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November 2023

## Cheryl L. Martin, interviewed by Kim Sealy, Part 2

Cheryl L. Martin

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# ACCESSION SHEET

## Maine Folklife Center

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**Collection Name:** Women in the Military    **P/S**    **V#**    **DV**    **DA**  
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**Interviewer** Kim Sealy  
**/Depositor:**

**Narrator:** Cheryl L. Martin

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**Description:** 3235 Cheryl L. Martin, interviewed by Kim Sealy, November 15, 2001. Martin talks about personal and parent's educational background; decision to join Air Force instead of go to college; military history; "MAINEiacs"; federal versus state military service; time in basic training; benefits; logistics and shipping duties; year off with Fortune 500 company; CCAF; time as boom operator (air refueling); time in Kosovo; war effect on family; Shaw Air Force Base; rank and gender issues; air versus ground combat; experience in "gender free" military culture; officer versus enlisted rankings.

Text: 33 pp. transcript

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### Related Collections

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**Restrictions** None

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**Accessioned by** Jason Canniff

**To transcriber**

**Completed**

**Interviewer: Cheryl L. Martin**  
**Interviewer: Kim Sealy**  
**November 15, 2001**  
**Transcriber: Roxanne/ Katie**

[Begin Interview]

**Kim Sealy:** Ok, this is Kim Sealy, it's November 15, 2001 and I'm interviewing Cheryl Martin in her home in Brewer, Maine. Ok, so when and where were you born?

**Cheryl Martin:** I was born in New Britain, Connecticut in 1966.

**Sealy:** What is your educational background?

**Martin:** I have high school and college eventually I'll finish up my college but it's finding the time.

**Sealy:** So did you go to high school in Connecticut?

**Martin:** Oh no, I went to high school in Northern Maine. My parents moved to Northern Maine when I was like 7 and um that's where I went.

**Sealy:** So what about college? Is that something you did while you were in the military?

**Martin:** College I did in the military.

**Sealy:** You didn't actually go to a University you just take classes?

**Martin:** It's a CCAF; it's a college, a community college for the Air Force. And basically what I do is take these courses here and there when I can, but because my work schedule, I try to take classes when I can but, I never know when I'm going to be here so.

**Sealy:** That makes sense. Um, tell me about your parents. What's your parent's names, their educational background and their occupation?

**Martin:** My mom? Is Paullina Claude Martin. Both are high school graduates, none of them are college. And the reason why we moved to Northern Maine is because my parents did not want me brought up outside of Hartford, Connecticut along with my brother they wanted us brought up in a rural area, country sort of, that was fair, so they moved on to Maine and here I was, here I am.

**Sealy:** What does your mom do?

**Martin:** Well, right now, my mom does everything she can to get rid of my dad which would be basically she works part time as a cook and it keeps her busy, she likes that. They're both retired. And now they're both retired, she works part time as a cook, my dad likes to do wood work and all that other good stuff around the

house or whatever he finds his different hobbies all the time and that's pretty much my parents.

**Sealy:** Oh that's nice. So maybe you could start when you enlisted into the military.

**Martin:** I had an option, mom and dad said, actually my mom not so much my father he's very care free and easy go lucky but mom said you have a choice you either go to college or you join the military either way you've got to do something and each year upon graduation to do either or and I did not want to go back to school I had enough of school and I figured that was enough so I joined the military and thought I'd travel and took my basic training and did my school and did all that good stuff and my purpose of joining the military was to travel and sent me back up to Loring so I didn't get to travel but 16 years later I'm still here.

**Sealy:** But you actually joined the military I know when you were 19 but what year was that?

**Martin:** I joined 1985.

**Sealy:** 1985?

**Martin:** Yea, 18 going on 19.

**Sealy:** So when you were in high school even though the parents gave you that option you never said, that thought never crossed your mind, actually joining the military.

**Martin:** Oh no, oh my god no. When I graduated high school somebody looked at me and said you're going to join the military, I looked that them and laughed but when I was given that option by my mom you've got either or, you have one year off you have either or, you either join the military or go to college, you've got to do something with your life you cannot just be stagnant.

**[End Track 1, Begin Track 2]**

**Martin:** I joined the military because I didn't think I was ready for college yet I just hadn't gotten that, I wasn't ready for it, and I've been in the military ever since.

**Sealy:** Now you're in the Air Force, so were you always in the Air force.

**Martin:** I joined the Air Force in 1985, I was active duty in Air Force right up until five years later then I joined the international guard in Massachusetts, active duty. Basically what you do is you go from working for the federal government to the state and I worked for them for an additional 4 years then I joined the MAINEacs aka the 101st Air Fueling Wing and I've worked for them since and as international guard personnel. There's quite the loop hole as to the difference but basically instead of working for the federal government now I'm working for the state where

I went from working for the federal government to Massachusetts, the state of Massachusetts, to now the state of Maine, so now I work for the state of Maine and I work for my homeland as I see it.

**Sealy:** So now do you actually prefer, I know you've worked for the state for a longer period of time but do you see a big difference working for the federal government to state government do you like it better?

**Martin:** Yea, it's a little bit more personal. When you work for the federal government you move around a lot, where if you're working for the state of Maine, the average turn time for people on active duty is four years so every 4 years you're meeting people every 2 to 4 years you're meeting new people where if you're working for a state you're usually going to be with those people for a long time so you got the commodity going and you got somebody that you know for years I mean you work with them for years and years you know their personality you know their ups you know their downs you know, you know they're your friends, you're active duty air force you move so many times that you don't really get to really know them, you know them but not for a very long time. So I think working for the state is the way to go, but that's my opinion I could be wrong.

**Sealy:** Well I guess I was going to ask how you're family and friends felt about your enlisting into the military but since it really wasn't that you just

surprised them with it, it was more that it was given as an option I'm sure they were pretty prepared for that.

