

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

MF144 Women in the Military

NAFOH Oral History Recordings

November 2023

Angel Maria Tyler, interviewed by Tiffany Jones, Part 1

Angel Maria Tyler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mf144>



Part of the [Military History Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), [United States History Commons](#), and the [Women's History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tyler, Angel Maria, "Angel Maria Tyler, interviewed by Tiffany Jones, Part 1" (2023). *MF144 Women in the Military*. 15.

<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mf144/15>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in MF144 Women in the Military by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

1

Interviewee: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Transcriber: Tiffany Jones
05 November 2001
[Begin Tape 1, Side A.]

Tiffany Jones: Okay, this is Tiffany Jones and I'm interviewing Angel Tyler. It's November 5, 2001. We're in Bangor, Maine, at her home and this interview is going to be about her military experience. So, we'll start with basic stuff, your name, and when you were born and where you were born.

Angel Tyler: Okay. My name is Angel Maria Tyler. I was born in San Diego, California on March 26, 1969.

TJ: So what are you parent's names?

AT: My mother's name is Charlotte Tyler and my father is Douglass Tyler.

TJ: And what did they do?

AT: My mother is an office manager/computer programmer for an electrical company. And my father is now retired. He did maintenance [dog drops toy loudly on the floor] on the streets of El Cajon.

TJ: So where did you spend your childhood for the most part, in San Diego?

AT: Yes.

TJ: Any general childhood information on what that was like?

AT: Oh, let's see...[dog drops toy] General...

TJ: Any moves, or where school was?

[17] **AT:** We did make a lot of moves. We were in a lower scale of economics, which was fine. Both my parents worked from the very beginning. My dad was out of work for

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

2

a little while; we were on welfare for a little while. I shouldn't say this, but I'll say it anyway. I was actually born in a nudist colony. It was the very first place we lived was a nudist colony. I was there for 2 years. Went back again when I was 5. It was really uncomfortable because didn't really see those types of things at that point. I was 2 can't really remember much. It was a good Christian home. We went to church all the time. I ended up in high school...I went to 2 different high schools. My first high school was in a rough neighborhood. We lived in a very rough neighborhood, and I learned very quickly that I had to carry all my books to and from school because my locker was usually right in front of a fight. Whether it was a knife fight or something like that; so I didn't have much of an opportunity to get my books. Even though all of that I remained drug free. I'm not really sure how but I did remain drug free. I played soccer though out high school. Didn't like the coach from the first school, so I transferred schools without moving. I must admit we did it a little illegally, your not supposed to do that. But I was staying with some friends who were also on the soccer team of the other school. And we ended up getting caught. I got suspended for three days. Never did anything wrong, and all of a sudden at this point I was suspended because I was going to the wrong school. My parents sold their house all within a week. They sold their house and moved out there to El Cajon so that I continue to go to that school and keep playing for that particular team. The other coach that I did not like would cuss at me on the field. And I was one of the stronger players. And I didn't like being cussed at, not at all. As a matter of fact I picking up the ball one-time right smack in the middle of the field and told her [48] that she needed to stop cussing at me or I was walking off the field and taking half

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

3

the team with me. All the sidelines are clapping and cheering, and that sort of thing. I think that's about it...Worked though high school.

TJ: So how much education did you have before you joined the service?

AT: High school diploma. That was it.

TJ: Did you join right after you graduated?

AT: Yes, I actually started up [Talks to dog] I signed up before my senior year and was...I can't remember what they called it...it wasn't really an active status but...I ended up going to meetings once a month, and through the recruiter they taught us to march and all that stuff for a year before going in. I did that for 13 months and went into the military 3 months after I graduated.

TJ: What branch of the military did you join?

AT: The Air Force.

TJ: And what year was it?

AT: In 1987

TJ: 1987 being your junior year when you signed up?

AT: No, my senior year after I graduated. It was the year I graduated.

TJ: Going right into basic training was 1987?

AT: Right.

TJ: Do you remember what month by any chance?

AT: August. August 19th.

TJ: So what was your reason or motivations for joining the Air Force?

AT: Actually, I joined the military [dog drops toy] because my hero, who was my grandfather, had been in the military for 20 years. He actually is...his influence has

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

4

dictated a lot of the things that I do in my life, even up till now. He served his country.

After he served his country, he served his community, and through out all of that he served his family as well. That's why I work really hard at following in his footsteps.

TJ: What branch of the service did he serve in?

AT: He originally started in the Navy, and was there for 4 years. Got out, and decided that he didn't really like being out of the military, but didn't want to go back into the Navy either, so he went back into the Air Force then. Then retired from the Air Force.

TJ: How did your family and or friends respond when they found out you planned on joining the military? Or joined the military?

AT: My father was eagerly pushing me to do that. I'm not really sure if the fact that he wanted me out of the house, or he just wanted me to have some sort of path in life that was going to be a good one. I'm not really sure, but my mother was very supportive, but at the same time she was also very worried. Her only daughter, her oldest was leaving the nest. Taking on my own life, so she was a little worried about that. My friends all thought that I was nuts. They thought that I would never make it. But at the same time they were still supportive.

TJ: Did you...let's start with this one...When and where did you do your basic training?

AT: Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

TJ: And that was for three months?

AT: Yes, I think that's what it was. I can't exactly remember.

[95] TJ: Any memorable experiences, or could you describe what the basic training was like for you then?

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

5

AT: Yes, the very first night was very scary. I was thinking that I made a big, big mistake. But I also remembered that my recruiter kept telling me that it was all a game. That if you can play the game, then you'll make it though. Remember it's not personal. Because they yell, and they scream, and they're not supposed to cuss at you, but they did. The only thing they were really good about was not spitting on you. Even though when they were yelling at you right close to your face, two inches away from your nose, screaming as loud as they possibly could at you. And every once and a while they would spit. And it was so funny because all of a sudden it was "Oh gosh, I'm sorry." You know? [Laughing] They would stop dead in their tracks and go "Oh gosh, I'm really sorry". And at that point the first time I actually experienced that; I knew that this was a game. I got into more trouble from laughing or smirking trying not to laugh than I did with anything else. But it was definitely an experience. They...as time actually went on you ended up developing more and more respect with the TI's.

TJ: What does TI's stand for?

AT: Technical Instructor.... Training instructor...that's what I think it is. It's been a long time. [Laughs]

TJ: Did you hold any ranks while you were enlisted? And if so, do you remember what years you got them?

