

MR My name is Marcy Reborchick and I am interviewing Elizabeth Ferrill on the 21st of October, 2006 at the Women's Memorial during the Academy Women's Symposium. Elizabeth Ferrill attended the Air Force Academy and graduated in 1998 and served in the Air Force reaching the rank of Captain. This interview is being recorded for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation's Oral History Program in collaboration with the Library of Congress Veteran's History Project.

MR So Elizabeth, could you give us your full name for the record?

EF Sure, Elizabeth Diane Ferrill.

MR And could you spell your last name?

EF Sure, F-e-r-r-i-l-l

MR And, when and where were you born?

EF I was born on June 28, 1976 in Greensborough, NC.

MR Tell me about your parents. What were there names and what did they do for a living?

EF My mother's name is Patricia Ann Ferrill and she works for IBM, she is involved in outsourcing for state and local governments and my father is Jess Britton Ferrill and he is an Electrical and Mechanical Engineer and he currently works for a company that makes chips that go in the back of cell phones. I have step parents as well. Do you care about them?

MR Yes, sure.

EF My stepfather's name is Sterling Eugene Phillips and he is the Chief Executive Officer of Analex Corporation, a small defense contractor, and my stepmother is Elizabeth Stotler Ferrill and she is a Physician's Assistant and she works in an oncology ward.

MR Very good. Can you tell me about your siblings?

EF Sure, I have one whole sibling and her name is Margaret Catherine Ferrill and works for a market research firm in San Francisco and she is three years younger than me and I have three step brothers who are the sons of my stepfather. The oldest one is Matt Phillips, he is three years older than me and lives in Durham, NC and my middle brother is Peter Phillips and he is actually a 1999 graduate of the Naval Academy and he works in Pensacola Florida as an instructor pilot and my youngest brother is Mark Phillips and he lives in Charlotte, NC and works in the secondary mortgage market..

MR Very good. So when and where did you graduate from high school.

EF I went to Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, MD and I graduated in 1994.

MR What interested you about attending the Air Force Academy?

EF I decided I wanted to go to the Air Force Academy when I was in 5th Grade. I really wanted to be an astronaut. Unfortunately I'm not tall enough, I have bad eye sight and I have allergies but luckily, I had high enough SAT scores to get into the Air Force Academy nonetheless. So I knew going in that I was only commission qualified and that I wouldn't be able to fly but while I was there, I discovered that I really liked being a leader and I really liked working with people and so it was OK.

MR What is the height requirement for flying, is it 5'4"?

EF I think it is 5' 3 and $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 5'4". Something in that neighborhood and I'm about 5'3 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Some girls would stretch themselves. They would hang upside down the night before the test but because my eyes were so bad, it didn't really matter if I stretched myself.

MR Could you describe your admission process to get into the Academy?

EF Sure, it started in the Fall of my senior year of high school and as I recall, there's two tracks. You had to fill out an application to the Academy but you also had to fill out applications for various Senators and Congressman to try and get a nomination. It's pretty competitive around here. Not so much for the Air Force Academy but definitely for the Naval Academy, a lot of people want to go to the Naval Academy and so as I recall I spent late summer and early fall filling out the applications and then I never had an interview, I got my appointment from Congresswoman Connie Marrella but I didn't actually meet her until after she gave me the nomination because she had a whole panel of people and so I remember one day I had to go to this office building somewhere and it was really weird for me because at the time I had never done anything like that where you walk into a room and there are 6 or 8 adults, this whole panel of sort of community leaders and they were asking me all these questions. I guess I did OK because I got the nomination but it definitely seemed like an uncomfortable experience for someone who's 17 years old at the time and then I had to get the I had to do the candidate fitness test. It's a little different than the fitness test you had to do at the Academy but I was definitely nervous about that because I wasn't particularly athletic person which made me kind of unique at the Academy because a high percentage of women who go to the Academy are varsity athletes and I wasn't. I played on season of junior varsity volleyball in high school and other than that I'm just. I've become more athletic since going to the Academy but I definitely wasn't when I first went there so I trained very hard for my test I passed and that was good but let's just say that passing the candidate fitness test and passing at the actual test at the Academy are two completely different things. You can pass the candidate fitness test and get to the Academy and find that to be a bit of a challenge.

