot, but in fact that still keeps with us. But what she'd do is she would
12 keep me, keep me straight and we cleaned up the house. We just do a lot of things. All
13 of us did things together. We played together. My sister would see that I had chores to
14 do and I'd put the—when it's my turn to do the pots and pans I'd put them under the
15 porch, wash the dishes, had pots and pans under the porch. I got a spanking every day,
16 but that spanking was one of those, “Mm hmm, you know, get a little lesson and spank
17 your butt,” and I think I turned out to be a wonderful little old lady now.

18 LC: You turned out okay.

19 DA: Yeah, I turned out fine.

20 LC: Even though you didn't necessarily want to do the pots and pans.

21 DA: I didn't. I didn't. Mother said, “Where's my skillet?” or blah, blah, blah. I
22 said, “Don't have to tell on me because I know.” Suffice it to say we did lots of
23 wonderful, wonderful good things together. I came up—like in the military—this is to so
24 many kids how they hated their parents or, “Don't talk to me about that bitch,” blah, blah,
25 blah. It just wasn't—it was hard to see. So that was all too a part of my growing up, of
26 my getting more mature as I heard people not liking their parents or not having
27 experienced anything. Like we wanted to—we used to go every summer, my dad and
28 mom would take us to—we spent every summer in Phoenix, in Arizona. Not all the
29 whole summer, but a lot of time in the summer. We'd go to—all the time we'd drive
30 down to San Antonio, but we'd go somewhere all the time together. But I remember we
31 used to see a car with a trailer and we wanted one. My dad went home and built it. My

1 dad built us a boat, a little boat. We wanted to boat. They had just built Ascarate Lake.
2 Three C's, the triple, the CCC camps they built—would that be equal to today's—well,
3 Civil Conservation Corps. You know the kids, they do a lot of work. They still hire
4 them. But anyway they built a lake. So we told my dad we wanted a boat. He said okay.
5 He went down, got some fiberglass, and built us a boat. We didn't have a radio. My dad
6 said okay. He went and got some coil—as a little bitty kid wanted to listen to the fights.
7 He'd get some fights up there, built us a radio. But we wanted to listen to (inaudible.)
8 He had built up some coil together and made us a radio. We had—and Mom and Dad
9 were home. My dad would—somebody's coming after my dad at the home and my
10 mother said, "He's not here right now, but he'll be here in thirty"—whatever time. But
11 he was always there. I learned to shoot pool when I was a kid. Dad would take us to the
12 Oaks Club and it was okay.

13 LC: It sounds wonderful actually. They sound like they really wanted you kids,
14 and I think that makes a difference too.

15 DA: Yeah. I think what it was—you know when that tread of love comes
16 through, it was always there. That's why it's still hard for me to debate to see why men
17 aren't their with the kids. So right now. Mother and dad were always, always, always
18 there. When we moved out here, we moved out here to California. My sister and I, we
19 convinced them, and they came on out and they moved out here to California with us.

20 LC: What year was that?

21 DA: 1963.

22 LC: How did they like out there?

23 DA: Well, it was wonderful. We did things together.

24 LC: Now you're all together again.

25 DA: Yeah. Mom and Dad are gone now, but. Both my brothers were here. One
26 brother was, like stones, salt down, addict. What he would do is he'd come home and
27 like one time he stole our instruments, a clarinet, saxophone, and trumpet. He took it
28 down to the pawnshop, but he brought the pawn slips home, always, always. He brought
29 that pawn slip home and he put it on my momma's nightstand. So we never had to look
30 for it. We always kind of, because you know, put the pawn slip there. He was a
31 wonderful little boy but he would do that, but instead of just taking the stuff and just go,

1 he'd take it to the pawn shop. He cleared himself up in later years and became a senior
2 high school counselor, abuse counselor, in Anchorage, Alaska, wonderful, wonderful
3 man.

4 LC: Wow. And which brother was this?

5 DA: That was my older brother, oldest brother.

6 LC: Was that Richard, Jr. or—?

7 DA: No. That was Robert. Yeah, Richard, Jr. was a mechanical engineer. He
8 graduated from Prairieview and he died at sixty-three years old.

9 LC: Wow. That's too young.

10 DA: Wonderful, wonderful guy. Both my brothers—I just throw this in, this as
11 an aside—but both my brothers like if there were a whole lot of women in the house or
12 whatever or we go to a party, whatever, my brothers never let a wallflower happen.

13 LC: Is that right?

14 DA: You know how some—the ugly school kid girls sit on the side of this, and
15 they never ever let them just sit there. They'd go and say, "C'mon baby! Dance with
16 me." But they were always like that. All our lives they were always like that. They
17 never let anybody feel inferior as far as women, their looks or whatever.

18 LC: They both sound like good men.

19 DA: They were. They were.

20 LC: Lucki, who in the family was, would you say, the guiding force or maybe it
21 was both your parents around you going to college?

22 DA: Oh, both of them. My sister had already gone off.

23 LC: Was it always expected that you kids were going to go to college?

24 DA: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. My mother graduated from Hillston? Huston Tillotson?

25 LC: Oh. Huston Tillotson

26 DA: Yeah. We had that plan.

27 LC: What had she majored in, do you know?

28 DA: I have no idea.

29 LC: Who had gotten behind the project of getting her to college? Was it your
30 grandmother?

31 DA: Oh, her mother. Yes.

1 LC: The fact that both of your—did your sister go to Tuskegee as well?

2 DA: Yes, but she first went to Jefferson City to Lincoln with my—my uncle was
3 there. She called home and told my mom that she didn't want to be there, so she finished
4 that year. She said she didn't like being there with—my uncle had five girls and she was
5 kind of the other girl. Sometimes she said she didn't want to do that.

6 LC: She kind of wanted to be more independent?

7 DA: Yeah. Well, she didn't want—you know when you're the fifth wheel or
8 wheel or whatever, it doesn't work. When she went off to Tuskegee she was fine. But
9 she wasn't, didn't have to prove anything to anybody so she could be in the family. She
10 wasn't kept out because of hatred or anything, but she was just the sixth person.

11 LC: Yeah. Just kind of felt like the extra—maybe not part of the unit. It was
12 already functioning.

13 DA: Yes. Moved in to a group, you know when you move in to a group.

14 LC: That's tough. Yeah. Doesn't always work.

15 DA: Absolutely. She was able to say, "Mom and Dad, I don't want to be here."
16 Mom and Dad said, "Okay." So she came back home. Now, I followed her a couple of
17 years later.

18 LC: How did she decide to select Tuskegee?

19 DA: There was—our coach had graduated from Tuskegee.

20 LC: Which coach was that?

21 DA: He was the—you know when you had a coach at those schools, they had one
22 coach for everything.

23 LC: Sure. So this was a man?

24 DA: Oh, yes.

25 LC: What was his name? Do you remember?

26 DA: Oh, I sure do. I can't think—I certainly do remember it. Oh my goodness.

27 LC: He sounds like he was an influential person though.

28 DA: Yeah. Well, all of them were. Every one of them. We had some wonderful
29 teachers. We didn't have any slobs. No, we didn't have slobs.

1 LC: Well, I guess so. He came from Tuskegee. That's, of course, extremely
2 prestigious. So she went to Tuskegee first and then you came along a couple of years
3 later. What year did you actually enter?

4 DA: I entered in '44. I got put out in the '44 and I went back in '45.

5 LC: Now by "put out" what do you mean?

6 DA: I got expelled.

7 LC: Ouch. How did that happen?

8 DA: I played in the band. We were going across the bridge from Phoenix City,
9 Alabama, to go to play a game in Columbus, Georgia. Somebody offered me—proffered,
10 if you will—that's a good word?

11 LC: Yes.

12 DA: They were proffered a bottle of white lightning as we were marching. I took
13 the bottle of white lightning, kind of sat down low and took a big swig, and I gave it
14 back. Went on across the bridge. When we got back to Tuskegee, back to school, I had
15 been turned in by a fellow trumpet player, Haddie, whatever her name was, but I had
16 been turned in. She was a fellow trumpet player and a fellow basketball player. We were
17 in physical education together. That's what I made with my major. She had turned me in
18 and she was—well, I can see it now. Turned me in. But anyway I got suspended and I
19 went home and mother talked to the men. I don't know what she told them, but she wrote
20 them back and said—she must've told them I was a pretty good girl so I was allowed to
21 return. So I returned, I think, in the summer. I guess. Whenever that was. I graduated in
22 1949. I had a very bad average. I even had to take—I did—I took remedial math.

23 LC: Well, you weren't the only one. You know that, right?

24 DA: Yeah. Well, but I did really good. I got serious after that. I was serious
25 enough to graduate.

26 LC: Sure. Now, Tuskegee, can you describe what you remember about it during
27 the late years of the war? This would be very interesting to a number of people, maybe
28 who don't have an interest in Vietnam, but were interested in Tuskegee and what it was
29 like to be there during the war. Can you talk about that for a minute?

1 DA: The war was over 1945 so I wasn't there for the war, but I was there for a
2 couple of things. George Washington Carver had just died. My sister got to meet him
3 and all that.

4 LC: Is that right?

5 DA: Oh, yes. We went to—we spent a lot of time in his lab at Tuskegee and I
6 saw how he grew these wonderful, big, monstrous vegetables and stuff. I was able to,
7 when I got to Japan, and I saw these wonderful big, big vegetables that they were
8 growing. Then I knew why they were so big because there was some urine compound to
9 grow a lot of these monstrous vegetables.

10 LC: Right, to fertilize them. Uh-huh.

11 DA: Because they used the honey pots in Japan. I think, as I thought about that's
12 one of the reasons that they did not use a lot of Carver's inventions, if you will, his ideas,
13 because he did use human fertilizer. But wonderful, beautiful vegetables and everything.
14 I thought about, well, they eat them in Japan why not eat them here? We could feed
15 many more people and wow. But we Americans are something.

16 LC: We got some cultural thing.

17 DA: Oh, thank you. So let's go back to Tuskegee. We wore uniforms to vesper
18 and for Sunday. Everybody had to wear uniforms, and uniforms were good. I became,
19 incidentally, the bugler so I didn't have to march. So I'd go over and get my trumpet, go
20 and be the bugler for—because you always get called to church on Sunday and called to
21 church on Wednesday, vesper services. So that time that was good. I was on the
22 basketball team, had a good time, had a wonderful time. I was in the shadow of my sister
23 because she's such a terrific basketball player.

24 LC: She was good too, huh?

25 DA: Oh. She's very short, but she could stand out here and shoot and the ball
26 would go in. She'd shoot really good. We had some good years at Tuskegee. But
27 wearing that uniform, my sister and I would come home on vacation or whatever and
28 we'd wear our uniform. Because of the prejudice we had to catch a train to Chehaw,
29 Alabama, which is outside Tuskegee. We'd go catch the plane. We'd wear our uniforms
30 and go to the—it was a blue military looking uniform with a cap, the whole bit. We
31 looked really good in them. If we would get on a train we were with a lot of kids from

1 Tuskegee and they'd get off at their various places. When we got to, I guess, like in New
2 Orleans we had people who were going to San Antonio or to wherever. What we could
3 do is she and I would sit on the train and we would sit in the other compartments, in the
4 other train, not with the black folks. This was a matter of protection. It was a matter
5 of—they seated us—the war was just like winding down, but there was still the war. The
6 Red Cross and stuff in that time, in '44, '45, war was just winding down then. It wasn't
7 over, just winding down. But the Red Cross would come up and we didn't speak to
8 anybody. We spoke Spanish in case anybody asked us to go to the back, but we got
9 the—Red Cross would come up and just give us sandwiches and they never gave it to the
10 black folks, never, ever, ever.

11 LC: Lucki, when you say it was a matter of protection, what do you mean?

12 DA: Well, it was a matter of—my sister and I, young, traveling alone on the
13 train. Back in those days you don't—it was kind of just easier to travel on the train with
14 some better accommodations for that long trip.

15 LC: Things were more controlled up in the—?

16 DA: No. It wasn't even a matter of control or anything. There was—though the
17 restroom on the—it was up in the, I don't even remember now it's been so long. But if
18 the coach was full then there was no place to sit. There were a lot of prejudices that I
19 can't even bring them up anymore. In fact they have a sign downstairs that says, "For
20 colored only." That's one of those lettered signs that, and it's still up downstairs, but I
21 took it off the train. But even if they said, even if we had to all sit in the same coach that
22 was okay, but if the coach was full then we couldn't get a seat so we moved, instead of
23 moving side up, we could move all the way up. We'd get off the train—and it wasn't that
24 we weren't trying to be black or anything, it was self-survival. It was survival.

25 LC: Right. You're two young girls traveling alone and anything can happen.

26 DA: Two young cute girls, I'm not being funny.

27 LC: No, I get you.

28 DA: Two, young, cute girls with long hair and really good looking, two good
29 looking little women. It was just a matter of—

30 LC: Being safe.

1 DA: Yes. Mother and Dad always told us that was okay. We don't play that.
2 Like many times my mother could have passed for whatever. But going back to
3 Tuskegee, my boyfriend was a Tuskegee airman.

4 LC: What was his name?

5 DA: (Information removed per interviewee's request) I can't even remember his
6 first name right now and then another Tuskegee airman, my very good, good, good
7 friend, who died a couple years ago in an accident, Willis Stheon, S-T-H-E-O-N. But I
8 knew quite a few of them, but I've forgotten their names and stuff.

9 LC: How were those guys viewed? Were they just kind of one of the group or
10 did you know, even at that time, that there was something really special about what they
11 were doing?

12 DA: Well, one of the things that was really special about them was that all of
13 them were good-looking. You could tell they were chosen people and they wore their
14 uniforms so proudly, and wow. They were too old for us anyway. Most of them, they
15 weren't really, but they were—I don't know. They were just dignified and good looking
16 and nice. We didn't mingle that much with them because we were young kids and they
17 were already old enough to be in the military. They were the older ones. (Information
18 removed per interviewee's request) came along. He had just become an airmen. Don't
19 mention his name, by the way. He had just become an airman. Well, I don't know. But
20 he's a wonderful guy, a wonderful guy. Everybody, all of them, was good. Let me tell
21 you one thing that I learned. I want to move from Tuskegee for just a second. When I
22 taught school in Mississippi my principal came in and was offering that day beech nut
23 gum. He brought in the beech nut gum company man into my classroom. I was teaching
24 seventh grade, I guess, sixth or seventh. Whatever. But he came in and wanted to
25 introduce—"Fine. How do you do?" I told my kids. I said, "Remember you do not
26 chew gum in my class." They said, "Yes, Ms. Allen," enthusiastically. Mr. Thriftfield
27 looked at me and he said, "Oh, it's all right to chew gum anytime." I said, "No Mr.
28 Thriftfield. They do not chew gum in my class. Not in my class." He said, "Oh, but,"
29 and I said, "Nope. No gum chewing kids." "Yes, Ms. Allen." Mr. Thriftfield said, "Oh,
30 it's all right if you chew gum today." I left, went out and I tendered my resignation. I
31 learned at Tuskegee, I don't care whether you're a woman, man, black, blue, green, or

1 striped you don't have to be oppressed. Oppression begins with you. You either let it
2 happen or you don't. That's one of the biggest things I learned at Tuskegee. Don't let it
3 happen.

4 LC: Did he accept your resignation?

5 DA: Yes, he did. One of the things that happened—I was a young kid. I was
6 twenty-two, twenty-two years old I guess, and a lot of kids—the guys were just coming
7 back from, were going to finish high school. They didn't have GED (general equivalency
8 diploma) at that time, but you come back and go finish high school. So it was kind of
9 little older kids, but they were finishing high school. I'd go across the street—there was a
10 restaurant. I'd go across the street and eat lunch. The principal wanted me to go back
11 into the sewing room with these other old people and sit. That's where they—well, they
12 were young or old they were still old—that old stuff. They'd sit back and gossip and I
13 didn't want to do that. I didn't do that. I was very respected at school. They talked
14 about, want to talk about the other teachers and I'd say, "Hold on there," made a really
15 good, good report. The principal really didn't like that. He didn't like all those things I
16 was doing. He didn't like the fact that my sister and the other kids would come up from
17 Alcorn and pick me up. We had like, like I said, a little pink van. I played trumpet and
18 Jinx played saxophone and we had a couple more posts. We'd go to the little nightclubs
19 in this city and play. He didn't like that because I was a teacher. I was supposed to have
20 stature, but wait a minute. I'm not doing any harm to anybody. I can go club. He really
21 didn't like it. So, at any rate.

22 LC: He just didn't like the image or what he thought it meant or whatever.

23 DA: Yes. I think more than not liking image, I think he did not like the fact that
24 the kids liked me and didn't like him. You know how that—

25 LC: Oh yeah, that jealousy thing going or something.

26 DA: Yes, yes. The kids, I told them one day I got a bus for them and I paid most
27 of the money for the bus because a lot of kids didn't have money. Mr. Thriftfield came
28 and wanted to get on my bus for free and I said, "Mr. Thriftfield, it's going to be a
29 dollar." He says, "Oh, no, I'll be on the trip." I said, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no," and he
30 wanted to give me a bad time and I told him now you give me a dollar. We got back to

1 school and somebody had punctured his tires because the kids didn't like the way he
2 talked to me.

3 LC: Is that right?

4 DA: Yes. I didn't like the fact that they did that, but they didn't like the way
5 he—"You don't treat Ms. Allen like that," sort of thing, you know.

6 LC: You think that you attribute this to having been at Tuskegee and what you
7 were getting there as well as of course your parents?

8 DA: Not just Tuskegee. Not just Tuskegee. I got that from my mom and dad. I
9 got that from my dad. We wanted to learn how to play tennis and my dad says, "Okay
10 baby, don't—watch them. Watch them. See the mistakes that people make. Watch them
11 for a while. Watch what they're doing. Don't go out there and just try to play. See.
12 Watch that. You get in your mind. Ah, it's okay now, then you go do it." So we learned
13 patience. We learned—from my mom and dad I think we learned that. But at Tuskegee
14 you're with a lot of other people also, with great Americans. Like Mary McLeod
15 Bethune and Ellen the Beautiful, I call them both beautiful. They were not very pretty
16 women, but they were the most beautiful women I've ever met. They were both on stage
17 and you could see their grace and how classy they were and how you stand up and you be
18 proud. Booker T. Washington said, "Lift the veil of ignorance from the head of the
19 Negro," and all of those things. That was all incorporated in our whole thing. Let me get
20 another phone here. Hold on.

21 LC: Sure. Okay. I want to ask you just another question if I can, Lucki.

22 DA: I'm sorry I'm taking so long.

23 LC: Oh, no. Please. This is wonderful. It really, really truly is. Let me ask you
24 about the basketball team. Did you gals travel around together and go to other colleges?
25 Who did you play? Who were the other schools?

26 DA: All of the colleges in the SIEC (Southern Intercollegiate Athletic
27 Conference) conference, which was Alabama State—I mean we played black schools.
28 We didn't play any white schools, but we played Morris, not Morris, Morris Brown,
29 Clark, Spelman, like a side game for all those little colleges all in that era.

30 LC: But the private, what we call now HBCU (historically black colleges and
31 universities), the historically black colleges. Mostly the private—

1 DA: Well, not just them. Not just them. Yes, historically black colleges. But we
2 played the Shaw University is a Christian, I think, Claflin...

3 LC: Yes, Claflin, Claflin College in South Carolina.

4 DA: I think they're—yes. We played—something else in Texas. Anyway, we
5 played—yes, we did.

6 LC: You traveled all over—how did you travel? How did you get around? Did
7 you have a bus?

8 DA: Yes.

9 LC: Who all would go with you?

10 DA: The ball team.

11 LC: The gals on the team.

12 DA: The women's ball team and our coach, and the men's coach and the
13 women's coach.

14 LC: Did you ever have trouble finding a place to stay? Did you ever have
15 incidents where it made it difficult?

16 DA: No. We stayed in dormitories.

17 LC: Okay. You stayed in the dorms. Okay. Were there any of those—first of
18 all, what kind of a team were you? Were you any good?

19 DA: Not only were we good, we won all of our games except maybe one or two.
20 We were always the champions.

21 LC: You were always the champions.

22 DA: Yes.

23 LC: Well, that's a good feeling.

24 DA: That's in my era, yes.

25 LC: Okay. Were you—now, being fair now, were you pretty much the best shot
26 on the team?

27 DA: Not at all. I was the best octopus on the team. I could steal the ball and
28 people get mad at me. Now my sister was one of the best forwards, she was the best
29 shooter. I was without a doubt—I stole the ball all the time. Kids get mad at me. I'd
30 steal the ball then I'd laugh.

31 LC: Do you still consider yourself kind of a supporter of women's sports?

1 DA: Most assuredly, as much, like about women going to war. If a woman wants
2 to go to war let her go to war. If a woman wants to play sports let her play sports. I think
3 a woman can do anything—excuse me—any damn thing she wants to. I really, I support
4 that whole-heartedly.

5 LC: It must be amazing to you to see what's happened, for example, to women's
6 basketball. I mean it's on, you know—

7 DA: Oh, they are fantastic. I don't like the fact that they push and shove.

8 LC: Well, there is that. But you know now, gals who are really good, they can
9 play in college and then they can go and play pro.

