

Interview Transcript
October 21, 2006
Military Women's Memorial

Adrienne Marks Griffen
New York City, New York
1983-1987 | 1987-1994
U.S. Naval Academy, Navy

00:00:33 Marcy Reborchick

Okay, my name is Marcy Reborchick and I'm interviewing Adrienne Griffen on the 21st of October at the Women's Memorial during the Academy Women's Symposium. Adrienne Griffen attended the Naval Academy and graduated in 1987, and served in the Navy with the highest rank of lieutenant. 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 Veterans History Project. Adrienne, could you give us your full name for the record?

00:01:12 Adrienne Griffen

Sure, my name is Adrienne Marks Griffen.

00:01 :15 Marcy Reborchick

And could you spell your last name?

00:01:16 Adrienne Griffen

Griffen, G-R-I-F-F-E-N.

00:01:19 Marcy Reborchick

When and where were you born?

00:01:21 Adrienne Griffen

I was born in New York City in 1965. Ancient history.

00:01:27 Marcy Reborchick

Could you tell me about your parents? What were your parents' names and where did they live?

00:01:32 Adrienne Griffen

Sure, both of my parents were born and raised in New York City. My mother's name is Michelle and my father's Phillip. And my father was the first introduction that I had to the Academy. His brother had graduated and my dad always thought it was a really cool place. Unfortunately, his eyes were so bad that back then there were no waivers for vision, so maybe one of his deferred dreams was that he could have gone to the Academy.

00:01:57 Marcy Reborchick

And what did they do for a living?

00:01:59 Adrienne Griffen

My father was an attorney and my mom was a mom.

00:02:02 Marcy Reborchick

Very good. Could you tell me about your siblings?

00:02:06 Adrienne Griffen

Sure, I have an older brother who is a year older than I am and two younger sisters.

00:02:11 Marcy Reborchick

And when and where did you graduate from high school?

00:02:13 Adrienne Griffen

I graduated from high school in 1983 from a very small Catholic school in upstate New York. Although we were all born in New York City, my parents moved upstate to give us the opportunity to live in a small town. So I actually grew up in Olean, New York, which is...you're nodding, do you know it?

00:02:28 Marcy Reborchick

Yes.

00:02:30 Adrienne Griffen

How come? How do you know it?

00:02:31 Marcy Reborchick

I think I read... there was some kind of... during World War II, I think Holocaust survivors—

00:02:40 Adrienne Griffen

Oh really? I didn't know that.

00:02:42 Marcy Reborchick

Yeah, I think there was a—

00:02:43 Adrienne Griffen

Like an underground railroad kind of thing?

00:02:44 Marcy Reborchick

Yeah, they had a camp there for—

00:02:46 Adrienne Griffen

Oh, I didn't know that.

00:02:47 Marcy Reborchick

—Yeah, for women. The name just sort of stuck in my head when I was getting my master's in history. I took a course in the Holocaust. Okay, and what was it like to grow up in Olean, New York?

00:03:01 Adrienne Griffen

Oh, well, just sort of that classic small town kind of thing. We walked to school, we walked everywhere. Whatever extracurricular activities, or play dates, or whatever you wanted to have was pretty much to your own device. You wanted to go to swim team, okay, well, go ahead and walk over, ride your bike, and we'll see you home in time for dinner. So, very small town. I mean, the people that we grew up with, all the way from grade school all the way through high school, big families, kind of the church school setting was the center of all of our activities. So, you know, just sort of a typical small town existence.

00:03:37 Marcy Reborchick

Very good. So, what interested you, or how did you become— Oh, you said your uncle, but was that your main interest or main person that got you involved in it [US Naval Academy]?

00:03:45 Adrienne Griffen

Yeah, my main introduction. As I said, my uncle had graduated from the Academy, and so even as a kid we always knew about the Army-Navy game. My cousins wore Navy sweatshirts, and I remember very clearly in 1976 when they opened the doors. So we went

to the Academy and half-hearted, half-jokingly said, oh, now I can go. And everyone was like, yeah, yeah, sure, you know, lo and behold, you know, several years later.