**Martin:** Actually my mom, actually my mom thought I'd go for the college way yea because I had the grades and I had everything going for me and she went ok this is forcing her to go to college, you know, reverse psychology sort of thing and it backfired on her so anyways basically I came into my parents home and I said I joined the military and my mom went yea right I don't know mom I really did, and she goes you did not and said I really did, and she didn't believe me right up until the very, very day, I told her the day I was leaving I told her everything and she didn't believe me because I'm a practical joker so she thought I was just messing with her and anyways she just that day I go is anybody giving me a ride to the airport yea that's honestly the way it happened. And then is when she realized that I wasn't kidding and I did do it, and I followed through and basic training is a totally different story you know, two days in I thought I had it so rough and then I two days into basic training I'm calling my mom crying but eh that's a different story.

**Sealy:** Well sorry about that actually we can jump right to that how was your basic training what was it like?

**Martin:** It was horrible! I mean you went from laid back mommy and daddy to no kid can bounce a quarter off a cot I was what on earth did I get myself into.



**Sealy:** Where was your basic training?

**Martin:** In San Antonio Texas.

**Sealy:** That's a big change from Maine.

**Martin:** Yea, yea and they saw me coming from a mile away. I had ...

**[End Track 2, Begin Track 3]**

**Martin:** on like, they get you the moment you walk off that little bus they bring you in on and they get you right until you leave you're just not left alone and you are taught discipline and a lot of people can't handle it because they're not brought up with it thank god I come from a strict French catholic family that had a lot of discipline that was difficult but it was easier for me, it was easier for me then.

**Sealy:** Any point were you just like that's it, I don't want to be here anymore.

**Martin:** The first hour, no actually many places that get you there, what got me through basic training was knowing that I had family members that had been in the military prior to so I said if they could do it I could do it I mean I can do this I can do this, what really wanted me to do it the most was, it's a female thing, you just want to be able to go the guys can do it I can to and then I have weaker kind of cousin that was really, really feminine and I thought yea if she can do it I can do it and that kind of got me through.

**Sealy:** And your brother, what did he think about his sister going into the military.

**Martin:** He laughed at me, well, he didn't laugh at me I shouldn't say he laughed at me, he asked me if I was crazy but 2 or 3 or 4 years after being in the military he wished he had done the same thing. Now my brother is completely I guess he's career wise very well off but he wish he had traveled like I did he wish he'd had a free education he wish he'd, I think he wish he'd took advantage of some of the benefits of the military offers that most people just don't know until their in. You know there's just a different avenue.

**Sealy:** Was it as much as it was cracked up to be or I mean, we've read in our class that sometimes women didn't get benefits they thought they were going to get I just didn't know if it was for just men or women or.

**Martin:** It's totally gender free in the military, it really is as far as what women get and what men get benefit wise it depends what you're looking for and what you're looking to gain. If you're looking for an education certainly you're going to get it, pretty much a free education. That's a given, that's a done deal, if you're looking for a career field that's a give me you're going to get a free career , and education on what career field you choose. That's you're going to get your training and you're going to get all this stuff, there's a lot of other stuff you've got to do and

put up with, do you get what you're signing up for, not always, be very, very careful whatever you sign a line your name on you've got to be careful on and I'm not saying the military is trying to teach you I'm just saying that whatever you sign your name for you've got to be careful.

**Sealy:** Like such as?

**Martin:** Well if you go into the military saying you want to be a nurse or a you want to be a dentist and they say well I can give you dental assistant, don't sign, hold out, go for what you really want, and if you can't get that don't do it I'm not saying that they're going to try and trick but they're going try, they're definitely not going to try and trick, but if you're going to go in there and say well we can get you in this time as a nurse just a regular I don't know the name for nurses just you know

**Sealy:** Like an RN?

**Martin:** Exactly, but you want to be an RN, don't sign the dotted line, you know don't buy the car you don't want, hold it out, hold out they'll come back for you, if they want you bad enough they'll come back for you, just don't be too anxious, know what you want before you go in.

**[End Track 3, Begin Track 4]**

**Martin:** And if you know then, then you're going to be all set they're going to give you everything you want.

**Sealy:** What about the benefits, as far as education the benefits, are they everything they say they are?

**Martin:** I'll tell you what, for 16 years I've never had to pay any medical, if something happens to me and things have, I see the doctor they pay my bills I get prescription they pay my bills, paperwork is stupid, but they're paid. Everything is there for you, medical, dental, insurance, everything is there for you. Military life isn't for everybody it isn't, it isn't for everybody. There's a lot of disciplinary there's a lot of, what word do I want to use, there's a lot of traditional, the word you use for history, there's a lot of history there and there's a lot of you know the ? The customs, thank you customs and courtesies, there's a lot of customs and courtesies. But the truth of it is if you look where they're stemmed from its nice and it's very nice but sometimes it's annoying but if you look where they come from and how they came and you will know that if you're ever in the military it's nice, it's very nice.

**Sealy:** Well great, what did you want to go into the military, you were talking about the nurses and the doctors or whatever, what did you want, what was your job that you wanted to be when you first enlisted?

**Martin:** Oh, when I joined the military I wanted to be, what did I want to be, ah I can't remember, it was so long ago, anyways, I don't recall what I wanted but they gave me logistics. And I'm thinking logistics wow that sounds cool, people,

places, and things, you know? And I come to find out it's supply, so I went, is there supply, what supply got me was eventually at one point in my career I decided I needed a break from the military it's a neat thing about the military if you're not too old, yea I took a break one year and with my logistics background people places and um I got a job at the fortune 500 company as a purchasing agent making very, very good money and I worked for the for a year as an import and export manager of their produce and products and I missed the military , I missed it, I couldn't believe it I actually missed the commodity that you have with people that you have to deal in a lot of different scenarios that civilian people just don't deal with. They just don't deal with it, they don't deal with the closeness that you gain from that person that's going to help you with your gains, you know? They just don't realize that, so I worked for them for a year with my logistics career field with no college at that time and I got hired as, hired on as and with the fortune 500 company.