10 DA: And get lots of money.

11 LC: Yeah. Sure. Why not?

12 DA: I think they're being a wonderful image like Leslie, you know on Lakers. I
13 think Lisa Leslie—whatever—I think they're being wonderful role models and they're
14 playing good. Kids want to go to the gym instead of going out on the streets and selling
15 pot and selling drugs and using drugs. They use a lot of those. It's a shame they don't
16 use an archaeologist as a role model sometimes, but if that's all you have to use as a role
17 model. I can't think—women are I think they're conducting themselves quite well. Oh,
18 yes, I do.

19 LC: It's a positive thing.

20 DA: Yes. I think it's positive.

21 LC: Lucki, you had as your major physical education. I suppose then that you
22 were thinking you would teach somewhere.

23 DA: I thought that I would play. Yes, I did think that I would—

24 LC: But it would be a way you could play, yeah.

25 DA: I could tell you why I joined the military.

26 LC: Yeah, please do.

27 DA: My brother came home from World War II. He had a Purple Heart. He
28 came home from World War II and we were sitting one day laughing. Mother and Dad
29 had gone to bed. My sister and brother and I, because my big brother was out, but my
30 sister, brother, and I were standing in the living room just laughing and laughing. My
31 mother had just that week had all of her teeth taken out of her mouth and we were just

1 kind of laughing real hard, but my mother came out of her room and she said, “You kids,
2 take off your britches and go to bed.” It just cracked us up. We laughed so hard and so
3 long that you could see my brother’s heart beating through his t-shirt. Oh, that was
4 awful. We’ve never seen anything like that, and we were asking him, “What’s going
5 on?” He said that he was in—well, he gave us some of his experiences and stuff—but he
6 said a couple of things happened to him while he was in the military. I said, “I’m going
7 to get them for that.” So that seed was in my mind join the military. “Get somebody for
8 messing with your brother.” You know that little bravado role thing. So when I finished,
9 when I resigned teaching, I opened a swimming pool for black kids in Mississippi for the
10 rest of the summer and then in October I was going to (inaudible) in October. September
11 went down. October I joined the military because I said, “I’m going—maybe I’ll join the
12 military after this. I’m going to see what this is all about and see about helping my
13 brother.”

14 LC: Was that 1950?

15 DA: 1950, yes.

16 LC: Lucki, can you say anything about where your brother served? Was he sent
17 overseas?

18 DA: Yes, my poor brother. My poor brother had to go to Louisiana for whatever
19 training. He was speaking Spanish to a couple of his buddies. The platoon sergeant
20 came up to him and absolutely cursed him out. He said, “I don’t want you speaking that
21 shit in my face! You don’t speak that shit! You speak English!” He really chastised my
22 brother and jumped into him for doing that. Wow. He was just talking about (inaudible.)
23 Then he went to—that was in Louisiana. He went to Ft. Holabird, Maryland, for training
24 in armored, whatever. Then he went to the Philippines. No, he went to, he went to the
25 Philippines. He went wherever it is they learned how to say, when the guy would ask a
26 woman to go with him and ask them how much and they would say, “It’s up to you, Joe.”

27 LC: Somewhere in the Far East. Yeah.

28 DA: I think it was Guam. In Guam, I guess, in the Philippines, somewhere,
29 somewhere over there. But we all—we laughed about it a whole lot of that.

30 LC: But he had had a rough time?

1 DA: He had not a rough time as far as he's concerned, but it was a rough time.
2 People put little things on him for being who he was. This guy—he was in the hooch
3 talking to somebody just jawjacking and the dude called him, turned around and called
4 him something that wasn't nice. My brother took a pot of coffee—it was so bad, he was
5 so angry. He took some coffee off the—not coffee, water, boiling water off of this, off
6 that potbelly stove they had, and threw it at the guy. He said it was just horrendous. The
7 things that they were heaping on and he was so angry and he didn't want to hit him
8 because he wasn't a hitter, but he was so angry. He didn't throw it right at him, but he
9 took it and threw it. Nothing happened to him about it, but he said, "You know that
10 man's inhumanity to man." Like why do you say things to me like that?

11 LC: That are intentionally hurtful.

12 DA: Yeah, very hurtful. Things like that, but otherwise he was okay. But at that
13 time, probably had it been a good Army, it might have been all right, but he had to stay in
14 until the duration—and what—the duration and one year, or something like that. He
15 spent that time and then he got out.

16 LC: Now was he in the Army?

17 DA: Yes, he was. Looked so sharp, wow.

18 LC: Good looking guy, huh?

19 DA: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Really. He's such a sweetheart, such a good guy, such a
20 wonderful personality and the whole bit. Yes.

21 LC: Your sister also decided to go into the military.

22 DA: Say it again please. I'm not hearing you.

23 LC: Your sister had also decided that she would join the military.

24 DA: Yes, after I did.

25 LC: Oh, after you. Now what was motivating her? I'll have to ask her sometime.

26 DA: You know, she was teaching at Alcorn College. It was okay. But I guess, I
27 don't know. I went into the military. She's older than I am. I went into the military and
28 it was okay. I don't know. I can't tell you. Unless she just thought that was a good deal,
29 and it might appeal to her the same thing about my brother. I don't know. I never asked
30 her about it. When I finish this I'm going to say, "What made you join the military?"
31 Like I say, she was already teaching. In fact she was teaching and I had a chance—I did

1 some substitute teaching for her, but she'd take her ball team away. I taught her classes.
2 Medgar Evers, by the way, was her student.

3 LC: She was a phys ed teacher?

4 DA: Yes.

5 LC: She had Medgar Evers in one of her classes at Alcorn?

6 DA: Yes. At Alcorn.

7 LC: Does she remember much about him? Has she told you much about him?

8 DA: Of course she does. He was just, he was just a wonderful, smooth,
9 personable. Myrlie was—they were together in college, and Myrlie was just a wonderful
10 lady too. They were just good kids.

11 LC: They were together in college, did you say?

12 DA: Yes. Myrlie and Medgar. Yes.

13 LC: Myrlie was also a student then of your sister's at Alcorn?

14 DA: Student at Alcorn. Yes.

15 LC: Wow. That's just incredible.

16 DA: But they were good kids. But I had to—but it was just a good, good time.

17 LC: Good experiences. Yeah. When you decided to actually go ahead and join
18 did you go talk to a recruiter? Is that how it happened?

19 DA: Yes.

20 LC: Where did you go to the recruiter?

21 DA: To Jackson. I was still in Mississippi and I went to Jackson, Mississippi.

22 LC: Do you remember that visit to the recruiter's office?

23 DA: I remember it as if it was yesterday. One of the reasons I remember it
24 because it was Friday the thirteenth of October, that I enlisted. But what I wanted to do, I
25 said—and it was no really serious thing with me. I had no idea I might stay in or get out
26 or whatever, but I said to myself, "Well, I could go in as an officer, but I want to go in
27 through the ranks. I want to be a private and go up and experience it all." Then I wanted
28 to go to the Air Force and I wanted to get to the Air Corps and then I wanted to the—it
29 was Air Force by then—and then I wanted to go to the Navy and I wanted to go to the
30 Marines.

31 LC: You wanted to find out all about it.

1 DA: Yeah. I was going to find out all about it. I got started—I guess I started
2 having so much fun in the Army that I never did any of those things. Then when I finally
3 applied, I did apply once to become a lieutenant, and that didn't turn out well, but I
4 screwed that up in my mind.

5 LC: But that was, of course, much, much later.

6 DA: Yeah.

7 LC: Much later. Well, did that recruiter—now was this recruiter a man or a
8 woman?

9 DA: Woman.

10 LC: She was white?

11 DA: Yes.

12 LC: And what—

13 DA: No problem whatsoever.

14 LC: No problem, huh?

15 DA: No nothing.

16 LC: So she just kind of worked with you and she was cool?

17 DA: Yes. You know what I found out?

18 LC: Tell me.

19 DA: When you learn not to be—put yourself in that position. You're a young
20 looking person who happens to be a Ph.D. People look at you and they assume. Okay.
21 You say okay, whatever you think is all right. But when it comes to letting them know
22 who you are and how they can treat you or whatever, then that's as far as they can go.
23 You don't do it nastily. You put it there and they know. Okay. So, all my entire
24 military—well, all my life, but all my entire military I found that—Mom and Dad taught
25 me—when you go for something you go in as if you know what you're talking about.
26 Now, if you don't know what you're talking about what you do is stop, learn, and then
27 you go in. So when I go in to any place, and when I went into the recruiting office, I
28 knew what I wanted to do and I didn't say, "What do you have for me?" I said, "This is
29 what I would like to do." Oh, okay. So what you've done is you've already placed. You
30 said this is what. I didn't dictate any of that. All I did was walk in knowing what I
31 wanted, basically.

1 LC: And you presented in a certain way.

2 DA: Yes. I just walk in. “I’d like to”—and yes. I’d like to go into the military.

3 We did talk about the Air Force and something else, but I said well I want to go into the

4 Army because I want to start with the Army and they said okay. It was fine.

5 LC: You reported, then, how soon after that?

6 DA: Oh, you know what, it couldn’t have been more than—oh, lordy. Now that I

7 don’t as far as the dates are concerned. I know I enlisted on the—I held up my hand on

8 the thirteenth of October. Friday the thirteenth of October.

9 LC: Okay. You went to Ft. Lee, is that right?

10 DA: Ft. Lee, Virginia.

11 LC: Okay. It’s a beautiful installation at Ft. Lee. How did you find it?

12 DA: I was just back there last October.

13 LC: Did you go to the museum?

14 DA: We went to—yes. Yes. Ft. Lee doesn’t look anything like it looked.

15 LC: No kidding?

16 DA: No. I’ve been back several times just because I have a friend who lives in

17 the area. We used to go to the commissary over at Ft. Lee. But Ft. Lee looks like a

18 military base with all them wooden barracks and all that stuff. It doesn’t look like that

19 now. It looks like a nice, you know—it doesn’t look like that now. But it was okay.

20 LC: It had a lot of more or less temporary, I mean, sort of temporary structures.

21 DA: Yes, (inaudible). It is pretty now.

22 LC: It is in a beautiful part of the world too, I think.

23 DA: Oh, it is. It sure is. Yes.

24 LC: Tell me about what basic was like. How many women were in the group

25 that was going through with you?

26 DA: More than four. You usually have two hundred people in a platoon. No,

27 two hundred people in a company. However that works. But we were in our barracks.

28 One sleeps with the head that way, the next two are the head this way, and you know.

29 Allard was the person that was ahead of me. Then I was next and a couple of beds down

30 was Campbell’s and Cook’s. I still remember some of the names, Mary Darr. We got

1 along wonderfully, just great. I guess second or third mixed, completely mixed company
2 and it was fine because all of us had to go through a lot of shh.

3 LC: Together; and you had to do it together pretty much.

4 DA: Yeah. Now, when I did get in trouble I was sent up, sent in for assessment.
5 I was called in. He said I was a sociopath. One of the things that happened—I was a
6 college graduate. I didn't assume anything. I just went in. Because at Tuskegee or even
7 in high school, when I learned going through school all the way, if you knew the answer
8 you hold up your hand, no matter what you hold up your hand. If you got called on fine.
9 If you didn't get called on, fine. But if you did get called on and you didn't know the
10 answer, shew. So you had to know. So in basic training, having been through a military
11 type thing at Tuskegee, you knew a lot of stuff. You knew a lot of stuff because I was
12 born in El Paso. Ft. Bliss, Texas was right there. I had worked before that at William
13 Beaumont Hospital. I had worked with German prisoners of war. So I knew a lot of
14 stuff. So I'd hold up my hand. This one instructor told me I was trying to be cute. I said
15 well, wait a minute. Wait a minute. "Well you're trying to act like you know
16 everything." It really, it really hurt my feelings. I said that's not what I'm trying to be
17 because I don't want to be—I'm not trying to outdo anybody. I know what I know what I
18 know.

19 LC: You're just trying to do your best.

20 DA: Yeah. Really. So they sent me to the psychiatrist and told me I was—the
21 psychiatrist told me that I was trying to be, she did say sociopath. Now I've grown old
22 enough and a psychologist. I don't even know what she meant then. But they didn't
23 know what to do with me. They didn't know.

24 LC: I believe that. That I believe. Yeah, they weren't sure what to make of you
25 really.

26 DA: Really. So, they went on sociopath. Then we had, in basic, we had two
27 weeks of bivouac training. We went out to bivouac and the lady, one of the ladies—she
28 was a leader in the class ahead of us. Keep this name in mind because it'll come back up,
29 (information removed per interviewees request.) Do you have enough time? Are you all
30 right?

31 LC: Oh, yeah. I'm hanging on every word.

1 DA: Okay. This lady went out in the field. The person who was in the leader's
2 class, which the class before us they become leaders so they can get their leadership
3 training. So we were out on the field. It just so happens that I was the bugler for the
4 company. As the bugler I did what the first sergeant said to do. Period. So these leaders
5 couldn't tell me what to do because if the first sergeant had said be here and do this and
6 do that I had to be at her disposal at all times. Mostly I did all the bugle calls and call the
7 troops to blah blah and I blow the bugle. That might sound little but it's big thing. It's
8 the bugler. Anyway, I didn't have to do what (information removed per interviewee's
9 request) told me to do. I told her. I said, "I work for the first sergeant." "No, you
10 don't." She got really, really upset with me. I said, "But I work for the first sergeant."
11 So she got mad at me. So that ended all of that. So, (information removed per
12 interviewee's request) is the name. But she was really upset with me. Down the line—
13 don't mention that name please for respect of a person, which you will hear again. We
14 went to—I stayed for—I got chosen to go to entertainment specialist school. You read
15 that thing about the bands, right?

16 LC: Yes.

17 DA: Okay. So you got that part. But I got chosen to go to entertainment
18 specialist school. This was in December, I guess. (Information removed per
19 interviewee's request) had also gotten chose to go to entertainment specialist school.
20 Anyway, she wasn't in the band with me but, you know, you had to audition. But at any
21 rate, we were there over the Christmas holidays because I wasn't coming all the way back
22 home and then go back to, you know, for another class. You know, to go to leadership—
23 not leadership—advanced. Okay. So when—I said, "Well, I'll stay and I'll stay here
24 over Christmas." (Information removed per interviewee's request) stayed over
25 Christmas. Okay. So, there were only a couple few of us there said let's go to town,
26 down to Richmond. Okay. We went to Richmond. Went down to wherever we went.
27 They said, "Well, let's stay over night." I said, "Hey, okay. No big thing. No need to go
28 on back. We can just stay overnight. Fine. Well, let's get a hotel. Fine." She said,
29 "Well, let's get a room. Maybe we'll get together because we don't have much money."
30 I said, "Fine." So we got that room together. We had the same bed because it was
31 cheaper. When we got back or when things started up again here comes this black sedan

1 coming up to my building. You always knew, “Oh, who are they for?” They came in
2 and got me. I said, “Whoa. Wait.” This lady had told the, whoever was CID (Criminal
3 Investigation Division) or whoever, that I tried to rape her. I said, “Oh my God.” So that
4 was my—that was this (Information removed per interviewee’s request) person. Excuse
5 me. I must tend a moment, just a moment.

6 LC: You had just mentioned that the CID was going to investigate this.

7 DA: Okay. So they investigated me. I took lie detector tests and the whole bit. I
8 said, “How could you?” You know, wait a minute because I could not even imagine. I
9 thought about, that’s why. She turned, had set me up, and turned me in. I told them,
10 “Yeah, of course I’ll take a lie detector test.” I went through the whole bit. Well, I
11 stayed in. Okay. So we got to Japan and guess who was in Japan? (Information
12 removed per interviewee’s request), same outfit. I never did talk to her. She didn’t exist.

13 LC: Did you ever find out or think about or get some sugar chat on what the
14 background for that was?

15 DA: I asked her. I asked her. When the tour, when it was time for me to come
16 back to the States, I guess about two weeks before, I told her I couldn’t hold all this
17 anymore. I asked her why. I said, “Why did you do something like that? Why did
18 you—what motivated you?” She could not even look at me, couldn’t even look at me
19 and answer. I did not want to waste my time sitting there, waiting for her to think of
20 some kind of something, and I didn’t say another word. I turned around and walked off.
21 That’s one of those things. That was a part of growing up for me because I was
22 investigated three more times in those days by somebody that had some, had been shit on
23 the head—excuse me—on the head because they couldn’t fathom me because I didn’t
24 bother anybody. “Hey baby. How you doing?” A lot of people have you, I started to say
25 (inaudible). That’s a good word. You know, because this is what I expect you going to
26 be. You going to do this. You going to do that. I never did meet those whatever they
27 had.

28 LC: So then they’re left with nowhere to go.

29 DA: Hey. But in order to get back to people like they turn in people whether
30 they’re right or wrong, but they turn them in because that’s the only way they can—you

1 know, it's not even a matter of turning them in. It's a matter of making up something.
2 That's some shit. That's easier to do.

3 LC: Of course, the threat there is that you would get tagged with a certain label
4 and be immediately out of the military.

5 DA: Absolutely.

6 LC: With a dishonorable discharge and what not.

7 DA: Absolutely. Absolutely. I saw some kids—I still have one that's a friend of
8 mine, they called her in and told her, "We hear you're homosexual. Are you a
9 homosexual?" She says, "I don't know." They put that girl out and she's right up there
10 right now today. She just, this month or next, she's about to retire from her civilian job,
11 but they had put her out because she said I don't know. That's terrible. That happens, of
12 course, my entire career. People, you know—

13 LC: Yeah. Lucki, do you think that there was—and this is just kind of an
14 observation call on your part which you can make or not if you like—do you think that
15 the CID was looking more closely at the women than the men for this kind of offense?

16 DA: Oh, of course. Of course. I don't know of any—and that's a shame to say,
17 but I don't know of any men that, or maybe I wasn't close enough to the situation or
18 looking for it, but I don't remember any men getting called in for being homosexual.

19 LC: That investigation was, would you say it was pretty rough? How were you
20 treated?

21 DA: No. What they did, they called you in and asked you all these questions. I
22 remember one time—this will be a part of an answer too. I'd gotten a letter in Japan. My
23 sister had sent me a letter and said, "Oh, we're going to paint the town red when you get
24 home." Oh, she had all this stuff written in there. It was really cute and good and stuff.
25 "We're going to do this and I love you and, you know, really really," and they'd drawn at
26 such straws with the ignorant asses—excuse me. Don't put that there. You know what
27 not to put down. I mean don't put quote direct quote, don't do that. But they were so
28 ignorant. They called me home from work in Japan. The lady had already made us take
29 all the doors off the rooms for whatever reason.

30 LC: Are you serious?

1 DA: Yeah, in my barracks. In our barracks she made all the women take the
2 doors off of their—you had to take the doors off your room so any privacy you had,
3 maybe you had a blanket up there, whatever. I thought it was so stupid. But at any rate
4 they called me home from work. I walked in and this man is standing up there. Well,
5 there's three of them standing up there with all these papers in their hand and start talking
6 about homosexuality. I didn't know what they were talking about. "Well, who is this
7 letter from? Listen to this." He started reading and I started laughing. I just could not
8 help but crack up. I said, "Wait, wait, what are you talking?" I did and they thought that
9 was really not nice of me to be standing there laughing because this is a serious thing.

10 LC: That's right. They were very serious.

11 DA: He said, "Well, who is this?" I said, "Lieutenant Jewel Allen, that's my
12 sister." Oh my goodness. They really got mad and then turned around and walked out.
13 But little things like that. The lady on the ball team, she turned in everybody was there
14 all of them are gay. So the whole ball team had to go in to be investigated. When we got
15 in there we answered questions and blah blah blah. When we got home this one lady got
16 so mad and we looked over into the other barracks that night. They just beat her up so
17 badly. Not they, this one woman, beat her up so badly. What the others did was just
18 looked on out of, not in the same place but through windows. But nobody bothered.

19 LC: Was that also in Japan? In Sendai?

20 DA: In Japan. That was because—she turned in people that had nothing to do
21 with being homosexual. You played ball and why you playing ball. They used to say,
22 "Oh, Lucki, you play ball just like a man." I said, "No, I don't. Save it. I play ball just
23 like a good woman." Put that in your pipe and smoke it. Oh, okay. "You sure play like
24 a man." "No, I don't honey. I play like a good woman and now what's your problem?"

25 LC: But this one gal got, she got beaten up fairly badly because of that?

26 DA: That (information removed per interviewee's request)? Yes.

27 LC: Wow.

28 DA: She tried to speak to me in Japan and, like in front of a lot of people or
29 whatever, and I just—not at the group. But she could not, she could not—she didn't exist
30 to me.

1 LC: This kind of thing just kept coming up, not just around you, but I mean
2 around—

3 DA: Sure it came around. It came around people and—this is what I thought
4 they should have done. Okay? You see because I believe homosexuality is all over
5 everywhere. Okay. I don't believe because someone is a homosexual that they will give
6 any more secrets than anybody else. I say that. I was an investigator, as you know, I was
7 an investigator. I investigated a whole lot of people. Could they be black males? Most
8 of them not really. I think it's a big waste, in a sense, but you had to have something and
9 that's the only thing. You know when men decide they want to get women out of
10 something they have to figure out something, so let's make that big. One of the reasons
11 that my sister got out of the military after being in five years, she was the only black
12 officer at so many places. They wanted to make her be who she wasn't.

