

Gy. Sgt. Margaret (Maggie) Flanagan  
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L. J. Kimball: I was talking to Mary Sabourin.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: She has a lot of the books, I know she has.

L. J. Kimball: Helen Tatum [Maj., USMC, deceased] apparently had given her this. And she loaned it to me so I could copy it. I subscribe to a lot of used book catalogs also, looking for something to do with the Marine Corps. I saw one of these advertised but they wanted something like \$100 for it. I didn't want to spend \$100 for it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I haven't ordered any of, I can't afford something like that.

L. J. Kimball: What I'm going to do is ask you some personal questions, just to develop your background.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It doesn't bother me one bit. My life is an open book. If you don't believe it I'll show you some recent newspaper things they've written on me in Carteret County.

L. J. Kimball: Yes. When were you born?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I was born in Danville, Kentucky.

L. J. Kimball: What year and what's the date of your birth?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 17 February 1921.

L. J. Kimball: My parents were born one day apart in December 1921.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I'll be darn.

L. J. Kimball: My mother is one day older than my father. Danville, Kentucky.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It's right in the center of the state of Kentucky. It's about 25 miles South of Lexington, Kentucky. Right in the heart of the blue grass.

L. J. Kimball: I've sent some communications to Lexington, but I've never been there personally.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It has a Centre College, it's at Danville. And was the first college West of the Allegheny Mountains. It's a real old, real expensive college too.

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L. J. Kimball: Tell me about your mother and father.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, my mother was born in Sunbright, Tennessee and my father in Helenwood, Tennessee. That's down, not in the mountains, but on the edge of the mountain, just West of Knoxville. I'd say oh, kind in the middle part of the state up there. They both worked with the railroad company. My mother was a real go-getter when she was young. She learned to ride a motorcycle when she was 16 years old. This was back at the turn of the century and women, and we had pictures of her in the long skirts and everything on the motorcycle. But, anyway she worked for the railroad company too and after she and my father married, they went, he got transferred to Danville and she didn't get transferred because she was a ticket agent. She got up there, she had one, two, three, four, children, you know. So that satisfied that. She went back with the railroad company after we were grown, though and worked out her retirement. I always thought that that was really something that she would do that. She was the smartest of whips. She was a state representative, you're behaving yourself. O.K. [talking to dog]

L. J. Kimball: Your father, what did he do on the railroad?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He was a yard master.

L. J. Kimball: They both worked for the same railroad?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, and I did too. I went to work for the railroad.

L. J. Kimball: What railroad was that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: The Southern Railway. It goes right straight down from Louisville to Florida or wherever it goes down there. I don't remember anymore.

L. J. Kimball: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, I had one sister and two brothers and of course my sister never joined anything. She went to work after her husband died. She works in a big museum there in Danville. Danville is really a historic place. The first abdominal surgery was performed by Dr. Ephraim McDowell there. And they have a big museum built around it. He operated on a woman, she rode mule, aboard a mule from the mountains of Eastern Kentucky to get up here and he was only about two or three doctors in the state. He told

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her husband and told her that she had a huge tumor and she wasn't going to live if they couldn't take it out. They asked if he could take it out, he said yes, but I don't have an operating room, I don't have an operating table. He said we can use my kitchen table. So his wife got to sterilize the kitchen table and they put that poor woman on there and then some of the men this frontier town heard what he was doing. They came in with their rifles. They said, if she dies, you do too. And that's the way he operated on that woman. His wife acted as his nurse. That woman lived and two weeks later she got aboard her mule and rode back home and lived a real long, they got a highway named for her. Jane Todd Crawford Trail.

L. J. Kimball: And the doctor was Doctor McDowell?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Ephraim McDowell.

L. J. Kimball: McDowell. What year was this? Have any idea?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Let me look it up in the dictionary.

L. J. Kimball: I mean was it before the Civil War?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I guess it was. I guess it really was, because during the Civil War Danville was a pretty good size town. It was the first State Capitol in the State of Kentucky too, but they eventually got it over to Frankfort, which is O.K. They don't need it there in Danville anyway.

L. J. Kimball: You were raised during the Depression.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Uh huh.

L. J. Kimball: With both parents working on the railroad, though, you probably for the day were fairly comfortable.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Let me tell you something. We did not want for anything, but we earned every single thing we had. My mother saw to that. What my mothers' and fathers' money went for was to support and buy food for other people. I said, I saw many Thanksgiving Dinners leave our table and go in a clothes basket and be taken two or three blocks down the street. She got a call that those people were hungry and didn't have anything. We ended up eating peanut butter and jelly, but that's the type of people they were. They were really giving. He had two sisters that taught school in

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Tennessee. They didn't get paid, they gave them script for their pay. If they cashed it when they first got it, they'd get like twenty cents on the dollar. If they waited a certain period then it would be worth the full amount. So, he supported them too. He also put his brother through college. He went through college in the early 20's because I know I was a baby. They pulled all kind of stunts with me. Supreme Court Justices, I can't remember names, but anyway they all went to, about four of them went to college there and he was one of them. This little college beat Harvard one year, I think, in 1922. Football game. Lost big game, you still go there and you see it painted on a tall building. Center 7, Harvard 0. They still brag about that, but that's O.K. It was a wonderful little town, it really is. My father was well known politically there as, well, just being a good person. He really was and my mother was too. But, my father died at the age of 60. Being yard master, they had a, he was, this was at the top of a big long pole, way up in the sky.

L. J. Kimball: I've seen those.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Where he could look all away around him, the yard up there and check on the trains and the men working. He had to climb this steel ladder, straight up there. He went to work one night. Let's see. I guess it was about 1959. My daughter was born in 1958, so I think it was 1959. He got up there and had a massive heart attack. He wasn't a big man this way, but he was big, period. About 6' 2". I guess he weighed 200 pounds. But, I still want to know how they got him down out of there, but they did and I laughed and said, they must have put him on a sled and let him scoot down the side, they got him down. But, he had a massive heart attack. Then my husband died right down here at our dock with a massive heart attack.

L. J. Kimball: When did he die?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That was 1978.

L. J. Kimball: That was James C. Flanagan?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: What kind of family life did you have when you were growing up? Were your parents the loving, gentle type or were they the disciplinarian type?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: They would like to have said they were disciplinarian, but they weren't. We got away with everything, especially me. My mother was just as gentle as she could be. My father, when he decided to spank us, he did a darn good job of it. There was only about 3 spankings I ever got in my life, but, boy I remember every one of them. One, I didn't mind him one day and he was going to catch me at the front door and give me a swat on the fanny and I looked at him and said, "no, you don't" and I took off and I ran around and around the house until he finally caught me and he blistered me. And then another time we were down at my grandmother's place in Tennessee. Well, my brother and I did not know the difference between the cow and the bull at one grandmother's place. She had an old milk can and she'd get through milking and she'd reach around and get us and set us on the back of that old milk cow. We'd wander around the pasture all afternoon. So we went up to my grandmother's place one day and we saw all the old cows out there and saw this one big pen, this great big cow in it. And, so R.E. and I decided we'd ride that thing. It was lying on the ground and we crawled over the fence and you know how they've got all those folds on the neck. I was set in front and R.E. and set behind me and put his arms around me and I held my hands in those folds. Boy, that thing jumped up from there and started raising Cain. We had a big family reunion. There must have been, I'd say 75 people at the reunion. Here they all come running. I could see my father standing there and I thought he was proud of me because R.E. got thrown off but I was still riding. And we went around that pen several times, that thing snorting and carrying on and finally I was so proud of myself, I tried to wave to him. I waved to him and I went flying right over the fence and landed at his feet. I was held up, his hand, my hand right now would fit in the palm of his. He wore me out. There were things like that the only time he ever, and I said, I had to raise a daughter myself. I know it wasn't that he was angry, he was scared to death. He was petrified. But, no, we had a loving family. We didn't want for anything.

L. J. Kimball: Did you go through all your schooling in Danville?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: How many years was high school then?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Four.

L. J. Kimball: I mean all the years, did you go to school for twelve years?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, twelve years.

L. J. Kimball: Years ago in Onslow County they didn't go to school for twelve years.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Our school was rough too. We've all talked about it. The kids had to go to school. What we had to do then, they wouldn't do it. That's the reason I was trained for the Marine Corps. Of course my school didn't know that they trained me for the Marine Corps. But, we really had to study and we had, we'd better. In fact my mother and father would have really paddled us if we hadn't done what we were supposed to do. But, yet they helped us too. They'd sit down and help us with our homework and our projects. They were always helping us.

L. J. Kimball: When did you graduate from high school?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 1939, I think. I've got, I've still got my high school diploma someplace in that Marine Corps mess in there.

L. J. Kimball: What did you do after you graduated from high school?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Went to work in a factory. There wasn't any jobs for young people then. I couldn't afford to go to college then. I went to work in a factory, Palm Beach Company. I don't know if you've heard of it or not. They make men's suits.

L. J. Kimball: Bathing suits?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Men's suits.

L. J. Kimball: Men's suits.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And I worked there for about a year and all the time I was working I was saving up some money. I came in from work one day. I'd stopped by the ten cents store and bought a little black suitcase about that long and about that deep. Not that wide. I've still got it back there. My mother looked at it and said, "What do you think you're doing?" "I'm leaving here. I quit my job today. I've got \$300 saved up and I'm leaving." She said, "Why are you leaving?" I said, "because I can't get a decent job around here." I had a cousin that lived up in Detroit. I said, "I don't know whether I'm going," I had one in St. Louis and one in Detroit. I had written both of them a note and asked them if they'd help me get work in either one of

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those places. Well, I flipped a coin and it came out Detroit, so that's where, I went to Detroit. I got up there, they were the busiest people I'd ever seen in my life. So, I got me a room and I started riding the busses to try to get the layout of the place. I found it was all in angles, streets going like this down to the water. So, I'd get on the busses and I kept looking at all the buildings. I saw the prettiest building on Woodward Avenue. I don't remember now what it was called, but anyway I got off of the bus and went in and I looked at that big name board and I finally came to a name that fascinated me. Kenneth McQueen. He was advertising manager for the Pontiac Company, only I didn't know it, I didn't understand all those abbreviations. Anyway I went with my little high school diploma up to his office. I walked in, wasn't anybody there, the receptionist wasn't there. So, finally he got up out of his office and came out and asked if he could help me. I said, "yes, Sir, I want a job, will you hire me?" He said, "Well, I don't know. Let's sit down here and let's talk about it." He wanted to know how old I was. I was past 18, but I looked like I was about 13, or 14. I was so small. I showed him my diploma and everything and he said, "well, does your mother know you're here?" And I said, "she sure does, she knows I'm looking for work." I explained to him why. I was from a small town and there wasn't anything for young people to do. Do you know he hired me? He asked me, "what can you do?" I said, "nothing, but I'm willing to learn." Two times that's done me good. So, he said, "alright, tell you what, I'll pay you \$12 a week and we'll teach you." He said, "we really need a receptionist out here." You talk about a happy person, I thought I would absolutely split. Because \$12 a week back in 1940 was really something. I wasn't there too long when things were heating up for the war and all that. I worked then, let's see, two years I guess it was. I just fell in love with him and his, in fact whole family. I ended up living with them. They had a maid's quarters on the third floor and a nice bedroom, lounge and a bath and he says, that's just sitting here empty and his wife did, she was so sweet. She said, "no point in paying rent out here. You can ride in with Ken to work in the morning and then when we want to go someplace, we got a built in babysitter." Because they had three children. I loved those kids too. So, I lived with them and then the war got started and I said, well, I've got to do something. My sister and her husband were living in Louisville, Kentucky and I went to Louisville. I said, **Mary** do you think I could get on with the Curtis Wright Plant having to do with them airplanes, because her husband, I forget, he was one of the supervisors there. He told me that I'd probably never make it. I said, "why can't I? I can do work like that. I can do anything like that." He said, "well, I don't know, you don't weigh

enough.” I only weighed about 90 pounds. So, I got a job in a jewelry store. It was a natural talent, I didn’t learn anything, it was just natural for me. I became a watch repair person.

L. J. Kimball: On the job training, just through your own work. You didn’t go to school, right?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, I didn’t go to school. But, anyway, on the job training. I worked for Seng Jewelry Store and that was a real nice family. They just practically adopted me too. I stayed there and the Marine Corps Recruiting Office was right around the corner from the jewelry store. I kept seeing that, “Uncle Sam Needs You” thing and it got to me. So, I went to the recruiting office. They were sweet and nice to me, but they told me very bluntly. You don’t weight enough. You’re supposed to weight at least 110 pounds. I weighed 92 pounds. And I says, well, I think I can gain weight, I think. And they said, come back in about 6 months. Let’s see what you weigh then. I went to a doctor and asked him what I had to do and he told me to drink all these milk shakes. I never drank so many milk shakes in all my life. Well, it got me up to 101. I went there and they said, tell you what, we’re going to send you to the procurement office in St. Louis and maybe by that time you’ll weigh enough. I said, well, that’s funny, how am I going to put weight on? You had to ride the train overnight to go. So, I went back to the doctor and said, how can I put weight on overnight like that? He said, go buy you a dozen bananas and eat them. That night on the train I ate all those bananas and I thought I was going to die. We got there and this male recruiter, there were several girls getting off the train, which I didn’t know they were all there. He met us and he was supposed to take us to breakfast. I, if I have to eat that breakfast, I’d just die. There’s no way I could swallow any more food. And that bothered him. He said, “what’s wrong with you? Are you nervous, are you scared?” I wouldn’t tell him I ate all those bananas to gain weight. I weighed 106. So, everybody that had to interview me, I upped a pound. By the time I did this, I weighed 110 pounds. But, I got up at Boot Camp and I found out why. The uniforms were not made for small people and all the years I was in the Marine Corps I never could go to the supply store to buy uniforms. I always had to take the samples. Because they made the samples in the real small sizes because they knew they wouldn’t fit anybody. But, I came along and they were just perfect for me.

L. J. Kimball: How tall were you?



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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I was 5' 4" but I've lost all, due to osteoporosis, I've lost.

L. J. Kimball: One of the things Mary Sabourin told me was, her problem was she had to be 5' tall to join the Women Marines, and she just barely made that.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: See, they changed the regulations. Later when I first went in, you had to be a high school graduate, you had to be 21 years old and all that stuff. Well, right after Boot Camp I found out why, a lot of it. Because none of the uniforms fit me. I got out of Boot Camp and went home on boot leave and my mother and I spent all that time ripping those uniforms apart, taking them up so I'd look like a human being in them. I had to go to Chicago to go to school. They sent me right straight from Boot Camp to Chicago to Aircraft Instrument School.

L. J. Kimball: Do you remember December 7, 1941 when war started? What you were doing? When Pearl Harbor was attacked?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I sure do. I certainly do. I was in Detroit. I was in Detroit, and my cousin's husband was Danish and he had a landscaping business. How do you say that?

L. J. Kimball: I know what you're talking about. Landscaping, lawn care?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, he called it landscaping. L-A-W-N. It's on the side of his truck. He had hired two young men and when he came in the house late in the afternoon, that was the maddest man I've ever seen. He told his wife, "I'm going to get my gun and I'm going to kill those two damn Germans." They were two German boys that he had hired. He was going to go kill them that night. The very idea he said, the Germans and the Japanese. The Japanese was the one thing that got, I'm sorry but I'm still, I'm very prejudiced.

L. J. Kimball: You can be very honest.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I don't like the Germans and I don't like the Japanese. I don't think I'd ever do anything to any of them. I'm not put together that way, but I don't hesitate, and I'll tell you why in a minute. Of course Art introduced me to those Germans and how mad he was, the stuff Germany was pulling. But, Danville, Kentucky. It was a small town, about 15,000, now it's about 25,000. It's not grown a whole lot. But, there's a little town close to Danville, called Harrodsburg and the Army Reserve Unit there was made

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up of about 75 young men. All 75 of them enlisted at one time, went to the same place, all got caught by the Japanese and they were on the Bataan Death March. I tell you, you don't see an oriental around Harrodsburg, Kentucky. I don't believe they'd last two hours there because those people, well, it's grandchildren and everything now. But, they don't forget and I haven't forgotten because I lost a lot of good friends in that Bataan Death March.