MR Is that running, pushups and sit-ups, is that what they ask you to do?

EF I'm trying to remember, there definitely a shuttle run, which I remember it being really stupid because you had these erasers on the floor four and you had to run back and forth between the erasers, but yah it was I think push-ups and sit-ups, I think they were actually pull-ups not no chin-ups not pull-ups because pull-ups are much harder to do than chin-ups. I think they were actually chin-ups, which is easier to do.

MR What major did you pursue at the Air Academy?

EF I was a computer science major which was kind of unusual. There's not that many when I was there there were only 32 of us in my class and there was only one other woman who was a computer science major. And as I recall, my year there were two of us and there was no women in the class ahead of us and no women in the class below us so who were computer science major and so we had this thing called majors night and we had it twice a year and we would all go out and stand there and the teachers would all talk about how great all the majors were and you should definitely major in this. And I worked every single majors night from the time I declared my major to the time I graduated because my department head couldn't find anybody, because I have to have women there, we won't get any women to come if we don't have somebody's name there so I worked every single majors night and I was trying to sell everybody on computer science which is sort of hard because it was definitely a major that required a lot of work and a lot of time on the weekends. This was before you could do everything in your room so you had to go to the lab and you had to work on the computers that were in the lab and that was not, people who already felt like they were in prison their first year didn't want spend their second and third year stuck in some lab named after Star Trek characters, which I completely understand but it's still a pretty neat major.

MR Describe when you first arrived at the Academy, what that was like your first day or your first week?

EF Well so the weird part was we bought a one way plane ticket for me and I at that point didn't really understand what a one way plane ticket was and my mother was like yah we bought you a one way plane ticket and I'm like does that mean I don't get to come back. She said yah we'll get you a round trip later on and so I think it was something really inexpensive like \$125.00. I don't know how we got a one way plane ticket to Colorado Springs for that amount but anyway, we flew out and we stayed, it was my mom and me and we stayed in a Marriott Hotel in Colorado Springs. I actually remember the morning, I don't know what time we had to be there, we went to Denny's from breakfast. My mom was reading the paper and I found a Dennis the Menace cartoon and I saved it. I still have it actually but it is Dennis the Menace standing at Mr. Wilson's front door and he's wearing like camouflage and he's got stuff all over, branches all over his head and it says, actually he's coming back home, anyway it says, the line is 'Mr. Wilson thinks that any of them are basic training' and I saved that because I thought it was absolutely hilarious. But I started June 30, 1994, two days after my 18th birthday. My mom drove me up and we actually went to the AOG and I think they do this a little differently now but we would go to the AOG which is not in the same location

as the cadet area at the Air Force Academy and what we did is we got on buses and so they have you with all your stuff and you have to line up and you get on the bus and you hug your mom or whatever and my mother looked like she was about to cry, my said I'll try not to cry because she thought that would be bad but my only memory is I'm standing in the line and there's a firstclassman standing there and he said something like OK this is the beginning and nobody's supposed to move. He said don't move. Don't move, well when your in high school, don't move means stay in line. I scratched my nose and I got yelled at and I thought my mother was going to die. She told me a couple of weeks later, I felt that I was sending my baby off to the worst experience of her life because all she did was scratch her nose and she got yelled at. But I have to say to be honest that I had no idea what basic training would be like and had had any idea what it would be like, I probably wouldn't have done because it was pretty hard. And then they cut my hair.

*arriving at
Air force
Academy*

MR So you had to do basic training before school started?

EF Basic Training, in my case, went from June 30th until just before Labor Day weekend.

MR I didn't realize that so do achieve a cadet rank when you get finished with basic training?

EF You get shoulder boards with the lowest possible rank but at least you are not without shoulder boards which is nice. So we had a ceremony at the end of basic training where they give you your shoulder boards and that coincides very closely with the beginning of parent's weekend which is when you get to see your parents again.

