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Oral History Number: 472-002
Interviewee: Marie Richards
Interviewer: Michael Ireland Belport
Date of Interview: November 26, 2019
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[Telephone rings]

Marie Richards: Hello.

Michael Ireland Belport: Hello, good evening. How's it going?

MR: It's going good.

MB: Good, I'm glad to hear that. How's Mom doing tonight?

MR: She's doing good, honey. [laughs]

MB: Good. Well, thank you again for doing this interview. I appreciate it very, very much.

MR: Oh, you are so welcome. You're very professional right now too. [laughs]

MB: Oh, thank you. Yeah well, you know, you know. I'm trying to do good for my class and stuff.
[laughs]

MR: I know. [Laughs]

MB: We'll just start off then and...so we'll start off with your name.

MR: My name is Marie Richards.

MB: Okay. What branch of the military did you serve in?

MR: I served in the Navy.

MB: Okay. What made you decide to join the military?

MR: I wanted to travel, go see different things, go to different areas. Get away from Montana.
[laughs]

MB: Yeah, I understand that. So, what did it feel like when you joined the service? Was it a good experience or a bad experience?

MR: It was a really good experience. I was really excited to go. Felt like I was going to go on a big adventure, you know? Get to go someplace else.

MB: Very cool. Was it a good experience when you got there?

MR: When I got there? After a while it was a good experience. When I first got there, it was just so different from anything that I was ever used to. Big place, lots of people. I was in Florida for boot camp so I wasn't used to the humidity, and they just had a hurricane. So, I was not used to any of that kind of stuff.

MB: Yeah, oh yeah, especially coming from Montana, all the mountains and snow and going from here to there. Yeah, it's a big change.

MR: Very big change.

MB: Yeah, very big change indeed. So, was boot camp, was that an interesting experience?

MR: Yeah, boot camp was very...it was a good experience. I really kind of liked boot camp. Lots of people don't, but I liked boot camp [laughs].

MB: Yeah that's a surprise. It's a surprise to hear [laughs]. That's funny. That's great; that's really funny. I was going to say everybody usually complains about that. [laughs] Everybody I've ever really heard. That's funny.

So, you actually did pretty good while you're in boot camp and stuff. What did you get assigned as your first duties when you were done with boot camp and everything?

MR: When I was first done with boot camp, I went to San Diego, and I went to what they called "A School." And they were teaching me how to be a machinery repairman.

MB: That's very cool. What kind of machinery?

MR: We worked on drill presses, metal lathes—anything to do with metal working.

MB: That's pretty sweet. Because I graduated as a machinist so that's pretty cool there. So, did you like doing that?

MR: You know what, the schooling itself was pretty good—when I paid attention. [laughs] You know, because after being in boot camp you're in one place all the time, so when you get to A School you're like right out of jail. [laughs]

MB: Oh, that's funny. [laughs]

So, after you were done with all of your schooling, what happened then?

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MR: After I got done with the schooling, I went to my first duty station. And I went to Pascagoula, Mississippi.

MB: Nice, and what'd you do while you were there?

MR: We were actually in a shipyard. The ship I was assigned to was in the docks, in dry-dock, getting fixed. It was a Simon Lake; it was a sub[marine] tender. So, they were doing lots of work and updating it and getting it ready to go to its next deployment.

MB: Very cool. Did you have fun while you were in Mississippi?

MR: Yes, I actually kind of—another thing—I enjoyed Mississippi. The people there were really nice. I really had a lot of fun there.

MB: Right, so other than Mississippi, where did you go other than there?

MR: That's as far as I went. [laughs]

MB: [laughs] That's funny. So, you just kept machining and doing machine repair and all that stuff for the rest of your time in the service?

MR: When I was in Mississippi, yeah, I just was making stuff for the ship. I mean, the bolts and stuff for the decks and stuff. Then when I got pregnant, they put me on, kind of like, desk duty. [laughs] So, I didn't do too much after that. I was just kind of doing little things here and there, nothing major.

MB: That's fantastic. [laughs] So, when you got pregnant and everything, you obviously stayed serving in the military and stuff for a while. How was that being pregnant and serving in the military?

MR: It was actually not that bad being pregnant and serving. They really accommodate you when you are pregnant. They just make sure that you don't do anything that's going to hurt you or anything. But I had no problems with it whatsoever.

MB: When you were done towards the end of your pregnancy, obviously gave birth to me. [laughs] So, is that when you decided that you were going to get out of the service?

MR: Actually, I got out of the service when I was about five and a half months pregnant with you. The ship was getting ready to—they were going to exchange home ports; they were going to Holy Loch, Scotland. And I wasn't going to be able to take you with me. I was going to have to leave you with your grandma to stay on the ship to go there, and I really didn't want to do that. I couldn't have my baby and then just leave him. [laughs]

MB: I understand. Yeah, I was going to say, I understand you made a choice between family and service and I understand. That's great.

MR: Yeah, you were a little more important. [laughs]

MB: So, did you feel like you did your part while you were in the service? Did you feel like you actually accomplished goals and helped out with the cause there?

MR: I think I did. I did everything they told me to do. I was always there. I don't know how else to put it. I just did everything that was required of me. I think I did what they wanted.

MB: [laughs] That's great. Well, I guess that's...thank you, I appreciated it very much, Mom.

MR: You're welcome.

MB: Thank you for the interview for my class and thank you for getting put in the archives here at the college and all that.

MR: Well, you're so welcome.

MB: Yes, and I appreciate it and I love you and—

MR: I love you too.

MB: —I will talk to you later. Have a good night.

MR: Okay, you too.

MB: Bye.

MR: Bye.

[End of interview]