

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Julie (Kugel) Radosavljevic
Chief Warrant Officer, Army, Vietnam War.

2007

OH
996

**OH
996**

Radosavljevic, Julie A., née Kugel [b. 1949]. Oral History Interview, 2007.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette [ca. 61 min.]; analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette [ca. 61 min.]; analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. [1 folder]

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. [1 folder]

Abstract:

Julie Radosavljevic, née Kugel, a Green Bay, Wisconsin resident, discusses her career as a Warrant Supply Officer with the Women's Army Corps and the regular Army during the Vietnam War era. Radosavljevic was born in New Franken, Wisconsin and graduated from Luxemburg High School in 1967. She attended University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Center for one year before transferring to the Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute, where she studied marketing/fashion merchandizing. Radosavljevic states she joined the military after graduating from NWTI, because she wanted to see the world. She also cites as her inspiration her father, who served in the Army during World War II, and her neighbor's daughter who had served in the Air Force. Radosavljevic explains that she went into the Quartermaster field because of her background in merchandizing. Radosavljevic reports she enlisted in fall 1970, but was told she was overweight. She lost thirty pounds and was accepted into the Women's Army Corps in March 1971. Radosavljevic describes in detail her basic training at Fort McClellan [Alabama] and the uniforms the WACs had to wear, which the Army borrowed from the Air Force. She comments they had a lot of classroom training because most servicewomen were training to be stenographers and clerks. Next, Radosavljevic describes her advanced individual training in the Quartermaster field at Fort Lee [Virginia]. Here, the WACs took classes alongside the men, but they were housed separately. Radosavljevic reached the rank of PFC E-3 and was given her first assignment with a medical supply company in Walson Army Hospital at Fort Dix [New Jersey]. She states this was a "fun assignment" and she worked with civilians and a Lieutenant Colonel Fred Levin. After three years, Radosavljevic reenlisted and was assigned to Frankfurt [Germany] where she became the supply sergeant for the WAC Detachment. She tells how the WACs lived in the same building as the military police and military intelligence, but mentions that the WAC program grew from thirty members to over one hundred by the time her term was up. Radosavljevic describes at length her duties as a supply sergeant: she was responsible for ordering and managing linens, toilet paper, furniture and other necessities. She also discusses traveling by car and train; the Army arranged weekend trips, and Radosavljevic was able to visit various towns in Germany, Luxembourg, and Scandinavia. She tells a story of getting a special pass to visit East Berlin. Radosavljevic explains how the WACs disbanded in 1975 and were integrated into the regular Army. Throughout the interview, she addresses changes in the Army: she remarks upon the shift in her job from manual accounting to computerized accounting, and she mentions several changes in women's roles in the military. For example, Radosavljevic describes returning to Fort McClellan as a supply sergeant with WAC Company D and undergoing extra combat training, more

strenuous physical training, and weapons training on the M16, which she had not had to do before. She comments on the PT changes, stating: “We were regular Army, we were with the men, we were not special.” Radosavljevic reports she left WAC Company D to be the supply sergeant for the 10th Military Police School at the battalion level. Next, Radosavljevic discusses her three-year appointment in the Panama Canal Zone where she was in the commissary; tracking and supplying food to civilians. She mentions she enjoyed Panama, interacting with civilians, and swimming outdoors for her PT. She mentions recreational activities in Panama like sea-shell hunting and interactions with the Kuna Indians. Radosavljevic reveals she decided to be a career officer while in Panama and applied to be a warrant officer, but was rejected at first. She traded jobs with another soldier and switched from food commissary to electronics supply because she “wanted to be with the *real* Army, and with the *tough* job.” Radosavljevic suggests that with the computer skills she learned in electronics supply, she gained enough expertise to become a warrant officer. She went to Fort Hood [Texas] in the material management center for electronic supply. She discusses some of the perks of her new rank, including choice of housing. In 1981, Radosavljevic explains she transferred back to Fort Lee to become the coordinator of a new warrant officer training program at the Quartermaster School. Here, she was part of the faculty, wore her “Class A uniform” and worked with many international soldiers from the Middle East. She also mentions that while at Fort Hood, she was able to finish her B.A. through New York’s Regent School and was working on her M.A. when she got a unique opportunity to return to Pirmasens, Germany in 1983. She explains she was chief warrant officer assigned to test measurement diagnostic equipment and got to travel around Germany as well as to Turkey and Italy. Radosavljevic tells how she married a Serbian man in Germany [she took his name] and had a daughter. She comments that she was allowed to stay in the Army while she was pregnant, another change in the Army’s treatment of women soldiers. Radosavljevic reveals her husband died unexpectedly and comments that she “had an opportunity to have the Army stand behind me” during this difficult time. Radosavljevic extended her tour in Germany several times. She describes her last assignment in Fort Ord [California], stating it was a “real Army” job with PT at 5 a.m. and a challenging supply job. She reveals that she wanted to retire in 1990 after twenty years in the military, but the military froze all retirements due to Desert Storm. Radosavljevic explains that because she was a single mom and her sister had recently died, she declined an opportunity to serve in Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm. She retired in 1991 as Chief Warrant Officer 3 and got to lead a retirement parade for all the soldiers whose retirement had been delayed due to Desert Storm.