MR Is this different from enlisted basic training or is it the same?

EF It technically meets the same requirements. If your in ROTC, after a couple of years you have to go to what they call camp, or field training which is basically field training and cadet basic training and enlisted basic training and it is my understanding that they all meet the requirement that your in basic training, you learn how to march you learn how to wear a uniform. It is definitely a similar idea and we were able to get it pretty much there are a few differences but that's about right.

MR Tell me about the athletic teams and other activities you were involved with while you were at the Academy?

EF Well, I wasn't an intercollegiate athlete so that meant that I participated in intramural sports and I also had to marching practice that we had to participate in that the intercollegiate athletes, after school, went and played their sports and what we did if you weren't an intercollegiate athlete is you participated in intramurals, so I played wallyball and I played team handball. The Air Force Academy has all these sports that no one has ever heard of like flickerball. I didn't play flickerball but flickerball is this sport with a box and a football that you through, it's not a real sport. It is a real sport, just not one that anyone has ever heard of. So I did that for a couple of years. I got out of doing water

polo because that was just always the one that no one wanted to do. It's actually fun now because I can swim now so it would be fun now but back then I wasn't all that athletic and then after my junior year, I became a referee for team handball, which is quite amusing because team handball was kind of like a combination of basketball and soccer. Really tall, big guys like to play team handball so I always found it entertaining when I would put on my little referee jersey and tried to separate the big tall guys. The truth is they really weren't going to run me over because that would have been mean. As long as I injected myself in the middle of it by whistling really hard, they went OK.

MR So for the drilling, did they have you doing marches? Is that like a drill team or like a color guard?

EF Kind of. We had actual teams that did drill very well. The honor guard did drill with weapons and the saber drill team did it with long swords. But as cadets we just had to practice marching. They wanted us to look nice for parades.

MR What about summer assignments, beyond basic training your first summer, what did you do after that?

EF My second summer, I entered Combat Survival Training which is a lot like SREE school survival, resistance, evasion and escape, but as a result of the whole 20/20 scandal that happened in sometime between 1995 and 1996, we didn't have the resistance part of it anymore, the part where they would, the whole point of SREES is that you're a downed airman and someone captures you and then they try to make you talk and you don't talk and then you escape. Well, we weren't doing the resistance portion of it any more because Congress told us don't do that anymore so instead you do Combat Survival Training which is sort of like you crashed except you crashed in a place where nobody's looking for you and the people that are looking for you are not adept enough to catch you. So anyway, you land and spend about thirteen days without any food and then they chase us for a while and then we get lost.

MR But they teach you how to find food, like what kind of berries to eat don't they?

EF Sort of, mostly they expect you to, they gave us one MRE and some K-rations, which are sort of like very hard granola bars. But CST was fun. I thought it was interesting, you got to do some other stuff, you got to do some water survival training outside in a very cold lake in Colorado, but it fun and intense. And also did the soaring program which was a glider training program while I was at the Academy. That was the summer after my first year. And they are gliders that are pulled up by a prop plane that pulls you up and then you release. It's fun and I got to solo in that which is kind of good. Then my second summer, I went to Germany as part of a program called Operation Air Force which is a program that's supposed to send cadets out to the Air Force to see what it's like to be in the real Air Force. A long time ago, they used to call it the third lieutenant. That was kind of the joke, you were a second lieutenant but before that you were a third lieutenant. But the new name for it was Operation Air Force by the time I got there. Also, that summer you had to do a training program a leadership program and

what I did was what was called summer scientific seminar that brings high school students to the Academy to see what it's like to be a cadet. Not exactly, mostly it's about science and about taking classes. We also did some fun activities for them. I did that two summers, I did that the summer before my junior year and before my senior year. My senior year, I ran the program. And also the summer before my senior year, I worked at the Pentagon, I did a summer research project at the Pentagon and I worked in the Joint Chiefs of Staff Computer unit that basically provided all the computer security for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and that was a lot of fun.