13 LC: By asking her to do things or—?

14 DA: Huh?

15 LC: By making her to do things or asking her to do stuff that she shouldn't have
16 to do?

17 DA: Yeah. And just making, trying to get her to, well, trying to get her to do
18 things that were not proper for military or any other place or for any other thing. But
19 they would do things like, "Well, you're black so you can take care of these black
20 troops." Oh, no. Or you're this so you could do—no, no, no, no, no. They assigned her
21 as a like a supply officer and she cleaned everything up so sharp and so good and
22 everything. The general comes up to her and wants her to sign all the materials and stuff
23 over to him, and then she would be liable. She said, "Oh, no. Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no,
24 no." She would be the only black officer sitting in the officer's club having a drink or
25 whatever and they would expect that she would talk black. My sister said, "I don't have
26 to do this." She was the coach of the ball team, never lost a game while we were—she
27 coached volleyball. We did not lose a game that whole season. Helped coach basketball
28 did not lose a whole game. Softball, did not lose a game. I think we lost one game in
29 volleyball. One game out of the whole set. But she was really, really good and she
30 wanted to talk to her troops. You know, let a women talk to her troops. They said, "No,
31 you can't fraternize." I said it's not fraternization. I'm talking to my troops, I'm talking

1 to my, you know. They didn't want her to do that. She said, "I got to leave this place. I
2 got to get out of here."

3 LC: So that was finally what—

4 DA: So she retired. I mean not retired, she quit.

5 LC: How long had she been in?

6 DA: She stayed in five years. She said, "I don't want to do this. I'm not going to
7 do this," and she didn't. That's that same thing about you know, I don't have to be
8 oppressed. She took it for a while and then they got mad at us. We were in stations
9 together in Camp Stoneman in California. When it came time to close Camp Stoneman
10 they sent all these other people where they wanted to go. So my sister and I wanted to be
11 stationed together at wherever wanted to be stationed at. They were sending me to
12 Seattle, Washington, and her to I don't know where. But we went in and said, "Why
13 would you put us so far apart?" Because when she's on the field I salute her. When we
14 whatever I saluted her. I treat her like she's my CO (commanding officer). She was. I
15 figured nobody would let me—my God I'm talking.

16 LC: Well, she went in as an officer then.

17 DA: Yes. I'm talking too much.

18 LC: No, you're doing fine. I'll stop you if you're talking too much, but I don't
19 think it's gonna happen, but this is really interesting. I mean she was an officer. You
20 were an enlisted person.

21 DA: Let me give you one more. When I got promoted to sergeant, to E5, all the
22 troops, the whole company of troops, over two hundred, four platoons, whatever, out to
23 the front and more than that many. But she came out with some congratulating troops—
24 well, the first sergeant had called those of us who got promoted up to the front. We stand
25 there at attention. He turned over the company to my sister and she was congratulating
26 all the women who got promoted. When she got to me she looked at my arm and I still
27 had on the wrong stripes. She said something to the effect, very close to it many years
28 later, in fact fifty years later, she said something to me like, and very closely, "Sergeant
29 Allen, if that's what you are, the correct time is 0700 hours." Looked at her watch. She
30 said, "At 0730 hours I want you to report to my office with all of your chevrons sewn on,
31 with all of your uniform in place. Dismissed." That embarrassed me. When I got into

1 her office I want you to know I took off my uniform and I had all my stuff sewn on
2 correctly. I took them in and she reamed me.

3 LC: Did she?

4 DA: Oh, of course. But if that hadn't embarrassed me—if she had said
5 something else, really it was embarrassing, but I shouldn't have done it. I shouldn't have,
6 you know—

7 LC: Shouldn't have been in that position.

8 DA: Yes. That was just inappropriate. It would have had nothing to do with her
9 and had nothing to do with, but it was just embarrassing, which—"I want to see you in
10 my office with all your"—it's just embarrassing. Here I am, a sergeant, and doing
11 something that you had to be reamed out about. Her thing was you got to do right. When
12 I went in, like I said, she just reamed me. Then after she finished reaming me she said,
13 "Lucki, what is the matter with you girlfriend?" I was her sister and you don't do things
14 like that. You don't put out bad news and vibes like that. I understood her. So she could
15 have taken them off. She could have said, "Well, you don't deserve them. You don't
16 want them? I'll just withhold them."

17 LC: Right. And she had the power to.

18 DA: Oh, yes.

19 LC: What did she end up doing when she left the Army?

20 DA: She taught. She went and finished her masters or, I guess, most of it or
21 whatever, and then she taught for a long time.

22 LC: Where? In California?

23 DA: Yes. Then she said she didn't want to do that. She went to the post office
24 and became a mail carrier. When she finished, when she got a few years up in the road
25 she took the exam for supervisor. When she came out she finished number one in the
26 nation. They said they could send her back to do things. She said, "I don't want to do
27 that." Not number one—excuse me—number three.

28 LC: Okay. Number three. That's still not too—

29 DA: Number three in the nation. She said, "Na, I don't want to do that."
30 Because she said if she supervised she had to get to work at six o'clock in the morning
31 and blah blah blah blah blah blah. I don't want to do that. My mother was being kind of

1 ill too. So she said na. So she would go—in the mornings she'd go to work, deliver all
2 the mail by eleven o'clock, go home and fix mother's food and take care of my uncle and
3 all that stuff. Then she'd go back to the office and sign out.

4 LC: She had a system that was working. She had other things she had to be
5 doing.

6 DA: Yeah.

7 LC: Was she, as the years went on, do you think glad that you had stayed in the
8 Army and that you were doing so well? I mean, you had an amazing career.

9 DA: Always been my supporter. Had I not—when I came back from Vietnam
10 had it not been for her I'd been probably out of my mind because she understood my
11 stuff.

12 LC: Yeah. You could share everything with her.

13 DA: Because there was a lot of residual stuff.

14 LC: Well, what year did she leave, roughly? Would it have been in the mid-
15 '50s?

16 DA: '56. She stayed in Reserves a couple of, a year maybe. A year, a couple of
17 years.

18 LC: This is the time that you were at Sendai, is that right?

19 DA: '56 to '58. Yes.

20 LC: What was your job at Sendai? What were you actually doing?

21 DA: I started out as entertainment specialist and then the editor of the post
22 newspaper was Msgt. Paul C. Westerman. He was going back to the States. They looked
23 for an editor, couldn't find one. So they took all the records and looked at them. They
24 found this person, had no idea whether she was a one or a two, but found this person who
25 was a college graduate. Wee. That's it.

26 LC: Right. You're it.

27 DA: Yeah. So they called me and here I was a PFC (private first class). I got
28 over there and they looked at me. Oh my God, but they didn't have anybody else. So I
29 became the editor of the newspaper.

30 LC: So this is the point in which you went to public information?

31 DA: Yes.

1 LC: Did you have to do any training or did they just kind of slot you in?

2 DA: No, they slotted me in there. I didn't go to training until after I got to Ft.
3 Monmouth, I think, Ft. Monmouth, New Jersey. I think it was. I went up to Rochelle,
4 New York, to Rochelle for information school.

5 LC: How long was that? How long was information school?

6 DA: I don't know.

7 LC: A couple of months or longer?

8 DA: No, just a, I think, couple of months. You're asking me, remember you're
9 asking me fifty year old questions.

10 LC: I know. I know. Well, it's just I wondered whether it was a six month thing
11 where you really had to get down to brass tacks or whether—?

12 DA: No, you had to get down to brass tacks anyway. You had to get down to
13 brass tacks, anyway. But the kick is you don't get chosen—a lot of military schools get
14 at that time, during those times, you did not get chosen unless you were—you were
15 screened before they sent you to school. You were classified. You had to get pass
16 attention now and that's the reason why your records and all the things you've done and
17 all of this.

18 LC: So they were leaning heavily on your having gone through undergraduate
19 program and completed it and they could see all that?

20 DA: Yes and having done—I got lots of kudos, Department of Defense kudos, et
21 cetera for my newspaper, for my editorship.

22 LC: Was it something that you enjoyed doing?

23 DA: It was okay. It was fine. Yes. It was okay.

24 LC: When you rotated out of Japan back to, as you said, Ft. Monmouth, were you
25 looking forward to this new kind of work that you were going to be doing?

26 DA: It was fine except, but I expected something. Let me go right back to Japan
27 for just a second, make it very short. Major Hazel Burhigh was the officer in charge of
28 the paper. I put in a wrong story. I wrote as my headline, it said, "Renzel Royce Sawyer
29 Joins the Japanese Army," or Japanese Navy, something like that. At that time we were
30 not allowed, or Japan was not allowed to have military, Navy, or anything like that. They
31 had a self-defense force. So I had to take on my two-thousand circulation and Major

1 Burhigh told me personally to take it to the burn barrel. At that time we had those cute
2 cotton nice dresses that we wore. I had to take it out to the burn barrel and burn all two
3 thousand copies myself. Major Burhigh could have asked somebody to come out there
4 with me and help me or whatever and she didn't. She's one of my memories.

5 LC: Was she teaching you a lesson or was she overkill?

6 DA: She was—jack.

7 LC: Okay. You got the point already.

8 DA: If she could have taught me jack she could have been the editor of the
9 newspaper. So, she's one of my bad memories. There's a bad memory since talking
10 about you asking about was I looking forward to it when I got my next assignment at
11 Camp Stoneman. Oh my God I forgot the name, didn't intend to. They'd begin with
12 Captain somebody, but he—I went in. I was supposed to be the feature editor for the
13 newspaper at Camp Stoneman. Oh, he could not abide that.

14 LC: Because?

15 DA: Oh, well, you know.

16 LC: I have an idea.

17 DA: Yeah, you know. Woman, black, blah blah.

18 LC: He had issues around that.

19 DA: Yeah. So at any rate, I kept on it. But he—I asked, I was supposed to be
20 doing something and here's two weeks, nothing. "When you want to do something take
21 those ink oils and wash them out for me." Whew. Not wash them out for me. "Take
22 those ink oils and wash them out." Clean them. I picked up a red and black, red and
23 green ink, and took those eight oils outside, in my dress, and I emptied and cleaned those
24 ink oils. I took them back, put them on his desk, went out of his place, and I went to my
25 first sergeant and I told him how unhappy I was. I said, "Number one, there are many
26 people here who I outrank"—you know it's very big in those—"I outrank them. I was
27 assigned here to do blah blah blah," and I did it very quietly. Because this way, when I
28 get very angry, I get very, very quiet, but very pointed so you couldn't make any mistake
29 on what I was saying. I told him how unhappy I was that you had a couple of privates
30 sitting over there, right there just sitting there, and he's going to send me out there to do
31 that. By the time I finished it came on that he said, "Well, I'll look into it to see about it."

1 So then I became the feature editor for just a little while. But then they needed an
2 announcer. They found that I was the only one articulate enough on the base to be
3 another fit, being announcer, so I started announcing the news on the PA system, the post
4 PA system which is all over the base.

5 LC: This is at Stoneman as well?

6 DA: Beg your pardon?

7 LC: At Camp Stoneman?

8 DA: At Camp Stoneman.

9 LC: How long did you do that, the announcing?

10 DA: I got to Camp Stoneman in September—no. I guess September, maybe, of
11 '53 and we closed in '54. Closed Camp Stoneman '54. So I did that for just that time.

12 LC: Then after that is when you went to Sendai?

13 DA: No. That was—let me see. Yes. No. Then I came to Oakland Army Base.

14 LC: Oh, Oakland Terminal. Yeah, that's right. That's right. What did you do at
15 the terminal?

16 DA: I did newspaper.

17 LC: You did newspaper again?

18 DA: Yes.

19 LC: Okay. Just moving forward a little bit, when you were at Ft. Monmouth and
20 you'd taken the training for public information officer, were you at any time in there
21 starting to think about whether you should stay in the military for good or, I mean, had
22 you kind of already decided you were going to do this as career?

23 DA: It had not entered my mind one way or the other. In fact, I was down at Ft.
24 Ord with one of my friends. We had said let's go to the movie and went to the movie,
25 and on the way back, we was on the way back and I was going to drop Brownie off at the
26 base. I said, "Oh my God, I got to get back to Stoneman. I got to get back to base." So,
27 I had to re-enlist the next day and I forgot all about it. Completely. It wasn't even in
28 my—because it never entered my mind. There was never the urgency to stay in or get
29 out. When you got a good job, oh well.

30 LC: You just kind of go along.

1 DA: Yeah. I always had a good job that was—you know a lot of people want to
2 get out because they're not happy in what they're doing or people are telling them what
3 to do all the time or people are doing not nice things. Excuse me. One second. One
4 second, please. I mean, I was right there. Where was I?

5 LC: We were talking about that you had forgotten completely that you had to re-
6 enlist.

7 DA: Yeah. Oh, I want to say, what happens is when people are being meanly
8 treated or when something, you know—"I don't have to take that. I'm going to leave.
9 I'm going to quit." It never entered my mind because nobody—I was mostly my own
10 boss.

11 LC: You were getting along pretty well.

12 DA: Yeah, most of the time I was on my own.

13 LC: Most of the time. At what point, Lucki, did the Army select you for foreign
14 language training and how did that come about?

15 DA: Okay. I was at Ft. Monmouth and I couldn't get promoted. I wouldn't go
16 out with my boss so he wouldn't give me a blood stripe. They had blood stripes. In other
17 words, when somebody gets busted, that's a blood stripe. So he could have promoted
18 me.

19 LC: But he wanted to go out with you?

20 DA: He wanted me to go out with him and I said no. We get along famously, but
21 I said no. I don't mix—number one, I don't mix business with pleasure. No, I'm not
22 going to do that. So, he saw fit not to put me in. So I didn't get promoted. But I kept on
23 trying my best. I applied for everything trying to get out of Ft. Monmouth only because I
24 needed to do something. I stayed in there for twelve years. That's one of those, you
25 don't go out with your boss.

26 LC: Yes. Absolutely. It is one of those things.

27 DA: Yeah. But there was nothing—I would not do whatever they needed, if you
28 will, to get promoted.

29 LC: I'm reading you. So you were putting in for all kinds of different posts?

30 DA: Yeah. I put in for everything. So finally, I put in for—you know these
31 MOS' (military occupational specialty) that they really needed like flight, the controller,

1 aircraft controller. For all of them, I put in for lots because they kept telling me no, my
2 MOS was too important. They couldn't do this. So they—finally, I applied for
3 Vietnamese, Spanish, and Chinese for the language school. I just knew they weren't
4 going to send me to Vietnamese. I couldn't imagine them sending me to Chinese and
5 Spanish rather, but they sent me for French and I wanted Spanish because I knew the
6 language.

7 LC: Why didn't you select Vietnamese and Chinese? This was 1963 or—?

8 DA: Well, no. Because that's the way it works. You apply for something and
9 you don't get it. I mean, if I apply for Spanish I knew I wasn't going to get it. If I apply
10 for something way out of the realm and you probably would get something else.

11 LC: When you found out it was going to be French were you like fine, let's just
12 go?

13 DA: You know the only reason I said it was fine was, "Oh, well, they got me the
14 French." It's almost like Spanish so I'll be alright, but the funny thing was when I first
15 got to school we started school on a Friday and I came home that night—down in
16 Monterey. I came home up here to Oakland. I spoke to Dad and Mom and I said, "Well,
17 we started school today." My dad said, "Oh, good. What'd you learn, baby?" I said, "I
18 learned how to say 'Parlez-vous français?'" My dad says, "Oh, hell, I know Polly and
19 Francis both, and ain't neither one of them worth a damn." I cracked up. That was a
20 wonderful dad, you know. I think about it even now.

21 LC: He was a pretty cool guy. How did you do with the training?

22 DA: I did fine even though my dad died during the time that I was in school. Set
23 me back for just a moment, but it was okay. I had a terrible time on one hand because I
24 was sitting in class and everyday someone would have to have a conversation with the
25 instructor during that time. It was my turn that day to have a conversation with the
26 instructor in French and we started talking. We talked a long time and I didn't realize.
27 All of a sudden he walked over to my desk and slapped the desk real hard and I jumped,
28 everybody jumped. He says, "You will not again speak Spanish in my classroom." I
29 didn't know I was speaking Spanish. I thought I was still in French.

30 LC: Was it that you really had—?

1 DA: No. Because the conversation was so easy and I just went into French, I
2 mean I went into Spanish and he went into Spanish with me. Then he brought me back to
3 Earth because this is a French class. We all laughed about it afterward, after he scared
4 the hell out of us. We all really laughed about it.

5 LC: Did you make friends in that class? Were there other people that you—?

6 DA: Oh, yeah. There were only eight students and it was—yeah. I didn't know
7 any of them afterwards, but—

8 LC: But you got along okay while you were there.

9 DA: Oh, yes. Yes. I expected—I was supposed to go to France when I finished
10 class. They told me, “Well, you can't go because you called”—in fact I was supposed to
11 be on the staff for translation for de Gaulle, you know, on that. They told me I couldn't
12 go because that time de Gaulle said he didn't want any more of the Americans in his
13 country.

14 LC: Yes, he had some issues with the United States.

15 DA: Yes. That was the time that that happened.

16 LC: Okay. When did you find out then what your actual assignment was going
17 to be?

18 DA: Oh, very shortly thereafter. I went to—and I had to laugh because it said I
19 was going to Ft. Holabird, Maryland, to the “pow” course. I said, “What are you talking
20 about ‘pow’?” I had no idea what “pow” was. That's when I went to the POW (prisoner
21 of war) course.

22 LC: This was at Holabird?

23 DA: Yes.

24 LC: Any idea how long that one lasted?

25 DA: How long was that course? Eight months, seven or six months, eight, six
26 months—I don't remember. Eight, six, ten—beg your pardon?

27 LC: What can you tell me about the content of that course? What kinds of things
28 were you supposed to be learning?

29 DA: Let me ask. Can we take a break?

30 LC: Oh, sure.

31 DA: Now where were we?

1 LC: We were talking about your starting “pow” training, POW training, and I
2 was asking you what kinds of things they wanted to train you in and what did that look
3 like.

4 DA: Okay. This is—I was the first woman, official woman, trained at that school
5 for interrogation. Okay? However, I found that there were no things that came up that
6 were harder for me than for a man. There were no—because we learned, really learned,
7 good basics of interrogation. I could bring it to today if you please.

8 LC: Please do.

9 DA: Any person that is chosen to take some of the courses in intelligence for the
10 United States of America, especially for the Army, when you’re chosen for those courses
11 it’s not something that they just pick somebody off the freeway. You have to be a certain
12 caliber of person in the first place. Then you learn to be an interrogator. You also learn
13 what is not right and what is not acceptable. Any person who is trained, I’ll say about the
14 United States Army in interrogation—and I taught in interrogation school—anybody that
15 was taught there officially would never do what these children are doing right now.

16 LC: And we’re talking about Iraq.

17 DA: Iraq.

18 LC: And we’re talking about the prisons.

19 DA: Absolutely. Now, they wouldn’t do that out of their—because you know
20 that’s not proper. You know that’s not proper. You know that that could happen to you.
21 Okay? So, I haven’t really looked at all of it because it just sickens me. However I know
22 that a person really trained wouldn’t do that. Now, they said it’s being done out of
23 frustration. That might be very well—that might very well be, but if you’re trained to
24 interrogate you wouldn’t do that. Okay.

25 LC: What are you thinking—any thoughts on the young woman who is being
26 kind of held up, at least over the last couple three days, and sort of spotlighted by the
27 media for the photographs that she’s in? Any thinking about the position she’s in over
28 there?

29 DA: She’s not a military woman, right?

30 LC: I think she’s in the military, either MP (Military Police) or military
31 intelligence.

1 DA: Well, MP is a lot different.

2 LC: Yeah. I'm not really sure. I think she may be MP.

3 DA: Being an MP, altogether different. I can't even see her doing that—

4 LC: Even so. Yeah. Even so.

5 DA: But I really can't judge that woman, but all I can say is from the basics you
6 were taught, and I was taught that—only one thing I had that I changed when I was
7 teaching interrogation, because when you learn you learn to get the name and rank and
8 serial number and all that and identify the prisoner. My thing was always identify the
9 prisoner later. I want to know where the rockets coming from. In other words, let's find
10 out right now. So you and I don't want to get killed so let's find out where you came
11 from so let's know if a rocket is coming. If we find out the rocket's not coming then I'll
12 take care of the basics, all the rest of that little stuff. Because I know of prisoners being
13 thrown out of a plane who needs an answer, you know. So, that's that.

14 LC: The training that you were getting in the, it would have been in the early
15 '60s. So, '60, about '64 perhaps?

16 DA: Same basic training. It says you interrogate a prisoner and you can do
17 enough things to get him to talk. The kick is if he doesn't talk then you have some, there
18 are a whole lot of prisoners. See what happens, people get killed before they get to talk
19 because somebody's going to kill them and we want them to talk. We want them to be in
20 good enough shape to tell us what we need to know.