Biographical Sketch:

Radosavljevic [b. 1949] was born in New Franken [Wisconsin] and graduated from high school in 1967 in Luxemburg [Wisconsin]. She attended one year at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and transferred to Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute, majoring in marketing/fashion merchandizing. In 1971, she enlisted in the Army, serving as a quartermaster in the Woman’s Army Corps. Radosavljevic had a twenty-year career in the Army and served at Fort Dix [New Jersey], Frankfurt [Germany], Fort McClellan [Alabama], Panama Canal Zone, Fort Lee [Virginia], Fort Hood [Texas], Primasens

[Germany], and Fort Ord [California]. She spent most of her career in Electronics Supply and retired in 1991 with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3. She married a Serbian man in the 1980s in Germany and had one daughter. She now lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Interviewed by Terry MacDonald, 2007

Transcribed by Cathy Cox, 2007

Transcript edited and abstract written by Darcy I. Gervasio, 2010

Interview Transcript:

Terry: This is an interview with Julie Radosavljevic who served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. This interview is being conducted at 10:30 a.m. at the following address of 948 Regent Lane, Green Bay, Wisconsin, on January 25, 2007, and the interviewer is Terry MacDonald.

Julie, can you tell us a little bit about your background, life circumstances prior to entering the military?

Julie: Terry, I was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin at Saint Mary's Hospital, but my home is actually in New Franken, Wisconsin about six miles from here. My parents were Anna and Joseph Kugel—they lived on a farm—I was a farm girl. I attended grade school in New Franken and attended Luxemburg High School. I was a 1967 graduate at Luxemburg, and was the last graduating class before it joined with Luxemburg-Casco. I went to the University of Wisconsin Green Bay Center. It was the Center prior to the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. I attended that school one year. I went on to Northeast Wisconsin Technical Institute, majored in Marketing/[slash vocally] with emphasis on Fashion Merchandising. At that time I had a job—part-time job at a little children's store called Fladel's—it was geared toward children's clothes. I realize at minimum wage—which I was receiving at like \$1.35 an hour—that I would not be able to get far in this world. And at that time I was very immature, and , didn't really—was insecure in my own self, so , I needed a way to just kind of see the world—and that was a goal of mine, to see the world.

Terry: Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Julie: Yes. I had a sister, who is 14 months older than me—Mary—and a brother six years younger—Ken.

Terry: You said you wanted to see the world, so—did you feel that the military was your chance to do that?

Julie: Yes, I did. My parents had an apple orchard in New Franken, and one of our customers was a family whose daughter actually was the Physical Education teacher at Luxemburg High School, and she had taught me—and I guess I didn't know that. But through her parents we found out that she had been in the Air Force, for like two years before she became a Phy Ed teacher. And I just started thinking about that. I thought, "Wow." That sounded really cool. And I thought that was a way to see the world was , to go in the military. My dad had been in World War II, and he had also talked a lot about traveling and about Germany, and I always enjoyed

his travels. He was a truck driver, and so that was really —kind of the travel bug in our family.

Terry: So what made you join the Army specifically? Did you look at other branches of service?

Julie: I did, —it just seemed like my dad was Army and everybody around was joining the Army, so—the recruiters were downtown Green Bay, and so—I really didn't look at any other branch, no, that I can remember. And they accepted me, also.

[both chuckle]

Terry: When you went into the Army, were you going to go in for any specific training thing that you were looking for in the Army, or is it just—

Julie: No, the only training that came even close to my background in Marketing/Fashion Merchandising was what we call Quartermaster. And Quartermaster was the field that I went into. And that deals with supply—at that time it dealt with parachute rigging, with food service, and it also included, I guess, some mortuary services.

Terry: So what year was it that you decided to go into Army?

Julie: Actually, my decision to go into the military was like, November—I had graduated from NWTC in May of '71, and—no, May of '70. And—I went to see the recruiter—let's say in fall—and I went down and took some ASPAC, or some kind of test. And however, we had one major problem—I was overweight. So I somehow managed to lose like 30 pounds before I could actually sign up, which was March 9th—March 10th—1971.

Terry: And where did they send you for your initial training at?

Julie: My initial training was at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

Terry: You served with all women, or—

Julie: I was with the Women's Army Corps at that time. And I went to a women's basic training company. And of course it was pretty traumatic, being also naïve and not a lady of the world to take my first flights after I went to—I think took the train down to—maybe that was for my physical—I took the train to Milwaukee, to the Board down there, and then—I believe the recruiter actually drove me down to Milwaukee for my sign in. From there I took a flight from Milwaukee to Chicago, and Chicago to Atlanta, and then Atlanta to Anniston, Alabama.

- Terry: So then you were by yourself this whole time—
- Julie: Uh huh. Actually I had met a girl down in Milwaukee, so it was both of us that kind of were together that went on to Anniston.
- Terry: What kind of training did you go through then—at basic training then?
- Julie: Well, we went through an all women's training, which was very long at that time—it was 10 weeks. It was a lot of classroom training. We had such wonderful classes as history, a lot of history about the military. At that time, most of the ladies were in the stenographers, in the personnel field, so a lot of that was geared towards them. One of the classes that was very unique was Poison Personality—we just had something you never hear about right now. We only had—I believe it was like 3 days to go in the field, and that was a really big experience to actually change our uniforms. We had a type of a uniform that was really from the Air Force—it was a blue uniform—that the Army had bought really cheap from the Air Force. And I can very specifically remember we spent more time ironing these denim—it was like a sixteen gored skirt, that every time we went to class or training we had to iron and press the wrinkles out. And our big thing was who could get it as stiff as ever—and I believe the word went out that a girl had put so much starch on her skirt that it actually cracked. [Terry laughs] So as far as the real true military at that time, there was very little true combat type training—it was all very—we were in classrooms. The experience in the field was very interesting for us because we had not dealt with the real world, the real Army type thing. We got to—we were issued like fatigues, and we got to sleep overnight in tents, and that was quite an experience.
- Terry: What was your family's reaction when you decided to go into the military? What did they think?
- Julie: They weren't too sure—but my dad, having had been in World War II—they were pretty for it. I didn't hear too much negatives. They really kind of—
- Terry: Did you come home after boot camp, then?
- Julie: No. Not immediately—I was trying to save my leave. I'm not quite sure how that worked out; however, I went on to my AIT, which was at Fort Lee, Virginia. And I completed that—that was in the Quartermaster field.
- Terry: AIT. What does that stand for?