**Sealy:** How long were you in the military at that point before you actually got the job, how much did you need for background?

**Martin:** Well, I had nine years at that point I had nine years and they just looked at me and went sold, and they hired me right off, right off and I did very, very well with that job without a college education at that point, not that's changed, it just changes but we'll get into that later but basically, yea.

**Sealy:** Ok, so wait, what are we saying changes?

**Martin:** As far as the military goes, at that point, I was in logistics supply, whatever else,

**[End Track 4, Begin Track 5]**

**Martin:** now that I'm in a different career field, I'm in aviation, my career college CCAF community college of the Air Force will pay towards my aviation degree not towards the logistics. So whatever I got as college for my logistics is null and void unless I can apply it towards my aviation degree.

**Sealy:** And can you?

**Martin:** Yes, some courses I can into that. Some courses I can't, some I can obviously but I'll always have that nine years of experience in logistics that most people don't have

**Sealy:** So, that brings up another question to mind, did you feel that your training prepared you for your job, I was more or less thinking the training that got you, that prepared you for your military job in logistics, I guess it can apply anywhere throughout civilian life as well?

**Martin:** Well I mean in your basic training, when you go through basic training they're not teaching you skills they're teaching you discipline. When you go into your technical training they're teaching you skill so in order to get to your skills you

have to get through your discipline and once you get through your discipline then the world is open, you can choose whatever you want because the military has every single career field and then some that the civilians have to offer us, so it's up to you, it's up to you where you want to go with it, do you want to stay in four years or do you want to stay in 8 or do you want to stay in so on and so forth. I'm at 16, I'm 35, I retire in four years.

**Sealy:** Is that a great feeling?

**Martin:** I will get paid to wake up in four years for the rest of my life, is that what you want, I mean we've got the benefits, it's compared to a 401 k plan, I mean, we've got everything that all the companies offer, we just serve god and country, and sometimes we have to do more than what a civilians asked of, sometimes we have to put our life on the line, that's the difference, we're asked to do a little bit more, but for the most part I get up at the same time everyday and go to work the same time everyday and sometimes I come home a little later than most and sometimes my schedules a little bit different, but it feels good, I have a normal life just like anybody else, I'm just a lot more towards god and country.

**Sealy:** But people sacrifice themselves.

**Martin:** Some. I don't get paid overtime how's that? I don't get paid overtime

**Sealy:** I guess I'll ask what a typical military day is like for you because you're still in the military I guess I could rephrase that to how is a typical day in the military like now for you opposed to 10 years ago, has it changed a lot now that you're grounded you're always going home, you know you go to work every day, you come home opposed to like when you were traveling.

**Martin:** Oh I travel all the time.

**Sealy:** Or when you were stationed in different areas.

**Martin:** I always traveled because my career field, I'm in aviations, so I never know, sometimes I walk into work and they go Hey can you pack a bag we need you over night to san Antonio to pick up a jet bring it back here or we need you here we need you there or we need you to this we need you to pick up my, I never, never know, my blessed, beautiful day is show up at seven and leave at four, that is the perfect day for me. If I can do that and walk back in this house at 4 o' clock that's a perfect day. ??

**Sealy:** Now the whole 16 years you've been in the military have you ever gone 8 months without having to leave?



**Martin:** Oh my God yes, when I was in logistics, I never went anywhere I mean hardly ever, but since I've been in aviation for just about 7 years now I'm never home. Last year I was home 180 days, 180 days.

**[End Track 5, Begin Track 6]**

**Sealy:** Half a year, six months.

**Martin:** Yes, and I mean it's in intervals.

**Sealy:** I was going to ask you so is it sometimes you're gone for a couple days and you're home for a couple days or are you gone for weeks at a time?

**Martin:** Some times days, weeks, months I never know. There's my chore, here you go. Well I think that's why there's not many females who do this because I mean it's harder for a mommy to leave her kids than it is for a, there's not many females who do this you've got to be a very strong willed woman to do this.

**Sealy:** If you think you could, so we haven't even talked about your actual job right now, your ? Operator, tell me more about that and we'll go from there.

**Martin:** Ok basically, a ? Operator is you fuel aircraft, the whole air force fleet anywhere from 21,000 feet oh we could go down to 13, we'll go down to 13,000 feet to 33,000 feet. We re-fuel them anywhere from, I want to say, some planes are small some planes are fat, we can re-fuel them anywhere from 310 knots down to, well we could actually re-fuel them faster if we had to 335 knots depending on what type of boom we have on the aircraft right down to about 210 knots. And um, we just re-

fuel aircraft mid-air, 30 feet away depending on how small they are, how big they are depends on the amount of gas they'll take, and how much we can off load but basically we can carry, we're a fine gas station, we're like a Texaco in the air and I'm a boom, I'm a glorified gas station attendant so basically what I do is I re-fuel these guys in mid-air and we can off load around 100, 55, 160,000 pounds of fuel ? 6.8 divided by the gallon, that would be how much we could actually carry. We're like one of those big trucks that drive by you on the high way, and we carry more than them.

**Sealy:** So what's it like being up in the air? And looking out the glass window and seeing another air craft come at you and you go fuel them, must go pretty quick time it all up right.