21 LC: Right. There's a line somewhere that's, where it becomes counter
22 productive.

23 DA: Hey. Absolutely.

24 LC: I mean, I'm just—

25 DA: I'll tell you, I think the training is basically some good training. I think still,
26 I think it's still today and I've known people like this young man in my church that his
27 training was about five, six years ago or so. So it's basically, you know, basically the
28 same. Let me talk about intelligence for a moment.

29 LC: Please do.

30 DA: I'll go back to that same thing I just said of people who are chosen to be in
31 those fields. You don't just go out and pick up somebody else. There are special people

1 who get trained, basically, in intelligence. All the information, as you've read in my
2 book—I gave the, not my book, in *Piece My Heart* or somewhere there—the point is you
3 give them information. If I give my boss the information he can do anything he wants to
4 with it. So it turns into—until I turn it from information to intelligence by analysis and I
5 feel like I have the right product because I worked at it, and then when I turn it over to
6 somebody else, some commanders want to say, “Oh, that can't happen. Oh, I can't tell
7 them that. I can't report that because if I report that they'll think I'm not doing my job.”
8 So you see how it gets watered down. You know that telephone conversation when
9 you're a kid and you pass it along in the classroom?

10 LC: Yes.

11 DA: By the time it gets from the teacher back around to the teacher it's
12 completely different. That is so close to truth. As a historian you know exactly what I'm
13 talking about. So by the time it gets up, so we're blaming Rumsfeld—I'm not saying
14 he's guilty or not guilty—but the point is we don't know where the pipe broke, if it
15 broke. Because somebody didn't want to be thought of as stupid. So intelligence people,
16 when they do that intelligence at that level, any level, you turn information into
17 intelligence because that's what you know how to do that you expect, but by the time you
18 pass it on is that what it is?

19 LC: But you're also—one of the points I hear you making is that something that
20 is passed from a prisoner to an interrogator is just a static piece of information until it's
21 put into some kind of context, and that's a separate process.

22 DA: Yes it is. What happens with that—in other words there are lots of pieces of
23 information. See, we don't know the veracity of that information until it's checked. You
24 have to do some comparison. You have to do some analysis. You don't know if this guy
25 is telling you the truth or telling me a lie or what, so how do you get that? You go
26 through all these other pieces of paper you saw the little things in and corroborate the
27 information and stuff, or do you go out there and just shoot somebody because, “He told
28 me”? That's, I think, we're in a little trouble like right now by just going out and putting
29 it out there without corroborating the information.

30 LC: Do you have any—are there any questions in your mind about the
31 authenticity of the photographs?

1 DA: About what honey?

2 LC: About the authenticity of the photographs that are in the press now, which
3 are said to be taken in this prison, said to be taken—?

4 DA: Oh, of the abused people?

5 LC: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

6 DA: Let me tell you, I'm at very odds, big odds with United States government.
7 I have the sad of this truth. I am at odds because they won't even let us see a casket that
8 comes back. They won't photograph that, but they want to show—oh, lordy. Don't get
9 me started talking about it, Laura. I think you know where I'm going with that.

10 LC: I actually do see where you're going and—

11 DA: I don't think I should get into it.

12 LC: Okay. If there are other things that you want to say of course you can pop
13 them in whenever. I was asking about the POW training because it seems—

14 DA: Yes. The POW training taught us to do right.

15 LC: Now, Lucki, had you had some contact with German POWs at Beaumont
16 Hospital? Did you tell me that earlier?

17 DA: Yeah. Way long time ago when I was, I was just old enough to get a job and
18 I needed to pay to get some money to go to school. My sister and I worked down at
19 William Beaumont Hospital in the kitchen, in dining hall rather. Not in the kitchen,
20 dining hall. That's when they had all the German POWs over here from World War II.
21 Yeah, from World War II.

22 LC: Did you speak with them at all? Did they have enough English?

23 DA: There was one guy named Hans Mueller. I found out many years later Hans
24 Mueller was a very common name, oh, like Joe Smith. I said one day I'm going to look
25 him up because he was such a nice, such a nice fellow. They would let the prisoners
26 come in and do the KP (kitchen police), and stuff like that. Then they'd send them back.

27 LC: Did you form any kind of impression of who the Nazis were or whether there
28 was something other than what was being portrayed in general about the Germans at that
29 time?

1 DA: You know, even with the rest of me I had a picture of Hitler as opposed to a
2 picture of Germans or the Nazi people, or the Nazis rather. I had pictures of Hitler. He
3 was the tyrant.

4 LC: Not the Germans in general.

5 DA: Well, he's the man. You know.

6 LC: Oh, absolutely. Yes. There wasn't a lot of dissent.

7 DA: Yeah. Saddam Hussein was the man. So why am I getting mad at
8 everybody else? It's just like somebody said just the other day, "It's hard to go
9 somewhere and kill people that look like you." Oh. You ever hear that?

10 LC: Yeah, actually I have. I was just thinking about that. Yeah.

11 DA: But you do it because you're, you know, you're American and you're sent
12 there to do something and that's what you do. With all this stuff going on now I have
13 really, really—I don't have any mixed emotions about it at all. I have emotions.

14 LC: But they're clear.

15 DA: Very clear. Very clear. Let me go back to when I had, when I found out I
16 had PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder).

17 LC: Okay. Sure.

18 DA: I was fine when I came—well, I knew there was some shock thing and
19 some, but when it really hit me, and I guess that was not until the Gulf War when Bush
20 told the troops, "Okay, go out there. Now, the man's going to put some gas and stuff out
21 there so what I want you to do is go dig a foxhole, close your shelter half over your head,
22 so you won't get—you know, so it won't get on you." Now what would that do to you?
23 Wow. Now, especially when you think your government can help you. You know,
24 can—"Oh, our government can stop that because we the greatest. You know, we can do
25 anything." But we'll tell you what. What it came to me with an educated mind, it came
26 to me that they was sitting out there helpless. It wasn't that Powell was doing anything
27 better, but they were so helpless just like we were in Vietnam. Oh, you don't fire back or
28 you don't do this or you don't do that. So you're in a place that's kind of scary and you
29 almost feel like, in a way, you're on your own, but you're not. I felt that same—and what
30 I did was I didn't feel the hopelessness too late of a Vietnam, of having been in Vietnam,
31 but because I had been in Vietnam I could feel the helplessness of those troops that were

1 out there in the desert waiting for the fire to come down on them. That's a helplessness
2 that I think is horrible.

3 LC: And haunting.

4 DA: Haunting. Absolutely. That's when it—I didn't realize so much and then I
5 said, "God, that's really PTSD." Then I could acquaint even more with women who had
6 gotten raped because what I hadn't done, even being a psychologist, I hadn't really put
7 any of that together anywhere, just the helplessness of women. I had never put that
8 somewhere wherever it should have been or however I could have, but that's a given.

9 LC: When did you actually sort of string these things together?

10 DA: I can't hear you.

11 LC: When did you actually string those things together as some kind of
12 continuity of helplessness?

13 DA: Not till—during that Gulf War time when it came to me that, wow. In other
14 words, what I've always tried to do is if I feel like there's a situation I try my best to
15 figure out what it is. What's going on? After I figure it out, what's going on, then that
16 takes care of it because now I know. So if I know what's going on I say what can I do
17 about it. So what good is this to hold on too? Can you let it go? Is it going to do you
18 any good? So what I did was I was trying to—I don't like having PTSD. I don't like the
19 (inaudible) factor. I don't like the crying like off the top—you know, just cry—some of
20 those things that come up. So I would like to stop them. I found out that you just can't
21 just stop them, and trying to find out if I could do something about mine I was trying to
22 string it together, as you put it. It's hard to string together. It's hard. I keep thinking,
23 being a historian, I think you know what I'm saying. You got to keep on trying to put it
24 together.

25 LC: Yes. Sometimes the more you try to put it together the less sense it seems to
26 make. That's a certain frustration too. But when you have those very few, as it turns out,
27 anyway for me, moments when you suddenly get it it's like nothing else really, at least
28 for me.

29 DA: When you finally get it what happens is somebody says, "Oh, you got it,
30 huh? Tell me about it. Share it with me," and you can't.

31 LC: Explain it to me and you can't. It's hard.

1 DA: Yeah.

2 LC: After the POW course were you in fact the only African American in the
3 course or the only African American woman or—?

4 DA: No, no.

5 LC: Okay. So there were others?

6 DA: Oh, yes. I was the only female.

7 LC: Only female. Okay.

8 DA: Let me tell you another thing what happened to me in many of my courses
9 that I went to, the period in the military. When you go in to a course, you know, men like
10 to tell jokes. Men like to tell dirty jokes or they like to tell off-color jokes. I found out
11 long, long, long time that I did not have to sit in the classroom and listen to the dirty
12 jokes. So what I would do is somebody up in the front start telling a joke, I'd get up and
13 walk out, and they wondered why. "Wait a minute, where you going? You can't do
14 that." I said, "Yes I can, because this is not what I came from. I didn't come for dirty
15 jokes. I didn't come for jokes."

16 LC: Right. At all.

17 DA: At all. Period. The one reason I think the respect stayed in my life is
18 because I didn't participate and I did not let you do that if I knew that I could walk out.
19 Whatever. It wasn't that I was so straight laced, but it was most certainly that it could get
20 out of hand. So, I just—go on, take it, it's just fine baby. When you finish I'll be right
21 back in. A lot of them got the message when I was in classes. I think that was the only
22 thing that made classes a little bit different forever because I was a woman and they
23 couldn't talk all that talk.

24 LC: Would you say that you were in some way taking control of your own
25 situation by just exempting yourself from having to listen to it? I mean, you're not
26 interfering with them doing it, you're just not authorizing them to do it in front of you.
27 Something like that?

28 DA: Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely.

29 LC: It doesn't take—it, again, doesn't take a big demonstration or a big public
30 statement.

1 DA: No. No. There's no fighting. But, you know, there's a lot of harassment
2 that men do to women. I will never forget the one in the Army operations center in
3 Vietnam. The guy asked me—I don't think there was any operation center. He asked me
4 to go out with him. "Oh, I can't go out with you, you're married." It embarrassed him so
5 badly. Oh, it took him—he turned around after he turned red and he walked out of the
6 door. That gives messages. Because as long as you—they can soon be quiet and there's
7 a certain harassment in that, so if you let that harassment continue or do you say no? The
8 way to do it is so they'll know that you can't do that. It embarrassed one man. Even
9 though the rest of them might have laughed at it, it gave them a lesson.

10 LC: They still got the message.

11 DA: Yes. The person you did it to was—he's not less-able, he's lesser in a sense
12 because he has done something to embarrass himself.

13 LC: Right. It's now public knowledge that he did that. All you're saying is no.

14 DA: That's right. People don't want to get caught. That's what I used to tell all
15 the girls when they come up to me and say, "Well, what can I do about it? They just
16 bothering us." I said, "Just say it very loudly. I can't go out with you, you're married."
17 Oh, and they do it, and they say I can't do that, and I say yes you can. I always thought
18 be as aggressively assertive as you want to be. Never assertively aggressive, but
19 aggressively assertive and you'll find that they will come right to place.

20 LC: Did women come to you for advice, Lucki?

21 DA: Oh, all the time. For some reason I—like I said I've always been kind of
22 older than the folks that I was around because I associated with younger people, I guess,
23 but everybody—I was not being an advisor. I guess I was being a friend, maybe. But
24 this young lady called me, I was at the dump yesterday getting rid of all the trash I had in
25 the back, not trash, but all the wood and stuff that was cut up. This lady came up to me
26 who I hadn't seen her for, I know, twenty-six, twenty-seven years. She came up to me
27 and she says, "Oh my goodness, aren't you Lucki? Aren't you? I haven't"—and she
28 started. I said, "Oh my goodness," because I didn't remember who until after a moment.
29 She says, "I'm blah blah blah and I'm the blah blah." I said, "Oh." She said, "You look
30 just the same. You're just"—and I've had so many people that keep telling me that. One
31 of my happinesses, happinesses for me that I'm basically I think the same person that I

1 was, in a sense, then of somebody being able to come, because I've always been
2 approachable. So being approachable, that helps people be able to come up and say,
3 "Lucki, would you blah blah blah?" "Yeah, c'mon baby, what's going on?" I think
4 that's—so from that angle, yes.

5 LC: Yeah. As you say it allows people to ask you for help, especially, I think, I
6 can easily imagine younger women in the services, especially in the Army. Tell me
7 about your assignment to Ft. Bragg in 1964. How did that come about? Did you just get
8 orders or did you know earlier like during the POW training class that your assignment
9 would be there?

10 DA: Well, they were going to send me to France. I couldn't go to France so they
11 sent me to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, which to an intelligence unit that had the military
12 intelligence which had an interrogation unit, a signal—they had three units anyway that
13 we were always in interrogation. One was analyst and one was something else. But
14 anyway that was the military battalion that I got sent to.

15 LC: Was that the 519th?

16 DA: 519th. Yes.

17 LC: What was your rank at this point when you got there?

18 DA: When I first got there I was a five, E5.

19 LC: Did you get promoted while you were at Bragg?

20 DA: Not until all these people walked in. I don't know if it was down there or
21 not. But all these people walked in—I was working in the headquarters at that particular
22 time, in the headquarters area. Here come all the troops in. They was all dressed up in
23 their class A uniforms. I said, "Hey, where you guys going?" I should have been in on
24 that. I should have known that. They said, "We're going before the board." You what?
25 At any rate, the bottom line is that there were thirty-two people going before promotion
26 board and my name wasn't on it. I didn't know anything about it. It just dawned on me,
27 I should have met with—first thing I said to myself, I said, "Oh, maybe they going to
28 promote me anyway and I don't have to go before the board." Because I knew that I was
29 qualified and good and all that. Honey, it dawned on me, just say something. I went to
30 the sergeant major and I said, "Wait a minute, what's going on?" I told him I want to talk
31 to the commander. The bottom line of that is I went and talked to the commander. I

1 must have talked to him for almost half an hour or forty-five minutes. One of the first
2 things I did, I told him that I was—I gave him my life history, very quietly again, because
3 like I said I get quiet. I get right there so they could not misconstrue anything I was
4 saying. The whole thing was why am I not being going before the board. I told him the
5 things I had done and gave it to him, all of it. He didn't say anything while I was talking
6 all that time. When I finished I said, "And that's it." I saluted him. I did an about face.
7 I was on my way out the door. He said, "Just a minute. Just a minute." He asked me a
8 couple of questions. I answered them. He said okay. I saluted and walked back out and
9 sat at my desk, absolutely boiling quietly. He went out of the office, went up to the
10 headquarters contact, came back about an hour later, I guess. He went into his office,
11 called the sergeant major in. Sergeant major came back out to my desk and said to me,
12 "You will meet the board Friday." Keep in mind, when a board convenes that is the end
13 of the world. You have to wait until the next, next board, which is maybe a month, five
14 months, six months, or whatever, usually six months or so, but he said you'll meet the
15 board. Okay. I went before the board that day. There were thirty-five people that had
16 gone. I went before that board that day and they asked all the military questions, all the
17 infantry training questions, all the things that the guys would know. They asked me the
18 same questions. I came out number five. What happened was I came out higher than
19 that, but they had to throw out the education points because the curve was skewed.

20 LC: Because you had an undergraduate degree.

21 DA: I had a graduate—uh, yeah. I had an undergraduate degree. But I think it
22 was more than just I had a—yes. I had done much more education than that though. I
23 had done every course that I could, the GED course that they used to have, General
24 Education Development, I took all those courses. I just took them before—I took speech
25 and everything. I just took them.

26 LC: You had been taking these along just to—?

27 DA: Yeah. I took them all on just because they were there and why not.

28 LC: It was available and—

29 DA: Yeah. Let me see if I could fit. But I've always been—my mother and dad
30 always taught us get your education. Nobody can take it away from you. Nobody. They
31 might take away your privilege, your whatever, but they can't take that away from you. I

1 always had that thirst for knowledge and nobody could take it away from me. People get
2 mad at me sometimes because I can answer the question correctly, you know. “What’s
3 that on the wall?” I said, “Oh, that’s a big curling.” “How did you know that?” and got
4 angry with me because I knew it.

5 LC: Yeah. You weren’t supposed to know it.

6 DA: That’s right.

7 LC: You didn’t look like you were supposed to know it.

8 DA: Yeah. Then when I knew it they thought I was trying to be cute and smart.
9 I wasn’t. I just answered your question. You know? So it was a matter of education, so
10 that’s why it was skewed. They can’t do anything about it.

11 LC: So they—

12 DA: They knocked off every education point.

13 LC: And you still came out—

14 DA: I still came out number five.

15 LC: Yeah. So they didn’t really have a choice. The board had to—

16 DA: They had no choice. There were six promotions and they had to pick me. I
17 got promoted finally.

18 LC: So what did that mean for you? I mean, did you have a sense of having
19 gotten a fair shake or not from that whole experience?

20 DA: From that experience I had—it just reinforced that you don’t have to be
21 oppressed, but had I not been aggressively assertive I would have been still sitting there
22 in that same chair. The men would have gotten promoted and I’d be still sitting there.

23 LC: Right, while everyone went off to the board.

24 DA: Absolutely. You have to—well, everybody had gone before the board on
25 that Wednesday when I went, but they would never accept me had I not said no, no, you
26 can’t do this to me. I didn’t say it in those words but I said this is not fair, it’s not right,
27 and here’s the reason it is not right. This is my qualifications, so how could I not be
28 considered for that promotion? But many of us get scared because, “Oh, you can’t talk to
29 him like that.” Yes I can because you’re speaking from heart, knowledge—I’ve never
30 been nasty. I’ve never tried—I’ve always—and I’ve never been insubordinate either, but
31 I always try to put it out there where it is, and that’s why I keep telling everyone, you’re

1 not going to get promoted as long as you sit there and let that man say that he can go and
2 have sex with you then you can get promoted. You can't do that. You don't let him take
3 any of those things. I think I have had an influence properly on lots and lots of women
4 who had that. In Vietnam kids used to come up—there were three hundred men to every
5 woman at Long Binh. They'd be nasty to the guys. I'd say, "Stop that." I said, "All he
6 wants to do is talk to you because you're around to act." If all he wants to do is have a
7 conversation with an American woman, why you acting like that? "Well, there are plenty
8 of—I can get any"—no. I said, "You know when you get back to the States sweetheart,
9 you're going to be saying, 'Oh, hi, I know you,' and he's going to look at you with scorn
10 and turn around and act like he never"—and I said, "All they want from you is to say
11 hello. They're not looking for anything else." I think a lot of women got that message.
12 So yeah. Because you just—well, you have to be assertive and you have to protect
13 yourself and you don't have to be nasty.

14 LC: When you have, I mean, those women had some power because guys were
15 lonely and so forth, just have to exercise it with humanity, which is basically that kind of
16 theme keeps coming up that I think is very interesting. Lucki, let me ask you a little bit
17 about the con tech mission that you were working on when you were at Ft. Bragg. This
18 was during the period of the really big buildup of American troops in Vietnam to over
19 half a million I think while you were at Ft. Bragg mid-'67. What kinds of work were you
20 doing and what was the con tech mission at that point?

21 DA: Well, at first—well, con tech mission is and always has been the strategic
22 intel, but I was working on the Latin American desk and, as you probably know, that was
23 usually a civilian job. They had me working that kind of work, but I had the Latin
24 America desk. So I knew where Fidel Castro and Che Guevara were at all times because
25 that's what that's about. But when Vietnam came up, and I was also at that time I was
26 doing—well, I did lots of things, but be that as it may. But when Vietnam came up and
27 they said they were going to send women I wanted to go. They chose the women to go
28 and I was not one of that. There were two other women who were analysts who were
29 sent over. One just died not long ago, good friend, they were sent over with the original
30 group.

31 LC: In '65?

1 DA: Yeah. They got sent—what'd you say?

2 LC: I was asking if that was 1965?

3 DA: No. They went over in '67, that group, that contingent, first contingent of—
4 a big group. They went over in July—July, I think. Keep in mind these were Army
5 women, military women. Not advisors and they were not nurses. So those two had been
6 sent. I wanted to go, but they didn't send me, but when I finally got to go I did not work
7 in the same thing that they were working in. I went into a different phase, if you will.

8 LC: They were analysts as well?

9 DA: They were analysts. Yes.

10 LC: Had they had desk assignments similar to your own with Latin American
11 desk?

12 DA: Kind of basically, but in a different—they're different fields, if you will.
13 They're different work. They were doing a different work and I have to leave it at that.
14 They were doing a different work, which is basically takes the same skill, basically takes
15 that skill to do it, but they were doing a different work.

16 LC: Applying it in a different area.

17 DA: Yes.

18 LC: Okay. Your responsibilities at this time were what? You were evaluating,
19 watching, looking at incoming material about developments in Latin America and the
20 Caribbean. Is that fair?

