

Jeannie Adams

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Transcribed by Sonix with corrections by Leah Cohen

Edited by Leah Cohen

Web biography by Leah Cohen

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Cohen: [00:00:00] Today is November 3rd, 2021, when and we're here in person at the Pritzker Military Museum & Library in the Oral History Room. I'm Leah Cohen, the Oral History and Reference Manager, and I'm pleased to interview Sergeant Jeannie Adams. Sergeant Adams served on active duty at the U.S. Air Force as a medical corpsman from 1965 to 1968. Seventeen years later, in 1986, she joined the Air Force Reserves 928th Tactical Airlift Squadron [i.e., Group] in addition to her day job at Northern Trust. She was discharged from the Reserves in 1996 and we look forward to hearing your story.

Adams: [00:00:44] Thank you. I look forward to telling you.

Cohen: [00:00:46] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So we'll begin at the beginning. Where and when were you born?

Adams: [00:00:53] I was born in Canton, Mississippi. That's a small town about eighteen miles north of Jackson, Mississippi. But it's better known now as the home of Nissan. Giant Nissan factory, five years ago?[Cohen laughs] And I lived there until age nine and then relocated to Chicago South Side, Hyde Park community.

Cohen: [00:01:17] What was it like growing up in Hyde Park?

Adams: [00:01:21] Oh, I loved it there. I still love it. Not as much now because it's very, very congested. I was over there a few days ago. All the high rises and things now it's different. But I enjoyed Hyde Park. It was a nice community, very diverse community. The, you know, just great people, neighbors, new neighbors, even though most of us lived in, the area where I lived on Drexel, lived in apartment buildings. They were mostly three story and courtways. So of course, with the court way, everyone knew each other, you know? So it was I enjoyed it, and I just again, I love the atmosphere. I went to grammar school just a couple of blocks from my home,

so I was able to walk, come home for lunch. It was a secure area. The museums, everything that we needed was right there and everything within walking distance and not too far from the lake and it was just great. Great. And then when the parades would come down King Drive, which at that time it was called South Park, we were able to just walk straight out of the back through Washington Park over to, you know, King Drive or South Park and be right in the middle of the parade, especially the Bud Billiken Parade, the back to school parade. So everything was just right there. Very, very convenient. And I like I said, I moved from Hyde Park in 1986, actually. Yeah.

Cohen: [00:03:11] So you were there for quite some time?

Adams: [00:03:13] Right. Because I grew up in Hyde Park. And then, of course, I'm jumping but after I was discharged from the Air Force, married at that time, my husband and I originally lived in Lakeview until 1972 and then moved to Hyde Park, just a few blocks from where I was reared. And I stayed there until 1986 and continued to go to church in that area also.

Cohen: [00:03:46] Well, that's something I was about to ask you like. Was Church an important part of your life and and which church did you go to in Hyde Park?

Adams: [00:03:54] In Hyde Park? I went to Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, located at 48th and Dorchester and, yes, [re:] Church growing up, we had to go to Church. I mean, that was a must. In the south, okay--

Cohen: [00:04:14] Okay. [Laughter]

Adams: [00:04:16] And my grandmom was a teacher. Well, she was a schoolteacher as well as a Bible teacher in the church. She was also the treasurer of the church. My grandfather was a deacon. Yeah. So yeah, so it was just... the Church has always been a part of my life.

Cohen: [00:04:33] What motivated your parents to move to Chicago?

Adams: [00:04:38] You know, my mom, well, I'm not. I I don't know all the details. But she moved to Chicago in 19--. My mom moved in 1952 and got a job, and I stayed with my

grandparents. And until, you know, I came up in, you know, like I said at the age of nine. She, my mom, would come back to visit and my father actually... And I don't mind [saying this]: my mom and my dad separated. She lived in Chicago. He lived in Joliet.

Cohen: [00:05:18] Not too far, relatively speaking.

Adams: [00:05:21] And she said she was determined not to move to Joliet. She left the country once and she wasn't going back. She considered -- okay -- Joliet the country - but anyway, and then things just didn't work out between the two of them, and they were divorced. And so really, I was raised, I got raised by my dad. My dad was my stepfather. He and my mom got married a number of years [after the divorce]. I think it was early '60s, and that was *Daddy*. No, actually, it was. It was in the '50s because, right, they were married when they brought me to Chicago. Yeah, Daddy came down to Mississippi to meet my grandparents because he had to meet the family. And my great-grandmother, who passed at the age of a hundred six, had to give him her stamp of approval because he was a northerner.