AT: I couldn't tell you what years I actually got them. I ended up leaving the military as an E-4. When I left the military, I was considered a Senior Airman. But on all my paperwork they called me a Sergeant, and I'd never been called a Sergeant. It really kind [119] of floored me when I ended up seeing the paperwork. But they said that "Now as an E-4 you are a Sergeant".

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

6

TJ: Do you think that was a technicality, or was there a reason for you not being called a sergeant?

AT: Yes, when you're in the army ranked as an E-4 [talks to dog]. When you earn the rank of E-4, half way through that you end up getting your star. Stripes are the same, it's just whether there's actually a star on the stripes itself. I think it's pretty much halfway through...After about a year and a half I think. Don't quote me on that, it's been a long time since I've done that. And I ended up getting out just before I was supposed to get that star. But the ranking still stays the same it's just the actual title that changes.

TJ: That's good. When you enlisted, did you enlist for a certain period of time and then stay afterward, or was 1987 to 1992 what you signed up to do?

AT: No, actually I originally tried to sign up for six years and I was talked out of it. When I went down to the MEPS station, which is the place where they give you the physical before you actually go in, and you actually sign the actual paperwork to say, "Yes, I am going into the military. Yes, I agree to do all of these things". I went in with the intention of signing up for six years. That's what I wanted. And there was a guy that was there, I couldn't tell you what his rank was, but he said that "You're not going to want to stay in for six years. Why don't you just try four and if you really like it then you can go ahead" And I'm like why? Why should I do this? "Because most girls don't really want to be in for more than four years. And you'll figure that out. And you're going to really wish that you didn't do that". I was very angry, I was really angry. But I was 18. I was young. Didn't really know how to be truly assertive, so I agreed and signed up for 4 [149] years and ended up serving 5 and half. When I was stationed in North Dakota and ended up getting my orders to go to Germany. Germany orders were for 3 years. And that

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

7

would have put me past that 4 year mark so I had to sign up for an additional 11 months I think is what it was, at that point. I guess it was an additional year and a half that I actually ended up signing up for so that way I could fulfill that 3-year requirement of actually going to that duty assignment.

TJ: So where else were you stationed? And if you can remember the years.

AT: I went to Minot, North Dakota. Minot AFB. And I was there in November of 1987, and stayed there until June of 1989. And then from there I went to Germany. Left Germany in 1992.

TJ: So you were stationed overseas during the Gulf War?

AT: [Nods head] Yes. I was stationed at the Command and Control of Europe, and so we actually ended up going down to the OSC, which is the Operation Support Center. It's the command center for all of Europe. We did a lot of things right from there. Watched the entire war from 4 stories under basically.

TJ: After your basic training did you have any specialty training?

AT: I did go to Biloxi, Mississippi for 4 weeks. Where I ended up receiving my Administrative Specialist training. It was more just teaching you about ranks, and one week of typing if you didn't know how to type. You could actually take a test at the very beginning of the week and move forward in the class if you actually did learn how to type before. So I was only there 4 weeks out of 5. At the end of each week you tested out of that particular week that you ended up learning everything. And then you could move on [189] to the next one. So if you didn't get everything they taught you that week you could stay for an additional week to continue, to go through that class again basically.

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

8

TJ: So if you didn't [pass the test the first time], how many chances would they give you to pass? Was it just that extra week and then you were out?

AT: I'm not really sure to tell you the truth. I didn't have to do that, [laughs] so I don't know how anyone else handled it.

TJ: So what job or jobs did you actually do while you were in the Air Force?

AT: Well, my first duty station up in Minot, North Dakota I worked for...I'm not going to remember the exact title of it...it was basically a cop squadron. But I worked for Group. Which is, there are different levels of organizations of it. With in the Air Force, and they have Group, [which] had I think 3 entities that were actually underneath that. But there all in different cop squadrons per say, out of all of those...security groups...but I actually worked for Group. And I worked at what was called Pass Registration. So I issued out passes to get on base, or ID cards, or military dependent ID cards. We also registered vehicles on base. There were requirements behind all that. There were also badges to get onto the flight line. You had to have certain security level to go into certain security areas of the flight line, or even just have a need to actually get on the flight line. So we also issued those badges as well.

TJ: Did you training adequately prepare you for your job?

AT: Not at all. Not at all. The training itself went over basic regulations and how the regulations actually functioned and how they worked. How to set up files. Everything is regulated, so one person can't have a certain way of actually setting up their files and then another person have a completely different way. Everything is standardized [225] though out the entire military. And if you don't do that the right way, you can get written up for it. So it kind of showed you those types of basics, [snaps fingers at dog]

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

9

but they didn't go into much detail over it. Once you actually got out of Tech school, and you were actually at your actually duty station, you had to take a series of independent type studies and then take tests in order to...I'm really not sure what you want to call it...a certification or something like that...but you had a certain time frame to get through all of these tests in order to continue on in your career. Because they could boot you out of the military if you could not pass that. [Snaps fingers at dog]

TJ: So do you think that the training you received didn't prepare you or give you enough detail was on purpose so you could become adjusted for your particular job, or was it just a lack of oversight on their part?

AT: No, I think it had a lot to do with fact that each job that you end up taking on is going to be very different, you know? And to get a basic idea of each one, but the job that I did up in Minot, North Dakota was very different from the one I did in Germany. And so I had to learn any entirely new way of doing things. [Talks to dog] So I'm sure the training they gave you was just a basic overview so that way you have a basic knowledge for each duty station that you go to, even though it's still going to be different in each location.

TJ: So there's on the job training kind of idea?

AT: Yes.

TJ: What was a typical day like for you in North Dakota and then what was a typical day like while you were in Germany?

[264] **AT:** In North Dakota, a typical day would be going to work in the dark...I say going to work in the dark because in North Dakota whenever you went to work it was usually nighttime. Especially in the wintertime. That's really what I remember a lot was

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

10

the winter. Because I came from San Diego immediately up to freezing cold. I left 85-degree weather and got there and it was 35 below. [Laughs] So I would go to work in the dark. I worked in a building that had no windows, none whatsoever. Then I went home in the dark. And if I was brave enough to actually go outside during lunch, then I could do that, but we had a place right upstairs to actually go and eat, so I usually didn't do that because it was really *cold*. And I wasn't prepared. I didn't have the clothing for cold weather, not at all. I had bought a jacket before I left, but I didn't realize I was going to need a jacket that was going to be that intense. I never lived in anything that was that cold so I didn't realize what was going on. While I was there at work I would be typing up ID cards, and talking to people that would actually come in. There were some people that treated me with respect because I was a person, and then there were some people that didn't. They had the rank and they were going to use it. And they had power. I do remember one guy ended up yelling at me. I was the only one in office, my boss had to leave for a little while. Here I had 2 stripes on my arm, and there wasn't much I could do about this sort of thing. He wanted to register his vehicle and the only thing he actually had was a set of keys. He had just purchased this vehicle and I needed proof of ownership, I needed insurance, driver's license, ID card. He gave me his driver's license and ID card but that was it. He tosses me the keys, "There are the keys. I own it". "I'm sorry but I can't do that. These are the things that I need". "I am a Colonel in the United States Air Force do you honestly think I would lie to you!?". "Sir I'm sorry, but I'm not [305] going to be losing my job because you did not have the proper information." He stormed out of there. I thought he was going to break the glass when he ended up leaving. He said he wanted to talk to my boss. "I'm sorry my boss isn't here at the