21 DA: Yes. Yes.

22 LC: Were you writing reports as well?

23 DA: Oh, yes. Definitely.

24 LC: What kind of distribution would those reports have had? Would they have
25 gone—?

26 DA: Everywhere. They especially went up to—some of those reports are still in
27 the National Intelligence Service files. They're still there

28 LC: Why did you get the Latin America desk? Do you know?

29 DA: I don't know. They probably had somebody that didn't—I don't know. I
30 don't know.

1 LC: Did you have a reading in period where you had to kind of get up to speed or
2 did they just kind of plug you in and you had to start going?

3 DA: No. In this place, in this particular room, you had already known where
4 basically where people were. You already knew your geography, if you will. You
5 already knew intelligence, if you will. You already knew lots of things. You already
6 knew those things. But when you get to a particular part—this is my concentration.
7 That's what that was about.

8 LC: You would just apply those skills to the assignment that was in front of you.
9 How big was Latin America desk, say, relative to other desks? Were geographically—?

10 DA: I had all of Latin America. There were some people that had—and this is
11 not—some people had one country—let's just say some people for just this purposes.
12 One person had Korea. Okay. One person had a hot spot at the time, maybe. One
13 person had, like they might have had five or six people at the time on some part of Russia
14 or two or three maybe on China, but they had enough to do what they thought needed to
15 be done at that particular time for those particular countries. Make no mistake, every
16 single country is as important as another.

17 LC: Regardless of other demographic issues or economic issues or so on.

18 DA: Yes. Because what you're doing is, what you're doing with that country
19 you're doing with that country period. If nobody did anything with that particular
20 country something might—I love that (inaudible) that's a good word. But something
21 might have fallen through the cracks. It might, and it's not a big, big thing, but it's there.
22 I don't think I should talk anything more about that, in that context.

23 LC: Okay. That's fine. You mentioned that you were interested in going to
24 Vietnam, but that you weren't chosen for that first group. Did you continue to put
25 forward either informally or formally the idea that you would like to get an assignment
26 over there?

27 DA: Yes. But lots and lots of people wanted to go to Vietnam. Lots of people.
28 When I finally went I went by myself. I was the only woman that went on assignment at
29 that time.

30 LC: That was in 1967?

1 DA: In '67. I went in October. They had gone over, I think it was July. I went
2 in, maybe February or something somewhere there. I got over after them but the same,
3 the first group, was still there.

4 LC: Just stepping aside from your own career, at this point what, for example, did
5 your sister think or your mom think, your brothers, about you getting sent over to
6 Vietnam? Did they—were they worried?

7 DA: We have always been taught whatever you do, do well. You go with trust
8 and you go with love and it'll be okay. It's okay. You got to go. Okay. I had to go to
9 Japan back in 1950. The war hadn't been over that long and, you know, blah blah blah.
10 Except when I came back on my mother said, "Oh, baby, how'd you do with the Japs
11 over there?" and I said, "Don't you ever." "Wait, wait a minute. What's the matter?" I
12 said, "Don't call them Japs." Because you called them Japs. I told her, "Don't do that,"
13 and she said, "Okay, okay, okay." But I guess we understood our lives, military people.
14 We understood that. That you have to go, you have to go. Of course, like my uncle
15 who—see, he and his wife put a candle on their table and they lit it every single day that I
16 was in Vietnam for a year. They lit it. I never knew that, but they lit it every day. In the
17 morning, they'd blow it out in the evening. But there's a lot of prayer out there for folks.

18 LC: When did you find out about the candle?

19 DA: After I came back—while I was here or, I don't even remember exactly.

20 LC: But somebody told you about it?

21 DA: No. I was there to see my uncle and he says—and I—my uncle said, "We
22 burned it everyday baby." Oh my goodness.

23 LC: That's amazing. What a beautiful, hopeful thing.

24 DA: I never would have known it. They didn't make any hoopla with it.

25 LC: It was just something they were just doing quietly for themselves.

26 DA: Yeah. Had I not been in the house and asked about the candle or something
27 came up about it and I never would have known.

28 LC: That's really lovely. That's a lovely thing.

29 DA: But I think a lot of people do quiet things for their loved ones. But when I
30 got back on—I came back on R&R (rest and recuperation) once and the A's, the Oakland
31 A's, the baseball team—the coliseum is right down the hill from me. They used to fire

1 off a cannon every time somebody got a homerun. One day I was in here, lying in my
2 bed, and the cannon went off. Mother was sitting in the kitchen at the table, my sister—I
3 don't know where my sister was. When I heard that I got up and I ran and I was just
4 streaking out here and mother said, "Where you going? Where you going?" "I'm going
5 to the bunker." They slowed me down and brought me back to Earth. They were able to
6 do that a lot. Helicopters used to come over and I'd get woo, but they helped me. They
7 helped me to know that you're not in Vietnam baby. There's no happening. It's okay.
8 Eventually they stopped shooting off that cannon.

9 LC: Yeah. To your relief, I'm sure.

10 DA: I don't hear well baby.

11 LC: I wanted to ask you a couple of timeline questions actually. In 1963, of
12 course, at the end of the year the president was killed. I wonder if you remember where
13 you were, or much about that event?

14 DA: One of the reasons I remembered was because my father died, had a stroke
15 shortly thereafter. Let me see—what month? He died in October—when was Kennedy?

16 LC: November.

17 DA: Yes. My father died after that. He died '63 November, but we didn't even
18 get the chance to tell my dad that Kennedy had died. So I remember it very well. I was
19 at language school still.

20 LC: That's right. Yep. Did you have any kind of feelings about President
21 Johnson? Did you feel supportive of him or he was the commander in chief and you had
22 to follow him now, all those kinds of feelings come to you?

23 DA: You know, I saw a compassion. I really wasn't thinking about it too hard
24 but I had to compare—I always had a compassion for Lyndon Baines Johnson. I was
25 always taught in my life that you're innocent until proven guilty and no one proved him
26 guilty. No one proved him of anything but—and so I still saw compassion. I saw
27 compassion when I—I've always been compassionate. I saw lots of compassion when I
28 met Lady Bird and her daughter and her grandson. They were just really wonderful
29 people. But you know, we get a fix on somebody there for this and that, but when
30 Johnson took over it was just Johnson taking over. I didn't think anything malicious.

1 LC: Lucki, under what circumstances did you meet Lady Bird? I gather this
2 would have been much later on.

3 DA: This was when I was inducted into the Faces From the Vietnam Wall and
4 that was in '94, November 11th, 1994. I think I mentioned it to you. It's right there in
5 Austin.

6 LC: Yes. Actually, I did go down there. I was just down there a couple of weeks
7 ago.

8 DA: Oh, were you? I guess the Wall is still there.

9 LC: It's there and I saw you.

10 DA: Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

11 LC: What was your impression of Lady Bird?

12 DA: I think she's just a wonderful—I think she's just wonderful. I heard some
13 after, so much stuff about her. She owns this and she's this and she's that. The lady is so
14 down to earth and just—you never would've—with all this talk you think she'd be sitting
15 up here on some pedestal and blah, blah. She is just as much, "Hi mom."

16 LC: Really? That's nice. What about the daughter?

17 DA: Gracious. Gracious. Both of them. The son-in-law too. I mean, yeah, very
18 gracious people. I met quite a few celebrities and some of them have not been so
19 gracious, but she's one of the most gracious people I've met.

20 LC: Lucki, tell me about your arrival over in Vietnam. How did you get over
21 there? What was the route?

22 DA: My route was—I'm not wasting time. I got on the plane—there were 238
23 men and me. We got to Tan Son Nhut and all the names were called. Well, just before I
24 got off the plane I went in. I'd taken a uniform. I went in and put on my clean uniform
25 so when I got off the plane I was starched. So, I was standing there with all the guys in
26 the platoon just standing and all these names and outfits were called. Blah, blah. Next
27 thing I know everybody was gone except me. Because I had asked, you know, here I am.
28 I went over and I was standing there. I went and stood against the wall because I didn't
29 want anybody to take my picture. You get paranoid when you don't know what's
30 happening. Well, I did and I just kind of faced the wall so nobody would take my
31 picture. There were a lot of Vietnamese in there. But I asked several times, "What's

1 happening?" They really did not know. I showed them the orders and they just couldn't
2 figure it out. So eventually, maybe quite a few hours later, they eventually came and got
3 me in a stand and drove me from Tan Son Nhut airbase to, in Saigon, to Long Binh to the
4 90th Replacement Depot. I was there for a little bit. Then I went over to the company
5 and they gave me a wash cloth and a—no, that's a couple of—they gave me a towel.
6 They gave you a white towel and a white washcloth and that's when I went in to take my
7 shower. I went in and took my shower. I thought I had turned brown.

8 LC: When you got done with that—?

9 DA: Thought I turned, whatever color, iron.

10 LC: What happened next after that?

11 DA: What, what honey?

12 LC: What happened next? Did you get your assignment pretty quickly?

13 DA: Oh, yeah. Yes. There was no playing.

14 LC: You were going to stay there at Long Binh, is that right?

15 DA: Yes. I stayed at Long Binh. Now, I wrote this in that first position for a
16 year, a year and a half, about a year—whatever timeline I had down there. Then I went
17 to 1st Logistical Command as an intelligence sergeant in the Army operations center. I
18 stayed there for whatever time I had down there and then I went to Saigon.

19 LC: Went to Saigon. That was at the end, the 519th that was in, what, late '69 or
20 during 1969?

21 DA: I didn't get—I did not get there until '70.

22 LC: Oh, in 1970. Okay.

23 DA: Well, before that.

24 LC: Lucki, tell me a little bit about your first assignment over there. You were at
25 Long Binh. I gather from what you told us that you were with the 525th MI (Military
26 Intelligence) Battalion. You were—on paper your assignment was as an interrogator but
27 in fact that was just paper. You were working as an analyst. What kinds of things did
28 you do? Can you tell me what an average day was like and what your workload looked
29 like?

30 DA: My average day started at six o'clock and it ended about 6:30 this is average,
31 nice, quiet day. When it ended it was—just you had fulfilled a whole day. What I did,

1 and I don't know exactly where you're getting to with that, but the average day was work
2 from the time you walked in, do something good and do it well, and then go home. But
3 what I did mainly was take one stack of intelligence report—no—one stack of
4 information and put it on the other stack. When I say a stack I'm talking about a stack of
5 maybe two feet, two feet high. That's because all those faxes come in through to my
6 desk of everything that happened in Vietnam.

7 LC: From all areas?

8 DA: All areas. We not only—not only was this happening, we get information
9 from some little wood cutter saying that he saw a little boy doing whatever. So any kind
10 of intelligence, any kind of report that you might think maybe they can use this. This is
11 from out there, whoever—like we had informants, naturally, but this is whoever was
12 seeing people. A GI says somebody came along and asked me blah blah blah and
13 thought it might be important or suspicious. Everything got turned in. Okay? So every
14 morning—this is just basic—every morning I'd walk in with the papers, about two feet of
15 papers on my desk on one side and on the other side nothing or something I had left over
16 I had put over. I read everything that even the—I read it. I put it on a couple of piles. I
17 put one here, and one there, this might be. I separated everything. You had to have a
18 good memory because, “Oh, wait a minute. I saw that. I saw that this morning at—oh, I
19 saw that this morning when I first walked at 8:30.” You see this is about almost 5:30 in
20 the afternoon that you'd remember that you saw something about that somewhere and
21 you had saved that piece of paper. So by the time you get all those pieces of information
22 together that's how you come up with that, “Oh, oh, this might be something.” I got
23 there in October and I started—like when I first got there I started doing that. So that's
24 why in December I was able to put down that report because, “Oops, something's
25 happening here.”

26 LC: What was the—?

27 DA: That was Tet. I recorded that Tet was about to happen and I didn't know it
28 was Tet because I had no idea—I had absolutely no concept. I had a concept of it, but I
29 hadn't put anything together about—because I thought all the Viet Cong were dead from
30 all the reports we got. Oh, we killed eighty people and we only lost five. Wow. If you
31 kill them all where the hell they go? You know? How can more people keep coming and

1 coming and coming and coming? So I said it must be the Chinese or somebody, but it
2 was the NVA, the North Vietnamese Army, that was going to do it, but I had no idea.
3 But I did know that something really big was going to happen on this particular holiday.
4 Like I said I named it, I titled it on my report, "Fifty Thousand Chinese," and it wasn't
5 Chinese. It was NVA and Viet Cong. There might have been some Chinese, but all I
6 knew was that it was going to happen. But I did that and—I call it a short period of time,
7 but was able to put real things together.

8 LC: By sometime in December of '67?

9 DA: Like I told them—I gave them the report in December and I said—that's
10 when I gave it to them—so within thirty days it happened within that time period.

11 LC: Do you recall now any of the kinds of pieces or kinds of evidence that came
12 to your attention that seemed to eventually to fall together to this picture that you drew up
13 in that document?

14 DA: No. I got—say it like this. You know when you get, again I go back to you
15 as a historian, somewhere, "Oh, I saw that," and that's the same—what you do is the
16 same thing that I did bringing facts together, so you don't—"Oh what piece, where was
17 that?" So what I did is when I put a piece together I put all those papers over there and
18 somebody wouldn't do this, but they might come in and say let me say where did you get
19 that, but it's in my head by then because I had put it together. Yes, there is back gammit.
20 You have backup, but if you do the backup you must come up with the same analysis and
21 ideas from all these non—these papers that don't—they're not even together. They have
22 nothing to do with each other.

23 LC: Right. Individually they don't suggest something.

24 DA: Yes. It's just a piece of paper like for the second Tet when I found out—
25 before Tet the second one, every once in awhile I'd see something about a mound of dirt
26 being over—"Well, I saw somebody out there in the field doing whatever." It never did
27 say that they were 122 millimeter rockets. Like they didn't say it in that—in other words
28 that rocket was not identified. They'd just put some long, long tubes. I might have
29 gotten four or five of those reports over a period of time and how do you put that
30 together? You put that together because it's in your blood. It's in your brain. It's in
31 your heart. You know it's going to happen.

1 LC: You just have to recognize it.

2 DA: You have to recognize it.

3 LC: Yeah. That's the art in it, really. That's the art in it.

4 DA: Yes. Yes. That's the explanation. Yes. Like when you said China—oh my
5 God. The biggest place in the world. But for you it was just that an easy—I mean it's
6 hard, but it was that. So I did the same thing the very same way.

7 LC: It becomes knowable, but only over time with extra pieces.

8 DA: Absolutely. But my only reference papers I had were from reports—"Well,
9 I read this"—and they'd, "How'd you come upon that?" Well, I read this report saying
10 blah blah or what. I was able to come up with this 117 explosions up to 100 feet high.

11 LC: Lucki, did that report that you wrote December '67, "Fifty Thousand
12 Chinese," did that ever bring anything down on your head, either praise or upset?

13 DA: Of course not.

14 LC: Nothing.

15 DA: Of course not. I sat on top of the—there was a stack by my hooch and I sat
16 upon—no, I went out there. The second time I sat on top of the hooch, but I sat there by
17 myself kind of and I said, "Thank God, thank God, thank God," to myself. In fact, I
18 remember being almost in tears too. Excuse me a moment.

19 DA: What I was saying thank God for is that I reported it. I wasn't lying, and I
20 was right. Whether they used it or not I did what I was supposed to do and I did a good
21 job of it and I thank to God that I could do that. What I did was I told—I said your fly is
22 open, General. It's up to you to either zip it up or not, but at least I said to you that this
23 was what it is. So when Tet happened there was a satisfaction for me in knowing that I
24 put it out there. I did my job. Like I said I think two thousand or so of those people,
25 maybe many more, are out there on that Wall belong to me just because somebody else
26 did not accept that piece of intelligence that I gave them. Have you ever been able to see
27 *A Piece Of My Heart* yet?

28 LC: Yes I have. Yes. I made a point of it.

29 DA: That's—I don't know how well it was acted or whatever, but the point is it's
30 there. It comes out. But that was really hard, but it was satisfaction for me to see it.
31 Now, I did what I had to do.

1 LC: You had done it well.

2 DA: Yes. Anyway, I could have walked up and said, “See I told you.” That was
3 not even important, but in me, in me, there was that, “Okay baby, you did it right. Thank
4 God, thank God.”

5 LC: Lucki, if you feel up to it can you tell me what happened at Long Binh
6 during Tet while you were there?

7 DA: I worked. Let me tell you why I can’t tell you because I worked—my first
8 day I think I worked twenty hours and I worked twenty-two hours. The government—I
9 went home and put my head down for a couple of hours. What I’d do is I’d lay on the
10 bed, straight with my uniform on, I got up and went back to—we were there the whole
11 time. The adrenaline was just there and you just did it. They told me, “You got to go
12 home, you got to go home,” but you don’t know. It’s almost like you’re in Alaska and
13 it’s daytime and you work. You say, “Oh goodness, it’s two o’clock, got to go home, go
14 to bed,” but you didn’t do that. You just kept going and it just kept coming in. It was
15 just working. We was just there working. I slept—the longest I slept I think—on the
16 third day I slept about six hours. My third night I slept about six hours, woke up at seven,
17 took a shower, and went back to work and was all right. Not until it was really
18 vulnerable quiet that we were able to—and I wasn’t the only one doing that, keep in
19 mind. That’s what the troops were doing.

20 LC: Yeah. I spoke to someone else who was also at Long Binh, also an MI,
21 describing very much the same sort of thing. Just absolutely going flat out and working
22 as hard and as quickly. He said he thought as well as he ever had.

23 DA: Yeah. It was—oh, and everybody was working together and you did your
24 job. You didn’t have no crap and you just did it. It was okay. What happens at those
25 times is people let you do what your job is and nobody is walking you around trying to
26 micromanage you and blah blah blah, because you have to do your own job. That was
27 what Tet’s about.

28 LC: Lucki, let’s take a break.

29 DA: Okay.

Interview with Doris Allen

Session [2] of [2]

Date: June 7, 2004

1 Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
2 University. Today is the seventh of June 2004. I'm continuing my oral history interview
3 with Dr. Doris Allen. Today's date is, as I said, seventh of June. I am in the interview
4 room of the Special Collections building on the campus of Texas Tech. Lucki is
5 speaking to me by telephone from California. Good afternoon.

6 Doris Allen: Hi.

7 LC: Hi. We've already begun speaking a little bit and we're talking about your
8 tour in-country, which began in 1967. We were talking about a list that the VC (Viet
9 Cong) had that had your name on it. Can you just go back over what we were just talking
10 about, Lucki?

11 DA: Yes. There was a captured enemy document. The first one—it was—no, no
12 three times. The first time I did not see it. They told me about it. The second time was
13 maybe a year later, I guess, but I saw a copy that I was not able to get my hands on, but I
14 saw the copy and I saw it. The third time I saw it I decided it was time for me to come
15 home. I was at Saigon. I was, at that time, the OIC (officer in charge) of the translation
16 branch at CDEC, Combined Documents Exploitation Center. They had captured lots and
17 lots, in fact truckloads of documents in Cambodia at the—or in that area, the Tay Ninh
18 and Parrot's Beak area from the 200th—oh, I forget the name—the 200th NVA Hospital.
19 Can't get that part straight. But they kept, and all these documents were there. One of
20 the translators came up to me and said here's your name. I said, "Oh my goodness." I
21 looked at it, naturally I had to turn that document in, but I saw the document itself. I sent
22 the document up because that had more than me to deal with. So I had to send it up
23 immediately, but I actually saw it. Shortly after that I said it's time for me to come home.

24 LC: That document had a list of people by name?

25 DA: I don't remember how many names were on that last list. I think it was
26 either thirteen—long time ago—either thirteen on the first list or thirteen on the last list,
27 but I don't remember exactly. I know that there were thirteen names, but that name
28 struck a bell.

1 LC: And what was the point of the list?

2 DA: It said, “People Who Need To Be Abducted,” exact words. I don’t know
3 like “eliminated.” I was to be eliminated. That was in a document that you could just tell
4 that that’s what was supposed to happen to whoever, whoever saw me could eliminate
5 me, I guess.

6 LC: Right. It was—

7 DA: But there was no reward, nothing like a reward or anything like that.

8 LC: Right. It was just you needed to be gotten out of the way or removed and
9 gotten out of action.

10 DA: For whatever reason, I guess.

11 LC: This was sometime then probably in the summer or so of 1970?

12 DA: This was 1970, yes. I came home I think in—when’d I come home? July?

13 LC: September?

14 DA: Oh, yeah. I came home September of, I guess, I got the—

15 LC: Well, actually we should start probably by talking about your arrival there,
16 which again, I think was in September in 1967. Does that sound right?

17 DA: Yes.

18 LC: You had volunteered. Can you tell me about getting your orders?

19 DA: Yes. Okay. I had volunteered prior. I had volunteered when I found out
20 that some women were being sent to Vietnam and most of them were right there in the
21 same place I was at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina. I found out they were going. I said, “Oh,
22 good. I want to go.” In fact, many women wanted to go. I wasn’t chosen.

23 LC: Why did you want to go so badly?

24 DA: This might sound very frightful. One of the reasons I wanted to go is I’m a
25 soldier and this is war and, you know, may as well.

26 LC: This is your opportunity?

27 DA: Had no idea what the hell was going on. Excuse me. I did know because it
28 was pretty bad when they had to send women.