L. J. Kimball: They were stationed in the Philippines in the Army?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. They were all in the Army Reserve Unit. My sister who lives in Danville right now. Let me tell you something, she's adamant. In fact she's worse than I am. I don't go around telling everybody how I feel about it, but she doesn't hesitate and she don't trust them and I said, Mary E., after I came, wait a minute, I'm getting ahead of myself here. When I came to Camp Lejeune, we had to work guard duty. Now, I don't know what unit is there now, but it's where Building 2 is. If you look down straight down one place, you used to be able to say that was Division Headquarters.

L. J. Kimball: All the way, the building down by the water?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Right. Well, that in WWII was Woman Marine's Headquarters. We lived in the barracks half way between that diagonally across from the Protestant Chapel [Bldg. 16]. That's where we lived. Our barracks were there.

L. J. Kimball: O.K.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I don't remember what number they were now, things like that.

L. J. Kimball: I was thinking about looking down Holcomb. I know later that the Woman Marine Battalion was in back of Buildings 15 and 66. The headquarters for the WM Reserve Schools was a single story?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, that big double building down...[Bldg. 2]

L. J. Kimball: You say it was Women Marine [WM] Reserve Headquarters?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, and our barracks, later our barracks were behind Building 15, up there. But, I didn't live there, yes I did to go to school there one time, later in my career.

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L. J. Kimball: As Boots you were across the street, diagonally opposite from the Protestant Chapel. Area 3 is what they call it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: The Protestant Chapel is here and there's a barracks right in front, and another barracks further on, that was our barracks. Oh, let me see that map.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Women's Reserve School was initially in Area 1. That's where the Recruit Depot was, or the Women's Boot Camp. The WM's subsequently assigned to Base were in the WM Battalion, located in back of Buildings 15 and 66. However, what you're telling me is that Boot Camp moved from Area 1 to Area 3

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I have a book on Camp Lejeune. I think it might be better. I have to move around real slow.

L. J. Kimball: That's fine, take your time.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I don't know what year this is.

L. J. Kimball: It's not clear.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Somewhere back then. I was trying to see. Isn't there a map of Camp Lejeune?

L. J. Kimball: I bet there's a map somewhere. Of course when you're looking for it, you can't find it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, there has to be a map in here.

L. J. Kimball: Let me take a look. I might be able to find it a little bit faster.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I couldn't believe. I looked down and this book says, Marine Corps Women's Reserve, Camp Lejeune, New River, North Carolina.

L. J. Kimball: The other was 1966.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: '56?

L. J. Kimball: '66.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, I don't know what year this one is, but this had to be between 1943 or 1945. I went to Boot Camp in 1944, so this must be it. Yes. Boots, boots, boots. We wrote little notes.

L. J. Kimball: That's a curious thing about some of these Welcome Aboard booklets for Camp Lejeune, you'd think the most obvious thing they'd put in them would be a map.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: This is what you want. You really do want this. See, we weren't allowed...I got pictures of us around the barracks and I called this friend of mine in Washington, DC, I mean in Washington State that went through Boot Camp with me last night, because I couldn't find any of those pictures. She said, we weren't allowed to take pictures. She said, we'd sneak the camera in to take pictures around the barracks. See, we weren't allowed to have cameras, see it was WWII and we weren't allowed to have a camera. But, these pictures are what you want. This one is...

L. J. Kimball: 1953.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 1953.

L. J. Kimball: This is California.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, Santa Anna. I was stationed out there. This one, the one I thought she walked off with. I know she probably sat there and we put it over there.

L. J. Kimball: Let me orient you with respect to this photograph. This is Building 2. This is the New River right here and the amphitheater is in back of Building 2, which was The Training Center [TTC] Headquarters and after the war, Division Headquarters, Building 1, was up here.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: This is the building that was Women Reserve Headquarters. Right here.

L. J. Kimball: That's interesting, you're pointing to Building 2. This other photo suggests the Women's Reserve Battalion was in Building 127, which was down by the water, and the Recruit Depot in 114, but that was apparently before the move to Area 3.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It was on the river, you know the river is right here in front of it. There was a great big park there. A beautiful park with benches and I think they called it Streeter Park [immediately to the south of Bldg. 2]. See, Mrs.

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[Col. Ruth C.] Streeter was our first Director of Women Marines and that park was named for her. Well, we lived up here, opposite the Protestant Chapel, on the north side of and facing Holcomb Blvd.

L. J. Kimball: This is what's called the Main Service Road, it goes out to Paradise Point. The Chapel is over here and I've heard some of the Women Marines say that at one point Parachute Marines lived there, in Area 1..

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. But, we had to walk guard duty all up and down this river front, around Bldg. 2. And people don't believe it when I told them, but I'm tell you honest to God's true. We wore those old cotton hose. We could not wear dungarees or anything like that. We had to be in uniform.

L. J. Kimball: Cotton hose?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We had cotton hose. We couldn't get silk or nylon.

L. J. Kimball: So, you're wearing a skirt or something.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We had to wear a skirt, the uniform of the day and we would come back after two hours on guard duty. From my knees to my ankles, it would be stuck to our legs and it they were blood red from mosquito bites. Oh, it was terrible. What we went through. I'd get so scared, see, because German submarines were up and down here. Some even swam ashore and bought a lot of stuff in Morehead City. So we had to stay alert for foreign-looking people, and all we had to protect ourselves was a billy club. Two of us had to go together, we didn't even have a whistle to blow for help.

L. J. Kimball: Did the male Marines ever bother you when you were on duty?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That's another thing I get a little perturbed at. With all this harassment stuff they keep talking about, I'd tell people they were crazy. I'd say, I went to Boot Camp in 1944, they'd just had the Boot Camp opened a year, the instructors were men, male Marines, and they didn't take any nonsense off of us. They were good. There are 3 things that stand out.

L. J. Kimball: **Tape One, Side Two.** Go ahead.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: After one of these incidents that I can't remember now, an old Master Sergeant told me that he was sorry that he had been hard on me. But, he said, some day you might work some place where you have to keep a

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straight face and the only way you're going to learn to keep a straight face is do what I'm telling you to do. I was a giggler. Every time they'd tell me something silly, I'd giggle at it. Well, we had to go through the obstacle course and I knew I couldn't lift my weight. And if you went through it, I'm sure you remember you had to grab that rope and swing across that big mud thing there. I knew that there was a big water moccasin in that thing. I knew that I couldn't lift my weight, so I ran around it.

L. J. Kimball: Where was the obstacle course located, do you remember?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I don't remember.

L. J. Kimball: Was it just a woman's?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, no it was a regular obstacle course. We had to climb that board and go down that chute like we were jumping out of a plane. Some old master Sergeant if he's still alive still has scars on his ankles where I held on, from trying to go down it, but he shoved me down anyway.

L. J. Kimball: Do you remember what date it was that you checked into Camp Lejeune, Women's Reserve training center?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, it was July, 1944. That's all I can tell you. It'd be the first part of the month, because everything always rotated in the first of the month.

L. J. Kimball: How did you get there?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I'm glad you asked that because the people don't believe this tale either. I had to go to St. Louis for my physical and everything to the procurement office. Then I had to go back home and wait until they sent me orders. I got my orders and I had to go to Louisville and get a train and go to St. Louis and get a train and then I guess they had put us, 100 or so, 2 or 3 car loads of us in the train. So, the train left St. Louis and I guess, I don't know where all we went to, Atlanta, and there wasn't any air-conditioning. Hot. This was the end of June and it was hot. We had the windows up and the dirt and the cinders and everything flying in on us and the girls got, well, I don't know, they got so bored they couldn't stand it. Two or three of them ended up with broken legs because what they'd do for exercise is put their hands on the backs of the seat and swing back and forth. They broke their legs. Then they didn't have any food for us and they had, the

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train was pulled into a siding and I still don't know if it was Georgia, South Carolina, some place. Well the siding was right next to a big watermelon patch. You could see all those green watermelons. So, we got the colored porter to go down and get watermelons for us. We cracked them open and sat there eating. We were a mess. Anyway we ate hot watermelons. Sick. Oh, as a, we got to Camp Lejeune about midnight, as sick as a dog. They, let's see, how did we get to Camp Lejeune? Oh, by train. Backed us all the way into Camp Lejeune.

L. J. Kimball: You went into the base as opposed to the Jacksonville Station.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, the base.

L. J. Kimball: The base. Where did you get off on the base, do you recall?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We didn't know where we were and I didn't know what a troop was. I didn't know what a barracks was. I didn't know nothing for nothing. And anyway they met us and they marched us by the mess hall and handed us a glass of cool aid and a piece of cake. That I remember. They marched us into our barracks. They wouldn't even let us undress. They just shoved us on the bunk. Because they knew that we'd had it. We were really in need, because the word had gotten to them that we hadn't had food, we hadn't had anything. They were scared to feed us until we had a physical the next morning. So, the next morning they came in and got us up and I'm standing there and one girl was supposed to help us, said, "aren't you going to the bathroom?" See, we didn't know all the lingo yet, she didn't either. I said, I would but I don't know where it is. So she had to go all the way down the hallway and showed me and we were all in the same boat. Anyway we found out about a few things and later we had a physical. Then the boom was lowered on us. But, I, that's when my giggling started. I couldn't believe this stuff. I could not believe.

L. J. Kimball: What sort of stuff are you talking about?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: The marching and not telling us anything. They said, "Left Face" and we just went every which way. Well, they didn't tell us or show us anything. What they were trying to do was exercise us. They were afraid to push us too hard, because they were just falling like flies. And I was determined that I wasn't. And what was it they called me, "Pee Wee." And that's when I became Maggie. My name was Margaret West. So, I became

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Maggie. We had Martha's and Margaret's and everything, so I became the Maggie. It suited me fine.

L. J. Kimball: Did you say it was West?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: Your maiden name was West.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. Anyway I got in trouble going to the mess hall. I couldn't eat all that food they put on that tray. So I put it down here.

L. J. Kimball: In your shirt?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, in my bra. Oh, it was terrible. I had to go back and get cleaned up and get into my uniform, but I was so glad when we got through Boot Camp and I could pick my own food. I couldn't eat all that food. I couldn't eat it today. There's no time in my life I could have eaten that much food.

L. J. Kimball: Was the food good?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: They just had too much of it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, my goodness, there could be a lumberjack that couldn't eat all that food that they put on that tray. But, that's alright. We weren't denied anything. We really weren't. They were good to us. They were really good to us. Except, our little Drill Sergeant, his name was Dickie. He didn't look like he was 16 years old, but I'm sure he was much older than that. Nice looking young man and that bunch of old women. I'd been West. I was always the tale end of the platoon, the tale end of everything and they got...he gave us a rest period, it was hot. So, we were under the shade of the pine trees. They started singing, "rock-a-bye baby in the tree top" to him. So, he got us in formation and he run us, well, I guess it would be where Women Marine Headquarters was to Building 1 and back [up and down Holcomb Blvd.]. I followed along for a few minutes and then I got to laughing so hard, I could not do anything. I just fell out and sat down beside one of the walkways across from the street over to the sidewalk. Just set there, laughing like crazy. Well, here come a woman



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officer out of one of those buildings. As she turned out, she eventually became Director of Women Marines. At that time she was just Lieutenant Margaret Henderson. She came out and wanted to know if I was sick. I said, no. She said, what's the matter? All I did was point to that group of women running through up there. Women running with two men. You know what was happening? To me that was the funniest sight I'd ever seen. She, Margaret Henderson was almost 6 feet tall. She stood there and said, yes that's the funniest sight I've ever seen. So, she stayed with me. When he gotten back there he stopped and she went over and talked to him. She came over and said, now you get up and fall in place. So, I did. I thought, oh, God, what's he going to do to me? I didn't know what he was going to do to me. He came over to me and tried to look mean and all that business you know. He said I want your general orders from beginning to end. Do you know what I did? I was so scared I said them backwards. All the girls are just howling like crazy. He never said a word, he let it go. I said them backwards. Then they had to tell me later, do you know you said those things backwards? Well, proved to him I knew them. Because we only had a couple of days to memorize them. Did they give you much time to memorize them? Or do you remember?

L. J. Kimball: I never went through Boot Camp. The only time I had to memorize them was when I was with the Inspector General and had to ask the other Marines if they knew them. But, no one ever asked me what they were.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We had to say them. There's two things I could never forget. My service number and I couldn't remember general orders now, I did forget those.

L. J. Kimball: Do you still remember your service number?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh yes. 770357.

L. J. Kimball: Is there a W on the end of that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. W770357.

L. J. Kimball: How long was Boot Camp, do you remember?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Six weeks.

L. J. Kimball: And all that time you were in this area, diagonally across from the Protestant Chapel. Was it an open squad bay?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, yes it was. I left my locker box out one inch one time and got caught with it. I had to scrub the ladders, steps were called ladders. The ladder went from one end of the barracks. What do you want? You want out? O.K. [talking to the dog]

L. J. Kimball: You sound like Boot Camp was kind of a fun thing for you.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It was rough. I giggled myself to...anyway I had to scrub the ladder down with my toothbrush, from the top to the bottom. So, he came up about time I was through. "Well, young lady have you learned your lesson?" Gigggle, giggle. So, I had to go down to the other end of the bay. When I got through with that one, I didn't giggle. He later, he's the one that later told me that I might be in a job some day where you have to keep a straight face and you've got to learn to do it now. So, after that he had us out on the drill field and we were playing, something says...Simon says. I was the only one that made it through. He could not whip me on it. He told me afterward, you learned your lesson well. After I started working in the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Secretary of the Navy's office, and all those offices. I found out this is the reason he made me keep a straight face. It wasn't easy always to keep a straight face in those offices. But, that was the reason for it. I despised Boot Camp. I really did. They had two or three women that they were trying train to be over us and they weren't very nice at all. When I got the orders to go to Chicago. I didn't go up and tell them goodbye. Why should I tell them goodbye? They didn't do me any favors. They harassed me the whole time. They were trying to flunk me out, that's what they were trying to do. They said I was too little and I wouldn't give up. They weren't going to do that to me.

L. J. Kimball: Did they just pick on you? Or did they pick on the other women also?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: One or two they picked on and they did wash a couple of them out. But, they picked on me unmercifully so I was glad to leave Boot Camp. When this woman, her last name was Walsh, can't remember her first name. She told me, you know you're going to my hometown and I'll be up in Chicago and I'll come out and check on you and see how you're doing. She did. And you know, she's one of the sweetest people I know. I said, why couldn't you be this nice in Boot Camp? I said, I was up there loving everybody. But, they called me up to the Lieutenant's office to ask me why I wasn't coming up to say goodbye. I just told them, why should I say goodbye to you? You didn't wish me good luck or anything. I said, I'd like to know how I got that school? She said, you were very highly rated

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on it. We had to take a test for it. So, when I got up there, I started talking. I was not a college graduate at the time. I had two years.

L. J. Kimball: Of college?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. I had, I just took courses. I didn't take anything in particular. But, you were supposed to be busy, so a chemistry student had to know all that stuff. I said, I won't last a year because I don't know all that stuff. It came, we had, our instructors were from Northwestern. They were the nicest people. The one that was the roughest on us was named Schendelbecker. He was the one, we had to make all the tools to work on instruments with because Germany had made all tweezers and screw drivers, little ones all those years. They couldn't give them to me. So we had to make them. Would you like to see them? I have them. University of Indiana started trying to...

L. J. Kimball: O.K. To make sure we got the chronology straight here. You graduated from Boot Camp and while you were there they had some kind of interviews, selection and testing process to determine what school you were going to go to?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I guess so. They put us in this great big auditorium and we had to take all these tests and everything. I couldn't tell you now.