00:04:06 Marcy Reborchick

So how did you— so tell me about the process to get admitted to the Academy.

00:04:12 Adrienne Griffen

Okay, well, I guess when I was a sophomore in high school, my brother would have been a junior. We went on the big college tour of, you know, different schools, and the Academy was one of them. That was the first time that I saw the Academy, and I was really kind of like, hey, you know what? I really think that I might be interested in this. We didn't know anybody famous. We didn't know our local congressman or anything. But my congressman, as I think most representatives do, have a board that conducts interviews for potential nominees to the Academy. So as I recall—and again, this is, you know, a long time ago—there was sort of two tracks. You applied to the Academy and have to be accepted. You know, they check your SAT scores, and grades, and all that. At the same time, you're applying through your local congressman or senator to get an appointment from them. And so, you know, it was a fairly rigorous process, several interviews with my congressman's board. And that's how I recall being selected.

00:05:04 Marcy Reborchick

And what types of courses, or what major did you pursue?

00:05:09 Adrienne Griffen

I was a computer science major. And I think that might have been the first or second year that they actually offered that major. So again, you know, a long time ago. We had the old five-inch floppy disks, you know, shuffling them in and out of computers.

00:05:20 Marcy Reborchick

Right, I remember this. Well, tell me, I guess by the time you were there, I guess it was—women had been on campus for a few years.

00:05:31 Adrienne Griffen

Right.

00:05:32 Marcy Reborchick

Eleven years, I guess, by the time, well, when you first arrived.

00:05:35 Adrienne Griffen

Right, we were the seventh class of women graduates.

00:05:36 Marcy Reborchick

Seventh, okay. So what, how were you treated, basically?

00:05:46 Adrienne Griffen

You know, in some ways, a plebe is a plebe. But a female midshipman is a little different. And so I would say that in general, I felt like I was always under the microscope or always in a fishbowl. Like everything that I did or that the women did seemed to be magnified because you stood out so much. I mean, when you're the only woman who sits at your squad table or the only woman who's in your academic class of 25 or 30 people, you just kind of stick out. And so I just kind of felt like as much as we tried to fit in, we just always stuck out.

00:06:26 Marcy Reborchick

How many women were there in your class?

00:06:27 Adrienne Griffen

In my class, there were 68 women who graduated, and there were 1,100 total people in our class.

00:06:32 Marcy Reborchick

And how many started out when you first went?

00:06:35 Adrienne Griffen

I'm not exactly sure. I think it was like 100, somewhere between 110 and 120.

00:06:40 Marcy Reborchick

Okay, all right. And I read somewhere that of the academies, the Air Force Academy did the best job at sort of integrating the women into their academy by sort of positioning them as the best of the best. And then in the Naval Academy and West Point, they sort of said, well, you're on your own. You can sink or swim. Does your experience sort of coincide with that?

00:07:03 Adrienne Griffen

I don't know. I mean, it's hard to compare to what it was like at one of the other academies because I don't know. Similarly, it's hard to compare what my experience was then

compared to what the women go through now because you're just so invested in your own little life and just survival. I mean, surviving leap summer, surviving every hour, whether you're male or female, is very difficult. Surviving the academy, excelling, graduating is a tough challenge no matter what your gender is. But I certainly don't feel that there was any support for women there. There was nobody who sort of was a mentor, or there was nowhere to really turn. It was just sort of like, things that happen to you, you just sort of suck it up, just kind of deal with it and just keep going.

00:07:50 Marcy Reborchick

Well, tell me about— so what types of activities did you do at the academy?