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

11

moment. I'll make sure to get him a message and let him handle this." There was lots of other people that were actually in the office they all said, " You did a great job". The entire time I was shaking, I was so scared. This man's yelling at me...at one point I thought he was going to come over the counter at me he was so angry. He called five times that day. And spoke to five different people to get what were the requirements for him to register his vehicle on base. He got the same answer out of every single one. I ended up complaining to my boss, he went ahead and relayed the complaint to his boss, who ended up calling me down to his office. And I ended up telling him what had happened. They were all not pleased. But apparently in that particular incident got all the way up to the Group [dog whines] Commander who took it upon himself to call that particular Colonel. That Colonel came back in the next day to register his vehicle with all of the information that I had requested and gave me an apology. And was also very humble about that apology too, which I was kind of impressed. But the Group Commander also liked me too, so I think that had a little bit to do with it. It was the first time I was truly scared of someone that was actually there. As for Germany, basically the day that I actually spent there in Germany, was writing out [talks to dog] orders. The area that I worked in also wrote regulations as well, so I was basically a glorified secretary. So I would help them type up the orders, or type up the regulations. So anything that they had to do, if they were sending information to a different command post or a different base, or something like that, the bases would have questions, and send questions in. And [351] then we'd have to reply to them. So I ended up typing all that stuff up. Everything was written out by hand and I had to type it all up. Plus I maintained all the files,

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

12

answered all incoming calls, that type of stuff. I was a glorified secretary is what it boils down to.

TJ: What time did your shift start? You said in the dark, was it early in the morning?

AT: Yes, I think it actually started at 7 and I worked until 4...4:30, something like that.

In Germany though, it was like 8-5.

TJ: Nice hours.

AT: Yes...yes.

TJ: So they were only 8 hours shifts then? Nothing longer?

AT: It depends. It could be longer depending on what would actually happen. If we were having like exercises, or something like that. Exercises was really odd. I was not a cop, but I worked for a cop squadron, a cop organization. They did send me to like this 3-day training class on how to be a cop, I guess. [Laughs] I'm not really sure what that was all about. They taught me how to handcuff somebody, the things you supposed to say...those are the things that I really remember. I remember it was for 3 days and I was bored through out the entire thing and I'm like 'I don't want to do this, not at all'.

Regardless of what career field you were in, we still had to fire a weapon. I ended up getting Marksman on both 9mm and also the M-16. But I didn't have a holster for a 9mm so they wouldn't let me carry one. They wouldn't issue one to me either. Even though they wanted to, but they didn't have one to issue...I'm not really sure about all that stuff. But we had one exercise that we were on for 12-hour shifts. One exercise that I had to carry and M-16 stand out in the middle of... this road. I didn't know how to talk [397] on a radio. They didn't teach me those types of things, you know. But everybody laughed at almost everything that I said, made jokes about it days later. Going "You

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

13

know, I heard you on the radio the other day. That was pretty funny". They told me that they needed, I need to be in a certain location because there was a bomb in this one place. I didn't know the directions of, you know, you need to move like 100 yards south, or something like that was what they ended up telling me. So I thought I was going south and I wasn't. And I ended up sitting right on top of the bomb. And I ended up getting a radio call telling me to turn around, and there's this cop all the way down at the other end going like this [waves arms overhead] waving at me, hands over his head. He goes "you need to be down here!". I'm like "okay". [Laughs] All right. Everyone got a big chuckle out of that one there as well.

TJ: Okay the tape is about to be done, but we have a little time just yet. What is a Marksman?

AT: There's different levels when you fire a weapon, and Marksman means you actually end up hitting all the targets, or if you actually missed, it's only like one or two that you end up missing. So let's say if you fire off 40 rounds you hit 38 or 39. I didn't turn in the paperwork for my Marksman, so it's not documented anywhere.

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

TJ: That's too bad.

AT: Yes, it is, unfortunately. And I wasn't allowed to get the ribbons for that either because you wore ribbons for Marksman. I did not know that. Just because it wasn't documented anywhere.

TJ: So you're an excellent shot, huh?

[434] AT: I was back then. [Laugh] Don't know about now.

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

14

TJ: So how did being a woman shape your military experience? Did you see the Air Force would treat women any different than the men?

AT: I don't think it's really the Air Force per say, I think individuals within the Air Force did that. I know the Air Force treated women differently because you couldn't actually go in a certain career field. Any combat positions women couldn't be in. But at the same time there would be certain individuals that didn't think women should be there, and they didn't even have to come right out and tell you that, because that would be discrimination and then they'd get in trouble for that. But there was a lot of innuendos along those lines. With certain people you just knew that you were only there to be looked at. There was a couple people that I ended up running into that were like that. You were just there to look pleasing for the other men, and you know, it wasn't something that I really appreciated but...

TJ: Did women in the Air Force, in particular, have any rules or regulations that were different from the men?

AT: Yes. The one that really strikes my mind right now is for physical fitness. You had to be... women had an extra amount of time to actually do a run, or they didn't have to do quite as many sit ups, or stuff like that. So the fitness requirement was much less than it was for a man. That's something that comes out immediately. I'm sure they have some others, but I didn't actually run across any.

TJ: No curfew times or anything?

AT: No, nope. Once you were actually in what we call "the real Air Force"... while your in basic training, that's not the real Air Force, military tech school that's not the real [463] Air Force. Once you actually end up getting to your duty station and stuff like that,

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

15

you are responsible for yourself. So if you stayed up all night long partying, as long as you were at work the next day sober, they didn't care what you did. You know? Well, no, I can't say that, because if you ended up getting in trouble while you were partying, yes, they'd care about what you did. But you can stay up all night long if you really wanted to, as long as you did your work the next day. That really wasn't a big deal. They didn't want anybody staying in your rooms if they weren't assigned to that room. That didn't always happen, mind you, but that's what they wanted.