Cohen: [00:06:10] Oh. [Laughs]

Adams: [00:06:11] And he was actually originally from Centrailia, Illinois. My dad, [i.e.], my step-dad. But my father and my mom grew up together in Canton, got married at the age of nineteen. Okay. So they had known each other since they were sixteen years old. [Cohen interjects: Wow. That was unbelievably young]. So I know I'm just kind of going back and forth. So I was really, when I said...I was raised by and my mom and my stepdad, who's who... They were right in my life all day and one present at all times because my mom worked days and my dad was a railroader. He worked for Illinois Central Railroad in electrical engineering and he worked nights. So there was someone home [Laughter] to cover the hours.

Adams: [00:07:04] Since my mom worked days or Daddy got the day duty. If you had to go to school or somebody, that it was him. Yeah, once I got in trouble, he had to go up [to school] Just once. [Laughter]

Adams: [00:07:17] It was great and my mom worked in the neighborhood. She worked at the Jack's Sandwich Shop Restaurant in Cottage Grove. And so again, within walking distance, like

so my whole life was right there in Hyde Park. My favorite aunt moved. She followed my mom from Mississippi, and then she got an apartment at 39th and Drexel and we lived 52th and Drexel.

Cohen: [00:07:40] So very close to close. Yeah, yeah. Where did you go to school?

Adams: [00:07:48] I went to Kozminski Grammar School. It was 53rd and Ellis. And it is still there.

Cohen: [00:07:57] Oh, wow.

Adams: [00:07:57] Charles Kozminski. It might be called academy now or something, but actually, my grandkids ended up going to camp there about three or four years ago. And so I got to walk the halls [unclear due to laughter] because it was my first time back at Kozminski since I graduated eighth grade, you know, and just going through and remembering and looking at the different rooms and the teachers' faces popping up before me. It was pretty funny. I went to Kozminski Grammar School and then Hyde Park High School, and Hyde Park High School is still in existence and it's going to be right across the street from the [pause for effect] Obama Library!

Cohen: [00:08:38] Oh my. Well. Wow.

Adams: [00:08:42] At 62nd and Stony Island. Right?

Cohen: [00:08:43] Wow. Wow, that's cool. Which subjects did you like in high school?

Adams: [00:08:52] Oh, accounting, business administration were my favorite. And, you know, just sort of like office work. I actually, as a freshman, I got a job with the assistant principal in the principal's office. So, you know, in helping to keep attendance, and whatever, filing, and you name it. So and so that was it. I wasn't. Well, you didn't ask my not favorite, so I'll just leave it at accounting and business administration were my favorite subjects. [Laughter]

Cohen: [00:09:29] Recognized, let's say, by the principal and the staff, yeah.

Adams: [00:09:32] I had a few accidents in chemistry class. Yeah, it was a challenge. But anyway.

Adams: [00:09:41] I enjoyed social studies, mainly because of Dr. [Timuel] Black, who was just one of my all-time favorites. And he really, he had such an impact on my life in so many different ways and, you know, I won't go into all the details. But what stands out in my mind, more so is - in class, we had to do a paper on the death sentence. Yes. And of course, what did I know about this? But after all the research and we had to come up with, 'Okay, do I believe in it--do you know, capital punishment or not?' And it was at that time I made a decision, and I'm still many, many years stick by, that because I do believe in rehabilitation. And so that was that. But anyway, so.

Cohen: [00:10:39] What was he like as a teacher?

Adams: [00:10:43] Different than after I graduated, but he was an excellent teacher, as I remember back. But he kept the line between student and instructor. Okay. And I thought, 'Oh, it's going to be great because I know Amitra [his daughter]. We went to grammar school together and now we were in high school together. You know, I have an "in" here.' Ugh ugh! [Makes noise of negation]

Cohen: [00:11:11] [Laughs]

Adams: [00:11:11] But he was always open and, you know, no, no question was off limits. And so he was just somewhat very easy to, you know, talk with and and to listen to, and you just enjoyed him as a teacher, you know, not knowing, you know, how his life was going to turn out or the impact that he would have on ours. But every time I got an opportunity after school, when I would see him at some event, I'd make a beeline over to see him and, you know, chit chat and so. So it was a, you know, I don't want to say a relationship, you know--

Cohen: [00:11:54] --But you were friendly.