Julie: Advanced Individual Training. And, at that time, at the completion of that training, which was then even with more men—well that actually was with men—my basic training was with all women. Actually there was like 40 women in a platoon that we stayed with. At AIT we had a very small little house called the WAC Detachment, where we stayed, and then the men were housed in big buildings. After that training—which I happened to do very well in—I obtained a higher grade of PFC, which is equal to E-3, because I did so well. I was waiting on my assignment—the guys from my class were mostly going to Korea, and I think a few were going to Vietnam—and I was waiting on my assignment. I was what they called hold, because I was a woman so they couldn't—I couldn't go with the group of guys being assigned. And at that time my grandmother had passed away, so we were—I was able to come home for her funeral. And then after a week or two, then I took some leave, then I went on to my first permanent station, which was at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Terry: You were with the Quartermaster Corps then, at Fort Dix?

Julie: No. At Fort Dix I then—because they didn't know what to—how to handle women in my specialty—of supply—so they actually put me in medical supply. So I worked at the big Walson Army Hospital at Fort Dix, which was a huge hospital that was like 10 floors high. And I worked various positions—I did medical replacement, supply records, I did property records, I worked a little bit with medical maintenance, I was in charge of all the keys for the hospital—some thousand keys. I had various jobs—down in the basement at Walson Hospital was where they did the—a lot of the supply work. Uh—I did a lot of the paper—the records—I remember one of the records I did was ordering glasses, and glasses lens, and I found that very interesting. At that time, of course everything was manual—you had to figure out the reorder point when you needed to order—or when *they* needed to order—some glasses and things like that. So it was a really fun assignment—

Terry: Was there any other women assigned with you, where you were working?

Julie: No. I worked with all civilians—almost all civilians. There was like a token one or two other military. There was like a Lieutenant that was the Army, there was a Major who I ended up working very closely with, and with a Lieutenant Colonel, Fred Levin. Fred still emails me today. He's moved down to South Carolina, and I can go any day and receive an email from Fred. So we had a really great working relationship. However, through the WAC Detachment, where we stayed, I met several women. Actually when we got there, the WACs were growing by leaps and bounds, and so we were placed in—they had actually got a new building— and there were so many women that we were placed in these, what they call open bays—there was no tops, they had dividers for two

women and with a shower curtain in front. So when you would go down the aisle there was shower curtains all over and it was pretty disgusting. If you would obtain a rank of E-5 at that time—somewhere there I became an E-4—then you could get a room, a room with maybe a roommate. I met a young lady from Iowa, and her background—and we just totally clicked. Linnea and I are still friends today. And her dad was a truck driver like my dad was, and we became the greatest friends, and still talk to each other often.

Terry: So how long were you serving at the hospital, then?

Julie: About three years. And just before I left the hospital I re-enlisted. I had an opportunity to go to Germany—that was kind of my goal.

Terry: Was that the reason you re-enlisted, to be able to go overseas?

Julie: Yup. I believe it was. [laughs]

Terry: How long did you re-enlist for?

Julie: I believe it was three years.

Terry: And where did you end up in Germany, then?

Julie: I ended up in Frankfurt, where almost everyone comes. They said that they had an assignment for me right there in Frankfurt. So I became the Supply Sergeant for the WAC Detachment in Frankfurt.

Terry: Now were you at a fairly large base?

Julie: I was not in the base—they called it a community. We just had some buildings out in the middle of Frankfurt. And we had like a—a structure, a nice building and we lived—the first two floors belonged to the Military Police and the CID, which was the investigation part of the military, and our housing at that time was the top two floors. And the women's—the WACs start growing in leaps and bounds, and through that process we got another building, which I was involved in with providing supplies.

Terry: So roughly how many WACs were—when you first got over there, how many were there?

Julie: Probably close to 30 or 40, or maybe—yeah, probably about 30. And then, when we got this other building we probably added another 60, so there was probably over 100 ladies, when we left—when I left.