TJ: That applied to the men too?

AT: Yes, yes. You just weren't allowed to have anybody else in your room. You could have them visit, but you couldn't have them sleep over or anything like that.

TJ: Did you ever feel that you were treated unfairly while in the Air Force?

AT: [Pauses to think]

TJ: Or maybe more specifically, treated unfairly because you were a woman?

AT: No, I don't think so. I was very lucky that I had some really good bosses. I did have two bosses that I didn't particularly like. I didn't think that they were fair. And unless you actually did certain things for them they probably wouldn't give you the time of day. You know what I mean? Well, I should say...one imparticular crew; he was having an affair with someone else who was underneath him. And so he gave preferential treatment to her. She ended up getting away with a lot of things. And every one knew what was going on. He was drunk most of the time too. They would go out and actually have two hour liquid lunches and...just thoroughly amazed me, thoroughly amazed me that they were actually able to do all that type of stuff, both of them would do it. But I don't think

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

16

[494] that anything like that was specifically on me just because of who I was or the fact that I am a woman and not a man. I was lucky in that aspect.

TJ: Were there any other women that had the same position you did? And if so, did they have the same type of civilian background?

AT: No. Everyone that I actually ended up running into that was in my kind of career field, they all had very different backgrounds. There were some that lived in very, very rough neighborhoods and got out, narrowly escaping the law in order to actually move on with their lives I guess. I had a roommate, who was adopted, or not...she wasn't adopted, but she lived in foster care since she was 10; after she ended up putting her father away for molesting her. There was just a really wide variety of different people from all walks of life. For me, that's most enjoyable, because you get to meet people from all over the country. And now I know I have friends all over the world because they're either still in the military, or they've gone back home, or something like that.

TJ: Were any of the women married?

AT: Yes, there were some that were married, some that were single, some who were dating married; they were married or dating someone who was. Same thing that happens on the outside happens on the inside. Quite a variety of different people.

TJ: How many women would you say did you come in contact with in your Group? Or were there many that were cops in your station in North Dakota?

AT: Up in North Dakota, the dorm that I lived in, that's the only reference point that I actually have, we lived in a dorm that held 265 people. There were 7 women in that entire dorm. Two people out of that dorm were Administrative specialists. I was the only female Administrative specialist. So all the rest were cops. But every ratio from

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

17

[525] female to male was dramatic. Any woman that actually wanted to date anyone; they had their pick of who they actually wanted to date. Some of them weren't quite as scrupulous as others. But the ratio was quite dramatic.

TJ: Would you say that the men would more actively pursue the women or would the women go after who they wanted to date more?

AT: I think the men were actively in pursuit of any one else. All anyone had to do at the point was to sit back and breathe. [Laughs]

TJ: If you could, could you describe, in general terms, the relationships between men and women in your unit? Was there any tension at work? In general did you work well together?

AT: I think it would go from individual to individual. Most of the time, yes, we all worked very well together. I don't think that there was much of a tension just because there was women working beside men. But this was also an office experience, so...I think the only tension I really had was two supervisors that I didn't really get along with and did really have a whole lot of respect for. I respected the rank, but I didn't respect the person.

TJ: So again, in general, how were the relationships between the women? Were they very close because there was only 7 of you in that dorm?

AT: For some of them, yes. There wasn't a whole lot of camaraderie between the women, saying, you know, "because we're a small knit group we're going to stick together" or all of that. There was a couple of outsiders that didn't want to have anything to do with the rest of us....I don't want to generalize too much, because I didn't see it all that much. I see it more now that I'm outside of the military than I ever did when I was in. Maybe it

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

18

[569] was just the fact that I wasn't looking for it either. I had more male friends than I did female friends. I trusted more of the men than I trusted the women. But the women that I did become very good friends with, we became lifelong friends; whether we stay in contact or not. I think for women it takes a lot longer to actually make some sort of a connection, but when you do, it's a more long lasting kind of connection...than I guess you would with a man. My own personal opinion, I don't know. [Laughs]

TJ: Do you think that the promotional polices were fair for women in the Air Force?

AT: Yes, because they were standardized. It really didn't matter one way or another. You were promoted based on your time and rank up until E-4, and then E-5 on up you had to test for it. So you did have...every year it was required that an evaluation had to be done. The evaluation had something to do with it; whatever you actually got on that would actually add points to when you actually tested. Your time and rank in the service added points to it. And they would only promote so many people that had so many points on up. So you would accrue points based on the things that you've done. If you ended up getting different types of medals, or if you had different ribbons, or awards, or something like that, that would add to it. But it was pretty standardized across the board, so I don't see how it may be different one way or another between men and women.

TJ: Did you have any problems, not you personally, but in your work environment, with either pregnancy or homosexuality issues? For both North Dakota and Germany.

AT: North Dakota, I didn't see any of that. Germany, however, I did. I ended up having one roommate who was...when I first got there; a lot of people already told me she was a lesbian. "Just to let you know" and that type of thing. She didn't like me very well right off the bat. I had to really truly warm up to her. But once she figured out that I just

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

19

[609] wasn't this little 'miss goodie two shoes', then she actually started liking me. And after that we became pretty good friends. It ended up coming out later, which she even revealed to me just before she ended up getting out of the military, that she and this other woman had been dating off and on. But that was really the only time I'd actually heard anything about that.

TJ: Was the other woman in the military also?

AT: Yes, she was.

TJ: Wow. How about the discipline and morale of the women that you worked with?

AT: Discipline as given to the women, or the discipline amongst the women?

TJ: Both.

AT: Okay.

TJ: Probably more amongst.

AT: I really didn't see much of the discipline, unless it was my own discipline. Which every single time I thought was completely fair; if I was slacking or being an idiot and forgot something. You know what I mean? And I ended getting more...my bosses earned more respect from me for doing that, for actually disciplining me for something that I did wrong, then actually just letting it go just because they liked me. I think discipline amongst the women...I think it varied; again it was from person to person. I saw women working harder to actually earn respect. Especially the police officers. I think the cops actually had to work harder to actually earn their respect. In my career field per say, just because the fact it's been coined more of a 'female position', being a secretary, or working in the office, or something like that...not something that I've always agreed with but...watching the women that were cops: they had to fight for it. And then there

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

20

[640] would be some women that would kind of taint other men. If they were afraid of the dark, or something like that. I heard stories about how one woman got afraid of the dark and dropped her gun and just took off running. And so the women that ended up coming in after her, they had to really prove themselves, that they're going to do something; they're not just going to run. And dropped their weapon, which is not something I would have done either. I mean if I was really afraid of something that would be the first thing I'd take with me. I saw a lot of dedication from the women that were actually in. They wanted to be in there for a reason. Sometimes I saw more dedication from the women than I actually did from men.