MR That sounds very interesting. So what rank or position did you hold. What was the highest one?

EF I was the Operations Officer which meant that I was second in command of my squadron in my final semester at the Academy which worked out pretty well because the guy who was the squadron commander, was on the jump team and was gone a lot and I got to march the squadron a lot which I thought was fun.

MR I guess they gave you training in that. You had to call cadences and such?

EF Yeah but you had been there for 3 ½ years at that point you pretty much knew what to say you just had to learn exactly when to say it. But the good part about a squadron is that it is 9 X 9, it's 81 people. So it's you in front and there's a guy with a flag behind you and you've got to march to lunch. The squadron pretty much knows where lunch is so if by mistake you tell them to turn left but it's really to the right, they just go to the left. So it's really quite, the problem is when you get to parades, they have to be paying attention and do it at the right spot. It's Saturday morning, everyone's asleep and their pretty much going to do whatever you say. But if it's noon and it's lunch time, they know where they're going they'll pretty much go that way. Yah, I had fun doing that. I got to do a fair amount of that. I probably got to do more than Jeff did, the squadron commander, because he was doing the Jump Team all the time.

MR Tell me about your remembrances of Academy life, your schedule and that kind of thing?

EF I got no sleep. It was ridiculous. My freshman year, you would get up, let me see class started at, they kept moving the schedule but as I recall class started at 7:30 AM so you had to be at breakfast at 7 AM. So you had to form up to march to breakfast at 6:30 AM because then they would raise the flag so as a freshman I probably got up at 5:30 AM and I think when I got a little bit older, I got up a little bit later. You had four classes in the morning, you had four opportunities for classes in the morning. You didn't necessarily have class in each of those blocks or periods in the morning. Then you formed up for lunch at 11:30 and then we had lunch at noon and then we had three periods in the afternoon and then after that, and that would end about 3:30 or 4:00. Then you had a couple of hours to do your intramurals. You had two sessions of intramurals, early and late. And then dinner went from 5:00 to 7:00. We didn't form up for dinner, you could go and eat in Mitchell Hall or do what we call a touch and go, which is

no
Sleep

something that pilots do to practice landing but what we did was go to Mitchell Hall and get your food in a little plastic container and go home. And then academic call to quarters was from 7 PM to 11 PM and then they moved it to 10:30 PM because they thought cadets needed more sleep. Which clearly didn't matter much because between 10:30 or 11:00 they did what was called a DI or dormitory inspection and the seniors would go around and count everybody to make sure they were all there.

MR Well, I had read that the Air Force Academy, when they first started to admit women into the Academies I guess in 1976, that they did a much better job of integrating the women because they were able to position the women as the best of the best and equal to the men as also the best of the best but the Navy and the Army Academies or Annapolis and West Point, sort of let them sink or swim, it was up to them. So I guess did you find any difficulty being a woman at a predominantly male institution, or did you feel you were integrated pretty well or did you have resources available to you if you had trouble, like a mentor or something.

EF I had a mentor. She was actually an 1982 graduate, she was one of my instructors and we got along and kept talking. I don't know, I realize that this is a hot button issue and a lot of people and unfortunately a lot of people had very bad experiences at the Academy. I really didn't. I showed up to the school. I showed up because I wanted to be an officer and because I wanted to work toward that goal. I didn't try to sweet talk people or get people to do something that wasn't, I guess I didn't use the fact that I was a woman, I didn't think to get things instead I just used the fact that I worked harder than the guy over there and I knew my stuff or I had gotten up early and I cleaned my room the way I was supposed to do it. And I think by trying to do that, I didn't have as many problems as maybe some other girls did. I think it's hard, I mean your there and your 18 years old or your 17 years old and you probably don't realize that some of the things you might do have consequences that you can't figure out at that moment. But I don't know whether I just got lucky or what but I had a really good experience. I mean I had a department, where yes it was weird when one of my teachers would look at me and say, Miss Ferrill, what do you think women think about this? Because I was the only woman in the whole room. But I'd usually say, I don't know what women think but here's what I think. I think that some of it is just if people put it out there and you jump on it you might have problems. Really, I didn't feel it was a big deal at all. I felt that I was definitely different, clearly, you can't be the only woman in the room and not realize that but to be honest, that's a lot like the way the Air Force is too and so you just got to get comfortable with it you kind of deal with it and make it work.

being
a woman

MR What did you find the most difficult about being there?