Terry: Did they incorporate a warrant in the military at that time as—

Julie: Not at that point. We'll get to that point ___[?]. I was—my actual, my position, what I did—I provided some of the basics like the toilet paper for the ladies. We called supplies paper towels. I was also responsible for linen—the linen—linen meaning I issued military sheets and pillow cases, etc. And I was responsible to have those cleaned once a week—we'd have linen exchange. And I would—that actually—service was provided at the—I think it was the 97th Hospital. They had the linen service for—at least our WAC Detachment. I was also responsible for some furniture and getting new supplies, whatever, it was a lot of property. I did have a very traumatic experience during that time. We had these what we called *shrinks*—they didn't have any closets—that's when the ladies—when we were growing so fast that we took over this building—*none* of the German buildings have closets. So we had the shrinks, which are similar to that over there. And at one point they were German issue, and then they were going to get real Army metal ones, and—we were—I was responsible for that exchange before the metal ones came in. The shrinks are—we had a what we call “military detail”—I had to coordinate this, and we had a detail of men that was supposed to move these shrinks. Well, they start falling apart because they were not assembled correctly. Pretty soon they had to go down these layers of steps, and pretty soon they were falling apart—falling apart pretty soon—the guys opened the windows and threw *all* the pieces out, and it was like millions of dollars, or thousands of dollars, of money just thrown out. And luckily I wasn't totally in charge at that time—I probably still was an E-4—and I had went to tell my bosses—at least I was kinda cleared of that total disaster, but it was kind of—pretty scary.

Terry: Yeah, I bet. Were the soldiers—did they outrank you, who did that, or is it—

Julie: The man, yes. The man who was in charge of the detail did, so he was like in charge. So when he said, “Oh, this is a bunch of junk. Let's just throw it out the window.” And they had this big, huge, tractor trailer, where all the stuff—and they were just throwing it out. It was really bad—bad scene.

Terry: So when you were over there, in your time off did you get to see much of Germany?

Julie: Oh, I certainly did, Terry. I—that was my goal was to visit and see the world, and I did twenty-seven tours in the three years I was there.

Terry: Tours meaning you went to different areas?

Julie: Mm hmm. That included my first tour—a large tour—I went up to Norway and Scandinavia. And from there I took advantage of—I had what I call a week or a week and a half, or two-week tour, about two or three a year, and in between I would take a day trip. I also had my car at that time—when I was an E-5 you could have a car shipped. So I had just purchased a Volkswagen in New Jersey before I came—I got my orders actually to go to Germany—so I was able to have it shipped. So I got to even go up to Bremerhaven, which is in northern Germany. And that’s an experience in itself, taking the train to pick up your car, and then driving like, you know, eight hours down to the middle—Frankfurt’s in the middle of Germany. So, that was quite a experience. The military provided what they call Armed Forces something—I forgot what it’s called. They provided little mini trips—train trips—on certain weekends, and a lot of the WACs, we would—together we would do that. Because, they’d have a car with beer and stuff, and they would actually contract these trains to go to a certain area. For example, one day we went to Luxembourg—Luxembourg City—the train brings you right into the town and then we got to—they had like tour guides—and got to see the museums, etc. Another one of those I can remember was actually doing—going to Nuremberg. I did those quite often because they were one-day trips, didn’t cost too much money, and we usually did that as a group, or a couple of us ladies would do that. Another experience I had, Terry, that was very interesting, that was very unique, was that I got to go to East Berlin. At that time the wall was still up, and that was a very communist-type thing, it was very scary. But part of that whole wall thing and—I forgot what that was called—do you remember, that wall, and all those rules—Checkpoint Charlie and all that—a part of that agreement was that they, the East Germans, had to provide—or let so many U.S. people across the border. You had to apply for this program, and you had to have a lot of documentation, etc. Well, I was accepted into the program. I believe I took a train—I think one or two other ladies—and we got to go to East Berlin. We got to go—we stayed in West Berlin, but got to go on a special train, or a special bus—I kinda forgot right now—to go to East Berlin. We spent like the whole day shopping and—so that was a very special thing.

Terry: And how were the people? Because you were in the Communist area at that point.

Julie: Well, the people were—well I think they—some spoke *some* English. But we were there such a short time. They were very receptive of us, because at that time East Germany, I believe, was still all—the money is very low—so this was the only place where actually foreigners or Europeans were able to even come, pretty much, to East Germany to spend money, so—they were anxious that, you spent it. They had of course special stores they recommended that we would go to, and that we did. We went

to, you know, a huge department store, and—yeah, I bought a lot of things, because it was kind of fun.

Terry: So how long did you end up spending in Germany then?

Julie: I spent about three years. And then I did have another assignment. , I went to—why, I believe it was at that point we were disbanding as the Women's Army Corps. We were integrated into the regular Army.

Terry: So up to this time it was still separate—

Julie: Right. So we're talking about 1975 that we were starting to integrate and—the end of '74— into the regular Army. And I had—they were actually disbanding the WAC Detachment. They were sending the ladies that were assigned—we had some ladies assigned to—let's say some kind of signal outfit out of Frankfurt. They had to move out there, and that company commander had to provide housing for them at that location instead of always coming back to the WAC Detachment. I had an opportunity to find another job. The job that came closest to my previous life was at the clothing sales store. This was kind of a—they have one military position at the clothing sales store which provided all the clothing for—military clothing for all over, almost—Europe. And we had a special mail order—holding thing—and I did some of the accounting, reordering. I did a lot of things there, and I tried to use some of my skills I'd learned in fashion merchandising. I did a beautiful display case and I did a lot of neat things. And I've worked with an international group of people—the lady, Mrs. Michalik[??], was German, and a couple other German ladies. We had a lady from Japan that was—had military connections. We had a guy from Bangladesh. It was very international. It was really a fun—I believe I worked at the clothing sales store almost nine months to a year.

Terry: So at that point then, did you stay where you were at?

Julie: Oh, I was able to stay at that WAC Detachment. And then I went on to my next assignment—I think I actually I re-enlisted at that point—

Terry: What rank were you at that point?