29 LC: Okay. You were getting the idea.

30 DA: Yeah. I knew about Vietnam, but I didn’t—you know, wasn’t really into it
31 until they said, “Well, we’re going to have send some women over there.” Said, “Wow.”

1 That's one of the reasons I wanted to go. I wanted to go be a pioneer, I guess. Go along
2 with the troops. The end result was I figured I could do more there than I could where I
3 was in the sense of since you're a soldier you may as well be where the action is. Had no
4 thought of getting killed and no thought of, you know, all that stuff.

5 LC: That came later on, I'm sure. That first group that went over, they had gone
6 earlier in 1967, I think.

7 DA: Yes. I think—I can't remember if it was February, July that we heard of—I
8 guess February, March, July, between that time.

9 LC: You put in pretty quickly for a transfer over there.

10 DA: Yes, I did. Soon as I heard they were going, but they already had a list of
11 who was going.

12 LC: When did you find out that you yourself was going to get to go?

13 DA: Times escape me, but it wasn't until about at least three or four, five months
14 later.

15 LC: How did you feel that day when you found out?

16 DA: Well, one of the things I stopped doing immediately is I stopped—the job I
17 was in, I was in the Latin America desk officer, which knew all where Fidel Castro and
18 Che Guevara, and everything that's happening in Latin America, that was my—

19 LC: That was your beat.

20 DA: My beat. That's the job I was doing. When I found out that I was going to
21 Vietnam I said, "I don't want to see anything having to do with Vietnam." Being Latin
22 America desk officer we were in the same room reading—you know, everybody's
23 there—and you see all the stuff. You know it's there. You're part of all of it because it's
24 intelligence analysis and then all of that. But I cut myself off from anything having to do
25 with even reading about Vietnam. My reasoning was when I get there I want to be fresh.
26 I knew what was going on by then, but I wanted to be fresh and have no opinions, no
27 jaded opinions.

28 LC: Just kind of come into it clean like a new assignment clean?

29 DA: Yes. The thing that amazed me when I finally got on the plane going over
30 to Vietnam I read the newspaper and I could pinpoint—anybody could—but I did just as
31 an exercise, pinpointed where all of the American troops were. All you had to do was

1 read the newspaper, talking about hiding something. They didn't hide a thing because I
2 knew exactly where—in fact, I did an order of battle on it. I knew who was in the
3 Mekong Delta. I knew who was in Cu Chi. I knew who was in Cua Viet. I knew who
4 was—all over, all the units. You even knew where the firebases were. I thought that was
5 kind of stupid for us to put it all in the newspaper. That gave—we had to find their order
6 of battle. We had to find out where they were through the troops reporting, through
7 engagements, through a whole lot of things. But they could just pick up the paper and
8 find out where we were. I thought that was—why are we doing that? Why would we
9 give the enemy the information, which we still do now, as you know. You probably
10 heard many people say that that we just gave it to them. It's just like when they come
11 over and they knew, the enemy knew, when a B-52 strike was coming from their
12 intelligence. They knew when the plane left the base, wherever it was, they had that
13 information. Plus the fact they knew where they were going to—not knew exactly where
14 but they knew basically where they might hit if they were coming over. But all they had
15 to do is move into this hole where the five hundred pound bomb had already hit because
16 they knew that we were not going to waste another five hundred pound bomb in that
17 same hole.

18 LC: So they could actually take advantage of that.

19 DA: Absolutely.

20 LC: In general, over the course of time that you were there, three years, would
21 you say there was just pretty much, too much information, as it were, available in the
22 open that had tactical or operational or strategic value for the enemy?

23 DA: Let me give you this much from where I sat. I did not talk to Vietnamese
24 people because they were not allowed in my office, in the Army operations center. They
25 weren't even allowed. There were some parts of intelligence, some of the places in the
26 building and some of the intelligence things that went on they were privy to, but not in
27 my office. So, that's where we ran in the sense, ran the war, the Army Operations
28 Center. Okay? But the too much news that we gave was—you know, we are loud, proud
29 Americans. Ha ha ha. But you could see us. We're visible. It was all in the newspapers.
30 The thing that we did is we messed with the Asian mind because, I don't know if you've
31 ever heard that saying something about, I wish I could think of it, messing with the or

1 trying to change the Asian mind. We tried to read Asians and we're too dumb. Ever
2 heard that?

3 LC: Yeah. That sense that we're not playing on as many levels as they are or
4 something like this.

5 DA: Yeah. We tried to find—the Asian brow is smarter than we are. That's
6 basically what it says. You know in your travels, in your Asian connections, if you will,
7 your Chinese connections, you know what I'm saying. They're brilliant, brilliant,
8 brilliant people. I think we thought that since we knew how to fight a war and blah blah
9 blah that we could beat them. We did not defeat them at all. That's because the Asian
10 mind is brilliant. We have weapons, but we also have other things like do a lot of stupid
11 things. I'm not trying to knock the United States.

12 LC: No. I think you're just making an observation on what you saw.

13 DA: Absolutely. Absolutely. It's just like what's happening right now with the
14 intelligence. Let me tell you. I don't know if I've said it before, but what happens is
15 when an intelligence analyst does lots of work to change information into intelligence.
16 When you report that, let's say to the next level, not the intelligence level because when
17 you do it you are the analyst so the next place it goes is to the G2, to the intelligence—not
18 the intelligence—the big shots. Okay. So what happens is when you get there and you
19 tell this commander, "This is happening. This is what's going on." That commander will
20 say to himself, I guess, "I can't tell my boss this. They'll think I'm not doing a good
21 job." Not that the intelligence analyst did not report exactly what was going on because
22 that's what he's been trained to do, but when it got to that man that was responsible at
23 that level for doing something about it or not letting it happen or wonder what his boss
24 will say or whatever he does—and I think I mentioned to you that telephone game. That
25 telephone's the same thing and by the time it gets—and then the intelligence analyst gets
26 the blame. So that was the same thing as far as information, you know what I mean?
27 That information going to how they got it. It was right there for them.

28 LC: When you first started up at the Army Operations Center how many analysts
29 were there?

30 DA: One.

31 LC: Just one?

1 DA: In the operations center there was an intelligence officer, but he was not an
2 analyst.

3 LC: Okay. Where were the analysts?

4 DA: A lot of analysts out in the field, but what they did is they were in the field,
5 but they weren't doing the job that I did because in the operations center I was—I got
6 every report that came from all over Vietnam. That includes the little woodsman that you
7 gave two bowls of rice extra or the other guy, other person, that you had recruited one
8 way or the other. They gave us information. But these little pieces—I mentioned that I
9 think—those little pieces of information turned into—that's the way I did mine.

10 LC: With a lot of work.

11 DA: Lot of work, yes. Yes. We did a lot of work, I think. Everybody in
12 Vietnam, those who were not smoking pot or doing whatever they did. I think we did a
13 lot of work in Vietnam, but we just—when you get people sitting up top who, as the
14 saying goes, will never be accountable they see it from their angle, but we're sitting on
15 the ground. I read something the other day where professional soldiers hate war because
16 we know what it does.

17 LC: Does that sound right to you?

18 DA: Hmm?

19 LC: Does that sound like that reflects pretty much how you feel too?

20 DA: Of course. Of course. Roosevelt said, "War is hell," and people say, you
21 know, "Hey." There are so many levels, but professional soldiers don't want to—they'll
22 go because that's where the money is or they can do better or they can help or whatever,
23 but it's just a terrible thing. So get me back on track.

24 LC: Okay. I was going to ask you about the Army Operations Center. What did
25 it look like when you walked in? Can you just describe it?

26 DA: Okay. You know what the—you've seen movies with all these lights
27 flashing and they're moving the map. Well, way back they used to move the map.

28 LC: That's right. World War II movies, yeah.

29 DA: Yeah. Yeah. They moved the thing across the board? Okay. In my
30 operations center we didn't move things across the board, we moved things across the
31 map. We had many maps. We had personnel, intelligence, training, and supply were the

1 main things that are the parts which make up the Army Operations Center, operations
2 period. So you always knew where the personnel were because you had personnel people
3 there. You always knew what supplies they needed because there's an area for that.
4 Then they had personnel, intelligence, training, and supply, but there were different areas
5 sitting there. So mine was in intelligence. Like I said, they had an intelligence officer
6 there. What that intelligence officer did when I came in was to take reports, put it
7 together, and report intelligence or report—this is the intelligence that came in. When I
8 got there I started actually doing—there was somebody else there. There was a sergeant
9 there doing—what was he doing? He was doing something but it was not extensive like
10 what I was doing. Okay? It's not that he wasn't doing his job. At another part of the
11 headquarters there was another section, Q section or R section—whatever section. There
12 was a section who did special intelligence. Okay? So that's where that was kind of being
13 done before. They still did their, their special intelligence. When I came into the Army
14 Operations Center I started doing order of battle, which you get order of battle from
15 getting all the stuff and putting it together, finding out where the enemy is. That's what I
16 started doing.

17 LC: So you were trying to build up a picture of the organization and extent of
18 enemy field forces in the field?

19 DA: Absolutely.

20 LC: Both VC and NVA?

21 DA: When I first got there I did know—NVA was not so, so visible as NVA.
22 That's why I wrote the, that Tet Offensive paper I wrote and I said, "Fifty Thousand
23 Chinese." I had no idea. I had no idea where all these troops were coming from. They
24 would come from somewhere because we had killed, as we look at it—even right now,
25 you know we killed like fifteen Iraqis died and there's one American wounded. You
26 understand what I'm saying?

27 LC: I think I do. Yes.

28 DA: Okay. But we had all these people who—you know, how can you kill—you
29 kill fifty Viet Cong and maybe there were five Americans dead or some wounded, but we
30 never killed as many Americans as we did Viet Cong. So where's all this big offensive
31 coming from? I had no idea, except there was somebody not in the mix. Keeping in

1 mind I got there at the end of—I think I got there end of September, I think, I got there.
2 The middle of September, whenever it was. I wrote this report from the time I got there
3 to October the—it was the end of October when I wrote that. So that wasn't much time
4 for me to put that all together.

5 LC: You still did pretty good work though. You called it, right?

6 DA: Yes, I called it. The kick is I didn't know where they were coming from.
7 So that's why I said Communist Chinese because I thought they were the ones that were
8 giving them the weapons and doing all the back stuff.

9 LC: Filling the ranks too possibly.

10 DA: So, come to find out the Chinese themselves were not there. It was the
11 North Vietnamese, but when you say communist, oops. Everybody fits in that same
12 category, so they say. So that was a bad part of, bad words on my part, but when
13 something's coming to knock the hell out of you, you're supposed to listen.

14 LC: That was clear to you pretty quickly then that this was—

15 DA: Oh, absolutely. Like I said, what I had done is I knew how the enemy
16 worked. Not that enemy, necessarily, but I know how the enemy works. I also knew—I
17 used that as an example for myself. Hannibal went over the mountain.

18 LC: This is deep background, but yes.

19 DA: Hey. The other part is, you know, we—I think of the slaves who worked in
20 the kitchen. The white folks would sit in there and talk all that stuff, but that black man
21 sitting over there, nigger sitting over there, he don't know nothing. He can't blah. He's
22 dumb. He's stupid. It's that same mentality of, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

23 LC: Just, right, you're just giving it away.

24 DA: There you go. There you go. So it was that same part of how people work
25 and how the military works, and how the Army works, and how—so knowing the enemy,
26 or knowing something was going on—and you can't sit there and keep seeing, hey, this is
27 happening over here. These little pieces of paper never, the only place they got put
28 together, not only, but they came in to me. All those little pieces of paper, when they
29 went all over, everywhere. Everybody, not everybody, many, many places were privy to
30 that information, but when they came in that wasn't their job. So they just, "Oh, okay."

31 LC: They didn't sort them and put it together in the way that you were doing.

1 DA: Yeah. Because you know when that's not your job that's not—I see a lot of
2 shoes come in, but I'm not the one that's supposed to put the sole on them so I just. So
3 that's what that was about—not that people didn't do their work, they did their job.

4 LC: Yeah. But equally, obviously, you were doing yours by putting the pieces
5 together and coming up with your conclusion.

6 DA: I hope. Let me tell you one other thing I think that helps me really big.
7 Don't take this wrong, but I have a pretty good personality. Kind of cute, at that time.
8 Smile a lot. Good character, naturally. But I had lots of people who liked me. What I
9 did is I treated everybody like they were somebody—well, with respect. So a lot of
10 people would call me and say, “Hey Lucki, blah blah blah blah blah.” So I was getting
11 calls from these people all around telling me little, extra little pieces of things that
12 somebody else wouldn't be privy to. So that helped me also. I had a telephone—we
13 weren't supposed to have, I wasn't supposed to have a telephone under my desk but I had
14 a field phone. I had met somebody so they'd call me up and say, “Hi Lucki. Blah blah
15 blah, guess what's happening?” Not guess what's happening. In our conversation
16 something would come up that would register in my mind, to that person that did not
17 register anywhere except maybe just talking to me.

18 LC: But you had a context.

19 DA: Yes. I had lots of context. Like somebody would come in and say, “Where
20 was that”—they need a bomb damage assessment or they needed to know where that
21 bomb came from or whatever, the mortar came from. Somebody had probably called me
22 and told me that we got hit or whatever. This wasn't all the time. Please believe me, you
23 know, but little bitty snips that came in.

24 LC: And over time.

25 DA: Yeah. That came in, and God just put it together for me, helped me put it
26 together. I think my personality probably helped a lot.

27 LC: You said people just kind of liked you, they just—

28 DA: Yeah, I think so.

29 LC: Did you ever get a sense of anybody resenting that you were a female or an
30 African American? Any catch any of that?

1 DA: Of course I did. Of course I did. But that's no big thing. Like you say,
2 "Ain't no thang." You know, because you had to go out there. That's been happening all
3 my life. So that was no thing. So you know somebody doesn't like you, so, but that's
4 not what I'm here for. I'm not here about the liking. Like a lot of guys would come in
5 from the field or whatever and they come up to me and put their arm next to me and say,
6 "Oh, I'm getting brown just like you are baby." I said, "You'll never catch up honey." I
7 pull my ring down, pull my watch down and there some say, "Oh my goodness," because
8 I was getting tan. I was getting a tan just as they were. So, even that—what happened
9 with that was the resentment came. Men did not want women there in the first place, as
10 you know, because we were stepping on their territory. Like here you are, oral historian,
11 what do you know about Vietnam? You ought to not be there, blah blah blah blah. I
12 should have gotten that job. Same thing. Same thing. It's not hard to explain because
13 that's the male attitude or whatever, but if I had let that stop me then I would not have
14 been very good at what I did. When I called the Tet Offensive, had I been a man maybe
15 they would have listened to this. When I called the 1968 Offensive, for the next year
16 when I talked about the 101, I mean, the one about the secondary (inaudible), when I
17 stood at the map and cried, but they had already known that I had done something that
18 was—in other words, I had some credibility but I still had to stand before the map and
19 tears just flowed. I was so mad with myself. But the kick is if I had not kept on and been
20 aggressively assertive, that bomb could have gotten me and those 122 millimeter rockets,
21 had they hit our compound, I would have been dead.

22 LC: Now, Lucki, when you say that you were, you know, standing in front of the
23 map and being upset, was this in '69 then?

24 DA: This was in sixty—Tet Offensive was '68, '69 was when I was talking about
25 the second just before the second, would have been the second Tet Offensive.

26 LC: Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit more about that briefing? This was—

27 DA: Okay. I knew what I had read and knew what I had seen. I talked to my G2
28 and he—I got him to consent to let me go over to the 173rd. No, it was the—oh which
29 one was it? Not 173rd. This is the—to the other officer, the second field force. I went
30 down to the second, let me go down to the second field force headquarters. I went in and
31 I told him, I knew most of them. They knew me, I guess. So I got into the Army

1 Operations Center and I went down. They said, “What you got?” Because that’s easy to
2 say, what you got, what’s going on. Then when you start giving it to them then they said,
3 “Mmm.” Then I could never forget the colonel I guess was one of the wheels set a
4 missing—no the general’s going to miss—ask, “Where did you get that information?” I
5 worked on it. The way I was asked was—what they had done, this is my speculation,
6 what they did they saw merit in it. Okay? But how could this woman have come up with
7 this in the first place?

8 LC: Exactly. That’s where I figured you were going to go.

9 DA: But the kick is, not only how did she come up with this, she’s not capable.
10 Somewhere somebody was saying she’s not capable, not capable because she’s a woman,
11 black, WAC (Women’s Army Corps) because at that time I was enlisted, all those things
12 that come in their minds. Now I don’t know that because I’m not them, but you know
13 what you feel, you know what you know. It was almost a falling in—how can I put that?
14 You know when somebody, when you’re trying to convince somebody of something and
15 you just keep on and it hits them. You know when you’ve got them. You know when
16 that moments comes. I knew that I had to keep on until that moment came but, like I
17 said, they had five generals sitting over there. Somebody said, “Well, we’ll look into it,”
18 after I had stood there. It must have been a two hour span right there in that place trying
19 to convince them. When the major came out and said, “Well, where’d you get that
20 information? Where did that come from?” I was explaining, trying to explain it to them
21 what was happening. It was fruitless for me to sit up and say—try to explain to them
22 where it came from. It doesn’t matter. The point is it’s out there. I’m an analyst and
23 that’s what I said—and I didn’t say it like that but you know it’s—and when they
24 finally—they didn’t do anything on it that day. It wasn’t until the next day that they put
25 out a couple of rounds of, you know, in the area that I said that these things and where
26 they are. They put some rounds and then when they got four secondary explosions the
27 next day is when they put out this flag and came up with that 117 secondary explosions
28 up to 100 feet high. Now, the reason that I know—I always say, if I had been a little
29 white blond girl—oh, I could’ve been stupid, dumb, but they would have—

30 LC: They would have listened to you.

1 DA: I think so. I think they would have tried to make me feel better anyway, you
2 know, whether they did anything or not.

3 LC: It's a lot of frustration to be up against.

4 DA: Oh, of course. Of course. The reason I could say is because I know you had
5 to go through it. I know you've been through some of it.

6 LC: I've been through some of it. The race part of this is a special piece,
7 obviously, that I don't have although I think I'm pretty tuned in.

8 DA: Yeah, but being a woman, it's that same, that same stuff. People thinking
9 you're stupid. But that happened. The other part about this racism stuff, when I called,
10 when this Marine officer called back down and said that whoever wrote that, the report
11 about the mortar round, the chemical rounds, that person, said he should have a legion of
12 merit because that was—you read about it that. If he hadn't read it then they would have
13 lost a hundred more Marines.

14 LC: Now this story is in *A Piece Of My Heart*, in the book *A Piece Of My Heart*?

15 DA: Yes. That's also in the book, I think. I think it is. Yeah. But the
16 information—yeah, in the book all that information is—when you said *A Piece Of My*
17 *Heart* I thought of the movie, I mean the play. Yes, it's in *A Piece Of My Heart* just like
18 it was. Yes.

19 LC: Did anybody say, "Well, let's look at Allen over here. Maybe she should get
20 some kind of citation because she came up with it," that never happened?

21 DA: No. It wasn't a matter of let's look. They knew who it was.

22 LC: Nobody sort of took the initiative to—

23 DA: No. I don't know if you know what Bronze Star, how Bronze Stars work
24 but I think you do.

25 LC: I have an idea.

26 DA: Okay. I got three Bronze Stars in Vietnam.

27 LC: Do you want to go ahead and say what those were actually given for?

28 DA: Because I was good.

29 LC: I have a feeling. Were there specific incidents though that got written up?

30 DA: They were meritoriously doing a bang up job. It's something in the citation,
31 but I was credited with some good stuff, you know.

1 LC: Yes. You absolutely were. Those citations, did they mean something to you
2 when they came through?

3 DA: Funny you should ask. Anytime a woman gets a combat citation—because
4 you can't get them unless you're in combat—and anytime you get that, that was really,
5 really wonderful for me. Yes. But one thing I learned as I went through life, and I was
6 missing that too, that with all those thirteen medals I have and \$1.05, I can go and buy a
7 cup of coffee. Understand what I'm saying?

8 LC: Yeah. I understand what you're saying and I wonder what that makes—
9 what does that make you think?

10 DA: No. This is life. Let me go off on another tangent for just a moment.

11 LC: Sure. That's okay. Go ahead. These are very interesting.

12 DA: I was kind of—I had some really – I think I was in a good place because I
13 was older than most of the women over there, but—hold just one second. What
14 happened was that the women would say 'humph' to the men. A guy would just want to
15 dance with her or just we go to a club or whatever. The guys just want to talk to them.
16 They'd say, "Humph, I don't have to," with the attitude there were three hundred men to
17 every woman on Long Binh post. These women would say, "Humph, there's enough
18 men out here for blah blah blah." I would tell them, I said, "All he wants to do is talk to
19 you." That's all he wants to do. You're a round eye. If I told you this part before just
20 stop me.