L. J. Kimball: And as a result of how you scored on the test they decided, which school was it that they sent you to in Chicago?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It was called Aircraft Instrument School.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Just before we get you up to Chicago there. The reason you said you joined the Marine Corps, was that you were impressed with the poster?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, that was the beginning of it. That was the beginning of it, but I had a cousin who was a Marine. In fact he was a warrant officer and, he was called CWO [Chief Warrant Officer]. I have this big picture of him, but he's been dead for so many years now, it's pathetic. But, I just loved him dearly. His name was Jack Parker and in fact when I was a little girl, my mother would be making my dresses for me and I didn't want to wear them. Finally she wanted to know why I didn't like those dresses. I said, I want my pockets on the back like Jack's. So, she started making all my little dresses so that I had my pockets on the back of them.

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L. J. Kimball: He was a Marine?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, he was a Marine. And anyway that influenced me a lot, too, because I loved him dearly. It was really funny, now let's see, there was something else I wanted to tell you about going to Chicago too.

L. J. Kimball: Well, I'm sure you'll think about it. You're showing me a bunch of tools here that you, what, repaired or manufactured aircraft instruments?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We had to make them. We had to temper the steel and had to cut these things out and had to temper the steel.

L. J. Kimball: So, you'd make your own tools. When you had these tools, was it your job to repair instruments?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. Right over here at Cherry Point.

L. J. Kimball: So, you went up to Chicago to school and they sent you back to Cherry Point to aircraft maintenance facility of some sort.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. And if found the barracks two years, not the barracks, the hanger two years ago that I worked in. Tickled everyone to death. I walked into that hanger and I turned ice cold. I said, my God, I'm home. And the young pilot that was showing us around and everything, got the biggest kick out of it. Anyway they told them that "she" used to work on aircraft instruments. He said, here? I said, yes. I said do you want me to take you to the aircraft instrument repair room? I know exactly where it is. He didn't believe it, so I went, come with me I'll, there was about 50 of them followed me right up to it. I opened the door and I said, this is it. He said it sure is, they're still repairing, but they didn't hire anyone full time anymore. Just part-time. I don't understand it. I'm mad at the Marine Corps. It's not the Marine Corps's fault, it's Congress, I'm sorry. I don't want to get started on that, but, anyway.

L. J. Kimball: What about Congress?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I think they're doing all the services dirt. First of all, I said something some time ago. I said something about all these military planes. They're not keeping them up, those planes. I said it's not their fault. I said, they're buying tools and replacement parts from Taiwan, Korea any place they can get them cheaper and the planes going to start going down too. First thing you know a bunch of helicopters went down and I said, see, I told you and

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you didn't believe me. It takes American parts to fit in American made planes. And if they have to pay more for them, they better pay more for them. If I had to go before Congress, I've been there before. But, anyway I went up to Chicago and stayed at Cherry Point until the end of WWII.

L. J. Kimball: When did you get to Cherry Point?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 1944, end of, I think December 1944. Then, to 1945 until, I think it was May of 1946, somewhere along there. When that, and then, I can't remember when I got out. It was somewhere in 1940's.

L. J. Kimball: Obviously you had some preconception of what the Marine Corps was going to be like and after Boot Camp, and you looked back upon that experience, is that what you thought the Marine Corps was going to be like?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. I didn't mind the regimentation or any of that stuff. The work we had to do, I never minded any of that. The scrubbing of the floors, toilets and all, that stuff never bothered me, not one bit. It was something that had to be done. So, I said, I know better than anybody else to do it. So we'd get together and do it. So, I'd last until somebody...we sang our way through all these trouble things. Now, the school in Chicago was something else again. There was a Wave commander and a Navy captain got court-martialed over the way we were treated there. See, there were both Waves, and there were women Marines in this school. And they were given so much money to run that school. They'd feed us and everything else and we nearly starved to death. In fact my mother, I asked her to send me grapefruit juice. And she started sending me big cans of juice. You could see all the girls grab it and go for it. An old janitor that used to work for me in the jewelry store. He started sending me stuff. But, he sent me the small cans so they'd be easier for us. But, he didn't know how many there were that were starving for it. And honest to God there was a while there and all we got for breakfast and this is the truth was soured maraschino cherries. And you can get hungry enough to eat the darn things too. And one of the girls in school there had been a secretary for this Colonel Streeter who was the Director of Women Marines. She decided to defy them one night and called her and told her what was going on. Boy, she came out there in a hurry. Then they had to a Marine Officer, was it 87th and Anthony down at the Navy docks, the Navy pier down there? The Marines were located at what they called 87th and Anthony. Boy, he came out there. He was a little feisty devil too. But, he

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came out and set on the foot of my bed. We were all standing on the beds and he set there and he said, I want to know where you keep your personal items? I said we have to keep them in our laundry bags. He said, that's not right. These lockers, they were only about that wide. We couldn't even get our uniforms in there. It was terrible. First we'd get our shoes on, we'd have to stuff everything in our laundry bags. Anyway we blessed him. That Navy captain and that woman commander disappeared and we had woman Marine, Lieutenant Humber there. They helped us quite a bit. Finally they got things straightened out. It was a mess, it really was.

L. J. Kimball: Were the captain and the commander keeping the money themselves that they were supposed to be spending on you?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. It was a mess, but the people that taught us, were professors from Northwestern. I wanted to say the University of Chicago, but I'm sure it was Northwestern. They were really nice to us. And believe it or not there was one bakery close there. The building we lived in was right on the corner, whatever street it was. It was sidewalk and then, a bakery truck would pull upside the building about 10:00 at night and just toot the horn lightly and we'd all get the windows open and lean out the windows and they would toss doughnuts and little cakes and everything they thought we could eat. Oh, what a blessing that was, it really was. Then word got out and we didn't have any place to go smoke, so we'd sit out on the fire escape and smoke. Which I wish they'd abandoned all together back then, I'd have quit many years ago. I quit over 20 years ago. Anyway the newspapers got hold of it. They came out and took pictures of us sitting out there in our pajamas and our hair all over, smoking a cigarette. All those women looked so silly. But, it was always something, it was something like that all the time. They just treated us terrible.

L. J. Kimball: What was your impression of the general attitude of the Women Marines who were with you at Boot Camp? Did they all share your attitude?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, yes. As I told someone, I said, we sang all the time. I've got all the songs somewhere. I take them into the women Marine thing and I think Mary Sabourin has copied all of them. She said you want to save some. I'd save them but I'd be, all the songs, every battalion that went through Boot Camp had to sit down and write a song and then they'd say what tune it was and that's what you'd sing it by. So, everything we did, if we were scrubbing floors or whatever we were doing, we were singing. I say, we sang our way through the Marine Corps and I said, we enjoyed it. But, you

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know they don't have that camaraderie now. They don't because they separated the women. They should put them all back in one barracks together so they can learn to be women Marines. I talked to them when I was up there. I said, do not do this to them.

L. J. Kimball: You think that by integrating the women Marines with male Marines, the women Marines lost something?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: They sure have. Because the young ones, some of the young ones will come to our meeting sometime. They don't have any feeling of camaraderie, or . . . you get a bunch, get five old women Marines together and you could, you'd be having a ball. Really are, because there's just feelings there that you can't get away from. But, those young girls don't have it and I think that's sad. They'll take about half a dozen of them and put them in the barracks with the men. That's wrong. I don't care, it's not fair to the men and it's not fair to the women either. But, of course they don't know any better. That's the only thing they know. It's not right.

L. J. Kimball: When you left Chicago and went to Cherry Point, what rank were you?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Private. Made PFC right after we got there.

L. J. Kimball: You were there at Cherry Point until 1946 or 1947.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I made corporal.

L. J. Kimball: When you signed up, was it the duration of war plus 6 months?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: So, everyone knew based on their contract that when the war was over, you were going to have to leave.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: I understand that you got to stay in the Marine Corps.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, I didn't get to stay in. I was one of the first to go back in. There was about 6 girls that got to stay in and they were all at Headquarters Marine Corps.

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L. J. Kimball: Why were they permitted to stay in? Just because they were at Headquarters Marine Corps?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: So, the majority of women Marines had to leave.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, you had to get out, you didn't have any choice.

L. J. Kimball: And you got out as a corporal?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. And I came back in as a corporal, I think...well, they sent me to Headquarters Marine Corps and that was funny too.

L. J. Kimball: What year was it that you came back in?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 19...

L. J. Kimball: Was it before the Korean War?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, yes it was heating up because I worked. I worked two jobs and went to college at the same time. I worked as a ticket clerk in the depot from 11:00 to 7:00 in the morning and then I went to college during the day and then I went to work at the police station from 6:00 at night until quarter to 11:00. I worked two jobs. And of course I was going back to college on this GI Bill of Rights, but I wasn't getting anywhere and I knew I wasn't. So, I got a letter from the Commandant of the Marine Corps asking if I would be willing to come back in and serve another term. Well, I jumped at it. I said, yes. I would love it. Because I loved everybody I met in the Marine Corps and I just loved it. I really did and so I went back in and they sent me to Headquarters Marine Corps and oh, I'll never forget that. I thought they were going to send me back to Cherry Point to work on aircraft instruments. Because I knew I was good at it and I knew that, but no. You're going to be an administrative clerk. I said, what's that? **The phone rang.** My daughter Margaret called. She is an accountant. She was at Camp Lejeune but they transferred her out to Omaha.

L. J. Kimball: Defense...

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Defense Accounting System.



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L. J. Kimball: Where about in Nebraska is that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Omaha. She lives half way between Lincoln and Omaha because she's got horses, so she had to get a farm. But...

L. J. Kimball: Were you into Henderson Hall or were you in the Navy Annex working as an administrator?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, my first job, we couldn't live at Henderson Hall then when we first went back in. We had to live out and find us a room. This is how I met Harry Truman. So, we got us a room, there was four of us, got us a room off of Dupont Circle and we had to share the bathroom with about 20 other people. We had to wash our clothes in that bathroom too. So, we'd get up at 3:00 in the morning, take our shower and get everything done and bring our wet clothes back in and hang them in the room. Oh, it was a mess, but anyway we enjoyed it. Then we had to ride all the busses and the street car to get over to the Navy Annex because it was quite a ways over to Dupont Circle over there. I finally said, I've had enough of this. I'm tired of having to stand up all the time and seeing nothing but the gutters. Because all the colored people got on there and took all the seats, you know. So, I said, "I'm walking." So, I started walking from Dupont Circle to the Navy Annex. I'd go across Memorial Bridge, around Arlington Cemetery and climb that hill every morning I'd walk. I'd leave that room we lived in over there about 6:00 in the morning and then I'd get over there at 7:00. But, do you know who I ran into every morning? Harry Truman. He'd come down Pennsylvania Avenue. We became real good buddies.

L. J. Kimball: Was he President then?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He was President.

L. J. Kimball: Did he have security people around him?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, yes, the CIA [Secret Service] was always with him, but they got used to me too. He was a riot. He really was. So, I'd stop and talk to him every morning. He wanted to know where I was from and everything. Several of the Women Marines didn't believe me. I said, alright, come and walk with me some morning. I'll never forget one old girl named Nancy Copp, kind of a chunky little girl. She said, oh, he's not going to show up. I said, he is, he's going to come down around that corner any minute. Here he came, CIA all around him. She froze like a block of ice.

I've never seen anything like it. He started talking and he finally turned around and he said, my dear, salute me. I am your Commander in Chief. We became such good buddies. He made a remark about the Marine Corps being the policemen. . . the police force or something ["The Marine Corps is the Navy's police force and as long as I am President that is what it will remain. They have a propaganda machine that is almost equal to Stalin's."] and I jumped him about it. The Marines were having a fit and they all knew I was running into him every morning. He said it was one of those things, a statement that is taken out of context. He said what I said was that the Marine Corps could do the best job policing the world than anybody. You know how they can just twist a word or two around. So when I got to work, I told Colonel, can't remember his name, about it. So they kind of printed it around. I took some leave because my mother and father were coming up. Finally I got me a small apartment with another girl, she worked for the Weather Bureau. My mother and father came up to visit with me.

L. J. Kimball: **Tape 2 - Side 1** Your mother and father are in Washington and you had a small apartment with a girl that worked in the Weather Service. You took them to the White House and the White House was under repair.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It was closed, you couldn't go in. I said, wait a minute, he and Bessie are staying over here in the Blair house. We walked across the street, Pennsylvania Avenue and we're standing there. They had the red ropes down, the red carpet down, you know and I was standing there explaining it to them. Of course they had the guards all over the place. And all of a sudden that door burst open and here he comes chomping the steps. He stopped and he turned around and said, "What in the hell are you doing here? What in hell are you doing out of uniform?" He just went on like that. My mother, my father just stood there grinning, because that was Harry Truman and that's the way he talked. Well, he didn't offend me, because that was his natural way. So, I told him I wasn't on duty. I'm in civilian clothes because I'm on leave and I'm taking my mother and father around Washington, DC showing them different things. He said, "Well, what do you know?" He reached over and shook their hands and said, "you've got a fine daughter there." They said, "We know that." He raised up his hand and said, "come on in, Bessie's in the parlor. Why don't you come in and meet Bessie." I'm like, what am I going to do now? We went in there and he introduced us to Bessie and she's so gracious and everything. And he kept asking my father, "Mr. West, is there anything that I can do for you? Can I help you in some way?" He said, "no, Mr.

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President, not a thing in the world you can do for me. I'm happy with my job and I'm a very contented man." He said, "Well, that's wonderful to hear." Finally Dad said, "Mr. President there is something that you can do for me." He said, "What in the world is it." He said, "go on over to that piano and sit down and play the Missouri Waltz from beginning to end for me." Now, he would play the Missouri Waltz, but he'd always just play a few bars of it. But, he set there and played it from beginning to end and he was a wonderful pianist. He really was. So, anyway we got up and left, but he pulled any number of stunts on me. The old Ford Theater they say is an old museum now. But at that time it was a theater and they put plays on there. I always got tickets and several of us would go to the plays. Well, you never knew when the President was going to be in there or anything. But, twice he pulled it on me. We were leaving, going out and all of a sudden, I'm raised right straight to the ceiling. I knew right then what it was. I'd turn around and look at him. He'd be back there laughing like crazy, clapping his hand. Made Bess so mad, she couldn't see straight. "Put her down, that's cruel."

L. J. Kimball: Harry Truman was lifting you up?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, the CIA was.

L. J. Kimball: The Secret Service, yes.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He was having the Secret Service to lift me up and they were big men. Lift me up. Nothing I could do, just standing out there in the sky, you know. But, twice he had pulled that on me. Something he pulled on me. There was always something. He was real nice, he was really a real nice person.

L. J. Kimball: I guess you walked to the Navy Annex, you had to walk back every day.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Nope. Taking it back, after I walked so long, I decided I'm going to get me a pair of roller skates. Roller skates. At that time I was working in the Commandant's office.

L. J. Kimball: Did you roller skate in uniform?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. I ate my breakfast over there. I skated real early. I skated all over Washington, DC. All out to Chevy Chase from Dupont Circle. Then I found out that it's against the law to skate on the sidewalks. After I'd

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skated all over the darn place. And then the, my woman officer that was over me, called me in and told me she didn't think it was very lady like that I was skating in uniform. I says, well, I got kind of tired of walking. She said, you can ride the bus you know. I said, "no, I can't. I can't see anything but the gutters and I'm not going to go through that again." I walked the whole time I was there on that tour of duty.

L. J. Kimball: What year again was it that you went to the Navy Annex, do you recall?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: About 1950 I guess. 1949 or 1950.

L. J. Kimball: How long were you there?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: About two years. Then I was transferred to Norfolk.