Adams: [00:11:57] There were only a couple of teachers that I still remember their names. And you know how we were in grammar school and in high school. And he was by far, you know, one of those [whom one never forgets]. And every time I would see him, he'd act just like he just saw me yesterday or something, you know? And I'm like, he had tons of people in his life, tons of students and other people all over the world. [Cohen laughs] ...but he was just that, you know, in touch, and just an easy and humbling [man]. I never forget, actually, the last time I saw him, we were at an event at DuSable Museum. And we were leaving and he said, "Oh, you know, can you give me a ride home?" And I was like, "You know, Dr. Black. I'm riding with someone else and he has a meeting." My daughter was with me. She said, "That's okay. I'll give you a ride, Sir." [Laughter]

Adams: [00:13:00] So. So she stepped in and gave him a ride home...

Cohen: [00:13:06] Like just very natural, down to earth. Yeah,

Adams: [00:13:09] Absolutely. All the way. All the way...

Cohen: [00:13:11] So we know that he heard Martin Luther King on television and went right away to meet him. So it made me wonder, did he bring in some of the teachings of Dr. King to the classroom or any, present any ideas?

Adams: [00:13:30] You know what? And I, to be perfectly honest, I cannot recall. I know I got, you know, some of the teachings of Dr. King from my pastor who also and he may have been in one of those pictures with Dr. King and Dr. Black... John Thurston was his name, Reverend John Thurston and he marched with Dr. King over Marquette Park and was one of the ones who was hit. Because there is a picture that we have in the archives of Church [New Covenant Baptist Church]. A rocket hit him in the forehead. So there was a lot of history that, you know and things that he talked about with Dr. King, you know? It came to the church, but other than that, I can't, I can't recall. Most of my knowledge about him was actually after I was in the military and I was stationed in Montgomery.

Cohen: [00:14:26] In Montgomery. Yes, yes. So, so it becomes very real a few years later.

Adams: [00:14:31] Yes. Very much so.

Cohen: [00:14:36] Did you have any brothers or sisters or half brothers or sisters?

Adams: [00:14:40] Yes, I have a brother. Well, I had a brother. He was two and a half years younger than I. And he passed in 1980. So he and I, we grew up together. My mom also brought him to Chicago. Maybe it was a year or two after I came because he elected to stay with my grandparents because our first cousin...my uncle was in the military. He was stationed away, so his son stayed with my grandparents. So the three of us, you know, were together. Actually, it was the two of them and me,

Cohen: [00:15:17] [Laughs] The two boys had their own thing.

Adams: [00:15:18] Exactly. And so, we were very...and that cousin and I are still in contact all the time. He lives in Memphis, Tennessee, and like I said, my brother passed in 1980, but he was also a product of the Chicago Public School System. He went to Burnside because by the time we moved out to the Chatham area and you went to Burnside Grammar School and Harlan High School. And I was supposed to transfer to Harlan High School because at that time you went to the school in the district in which you lived. Okay, well, I had an "in" with the office.

Adams: [00:15:59] So in my -- it's my freshman year! I went to the office and I boohoo-ed and begged and pleaded and I got permission after they spoke with my parents to make sure it was okay, you know, and I got permission to remain at Hyde Park.

Cohen: [00:16:18] So like, it's a good, useful lesson to learn. Yeah, I could see it.

Adams: [00:16:23] Yeah. Absolutely. And that continues with me today. Okay. [Laughter]

Cohen: [00:16:37] So what happens after? Oh, actually, let's go back a little bit. So I was reading in the 1950s onward, about the alderman of Hyde Park, Leon Despres [English pronunciation], Despres [French pronunciation] or I don't know how it's pronounced. He was a sort of a strong advocate for integration and fair housing. And I also wondered, to what extent did you or your family feel that this was happening or not happening? Yeah.