**Martin:** Yeah, it is, and sometimes you've got to be quick and everything is response, everything.

**Sealy:** Do you play the Nintendo game?

**Martin:** Yep, I'm not very good at it. But ok , have you ever played the Nintendo game? You know that split second if you don't get it, you're done. That's kind of like Nintendo, but what I'm trying to get at was that everybody, it's quick, it is quick, but the best way I can say to a civilian is what it's like, the experience of being a boom, because you know how when you're driving a car when you first

learn how to drive a car, you know how you get into the car and you drive away and when you're first learning how to drive that car you're looking around you're like is that girl going to back up into me, you're very, very nervous and then after a while you get into your car and it's like second nature, you drive out you ? You know you're doing what you need to do. Doing what I do along with all the aviators the first initial start of it is very, very scary. But once you've done it for quite a while it's actually like driving a car. You get up there, you do it. To you it might be scary ? Oh my God. We're doing about 310 knots. And this air craft, this other air craft is 30 feet away if he just nose up it's going to hit us. You don't think that, you don't think about it if you're behind another vehicle. And he's driving about 30, 35 miles an hour, and he stops right off, are you going to hit him?

**Sealy:** Hopefully not.

**Martin:** Right. It's kind of the same thing. It's just, different tense, different parts.

**Sealy:** Have you ever been in a situation where it's come close call?

**Martin:** Oh my God yea! Oh yea.

**[End Track 6, Begin Track 7]**

**Martin:** Many, many times yes. Can I elaborate no, but can I say yes, it does happen, yes.

**Sealy:** Scary?

**Martin:** Very, very scary. Um, the KC135 E Model is known to be an extremely cold aircraft, at that altitude that we're flying at it's a very, very cold aircraft. It's always cold. In fact you could be up there mid-summer, it could be 110 degrees on the ground and you're up, up in the air going, you know your teeth are chattering because it's so cold. It's just an old aircraft. And many times, I mean this is not like an every other day occurrence but there are certain times where things happen where I get out of the boom quad and I'm actually shaking and sweaty, because it's just that scary sometimes. Things happen, and sometimes I'll walk, walk out of there doing a walk going woo look at me I'm so good. You know, I mean, the good and bad.

**Sealy:** So any of the scary times or close calls you ever walk out of there saying "That's it, I'm done. I can't do this!"

**Martin:** I walked back h up into the cock pit with my fellow pilots and I say, and many times I'll ? Back on, booms back on and I do not get paid enough for this shit. You know, I mean, it's like a lot of times I do that, not a lot, there are times that it happens and you go back up there and I don't get paid enough for this, you know, it's just, if I were doing this on the civilian sector and believe it or not the Irish have this.

**Sealy:** Oh wow.

**Martin:** Yes. Civilians do it, I'd be getting paid back, more money than I do right now, but I have to move to ?, and God bless the U.S.A. , I'm here. I'm here.

**Sealy:** Well, you were talking earlier before with our interview about the ?, regardless of whether we're in the war or not, your job is the same as far as what you have to do whether it's the fact that during a time of war you're going to be doing it a little more frequently.

**Martin:** Right.

**Sealy:** Um, can you explain a little bit about your work experiences, what you've done, where you've been and as much as possible I know it's kind of difficult but.

**Martin:** Wow that kind of long.

**Sealy:** Ok well maybe we can minimize that a little.

**Martin:** No, I've pretty much been everywhere, we have different missions that I don't know if I could chit-chat about so I'll just say that I've been many

different segments of the world, re-fueled from many different segments of the world, at different times sometimes I'm there for two weeks at a time sometimes I'm there for a month at a time and sometimes I'm there for 40, 45 days at a time and sometimes I'm there for two days. I never know how long I'm going to be gone or what I'm going to be doing as I don't know if I walk into work tomorrow, and I'm in the face of what I'm going to be doing. I have a general idea that I work from 7 to a certain time but that doesn't mean that they can say Cheryl we have a boom operator that's sick that cannot fly you've got to take that spot. And then I take that spot but you know when we set up this interview I said I don't know if I'm going to be there but let's plan on it and call me that day only because I just never know. I just never know what my, I hope it's a normal day. ?

**Sealy:** So when you were stationed you were stationed in ? right?

**Martin:** No I was not.

**Sealy:** You went to ?.

**Martin:** My mission, excuse me, my job does not require me to be right in the midst of things. I, because of our mission a lot of the time they keep us away from the, how would I put, the, heated areas. They keep us away from it because of who we are, what we are, and what we do. They keep us safe. We're a fine gas station.

**[End Track 7, Begin Track 8]**

**Martin:** So they keep us safe and the fighters come to us as they should. You know, I mean, your gas station doesn't come to you, you have to go to it correct? So they should come to us.

**Sealy:** Does that make you feel safer knowing that, I mean.

**Martin:** No, because while I was in ? there was many a time where the circling area and there were certain areas that we had to fly over where I actually saw a train a vehicle going and we have to watch for these things and they have their ? Missiles that they can shoot from above and at that level could hit us and here we are we're flying over then I'm going hmm, that would be nice, I mean, it wouldn't take much for them to just fling it at us , if I can see them, obviously they can see me.

**Sealy:** Right.

**Martin:** And that's another good reason why I'm back there because I look from the bottom of the plane and if you see a picture of a plane you'll see that they see that way, I see that way, I see down, they see up, forward and up.

**Sealy:** And that's the pilots you're talking about?

**Martin:** Right. Yea, so it is and you see these little things, you just see so much, you just really do and it's kind of hard to explain but it's different it's odd but it works.

**Sealy:** So during your times of war you know right now and when you were flying through ? and in ? what were your feelings or what were your family's feelings I mean that must have been..

**Martin:** My parents were very, very edgy. It was hard to get back to the family and talk to them and let them know you were ok. They have family support but my mom doesn't and/or my father doesn't want to hear from a person they don't know. They want to hear my voice that makes time, because we can't always get to a phone. Or we can't always get through. It's very, very, very, very hard on family more than just, see I know I'm safe, you know, I know I'm uncomfortable and I really hate where I'm at right now but I know I'm safe, but my family doesn't. It's harder on family for the military people than it is for the military person. It is very uncomfortable, I mean ?, I was flying hours, I can't describe, but all I have to say is that I was flying hours that left me, I flew, I landed I had to go into crew rest. What crew rest means is I flew, I landed, I have to sleep so I can fly for my next flight. So I had no time for lunch breaks, I had none. , I had none. You just, and you were used so much.