L. J. Kimball: Well, when you first got there, were you immediately put in the Commandant's office? What did you do when you first got there?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I know you've never heard of him. His name was Clements, General Clements and he was a great big man. He loved the Marine Corps better than anything in the world. He was head of the Division Reserves. He took me in the Division Reserves. He was interviewing girls to work for him. He needed someone to be kind of his secretary. I said, girl Friday was what he needed and that's what he got. But, he had one girl working for him and she was going to get out of the Marine Corps due to family matters and he wanted someone in there. He interviewed six girls and every one of them knew how to type. Every darn one of them did. And they went in and told him a lie and said that they couldn't type. And I guess he could see through them. I went in and he said something about it. I said, "oh, my goodness, I don't know one end of the typewriter from another, but if you're willing to put up with me, I'll sure learn." And you know he wanted me. The first memo I had to type for him, I couldn't believe it. He set next to me, just a memo. I couldn't find the key, his finger would come over and hit the key. I said, "Lord, I'd like to see that memo now." I bet it was a big mess, but anyway I set and took the back of the old yellow pad, the cardboard part and took a nickel and drew all the circles and labeled that and I went home and I practiced it and I learned the keyboard. Then they opened a class for typists and I jumped at it and boy, I went down there. I learned to type. I became one of the fastest typists. Now, I can't do anything on the typewriter. But, I got real good with it. But, that man was so gentle and so kind. I'll never forget, oh, General

[Graves B.] Erskine. Yes, General Erskine. I know you've heard of him. He came in, in civilian clothes one time and my desk set right outside General Clement's office and he came in to see General Clement. Of course General Erskine thought everybody knew him, but I didn't know him. I never seen the man before. So, I stood up and borrowed his pass. I said, "whom shall I say is calling, Sir?" He said, gave me some kind of nickname and then I went in and told him, and he said, "Oh, Maggie, let him in." So, when he came out, I stood up as he came out the door. I said, "I'm sorry, Sir, I didn't recognize you." He turned around and said, "You're the only woman Marine I've ever met that I liked. You've got guts enough to stand up to me," he said, "I like you." And I didn't realize I had guts enough to stand up to him. If someone had told me he was General, because he was mean. They say he was as mean as he could be. But, I ran into him later in Norfolk. He became my real good friend. He fastened the bow on my shoe for me. It came out and I was going up to his office upstairs. I'm carrying it and he says, "hand me that shoe." I had taken it and handed it to him and he put the bow back on for me. But, anyway General Clements died in my arms. And to me that was one of the saddest things I ever heard. He did not have a living relative. And all the officers were real good to him. I think a lot of them knew it and everything. But, he rang for me that day and when I went in he was sitting on the end of the couch. He said, "sit here Maggie." So I set down there and I had my pad and everything and I said, "what do you want me to do General?" He said "just sit here with me." I said, "what's wrong General?" If I'd have been more astute or had known anything about medicine I would have caught on that there was something really wrong. All of a sudden his head flopped over. I'm pinned there, because he was such a heavy man and Colonel Belton finally decided he better check on us in there and he came in and I said, "thank God, I can't get up." He came over and said, "is he dead?" I said, "I don't know." He didn't know either and said, "I don't think he is," so he got the medics up there in a hurry. But, he died before we got him out to Bethesda. I told him "Colonel Belton, you know he doesn't have a living soul in the world. I said, his only living soul died about a month, a sister. He had an elderly sister that lived out in Kansas or somewhere like that. She had died and that's what he wanted to talk to me about. He kept talking, my sister, my sister. I didn't know what to do. And, but anyway, Colonel Belton rescued me from him. But, I've thought about that so much and I thought how much, I feel like I could have done so much more for that man and if I just had any idea like that, but.

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L. J. Kimball: What was it he died of?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: A heart attack. I think he just worried himself to death, knowing he was the last of his family and his sister was gone and he was elderly too. I don't know how old he was. I know he had enough years in, he could retire. I loved Headquarters Marine Corps and always said, every Marine in the Marine Corps should do a tour of duty up there and then they'd appreciate being out in the field. After you've spent some time up there, you appreciate every, the Congress and what have you. But...

L. J. Kimball: After the Division of Reserves, you went into the Commandant's office?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, I worked some in the Commandant's office then, a little bit. Not a whole lot. But, later I went in the Commandant's office, but I went to Norfolk and was there a year. Because I demanded to be transferred from that place. Old General Erskine, when he called me on the steps there when I broke the buckle on my shoe, that I just reported in and when he told me what I was to do, I said, "I'll just go to the Commandant and ask to be discharged. I'm not going to live that way." He said there was a bunch of lesbians down there and I was to get rid of them.

L. J. Kimball: How were you supposed to get rid of them?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I guess, catch them or something. I didn't know what I was supposed to do, but it just threw me for a loop. I did go up and see Shepard, I think was Commandant then.

L. J. Kimball: Lemuel C. Shepard.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I demanded to be discharged. I said, "I want to go home, I can't live like this." So finally, he said, "alright, I'll tell you something. Where would you like to be transferred to?" As far as, they had me going what with CID [Criminal Investigation Division]? I get my initials mixed up on some of that stuff.

L. J. Kimball: NIS [Naval Investigation Service]?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Whatever it is. It think they called them CID back then, anyway. I'd have to go with them, because they'd have to have a woman with them and all the cruddy stuff that you run into is just more than I could handle. I didn't live that way, and I didn't know anybody like that either. Anyway, so I

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said, I want to go as far away as I can. He said, well, do you want to go to Hawaii? Oh, no, that's too far. I said, I haven't seen enough of the United States yet. Anyway they sent me to El Torro. I want to tell you I wasn't there two months until they told me, they sent me to that school in Georgia. That was called a CID School, I'm sure it was.

L. J. Kimball: CID, so it could have been an Army school.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, it was an Army school.

L. J. Kimball: Fort Gordon?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, and I flunked it. I literally refused to get out in those Georgia woods at night and crawl on my stomach around hunting for their clues. I said, "I'm not going to do it." And I wouldn't do it, so they sent me back to El Torro and I flunked it. They sent another girl named Kay Murray who was a secretary in the legal office and she passed it. I don't know whether she thought about how dangerous it was or not, but I knew those Georgia woods had rattlesnakes and copperheads in them and I wasn't about to do it. But, I don't think she realized that. But, she passed it, but when it came to using anybody, it was me that they had to call and use. Kay just, made a sound, it was terrible. Honest to God, they had some kind of gang and you know what it wasn't women Marines either, it was wives of some of the men that they were after. They come and got me one Saturday night about 5:00. I had a date, I had a big dance. I was wearing an evening dress. I had to take that off and put on my uniform and take off with them. We started in Santa Anna. I guess you'd call it a body house. I'd never been so disgusted in all my life. I had to go in with them. When we were inside, in fact they almost held me up, they thought I'd pass out on them. All they had was mattresses on the floors around the rooms. I saw men I knew. I saw warrant officers and CWO's and master gunnery sergeants and sergeants major in that hell hole. We were looking for one person and they were spiriting her away. So, we got out of that mess, and I needed to upchuck.

L. J. Kimball: So, these Marines were fooling around with the wives?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Both ways. The wives and in fact this one woman we were looking for and they kept spiriting her from one body house to another. We ended up in San Francisco. We were gone about three days and then back down we finally caught her outside Laguna Beach. And I had never, I'm not, well, I

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did work for the police, but I didn't learn any police work. I knew that wasn't for me anyway. But, I read her, her rights as soon as she got in that car. If anyone had asked me to say those rights before or after then, I couldn't have done it. But they were, those men were really impressed. Well, you did that real well. I know I was shaking like a leaf, because I didn't know those things. They said I said it perfectly. But, anyway that was the last time, and I told them, I said, I don't want ever to be used for anything like that again. I'm not cut out that way.

L. J. Kimball: Let's go back here a minute. How long were you stationed at the Navy Annex?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: See, that was after, I think. Because it's been a long time ago, you know. I didn't go to the Navy Annex until after I'd been to California, no. I went to the Navy Annex and left there and went to Norfolk, Norfolk to El Torero, El Torero back to Camp Lejeune, the Leadership School and back to El Torero and I went to recruiting school at Parris Island and back to El Torero and then I got orders.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. We can do this step by step. I was just trying to get it clear in my mind. You worked in the Division of Reserves. Now, I heard that you worked also in the Commandant's, or the Secretary of the Navy's office.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That's later.

L. J. Kimball: That's later. So, basically your two years there was spent in the Division of Reserves.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, and the Commandant's office was down the steps, right down there. I remember real well. Now, meantime the career started. This Jack Parker, he was at the Chosin Reservoir. He had a wife and three children and they were in their home in Tennessee and they had an apartment on the second floor. And Ruby woke up and realized there was something wrong and she was trying to get the kids out of the apartment and everything, but her brother went there early in the morning to check on them and couldn't get in and so he went on and then came back and still couldn't get in, so he got several men and they broke in and they were all dead. Something happened to the gas furnace. Well, my mother called me and told me. Ruby had been raised with us, she was like a sister to me. Told me what happened. She said, is there anyway, Jack is over in Korea some place and they can't get a hold of him. So, I told Colonel Belton



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who was my immediate boss. He said, come on let's go down to the Commandant's office. So, we went down there. The first thing he asked me was, what was his name? I said, I only know Jack Parker. I didn't know what his real name was, you know. I said, he's a CWO. He says, alright. He said, we'll see what we can do. He had me to come down in about an hour. He says, we found him, we got his record and he's at the Chosin Reservoir. One of those hot shot pilots that they get mad about flying around here, bless his heart. And they were shooting at him, and it was cold. He swooped down with a basket and had that man to jump in it and he flew him out of there. They flew him right straight from Chosin Reservoir to Headquarters Marine Corps and I was waiting on the front step with the Commandant and two other generals and a whole bunch of colonels. And they just surrounded him. They had clean uniforms, they had everything ready for him. They took him and cleaned him up. Then the Marine Corps flew him to Knoxville, Tennessee, where they were in the funeral home. And my mother said it was the awfulest sight she ever saw, to see that mother, three children and they had a casket for the little puppy dog. They had a little tiny casket for it. She said, when Jack walked in there he just stood and he just passed out. He couldn't take it. He had a terrible time for awhile. He finally got on his feet. But, the Marine Corps was so good to him, so compassionate and that's what I keep telling about. I say, you know what? Those men are so compassionate. I know, I worked with them and I said how good they were to Jack. You know this little girl on that soccer team, last name is Hamm, married to a Marine Corps Pilot? He's actually stationed at Cherry Point, but he's on temporary duty in Japan. And that last game, the Marine Corps flew him home, flew him to that game for her so he could watch his wife play in that soccer game. And someone said something about it and I said, that's the compassion of the Marine Corps that I keep telling everybody about. I said, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe things have changed so much and I don't have sense enough to see it. But, I said, those are the things that make the Marine Corps to me.

L. J. Kimball: Was this recently?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. That was the women's soccer team that won the Olympic gold medal.

L. J. Kimball: Oh, that Hamm.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: She's married to a Marine Corps pilot stationed at Cherry Point. He was TAD [Temporary Additional Duty], well, they told it that night of the game. They told it, that the Marine Corps flew him back so he could watch his wife play soccer. And I often wonder if she knew he was out there in the audience. I don't know whether she knew it or not. She probably had been better off if she didn't know it. She'd probably go all to pieces if she had known.

L. J. Kimball: When you worked in the Division of Reserves, your principle support was to the Director of Division Reserve then. But, you were occasionally called down to the Commandant's office to do some work for him. Who was the Commandant?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Shepherd.

L. J. Kimball: Lemuel C. Shepherd. Right. Did you get any impression of General Shepherd.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: My only impression is, he had trouble making decisions. He was kind of wishy washy. I met some of them afterwards and they said something. But, he was always, oh, you know. I've got General [Randolph McCall] Pate's picture in there. Now, he was my real Marine Corps General. But, I liked General Shepherd. In fact I'd never met any of them I didn't like. But, except for the Division of Reserves, I'm having trouble remembering.

L. J. Kimball: You went from there from Norfolk.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, and then I left Norfolk and went to El Torero.

L. J. Kimball: How long were you at Norfolk?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: A little over a year, because I did not like it there. I did not want to be there.

L. J. Kimball: Do you remember what year that was? Was it during the Korean War?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Let me get my folder out and maybe I can see some of these dates. Let me see. This is my top secret clearance. I had filled out all this.

L. J. Kimball: Top Secret Clearance.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I had to give this stuff, send this to my daughter because she didn't know Grandma's or Grandpa's name. She'd never met them. Ah, well.

L. J. Kimball: This was your certificate of service when you got out the first time? Margaret Irene West, W770357?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: Honorably served on active duty. Is that what they gave in those days, just a card? These days an honorable discharge merits a certificate.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, we got that too. This was to carry in your wallet. This is not a bill. It's an insurance policy statement. What's this for? What's this doing here? VA Policy. Now, let me see. This was my 214. They tell where you've been don't they? They used to.

L. J. Kimball: They also give your decorations, combat service, and such.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: The VA folder. Certificate of Good Conduct. Let me see, Headquarters Battalion 1951, that's when I went back to working at Headquarters Battalion, 1949. O.K.

L. J. Kimball: You're a Sergeant. Was that the first time you went back?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, uh, uh. No, this is 1944, 1949, yes.

L. J. Kimball: So, in 1949 at Headquarters US Marine Corps.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Headquarters Battalion, yes, Sergeant.

L. J. Kimball: Hmm.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: You can read better upside down than I can read. I tell you I almost hate to look at all these names. I look at all these names, she's dead, she's dead, everybody is dead. Yeah. Now, I was in Division Reserve.

L. J. Kimball: In 1949.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. And now, this is 1948.

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L. J. Kimball: It's an appointment and organization assignment Marine Corps Reserve, so it must have been just when you came back in.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: And it's dated 1948.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I didn't enlist in the Marine Corps until January 1949.

L. J. Kimball: It's Private Margaret I list, having enlisted in the US Marine Corps this date 22 January 1949 and in compliance with instructions contained in reference A you're hereby appointed to the rank of corporal, PW, to rank from 13 Feb 1946.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: See, they gave us some...oh this one has to be a later one because who signed, 1958.

L. J. Kimball: Another Honorable Discharge...

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, yes got a whole bunch of them.

L. J. Kimball: After every enlistment you got an Honorable Discharge.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, here's my school stuff.

L. J. Kimball: Yes, MCI courses. Do you have the page from your service record book which has the chronological listing of your duty assignments?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. You know I never did that. I should have, but I've never done it.

L. J. Kimball: This is an article about the Chosin Reservoir.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Jack Parker.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Jack Parker. What unit was he in? Do you have that written down there?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. I don't.

L. J. Kimball: O.K.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: The Marine Corps found him and got him back.

L. J. Kimball: So, when you went from the Division of Reserves down to Norfolk, you said you ran into General Erskine again?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: What did you do in Norfolk?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I was the head of the women there. We had about 48 women Marines there. And I was overall and we didn't have a woman officer there.

L. J. Kimball: What rank were you then?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Gunnery Sergeant.

L. J. Kimball: So, you were staff NCOIC of the women there. They lived over in Camp Elmore?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We didn't at first. When I got there they were living all scattered all over the place but they were building Camp Elmore. I'm trying to figure what in the world is this thing? It's on Secretary of the Navy. General Pate members and friends. Oh. Oh. A speech he made at Iwo Jima Memorial. Oh, I loved that man.

L. J. Kimball: Was this the dedication of the Iwo Jima Memorial? And so, General Pate was there then as Commandant. And the speech was given by William B. Franke, Under Secretary of the Navy, US Marine Corps 183rd Birthday, Ceremony at Iwo Jima Memorial, Washington, DC, 10 Nov 1958.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, I saved a lot of things I don't know what they...I wish I could find something.

L. J. Kimball: What was General Erskine there in Norfolk?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He was FMFLANT [Command General Fleet Marine Forces, Atlantic].

L. J. Kimball: Interesting.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And then he told me the main reason they sent me there. He had called the Commandant of the Marine Corps saying he wanted some woman down there that couldn't be corrupted.

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L. J. Kimball: It was at Norfolk that they handed you this distasteful job of trying to break up the lesbians?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And you know what? People, I've had some people say that everyone of them they ever met were just as nice and as sweet as they could be. I said, I wish you'd have been with me in Norfolk.