TJ: Do you think that all military jobs should be open to women?

AT: Yes, I do. I just had an argument with my mother about this last night. I do agree completely that women are built very differently than men. Women are not quite as strong as men. But the military that we have today is not ground hand-to-hand combat. There's just not a lot of that. You have to have more brain power than you do brawn. Not that I want to see our military become flabby and overweight by any stretch of the imagination, but I do think that women can do jobs that men can do. They're sometimes not going to be able to lift something that's very heavy. Than that woman should probably not be in that position. But there's also a lot of men out there who wouldn't be able to lift the exact same thing. So why put them into that position, and call him a pansy, when there's probably a woman out there that could be in that position because she's strong enough. I don't think that, just like the military is not for all people, certain positions are not going to be for all people either. Sometimes I think that they should be scrutinized a little bit more as to who they actually put into certain positions. I think at the

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

21

[687] moment they just go by testing. And that testing does not include a physical test to go along with it.

TJ: I know you've kind of covered this, but in general, the officers that you had; were they good or bad, fair or unfair, fairly strict, did they know their jobs, were they good leaders?

AT: I was very lucky that I actually had several very good leaders. That actually inspired me to do more. With decent officer lives. I had more problems with the enlisted than I actually did with the officers. But the officers that I did work under, not only treated me with respect, but gave me a lot of confidence. Not only in them but also within myself.

TJ: What problems did you have with enlisted?

AT: There were a couple of supervisors that I had that were enlisted. That I just really didn't feel like they were doing their job. They didn't take it seriously. They were more interested in either going out drinking at lunch time, or talking down to people, stepping on people on their way up the ladder. Working out. I had one supervisor that was more interested in working out and posing for some contest, or something like that. He was only allowed to eat certain things two weeks before this contest. So he'd focus most of the day was on his food, or what his workout routine was going to be, or I don't know, something stupid like that. And then when I was getting all the work done, he complained to our boss that everything should be going through him. Since he was my supervisor, then he should be the one doling out all the work. But then he wouldn't be there to do the work. And they needed to have it done and I was the one that was there. So they'd give it to me, I'd get it done, and then it would go out. And then he'd get all upset because he didn't have his hands on it. He didn't want to work. And I didn't respect that.

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

22

[730] TJ: Can't say I blame you.

AT: Yes. And of course he wasn't my supervisor for very long. He never even touched my evaluation. That was a good thing.

TJ: You might have to think about this one. What was the funniest moment you remember from being in the Air Force?

AT: No, I don't even have to think for that one at all. It was actually during the war. Like I said, we worked four stories underground, it was called the Operations Support Center. And we would have briefings twice a day. We had shifts for 12 hours apiece, 12 hours each. So you're on 12 hours, off 12 hours. It didn't always work that way. I remember working 12, 16 hours and then having to get back up the next morning for another 12-hour shift. So I didn't have a whole lot of time to actually sleep in between. I do remember that. This one particular day it was a very slow day, very slow. Things were going really well. Not really sure why it was so slow, but the General that happened to be on...[Phone rings and recorder turned off for personal call] It was a slow day. And the commanding officer was I believe, I want to say he was a General, but I honestly can't remember. He was a really nice guy. And he ended up saying, "Okay I'm going to go ahead and give the briefing". And he looked around the room, like I said there wasn't a whole lot of us, and he ended up finding me. And he goes, "Ah, Airman Tyler, come on over here". And I'm like, "Okay. What would you like?" And he goes, "Come here. You're in charge". "Excuse me?!" "Your in charge. Here take the big seat". We called it the 'big seat'. It was a nice big leather chair that was right smack in the middle of the room. So that way when the briefing that was going on up on the stage, the commanding officer can actually see everything that was going on. And then there's rows of desks and

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

23

[768] computers, and stuff like that for everybody else that was going to be doing whatever at their particular station. That way you can actually see the entire room and ask people questions determining whatever is actually happening at that particular time. And he's like, "So, I'd like you to sit here and I'm going to give you the briefing." And I was scared to death, I'm like, "Sir, are you kidding? Really?" And he was like, "No, come on. Have a seat". And I sat down in this chair. "Kick back, put your feet up. Not a problem". And here I am in a skirt and heels and he's like, "No, really! Come on." So I'm like leaning back in this chair and thinking he's going to let it all out that this is really just a joke. But he went through the entire briefing. Asked if I had any questions. [Dog barking] I figured I had to make up a couple just to make it look good. Asked a couple of questions and then he directed other people to answer them for me. I was scared out of my wits. And after that was all over with, that happened to be his anniversary. And so he was going to take his wife out to dinner. He was going to be on call, but he's like, "If you need to get in touch with me just let me know, but in the meantime, Airman Tyler is in charge. So any questions you have you have to pass them through her." And I'm looking at him going, "Sir, you're kidding, right?". And he goes "No". He went to the highest-ranking officer there and said, "She is in charge. You ask her all questions. Anything that has to go out has to go thorough her first. And I'll be back at such and such a time". And he's like, "I'm very serious." And I died. [Laughs] I look at him going, "you're really kidding, right? Please tell me this is a joke because I don't like this joke at all". But everybody had fun with it. I mean everyone had fun with it. There wasn't anything that was dramatic that was going out. Anything that was going to be an emergency, or anything like that, I knew how to get in touch with him, so we knew that

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

24

[814] the world wasn't going to end. But the fact that he was putting an Airman in charge. All of these officers laughing hysterically thinking that this is the greatest thing in the world. And I felt so good, you know, just the fact that he did that. That had to have been the funniest moment that I experienced while I was in the military.

TJ: So how many hours were you in charge for?

AT: Four hours. Four terrifying hours. [Laughter] that was good. It was good.

TJ: Did you get to approve anything?

AT: Yes, I did. There was my signature on a couple of things. Of course, they didn't actually go out, mind you. What they had done is they ended up making up a copy. I would sign one copy and then other copy actually went into, whoever it was, the General, to sign. Like I said, they played it up. They had a lot of fun with this. [Talks to dog] So it was...I did have to approve a couple of things, but like I said, they weren't things that were that dramatic. They were already approved by someone else. I ended up putting an initial on it or something like that. I didn't have a clue what I was doing. I'm looking at this stuff going; I'm the one that types it up, remember. I don't know what it means. All I do is type, okay, nothing else.