Adams: [00:17:02] Well, you know, I'm going to tell you, Leah. And you know, maybe it was because of just me being so naive and the people that I was in contact with, I did not feel any discrimination. Or, you know, like I said, we lived in a nice apartment. You know, my parents had nice jobs. I had nice clothing and friends. And wherever and anywhere, I wanted to go, you know, within Hyde Park area, [I could go]. And it was only when I went in the military that I truly experienced [racism] even [with] those few years growing up in the South. You know, I knew that there was a difference, but it didn't really touch me.

Cohen: [00:17:49] Didn't touch the day to day life?

Adams: [00:17:51] Exactly. My grandfather was, you know, sort of well-to-do. I mean, you know, he had many acres of land. He actually had tenants that lived on his property and he was, you know, like the other Whites in that area as far as you know, having property and that type of thing. And he was very well respected. And like I said, my grandmom, she was a schoolteacher. Everybody respects a school teacher, you know? And so they were respected in the Black community and in the White. And, you know, I knew problems existed because when I would go back to visit, like, 'Okay, I'm walking on the sidewalk. Well, that's the way I do it in Chicago.' So I didn't realize I was supposed to step off of the sidewalk if I, you know, encountered or was meeting a non-Black. [both laugh]

Adams: [00:18:53] So my cousins would say, "Don't come down here, starting trouble" [Both laugh].

Adams: [00:18:59] But you know, I'm not one to start trouble but I'm sorry, you know this is just not right. It's not right. And my grandfather was, actually, once, as I recall, accosted by the police because he was walking, you know, beside a White woman. Well that White woman happened to be his niece. Biracial, okay. But you know, so it was that. But it wasn't, it didn't really, you know, touch my day to day here and in Chicago. Kozminski was integrated. You know, Hyde Park High School was. Now, you know, I didn't go in the South Shore area. At that time, it was only after I came back to Chicago and South Shore it was predominantly White at that time. But in the schools, we have been more so too. I just, you know, really ... But um, I

felt... Like it's when I look back on it and maybe I was I was naive [that I did not experience racism]. So when I when I got to Montgomery, I mean, I was--

Cohen: [00:20:16] [Interrupts] Like it's a shock. It was a shock.

Adams: [00:20:20] It was a shock. And there were some times that were really rough. I mean, I actually, when I was thinking about this and not knowing what you were going to ask me about it, you know, I thought of some incidents and said, 'You know, I don't know if you even want to hear about that', so I'll just wait. But you see, I mean, you know, you tell me which what you want me to share about that. But in growing up and in the Park, Hyde Park area, like I said, I did not experience any problems whatsoever. Yeah. And as a kid, I mean, if you were not bothered, you know, we weren't really into what the adults were, you know, and the fighting and the this and the that? We knew it existed, but it was just it didn't touch us, so you know, we just wanted to have fun, go to the museums, go to the movies, and, you know, do what we do as kids.

Cohen: [00:21:24] Yeah, yeah. It makes sense,

Adams: [00:21:27] You know, as you grow up, of course, then you take a different viewpoint of life and reality hits you and whether you're ready for it or not. [Cohen chimes in: Or not]. Exactly.

Cohen: [00:21:41] Well, you sort of referenced it a little bit, and we certainly talked about it on the phone, but would you like to talk about--? It seems that many family members were in the military and in particular visiting your your mother's youngest sister's husband, who was career military.

Adams: [00:21:57] Right, right. On my mom's side, her older brother. Yeah, that's one whose son my brother and I grew up with. He was in the [US] Army and his, well, his. I'm just going to name because it crosses generational lines. ...His son went into the [US] Marines. My uncle by marriage, my aunt's husband was in the [US] Air Force, and that's when I would visit in the summertime. And so I got accustomed to the Air Force life. I just loved it and, you know, just enjoyed being on the base and who doesn't like a uniform?[Laughter]

Adams: [00:22:47] But I didn't really have any one-on-one conversations with any women in the military, even though I was on the base all the time. It was always the wives, you know, of the airmen, you know, the men and their children. But I just-- I said, "You know what? This would be great to go in the Air Force, and this way I could serve my country, see the world, and go to school, you know, free, get everything. I mean, you know, that's a great deal!" And so I kept telling, you know, mentioning [this] to my uncle, he said, "That's wonderful. I think you should do that, but I think you should rearrange it a little bit and go to college first", he said. "And that way, you can come in the Air Force as a commissioned officer". He said, "Your life would be a lot better!" Now he was enlisted and he spent like thirty years in and loved every minute of it. But he was giving me some advice that he felt would be better for me, and especially as a female. I did not take that advice as I told you and ended up going in. When I was recruited and we had swearing in, our recruiter actually said, "Now," he said, "down the hall, there are several groups of, you know, Army guys being sworn in". Okay, they've been drafted. He said, "So make sure when you said 'volunteer', scream it out real loud because of course, the Air Force was volunteer [Cohen says it simultaneous to Adams].