Julie: I was an E-5. And I re-enlisted, because I liked it, and somewhere there I came on assignment for—actually to go back to Fort McClellan, Alabama. Which I wasn't too excited about, but [laughs] that's where I went.

Terry: And what was your position down there, then?

Julie: I was again, a WAC— a Supply Sergeant—at a WAC Detachment. Except—or a WAC Company, Company D. However, at that time then,

the training had changed totally towards more combat. And my responsibility was similar to the assignment I had at the WAC Detachment in Frankfurt, but it was more encompassing. We had changes—well, we had—we were actually the training company, so we—we're talking about 300 ladies as opposed to, you know, 80 or 90—exchanging linen every week. But it was more regulated because it was definitely a basic training company. It was providing—you know—toilet paper for all that, etc. And that was—during that time—I barely got there when—part of arriving at Fort McClellan was now we were regular Army and I had to be combat ready. And I had to qualify for a weapon. So I—they sent me off to some training for—to hear about all the parts of a weapon, the M16, and then I had to go out to qualify. Which was very different from my first three or four years in the military.

Terry: So how did you adapt to it, with firing the weapons and—

Julie: I did very poor, and I still am. I have very poor candidate [coordination?]. But I always made it, somehow—somebody'd always help me get through. And then the physical education had changed a lot. When I went through basic training we had to do like —it almost killed me to, like run a half a mile. Now we were required to run at least two or three miles. And they were having constant tests and pull-ups and push-ups—the training was—we were now regular Army, we were with the men, we were not special.

Terry: Was it more military regiment type of thing? It sounded like before at the hospital and stuff, and the other places you were—

Julie: Right. Right. Well, now I was considered cadre, at the WAC Detachment, which was, you know, I was part of a team that really was geared towards basic training, so—

Terry: So you're combat ready—did you do some field work too?

Julie: Uh, not much. I believe I would—when the troops would go out to the field and I had to drive my jeep out there, and you know, bring water, and some supplies and stuff like that. But I was just the backup and—yeah. I also—

Terry: So that was a big change for the military, then?

Julie: Right.

Terry: For everyone, including not only the women, but for the men to be accepting women into their outfits.

Julie: Right. At the same time—at Fort McClellan they were starting the Military Police School. And at some point I was asked—I'm quite not sure how this all happened—that I would go over to the Military Police School to be a WAC—to be a Supply Sergeant also. So at some point I left the WAC Detachment—WAC *Company*, Company D—I went over to the 10th Military Police School. It was called OSIT training, which meant that the men had—went to school, basic training at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and then they were moving over to Fort McClellan. And now we're talking about—I was at a *battalion* level, then, so I was getting more responsibility. And I was the Assistant Supply Sergeant and we were talking about battalion, which we're talking about—I'm thinking a thousand or more than that—of people we were then supporting. I was there only a short period of time—I'm trying to think—maybe three, four months—actually, I think I came on orders prior to my moving over there. And then I came on orders for Panama Canal Zone.

Terry: Ok. That would have been different then.

Julie: Yes. So that was my next assignment.

Terry: And were you still E-5 at that point?

Julie: No, I made E-6.

Terry: So the Panama Canal—military zone down there—what was that like?

Julie: Actually, Terry, I had another elite, neat, assignment. I was assigned to Troop Support Agency, out of Fort Lee, Virginia, which is actually the Commissary system. And I got to wear civilian clothes and I had—

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

Terry: Interview with Julie Radosavljevic, and she's speaking of her tour now at the Panama Canal Zone.

So Julie, go ahead. What happened down in Panama?

Julie: Well, besides—I was doing supply records, replacement, replenishment of food. That was what the commissary's mission is to provide food to the civilian market. And I got to do supply records again—manual supply records—I got really involved with inventories of food, and—like I got a special assignment to do like spot checks—see, people were stealing food. And I got to do a lot of little unique things. I was assigned to some kind of a company, I forgot, and, ah—but that company I was assigned to, we were—had to—, do PT, physical education, and part of my physical education I could do on my own was to go to the swimming pool in the

morning. Having come from Wisconsin, and being a little naïve and everything, I had never swam, and this was an opportunity to swim. At six o'clock in the morning I would leave my billeting at Fort Clayton, Panama Canal. And I would go to the swimming pool, which was maybe, you know, couple blocks away. And I would be in the water at six o'clock in the morning because the weather was real mild. So that was kind of a fun experience.

Terry: Outdoor pool?

Julie: Yup. Outdoor pool. At six o'clock in the morning. I love Panama. It was really a neat country. It was a neat experience. One of the unique things was that it would rain—we would have— not quite monsoons, but for about nine months of the year they have wet season, and then they'd have a period of maybe three months as dry season. Every afternoon at one o'clock it would rain. And I mean it would just pour, and then 15 minutes after it would pour, it would—everything would dry up, and it was like nothing had happened.