TJ: That's so funny.

AT: Yes, we did have a good time with that.

TJ: What did you take away from your military experience? This is going to be kind of vague. Any positive or negative aspects?

AT: Yes. The military is very diverse, and that was one thing that I truly enjoyed. I came from an environment at home that everything around me was very diverse. I had a wide group of people that came from all over. It's just the fact that I can actually work with...

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001
[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

25

TJ: Okay, this is the second tape for Angel Tyler. Could you begin again with the diverse...

AT: The military is such a diverse group of people. It was really amazing to work with people from all walks of life, different areas of the country, different cultures. And yet there was still a lot of respect between everyone, in general. I discovered that I can work with people, side by side with people, who I would probably never see again, but knew that we were all working for the same goal. I think that was probably the major thing that I actually ended up taking away from it. But I also learned a lot of discipline within myself. Discovered that I can be a stronger person. I was very shy growing up, very very shy. And I'm not like that anymore. I think the military had a lot to do with that. I grew up really quick in the military. Even though there is still a blanket of protection...because I went from my parents home into the military...there was still a little bit of a blanket of protection there because the military would take care of your rent, they take care of your food, you know. But at the same time you can still grow as a person and grow up basically. And I think a lot the experiences that I have from the military I share with people that I work with. They see me very differently now if they know that I was in the military. "No kidding, you, YOU were in the military?!" Many people don't see women as veterans. Even my mother has told me, "you know it's difficult to think of you as a veteran". And I'm like; "I was away from you for six years Mom. What more do you want?" How much more proof do you need? That I was in the military. I guess that's what I took away from it.

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

26

[891] TJ: Anything negative?

AT: Yes, there always has to be a negative to every positive. I think those really just came from individuals. I know one of the reasons why I ended up getting out of the service though, was because the military was changing their philosophy about a lot of things. And because that philosophy was changing there was a lot of people that were trying to step on other people in order to get to the top. Not really thinking about the fact that whoever you step on the way up are the people that you'll have to meet on your way back down. That I didn't agree with. I didn't like the changing of the roles.

TJ: How exactly was the philosophy changing? I guess I don't quite understand what you mean by that.

AT: The way of management they were trying to go to a...I'd heard that a lot of the philosophy was going to an Eastern type philosophy in management per say. And it was how they were supposed to be supervising other people. It wasn't the fact that the supervisor was going to be really looking out for the people that were under them, but they were looking out for themselves, and how they can better themselves. So not necessarily you as a supervisor trying to better the people that are under you, which is ultimately going to end up bettering you and bettering the way you look. That's just what I saw. It's not the fact that the military was actually doing that. And I don't think they actually truly had that kind of intention anyway, but I think it was happening anyway. And I didn't like the feel of it, and I didn't like how it was working. So I really decided that it was time to get out. I had always promised my self that I was going to stay in as long as I liked it and as long as I was getting something out of it. And it had reached a point where it wasn't doing that anymore. So it was time for me to go.

[921] **TJ:** Do you see any differences between the experiences that women had in the military while you were there compared to today? Do you hear things for better or for worse about how it's changed?

AT: No, not really because I don't have a lot of contacts with women that are still in the military. So I don't hear much of a difference between them. I do have one friend out in California that's still in the Reserves, but she doesn't talk much about that. When I talk with her we talk about her family and not necessarily what she's doing in the Reserves.

TJ: So what did you like most about being in the Air Force?

AT: Travel. I got to see all these different types of places. Met some very interesting people that I probably never would have met. Not only people within the military, or with in the Air Force, but civilians. Like over in Germany, I met a lot of German nationals and got to have some really good conversations with people that I would have never had that kind of experience.

TJ: And then what did you like least about it?

AT: I didn't like having to keep my room absolutely clean. I'm a slob. I will fully admit that. I struggled in basic training to fold my underwear into four-inch squares. I thought that was absolutely ludicrous. I understood why they wanted you to do that; I understood the fact that they wanted you to pay particular attention to detail. [Pounds fist on table to emphasize] And that was very important. And I understood that philosophy. I just thought it was a ludicrous way of looking at it, you know. And I didn't really like keeping my room in spotless condition. I didn't feel that it was lived in. And so I would only clean it just before inspections. And got nailed on it a couple of times when there was an inspections that I didn't know was going to happen. I didn't like the fact that they

[951] were able to go through my room. To me it just seemed like a really big invasion of privacy.

TJ: And that was just randomly that they could go through your room if they wanted to?

AT: Yes. They didn't have to give you any 'heads up' ahead of time, nothing. There would be scheduled inspections but I didn't like that fact that they would just go in randomly. "I think we're going to look at this room now", you know? I didn't like that I didn't appreciate it.

TJ: Did that happen a lot, or was it just the idea that they could, and they would kind of use the intimidation that they could go through your room?

AT: I'm not really sure if they used the intimidation per say. But it happened more times than I would have liked to have it happen. Seemed to know when someone was actually in your room and there just wasn't that kind of privacy. We don't, here out in the real world; we don't just have people come through your own home just to see if you keep clean enough, you know. I don't know...that's just one thing that I truly didn't like.

TJ: So would they only notify you after they've gone through your room and saw that it was a disaster?

AT: Oh yes.

TJ: So, it was only after that you found out?

AT: Yes. There would be times when I would actually have my room clean. But they would be really picky. I mean really really truly picky. On your refrigerator, on that little seal that goes around the refrigerator door, sometimes stuff gets in there. You had to clean all of that stuff out. I mean that's how picky that they would actually look at these things. If you had a ceiling light, you had to make sure to take down the covering

[976] that was there. Wash it, completely dry it, and set it back up there because they would check to see if there was any dust on it. The only things they were not allowed to look it were your closets, which were locked. But if they were unlocked, however, they could look in it. So you had to make sure you locked all your closets and any valuables went into those closets. You couldn't trust just keeping things in your own room would be there, because people were just walking through your room. It wasn't just your roommate that you had to be worried about. It was people when your roommate wasn't there that you actually had to worry about because you just don't know. One person was not actually allowed to walk into a room by themselves. They always had to have at least two people going into a room. But you can't sit there and stare at each other the entire time when you're walking through a room. And I just didn't trust that.

TJ: Were there many incidents of theft?

AT: Not that I really know of. Not with me anyway. But that didn't lessen my comfort level any.

TJ: So how did you spend your leave time?