**Sealy:** And you're talking about during times of war? Or regardless..for the past 16 years.

**Martin:** Regardless, that was, no, no, no that was during wartime. During ?. You were, you flew, landed, and you were in crew rest, to fly for the next flight. You had no personal time.

**Sealy:** So how long was that going on for you? For you personally?

**Martin:** For me personally while I was there it was a month.

**Sealy:** So a month you couldn't talk to your family were you able to somewhere in there?

**Martin:** Oh you could fix it in there but it was like minutes at a time, you know? And that's a long time you know, and for me it was a month. For some people it was longer, I was lucky they were easy on me. I was lucky, I was fortunate. But it was, it was something. I guess, it's just something. All for God and Country right?

**Sealy:** Yea, as far as, let's say we're outside of wartimes, how do you spend your leisurely time knowing that you have to, I guess it's different now because now

that you're in your working for the state, you're in Maine, you've been in Maine for how long now? How long has it been?

**Martin:** In the state of Maine?

**Sealy:** Yea.

**Martin:** 7 years.

**Sealy:** And you've been a boomer operator for 7 years?

**Martin:** Yes.

**Sealy:** Ok, I don't know if you can answer for both a boom operator and in logistics but I don't know how it was back then

**[End Track 8, Begin Track 9]**

**Sealy:** when you were stationed in different places every 4 years, is that how it works?

**Martin:** No. I can give you MY background, my military background. I joined the military in eighty five to travel I think I said that earlier, they sent me to Shaw Air force base, South Carolina. They kept me there for 1 year and I got orders, 1 year at Shaw Air Force base.

**Sealy:** Is it Shaw you said? Shaw?

**Martin:** Yes, Shaw Air Force Base. And then they took me to Shaw Air Force base and they, 1 year, and sent me to Loring Air Force Base, where I'm from, so I got one year away. I was at Loring for 5 years, and hence you get the history. I joined to travel and I didn't.

**Sealy:** Did they send you to placeStateMaine?

**Martin:** They sent me to placeStateMaine, most people die to go to their home states and I did not want to and they did.

**Sealy:** There's really only one year out of 15 years, that you were actually someplace other than ?, ? Station actually.

**Martin:** I'm always, I'm fortunate now. I can honestly say and look back, I'm very fortunate because I've been able to establish roots, where the normal military wouldn't allow that, I've honestly been able to establish roots, I mean, I'm in my own home. I've been able to have somewhat of a normal life, it's a little different than most, but, I mean I have a normal life, God don't take that away from me. I think I have a normal life. But most people in the active duty sector see I changed over to guard. Now most people on the active duty sector can never, never have that. I'm going to buy home there and I'm going to live there. Because if they bought a home

there, they might have to sell it in four years. I know, I might have to travel this world and half and I'm hardly ever home but my house is always here. And I'm lucky, I'm very, very fortunate. Very lucky that I have that.

**Sealy:** Now you were in active duty and not the national guard? It would not be the same?

**Martin:** It would not be the same.

**Sealy:** So what made you change to the national guard? I don't think I really asked you that, I mean.

**Martin:** No you never asked me that. What made me do that was I really wanted to be here. I wanted to stay in placeStateMaine.

**Sealy:** After you thought you didn't want to you decided

**Martin:** But see now if you look at it, I got the best of both worlds. I travel all over the world, but I can still come home. So after that, I went "No I want to stay here." I will always, I mean I will have a retirement home somewhere else, I'm sure but I will always, always have a home in Maine. I will never, never, never give up residency in Maine. I'm sorry, I love Maine. Great, so here I am. Patriotic me.

**Sealy:** Ok I think I'm going to stop the tape right now and fast forward to the next side because I don't want this to stop in between a conversation.

**Martin:** Ok, good enough.

**Sealy:** Ok, since our break we've talked about your rank and you are a Master Sergeant. So being a master sergeant do you notice any differences on what your delegating not delegating things to other people, people below you, I don't know what you call them ? Have you ?

**Martin:** In my career it's airman.

**Sealy:** Airman?

**Martin:** Yes.

**Sealy:** So do you see a difference being somebody of higher rank and your having to give commands do you see any difference in the way men and women respond or how they perform their jobs or, what's the difference between men and women ?, or is there one?

**Martin:** Well as far as it goes for me when I delegate is there a difference no, there is nothing. I'm asking them first and then telling them second but never, never and for whatever reason they don't want

**[End Track 9, Begin Track 10]**

**Martin:** to listen to what I'm asking them and I prefer to use asking. I use a higher command to delegate. I always ask, I never tell. I don't think I should have to tell somebody to do something. If I've asked them to do it and they didn't do it then if they didn't do it with my request then I will have somebody else in a higher command tell them and the only reason I do that is because of my personality trait. Now I could say do it but I won't. I won't ever, ever I will not ever do that. I'll always go to a higher person and say "Please, tell them to do that because I've asked them to do it and they won't do it." And if they don't do it on my request then I don't, most people will go well now I'm telling you and they pull rank, well I don't pull rank. Rank to me is not necessarily a good thing to do but I will go to their supervisor and I'll say excuse me I've asked them to do this and they refuse to do it or they haven't done it not a refusal or haven't just ok they haven't done it either way, and then their supervisor will go down on them and tell them to do it. I don't use rank, I don't like to use rank. But that's just a personality thing and somebody else in a different scenario with the same rank will go look I told you to do this and you will do it, I don't do that. I think I'm the kinder gentler airmen.

**Sealy:** It sounds like you are but it seems like it must work obviously.

**Martin:** Well it works for me because if I've asked you and you haven't then I'm going to go one step higher. I'm going to go to your immediate supervisor and go "Look, this is what I've asked them, this is what they've not provided and this is what I want you to do. And it usually gets accomplished at that point.