L. J. Kimball: Did you come across a lot of women Marines that were lesbians there?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, just a few. But see the Waves were involved. And there were more Waves down, well, I had to share a bath. Head of the Waves was a, she was chief. Had one big bedroom and I had one big bedroom, just shared a bath. Those idiots tried to climb that brick, well, they were threatening us, they wanted to kill us. We had to have guard protection, I mean Marine Corps guards to go from our barracks to our car and they had to build a garage for us to keep our cars in. She had a car and I had a car. They would have to unlock it and see that no one got into that garage, because they were trying to kill us.

L. J. Kimball: The lesbians?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: Where were your barracks? Was it in the CINCLANT [Commander in Chief, Atlantic] compound?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. We weren't very far from where the ships come in and what we went through there. I was scared to death for her and she was scared to death for me. And we were always checking on one another and of course I was always having to check in with General Erskine and I can't remember the colonel there that was head of the men, but he was real nice too. In fact they were all just as nice as can be. I kept saying, I don't want any part of it. I mean they were just about to drive me crazy, especially when they threatened to kill us.

L. J. Kimball: Who were you working for there in Norfolk? What organization did you belong to?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: FMFLANT I was directly under General Erskine. There was an old Sergeant Major there. He was a big help. There were a couple of women Marine officers that appeared on the scene. And I had all this stuff on

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these people that I had gathered locked in the safe. The CID had helped me gather it. They appeared on the scene and demanded that I open that safe so they could get the material out, because there was one woman officer that was involved. I told them I couldn't get into that safe and went out and told the Sergeant Major. He came in and said ladies, you must leave.

L. J. Kimball: So, he chased them out?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He told them they must leave.

L. J. Kimball: **Tape 2, Side 2.**

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And they left and I thought, boy, my name is going to be mud if they passed the word around and you know they never told anybody they tried to get in. But, anyway between the Sgt. Maj. and General Erskine I didn't have any more problems. But, then when I finally said I had had it. I had to take and every girl, every woman Marine, I had to discharge or see that they were discharged, I had to take them to the gate and escort them through the gate. I tell you I took some through the gate that were the prettiest little things I'd ever laid my eyes on. One little girl just begged and cried and said, please don't notify my mother. Don't let my mother know this. I said, "how did you get mixed up in this. I know you weren't raised that way." She said, "I got to drinking beer with them one night and that was it." I think that's what happens lots of times too. But, I said, no, I'll never tell your mother anything. It's up to you to tell her. I said, she trusted you to come in the Marine Corps. I said, and you let her down. You let the Marine Corps down. And she cried like a baby. I felt so sorry for her. And I said, but you have to get out of my car and I said there's a taxi cab sitting over there. You can go get a cab and go wherever you want to go.

L. J. Kimball: O.K.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And anyway it's terrible. I said, the Marine Corps takes care of it's own, but doggone it, but they have to do, I'm against them being in uniform. I'm sorry, but I'm very prejudiced about it.

L. J. Kimball: Did you hand her a Dishonorable Discharge printed in red ink?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Some of them just got discharged and a couple of them got Dishonorable Discharges.

L. J. Kimball: Those are experiences you don't forget. We had a homosexual Marine in my company in the 5th Division at Camp Pendleton. I had to drive him to the gate and hand him his dishonorable discharge. I'll never forget that because in those days it was printed in red ink. And dropped him off at the gate.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, it tears your heart out. After a little bit of that, I'd had it. So, I took one weekend. I left on a Thursday night. I had friends, stayed with at HOMC so I said, I've got to go out and see the Commandant, I don't care, I've got to get out of there. And being as the Commandant sent me down there, well I felt like I had to go back to Commandant to get out. That's when they says, alright, we'll send you to El Torero again. Then I got out to El Torero and had to help with those, but it was different. It wasn't women in uniforms. It was wives and girlfriends of some of the men, all mixed up and all that mess.

L. J. Kimball: Why were they picking on you?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I don't know. The only thing I know is that General Erskine told me, and I asked him, why did you want me? I said, I'm not big and strong. I think you need someone big and strong to be able to handle them. Because I couldn't handle anything. He said, because we know you can't be corrupted. He says, we know you can't be corrupted. Well, I appreciate that, because you can't corrupt me because I'd kill em. He said, that's what we mean. We know you can't do it.

L. J. Kimball: Well, you must have had a pretty good professional reputation by then.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I did have. I have to agree. Really and truly you could go to almost any place or to any officers or senior enlisted people in the Marine Corps at that time and they'd all tell you the same thing. I never knew Mary Sabourin until we started meeting here. But, boy, she knew me and she came up and she's a retired Sgt.. Maj. I said, I didn't retire as anything. I said, because I had to get out. I'd always said that when my daughter entered her teenage years, I'd either quit work or retire. I could retire. By that time I had 26 years, plus my age gave me enough time to retire.



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L. J. Kimball: You're MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] was an O1, you were an administrative type.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, after I went back in. The first time I don't remember what it was at Cherry Point. We didn't know anything like that then.

L. J. Kimball: How long were you in El Torero then?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I was at El Torero about two years.

L. J. Kimball: Do you remember what year that was? Approximately?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Mid 50's, somewhere along there.

L. J. Kimball: What were you doing in El Torero?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I worked, Administrative chief, for Colonel Bunker. Then I, there was two of us had to be acting sergeant major for awhile. There was a Dorothea Hannon and myself because they arrested all the Sgt. Majors. I don't know if you heard about it or not. But, it was a big mess.

L. J. Kimball: The women sergeant majors?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, no. They had to arrest all the male sergeant majors.

L. J. Kimball: Why was that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Kickbacks from Mohave and El Torero. It was a mess that you couldn't believe. I cried and I was the Administrative Sergeant Major then. I don't know if you ever heard of Sergeant Major Smith or not. When he finally retired he had about forty-five years in the Marine Corps and he retired in, maybe about 1951, 1952 or something like that. But, he was in there. He was an Administrative Sergeant Major and Colonel Bunker. And then there was a Colonel Charleston. He was, we called him hot-dog, because he was a pilot. And General [Christian Frank] Schilt was the air general of the base. But, those poor sergeant majors and I, their sergeant major in too. But, they finally found out that I Was Administrative Sergeant Major and they thought I was easy. I'll never forget it. One from Mohave came in, reported in first. Of course they had all been AWOL and they'd all been looking for them. It was a big mess. He came in and he stood there and he, and all of a sudden he turned around and sat down on my desk and

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said, well, Maggie, I'm here to report in. I sat there a few minutes and I thought he'd catch on about me having to say something. I said, you will stand up and old Colonel Bunker was behind the screen. You will get up and stand at attention. I kept him standing at attention. I called the OD. I said take him down and put him in the brig. I didn't know what to do with him, so I put him in the brig. Colonel came out after that and said, Maggie you don't put sergeant majors in the brig. I said, well, I can't take him home with me, do you want to take him home with you? I said, there's no way I can take him to my barracks. And keep him under, my thumb on him. I said, I had four of them locked up in the brig before their court martial. Well, from that, after that, and they gave me a job, to be in Treasurers SNCO Mess there. And I, the woman Marine I had before me, gave me the books and everything and God, I looked at those books. I'm no bookkeeper or anything, but I couldn't figure those things out to save my life. I can add and see columns. So, I took them to the area auditor and that was the start of it. And area auditor said, he said, this is terrible. So, that was the start of it. They were always getting back to augmented messes. My heart being in El Torero, and what have you. Dottie Hennon always had to put up a flag every morning. I said, I'm not going out there and put up that flag. I'm too short, too little, I'd look like a jackass out there. But, anyway.

L. J. Kimball: You were a gunnery sergeant, but you were an acting sergeant major.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. From there I went on recruiting duty.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Where was that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: In Des Moines, Iowa.

L. J. Kimball: Were you gunnery sergeant then?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. I had to travel to Iowa, Minnesota, and part of Nebraska, Missouri. I traveled all over the place. And part of it I liked and part of it I didn't like. I didn't like the winter times there. That was a scary part for me. I got caught out in some blizzards, and I was lucky to be alive. But, anyway I made it through all of it. I still hear from a lot of the people I met out there too. It was the people I loved. Really and truly, the best people in the world were out there in the Mid West. But, I showed my ignorance out there. I'd never been around the farm or anything like that. And the Wave recruiter was from New York City and she was as stupid as I was. But, we

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were at our coffee one morning, a little coffee shop back of the recruiting office and we were reading the paper. This young girl at the Mason City Iowa had to sell the steer that she raised and loved so much. **Safeway** bought it. And I kept saying, that's terrible, it showed her crying and her arms around that old steer's neck and I said, why can't they let that steer live and let it breed or propagate or something? Let that girl keep her animal. So, we went to check out and it was a retired Sgt. Maj. that ran the place. No, a retired Navy chief ran the place. And so we stopped to ask him. Why in the world won't they let that little girl keep that animal and let her breed it? She'd make college money. He just backed up and looked at us like he thought we were stupid. We went on to the office and I told her, Mims, we've said something wrong. The way he looked at us I don't know what we said wrong, but whatever it was is wrong. So, we went in the office and we had one, oh, he's a colonel now. Dean, oh what was his last name? Because he went ahead and made, I guess he's still in the Marine Corps. He's probably retired by now too. But, anyway he was just a staff sergeant then, the little coffee shop, I said, come on Dean, I'll take you to a cup of coffee. I've got something I want to ask you. He lived there. His mother and father lived there in town and everything. I asked him, now what did we say wrong? He had his head, and started laughing like crazy. I said, alright, tell me what we said was wrong? He said, you didn't say anything wrong, but don't you know what a steer is? I said, I've heard of steer. But, I don't know. Then he told me. I said, oh, golly Moses. He said, you know you hadn't gotten out of the door till there was the whole, all the Army, Navy, Air Force, all knew what you two girls had done.

L. J. Kimball: You eventually realized your error I take it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It was a steer. That's a male part. They've been operated on so they couldn't do anything. But, we didn't know. I found out though. Then another thing that was so funny. I listened to the radio every morning getting dressed and getting my breakfast and all that stuff. They always gave farm reports and farm news every morning. I'd listen to it because I was trying to learn, because after all you go in these homes and go out there and talk to the mothers and fathers and you don't want to be so stupid. I'd heard if a pig has a curly tail you should have a vet look at it because there could be something wrong, sick or something. So, I was with the male recruiter and wanted to call on a young man. We had to go by the pig's sty first to get up to the house, it's up on the hill and the pig pen was down close to the road. I said, oh, my goodness there's a pig in

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there that's got a curly tail. And he said, what do you mean? I told him what I heard. He said, well, I guess it's alright till we went up...I couldn't keep my mouth shut to save my life. I had to tell those people that they had sick pigs. The woman looked at me and started laughing and said, normally that would be right, but said, our grandchild broke that pig's tail when it was a little tiny pig, so he had a broken tail what's caused it. I said, I'll never say anything again about a pig and a curly tail.

L. J. Kimball: Did you have any trouble making your quotas?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, I didn't have any problems at all. I worked my tail off. I'll be perfectly honest with you. I was on the TV and I had a radio program on and I traveled that state from one end to the other. I really did. I talked to all the schools. But, if the Army recruiter couldn't go out, I took her papers and talked for her too. I talked for the Navy. I talked for the Air Force and to the airlines. I took all of their material and I'd tell em all. But, I didn't have any trouble recruiting.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. You're in Des Moines on recruiting duty for two years and then where did you go?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That's when I went back to Headquarters Marine Corps.

L. J. Kimball: Do you remember what year that was?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 19, I don't know, 1957, something like that.

L. J. Kimball: Had you met James Flanagan yet?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, no. I hadn't met Jim until later.

L. J. Kimball: O.K., James, it's James Flanagan. So, you went back to Headquarters Marine Corps. You're still a gunnery sergeant and you're in the Navy Annex. What are you doing?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I wasn't at the Navy Annex. I just went there for an interview. I had already been picked to go over to the Under Secretary of the Navy's Office.

L. J. Kimball: In the Pentagon.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: In the Pentagon.

L. J. Kimball: O.K.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And I want to tell you the people I met there were out of this world.

L. J. Kimball: Was this Under Secretary Franke?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Franke, uh huh. Yes. And that's where I met Mr. Nixon.

L. J. Kimball: Richard Nixon?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And Willie Brandt from Germany. I swear I can't remember all their names. I should have written everything down at the time, but it didn't dawn on me I should keep records. But, I thought I could remember things, too. But, when Jim and I got married, before we got married, I should say. Mr. Franke sent for him. I just happened to look up one day and there he was coming in the office with his dress blues on. He said well, when the Secretary of the Navy calls you, you put on your dress blues to go calling on him. I said, "what are you here for?" He said, "I don't know, he sent for me." I was on pins and needles then, I don't know what's going on around here, but he told me later. He came out and left and Mr. Franke never said a word to me about anything. But, that night Jim told me. He said, "he told me that he and his family loved you and he was acting as your father and if I ever said anything or ever did anything to you he'd kill me." He said, "I know her father would say the same thing to you." He said, "so, I'll never say a cuss word to you."

L. J. Kimball: You were dating then?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, we were dating and I told Mr. Franke we were getting married. Well, he asked me then if he and Birdie, and I, well I called her Birdie, his wife could come to the wedding. We were going to have it in the chapel at Henderson Hall. And I said "sure you can come." First thing you know, Mr. Nixon called next and asked if he and Pat could come. I said, "sure." Then, well the Navy Secretary for Air. He was head of J. C. Penny Co. And he went in for that. So, he asked me if he could come, and I said, sure he could come. Well, I think it was the next day that I got a call from the colonel that was head of Henderson Hall, would I come by his office and see him. I went in and he said, "I understand you're getting married Saturday." I said, "yes, we're getting married, I think it's 2:00 Saturday

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afternoon.” He said, “I understand that the Secretary of the Navy, Under Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of Navy for Air and the Vice President and their wives are all coming.” I said, “yes, they asked if they could come.” I said, “oh, my goodness.” He said, “do you realize what you’re doing to the male Marines at Henderson Hall on a Saturday afternoon?” I mean it was just beginning to go over me what was happening. He said, “they will have to be in dress blues from the front gate to the chapel.” I said, “oh, no they won’t.” I said, “I’ll cancel everything.” So, I had to call and tell them it was all off. They never knew why I called, we didn’t change a thing. We still got married 2:00 Saturday afternoon with six people there.

L. J. Kimball: What was the date you got married?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 2 Dec, don’t ask me what year. 1956.

L. J. Kimball: 1956. How old were you then when you got married?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I was about 36, 37.

L. J. Kimball: And James, he was in the Marine Corps. What rank was he?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He was a master sergeant at the time. He got promoted to master gunnery sergeant and I was being promoted to master sergeant when I got pregnant and I wouldn’t take it. They wanted me to take it anyway and I said no. There’s a little girl named Ethel Wilson that’s next on the list behind me, give it to Ethel. Ethel Wilcox, rather. And they did and she came and hugged my neck and said, “they told me that you wouldn’t take it and asked them to give it to me.” I said, “I sure did, I know I’m going to be getting out in a couple of months.” They wouldn’t let me go. I asked in February to get out and they wouldn’t let me go until May. I said, “well, I guess I’m going to have this baby in uniform.” I wouldn’t wear a uniform pregnant, I wouldn’t do it. I wore civilian clothes. But, I got out in May, I guess.

L. J. Kimball: Was there another tour of Camp Lejeune in there someplace?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: As a civilian.

L. J. Kimball: Oh, as a civilian.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, I came to school to Camp Lejeune. One school at Camp Lejeune and one school at Parris Island.

L. J. Kimball: And the school you came to at Camp Lejeune was what?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Leadership School.

L. J. Kimball: And that was over at Camp Geiger?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. The women's barracks at that time were right behind Buildings 15 and 66, down there several buildings and that was the building.