AT: Up in North Dakota, I spent it usually with my friends and my family that I developed up there. And I say family because you really do develop a good family relationship. You're away from home. I remember at both locations I would cook turkey in the day room for a group of people just so we could have Thanksgiving dinner. Or we would have barbeques for the Fourth of July, or something like that. Christmas was usually spent with a group of people. It was that, or you had a family that adopted you. Up in North Dakota, I ended up having a family that adopted me; who are now living here. And now that I'm single again, they've adopted me again. If that makes any sense.

[1005] But the second oldest daughter is my best friend, and we've been best friends since North Dakota. It was her father that was actually in the military, and he was technically my boss. When I moved here to Maine, he also gave me the military reference that you typically can't have because you can't find a supervisor to actually give you a reference when your trying to get into jobs and stuff like that. Because it's actually very difficult to find past supervisors. You have no idea where they actually went to.

TJ: Oh, because they get transferred so often?

AT: Because they get transferred so often. And you can say that I had this particular supervisor, but I couldn't tell you where they are now, and it may take me months to find them, you know? And then, are they going to have the time to write up a letter and then send it all the way here...you know what I mean? So he gave me that military reference because I worked under him. Not very many people can actually do that. I think I forgot the question.

TJ: How you spent your leave time. Any vacations?

AT: Vacations? Yes. When I was in Germany, I did a lot of traveling. Even if it was just on the weekends. Even if it wasn't really leave time. But I did take a lot of trips. I did take time off while I was over there. My grandmother had come to visit me for a week, so I took a week off then and took her all over Germany. And we went down to Austria and we took all these little day trips everywhere. Went into Holland. My boyfriend and I had gone to West Germany, went into Berlin. Saw the wall just after it came down and got pieces of the wall. We spent a lot of times just on the weekends...if he had a weekend that was off, I pretty much always had weekends off...we would just get in the

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

31

[1034] car and drive. If we wanted to turn right, we turned right. If we wanted to turn left, than we turned left. We took a weekend trip to Paris and slept in a tent. And that was probably one of the best trips that we'd actually ever had. Stopped alongside of the road in a field of sunflowers to go to the bathroom. Where apparently a lot of people seemed to do that because the first nine rows were a lot higher than the rest of them. Those are the types of things that I ended up doing. When I was over in Germany I did not take any trips home...back to California. The times I went back home was in between each duty station. So I went home for two weeks before I went to North Dakota, and then before I went to Germany, I went home for two weeks and then went to Germany. [Talks to dog]

TJ: Did your military training experience help you later in life in employment or in any other way?

AT: Yes. In a lot of ways. One, in the confidence itself. I ended up doing a lot of secretarial work after I got out the military. So having that experience in the military ended up helping me on a lot of things. Setting up my files, I had used a lot of the same philosophies that I learned when I was in the military to set up my own personal files at whatever job I was actually doing. Any job that I actually do now also requires a lot of stamina. And I learned to do that in the military. You learn to be flexible with anything that you actually have. Fortunately I have the kind of lifestyle that I can be flexible, where there's a lot of people that have families that actually can't. I use a lot of that experience.

TJ: Did you use the GI Bill at all?

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

32

[1067] AT: Yes, I did. I haven't finished my degree, mind you, but yes I did use it. And I used it all up. And loved it, actually while I was going to school right here at the University [of Maine] I also ended up working for Veteran Affairs. The Veteran Affairs office up there. And just before I ended up leaving I was also the supervisor up there too. I used up all the money that I possibly could. Still tried to get more out of them, but that didn't work either.

TJ: What are you going for your degree in?

AT: Social work.

TJ: Social work?

AT: Yes, I have five more classes, but I'm out of money. So it's going to have to wait.

TJ: Did you change your attitudes or ideas about the military or the government, in general, while you were in the service?

AT: I think a lot of it did change. I'm prouder now of our country and the freedom we have than before I actually went in. I cry when they play the national anthem. I'm very particular when I watch someone bringing down a flag. When they don't fold it right, and all they do is just jumbling the whole thing up and just putting it into a ball; that really pisses me off. I'm very particular about a lot of those types of things. I didn't really pay that much attention to government before I actually went in. You know, I was a typical teenager; all I really cared about really was myself. But I know that I probably would have a very different philosophy had I not been in the military. Because I look at things very different than other people do. I recognize that. Someone may end up saying that they really don't have to do that, especially with the conflict that's going on right now over in Afghanistan. A lot of people that don't really believe in fighting the war [Dog

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

33

[1104] dropping toy] we should not retaliate. I would probably have that philosophy if I had not been in the military because I was a very peaceful type person. Didn't really believe in fighting; never got into a fight in my entire life. But at the same time I understand that we have to protect our freedom, we have to protect our country. So, yes, I think it changed some.

TJ: What were your thoughts of politics at the time while you were stationed in Germany during Desert Shield and Desert Storm? And what were general thoughts of politics, I guess, around you?

AT: I guess there was different thoughts of those that were actually around me. Most of the people that I had around me were very much for the Gulf War. But at the same time there were still a couple that just didn't believe that we needed to be in war. That we didn't need to protect other people. And I saw it as the fact that we were like a big bother of sorts, of the smaller countries. Growing up I would never let someone hurt my little brothers; so I would make sure to protect them. They didn't have the strength or the mindset to protect themselves at that point because they were very young. Not that smaller countries don't have the mindset...I don't mean that. But they don't actually have the power that we did either. And I don't really see the United States goes in and takes over power...because usually after every conflict that we've actually been in we give back a lot of the power that they've actually, you know...give back a lot of power that we ended up taking control over, just so that we can make sure that they were protected. But there were people that were around me that just thought that everything that we were doing was wrong. I had one person who had a very religious background, and thought that God was not going to allow a war to actually happen. And I'm like, "did you read

[1146] the Bible? There was a lot of wars that actually happened in there that God dictated, and God told that what's going to..." And I'm like, "Where did you come up with this kind of philosophy?" But I don't know. I'm not really sure where people would actually come up with that, but that's okay. And I know even now a lot of people don't want this war that we're going through right now. But how many times is someone going to hit you before you realize that you got to protect yourself. You may end up having to hit back.

TJ: Looking back on your experience in the Air Force, would you do it again if you had the choice? Why or why not?

AT: Yes, I would do it again. If I was younger and if I was in better shape. After the bombings down in New York, I kind of looked down at my body and said, "Damn, I really need to go back into the military". But I can't do that. I think the reason why is because I still have that dedication, I still have that belief that I can do something to protect my country. I probably wouldn't at this point because I'm fighting for other things now, but if I was younger and my body wasn't hurting quite so much as it does, then yes, I would definitely do it again.

TJ: Would you change the way you did anything?