**Sealy:** So to go back to the gender ?? When you're delegating or you're asking someone to do something do you notice any differences between men and women or how you're asking or who asking and if so how do they respond.

**Martin:** Ok now I'm different from most females.

**Sealy:** Ok how do you see it in the military and ? how you do it.

**Martin:** Ok. I see that a lot of males, individuals might have a problem with females giving them orders. And I'm going to limit it down to a 20%. That's how minimum it is. Now few that might seem high but if you look at a woman in the military who's going to ? your ass or non it's hard to take direction from a female who's in charge. Because the male a lot of males think not all and God bless not all think that the females are inferior. But there are a lot of males that think women can't be in command. So there are those few men that have a hard time with a female giving them directive. So if a female is coming down to you saying you will go do this, you will go do that, a lot of men have a problem with that. I'm very, very fortunate in my career and where I work that, yeah there are some men that have a

problem with me saying “yeah, you will go fly at this time, you will go do this and you will go do this.” But I don’t think with my career field it’s as difficult to ask for something. I’m not...

**[End Track 10, Begin Track 11]**

**Martin:** I’m not in combat on the ground I’m in combat in the air. So that makes a difference.

**Sealy:** How does that make a difference?

**Martin:** It makes a difference because we’re carrying guns in the air but I don’t have somebody behind a bush hiding I have somebody in the air hiding. It’s just a totally different scenario so if I were, I’m just saying that if I was going to go ok guys you need to go up there and you need to fly and you need to be off at this time and you need to be there at this time, as I said earlier they keep us pretty safe because of what we do. We re-fuel aircraft in air; we’re a mobile gas station. They’re not going to hurt us; they’re going to try to keep us safe whereas, I’m just giving you a perspective because I really don’t know what the ground personnel think. You know, I mean they may be down there going did you hear that in the bush, I mean I don’t know, I don’t know that part of life, I’m in the air. I’m going, there’s an unidentified aircraft ok now I’m scared but I don’t get that no kidding on the ground part, I don’t get that. But I have a different scare up there, I have other aircraft that can shoot us down. So it’s a totally different spectrum I guess is what I’m trying to



say. But yea, men don't have, men women. My co workers don't have a problem when I ask them to do something because they know I'd do it too

**Sealy:** You know like when you get a command though or ..

**Martin:** I don't really give commands.

**Sealy:** Ok well when you've asked them to do something or will you see other people of your same rank or higher give commands, or ask to do something. Do you feel that they sometimes pick and choose their commands or I feel like a man is going to better be fit, I mean if this persons ?, I mean do you feel that there still is that gender gap.

**Martin:** Oh God yes, there will always be?

**Sealy:** Do you see a huge difference or...

**Martin:** No, no that does happen that really does happen. I mean, I'm going to say this right now is whenever I go TV white in a war scenario the always send me with the same, I shouldn't say this, they seem to always send me with the same co-pilot of the same gender and that's just because I can look at this person and set it straight and go ok cut it out quit being this way where male might be brought up on charges for picking the same thing I do. But because I'm a female I get away with

saying it. So there's a lot of advantage to being a female in the military because the men won't press ? because they know there are certain things you can say and there are certain things you cannot. So they won't press the ? but being a female I press the ? constantly. Because nobody is going to bring me up on anything because I'm just being honest. So in a lot of ways not only is there a female there's also a male.

**Sealy:** I'm trying to help but I can't think of the word! Like a harassment thing?

**Martin:** No it's not a harassment it's more of a female/male thing. I mean there a lot of, a lot of the well we can't say that to the girls. Guys seem to take it better, actually they do. But a guy can't say it to a girl, but a girl can say it to a girl. And...

**Sealy:** Double standard?

**Martin:** There's a lot of it, there is a lot of it. So a lot of times they'll put me on a crew with another female because I'm one of the boys and I think, I'm one of the boys. Where if,

**[End Track 11, End CD 1]**

**[Begin CD 2, Begin Track 1]**

**Martin:** if they go she's being this way, I'll talk to her or they wouldn't because they wouldn't want to offend or have any charges or harassment charges brought

against them where if they go Cheryl she's being this way I'll go 'I'll talk to her.' Well what's she going to say to me, I'm a female talking to a female. So I got 'You're being this way' and it's not bad it's not good, if you were having a bad day I'd go you know what, you're having a terribly bad day but why do you have to take it out on everybody you know, just cut it out. So, but I have, I guess, I have that personality that there's a ?. So, next.

**Sealy:** So how about, ok, maybe we can look at more because you said there's a difference between the up in the air and being down on the ground how about, maybe we'll go back to your time when you were in logistics. Or not even that but like when you were even at the world ?. Is there a big difference between men and women the way you were treated the way the rules and regulations were, I mean ? we've learned so much these days.

**Martin:** Not a big difference. Basically I guess with the military since I've been in and I mean obviously it's been a long time 16, 17 years, 16 years, they try to make it gender free it's we're there, we do a job, we go on. That's not necessarily so because I mean, you've got different people with different personalities I mean you've got millions and millions of people in the military and they all have their own beliefs they all have whatever but for the most sake they've got the military heart, they try to make it gender free it's no kidding. If you're there you can do the job cross your heart. Let me see, as far as on the ground versus in the air my job in the air is so much different than somebody who has to deal with somebody on the

ground. I don't know what their pressures are and I wish I could tell you. When I joined I had none if a war went on I still did whatever I did at the desk and my life never changed; being in Aviation my life changes a lot when something...