L. J. Kimball: And that was the women's Leadership School.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. When was that? What did you do after you went to the women's Leadership School? Where did you go?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Went back to El Torero. Oh, I had the best time in the world on the train back. There was one girl that came with me from El Torero, named Betty Hollis. Sour puss. She just set. We had a, what did they call them on the train? Where we could close it up and sit there. That's what she did, closed it up. I wouldn't do it. I went to the club car and I met some of the nicest people. There was a whole bunch of men in there and I, boy they're all nice acting men and everything. Well, it turned out that they had been to a convention in Wisconsin and they were all college professors from the West Coast, State of Washington, Oregon and anyway they practically filled it up. Well, this was this one older couple that I always ate with. In fact we met for breakfast and everything, ate with, man and his wife. I thought they were just wonderful. They were real interested in talking to me about the Marine Corps and what have you. So, I said, "well, I love California, being stationed here, but I wouldn't want to live out here on my own or anything, but I love being stationed there." And they said that they loved California too. So, we all got off of the train at El Torero. And just before we got off of the train, he asked me who my boss was. I told him it was Colonel Bunker there and General Schilt and like that. He said, good, I know Colonel Bunker real well. He's a pilot. I said, "yes he is a pilot." He said, "well, I'll be contacting him." I said, "what for?" What in the world had I done wrong, you know. And he said, "we've decided we'd like you to come visit us at San Diego." He was an admiral over at San

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Diego Naval Base down there. You think my knees didn't wobble? Sure enough they contacted Colonel Bunker. Well, he's dead now so, they couldn't do anything to him. He flew me down there. I packed my bag, went to San Diego. I spent a week down there with them. I was treated like Queen Elizabeth.

L. J. Kimball: Which Admiral was this? Do you remember his name?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. I get so mad at myself. These wonderful things happened. But, before we got there we had to go through Salt Lake City, Utah and we had about an hour and a half layover at Salt Lake. One of the men stood up in the club car and told who he was. He was the grandson of the man who started that mess out there in Salt Lake City. He said he would contact his brother if any of us would like to tour the church and all that.

L. J. Kimball: Are you talking about Brigham Young?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. And he was living in Seattle, Washington then, but his brother, he was somewhere else. There was a telephone on the train and he called him and talked to him. He said yes, he'd have two limousines there. I think there was about 20 of us that wanted to do it. And you know what? I was the only woman and I felt like a fool. But, I went anyway. I said, "I want to see these things too." And it turned out, I guess I, being so short and everything, I wasn't noticed. But, they took us in places that were supposed to be just for men only. Beautiful big rooms and everything, I couldn't figure it out, what it meant. I didn't know at the time it was men only. I found out as we were leaving, someone said something. You know that you had a lady in here? Oh, no, there's not supposed to be any ladies in here. I said, there's nothing wrong with the place, I didn't see any pornography or any tackiness on anything. Well, anyway I felt very honored, I really did. And then it was later when the couple told me where they were from. But, I had the best time down there. They showed me all over that base. She took me to the zoo, San Diego Zoo and the two of us had a ball. She acted like a little kid going through there. I had a wonderful time. But, I said, I wouldn't miss all the things. I have driven from one ocean to the other ocean six times by myself and one time I was going back and it was according to what year, what time of year it was, whether I took the Southern route, Route 66. Anyway I decided to stop off at Yellowstone and I rode that doggone mule down there. But, anyway I did and I lived through that. And then it was on the same time I stopped at Las Vegas. I'd never been in a gambling casino in my life or anything. If



they got those little machines along the street that's what I'll play. They didn't have that. So, I thought, well, what the heck. I went over to, I forget the name of that thing. It was, I've got a picture of it in here anyway. Golden Nugget. I went in and the, they're called maitre de' met me you know. So, I just confessed. I said, "I am a woman Marine, I'm traveling across country and I've never been in a casino in my life and I wonder if I could just walk through and look at things." He said, "my lady, I will take you through." I want to tell you he took me through. He even had me play roulette. I guess it was roulette. I didn't, I don't think I lost anything, and I didn't win anything. He just let me play anyway. He took me all through there and of course I was ga-ga seeing all those things I'd never seen in my life. I'd seen it on TV, but that's not the same thing. We get back to the front part of it and I said, "would you tell me, recommend a restaurant?" I knew they had food there but I didn't know where a restaurant was or anything. "A restaurant, some place close where I can eat, I'm getting a little bit hungry." He said, "it's all set up for you young lady." He opened the doors, oh. He took me over to a booth. I never saw such food before in my life. I'd never seen anything like that. I've got a picture of that too in my album. That plate of food they brought me. I couldn't even make a dent in it. But, anyway, I ate and I wasn't allowed to pay for a thing. And he escorted me to the door and wished me well. He couldn't have been nicer. He made a friend now. But, he made a friend and I've always told how nice they were. I said I felt like Queen Elizabeth by the time he got through escorting me around. But, I enjoyed all of it.

L. J. Kimball: When you left Washington, when you were pregnant, you got out of the Marine Corps. What year was that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 1957, I think. Because, Meg was, no, 1958, because Meg was born in 1958 and I didn't get out until just a few months before she was born.

L. J. Kimball: Now, you voluntarily got out. I understand there was a policy at one point if you got pregnant as a woman Marine you had to get out of the Marine Corps.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I was under that.

L. J. Kimball: Because you got pregnant you had to leave the Marine Corps.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Right. And Secretary Franke and Mr. Nixon and everybody was fussing like crazy. They said, the men don't have to get out, why should the women? And it wasn't too long after that they made the ruling that women didn't have to get out and I think I brought that on and I think it's a terrible thing. I think they should make them get out. I really do. But, I always felt kind of guilty about that, but, nothing I could do about it.

L. J. Kimball: How long were you in the Marine Corps?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, 14 years active duty and 2 years reserve.

L. J. Kimball: You came down to Camp Lejeune because James had orders to Camp Lejeune?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: What did he do when he got down here?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, he was in Purchasing and Contracting. He started out in the Marine Corps in tanks and I don't know what all jobs he had, but anyway he started out in tanks. He said he knew he had to get out of that he was, it was going to kill him. They worked the body to death. But, then he went to Administrative School and, well, of course I was out of the Marine Corps then, but while we were living in Arlington, he was still, he was in Purchasing and Contracting a lot.

L. J. Kimball: So, Purchasing and Contracting up at Marine Corps Headquarters.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, and at Camp Lejeune he was in Purchasing and Contracting.

L. J. Kimball: When did you come to Camp Lejeune?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 1959? Wait a minute here. I guess it was 1960. I worked as a civilian at Headquarters Marine Corps for awhile and was on the, I worked for the colonel's promotion board. I never could figure that one out either. That's how I met President Kennedy and that was and I guess May and June before he was killed in November, whatever year that was.

L. J. Kimball: 1963.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He, how did he get over to the Pentagon? Anyway, I don't remember but he asked me if I wanted to stay up there. I said, well, I loved Washington, D.C., and I loved working there, I really did, but my husband has already been transferred to Camp Lejeune and I want to go down there and stay with him. He said, well that's no problem, all I have to do is pick up the phone and get him back up here. I said, "no you don't, he's a Marine." I said no way, you don't do that to a Marine, his name would be mud. You're not doing that to him, I'm going down there to be with him. So I transferred myself as a civilian. Everyone said that's not possible, you can't transfer yourself as a civilian. I said, oh yes you can. I got my transfer orders and transferred to Camp Lejeune. They almost flipped because I came in under orders and they had to give me a job.

L. J. Kimball: You got a job at TMO [Transportation Management Office] then?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes and I stayed there the entire time.

L. J. Kimball: And how many years was that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Ten or eleven.

L. J. Kimball: What year did you retire?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: In 1972, I believe. Yes we retired in 1972.

L. J. Kimball: James retired in 1972 also?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. Because I fought for my retirement. They didn't want to let me go. He was retiring on 30 May and I said my retirement has to be before his. You think I'm going to stay at work one day more...

L. J. Kimball: **Tape 3 side 1.** What was her name again?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Valerie Hilgarth.

L. J. Kimball: And she was a colonel in Building 1 in 1972 or when you retired?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. She came out and stood with me because I had known her when she first came in the Marine Corps and I was at Recruiting School at Parris Island. And she come to the Boot Camp there. She and Amy Hayjack and they came in and used to talk to me. I had duty and they'd come in to talk

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to me and I told them, both you girls got a college graduate. I said, for heaven's sakes apply for officer's training and I talked them into applying for officer's training. And Amy Hayjack died when she was a major, but Valerie retired and she lives in Jacksonville. I see her every once in awhile.

L. J. Kimball: What is her name? Valerie?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Hilgarth.

L. J. Kimball: Is she a member of the Women's Marine Association?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, she's a member, but she very seldom comes to a meeting. She comes to our yearly anniversary party or something.

L. J. Kimball: And you were at Women's Marine Boot Camp together?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, no they were in Boot Camp. I was down there in Recruiting School. And of course they went on to officer's school and I'm the one who talked them into doing it. And...

L. J. Kimball: So, James retired as a Master Gunnery Sergeant. Still working at the base when he retired?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. He had him a big boat and he took out fishing parties. He loved the ocean.

L. J. Kimball: Before he retired, when he was a Master Gunnery Sergeant, was he working at the base?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, yes in Purchasing and Contracting.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. So, he stayed in Purchasing and Contracting all the time until you both retired. Where were you living? Did you live aboard the base?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. You look around and see what's in this house, there's no way on earth there was storage in one of those housing things. We rented a house over in Swansboro and lived there for two years until they opened up this area and this house was one of the first ones in the...

L. J. Kimball: When did you move here?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 1962 I think it was.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Let's go back and kind of look at the big picture here. You started off with the genesis of the Women Marines, and stayed with them, and had an opportunity to observe changes in the Marine Corps and the Women Marines. What did you see in the way of how Women Marines changed from the time you came in until the time you got out?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I've already told you most of it. I absolutely am against putting these young girls in the barracks mixed with these men. And it's not fair to those young men. They're just kids too, you know and both of them are just kids and it's not fair to either one of them. I know they're supposed to be adults, and supposed to act like adults and all, but they're children. I don't care what anyone says.

L. J. Kimball: Are you saying that it provides too much of a distraction?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, yes. After all why did the, when the hormones really get to going, you know and all that stuff. It's just not right. I just think Congress is wrong and the Army is wrong, the Navy is wrong and the Marine Corps is wrong and the Air Force is wrong to pull it all. I really feel that way. That to me is the biggest thing. Other than that, I think that the young people today are so much smarter than we were.

L. J. Kimball: I've heard that. Do you think they are tougher now than you were then? Or just smarter.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, I think they're smarter now. I don't think they were any tougher than the girls I went through Boot Camp with. I have to admit, I got out of a lot of things, I really did. But, and another thing that bothers me, is they keep saying they're opening up jobs for the women and all that. You know something? All the jobs they claim they're opening up, other than going aboard ship now, we didn't go aboard ship. But, those jobs we did anyway. You should have seen those women repair those big aircraft engines. They didn't have to lift them or anything, they had hoists and everything to get them out with. But, they could do that. Now, I admit they were pretty good sized people and I said, part of us were repairing the instruments. We did everything. They drove the busses. They drove the trucks. They did everything on earth. I drove a bus once. I was being discharged and they needed someone to drive a bus of young junior birdmen out to the Officer's Club. I never said anything. I didn't have a

bus driver's license. They come in and said, do you have a driver's license? I said, yes. I've got a Kentucky driver's license, is what I have. They said, well, you're the bus driver. So, I got the bus out there. I didn't know anything about Cherry Point back then, you know and the Officer's Club was real pretty. It had a circle driveway in front of it and they had a little white picket fence all away around that driveway. Going out, I took that bus out there and there was no more white picket fence. I took it all down. I didn't know it, but I did. We left there. They got aboard the bus and I got it started and going and everything. And all of a sudden, it started raining, it was pouring rain. The thing stopped. I didn't know what was wrong with it. I tried to keep starting it. It wouldn't start. So, those young men got off of that bus and pushed it up to Building 1 there at Cherry Point. We get it up there and all of a sudden, I don't remember turning the key to start that thing up. They were soaking and wet. I couldn't tell them that it was my fault. It wasn't the bus's fault. But, I was just, it was dark. It was nighttime when I had to drive that thing. So, we did everything on earth that they asked us to do.

L. J. Kimball: Going back over your career, to refresh my mind. When you left here in, 1947, when you left Camp Lejeune, did you ever come back again? Were you ever stationed at Camp Lejeune?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. No, I was never stationed there. I came back to school. I came back to school.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. So, you probably didn't get a whole lot of liberty while you were here in Camp Lejeune in 1947? Did you get a chance to get out to Jacksonville?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. Let me tell you something funny. After, I got to Boot Camp and one of the first letters that I wrote home to my mother, she held that over my head and I couldn't find it when she died. I wanted to get it. I wrote her and asked her where in the world I was? I said, I only know that they say we're in North Carolina and we're on the coast and I was trying to tell her where I thought we were. I said, it's horrible here. The mosquitos are horrible and there's nothing but sand, it's terrible. I said, find out where the Marine Corps has spirited us out of the United States. I said, if we weren't spirited out of the United States, tell them you want to give this section of the country back to the Indians because we don't need it. I'm of Cherokee decent.

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L. J. Kimball: Were you serious when you said, been spirited out of the country?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. Camp Lejeune was horrible looking then.

L. J. Kimball: Tell me what it looked like.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Let me go get some pictures. This was the first ID colored pictures.

L. J. Kimball: This is young Margaret West. When you had just joined the Marine Corps.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. I think there's a date on the back in one of them there. One in 1949, 1944. I guess this was the first one.

L. J. Kimball: All 101 pounds of you.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, I wasn't 101 then. They thought I was. Now, this is our barracks.

L. J. Kimball: We're looking at pictures here in a photograph album.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Our barracks, around our barracks. You can see how desolate it all was.

L. J. Kimball: This was over in the Boot Camp area.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Between Building 1 and I guess there's Building 2 down there? Building 2.

L. J. Kimball: Across from the Protestant Chapel, down Holcomb Blvd.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: See how desolate it was? All those beautiful maple trees they got all over the place down here, they were little stubs in the ground. I think there's one picture here.

L. J. Kimball: It looks like palm trees.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That wasn't, this was made in town or somewhere.

L. J. Kimball: Well, it looks like you know how to salute in this picture.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, yes, they taught us that. But, see we didn't have uniforms in a lot of.

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L. J. Kimball: Excuse me. Why weren't you wearing uniforms?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: The uniform shop didn't have them all in yet.

L. J. Kimball: That was when you first got there.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, yes. It was in the Third Recruit Training Battalion and we all learned to stand up straight too. See how tall I was? I was taller than some of the others.

L. J. Kimball: I'm looking at this building here and it's white.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It's just an old barrack's building and it's been torn down now.

L. J. Kimball: It looks like it's been there for awhile because the whopper stickers on the outside.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It's a mess.

L. J. Kimball: Is this when you were in Admin School or still in the 1940's?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It was in the 40's. Now, part of this was Norfolk. This is when I got to leave Norfolk and the girls gave me a party. I was happy to leave.

L. J. Kimball: Alright. This, you're out on a beach. Is that recreation or training?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Training.

L. J. Kimball: And is this a Lejeune Beach?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, that's at Norfolk. I don't know what beach that was. They took us out there. This of course is in California.

L. J. Kimball: In this picture here?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, that could be it. I think I was a gunnery sergeant in that one, I think. I can't remember now. This was General Pate, Headquarters Marine Corps. I was in charge of all these girls and that's me right there. See, I wasn't a shorty then. I had some height to me.

L. J. Kimball: You must have kept growing.



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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: What's this?

L. J. Kimball: Certificate of Honorable and Satisfactory Service in WWII. This is to certify that Margaret Irene West has satisfactory completed service and at this date entered the U.S. Marine Corps, 1 May 1944. Of the inactive service 24 July 1944. Upon relief from active duty held rank of corporal. Given at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina by Ruth E. Jones, 10 April 1946. Was that when you got out of the Marine Corps I guess. April of 1946.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We were discharged from Camp Lejeune but actually it was Cherry Point and this is...