AT: Yes, probably. If I knew then what I know now then I probably would. But it wouldn't change a whole lot. I'd be changing more of my approach towards things. My confidence level would start off much higher, but that's really about it. I don't want to change much of the experience that I had because that's who I am now, because of those experiences. But I have just liked to have had a little more confidence when I first started.

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

35

[1191] TJ: So do you keep in touch with people that you served with?

AT: Yes, I do. My ex husband is one person that I served with. We met up in North Dakota and followed each other around the world. Then we got married after I got out of the service. But I still keep in touch with him. He works here. There's also another person down in Thomaston that I keep in touch with, who's a cop down there. We were stationed together up in North Dakota. He's actually married to my best friend's sister. So you know that whole family I was adopted to? He married into that family. So, yes, a long history. I do have a friend...there's one friend that I know down in Kentucky. I try to get in touch with her every once in a while. Another friend in North Carolina that I keep in touch with. There's a lot of people I've lost track of over the years. But I try to look for them on the Internet every once in a while [Dog whines] and I haven't really had much luck. Couple years ago I went down to D.C. and ended up seeing the Women's Memorial at Arlington and was looking for a few of my female friends in the database there and couldn't find anybody. And also realized that I'm the only one that had actually registered at that point. And I was thinking, "How am I going to find them if they don't register?". But, you know...

TJ: Is there anything that you would tell the servicewomen of today?

AT: I guess, remain strong mentally. Stand your ground. Do what you want to do. Don't let someone talk you out of it because you're a woman. And fight for the things that you believe in. We would not have the kind of advances that we have now if the women before us, like the women in World War II, or something like that, didn't fight for the things that they believed in. or if they didn't work really hard to make sure that we

[1247] have the privileges that we have now. I would just give them the advice to continue doing that.

TJ: We have a little time on this one, so I'm just going to ask a quick question. Was your basic training segregated?

AT: Yes, to some extent. We had two flights of 50 women each in both of those flights and then we also had brother flights that we didn't have a lot of contact with them, except for when we were actually sitting in classes. The boys sat over here, and the girls sat over here. You know, those were the types of segregation that they actually had. It didn't mean that men and women didn't actually get together, that still managed to happen. How that actually ever occurred, I have no idea, because it didn't happen with me. But, yes, we were segregated.

TJ: So was it segregated for the physical part of it, like running the mile, or whatever?

AT: We all ended up running the mile on the track at the same time, but we ran as flights. So all the girls, our flight, would run together. And we'd run at different times, but we still ran separately, but we were all running at the same time. I should say.

TJ: I'm just going to stop this tape and flip it over.

AT: Okay.

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

TJ: Okay, would you encourage your daughter to join the service?

AT: Yes, if that was something she wanted to do. Definitely. I would encourage her to at least make it an option. Because I think the experience is one of a lifetime. But I'm also a firm believer that the military is not for everyone. So if my daughter actually comes up to not actually believe in that sort of thing, then I probably wouldn't encourage her do

[1281] something, because it's not going to be her. But I would at least have her keep that as an option.

TJ: Would you promote the Air Force more, or would you say go for any branch?

AT: I would probably promote the Air Force more, but that's just for personal biases. I originally actually wanted to go into the Marines, but then didn't think that they would take me. So kind of went off that track. When I went in, one of my stipulations was that I wanted to work a 9 to 5 job and I didn't want to cut my hair. And then I didn't get either. I actually cut my hair, and still ended up having to work really odd shifts. So, I didn't win on many counts. But you can't always have what you want in life too.

TJ: How short did you have to cut your hair? And how long was it prior to?

AT: It's not quite as long as it is now, which is down the middle of my back. But the fact that I had to cut my hair...because as long as you can actually keep your hair above your collar, then that's okay. So most of the time I would french braid it all the way up and then I would tuck it underneath and keep it above the collar. Then they didn't have a problem with that. But then I met a man that really liked short hair, and so I cut it for him. Last time I will ever do that. Mind you, because I didn't like my hair short. Didn't sleep for a month because I didn't realize that's how I went to sleep. I would play with my hair. I've been doing it since I was a kid, just never really thought about it; never really realized it. So for about four months I was dead tired because I couldn't get into a comfortable position to grab hold of my hair because it was so short.

TJ: Wow, that's an interesting little side effect.

AT: Yes, never thought of it. My mother was the one that ended up asking me, "So do you play with your hair still?". And at that moment I was trying to grab hold of a piece to

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

38

[1304] play with. And I couldn't find it. And I'm like, "oh, guess that I do. Yes, okay. That could be a good reason". And then that night I realized I was trying to get into a comfortable position, where as I'd always just grabbed a hold of a piece down here, I could play; and I couldn't do that anymore. So I blamed him for me not being able to sleep. That didn't go over very well, mind you, but still I blamed him anyway.

TJ: And then is there anything that you'd like to add that I didn't ask about? Or anything that you think people in the future should know in order to understand your military experience any better?

AT: Gosh, I'm not quite sure. I know there had been a lot of speculation as to women being treated differently because of the fact that they're women and that they're treated more as sex objects. I mean the Tailhook Convention is the perfect example of that. I know that it happened. It has happened to me; where people thought that they could just touch me just because...but luckily the people that I had around me also didn't approve of that, and those were usually men that just didn't care; that just saw women as sex objects. I don't really blame the military for that; I blame the certain individuals for that. But I was lucky to the point where every time I made a complaint, it was taken very seriously. I don't think that all women actually had that kind of experience. But I don't think that that's limited to just the military either. That's all around, in society everywhere. No one really wants to believe that that happens. Society still doesn't want to believe that rape actually occurs. But it does, on a regular basis. I think that's about it. Those are the things that I really remember and take away with me. My experience has always been very dear to my heart. I still feel that there's a family out there that knows about me, you know? There's a lot of people that I still have in my memory that will be

Narrator: Angel Tyler
Interviewer: Tiffany Jones
Date: November 5, 2001

Accession: 3208
Tape: 2309, 2310

39

[1336] there forever and there are people that, even though I'm not keeping in contact with them now, I know that if I see them 20 years from now we're going to start up a conversation like we'd just seen them yesterday. We'll catch up on everything that has happened, but I'll still trust them, you know. And that's not something I can say for a lot of the people that I've actually met outside of the military. I don't know why it's different. It feels very different. Even when I go on to a base, even now, if I happen to go on to a base with someone or something like that, I still feel that camaraderie that's there. That I don't quite feel so much from the people that are outside the military. Even though I'm not in the military any more, I still feel it.

TJ: Thank you so much. I appreciate it. And off with this contraption.