00:07:54 Adrienne Griffen

Well, as you know, everybody has to participate in sports, so I went out for the crew team. I had never picked up an oar in my life before [laughs] and decided to pick up one of the most challenging sports that there was, but I had a great time. Very physically demanding and certainly pushed myself harder physically than I ever thought I could do. I mean, you know, suddenly I was out there running 8 or 10 miles, and carrying a crew shell, and all those things. It was very, very demanding. So I did that. I swam, I just did battalion sports. I wasn't a huge athlete, so sort of more low-key sports. I participated in the Society of Women Engineers, because there were very few women who really chose the engineering and harder— the math science disciplines. But it's funny, as far as extracurricular activities, most of my extracurricular time I spent trying to get away from the academy. I was not really looking forward to spending more time there doing things on the weekends.

00:08:49 Marcy Reborchick

Well tell me, tell me what a typical day in the life of a cadet would be, or female cadet.

00:08:55 Adrienne Griffen

Midshipman, midshipman.

00:08:55 Marcy Reborchick

Oh, midshipman, I'm sorry.

00:08:56 Adrienne Griffen

That's okay. Well, again, back then—I have to rephrase everything, that this was 20 or 25 years ago, and I know that things have changed now. But we would get up between 6 and 6:30, have breakfast. You would have morning formation, roll call, whatever, whatever

announcements. And we, our classes started, I think, at 7:45 every morning, 7:45 or 8. And we basically had classes. You had six periods a day, and you pretty much had most of those periods filled with class, noon formation and noon meal in the middle of the day, two classes after lunch, and then extracurricular or sports time from, like, 3 to 6 every afternoon. And then evening meal formation, evening meal, and then study time as a plebe. Yeah, it was pretty rigorous. A pretty rigorous and demanding schedule. Lights out, supposedly, as a plebe at 11 o'clock. I was always one of these people who preferred sleep to study. So midnight would come, and I would say, I'm done. You know, no matter how much more I could study, sleep was more important to me, so I was always asleep by midnight at the latest. Some people stayed up all night. Yeah, but a pretty demanding and rigorous schedule, yeah.

00:10:05 Marcy Reborchick

So, as a midshipman what kind of summer assignments did you have to do?

00:10:09 Adrienne Griffen

Well, after our first year and after our third year, we went on cruises aboard a ship. Your first cruise, you go aboard a ship as a junior enlisted person. So I was aboard the aircraft carrier Lexington [*USS Lexington*], which was then based in Pensacola [Florida]. It was an old aircraft carrier, and they used it for flight training. And so it never really went out at sea, it just sort of went out for little day trips. And then my second cruise, which was right before my senior year, I also went on an aircraft carrier. This one was an active-duty carrier. It was the newest carrier at the time, the Carl Vinson [*USS Carl Vinson*]. And it was me and one other female midshipman, and 5,000 men. And that was it, yeah. So that was interesting.

00:10:49 Marcy Reborchick

And how long were the cruises?

00:10:51 Adrienne Griffen

Each of them is about a month.

00:10:53 Marcy Reborchick

Okay. So where did they put you? I mean... [laughs]

00:10:58 Adrienne Griffen

Oh, okay. Now, again, on the first cruise when we went on as junior enlisted, we were actually in the bunk room with the other enlisted women. And so you have your bunk and just the little storage space below it. On my second cruise when I was on as a junior

officer, it was me and this other girl who happens to be a very good friend of mine. They had a little stateroom that they found for us that they usually use for VIPs. And so it was probably about the size of this room that we're in, and we had bunks, and, you know, that was it. But the challenge on that is, this was before women were on ships in huge numbers, and there was no restroom facilities for us. And so, one of the challenges, you know, in the morning we'd go to the bathroom together, and we'd find they were communal bathrooms, heads. We'd bang on the door, any men in there? No? Okay. We'd go in, lock the door, hang a little sign up that says ladies in here, and, you know, go about our business, take a shower, whatever we want to do in there. Both of us are in the showers, separate showers, and we hear the toilet flush. And we're like, uh, as far as I know, there was nobody in here, there was men in there. So we had to figure out how to extricate ourselves from that situation. It's like, you know, it's sort of comical now, but when you're in there, you're standing naked in the shower, and there's some strange men in there with you. It's sort of nerve-wracking, you're 20 or 21, you really don't know how to handle these kinds of situations. These are the things that nobody really prepares you for.