Adams: [00:24:27] Yeah, exactly. So anyway.

Cohen: [00:24:28] Do you do you want to mention what happened between graduation in high school and recruitment?

Adams: [00:24:36] I, my parents? They agreed I could go in the military, but again after I'd go to school, after college. And so we talked about it, that's fine. So we had all my records transferred over to what was then called Chicago Teachers College and I was all set. You know, this is it. I'll go and I really, Leah, to the life of me, I cannot tell you exactly what transpired between September and November [both laugh] but somewhere in there I was like, "This is not what I want to do." And it wasn't like I was unhappy at home and wanted to get away or anything like that. But it was just something driving and nagging at me, you know, to do this. And then I had a couple of friends, male friends who had gone in to the Army, you know, after high school, and they're coming back after basic training. Now, you know, and they're in their uniforms and I'm like, "You're doing what I want to do." You know, I had no idea what it was going to be like. But my heart was set on doing it. And so the recruiter came out and spoke with my parents, and together we convinced my parents and [although] I didn't have [to do so]. I was of age. I was

eighteen so my parents didn't have to sign for me, you know? But of course, out of respect, I really didn't want to go against their wishes. Bottom line is, they went against their wishes. [Laughter] For me. My Daddy told Mommy... "If that's what she really wants to do, then she won't be happy doing anything else." He says, "So let her try it out." He goes, "She won't last through basic." My father was not a military man, nor my dad. Neither one of them was, okay, but they just thought it would be [hard] from what they had heard.

Cohen: [00:26:34] You know, it sounded too rigorous or--?

Adams: [00:26:36] Exactly, because I mean, I was--.

Cohen: [00:26:38] You're petite, like...

Adams: [00:26:40] I was tiny at that time, you know, I was like ninety eight pounds. Okay, skinny. You know, I had never really been away from home except to visit relatives, and I was easy going, you know, just almost scared of my own shadow kind of thing, you know?

Cohen: [00:26:59] Yeah.

Adams: [00:27:01] So not, the type of person that would want to go in the armed forces and possibly get shipped to a war that was going on. That never even occurred to me, you know until after I was in.

Cohen: [00:27:17] Well, were your mother and daddy concerned that you would be shipped to Vietnam or did they raise this issue?

Adams: [00:27:25] They did not have. No, they did not have. I think because the men were sent to Vietnam, not the women. The women would be given some desk job someplace and you know what I wanted to do...was to become a medic. We were actually given a choice at that time. Three choices: medics was my first, administration was my second, and then communications, was my third choice. And I got medics, which was my first choice. [Both laugh]

Adams: [00:28:03] Years later, it probably should have been the administration or social services or social events or something like that, because that's what I tested higher when I got my civilian job. But anyway!

Cohen: [00:28:20] When did you take the aptitude tests for the military? Did they--?

Adams: [00:28:24] We had to take those tests and actually if you did not, I mean there was a pass or fail [system]. And so I felt very good about that because I was not a great tester in school. Okay. I could know the answers, know it. But then when it came time, I mean, I was one of those, you know, panicked, you know, sweat. Yeah, sweating bullets and stuff. So but this was just something I guess I just had it in my heart so much to do, that I was able to pass. And apparently it showed that I would be good in the medical field. [Laughter]

Adams: [00:29:03] I don't know. All I knew is when I got out of basic training, that's what they do. You're [sent to a training school for your specific field. My field was the Medical Services Training Program.] So you go to medical training. Now, basic training was, yeah, it was a challenge.

Cohen: [00:29:17] Would you like to talk with I think you said your base boot camp was at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. [In unison]

Adams: [00:29:23] Exactly.