Terry: So you spent your time down there—at some point you must have really decided to make the military your career, because you've been in now probably what—six to—

Julie: About six years, mm hmm. Six and a half, and then I decided, I wanted to become an officer. Actually I had applied for that position when I— actually I was—actually in Alabama also. And there was an opportunity to become a warrant officer, because I had had some education. My records looked pretty good. So they—my supervisors and bosses encouraged me to become a warrant officer. I had applied actually in Alabama—I did not get it. But another opportunity came up in Panama, and—well, or opportunity *was* coming. At that point I decided I loved my commissary job wearing civilian clothes, and it was a neat group of people and got to work with a lot of Panamanian people, and it was really cool. However, I decided that I needed to be with the *real* Army, and with the *tough* job, not the nice one. So, we were able to manipulate an exchange—one of the guys who actually was more food service oriented, we exchanged. He worked at what they call the Supply and Service place in—a place called Corozal, Panama Canal. And I was able to exchange with him, so I took his position and he took mine. And based on then, working, that I was doing electronics—electronic supply—reordering electronic repair parts for the troops down station in Panama, and also I think some were in South America. Through that paperwork, this is now—because of the time frame we're not only doing manual supply records, we're now doing automated supply records. So that was an opportunity to learn more advanced technical, sophisticated

computerization paperwork that I needed, I felt, to become a supply officer.

Terry: Did you have to go to special schooling to become a warrant officer, then?

Julie: No, I didn't. So I did apply. I did get that. Well let me tell you a little bit about, when I was with the supply company—I was then assigned to like a 528th Maintenance Company—and that was more like really Army. And I had an opportunity to go out in the field. We went to a place called Ria Haddo, which was way on the coast somewhere in Panama. It was really far away, and we got to go like where it was like desert, and it was really quite an experience. It was my real—it was a real field experience. And to include a snake running in, and working 12 hour shifts, and having opportunity to go swimming, out on the Pacific Ocean or something like that. It was really fun. So as far as the warrant officer work, actually it got approved and I received my commission, as a Warrant Officer, when I was actually in the field. I had to take a helicopter back—it was kind of really messed up—I was supposed to get my appointment—actually was the appointment, like in January of 1978, I believe it was—and the paperwork was truly messed up. But I did, I did—was approved and I did receive that. As far as training, no, because if you're a warrant officer it's based on your experience and knowing the real world. So it's not based so much on training and stuff—it's based on knowing, having knowledge.

Terry: So that's the difference between say, a regular Army officer and a warrant officer is that—

Julie: Warrant officer is based on—

Terry: Experience.

Julie: Mm hmm. So I became a warrant officer specifically in the supply field. Most warrant officers—oh, I would say—even today—probably about 70 percent or 80 percent of the warrant officers are helicopter pilots, with the balance being some maintenance warrant officers, supply. Another field of warrant officer would be a band leader—in band. They're very specific technical—more technical field as opposed to a regular officer in the military or the Army would be more, you know, has a specific mission, more combat, or whatever the mission is of that group.

Terry: So did you get transferred then?

Julie: Yes, I did, Terry. I left my beautiful Panama assignment, and —also I should say I got involved with a couple groups down there. One of the groups I got involved with was the Shell Club, which we would take little private boats out and go shelling on the ocean. So that was a really neat

experience. We went to an *island*, and I almost—I got heat *stroke* and almost *died*—well, in my opinion almost died. [both laugh] I also was able to take a small little Cessna airplane—my sister came and visited and we went to the San Blas Island, which is where the Kuna Indians live. They are a very unique, native Indian in Panama. They are very short, probably barely four feet tall, they have kind of flat noses, they wear big rings in their nose—their ears—and they do a unique kind of—the *ladies* do a unique kind of needlework called molas. And we got to go to the island. And that was really, really, cool—and stay in a little grass hut and stuff. That was really neat.

Terry: Where did you end up after Panama then with your warrant officer—

Julie: I did end up in Fort Hood, Texas. And from—before I went to Fort Hood, the Army sent me back to Fort Lee, Virginia to have some more training. It probably was like only a week for training. And then I went to Fort Hood, Texas. At Fort Hood I was assigned to what they call an MMC, Material Management Center, and this is a higher level, automated, supply center where everything was now automated, computerized—where when I started everything was manual, everything here is automated. And I spent that, pretty much my next yea—maybe it was two years—I think I got there in '78, I left there in '81—I spent with the MMC—and I was assigned to basically again the electronics. I've really spent most of my supply career with electronic repair parts and reordering that.

Terry: At any time did you think about leaving the military?

Julie: No. By then it was too good. I was traveling. I was enjoying myself, especially when I became a warrant officer. I—

Terry: Now, becoming a warrant officer, did that entitle you to a little bit better privileges?

Julie: Absolutely. That's what I was gonna say. I got to have a choice of a housing. I wasn't stuck in a little room anymore. I got to have a BOQ [Bachelor Officers Quarters]. When I was in Texas, —I don't think they even had BOQ's—so I went off post and was able to rent an apartment, got reimbursed. And I lived in a place called Copperas Cove. And at that time the—I probably lived in the apartment about a year—and the interest rate was really low on houses, and I had an opportunity to even buy a house in Copperas Cove. A beautiful home.

Terry: Now that you'd been integrated into the military—the women—did the Army accept that now? Was it more acceptable then—you know—you'd been in probably a few years—you know what I mean, they switched from the WACs to the—

Julie: I believe they did, but the assignments I had still were kind of more office kind of jobs, even through the end of my career. So yes, I think women were—at least in the more—because I was in supply field, we were pretty well accepted. I think if I was more like a combat thing, I'm not sure if I would have been so readily accepted. Because supply was more like being a clerk, you know, a stenographer, a bookkeeper, as opposed to, you know, something else.