00:12:10 Marcy Reborchick

That's true. That's true. Well, since women really— what kind of assignments were you allowed to take? Back then.

00:12:18 Adrienne Griffen

Back then, most of us went into restricted line positions. I was an intelligence officer, supply corps, civil engineering. Some women did go surface line or aviation, but very small numbers. I know that things have changed radically, that most women now go into general unrestricted warfare specialties. Aviation, surface line.

00:12:40 Marcy Reborchick

Well, what was the rank or position that you held while you were at the academy?

00:12:48 Adrienne Griffen

I was a two-striper. I was just in company officer kinds of positions. I didn't rise to the ranks of the stripper community. I was sort of on my way and then got caught in a little disciplinary action, so that sort of... yeah, yeah, derailed my career there.

00:13:11 Marcy Reborchick

Well, what— tell me some of your remembrances of academy life, and what you remember most.

00:13:18 Adrienne Griffen

Well, the things that I probably remember most have to do with my roommate and my friends from there. I mean, I had the best roommate in the world, we're still very, very close. You know, our families get together and spend vacations together. I don't think I could have survived my time there without her. We just shared so much in common and really helped each other out. She would struggle academically; I would help her that way. I would struggle with a mile run; she'd come out and pace me, you know, that kind of thing. So that's probably my biggest remembrances. My fondest memories have to do with the time that I spent with my female friends from there. Certainly, academically, it was quite a challenge. I just remember I was a computer science major. I didn't know anything about computers, and I would be in the computer lab until all hours of the morning trying to write a program, and then I'd come back and dream about it and solve the problem in my sleep, and, you know, just sort of crazy academic kinds of things. And, you know, certainly going on cruises, you know, things that— traveling, things that I would never have had the opportunity to do had I gone to a civilian school are certainly some highlights.

00:14:21 Marcy Reborchick

Well, what do you think was the most difficult thing about your time at the academy?

00:14:26 Adrienne Griffen

I would quite honestly have to say just being female, just surviving as a female there. And I was talking to some of the women here who are currently midshipmen and trying to judge what's changed, what's the same, and, you know, how difficult it is to just sort of be such a minority in such a male-dominated organization. Because it's so pervasive, it clouds everything that you do, it's there all the time. I was telling them that I was the only female in my academic major, and so basically that meant for the last two years I was the only girl in all of my academic classes. Which, you tell that to a guy and they think, oh, that's great, you know, you walk into a room full— you know, “I'd love to walk into a room full of women if I were the only guy.” I'm like, no, you don't understand how that changes the dynamic in the room and how much of an intruder you feel like, and how separate you feel, and how uninvolved, and it's not even anything overt that the men do. It's just sort of this pervasive kind of environment, and I was disappointed to hear that some of those things still are going on. Although the numbers of women have increased, there's just sort of this—

00:15:37 Marcy Reborchick

Well, I think in some of the earlier experiences like yours, I mean, I think a lot of the men just didn't want women there.

00:15:43 Adrienne Griffen

Right.

00:15:44 Marcy Reborchick

Did they— did you find— did you have any experiences where they made that clear to you?

00:15:52 Adrienne Griffen

You know, it wasn't ever as explicit as that, but it was much more subtle. And—as I was talking again with these other female midshipmen—on a one-on-one basis, you felt very accepted. I had lots of guy friends, but when they would get together as a group, this mob mentality would just somehow take over, and as a group they would say things that were unkind, or that were divisive, and that's when you really felt very alone. Yeah.

00:16:24 Marcy Reborchick

What is the experience, or what do you feel was your most proud moment?