**Sealy:** Now do you think your life didn't change when you were at a desk because you were a woman?

**Martin:** No, no, just because of my job.

**Sealy:** So you didn't see anything where the women were deployed because [ ] were the last ones to be deployed.

**Martin:** No, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope. You signed on the valid line as far as I was concerned as far as everybody was concerned you signed on that dotted line. The only people that had a problem with women in the military was congress. It wasn't the people who signed on the dotted line, in my eyes. There's some women who may disagree with me but in my belief I signed on that dotted line to be wherever they put me. My beliefs was that, I don't know if that's every woman's belief. But I do know in my belief when I joined up and what I signed up for, this is what I believe if they sent me somewhere that's where I'm to go, if they didn't send me somewhere that's where they need me most so no, no.

**Sealy:** So as a whole, as a whole you did not believe that men not necessarily didn't want women there just still thought of them as lower people regardless even in the military even as they do to this day?

**Martin:** My belief is this not men, my belief a percentage of men, a percentage

**Sealy:** Not overall.

**Martin:** No, there are a percentage of men and they still exist. My percentage, a percentage of men, believe there are a lot of men out there, to a civilian sector to include the military sector that believe there shouldn't be women in combat. There are a lot of men out there that believe a woman shouldn't be in aviation.

**[End Track 1, Begin Track 2]**

**Martin:** It's just a belief. It's a belief like people believe in religion. You know they think what they think is correct regardless of whether it's right or wrong, they just believe that. Does that exist in the military? Oh shit yeah it does, you know, because that's what they think, but that's not what all men think.

**Sealy:** Did you ever encounter or have you ever encountered several or a lot of situations like that?

**Martin:** Of course I did.

**Sealy:** How did you handle it? What happened?

**Martin:** That's your belief and that's nice, keep it to yourself.

**Sealy:** Any harassment issues?

**Martin:** Of course not, no. They never ever, no that would never be allowed. Ever. And if for one moment I raised that little flag that said you're out of here, they'd be out of here. They'd be out before me.

**Sealy:** As a master sergeant or as any...

**Martin:** As any female. If you don't think I belong here than you're the one who's wrong because I can do this job and I can prove that I can do this job and I can do it just as well as any man or woman. It's not a gender thing. If you start putting gender into it, I think you're wrong. It's can you do the job? I mean god forbid I'm a female, if I wanted to be a mechanic, I'd be the shittiest mechanic on earth. I could not be a mechanic and to claim I am, kick my butt out of there. But if I can do the job than why can't I?

**Sealy:** So than you feel all military jobs should be open to women as long as they can do it just as men can.

**Martin:** Yes, not just as men can. If they can do it, if they are capable of doing the job, it's not a man thing. It's not a gender thing. If you can do the job, it's not a gender thing, do it. I have some men that can't do what I do.

**Sealy:** That's what I meant to say.

**Martin:** I'm just saying, if you can do the job, do it. It shouldn't be a gender thing. And for one moment, if my sex or gender falls into it where it causes a problem I'll be the first to back out but I'm not going to back out.

**Sealy:** So have you seen that case where it was the actually gender that caused the problem at the job, like they couldn't do, you know because she was a woman she could not lift that...

**Martin:** No. I've had a lot of women who have gotten into a job, I've seen a lot of females who have gotten into a job that it wasn't their career to get into and I can be the first one to say, gone. They may have wanted to do that but they're not good at it. Bow out gracefully.

You know, if you decided tomorrow I want to be a mechanic and you suck, bow out if you're not good. Bow out. Say ok, this isn't for me, I want to do something else. Admit you're not good at it and bow out. It's not a gender thing. It's a, you're just not good at it.

**Sealy:** We've read a lot in our books and studies that it was also a big deal as far as promotions, that promotions were regardless of what you do, the men always got them first.

**Martin:** Well you know what I guess I sincerely and it does happen. It does happen. In the grace of god, I have not had that happen to me. I've been very, very honest and sincere with you. If I thought for one moment I was being pooped on because of my gender I'd be the first one and you'd know it to tell you, no, I'm sorry. I'm saying that a lot of times and I've seen it, a lot of times people use their gender for excuses for not being promoted.

**Sealy:** As a crutch.

**Martin:** As a crutch. Then on the other hand, it's very possible that they aren't being promoted. It's case by case.

**Sealy:** In your case.

**Martin:** In my case yes, I've gotten exactly what I've gotten because I got myself there. Gender or not, I've proven, it was difficult, but I've proven that as a female damn it, I'm a damn good boom operator. I might not be...

**[End Track 2, Begin Track 3]**

**Martin:** smooth all the time but I'm good at what I do. I don't think that any of the boys that I fly with would argue that. I think they'd honestly go "Yeah, Cheryl's pretty good." Throw another one at me.

**Sealy:** Do you feel the experience that you've had so far in the military and the job you have right now has helped you in life and is going to help you in another life since you still are in the military.

**Martin:** Yes, and I'll retire in four years. Did I say that? Did it help me, yes it did. It helped me a lot. The military has always been good to me and I wouldn't be here if it hadn't been. As I said I got out earlier and joined the [civilian] sector and I came back to it.

The military is a family, most people don't realize that but the military is a family. My life depends a lot on the person that's behind me or in front of me or around me, my life depends a lot. When you go to work, is your life dependent on the person in the desk next to you? My life's dependent on the people that's around me. You don't have to like who's around you. If you have a little bit of respect for them because they're there for you. It's a different atmosphere. It's just so different. I just can't explain it to you that a gender thing, whatever thing is out the door when it's a life dependency. And any of the boys that I work with would know, if they ever, ever didn't back me up I'd be on their doorstep but I'm a dominant woman anyway.



But there are some women that wouldn't be like you know I am but I'm very, if I'm going to be there for you, you will be there for me.

**Sealy:** Do you feel like these women that are not so dominant are they still getting the same backup?

**Martin:** Maybe not. Maybe not, you have to have a very strong, strong, you have to be able to say look if I'm going to do this for you, you will do it for me. There are a lot of men out there that you don't have to say that too but there are a lot you do and maybe not.