EF The physical fitness aspect definitely. I think I'm in much better shape now than I was at the Academy. That's probably the one thing that I was a little bit frustrated with at the Academy it that, and it's probably a military thing in general that you can't just beat a person down physically, constantly and then expect them to be able to make improvements. The way that physical training works is that you do some and then you rest and then you do some more and that's how your body rebuilds the muscles. And we

Physical
Fitness

SEKE

never did any of that. They just continued to beat us down. It was sheer willpower that made you show up everyday. And I think I'm just in much better physical shape now. I know a lot more about my body. I know a lot more about how one is supposed to train for things. I started doing triathelons in Law School because I thought it would be nice to have a balance. Except for the doing the pull-ups, which I actually did train a lot to do pull-ups, I bet I could a lot better on most parts of the physical fitness test now than when I was in college.

MR Did you go to Law School after getting out of the Air Force?

EF Yes

MR So at the Academy, what is the thing that you are most proud of?

EF I think I was most proud, and I don't even think they do this anymore because I was talking to some of the cadets last night, but we got a report card every year, every semester. And e every semester, it had your order merit, if we graduated today, here's where you would graduate in the class. And I think the thing that I am most proud of is that every semester that number got smaller. I didn't show understanding the system and how to do things but I got there and I improved my physical fitness, I improved my grades, and I improved my military stuff. By the end, that was something that I was really proud of. That in the end that I finished strong and I kept working and that I didn't say oh well it's senior year and I'm just going to blow it off now.

MR What advise would you give to a young person today wanting to go to the Academy?

EF You have to want to go to the Academy. You can't go because your parents want you to go, because your brother went. You have to go because it's something that you want to do and you have to realize that the academy is a one shot opportunity, and if it doesn't work out there are still lots of other wonderful things that you can do with your life. But I think the thing that frustrated me the most was the kids that showed up who were under me who showed up who weren't really there for the right reasons, couldn't really commit themselves to the process and it's a game and you have to buy into the fact that it's a game and then play the game. If you don't play the game then you can't win the game and if you just stand back and go this is all really stupid your not ever going to have an experience that allows you to grow in a way that I think you can.

you have
to want
to go

MR So how did your experience at the Academy affect you long term?

EF I made the decision to go to the Air Force Academy over going to MIT. If I had gone to MIT, I probably would have gotten a better science education than I got at the Academy. The Academy gives you an incredibly well rounded experience and I got to some things that I never would have gotten to do if I had gone to a regular school. Having said that, I just think I'm a much more well rounded person. My step-mother calls me an inside child. She said, we were really surprised that you wanted to go to the

Academy because you're an inside child. And I'm just not anymore. I think I'm a person who can sort of figure stuff out for myself. I can go into new situations and I can talk to people and figure stuff out and go into new situations and I think all of that is an important part of the Academy experience. And I was a little frustrated because I felt that some of my classes were not as academically challenging as they could have been. But in my senior year, I was on committee with the Dean, Dean Caberra, who was the Dean while I was at the Academy, and I represented my class on his committee with all the other permanent professors. And he was sitting there one day at the end of the meeting and he said and I mentioned, he knew that I thought that the classes should be academically more rigorous, and he said to me, the point of the Academy is not to teach you what happens in the classes, the point is to teach you how to learn. It is to teach you how to teach yourself, when you get out and you need to learn new things and I thought OK and I think actually, I'm better at that than a lot of people who went to schools where really taught them just one specific area and didn't broadly teach.

MR What did it feel like on graduation day when you finally made it?