Terry: Where else did you serve besides—

Julie: Well, after Fort McClellan, which—I had a couple of field experiences there also—I then went on to Fort Lee, Virginia. I had an opportunity when I was actually at Fort Hood to go to a 10 week school at Fort McClellan—was warrant officer training. When I was there, the school at Fort Lee said they were putting together a new warrant officer training course and they had actually asked me if I would like to be a coordinator. And I said yes. However, when I left they said, “No. No.” It wasn't going to work out. Like I was back at Fort Lee—I mean Fort Hood—one week and they asked me to come back to Fort Lee. So I was back at Fort Lee as a then—what we called “permanent party”—or, I was actually assigned to Fort Lee, Virginia to the Quartermaster School. I believe I arrived there in October or September of like 1981, I believe.

Terry: And did you do the coordinating of the—

Julie: Yes.

Terry: --training there?

Julie: I worked with the Quartermaster School coordinating the new Warrant Officer Program. Then I was a part of the faculty of the school—another nice assignment. Got to wear my Class A uniform. Got to do a little politicking. Got to meet—because a lot of students come through the school—got to meet a lot of people. Got to teach, which was not a very good experience, because I really wasn't too experienced with the supply field, but—got to do that. Even had foreign students from, you know, the Middle East, people I'd never seen before. And it was—it was really kind of unique. I had some neat bosses that really supported me even though I wasn't—I did a pretty crummy job with the teaching part, but I did—I felt I did real well with the coordinating part. I do really well in that area.

Terry: Did you have an opportunity to work under any famous generals or—

Julie: No. I've never worked with anyone famous. No. [laughs]

- Terry: Well, I had to ask that! [both laugh] You know, sometimes people do. But that wasn't your final—
- Julie: Oh, no. No. So while I was at Fort Lee I had a opportunity to work with the Assignments Officer at the Pentagon. And he was responsible to make the assignments for the warrant officers in the Quartermaster field. While working at the school, you're [working] closely with him, and one day he calls me and he said, "I have an opportunity for you to have a special assignment in Germany." I had to think twice. I was just starting my master's degree—and I guess I failed to tell you—I was able to—when I was in Fort Hood I was able to go back to school, and went through a program through the University of New York called the Regent School. And I actually did get my Bachelor's degree. So, now I had an opportunity—well, when I was still at Fort Lee I started to work actually on my Master's degree— and then this opportunity came up. The Assignments Officer told me that this was a unique kind of a job. I would not be part of USERRA [Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act] —would be assigned to Redstone Arsenal. It was a very unique kind of a job, and that perhaps I would want to take it. I did take it. I arrived in Pirmasens, Germany—I believe it was in 1983— so I was at Fort Lee about two years. I was assigned to— Pirmasens is 12 miles from the French border. I was assigned to a maintenance company and it was called Calibration—it was TMDE—Test Measurement Diagnostic Equipment was the name of the company. And we were —I was assigned as a Warrant Officer, a Supply Warrant Officer. It was based out of Redstone Arsenal, which I also got to visit. And—hopefully we can finish in the next 15—**[this was an aside to Terry and the tape was stopped for a time]**
- Terry: You were talking about your time in Germany—
- Julie: Oh, I was assigned to Test Measurement Diagnostic Equipment. We were unique in that we had a facilities in Augsburg, Germany—southern Germany—in Frankfurt, and in Pirmasens. Out of these three locations there were like little satellite test measurement diagnostic ah—little detachments that actually supported test measurement diagnostic equipment for units that were based out of there. I had a opportunity to do a lot of travel within the test measurement diagnostic arena. To go to meetings—we would have a meeting every other month. Or, every month I believe. We would either go to Augsburg or Frankfurt, or it'd be in Pirmasens. We had a chance to go to some satellite places. Under the Pirmasens area included Test Measurement—the TMDE—that supported units in Italy and Turkey. So I had a chance to go and see how everybody was keeping their supply records. And I had a opportunity to go to Turkey. Our detachment up there was actually at the Black Sea. And—however you fly into Istanbul. I went with the Calibration Warrant

Officer from Zweibrucken, and he had been up to Turkey many times, so he kind of showed me the ropes, and we flew in together. Flew to Istanbul, spent the weekend in Istanbul, it just so happened to work out. And then flew up with a little private airline up to northern Turkey, where actually our unit was—Calibration supported what we call a Signal Unit, that was kind of a listening post up in the Black Sea. Was a very unique trip, taking the bus when I was up there—taking the little bus and with the chickens and— and the other big thing up in Turkey is, when any of the guys would ever come back they'd bring back pistachio nuts and these special lanterns they had and—it was a really neat trip. I also had a chance to go—I believe twice I went down to Italy to our two units that we were—supported down there. One was in Vicenza, which is near Venice, and the other unit was near Pisa. So I had a chance to do that. —

Terry: In the meantime you got to see a lot of different areas while you were doing that.

Julie: Right. Right. On this particular assignment as far as travel, , I was —to make a long story short, I —very shortly after I arrived there I had a British woman that worked for me. And she introduced me to my future husband. He was from Serbia. And his name was Radosavljevic. And I was going to see the world again, see Germany and all over, and I met him, and then I saw all Germany and Europe through his eyes, and we eventually dated and actually got married in Germany. Which was another experience. And we had to get married twice—we had to get married at the—through the county, what they called the—I forgot what that's called—the courthouse, the Rathaus. And then we got married in the military chapel in Pirmasens. And through that experience, I also had a child—we had a child together—my daughter Emily. And—

Terry: You stayed in the military?