00:16:30 Adrienne Griffen

Oh, that's really tough. I'd have to say it was one of the plebe year things, and they had this thing where if you excelled academically, physically, and militarily and scored high across the board, you would wear stars on your uniform. We wore anchors on our lapels and stars above them, if you had a certain grade point average. I got stars my second semester of plebe year, and so I really felt like I had achieved— not only survived, but had accomplished and achieved something fairly significant. Now, from then on, it was all downhill, but at least there was a shining moment there. I was just very proud physically that I could do things that I never thought I could do before. Like I said, as part of the crew team, we would go out and run 8 or 10 miles, and that was just sort of a normal day's workout. I had never imagined I could do something like that. Very good.

00:17:21 Marcy Reborchick

What was your guiding thought or personal standard that helped you achieve the success you did at the academy?

00:17:29 Adrienne Griffen

Um, you know, just perseverance. I think the academy's motto is another day in which to excel, and I just sort of tried to embody that. Every day's another chance to just go out there and do a good job, just keep my nose clean, stand the straight and narrow, learn as much as I can, just keep going every day.

00:17:47 Marcy Reborchick

And what advice would you give to someone, a young person today thinking about going to the academy?

00:17:54 Adrienne Griffen

I would really encourage them to gather as much information about the academy specifically, and the Navy in general. Understanding that going to the academy means that you are buying into not just four years of college, but whatever the commitment is afterwards, and that whole lifestyle, and what that really means. And when you're 16 or 17 trying to make that decision, that's very daunting, and I don't think that people, young people, really understand. I certainly didn't. I mean, you show up at the academy and they start asking, "well, what do you want to do when you graduate?" I don't know, do I have a choice? I have no idea, what options are there? I mean, I knew nothing about the Navy. So to just gather as much information as possible, especially for young women going there, and having them understand that it's a difficult path that they're choosing.

00:18:38 Marcy Reborchick

And how did the academy experience affect you in the long term?

00:18:44 Adrienne Griffen

Well on the one hand, it certainly allowed me to do things that I never thought ever would have occurred to me. After I graduated, I was an intelligence officer and a series of high visibility jobs. I ended up— My last job was working at the White House for the National Security Council in the Situation Room, so I ended up briefing the president when I was 27 years old. I would never have been able— never have imagined that I would do something like that, nor do I think I would have ever had that opportunity had I not gone to the Naval Academy. So on the one hand, I felt like I could accomplish anything, do anything. I had achieved and excelled and blah, blah, blah. On the other hand, I felt very diminished by the way that women were treated there. So it was sort of a double-edged sword.

00:19:31 Marcy Reborchick

Well, how did it— I guess you didn't have any mentors or anyone that could help you, you know, usually the military experiences break you down and build you back up, but you didn't really have that build-up kind of or anybody there to...

00:19:43 Adrienne Griffen

Rah-rah.

00:19:43 Marcy Reborchick

Yeah, rah-rah.

00:19:44 Adrienne Griffen

Not really. Yeah, in hindsight, no.

00:19:48 Marcy Reborchick

No, okay. And how did it feel to graduate? I mean, what was that feeling, when you finally get to that point?

00:19:53 Adrienne Griffen

You know, the biggest thing is like a sense of relief. You know, I've done it. We're done, we're moving on. You know, just this relief and feelings of being very proud.

00:20:09 Marcy Reborchick

And where— how long of a leave did you have before you had to go on active duty?

00:20:14 Adrienne Griffen

I think we had a month, yeah.

00:20:17 Marcy Reborchick

And where was your first assignment?

00:20:20 Adrienne Griffen

Oh, let's see, I did a temporary assignment at the academy after graduation where I taught the plebes how to sail, which was a lot of fun because I'm not a big sailor but in having to teach people, you really finally understand something. So that was very eye-opening for me. And very exciting, you know, you take these 18-year-old kids who've never seen water before, never been on a sailboat, you know, don't know how to swim, whatever, and to see them experience this was very, very exciting. Then I went to intel school, and then my first real job was with a P-3 squadron, BP-11 in Brunswick, Maine, and we deployed to Keflavik, Iceland. And our job back then was to hunt for Soviet submarines. So, you know, back in a different era when there was a Soviet Union and we had a real enemy, yeah. That was really neat, really exciting.