Cohen: [00:29:24] Would you describe it?

Adams: [00:29:26] Well, from the time we, I got there, well actually, the fright started because I had never been on a plane, with Daddy being train-train every place we went. You know, when I got to New York to visit my uncle, I took the train. To Ohio. Wherever I went to visit, I was always on the train. Right? So I never been on a plane. And Braniff Airlines, that's how I went. And I'll never forget there was a young man sitting next to me, and I cannot remember if he was going in the military or if he was just a regular passenger. I don't know, but he held my hand [Laughter] because I was on... you know, when we took off and when we were landing. And I think we landed someplace else in Texas and then had to change planes and go on to

Lackland. And it was just really, it was a blur. I mean, there was so much happening so quickly. So, you know, you get assigned to your barracks and you get all these clothing that are given to you and they tell you what to bring with you. But then you know all your outer garments, your uniforms, your everything, and it was just on and on and on. And this was on the 17th of November of 1965. And you know, I just remember, you know, getting situated, crying every night because you had lights out and some of the girls that had been there longer knew that you could take a flashlight and go under the cover. So when you see that on television and -- [Cohen: It's true]-- it happens.[Laughter]

Adams: [00:31:12] I was too scared to even do that. So I would just cry, you know, I wanted to go home, but I knew I couldn't, okay? And so and there was someone who said, "Oh, you know, it's a piece of cake. You know, you can go through hell for six weeks, you can manage." Well, it was not so easy, but it got easier because you start meeting friends, meeting people and I knew no one. Everybody said... They didn't know anyone; they didn't come and we didn't have the buddy system where you went in with someone that you knew. So we were all strangers and became quick friends, okay, you're allies because the drill sergeants and the ones in charge, they were not your friends, you know? So we had to really quickly [become friends] and I had some, some real great roommates. It was four of us to a room [Cohen interrupts: Oh] and two sets of bunk beds, you know. You just started learning from Day One. But I tell you I've been in church, so we had church services, but no getting out. The only way you could get out of basic training, to have some social time, is if you're in the choir, at church, or something like that. So I joined the choir.

Cohen: [00:32:37] It was a no-brainer.

Adams: [00:32:41] I don't even like singing! Exactly. So we know we were going to have choir rehearsal. As I recall, I think it was on Friday evenings or something like that. But so I was in the choir and I don't know who or why I was chosen, but I was Santa Claus for Christmas.

Cohen: [00:32:59] Oh.

Adams: [00:32:59] I know. So they pillow and pillow for my stomach and the cotton balls on my face. I was singing. So we had some fun times, crazy times. So it wasn't all that bad. But in

discipline, like I said that's one of the lessons that you learn right away. Order, discipline. You also learn how -- and that's something that stays with you -- how to respect other people. Also, teamwork, you know, so there's some life lessons that came out of those six weeks of, okay, sometimes torture, sometimes fun games, and we get to the point where you pull jokes on each other and, you know, that kind of surprise. So we made it, we made it. And with the early morning revelry and my roommate, one of my roommates, she had such an effect on me. She was Spanish-Italian. So very [makes noise of motor power].

Cohen: [00:34:12] High energy.

Adams: [00:34:12] We had to get up, I mean, what it was five o'clock, 5:30 or whatever and Anne was going to put on her eyes and her makeup and everything right before, you know, who has time for that? You're jumping up. You got to make these beds and they've got to be just, taut, you know...so that a quarter can bounce on them and all of that. But she was determined, but I was like, okay. Anyway, but she, and there's a term that she always used whenever we would leave each other, and that was *Vaya con Dios* [a Spanish parting phrase which literally means "Go with God"]. And I use that now sometimes when I'm signing off of a prayer line, whatever, because it was just so, so endearing. And when I went on leave and she wrote a note to me and she'd sign it, you know, Anna...So but I never saw her again after basic training. Yeah. So I just I loved her during those six weeks. Good time.

Cohen: [00:35:12] I know the women Marines were required to take like a six-week grooming course. Was there was there something parallel when you were the Air Force like were women taught how to wear their hair or put on makeup and so on?