EF It was pretty exciting but I feel that most graduation days are anticlimactic. I was super excited about three weeks before and by the time it shows up I'm just really tired. I was very tired but I was very happy and excited to graduate and I think and what mattered most at graduation was how proud my family was of me. It wasn't so much, I mean, you know you are going to graduate two months before it happens unless something major happens, you're pretty much sure it's going to happen. I think it was the idea that my parents could see me and they could just be there, I mean the Academies just do such a good job of graduation, I mean you know, there's the pomp and circumstance, lots of airplanes, it's a beautiful day and everyone's all dressed up and I think it's really, I know my grandfather, he served in the Army in WWII and he came up to me at graduation and he just thought it was the greatest thing ever. I mean, he just talks about it now, I like, Pop, it's been a while now and you're still like It's so great. And he loved going to my brother's graduation as well.

MR Well tell me, you had 30 days off after the Academy before going into the Air Force.

EF You usually get 60 days off. It's graduation leave.

MR So tell me about your first assignments

EF Well out of graduate school or out of the Air Force Academy, I went to graduate school. The Air Force sent me to graduate school at Georgia Tech and so I spent about a year and a half getting a graduate degree in Computer Science which for me solved that niche of wanting to know more about the subject matter because I got thrown into a pretty good school that I was probably not completely prepared to go to but I worked really hard doing that. But before I started graduate school I actually worked at the ROTC unit at Georgia Tech for about 6 weeks because there was this sort of time between school starting and when my graduation leave was up. That was actually a

really neat experience. That was very valuable because I got to meet a lot of ROTC cadets, I got to learn a lot about the ROTC system, I got to help them and when I went out into the Air Force, most people are ROTC graduates, R-O-T-C, most people are not Academy and so the opportunity to understand their system was very helpful in relating to my fellow officers when I got out into the service.

MR Were you assigned to the Air Force when you went to graduate school?

EF I was attached to the ROTC unit, I wore my uniform one to two days a week, I think it was one day a week which all my classmates in graduate school thought was absolutely hilarious. It was actually a fair amount of time after Forest Gump came out but they loved to call me LT Beth and so I'd be walking through grad school and there would be people going LT Beth, I see you in your uniform. I'm like, clearly I'm dressed in a uniform. It was fun, I actually got to do some additional duties for the ROTC folks. They had a couple of investigations where they needed someone who was impartial and so I was able to take on that role and so it was fun.

MR After you earned your Master's Degree what units did you work in after that?

EF After that, I was assigned to the 497th Intelligence Group, which is at Bolling Air Force Base, across the river and I was the Chief of Test and Evaluation and what we did, and so, there are different levels of computer networks and there are top secret and secret computer networks. The top secret network is run by the Defense Intelligence Agency and what I did, what my job was in charge of all of the contractors who tested all of the software before it went on to that network to make sure that it wouldn't cause the network to crash, so that was a really interesting job. I had to get a security clearance. I worked a lot with the intelligence community. I learned a lot about different things going on in the intelligence community which was really fascinating because I had not learned any of that at the Academy and I got a chance to use my computer skills but sort of towards something that was very interesting and that's where I was on September 11th. I was actually working at Bolling. I was in my bosses office and we finished our staff meeting and we had, the first plane had hit but everybody that it was some sort of accident and then when the second plane hit we were all just staring at the television set and I remember, my bosses phone rang and he picked up the phone and it was someone from the Pentagon and he was talking to the guy and then he was like OK, everybody needs to leave my office so I can get some work done. And then I just remember my boss who was a GS 15 and he had been a Master Sergeant in the Air Force and nothing phased this man and he put the phone and he said something like, that 's really weird. Then he put the phone down because the phone had cut off and the next thing I know, the air raid sirens are going off and like idiots, I don't know why we did this. We run outside and all we see is smoke billowing out of the Pentagon and then, I would say within two to three minutes the guys with the humvees and the cops were out with the SF with their flack jackets on and they were rolling down and it was very weird. It was something out of a movie. It was just the most odd experience.

MR Did you have another assignment after that?

EF After that I went to Greenland and I was at ~~Toulie~~ Greenland for a year and it was absolutely my favorite assignment.