00:21:07 Marcy Reborchick

And then from— did you stay on the air side, or what was your next assignment?

00:21:11 Adrienne Griffen

My next assignment—again, as an intel officer—I came to the Pentagon and worked on the staff of the Office of the Director of Naval Intelligence, and then from there went to the White House.

00:21:20 Marcy Reborchick

Very good, very good. And then you decided to get out.

00:21:23 Adrienne Griffen

I did, yeah.

00:21:24 Marcy Reborchick

What are you doing currently?

00:21:27 Adrienne Griffen

I currently have three young children, so I'm at home full-time with them. They're 7, 4, and 2, so still pretty busy with them. And, you know, I volunteer at school, and some other volunteer opportunities. But I'm pretty much full-time, stay-at-home.

00:21:39 Marcy Reborchick

Very good, very good. Well, let's see, I think, I guess in conclusion, what was your lasting impression or impact that the military had on you, on your life?

00:21:53 Adrienne Griffen

That's interesting. You know, again, I kind of come back to this duality, this, hey, you can do anything; but you're a woman, so you're a second-class citizen. And I'm kind of disappointed that that's sort of my lasting impression, and I certainly hope that that has changed. You know, on the one hand, hey, I could run faster, swim more than I ever thought I could, that I could study all these supposedly male things, engineering and science and computer science, that I could, you know, be a leader of a group of people. But on the other hand, I wasn't treated exactly as I would have hoped, and certainly not the way that I would wish my daughter to be treated.

00:22:38 Marcy Reborchick

But that was at the Academy, now when you got into the regular Navy, I would think that women were much more commonplace. So, did you find that—?

00:22:47 Adrienne Griffen

Well, yes and no. My first job at the aviation squadron, 70 officers, I was the only woman. So that brought with it a whole host of things. We deployed overseas. Now, most of these men were married with kids back home. I took it very seriously, trying to befriend their wives so that they knew who I was, so when I deployed overseas and lived in the same building with these guys for six months, that they knew I wasn't out there trying to steal their husbands or, you know, whatever. You know, really try to be, as I described it, one of the group, but not one of the guys, because that's a fine line to toe.

00:23:39 Marcy Reborchick

So then you— okay, so even in the regular Navy, you didn't really experience some...

00:23:34 Adrienne Griffen

The further I got away— and again, you know, junior squadrons, there's a lot of still young guys trying to sort their way out, so there's still a lot of the same mentality. The further you go up, I think, you know, once I came to the Pentagon, I mean, that's such a mix of people that it was not nearly as prevalent that I was a woman. I was a Lieutenant JG, which is very uncommon at the Pentagon. Usually you're seeing, you know, O-6s and admirals, and people would say, "what rank are you? We've never seen that before." So that was more of the difference that I was dealing with there, you know, being such a junior person at the Pentagon. Yeah, I just, you know, it is disappointing. I've been talking to a lot of the female midshipmen, and a lot of the things that we experienced are still going on. And that's just disappointing to know, that 20 years later, that there's still sort of this kind of pervasive, not total acceptance of women there. And that's just disappointing.

00:24: 25 Marcy Reborchick

It is disappointing. I agree.

00:24:27 Adrienne Griffen

Yeah, and I don't mean to keep focusing on it with this interview. But I think it is something that is just so much a part of the woman's academy experience that it cannot be denied, it needs to be addressed and talked about, and—

00:24:40 Marcy Reborchick

Oh, I agree.

00:24:41 Adrienne Griffen

—and, you know, I find myself at this odd juncture in life. This was not my issue when I was there. I thought it was fine. Just like anybody who goes there, you just sort of go along to get along. You don't make waves, you just kind of go with it. I just find myself now, 20 years after the fact, because I have friends whose daughters want to go there, really looking at this a little bit more and saying, you know, there's some improvement that is still needed.

00:25:07 Marcy Reborchick

Well, would you advise your daughter? Or if she wanted to go, would you say yes? I mean, not— obviously it's her choice, but how would you react?