Julie: Yes, I stayed in the military—I was pregnant. At this time they were letting ladies stay in. Before that, a lot of the ladies had to leave once they were pregnant. And my daughter was delivered at Landstuhl Air Base, which is still one of the—or Landstuhl Medical Hospital—which is still where the troops are coming back from Iraq currently. That they almost all go to Landstuhl, so it's the big medical facility. And that hospital was about maybe twenty miles, twenty-five miles, from where we lived in Pirmasens. So that was very unique. Also through some of this, unfortunately, my husband had some health issues and he passed away. And so I also had a opportunity to have the Army stand behind me and go through a very bad experience with my personal life. And so the chaplain helped me, and we actually had my husband come to America—he's actually buried in New Franken. And I went back to Europe for another—we were actually on orders to go to Fort Lewis, Washington, and when he

passed away I asked to stay there another year in Europe because my personal affairs were in Europe, not in the States. So I got extended another time. I had actually extended like almost twice before, because I like Europe, I love Pirmasens, and I love being with my—you know, I wanted to develop that relationship with my husband. So, I actually stayed in Pirmasens—and with the same unit—so this time I was with the same calibration unit from the time I arrived till I departed almost six years later. So I left there in June of 1998 [means 1988?]. Yes.

So that was very—and we saw more changes as far as the military part—I've worked with—well, we were that maintenance company, and I think once or twice we did go out in the field, but not much. And we could do—we mostly wore khaki, not—No, the camouflage uniforms—no, we weren't wearing the Class A uniforms anymore. Only when I was at Fort Lee did I get to wear my Class A uniform, but—

Terry: Did you go up in rank some more? The Warrant Officers is like—is that 3 or 4 steps?

Julie: Oh right. Yes, there was—I think, currently in supply—at least in supply—there's still five ranks. At that time there was only four. And yes, I had become a Chief Warrant Officer 2 when I was still in Texas. So when I went to Fort Lee as a instructor, I was a Chief Warrant Officer 2. And then I actually became a CW 3 when—shortly after my daughter was born. And that's what actually I retired as, a Chief Warrant Officer 3.

Terry: And what year did you retire then?

Julie: I retired in 1991. I retired July 31st, 1991.

Terry: And that was with 20 years?

Julie: Yes. And four months. Which brings me to my last assignment, which was at Fort Ord, California. I was then assigned to another maintenance company, and it was a—a maintenance company that supported the supply operation more on, not the civilian side but the military side, for all of Fort Ord. We ran all the supply documents, reordering of supply documents. We also supported some of the reserve units in California—in L.A. And that my last assignment was probably one of my roughest ones I had. I was—that was a true combat type [laughs] more—it was real Army. We had PT at 5 o'clock in the morning. I think they finally changed it to 5:30. Well, maybe it was 5:30 and 6. We would exercise for at least one hour every day, as opposed to like three times a week in my previous assignments. We were expected to run four miles. We were expected to do push-ups perfect, which I could never do. Sit-ups, and everyday, for one hour, we would exercise. We would do battalion runs—although it

wasn't so bad, we were close to the ocean—sometimes we would just run down to the ocean—it was like a mile and a half to the ocean from where we—actually, our little unit was. It was really kind of cool. It was—if it wasn't for the terrible kind of situation I was with in the military, the physical kind of stuff and then, a lot of changes with my daughter. My daughter came to Fort Ord, and as a single mom then, having a very young child was pretty traumatic, and a lot of changes there. But the military was pretty rough, and I really, I truly could say they based that assignment on my rank and not my experience, and a lot of the guys didn't have the rank but they had the experience. I had the rank, not the experience, so it was pretty rough running these big supply papers and being combat ready and all the reports. So it was kind of a rough assignment, although it was a lovely location to be at Fort Ord.

One of the things that happened was that —let's see, what actually happened—was that then there was a thing called Desert Storm. And that was the combat, first combat situation in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. It was November, actually October of—1999—no, 1990— that they wanted to send me to Saudi Arabia. We were overstaffed by one warrant officer. Since I was the highest rank I also had the privilege to go to Saudi Arabia, or to Desert Storm. At the same time, my sister had passed away—she had cancer. And she had passed away in October and this was like already—at the end of October, the middle of November, they wanted to send me—and having already been a single mom, I really—it was pretty stressful. They also—besides all this, I was ready to retire—they also said that we could no longer retire. Was the first time during my period almost 20 years in the military that people were not able to retire when they wanted to. So, it was also a big shock. I was extended. I had planned on retiring in March of 19—or 2000—no, 1991. And I was extended four months along with all my colleagues and everybody.

Terry: Did you go over to Saudi—

Julie: I did not. I kind of lucked out. I had a fellow warrant officer who also was ready to retire, said, "I'll just go, I have nothing to lose." He went. He made a lot of waves when he was there. He said—talked to a couple two, three, and star, four generals—and said, "Get me back to Fort Ord. I'm ready to retire. I don't have a job here, you just—you're filling in a number." And he arrived back before I left, and he retired, and we all retired. [Terry chuckles] So I actually was part of a really neat retirement ceremony, 'cause they hadn't retired people like in three, four months. We had a *huge*—like 20 or 30 people that retired at this retirement ceremony. And because of my high rank—it wasn't that high—but I was able to actually lead the parade, and all that, so it was kind of really cool.

Terry: Good way to end your military career.

Julie: So I was able to do that. And then at the end actually I left and they give you travel time and all those things. And I left out of there, , the end of May, but formally retired out of Fort Sheridan, Illinois, July 31st, 1991.

[End of Interview]