MR What did you do there?

EF I was the communications flight commander. Toulie is a Balistic Missile early warning station. It is part of these three big radars that can see over the pole of the United States or over the North Pole and if a, pretty much if any country wanted to bomb the United States, they would come over the Pole because it's the shortest distance and so with this it allows early warning and so the President basically knows if there are missiles coming. We had to have a whole lot of support structure to make that happen and we had a lot of contractors who were Danish and Greenlandic but we also had a lot of military folks and so I was in charge of Communications flight which included telephones and computers and satellite communications, radio systems, traffic control landing systems, the Post Office. I was in charge of the people who runs the computer who runs the radar. It was a really neat job.

MR And, it's pretty isolated up there is it?

EF Yes, it's a base with, when I was there, there were only about 800 people and only about 120 were American military and about 80 were American contractors and the rest were Greenlandic and Danish contractors.

MR So what assignment did you have after that?

EF That's when I got out.

MR So where did you go to Law School?

EF I went to UNC, Chapel Hill in North Carolina.

MR And what do you currently do?

EF I work for a Federal Judge, I'm clerking for a judge in the eastern district of Virginia. It's where the ~~Zaccaria Mussouri~~ trial took place. That's not my judge, that's my court house.

MR If you had it to do over again would you do anything differently?

EF If I had been a couple of years younger, I think I would have majored in weather at the Academy but it wasn't a major when I was there. Because it's a neat part of the Air Force that I didn't really know existed. That or I might have done Intel I don't know. But I really like computers so I would have been torn.

MR Would that have been a different major at the Academy?

EF Weather would have been but it just didn't exist when I was, it became a major while I was there so I couldn't have majored in it because I wasn't the right age.

MR But Intel you could have done as a Computer Science major?

EF I could have, I could have done that had I known it existed. There's a whole community of it's called Comm Intel that mixes the people who have comm. Experience with the people who have intel experience and they never really explained to us at the Academy that that was an option. And actually had I stayed in I would have been classified in that track anyway because I had a security clearance anyway, so I would have continued to do jobs similar to that.

MR What is the lasting impression or impact that the military has had on your life so far?

EF I have to say that there were a lot of days at the Academy that really sucked and pretty much the rest of your life is easy after you go to a service academy. I mean, in real life, nobody yells. It's just not done. I mean they might come in and they might be mad and kind of gruff but I mean I've had people in my face so close there spitting at me and that just doesn't happen in real life so it's like, once you live through that experience, it just makes the rest of your life so easy, I mean that's just the way I look at it. They used to have these T shirts when I was in basic training, that said, the easiest day was yesterday and thought, what a depressing thought, because these days were really getting hard here and how could, yesterday was really hard and how could...And I feel that it's just the opposite. At 18, I had to do so much stuff that I didn't want to do and I had so little control over my life and I feel now I have so much more control. People would be like, Oh I don't want to go to work, but you picked that job. You could pick a different job if you want to. And I think when you have that different perspective, it stops becoming, somebody always putting stuff on me and instead, these are my choices, I've made this choice, I'm going to live with this choice and I think it makes it much easier to be happy in your life.

Lasting impression on the rest of your life is easy

MR It sort of empowers you.

EF OK

MR Is there anything else that you would like to talk about that I didn't ask?

EF I was born on June 28, 1976 which was the day that the very first woman reported to basic training at the United States Air Force Academy and as a result, my mother feels that I was destined to go to the Air Force Academy.

MR That's very good, that's very good. I didn't realize that that was the day.

EF She was sitting in something one time, and some group of people, I forget, something related to the Academy and a women said, I knew about the date before but I hadn't really focused on it and the women leading the group said, raise your hand if you were born before June 28th, 1976, and a bunch of people raised their hands and then she said how many people were born after, and a bunch of people raised their hands and then I raised my hand and asked, what happens if you were born on that day. And she said you're the only person who has ever told me that she was trying to make some statement about women at the service academies.

MR That was a good point though so you were destined. Well thank you so much for talking with us. It was very interesting.