00:25:16 Adrienne Griffen

I don't know. I would have real mixed feelings. And I've talked to lots of my friends about this, and some of them are like, of course I'd let my daughter go. I'd encourage her to go. It was a great place, I learned great things about myself. Others of us have, you know, a little bit more of a mixed thing. And I think it comes to a very individual basis. You know, how tough is your skin? How much do you let things roll off your back? You know, what's your self-esteem like? I don't know what I would do. My children are still young enough where I'm hoping that maybe I can make some improvements in the next 10 or 15 years so that if they choose to go, that I feel more comfortable saying that's a great idea.

00:25:54 Marcy Reborchick

Yeah. It's a great place for you.

00:25:55 Adrienne Griffen

Right.

00:25:57 Adrienne Griffen

You know, to fix some of those issues.

00:25:59 Marcy Reborchick

Right. Right. So— Is there anything else that you'd like to say that I didn't ask?

00:26:05 Adrienne Griffen

You know, one of the thoughts that comes to me, and this was sort of something I would repeat periodically throughout my time at the Academy and in the Navy, for every door that was closed to me because I was a woman, there was another door that was opened. For example, when I was working at the Pentagon, I was sort of slated to become the

Admiral's aide. And at some point, his wife said, no, she didn't want a female to be his aide for a variety of reasons. And I was very disheartened. And then the next day, a door opened and I got to go to the White House to work, which was a wonderful opportunity. You know, similarly, going on an aircraft carrier as one of two women, while exciting and all that, you know, had its certain challenges. But whenever we said we wanted to do something, "wouldn't it be cool if we knew where the bombs were kept on the aircraft carrier?" Okay, well, let's go. And the two of us would be escorted down to where the bombs were kept. "Hey, would anybody like to go on in a helicopter?" All right, well, here's your flight suit, hop on. So, you know, there were positives and negatives about it the whole time. I almost wish I could have experienced all this as a man, so that I could have a more singular viewpoint and not having, have the additional filter of being female.

00:27:22 Marcy Reborchick

Well, I think you've done very well. I mean, you survived and you graduated.

00:27:27 Adrienne Griffen

But survival, it should be more than survival, it should be about excelling.

00:27:30 Marcy Reborchick

But that's a big accomplishment, though, to have made it through, especially with, you know, so little support at the time. You know, and I think maybe there's probably a little bit more now, but I should say not nearly enough.

00:27:41 Adrienne Griffen

Right, right. And, you know, I certainly had some positive experiences there and positive experiences in the Navy. I do think, though, that it is much more difficult for a woman to be in the Navy than it is for a man for a variety of reasons. At our 15-year college reunion five years ago, kind of talked to all the women who were there, and it was two groups of women. There were those who were still on active duty who perhaps were married but did not have children. Anybody who had children had gotten out of the service. There was one woman out of all of us, one woman out of almost 70, who was married, on active duty, and had children. And she said the only reason she was able to do it was because her mother lived with them since the time her first child was born, so she could do whatever she needed to to continue her Navy career, knowing that somebody was at home caring for the children. And that just doesn't seem right.

00:28:37 Marcy Reborchick

Yeah, well, especially when you go on seven-month deployments on a ship or year-long deployments, it's a tough life.

00:28:45 Adrienne Griffen

Right, right. And so...

00:28:48 Marcy Reborchick

Yeah, it's a tough life for women.

00:28:51 Adrienne Griffen

Right, right. And it's one of those things, you know, again, when you're 16 or 17 making the decision to go to the Academy, you don't see all that. You don't know that that's how your life is going to unfold. You know, the idea of having children or being married is, like, you know, so far off in the future you can't even imagine that that's going to be a factor in your life at some point.

00:29:11 Marcy Reborchick

Absolutely. Well, I agree. Well, thank you. Thank you so much for...

00:29:14 Adrienne Griffen

Thank you. Thank you for having me. I'm really glad to be at the conference.

00:29:17 Marcy Reborchick

No, this is great. We're really getting some very good interviews, and I think—