21 LC: That's okay. Go ahead.

22 DA: But you're a round eye. I said, "All he wants to do is talk to you." You
23 couldn't go anywhere for sex anyway. He just wants to talk to a round eye, somebody
24 from home, his sister, his mother, his girlfriend, anything. Some of the women had the
25 attitude, "Humph, I don't have to talk to him." I tell them and I tell them, I say, "You
26 know when you get back to the States, one of the things—you going to see this same guy
27 and you going to say, 'Oh, hi, we met in Vietnam,' and he's going to look at you and say,
28 'I beg your pardon,' and walk right on. You're going to be back in that same place that
29 you were before you left because all he wants to do is talk to you." I said, "Quit trying to
30 treat people badly. Be nice." That kind of worked. But I thought about that, when you
31 get back to the States what's it going to be, what's it going to be like? You know? So

1 that's when I got back to the States with all that, thirteen Bronze Stars, I mean three
2 Bronze Stars and all those medals, when I didn't have on my uniform, psh.

3 LC: Right. Doesn't show.

4 DA: Doesn't show.

5 LC: Something else is showing.

6 DA: Hey.

7 LC: Other things are apparent but medals aren't.

8 DA: Hey. Hey. Absolutely. So that's why I said yes, they were very important.
9 Whatever pride means I'm proud that I—and I earned them. Just like with my doctorate.
10 I knew some people that went and got there doctorate a different way. I worked hard for
11 my doctorate. Those of us who worked hard for it we know—maybe nobody else will
12 know, but we knew what we did to get it.

13 LC: Right. It's one of those things you do for yourself anyway.

14 DA: Absolutely.

15 LC: I mean if you're doing it so people look at you, you might as well forget
16 about it. It's not worth it.

17 DA: Absolutely. So that's the same thing. It's the same thing about—had I not
18 when I was teaching interrogations, had I not put my medals on because I told you about
19 the use we had about all that noise that they were making, they respected the medals, not
20 me.

21 LC: What noise was that that they were making?

22 DA: They were just being—you know how—I'll put it like this—how kids do?
23 They just not paying attention. They're disrespecting the teacher.

24 LC: That kind of stuff was going on?

25 DA: Yeah. That same kind of rattling back and forth, the same thing. But had
26 they not seen the—they had to have an opening so had they not seen the medals then they
27 would never have known it. May I go into that part? I bet you gained fifty miles of
28 respect when you were sitting there with those generals, with those and other people in
29 your outfit, probably would loved to have been sitting there.

30 LC: It's possible.

1 DA: But here you were because you were the one that was appointed and chosen
2 to do that.

3 LC: Right. I didn't actually think of it that way. I need to stop and think about
4 that. I hadn't thought of it that way.

5 DA: Yeah. There were a lot of people that wanted to be where you were. You're
6 from your own—you said it yourself. Here you're sitting with some history. Some other
7 people would have loved to have been sitting there where you were sitting and got very
8 pissed off with you because they weren't sitting there.

9 LC: I think of others that would have been very happy that I had the opportunity
10 too.

11 DA: Of course. Of course.

12 LC: So, yeah. It goes both ways. I think of people who supported me earlier on.
13 My dissertation supervisor, for example, who's no longer alive, he would have been
14 thrilled.

15 DA: See. I mean a lot of people were thrilled about me doing those things, but
16 I'm saying those other little things, those other little things that come up. The same thing
17 was happening to me. It wasn't that I was a good blah blah blah lady, but when you look
18 at it the other way that analogy came from when you asked me about the race thing.

19 LC: Absolutely. I see that too, that people would—there's a little jealousy.
20 There's a little resentment. There's a little, "What'd she do to get there?" that kind of
21 thing.

22 DA: Sure. If I dwell on that—like you just said, you don't dwell on that. If I
23 dwelt on that I wouldn't be the person I am now.

24 LC: That's right. I can hear that's true. I can absolutely hear that that's true.
25 That came up, or the part that we're referring there, has to do with when you were back
26 from Vietnam and instructing at, was it Ft. Holabird in the interrogation course?

27 DA: Yeah, it was at Ft. Holabird. Yes.

28 LC: Well, let me ask you a couple of more questions about the Vietnam period.

29 DA: Well, that was the Vietnam period by the way.

30 LC: Well, yes, that's right. That's true. You're absolutely right. While you
31 were working at AOC (Army Operations Center) though I wonder, where did you live?

1 DA: Oh, I lived with the rest of the post. I lived in the, I lived in barracks.

2 LC: What was the setup there?

3 DA: We had a regular compound. We lived in a compound, in the barracks.

4 When I first got there we had no sand bags, no nothing, and then they put lots of

5 sandbags. When we had incoming or when had to go to the bunker or hide or whatever,

6 that's what we'd do.

7 LC: Was it like a two story barracks?

8 DA: Yes. Like regular, like the regular barracks.

9 LC: Did you have a roommate assigned or did you have your own room?

10 DA: Yes, I had a roommate. Yes. I had my Bob Hope roommate. You read

11 about that part.

12 LC: No. What was that?

13 DA: You didn't get permiss to that yet? Oh.

14 LC: No. Uh-oh, break me in. Tell me.

15 DA: You know what—well I'm going to send—you probably hate me.

16 LC: No!

17 DA: You probably hate me when you hear this part. I don't know where it is

18 right now, I'm going to save that or either call you. When I read it it's much better.

19 Well, what it was about was—it starts off, it says, "I didn't like Bob Hope then, I still

20 don't like him now." What that was—oh, but that just started the thing off. Oh, I got to

21 send you it.

22 LC: Oh, yeah. You better. You send that and we'll—

23 DA: You know what has happened. The reason I'm looking for stuff. My sisters

24 are gone and before they left they painted the house, inside and—

25 LC: Last time I talked to you they were painting.

26 DA: Yeah. Yeah, they finished. So then it was my turn to do all of mine so my

27 posse has come in. They painted. They moved the stuff and painted my room. I'm still

28 trying to put stuff back, but I am. I did not move my stuff out like they did. They did it

29 very meticulously and in order. I just put all my stuff in a box. I have no idea where half

30 the stuff is.

1 LC: Well, see, when you uncover it now it'll be like, frankly, like Christmas. Oh,
2 I wondered where that was.

3 DA: No. No. I'm working on it now, but I'm throwing a lot of stuff out though.

4 LC: Oh, you are? Uh-oh.

5 DA: But I'm going to send you a couple of things. I'm going to send you a poem
6 that I wrote, not a poem, a piece I wrote about this lady, Lily Adams. She was a nurse.
7 When she came back here they wouldn't even let her hang an IV. That's one of the
8 things that—and then the other one I'm going to send you, I have a thing about the
9 Wailing Wall. I'll send that one. I'll send the one that—which one I just said?

10 LC: The gal who was the nurse that they wouldn't let—

11 DA: That's the first one. That's the nurse. But there was another one I wanted to
12 send you. Oh, Bob Hope.

13 LC: Oh, Bob Hope. Yeah. Sure. Yeah, okay. Make a little list of the things and
14 we'll—

15 DA: I'm going to send to you. I'm going to put those in my drawer. But I want
16 to give you a sense of me. I don't know if I'm going to write the book or not. What I
17 need Laura is somebody to write that book with me, you know? That's my problem.

18 LC: Yeah. We had a little email back and forth about that and I can talk to you
19 about that in a bit too, maybe an idea or two for you. I want to ask you about these
20 weekly intelligence estimate updates that you were responsible for. Can you just tell me
21 how you put one of those together and what your role in that was?

22 DA: Okay. The same thing is the one that's put out every week all over the
23 world, the weekly update. Okay? My part in it was to—because it's the intelligence
24 update—my part was to write it or write parts of it, write major parts of it. It's a
25 classified document. Was that one? No, the regular—I listed on top of my stuff and I
26 can't put on the—separate a couple of things. But, so I wrote just important, important
27 stuff that came out of my intelligence part. Okay? There were other, like I said, there
28 was another intelligence going on. Not in the operation center but anything that needed
29 to be disseminated to update intelligence all over, everywhere, was put in the WIU
30 (weekly intelligence update).

31 LC: Those would go—?

1 DA: All over, everywhere.

2 LC: All over. Not just in Vietnam, I take it, but probably back in D.C. also?

3 DA: Oh, yes. Yes. All over, everywhere. A need to know.

4 LC: Okay. The special intelligence that you talked about being, that's happening
5 somewhere else?

6 DA: Not in my office. Not in the Army Operations Center.

7 LC: Right.

8 DA: I'll tell you, I'll tell you in just a little. It needs to discuss it because I wasn't
9 there, I didn't do that. But the My Lai incident came across my desk. I was right on top
10 of it, however, I guess it stayed in my office about less than an hour, between a half an
11 hour and an hour.

12 LC: Before what happened?

13 DA: Before it was spirited away. It was taken into special ops, special
14 intelligence, special ops. Okay? I saw it no more. But I was—I knew exactly what
15 happened when it first came in.

16 LC: The first initial reports?

17 DA: Yeah, because it was right there. Yes. Somebody came and got it. That's
18 all I can say about that.

19 LC: So it came and then it left very quickly. Okay.

20 DA: Yes. So that's the type of thing that was not in my purview. I'm not free—
21 like I said, I'm not free to discuss anything that went on except what I know. So if I do
22 that then—

23 LC: Well, you know quite a lot so that's actually still quite a lot to have to talk
24 about. Tell me, at what point did you—and am I right in thinking that this was a
25 change—that you moved to CDEC? How did that happen?

26 DA: I applied—you know I stayed in grade so long. I wouldn't go out with my
27 boss in Ft. Monmouth so he wouldn't give me a stripe.

28 LC: Right. I remember.

29 DA: I had to go and almost cuss the colonel out at Ft. Bragg because they weren't
30 going to give me a stripe. Even before that when I was in Camp Spellman when I was
31 just a youngster. I'd come back from Japan and I still wasn't getting promoted. My

1 sister happened to be the commanding officer. She went up and just asked why wasn't
2 this person getting promoted. Not my name, I mean, not in the vein of sister, but she
3 wondered why certain people were not put up for promotion, and I got promoted then. I
4 had of course to go before the board as a matter of getting your name in. But all those
5 times, and I never—I always had to fight. I was never just called in. I always had to
6 fight for my promotion. So I had been in grade so long, and I said, because there was no
7 such thing as E8 in my MOS. The only higher I could go would be a warrant officer,
8 unless I accepted, way back when, accepted the commissioned officer thing. It came
9 upon me to say, "Hey baby, you're going to be out there as an E7 unless you do
10 something about it." So I said, "Well, I'll apply for warrant." So that's what I did. I
11 applied for warrant officer. When I applied I fully expected to be a warrant officer as an
12 intelligence analyst. Shows you how much they didn't know, when I got the warrant it
13 was as an interrogator, not as an intelligence analyst.

14 LC: Any idea how they made that switch or how that happened?

15 DA: You know when you have somebody you don't know what to do with?

16 LC: Uh-huh. Yes. Got to find something.

17 DA: Got to find something. Because they couldn't find—see that was the whole
18 thing most of my—they couldn't find anything wrong. Because if they could have found
19 something wrong they would've probably done it. Lady called me in for—I got courts,
20 not court, what did I get? I got put up for general for special court martial one time.
21 What the commanding officer did was put all this information down—and it was so
22 erroneous—but when I walked in to the man who was the major who was holding the
23 court martial, I had walked in with a dictionary under one arm, with the UCMJ (Uniform
24 Code of Military Justice) under the other arm. I had to put them both down on his desk
25 and then I saluted. When I saluted he looked up and he said, "Lucki, what are you doing
26 here?"

27 LC: Was this the incident back in Japan?

28 DA: No—yeah, that was way back when, when the CO wanted to—she just—

29 LC: She just had a problem.

30 DA: She just had problems. When you try to do things to people you should
31 have your information together because I hadn't done a thing to that lady. It's just that I

1 was too whatever. But the main thing about that is if you don't have that aggressive
2 assertiveness then you will continue to be where you were. At any rate, I applied for and
3 like I said they gave me as an interrogator and I was still in Vietnam, but what I did is I
4 applied to go to Saigon. When I got there I was not an analyst, but I was in charge of the
5 translation branch. A Vietnamese whom I have never spoken any Vietnamese to in life, I
6 had gone to language school for French, but most of the Vietnamese with whom I worked
7 spoke English. In other words, all the bosses up here, all those liaisons, those in between,
8 spoke English. The translators knew English enough to—because they had to translate
9 the document. So I worked with people who spoke English. But that was the switch of
10 going to Saigon. I wouldn't have—I needed to leave. I needed to go away. I needed
11 to—another place.

12 LC: Did you ever consider actually leaving Vietnam or did you want to stay
13 there, because you were there for three years, which is—?

14 DA: The reason why—when I first got orders to go somewhere, you've heard me
15 say before, I learned how not to be oppressed. When I first—see what happens is in
16 military when you're going somewhere and they usually assign somebody that would say
17 welcome when you get there. So, I was an E7. When you get to be an E7 you get a
18 welcome committee, sort of, a welcome person who will tell you what this space is all
19 about and stuff. So I got this letter from an E5. I felt I was disrespected. I'm an E7.
20 You're supposed to get a letter from an E7. This E5 that I got the letter from was black.
21 I got the sense that the reason that person was given me as an assignment because I was
22 black. They didn't know—it was in Chicago at Ft. whatever that is—they didn't know
23 what to do with me. Didn't know what they would have done with me, didn't know how
24 to treat me, so they had to get somebody black to take care of me. The only person they
25 could get was an E5. I just refused in my life—I respectfully declined to go. I stayed in
26 Vietnam. It was okay because I thought I was doing a fine job. Had I really wanted to
27 come back to the States I would have come back to Chicago and then done what I did at
28 Ft. Bragg and tell them I don't want to be there and have to talk my way out of it. But
29 that's the reason, the first time I didn't come back. You don't disrespect somebody. You
30 don't disrespect the private.

1 LC: Right. You didn't want to come into a new command under those kind of
2 conditions. Yeah.

3 DA: Oh, of course not. Of course not. No, no, no. I've always told people, "I
4 don't care what you think of me. Just use my work. Just look at my work. That's all."
5 Then they look at my work and then, "Oh, okay." They kind of, "Okay." It's been an
6 arduous journey, but it's okay because I've learned how to say okay.

7 LC: Sure. You have to do a little adjustment there.

8 DA: Sure you do. Sure you do.

9 LC: Lucki, I want to ask you about the time at CDEC. You mentioned some
10 about the translators that were working there, the Vietnamese civilians, I take it, who
11 were working there. Did any of them actually become friends?

12 DA: No.

13 LC: You didn't cross that line with any of them?

14 DA: No. You know, I was friendly with everybody. But let me give you an
15 incident of—I'll go back to that one and put it off if you ask me again, but I took—you
16 know Chieu Hoi, right? I took a Chieu Hoi up to one of our bases. I found out later that
17 the Chieu Hoi was a major in NVA. That taught me a big lesson. Lo Vinh trusts you, but
18 he turned out, when we found out—we found out before he did lots of damage, but he
19 was an NVA sapper. That taught me a really big, big, big lesson about trust. You speak
20 to everybody, you friendly with everybody, you do all those wonderful things, but I was
21 the one who took this Chieu Hoi from the 93rd—golly, that's leaving my brain, it's not
22 the Second Field Corps—but I was the thread catcher, but I was the one that took him to
23 another base and was letting him show us how the Vietnamese or how the enemy would
24 infiltrate our perimeter. I was getting told this out of him, but what he was doing was
25 getting intelligence of scouting our base so he could send information to his people how
26 to get into our base. When you learn those lessons you get very, very cagey. Like I said,
27 I was friendly with everybody, but I had nothing, nothing in common. They would come
28 up to me and we'd even have lunch. They'd eat lunch. I'd go back and kind of gnaw
29 with them and stuff like that, but not friendly.

30 LC: Now how was it found out that this major was in fact not truly, not an
31 authentic, changed heart man?

1 DA: There was a grenade thrown into the officer's barracks.

2 LC: This is at Saigon or—?

3 DA: No. We were at Long Binh. This is at—he was at (inaudible) right down
4 the street from us. When that happened we got right on to find out how that could have
5 happened, where it could have come from. That's how we came up with he's the only
6 who could've done it.

7 LC: Oh, okay.

8 DA: He's the only one could have done it. When we start interrogation of him
9 then we found out. Let me stop. I did not do the interrogation. Okay. I was privy.

10 LC: You just found out later. Yeah.

11 DA: No, I was privy. I was—yeah. I was found out like almost that day, that
12 same day that they did it, but the point is that that was him. That was a really big thing.
13 So we started looking again at our Chieu Hois a little more closely.

14 LC: About what time period was this? This was after Tet, would that be fair?

15 DA: Yes. Yes.

16 LC: Although you—

17 DA: Not directly after, but somewhere—

18 LC: Right. Sometime in the period after that.

19 DA: In fact, I was in operations center, 1st Logistical Command by then. At first
20 I was at Army Operations Center at USARV (United States Army Vietnam), and then I
21 moved to 1st Log Command.

22 LC: 1st Log. Okay. But that was still—?

23 DA: In AOC.

24 LC: That was all still, though, at Long Binh? The base was still the home of both
25 operations.

26 DA: Yes.

27 LC: Yeah. Lucki, just to clarify, when you did become a warrant officer and you
28 were appointed in the interrogator MOS you were not actually conducting interrogations.
29 Just to clarify that, that didn't happen. You really stayed functional as an analyst.

30 DA: Absolutely. Absolutely.

1 LC: Okay. Working at CDEC, you were still in that analyst mode, but you had a
2 number of people working for you, I guess. How many people?

3 DA: I guess we had, we had about between thirty-five and forty translators. We
4 had a couple of extra secretaries. The translators would translate and we had some
5 people who refined it. When I say refined it, what they did is they also, they rigged the
6 translations to see that they could be—to see that they were translated correctly.

7 LC: Okay, and that they were readable in English and understandable?

8 DA: Yes. Yes.

9 LC: Did those people who were doing those sort of final edits also report to you?

10 DA: Oh, yes. Yes.

11 LC: So the whole group—and were most of those Vietnamese translators, were
12 most of them Chieu Hoi or were they ARVN? Any Chieu Hoi in there?

13 DA: Oh, no, no, no, no. No. They were—I started saying they were American,
14 Lord, no. No. They were workers. They were South Vietnamese workers, just people
15 who worked.

16 LC: Would they have had some kind of security clearance process they would
17 have gone through?

18 DA: Definitely. Oh, definitely.

19 LC: Who conducted those clearances?

20 DA: Oh, somebody else, not me. But—

21 LC: But American?

22 DA: Oh, yes. Definitely. Well, Americans and the Vietnamese also, but they
23 had the regular process of getting a clearance.

24 LC: So there was some process they had to clear before they would go through,
25 before they would be working for you?

26 DA: Definitely.

27 LC: The source of the material that they were translating was what?

28 DA: Captured enemy documents.

29 LC: So presumably internal Communist documents?

30 DA: No. What do you mean internal?

31 LC: Well—

1 DA: No. This is captured. This was at the Combined Documents Exploitation
2 Center, but my part was the translation branch. Okay? Any enemy document that was
3 captured was translated in my order.

4 LC: Were there other branches? What were the other branches of CDEC?

5 DA: Honey. You couldn't pull it out of me.

6 LC: Oh, really? Okay. That's fine. That's fine. I didn't know that that was an
7 area we shouldn't go on.

8 DA: No. It wasn't a matter of not an area we shouldn't go in. I was working
9 in—when you work in an area that you're working. I knew they were there, but I
10 didn't—it was just an area that was there.

11 LC: I just wondered, as the head of the translation branch, if you had to attend
12 meetings or whatever where these other people were there.

13 DA: Of course. Of course. Of course.

14 LC: What was the structure such—what was the structure of command for
15 CDEC? How did it report? Who was in charge?

16 DA: Oh. Who did we report—we report to MACV (Military Assistance
17 Command, Vietnam).

18 LC: Okay. So part of MACV?

19 DA: Yeah. Part of MACV. Yes.

20 LC: Who did you actually report to? What rank?

21 DA: I don't know that I reported, in a sense, but yes, I reported to the G2.

22 LC: Okay. Was CDEC and the part that you were working in, did you have
23 adequate resources to do what you were tasked with?

24 DA: Absolutely. Let me—you know you asked me a question. Let me go back
25 to that—what I did with the translated documents. Okay, that was important. Those
26 translated documents were furthered on to other analysts. What I did was basically
27 supervise the—the analysis that I did, the work that I did, was seeing that the important,
28 if you will—whew, hard to say it like that—but the cogent documents were forwarded,
29 that you didn't send a bunch of junk up because there was lots of junk, lots of junk. But
30 you sent those up that—that's where that responsibility came in as far as doing something
31 of let's get the right documents.

1 LC: You pretty much had to make those calls to which ones needed to go up and
2 which ones were—?

3 DA: Which ones needed to be, “Let’s act on this now,” or, “This is important for
4 you to know now, chief,” sort of thing, or, “This might be”—you know, so that sort of
5 thing. But there were other analysts who worked on the documents also after I saw that
6 they got where they were supposed to be.

7 LC: Okay. Interpreting content and all of that for its operational value, would
8 that would all happen further on down the line somewhere?

9 DA: Yes. Well, it’s—what I did was a triage, so to speak. You know, that part,
10 let’s check and see where this goes or how that is. That’s where that parts coming.