L. J. Kimball: That looks like General Pate. Is this your picture?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, this is a friend of mine. I made all the wedding dresses for all the girls. One time I was a good seamstress. And this was the Headquarters Marine Corps.

L. J. Kimball: Was this the place that all the ladies stayed together?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, one great big room. It was only for one week when we reported in. It was terrible. But, anyway we had to go out and find a place to live. And we did and I enjoyed it up there. All the people you met and everything, it was wonderful.

L. J. Kimball: Is this you here?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, this is me here. I was trying to show you. I think it should be in here. Yes, instrument training. Oh, that darn telephone.

L. J. Kimball: Is that up at the school in Chicago?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: This one has, it says...

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, if you can read it.

L. J. Kimball: Chicago School Aircraft Instruments Naval Training School, Barracks Number One.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: There's, just one barracks, period. And it's just a sidewalk between us and the street and you go around the corner and it's the same way. But, I, we and this is one of our instructors when we were there. That's the type of hat we wore. Of course we all wore them differently. This was myself and this woman was Fran Ridgely. She was Dean of Women at Fresno College when she came in the Marine Corps. We became real good friends. And this of course is Blair House. And, I can't remember the names of those gardens up there. And of course, Mount Vernon. This is the garden where Roosevelt and Churchill, this is myself and another girl, came to agreement on a lot of things. What is the name of that doggone garden?

L. J. Kimball: Maybe I'll think of it before I leave.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Scrubbing floors. They always caught me scrubbing floors. That was O.K. I didn't mind it. My brother had to go overseas. He was in the Army.

L. J. Kimball: Oh, before I forget. You had a daughter. Just one daughter?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Just one.

L. J. Kimball: And she was born when?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, she be 40 years old in September so how old, born in?

L. J. Kimball: 1958, 1959? Around there?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Who's this gentleman here?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: General Shepherd. And I had this apartment and all the women Marines would come out and I used to make their clothes for them, skirts and blouses for them and everything, so they didn't have to buy them. They didn't have a lot of money, you know.

L. J. Kimball: Where did you get the skill to make all those clothes?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: My mother taught it to us. My sister and I both had to learn to sew. But, when we came out for Christmas and everything we gave each other

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musical instruments and we were trying to play them, but we didn't do very well. But, we had a good time. We enjoyed each other. That's what I mean about camaraderie. They didn't live there with me. There was only two other girls. This girl, Ann, she's got to be in a picture someplace. We had the apartment, but they used to come out and we had the best time. They worked at the Weather Bureau. She had been through Boot Camp with me and then she went to work at the Weather Bureau. The woman who owned the house lived downstairs and she had a bunch of old relatives and you'd see all these old people and this was her, Miss Mack. When she would go on vacation or something we took care of those old folks. They had a hired woman nurse in the daytime. At nighttime, you know what we did? We took turns sleeping on the steps because we lived upstairs and they were downstairs. So, we'd sleep on the steps so we could hear them if they grunted even. We were so afraid something would happen to them. But, I was, of course this is California. Yes. That's a meal they set down in front of me.

L. J. Kimball: In Las Vegas.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: And this is Salt Lake City?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. This is family pictures. Not all of it, this part is California. And boyfriends. Had more friends. San Juan Capistrano. Knott's Berry Farm.

L. J. Kimball: Looking at these pictures here, you seem to have been a very attractive young lady. I'm surprised you waited until you were 36 to get married.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I wasn't about to get married. I was having too good of a time seeing everything and going everyplace and doing everything. This was the zoo in San Diego. This is one trip we made from, this is, yes, when we went to Parris Island. That's how long the train ticket was.

L. J. Kimball: Wow, it looks like about four or five feet long.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, I had plenty of chances to get married. But, I.

L. J. Kimball: When you were here at Boot Camp and also going to school, did the women Marines receive a lot of attention from the male Marines?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Not in Boot Camp, we weren't allowed to.

L. J. Kimball: O.K.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: The only time we were allowed to see any gentlemen was at the big dance they gave for us.

L. J. Kimball: Where was that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, they had it at one of the rec halls. I don't remember which rec hall or anything. But, they marched the women there, marched the men there and put us inside and turned us loose and started the music. Who wants to dance? So that's the only time that we got to...

L. J. Kimball: Did you all kind of stand there and stare at each other?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Right at the very beginning. But, it didn't take us long to, I think the men were more scared than we were.

L. J. Kimball: Were you here when the black Marines were brought into the Marine Corps?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I was at Headquarters Marine Corps and they brought the first black woman in and she turned around and she, well, when she retired she was CWO I think. I think she was a CWO. They come and told me they were going to get a black Marine and they wanted to put her in my squad bay. I was in with all those girls. And I said, alright. Because I had, they wanted me to take care of her. They were going to put her in a cubicle. I had my own cubicle. I said, if you will let me have her in my own cubicle. I wanted her in the cubicle with me because I didn't want anybody saying anything to her. She turned out to be one of the nicest people that you could ever imagine and she was a photographer and she worked for P, what is it? I started to say PMO, but it wasn't PMO. It was photography.

L. J. Kimball: Photography? Could it have been PAO [Public Affairs Office]?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, she worked for them.

L. J. Kimball: Did you experience especially at the beginning of your career in the Marine Corps, any resentment by male Marines or rudeness due to the fact that you were a woman Marine?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, not really. The first resentment that I ran into and it only lasted a, I'd say a week. When they brought the male Marines back from overseas and put them in the instrument shop. They were not mentally fit to go back overseas. Most of them had mental problems, war shock. Most of the Marines were in shock. They wanted us to teach them how to repair instruments. It was mainly just to give them something to do. We couldn't teach them anything. We'd give them an instrument and try to tell them what to do and how to take it apart or something like that. They just glare at us and "swoosh" take it and bounce it off the wall. Then they'd spend two hours picking up the pieces. By that time the training was over. I mean, to me that was the only resentment and they did resent us. They did not want to learn anything from a woman. But, other than that I did not experience any resentment.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Once again I'm trying to refresh my mind because we covered your entire career. You were here in Boot Camp and then what did you do? You stayed here until 1946, what was it you did at Camp Lejeune?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I only went to Boot Camp at Camp Lejeune. Then I went to Chicago for Aircraft Instrument School then came back to Cherry Point.

L. J. Kimball: What do you remember of, this is a long time ago and you weren't here that long, but what was your impression of Camp Lejeune?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I told you I wrote my mother and told her to give it back to the Indians. Everything was so...[talking to dog] I think, hey, hey, hey, you know better than that. Now you stop it.

L. J. Kimball: Was there still a lot of construction going on?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: You know, one time during Vietnam. Jim was over in Vietnam and the Commanding General, I can't remember his name. He came in my building and I had known him for years anyway at Headquarters Marine Corps. He came by my desk and patted me on the shoulder, the back of me and said, "hi Maggie, how you doing?" I said, "I'm doing fine." He said, "Maggie let me ask you a question. Now, that you went, were here as a woman Marine years ago, and now you're here as a civilian." He says, "what do you think of Camp Lejeune now?" I said, do you want, now he was being transferred over to Vietnam. I said, "do you want me to make you feel good? Or do you want the truth?" He said, "I want the truth." I said, "alright. Fire all the civilians, transfer all the Marines and start over

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in Tent Camp like you did 50 years ago, because that's where we started in Tent Camp, you know." He says, well, it wasn't 50 years then. He got the biggest kick out of that. He got over to Daenang and he sent for Jim. When Jim went in the office, he said, "Jim, I want to talk to you about that little wife of yours." Jim said, "oh, my God, what is she doing now?" I was always telling some, well, they want the truth, I'm going to tell it to them if I know it. He said, "she gave me the best answer I've ever had." He told him what I said, and Jim said you know she feels that way. I said, some of those civilians back there in that warehouse have been there from the day getgo and they're going to stay here until the day getgo and they're not worth their salt. They really weren't. They got rid of a lot of them. They've gotten rid of a lot of them and there's a lot more they should get rid of.

L. J. Kimball: When you said they ought to go back and start with Tent Camp again. What would you have done different to make Camp Lejeune better, if you had the chance to start it all over again?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I think I'd have been a little bit more military. With compassion now. I don't mean, I think orders should have been followed a little bit more.

L. J. Kimball: By the Marines?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: In what sense weren't they following the orders?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Uniforms, more than anything else. In fact when my husband retired, I was so happy I said, "I'm so glad you're getting out. If you'd have stayed in another six months, you'd be court-martialed. Because he was always stopping the car and jumping out and telling some young Marine to square away and get that hat on right. Get that uniform squared away. On the way to work and everything. I would just sit there and cringe and think, you're going to get in trouble. You're going to get in trouble. If he had stayed in, he would have been in trouble. But, he loved the Marine Corps as much as I did and he thought everyone should be up and squared away all the time.

L. J. Kimball: So, people became kind of a sloppy with their personal appearance in their uniforms?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, just driving around that base and you'd see it. Every time I'd go to the commissary, I don't go to the commissary in Camp Lejeune.

L. J. Kimball: Are you talking about now?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, now.

L. J. Kimball: And then also.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, and that was twenty...

L. J. Kimball: Personal appearance had gone down considerably since your first experiences in the Marine Corps.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, that's right. Everyone took pride in their uniform. Everyone took pride in their shoes, it was just something you did. I can remember over here at Cherry Point when we would go on liberty. We'd have to go and line up at the bus station. We'd take extra Kleenex to put up our sleeves and everything else. Just before we got on the bus the MP's were standing there to inspect us, you know. We couldn't just get on the bus, we had to be inspected. You didn't dare have a speck of dust on your shoes, so just before we'd get there, take the Kleenex in our hand and everything. Everyone was the same way. Men and women. They took so much pride in their uniform. And we did, really.

L. J. Kimball: Do you think you saw a decrease in the esprit de corps in the Marine Corps over the years?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Because, and again it goes back to putting the women in barracks of their own and keeping the men in barracks of their own. Let them meet if they want to make friends. They can meet at work. They can meet doing anything, but they don't need to live together. I think that's where a lot of it is. I really do. It goes back to that. Of course, probably someone would look at me and tell me what my daughter told me about seven or eight years ago. We were talking about something and saying it's not right, people shouldn't do that. Oh, I know what it was. I had a niece that had her boyfriend move in with her and my brother had called me and talked to me and told me about it. I said, well, I'm going to call Amy and tell her off. I said, I don't believe in that. If her mother was alive, she wouldn't put up with it either. My brother said, "Oh, Sis, just don't do it." Well, I called my daughter and was telling her about it and she said, "Mother

wake up, this is the 90's, it isn't the, you're living in the dark ages." I said, "I'm not living in the dark ages, morals don't change, I don't care who it is or when it was morals are the same." I said, "If you ever do it, watch out your mother is coming with a baseball bat and I mean it." She said, "well, you don't need to worry, I'm not going to do that." I said, "well, you better not." I said, "you can date and you can have fun and go out." I said, "we had fun when we dated." I said, "when I was at home, going to school, we had fun. We had skating parties, cookouts and everything." The police used to block off the street in front of our house so we could have our skating parties right there and then we'd have a cookout and roast marshmallows in the backyard and everything. Have sing-a-longs and it's...my mother took, it was a big house, big rooms. She took, put linoleum rugs underneath the wool rugs, so when we wanted to dance, we'd roll up the rugs up in a hurry and we had that good, old linoleum to dance on. And I said, "we'd get the piano going and my brother played the clarinet and I used to play a violin, but I gave it up. I didn't get good with it. But, I said, "we had fun and I don't remember, but I could be wrong about this. But, no one that I knew or was close to drank. We didn't drink. Never thought about drinking. We couldn't afford to have bought a bottle of whisky if we had to. We didn't have that kind of money when I was growing up or anything like that. And that's the reason, and somebody said something to me about being, was I ever harassed. I said, Lord, no. I was never harassed. I'd be telling a lie if I did say it. I said, but you know something? In WWII now and everything, we called them slop chutes. Now they call them taverns, I think. We called them slop chutes. That's what they were called.

L. J. Kimball: Off the base? Or the ones on the base?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, on the base.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Service Clubs.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Service Clubs. Is that what they're calling them now? Well they went from slop chutes to taverns and now they're service clubs. Alright, that's fine with me. But you know something? I never hung out in them. If I had a reason to go there, I'd go, but I never went there or anything, I didn't drink. So, I didn't have any reason to go to them. And I think that's one reason why I was never bothered or anything. Everyone always treated me like I was a lady and that's why I...most of us always said that. I said, if anyone, there was only one time that I got afraid and that wasn't harassing



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me or ... there are barracks at El Torero where it set at the end of the runway. There was a street back of it. Then the station brig was back of that. One night a man escaped from that brig and our company offices were at the back of our barracks. He broke in to the company offices and got into the barracks, living quarters. And I was in my cubicle way down the end of the place and there were several girls laying on their bunks reading. Had their night lights on, reading and everything. And all of a sudden this awful screaming started and we all started running out there and he took off and running, but he had taken the fire hose off of the wall and went in there and he just beat the living daylights out of that girl. Blood all over the place, never saw anything like it. Well, he ran around the barracks. And the men in barracks next to us, the word got out, and here our barracks was swarming with male Marines. There we were in our pajamas. Some of us managed to get house coats on. Most of us didn't have pajamas. All of us crying, we were scared to death. They finally found that fool. He was down in the lounge, where they had those great big pool tables. They had those big wide legs on them. He was hiding behind one of those legs. Well, I'll tell you. He wasn't there but a few seconds and then he was out and we never heard what happened to him. He didn't get the death penalty, but I think he got about fifty years in the Federal Pen for it.

L. J. Kimball: So, the young woman was killed?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, she lived, but not as a human. She was put in a special home. If she's alive, the Marine Corps is still taking care of her. It was a home up close to San Francisco. They put her in there.

L. J. Kimball: You came back to Camp Lejeune to go to Leadership School, right?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: That was over in the women Marines area?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: Did you have a chance to go out in Jacksonville then, for liberty?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Not really. We didn't have cars. I had friends who lived on the base, married friends. They would come and get us.

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L. J. Kimball: **Tape 3, Side 2**

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: There was a major in charge of us. She was wonderful. She really was. In fact, she's dead now, too. When I was on recruiting duty we used to have these big conferences in Chicago every year. Where they would come from all over the Midwest out there and she came to one of those conferences. I was to give the Major's speech. Well, I gave, I've got it laying in there. The Major's speech. A woman from the telephone company came and wanted a copy of it. It was a recruiting speech, is what it was. They all just fell in love with it. Well, Major Carville took a copy of it to New Orleans with her and she printed it in the New Orleans paper and she wrote me a big letter and all, thanking me, what a wonderful speech I'd given and everything. But, I thought it was really wonderful when the woman from the telephone company wanted to use it for recruiting there in Chicago for the telephone company. I said, "we have problems in recruiting too." And anyway, let me go get it. It's laying in there at the foot of my bed.

L. J. Kimball: This is *The Round-Up*? That was what, New Orleans Recruiting District?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. And she took it down there and had it, well, it's in here someplace. It's right here.

L. J. Kimball: There's a lot of articles in there.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. They put out a real, anyway this is the note she wrote that she sent to me.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Your speech is in the February 1957 edition of the 8th Marine Corps R & RD, Reserve, and Recruit District, in *The Round-Up*.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I didn't save a copy of it. This is a letter from General Pate to me.

L. J. Kimball: Thanking you for working in his office there?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. Thanking me for working in Mr. Franke's office. Saying "your work in Mr. Franke's office is certainly representative of what I consider what a good Marine should be. He has expressed to me on several occasions his appreciations of your efforts." I had also made him, I used to do leather work. And I made everything on earth. He wanted me to make him a leather case. He had to take an awful lot of medicine to hold his pill

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boxes. I made him this leather case with all these little compartments in it to hold his pill containers. He was thanking me for that. I've got a big picture of him in there too.