**Sealy:** So then if you could do this all over again, you had the experience to do it all over again, the chance excuse me, would you? If you start from scratch and your mother said to you, you have one year to either go to college or you go to the military. So lets see, twelve years ago you might have graduated from college and married or done whatever, had the picket fence.

**Martin:** I have the picket fence. I got that.

**Sealy:** Would you have done it all over again?

**Martin:** Yeah, I would. I would because I can guarantee you right now, I can look at you and say to you along with my fellow college friends that went bye bye to college and I went to the military that laughed at me I have been to more places than they will ever think of going. I've been everywhere in the world. The only place I have not been in the whole world is Australia.

**Sealy:** Now do you want to go there?

**Martin:** Oh yes, and I will go. So that's it, everywhere and it's been paid for. I had to work but I mean and they paid for it. They paid for my college and they paid

for everything and all I had to do was be disciplined and I mean you've spent the evening with me here dear

**[End Track 3, Begin Track 4]**

**Martin:** and I that [ ] that I'm not like put on my hat. I mean I'm a normal person, I just happened to be in the military.

**Sealy:** Well actually you know what this reminded me I think I asked you this but I don't know if you actually answered it but the leisure time because you say I got all these chances to go travel all over but when you were traveling did you get time to actually get off and ...

**Martin:** Sometimes.

**Sealy:** look around, vacation kind of, you know have a good time.

**Martin:** Sometimes, sometimes. Depending, depending on what the mission is and I can't talk about that but depending what we're doing, when we're there. It all depends but yes, we always somehow make it a point to visit the local community, shop a little bit, send home some gifts; sometimes we don't have much time for that but a lot of times, yes we do. We do, we make time for it.

**Sealy:** What do you feel your best and worst experiences in the military overall? Can you think of them?

**Martin:** My best experience is I have met more people that would come to my aid at this very moment than you could imagine, if I needed it. The worst is I'm no kidding in the air having to call a break away separation because they're that close to hitting us. [That's the worst, so many instances] all over the world, all over.

**Sealy:** Do you still keep in touch with them?

**Martin:** All of them

**Sealy:** Do you?

**Martin:** Oh yes, on the internet we talk. I have a lot of people call me up just it's amazing. It's amazing the friends you make, friends that become family.

**Sealy:** So if you had a daughter, this is almost the last question but would you encourage her now to go into the military?

**Martin:** Yes.

**Sealy:** Right but they're going to have to start at the bottom.

**Martin:** No, no, no, I started at the bottom because I was enlisted; enlisted versus officer is different.

**Sealy:** You can go in to the military as an officer?

**Martin:** Yes maim you can.

**Sealy:** How do you do that?

**Martin:** You finish your education and you join and you chose your career field.

**Sealy:** What's the difference? Now what's your reasoning for only as an officer and not...

**Martin:** Because you get paid a hell of a lot more and do a lot less. The enlisted do all the work and honestly, it's as you get into it I mean I'm not being derogatory in any way but yes of course; get in there sweet pea, you go in as an officer, serve a little bit of time, make a few hundred bucks a month just to show up for a day. You do it sweet pea and then you get your, at least you have your life insurance covered, everything is covered.

**Sealy:** So all the wonderful experiences that you have been through good and bad you'd rather if you had a daughter her go to college first as opposed to going through all that you've been through?

**Martin:** Yes. I would say babe, honey, sweet pea, the light of my life, college first. Then go into the guard, that's what I would say. Try the guard out, if you like it go in that but don't do it until, get your college education then join then it's just a part time job. You get that retirement build up. You get your benefits. You get all this. You get to travel still. I mean do that. If I had a daughter, I would go, get your college education, [take time off] then join and then you go into a career field you like and then you do this one weekend a month, two weeks out of the year.

**[End Track 4, Begin Track 5]**

**Martin:** And then you get paid for that and if they go somewhere and you want to travel because a unit moves, we move, then go with the unit, go with them and travel the world for free and get paid to do it and get your experience level up there. I mean I would, I would totally support my child in the guard as an officer. I'm enlisted. I'm not an officer which means I joined without a college education. Now can I go for an officer because now I have a college education no because [ ]. When I got my college degree, if you don't go before you're 36 and I haven't and I'm not going to because I'm in aviation and there's no way I will be a pilot and I'm in a prime career field so I'm ok but basically I could not go right now because I'm too old.

**Sealy:** So now why would you, is it that, if your child, if your daughter did not go to college why would you persuade her to go to college before she was enlisted.

**Martin:** Officers get paid stupid money. They get paid very good money to do the same thing and do nothing because they delegate. They tell me the master sergeant which of course I'm different I go, yeah, but you know I mean, here's an enlisted ok, let me give you the rank. Let me give you a little [ ]. Why don't I give you, here's low ok. Ok, mid rank would be staff, here is staff sergeant, here's master sergeant, here's the chief. I'm right there, ok.

**Sealy:** So it goes chief, master sergeant, staff sergeant.

**Martin:** It goes staff sergeant, [text] sergeant, master sergeant seeing a master sergeant to a [ ] and this is as high as you can go. So I'm two away from that. Ok, so here you go like lieutenant, first lieutenant and then you go captain, then you go major, lieutenant colonel. Then you go general, general, general, so on forever ok so this is what I am. But like right here if you take a lieutenant and you look at the scale of things, I outrank that lieutenant

**Sealy:** You're pretty close.

**Martin:** Yes. No, no, no, this is my scale. See my scale on the enlisted force is right up here. So what this person says in comparison to what this person says, you get the feel.

**Sealy:** Well I still believe that what you've been through is amazing, wonderful and actually I'm done with questions so I actually wanted to ask you if you had anything else to add that I have forgot to mention that you want to add to your interview?

**Martin:** No, I think I've had enough. God I hope this comes out ok.

**Sealy:** It will. Well thank you very much. I'm going to end the tape now unless you have something else to add.

**Martin:** No.

**[End Track 5, End Interview]**