Adams: [00:35:28] Oh oh, that that was it, yes. Your hair could not touch the collar of your clothing. Well, I had short hair anyway. So that was...Earrings? Not with uniform. You didn't wear earrings. Your shoes. Oh gosh, I was a bit spit shine. After we got out, I used to spit shine my husband's [shoes]. Saturday afternoon that was my job to polish up his shoes and put a nice shine on them. But I mean, you and we did. We had to do the exercises. I mean, you were out there and you were running and you were doing push-ups, all kinds of calisthenics. And I mean, we did it. We had the drill. So it was not just -- Did you say lady Marines?

Cohen: [00:36:16] Yeah, yeah.

Adams: [00:36:16] Oh, okay. I think basic training was pretty much the same for everybody. They sent you to do that. And then I had additional after when I went to a med training, medical training. I thought it was going to be all over and it was just going to be hospital work. And, you know, back [in the hospital]. Oh no, no, no, no, we had to do war simulation, you know. So you were in a minefield with mines exploding all around, trying to get your patient or your person over here who had gotten wounded, and you had to get him on a stretcher, and then you had to go over a six foot wall and carrying that person and up. So oh yeah. And it was, it was not fun and games because they're preparing you--

Cohen: [00:37:01] --for reality.

Adams: [00:37:02] Exactly. Triage in medical training. We had simulated plane crashes. You know, so we first ones on the scene. And so now you've got this. And it was, it was intense. It was intense. And we had to learn how to give ourselves injections. If you're out in the field and you've got to give morphine, so we to offer... some of this stuff, it's sort of coming back as I talk.

Cohen: [00:37:38] That's good. I'm sorry to interrupt. Did they, did you have to take like academic courses too like anatomy or physiology?

Adams: [00:37:48] Oh yes. Oh yes. And before you could get promoted, you were tested. So we had the what we call on OJT, on the job training. Okay. And then you had your diploma testing, and if you didn't pass, you didn't...And you had to continue, right? And if you had to repeat, okay, the medical part of the training portion of it, that you would have to repeat that. I did not think ..I was able to go through basic training, get out in my regular six weeks and then do the medical training and everything...[a few words exchanged between Adams and Cohen not heard]

Cohen: [00:38:28] Well, maybe you were smart and worked hard. I don't know

Adams: [00:38:34] The only thing I couldn't do after, say, a triage or after we were in one of those the conditions, you know, real life, whenever we did that, it never failed when we went

to dinner afterwards, they were serving spaghetti, and I think it was deliberate. So no one could eat. Okay, I know [Laughter] I know it was without fail. Sometimes you say, "Oh, every time we do this, it rains or every time we do this, this happens." Well, every time we had all of those plane crashes, you know where you have the blood and guts and stuff, they served spaghetti! Anyway. So that was our day without food.

Cohen: [00:39:22] Jeannie, just to clarify, did you do the medical training--?

Adams: [00:39:25] --You were talking about the training, right? We had to study also.

Cohen: [00:39:29] Oh, so was that already at a Gunter Air Force Base?

Adams: [00:39:35] That was at [pronounced] Gunther.

Cohen: [00:39:37] That was near Maxwell Air Force Base?

Adams: [00:39:40] Yes, it was.

Adams: [00:39:41] Gunther was also in Montgomery, Alabama, and Gunther was on one side of town. Maxwell was on the other. So the medical training now, depending on, you know what, after basic training which field you were going into, that's what they would send you. So if they have Scott Air Force Base, [that] was the place to go for the Communications, then that person was sent there for their training. Or, you know, so the medical training, I think there was one in Texas, I can't remember the name of that base, but also there was a Gunther which was in Montgomery. So, you know, maybe they knew then that I was going to be, had already decided that I would be a permanent party at Maxwell. So just send me to Alabama and I'd be there for both. I don't know. And they never explained it. All I know is I cried like a baby when I found out I was going to be staying in Montgomery permanent party. I just knew. I mean, some of my friends were going in other places to Germany, and you know, that was all part of mine to see the world. Okay. How long am I going to be in Maxwell? But anyway. So that was it. I volunteered for Vietnam many times.

Cohen: [00:40:56] You had you had volunteered to Vietnam?

Adams: [00:40:58] I volunteered.

Cohen: [00:41:00] Anything to get out of Montgomery?

Adams: [00:41:07] Yes. I could talk to. Well, one of the highlights of being at Maxwell was I got to meet one-on-one with Colonel Jeanne Holm , who was the director of the Air Force.