L. J. Kimball: What was the date on that letter that he sent to you?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: 3 January 1959.

L. J. Kimball: Is this some of the memorabilia that you were telling me about that you got from your Marine Corps experience?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. And here's my first mustering out, back in 1946.

L. J. Kimball: That's when you got out as a corporal?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: Well, I have no doubt it's in here somewhere. I could probably sit down and study it in more detail.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, it's in there someplace. Oh, this is a letter I, a woman at the University of Indiana writing a book on Women Marines and the Waves and everything. I sent her all this material and she was the start of me getting everything all discombobulated. Because she wants me to donate my tools and everything. I'm not going to do it.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. So, this is Dawn J. Fornier, 2828 West 38th Place, Chicago, Illinois, 60632 3128900581. I don't see a date on here. Do you have a feeling for when that was? It says, the picture of you will be in the WWII Retrospective in 1986. So, it must go down, back to 1986 or so.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, it was back before then. See these are all mixed up. Nothing is together anymore. And this is re-enlistment pictures. This is Mr. Franke. I was so sick that day.

L. J. Kimball: Is this you?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I had the flu and he wanted to swear me in.

L. J. Kimball: Mr. William B. Franke Under Secretary of the Navy, swearing in Technical Sergeant M. I. West of D Company Henderson Hall,

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Headquarters Marine Corps. Technical Sergeant West receptionist for the Under Secretary of the Navy, re-enlisted for 6 years, having served 12 years with the Marine Corps. Date, 29 January 1958.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And then, oh, there's nothing on this one. This one, she was my commanding officer. I was feeling better that day though. Because she called me in to congratulate me and everything. But, oh, I was so sick and Mr. Franke was so worried. Look, you can tell the look on his face, he's looking at me. He didn't think I was going to be able to stand up. I had a temperature of 104. I mean, I was sick. But, he was determined that he was going to swear me in.

L. J. Kimball: It looks like you've got some other interesting things here.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh, that is real precious.

L. J. Kimball: US Marine Corps Women's Reserve.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. They kept saying that we weren't promised things at work. I come up with this. I beg your pardon, they gave this to me in Boot Camp and I've held on to it all these years. There's something else I had and they told me to hang on to it and I held on to it.

L. J. Kimball: This is a guide book with information on the Women Marines. It appears to be dated 1943. So, that's probably a very precious thing that you should hang on to.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It is. It's one of the first ones and they kept saying they didn't promise things and I said, "oh, yes they did promise us things."

L. J. Kimball: It's right here.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes.

L. J. Kimball: You've got a graduation picture here from Leadership School, I believe.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, one of the schools, I don't know.

L. J. Kimball: It says, NCO Leadership School Class #10 Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, 11 December 1953. Is that you?

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, that's me.

L. J. Kimball: How about that. You have a, looks like a pamphlet here on...

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Oh that's, oh the windows, oh, they're precious.

L. J. Kimball: You were telling me about women Marines contributing to that. Do you remember that experience?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, I do. We were all proud, to, we didn't have but about \$5.00 a month left over by the time they took everything away from us, you know. Buy a bond, do this, do that. But, anyway, we contributed to it. I'll show you which one that is. We weren't the only ones, every one of these windows were contributed by someone. I like to turn to them and see.

L. J. Kimball: Do I see women Marines here? I thought I saw something that said Women Marines.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No. The windows are beautiful. Now, you don't have to read this. You can read it and see who donated what. Everyone of these, it's so small it's hard to read. But, those windows are beautiful, absolutely magnificent. I thought you really might want to repeat some things that are in this booklet. Over here. They explain what each one of those things are, in color up there, what they are and then they get over here to the windows what they're all called. You can see who donated to them. The 6th Marine Division for this one. It's in here some place.

L. J. Kimball: I think I might recognize it if I see it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It's the last one in there, it's the Base one. This one, right here. The Victory. You can the V for Victory in the hand. And the Base did that and it tells on it.

L. J. Kimball: It says, Infantry, Artillery, Engineers, Signal, Paratroopers, and Women Reserves in that window.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. But, right here is something I always thought was precious. I forget who said this, General Vandegrift, somebody says that this chapel should be the WWII Memorial Chapel.

L. J. Kimball: Complete with an annual observance of WWII Armistice Day.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I think for the whole Marine Corps, because those windows are precious. They can't be paid for anymore. There's no way they can pay for them anymore.

L. J. Kimball: Could I impose on you just to borrow this just so I could reproduce it and give it back to you?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: O.K. Yes, I'll let you borrow it and if you don't I'll come and get you.

L. J. Kimball: Right, you know where I live. One of the principle reasons is, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune had a medallion during WWII. That's the Camp Lejeune medallion.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, absolutely.

L. J. Kimball: Do you ever remember seeing that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. I remember seeing all this stuff, you know. But, now they did not get the windows finished until after we had been transferred. When I came back to Recruiter's School I got to go see the windows. I don't know how many people I've taken there. I know, I went in one day. I had someone visiting me and I went into the Chaplain's office and asked him could someone go with me or would they give me the key to the chapel so I could take these friends, out of state, visiting me, in to see the Chapel windows. So, the Chaplain came with us. I guess he didn't trust me with the key or something, but anyway, he unlocked it. He was explaining it all to them. They were absolutely awed at those windows and I said, they didn't cost the government a damn cent either. I said, the Marines and the different divisions paid for these windows.

L. J. Kimball: I might be able to produce something that you're interested in. On 1 July they had a ribbon cutting for a self-guided tour of Camp Lejeune, with historical sites and with a map that shows you where to go. It's a colored book, very well done. I can give you one of those.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I'd love to have one of them.

L. J. Kimball: One of the places on the inductory tour was the Catholic Chapel General Ray Smith, the Base CG, walked in with us. He kept looking around and I said, General, did you know that the Marine Corps Base had a medallion during WWII? He said, no. I said, do you want to see it? He said, yes. I

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said, look at the window on the right there, on the upper right hand corner. See that blue and gold diamond shaped insignia, that's the Marine Corps Base medallion.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Which window is it on?

L. J. Kimball: When you go in the door it's up on the window that's immediately on the right hand side.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Victory. It's on victory. There it is. No, that's Marine Corps...

L. J. Kimball: Yes, in the Protestant Chapel, its on Victory. That's Marine Corps Camp Lejeune medallion.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, they wouldn't have changed it, but it'd be on the Victory one. Yes siree. I'm glad it shows up on there.

L. J. Kimball: It's nice because it's in color and I can get a color reproduction of it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I'll let you take it. I'll trust you. Would you want anything out of this book?

L. J. Kimball: Yes, I'd like to copy that too.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, you can but now, that's very precious. That's an antique.

L. J. Kimball: Let's see, I'm going to borrow this from you. I can see the value of this and I am grateful. Well, Mary Sabourin gave me a few items that Helen Tatum had picked up. Like this book. She loaned this to me. I said, O.K. I understand how important this is, but I'm going to reproduce it, so I'll have a copy of it. The originals are so few and far between.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: What year is it. Helen Tatum was one of the first, she taught school.

L. J. Kimball: I think, just glancing through, that the year was 1943.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, this one. I have a WWII book back there that a friend of mine sent me.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. This is Camp Lejeune right here.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Right. Now, I don't see. One year they showed the Higgins Boats.

L. J. Kimball: Right, Higgins Boats. This is the newer one. Early on of course they had those boats, you had to roll over the side.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: We had to make landings off of those things. Yes and then we had to make a beach head with machine gun fire over our heads.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. This is later because Vandegrift was Commandant. So, this is probably at least 1944.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: This is 1944, when I went.

L. J. Kimball: Yes, because that one has Holcomb as the Commandant, so I think it was 1943.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That was Colonel Streeter. She was the first.

L. J. Kimball: And [General John] Marston was the Base Commander.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, Marston Pavilion.

L. J. Kimball: Now this is BOQ.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: This is the Headquarters Women Marines. WWII.

L. J. Kimball: That was the old...I'd like to look at all these old pictures and try to figure out where they were taken, because so much has changed. The trees have grown up and they've torn other trees down.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Mary Sabourin has been after me for a number of years, wanting me to write a book. I said, Mary, you know some people can do that, and some people can't and I'm on the can't side. She said, well, we're going to get it on tape. Well, they got me on tape. Did she tell you that?

L. J. Kimball: I don't recall.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I don't like it. There was a real nice warrant officer came out. They tore my house apart. They took all the pictures off of the walls. They took pictures of, that thing running on me, and they got that camera right up against my face and showed every wrinkle in my face. I says, Lord. It



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made me look 110 years old. Then they used all my pictures and everything for backgrounds of other places. She made a beautiful tape on it.

L. J. Kimball: What became of this? You said they made a movie, not a movie, but a tape or a book or something out of that?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I've got it. She made a tape.

L. J. Kimball: Well, one of the things that's interesting in here just for the record is the black and white pictures of the Marines going up and down the mock up in the intercoastal water. Let's see. *Leathernecks in Skirts*. 980402 and classified TSTMCB Camp Lejeune misspelled, North Carolina. Well, it was 1998.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, it was made a year ago.

L. J. Kimball: They misspelled Leathernecks too. Why, when they make something like this do they stick it in a drawer someplace and not tell anybody else that it exists? Because that is a very interesting subject.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Do you want one? I've got two of them.

L. J. Kimball: I'd love to have one. Pictures are worth a thousand words.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: She starts out with me and that's about all. I said, gee I thought, she was just talking to me the whole time. Let me see.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. I'll take this one and I really appreciate it. Like they say, those other two. . .

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Credits should be on here.

L. J. Kimball: None of them have credits on them. Maybe what they did, and they do that on audio tapes, is when it begins, somebody says something about who they are, who it's being made for, the occasion and . . .

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. She was very affable and now I can't remember her name. Mary might know her name. I thought Mary might have had a copy of that, I'll give you that one. I had a friend who is a computer wizard and all that sort of stuff. He lived with me for a long time. He was a Navy Chief. He was

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with the 2nd Marine Division. He's married to the daughter of some real good friends of mine. You wanted to take that one, didn't you? You want to make a copy of this one?

L. J. Kimball: There's a couple of pictures in here I want to make copies of. I'll probably copy the whole one that Mary gave me and the pictures that are different in here, I'll just make copies.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: But, he lived with me when he was at Camp Lejeune for about two years.

L. J. Kimball: You've got to be careful these days when you say you lived with somebody for two years.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: He was like a son to me. Honest to God, he was the sweetest boy you could ever imagine. But, he came in one day and set a big box down in front of me. I was real sick. I mean I had years of being real, real sick. I spent 21 days in the hospital, 3 weeks in the hospital. One thing after another. And I'm cut from here all the way up here. They kept telling me I had a nodule or lump in my lungs. I was walking 2 miles every morning then.

L. J. Kimball: I don't believe you told me...your daughter is married?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No.

L. J. Kimball: So, she's finding it too...

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Believe it or not it's a riot, her name is Margaret Ann Flanagan and mine of course is Margaret W. Flanagan. My brother sends us *Reader's Digest* for Christmas every year and they cannot get it straight. She's out in Nebraska and I'm here. If they send me *Reader's Digest* they cut her off. If they send her *Reader's Digest* they cut me off. So, he's changed my name. He says, you're going to be Mrs. Jim Flanagan for *Reader's Digest* from now on. He said, don't you dare write Margaret on anything.

L. J. Kimball: You've seen the Marine Corps monograph series of WWII? It's been out the last few years. We've got Guadalcanal, we've got Pearl Harbor and other familiar subjects. My father was in the Air Force. The Marine Corps sends all those to him and won't send it to me. He's a retired Air Force Officer. So, I was always mystified. It didn't really bother me, it

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was kind of humorous, but I knew if he got it I'd eventually get it from him so, no problem.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I called my brother about a week ago and he said, *Reader's Digest* sent me the whole thing to fill out to renew all these subscriptions again and he said, I'm going to call. He called me back and he said, I hope I've got it straightened out now. I told him you hadn't received *Reader's Digest* since April and I said, this always gets me made because I always get their books too. I just finished reading a book that maybe you might be interested in. Let me open up my bookcase. I've got all these books around here.

L. J. Kimball: I've read some of those.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: It took me a long time to read it, but I didn't want to hurry through it.

L. J. Kimball: Let me recommend a book to you. It's on WWII. It was intended to be a monograph about the United States Marine in WWII. There's a book on Women Marines in WWII. There was one on blacks in the Marine Corps, but there was not one on your basic, garden variety white Marine in WWII. The author got so much material he couldn't just write a little monograph, so he wrote a book. It's called *Gyrene, the United States Marine in WWII*. It has very personal accounts of the boys that served in the Marine Corps.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: See, that's what that is. That's a personal account.

L. J. Kimball: This was, I think that's Korea though.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That's Korea.

L. J. Kimball: This is about WWII.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: I've got this big, huge book back there. This friend, she lives in Wisconsin sent it to me. They'd taken pictures of mess hall at Cherry Point and she found me in one of those pictures at the mess hall there and it's on WWII Marines. Maybe you've see it, maybe you haven't.

L. J. Kimball: Let me get the specifics from you. This is the *American Heritage Picture History of WWII* by Soltzberger and there's a picture of the mess hall at Cherry Point on page 475 and you're in that picture.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. Here I am. Right there.

L. J. Kimball: O.K. Well, that's something. It's quite a surprise when you open a book like that and see your own picture.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, well, her husband found it. I knew him real well and he found it and said, you know Maggie's picture is in here. She said, is that her? He said, sure it is. She said, well I want one of those books to send it to her.

L. J. Kimball: This has been fantastic, Maggie, and I really appreciate the time you've given me to talk to you.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Well, I don't mind at all. I don't know whether I'd told you over the phone that I'd had so many interviews, women calling and one that had to leave in an hour.

L. J. Kimball: And of course if there's any of your material that we want to include, we'll give you the chance first to look at it and have you decide whether you want it put in there or not.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Look. My life is an open book. I don't regret anything. See here? They call me a crusader.

L. J. Kimball: Let's see. This is by a Staff writer for the *Carteret News Times*, September 25, 1998. "Cape Carteret Crusader" by Katherine Bliley, staff writer.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: And.

L. J. Kimball: I mentioned the date so I could go back and look it up and go back and get a copy of it.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes. I've got extra copies somewhere. This is one and she didn't get everything right and she, well, she blew it up a little bit in some places. She said my mother was a suffragette. My mother was not a suffragette. She was a worker. She worked for the railroad and she, she was a politician.

L. J. Kimball: It says, "Flanagan a Fixture at Board" by Katherine Bliley again, special to *Tideland News* this time. September 23, 1998.

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Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: She writes for both of them. But, she got some things wrong, but it didn't matter. I know the difference. She said I met Mr. Truman when I worked for the Generals. That's not so at all. I met him when I was walking back and forth, that's all. Anyway.

L. J. Kimball: You have some other articles here, where you were in the newspaper?

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: This is one that they said is me.

L. J. Kimball: We looked at that one.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: Yes, I think that's about it, there's different copies. You can have copies if you want.

L. J. Kimball: Thank you. You've got lots of copies of "Flanagan a Fixture at Board." Flanagan concerned. Oh, that's just the second page.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: That's just.

L. J. Kimball: Yes. *News Times Coastal Living* September 25, 1998. O.K. If you've got an extra copy of that, that would be great. Thank you.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: There's plenty of the other if you want.

L. J. Kimball: I've got a copy of that too.

Gy. Sgt. Flanagan: No, I've always attended all the board meetings up here. As though the town belongs to me. I've been here 36 years. I helped start this town and I made up this voting list of this town. I worked all day, but I took a great big green ledger and went around at night knocking on doors getting people registered to vote. I said, we're a town and we've got to have elections and it's got to be done right. I said, I've worked for it, but the last two boards that we elected and put in, not really very nice. And I got disgusted and they all got so upset they couldn't believe it.

End of Tape 3