11 LC: Okay. I mean, Lucki, just personally, was this a good placement for you?
12 Did you enjoy doing this?

13 DA: Oh, I did immensely.

14 LC: Why was it so good?

15 DA: Because I was doing work. When you do work that means something, that
16 something comes out of it, and I was about saving up to where—if you put out the right
17 information you can save a life.

18 LC: Did you really think of it that way while you were there?

19 DA: I sure did. I thought—I say this to myself—I thought of saving my life.
20 You see, when you think of saving your own life, everybody else—my dad taught me
21 that, my mom and dad, said, “Baby, when you’re driving the car what you do is you pay
22 attention to what you’re doing, not what everybody else is doing. If you can save
23 yourself, everybody else will be saved also because you’re the driver. You’re the one
24 handling what’s going on. So, take care of you.” I didn’t apply that at first, but then I
25 said, “Hey, wait a minute. Let me do that that Mom and Dad put out there.” They kill
26 you baby, everybody, everything else is just like—

27 LC: Everything else will come along just fine.

28 DA: Everything else will come right in and fall right in, baby. Take care of you
29 and nobody else can die. That’s what I thought about when I first stood before that map
30 at—wherever that was.

31 LC: The briefing that you were talking about earlier?

1 DA: Yeah. Where, yeah, before the 117 secondary explosions, when I stand
2 before the map, yeah. Yeah. That's where it really came in. "Stand here, baby. Don't
3 you dare leave because the bomb could come in on you." That's where I learned that
4 other thing about—see in the book it says find out the name, rank, serial number of the
5 person you're interrogating. My thing was I really didn't give a damn what his name
6 was. I care where he came from and I cared what he was doing while he was there
7 because if a bomb was coming in it would hit the two of us, so let's find out where he
8 came from and what he was doing there and whether they about to bomb us or not.

9 LC: Right. The other things can kind of hold.

10 DA: Yeah. Yeah, because they'll fall in, but if I'm not alive, if I'm not alive to
11 get that information, then what good is it?

12 LC: Right. No point. Lucki, were there any allied personnel assigned to CDEC
13 that you saw or met with?

14 DA: Oh, yes. Yes. We had Australians—Australians—Australians, Koreans,
15 there were some Turks. We had a couple of—oh, Thais.

16 LC: Do you remember any incidents or any of those particular officials at all?
17 Anything you can tell us about any of them, the Koreans, for example, or—?

18 DA: I'm going to tell you who I would like to always be on my side because I
19 thought they took care of business. I didn't trust the Thais at all. I didn't trust the ARVN
20 because I don't think they knew what they were doing. The Australians drank too much.
21 But if I needed somebody to take my back I'd take a Turk or a Korean any day, any day.
22 Even now it's on my brain to take a Turk or a Korean if you're at war. Have you heard
23 that saying, "Homie, don't play"?

24 LC: That's where they're at?

25 DA: Yep. One thing I didn't like, an incident that happened when the Koreans
26 walked down the street, reminds me of that man, the Vietnamese officer who shot the VC
27 right in the middle of the street.

28 LC: Yeah, during Tet, that famous photograph.

29 DA: Yes. That other one is—I don't know if you ever saw that picture. I don't
30 think you did, maybe you did, but there was—you know how you put a deer, an animal,

1 between two sticks? You walk down and you coming back in with your prey? These
2 guys had a Viet Cong with the pole stuck through his ears.

3 LC: Who? Now which force was this that was doing this?

4 DA: The Koreans.

5 LC: With the pole stuck between his ears?

6 DA: Imagine. You're walking in with your deer on a stick or between the, your
7 prey—one had one end of the stick, one had the pole, one had the other end of the pole,
8 and hanging on that pole was a Viet Cong. The way he was hanging on that pole was the
9 pole was stuck through his ears, through his head, in one ear and out the other. I can see
10 it. I can see it right now as he dangles. You know how because it's heavy the load goes
11 up and down as you're walking. That picture still stays with me.

12 LC: You saw this in the street in Saigon?

13 DA: Yes. Yeah. That picture stays with me. I don't talk about that bit. I don't
14 remember that picture much sometimes.

15 LC: Yeah. That's quite brutal.

16 DA: By the way, is this going to be transposed, trans—what's that word?

17 DA: Thanks a lot.

18 LC: Sure. Yeah. So you were telling me about the ROKs (Republic of Korea)
19 and you said that the Thais didn't strike you as particularly trustworthy. What made you
20 think that? Any incident?

21 DA: Yes. Yes.

22 LC: Or just an impression?

23 DA: No. No. Incident. What happens mainly is when—we were wondering
24 where that mortar came from. We call them missed shots. If when we did a bomb
25 damage assessment and when we did a location, that's where it came from. It came from
26 the Thai compound.

27 LC: Oh, really?

28 DA: Yes. It wasn't—we decided – it wasn't that they were trying to hit us, it was
29 that they didn't know what the hell they were doing.

30 LC: So it was just incompetent firing?

31 DA: Yes. I don't want to call them incompetent in that sense, but yes.

1 LC: But for that particular firing of that particular mortar.

2 DA: Yes. Yes. The other thing, I don't know how much of that that I took into
3 consideration about the Thais, but they never looked like they were taking care of
4 themselves. Not the Thais, the Thais and the Vietnamese.

5 LC: The ARVN?

6 DA: The ARVN. Looks like, like in our hospitals they came to our hospitals, the
7 ARVN or the people. I kind of—but when somebody's shooting at you, whether they're
8 shooting at you or not—and this was on the basis of who would you like to have, who
9 would you like best—it wasn't that I didn't like them at all, I was thinking they were
10 okay people, but it was just that like who I'd like on my back.

11 LC: Got it. You had some observations that led you to these conclusions. It
12 wasn't just out of nowhere.

13 DA: Absolutely.

14 LC: While you were at Long Binh or later in Saigon, did any VIPs come through,
15 either civilian or military that you remember?

16 DA: One real big one, General Ryan, who was CINCPAC (commander in chief,
17 Pacific Command), came through and the colonel came in, in the operations center. He
18 told me, walked up to me and said, "I want you to do the briefing." I said, "Okay."
19 That's when a lot of people got upset with me because they wanted to do it. But when I
20 went in—and what they had done is they'd set all these plush in the operations center.
21 He came out with all these plush chairs. I got so upset, said, "What'd you got plush
22 chairs out here for? Sit his butt down on a desk or something." They said, "Well," but
23 they left the plush chairs in the room, but they brought out these kind of nice chairs to sit
24 them in. I said, "This is bull," but at any rate I was chosen to give that briefing. General
25 Ryan, when I finished—because he had been briefed on the personnel intelligence, I
26 mean personnel, training, and supply areas. When I did my part he came over to me and
27 first thing he said to me because I had my sleeves rolled up and he said, "What's that
28 rank?" And my sleeve only showed three chevrons, which were kind of bold—if you've
29 seen the spec seven stripe—but at any rate I told him, I said, "That's my triple canopy
30 jungle, sir." He chuckled. He says, "Well, I want to tell you something, Sarge." He
31 says, "You have been—this has been the only briefing that somebody has come up and

1 told me the honest truth and told me exactly what was going on here in Vietnam.” He
2 says, “I’ve been at CINCPAC as the commander in chief,” and whatever else he said, but
3 he said, “You have told me. I found out where the enemy was, where the friendlier
4 troops are and you the one that seems to have told me the truth, the only person.” I said,
5 “Thank you, sir,” and I turned around. You know what that reminded me of is that same
6 thing that I keep saying, when you send intelligence up people interpret it the way they
7 want to. I think what the CINCPAC did, General Ryan did, is he sat there and he got all
8 these pieces of information from all these different places. He had to be an analyst
9 himself and put all that stuff together and work at himself for him to be able to say that.

10 LC: How did it make you feel when he gave you that compliment?

11 DA: You know, I guess I was so—I was so all right with myself. Please don’t
12 think I’m being cute, but I was so all right with myself anyway that that’s what he should
13 have said. If he didn’t say it well then fine, but what I did was told the truth. That to me
14 was good.

15 LC: And he recognized that that’s what you’d done.

16 DA: He recognized it as truth. Of course it always makes you feel good when
17 somebody, somebody recognizes that it’s the truth, but I think of the times when I sat on
18 top of that—when nobody came to me and said, “Oh, that was a good report,” or
19 whatever. But when I saw that 117 secondary explosions go up, whew, to me that was
20 great because that was not far from, that was around our compound. So when I saw that
21 happen that was my—those are the things that make me feel good. For General Bryan to
22 say that—I mean General Ryan to say that, it was wonderful but that was one of those
23 inside things. It was almost like when you got your Ph.D. you said, “Whew,” and it’s all
24 yours. Who can you tell? “Well, I got my Ph.D.” “Yes, I know.” It’s not to be—it was
25 a truth and I appreciated it. That’s what it was about.

26 LC: Just to clarify, the secondary explosions that were identified, how close did
27 that happen? How close to Long Binh? Where did it happen from?

28 DA: Okay. What I did is report it—excuse me—that around our perimeter and
29 we had a very big perimeter. If you’d see a picture of Long Binh at that time they had
30 sprayed our area all around they had defoliated—is that the right word?

31 LC: Yes, it is.

1 DA: Yes, they had defoliated it. Around our compound you couldn't get around
2 our compound because it was nothing but dirt and the building. You've probably seen a
3 picture of it.

4 LC: Absolutely.

5 DA: Okay. So as close as our compound, as close as they could get was at the
6 fences, if you will, which were in places quite a ways. Let's talk about—all I could think
7 was perimeter. If you say distance—have you ever seen a picture of Long Binh?

8 LC: Yes.

9 DA: Okay. So if you see the perimeter, figure, say, thirty yards at places,
10 sometimes a hundred yards. The point is, they had to be where they would not be
11 observed when they were being placed by those people, whoever was in the guard tower.

12 LC: Right. Where there'd be some cover for them to—

13 DA: So it would be cover for them. Or not necessarily cover for them, but away
14 from lines of observations. Because they could—like they had woodmen. Vietnamese
15 walked through there all the time, Viet Cong, Vietnamese people, walking through there
16 all the time. But see the kick is when you like brought that rocket in and you set it there,
17 you didn't want somebody to see that so—122 millimeter rockets come along, you had to
18 bring it in under cover of night. You had to bring it in when there were no flares up,
19 because we had flares on all the time, looked like little parachutes. So they had to secrete
20 them that way.

21 LC: Right. So it took both opportunity and some stealth to do this.

22 DA: And time.

23 LC: Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely. Okay.

24 DA: Like I said the only reason I knew they were around me because I kept
25 getting these little reports about it. I saw blah blah blah. That was a report that—I didn't
26 get the same report from the same guys, from the same people.

27 LC: It would just be one piece here, one piece there.

28 DA: Yeah. Uh-huh. I came up with that's the way they were setting them up.
29 How could they set them up, just set them up on a stake? I had heard, I had heard about
30 how they set up, because they didn't have rocket launchers. So I had heard that
31 sometimes they put a couple of stakes up there and that's why they weren't so accurate.

1 They'd put a long pole up there like a—you know sling shot, that configuration—but
2 these were just on the ground and you put those two sticks up there, down here. Then
3 what you do is put the—uncover, when you uncover them, you'd have to stick the sticks
4 up and then put the rocket on it. So, I was able to figure out that that's what they were
5 going to do because I had no—well, whatever information I had that's what I came up
6 with.

7 LC: Right. You basically figured it out, again, like just a little item at a time.

8 DA: Yeah. I'd say, "Oh, mm-hmm," that sort of thing. Like when you did your
9 research, never want to have to do it again.

10 LC: That's right.

11 DA: Will never write another dissertation. I was thinking about how lucky you
12 are to sit up there and—oh, I can't say that on tape.

13 LC: Okay. Well, you can say it to me later. How about that? I'm always glad to
14 be reminded of how lucky I am.

15 DA: Well, that don't—okay.

16 LC: Okay. Well, I wondered if in addition to General Ryan that day, there were
17 any others? Like for example, American politicians. Did any American politicians come
18 and visit? You never saw any of that?

19 DA: No. No. If they would come they didn't—I don't remember, put it like that.
20 I don't know, maybe somebody did, but—

21 LC: But it just didn't leave a mark on your—

22 DA: No, not at all. They usually put people up in the auditoriums, but I had work
23 to do.

24 LC: That's right. You did have work to do, obviously. Did the atmosphere—?

25 DA: Let me tell you another cute incident. The general walked in, his fly was
26 open. Not a person in there had grit, gall, and audacity to tell him that his fly was open,
27 because I didn't know. I didn't see it, but I know that somebody had to see it. I walked
28 up there and I said, "General, your fly is open." He said, "Oh, thank you so much."
29 Then he'd say, "Oh, you told him his fly was"—yeah I told him his fly was open, what
30 am I supposed to do? I was the only person with guts enough to tell him his fly was

1 open. You know somebody had seen his fly open. He couldn't have just opened it when
2 he walked in the door.

3 LC: Do you remember which general?

4 DA: No. I had no idea. There were so many—

5 LC: Still pretty funny.

6 DA: Generals walked in all the time, and no. Tell the man his fly is open.

7 LC: Help him out.

8 DA: When the man asked me, he said, "How could you do it?" I said, "Because
9 when I was a kid my dad and my mom told the girls if your brother's fly is open you tell
10 him it's open. Boys, you tell your sister if her slip is hanging you tell her your slip is
11 hanging. You don't let them walk around here like that." It just came to me, "General,
12 your fly is open." It didn't mean a thing to me.

13 LC: Right. It's just courtesy. You were just—

14 DA: Absolutely. Another time I was leaning over my desk and I wanted to keep
15 my crease in my pants. I always like to keep as neat as possible. I'd always sit on the
16 edge of my seat. But a guy walked up, new redhead boy, walked up to me and patted me
17 on my butt. If my forty-five had been on the other side of the desk because he was kind
18 of—I turned around and I came up with my fist. My hand came from way down to here.
19 I came around and just knocked the hell out of him. He was across the other desk over
20 there. I was livid. I was absolutely livid with rage. He said, "What did you do that for?"
21 The guys, the other people, were laughing. The guys were laughing. I said, "As long as
22 you know me don't you ever touch me. Don't you ever." I really, I believe I would have
23 blown him away. Because you can't—you know, you don't do things. Oh. Oh, I was
24 just so—I wasn't embarrassed. I was pissed.

25 LC: Yeah. I bet he did not do that again.

26 DA: And nobody else. I told you before I never used, I never used language in
27 front of them that they could come up and use the same language.

28 LC: Right. You just did not enable them to say things like that.

29 DA: Thank you. Thank you. It comes back to my be aggressively assertive. It
30 wasn't a matter of hitting him. It was a matter of how that how dare he. He apologized, I

1 guess, you know, way after. He said, “I’m sorry.” But you don’t do—and I was the only
2 woman in there. You can either let them do it or not.

3 LC: Right. This was later on he apologized?

4 DA: He did. I guess it was the same evening or same day or whatever, but he did
5 apologize.

6 LC: Lucki, how did you accept his apology?

7 DA: After I—I think after I hit him that wasn’t good for me to hit him, but all I
8 could think about, it just wasn’t good for him to do that to me. As I thought about that it
9 wasn’t a matter of forgiveness, it was a matter of okay. I wasn’t thinking about—

10 LC: Right, now, incident over, that kind of thing.

11 DA: Yeah. Incident gone. Yeah. It’s finished. I did what I had to do and like I
12 said you don’t want to hit anybody. I hit a dentist once like that. He didn’t read my chart
13 and it came around with—if he had read my chart he knew I couldn’t take Novocain. He
14 came around and said, “Open your mouth.” I opened my mouth and I could smell it. He
15 was in my mouth and I swiveled with no intent, but I hit him.

16 LC: Get that out of here.

17 DA: Yeah. That was a matter of self-defense thing. I guess it was the same
18 thing, but that was horrible. You don’t hit, you don’t touch me. You don’t—you know,
19 but oh well. Everybody laughed, but everybody was all right then.

20 LC: Yeah. Up at the—they only laughed a little bit though.

21 DA: Well, they were laughing at—what they were doing is laughing at him.

22 LC: Mm-hmm. That’s right. Yes, that’s right. But this is you taking care of
23 yourself.

24 DA: Yeah. The guys took care of me too.

25 LC: Did they?

26 DA: The guys, yeah, they took care of me pretty well. They wouldn’t let
27 anything happen to me. They wouldn’t let anything happen. Somebody come in and
28 start talking they said, “Hey, knock it off man.” that sort of thing. So it was all right.

29 LC: When you were living in Saigon, again, did you have a barracks situation for
30 your own housing or—?

1 DA: Yes. I lived—I had my own room because I was a warrant officer.
2 Everybody else had—there were some Marines, some Air Force, and some, Marine, Air
3 Force, and Army living in the same barracks. So, enlisted. I was the only officer there.
4 That was okay. I had some friends, I still have, they're still my friends. We still have
5 good times together.

6 LC: Really?

7 DA: Yes.

8 LC: Well, that's great. And those are people that you met there?

9 DA: Yes.

10 LC: Was the fact of your being a warrant officer something that allowed
11 improvement in your situation? I mean, were you much happier now as an officer, as a
12 warrant officer?

13 DA: It had nothing to do with that. One of the things it did have to do with it
14 because at first the kids were treating me kind of blatantly, they said, "No, we can't." I
15 said, "Stop. I'm the same person I was when I left here. Don't do that." They said,
16 "Well, we thought"—no, you didn't think I'd—knock it off. I was respected, but I was
17 respected as enlisted. I'd say, you could say I was being older let me have a—there was a
18 certain amount of respect, if you will, and then whatever other respect I had. A lot of
19 them counted on me because I had been in the Army a long time. I talked to privates and
20 everybody.

21 LC: I was going to ask, did some of the other women come to you for advice?
22 You said that they had been doing that in the '50s. I wondered if in Vietnam that also
23 was true?

24 DA: Oh, all the time. All the time. Even the commanding officer, she was—
25 she's down in San Antonio, but even her. Yeah.

26 LC: On different things? Do you remember anything particularly?

27 DA: Everything. Just—I was almost like—one thing I wouldn't let the kids, I
28 wouldn't let them get out of the compound. If I saw them I wouldn't let them get out of
29 the compound if they were wrinkled.

30 LC: Oh, really?

1 DA: “No, you can’t. No. Go back in there and take care of yourself.” Little
2 things like that, or I was just like a—not a mother hen at all—but somebody they could
3 talk to. Somebody they could have a drink with, but somebody they could ask a question.

4 LC: Get some advice, confide in, that kind of thing.

5 DA: Yes. Somebody that—when you don’t tell a kid that you love them they
6 wonder and they go out to try to find love some place else. If you don’t—well, it used to
7 if you don’t spank your kid you’ll never know you love them. So that was kind of—they
8 could come to me and ask me anything. I’d give them, you know, I’d tell them and come
9 out truthfully. “How did you—what do you think of”—and that was—in fact, I still do
10 the same thing, still the same way.

11 LC: I believe that. What kinds of things would you be asked about, do you
12 remember?

13 DA: Everything. Everything. I don’t even remember because they were so—
14 they weren’t trite, but they were things that—“I’m scared. I’m scared.” “C’mon kid.
15 Let’s, c’mon, let’s talk about it. What are you scared about?” or, “My mom and dad
16 don’t like blah blah.” “Wait a minute. Let’s talk about it. What are you trying to tell
17 me?” They’d just get frustrated, didn’t know who to talk to. “You think you’re going to
18 get bombed.” I said, “Don’t worry about it. If you haven’t been bombed already you
19 won’t get bombed, baby.” It was one of those, “That’s all right if you get bombed,
20 baby.” If you die, don’t worry about it because you’ll be dead or if you think you’re
21 going to get bombed there are only two things to worry about: will you die or will you be
22 injured? If you get injured—if you die there ain’t nothing to worry about, but if you get
23 injured, only two things to worry about, and things like that. Making, in a sense, making
24 light, but yet making sense and letting it be okay and letting it be okay to say I’m scared,
25 and let it be okay to go to work from six o’clock in the morning till six o’clock in the
26 evening. Of course, they wouldn’t say anything to anybody about it but that was that
27 kind of thing.

28 LC: Right. Just giving space.

29 DA: Yeah. Yes.

30 LC: For people to express things.

1 DA: Yes. When you have nobody else to—you can't walk in to the first sergeant
2 and say, "First sergeant blah, blah, blah." You could always walk to Lucki and say
3 "Lucki"—and here I was. I'm an E7. I'm one of the highest ranks. So they could come
4 to me and talk to me because some of them get high ranks they're kind of, "Humph."
5 You don't fraternize with me or you're too high to talk to me or stuff like that.

6 LC: But you kept the door open the whole time.

7 DA: Yes. Yes. Absolutely. Somebody was, "He's prejudice." "Well, hey,
8 what's going on baby?" "Well, blah, blah, blah." You can't teach people how to do that,
9 but you can teach them how to accept whatever's happening. You can't—I always tell
10 them you can't—I didn't say it in those words, but it was the same thing. You can't
11 change the wind, but you can trim the sale.

12 LC: Lucki, let's take a break there.

13 DA: Please do.