Cohen: [00:41:21] Yeah, yeah. [together] the first brigadier general.

Adams: [00:41:23] First brigadier general, right. Right, exactly. And you talk about another down to earth person. Unbelievable! It just it was, I mean, she met us. She chit chatted with us just like you and I were talking. She came to the barracks. We met in the Day Room. Whatever. There were no questions off limit. So of course, I asked her, "You know, why couldn't I go to Vietnam?" [Laughs]

Cohen: [00:41:51] What did she say?

Adams: [00:41:53] She had a very nice answer and one that had stayed with me. And of course, this was her answer. Not necessarily military. But she said that the conditions were not that [suitable for women]. There were women nurses over. Okay, now I'm not a nurse. I'm a corpsman. There were male corpsmen over there. But she said that they were sending, I think, ten administrative females Air Force. But they were not going to be out in the field. They were going to be stationed in a hotel in Saigon. Being a medic, I would have to or the others would have to be on the field. And she said one of the reasons, her main reason for not wanting to see women, she said she wanted women to always feel like a lady, like a woman, and to always present themselves that way. And it can be impossible to do that, you know, in certain environments, but that you know that quote I wrote down. And I have kept it, "Always present yourself, you know, as a female first." That's what she did first because that's what you are first, you know? So that was her reason for me not going to Vietnam. But I do know that women were being sent and the organization that I'm with now, there were some nurses that were registered nurses, that did serve in Vietnam during that time.

Cohen: [00:43:35] Yeah. That's true. We have what we have one oral history with a woman who served [as a nurse] in Vietnam.

Adams: [00:43:41] I was in. I was not untouched by the war because working at Maxwell, we received some casualties. And so because I was in the hospital, I [in] Intensive Care and Surgery most of the time. E.R. when, they were shorthanded, but [in] Intensive Care and Surgery. So I did get to see quite a bit.

Cohen: [00:44:03] I was about to ask you about that. Like what was what was that like? And were there like typical injuries?

Adams: [00:44:12] There were some. Now, of course, we didn't see as many as, say, Andrews [Military Hospital] or some of the others. But we had some young men to come back without limbs and, you know, stomach injuries and that type of things. But and things that could be treated there and after the surgery or whatever, then they went into the [Intensive] Care for a while, and then they were moved into a medical ward. And then after that, you know, whether they were discharged or, you know, sent back to duty, I don't [know]. We didn't follow. I didn't follow them. I just did. This is what we have right now. This is real life. You know, this is not your lady that came in to have a hysterectomy or, you know, the person that had the appendix taken out. Or, you know, this is a little bit. So we really get to feel and how should I say, get a taste of [war] but from stateside, you know, knowing how much worse it was actually was, you know, for the ones in the field.

Cohen: [00:45:17] Did any of them like, share with you what they'd gone through or not so much, because it was an emergency type of situation?

Adams: [00:45:28] The only one that really sticks with me was an older gentleman who...And it wasn't so much what he went through. When he came back, he had somewhat ruptured intestines or whatever. So he had a lot of stomach and stomach issues, and he required quite a bit of, you know, attention almost at the bedside. And he talked more about his personal life and his family, you know, and having to leave the family, and now being here and his family was still someplace else. So, you know, the wife couldn't even, you know, come there to visit and that. But to talk about what went on over there? No. I talked with many later, you know, but

not during that time when I was actually working... In the Reserves, I got more of that from some of them, from my family members who served over there and friends, like my brother. Actually, I had seen a clip and we were watching the news on TV, and I told my parents, I said, "Oh, there's AJ, there's AJ, look, look", and we could see him.

Cohen: [00:46:41] Oh my God.

Adams: [00:46:42] And to recognize him even from the newsreel, you know, and so and so again, not necessarily there, but afterwards. And my uncle. Agent Orange. He ended up dying from complications of Agent Orange. Okay, friends that are still alive, of course, but have had side effects from that. Yeah. So. Yes. Anyway...

Cohen: [00:47:13] On another topic, at any point, either at basic or the later, medical training, were you required to learn how to use a gun or any other type of arms?

Adams: [00:47:24] In Reserve. When I went in the Reserves and I actually, I'm proud to say this, I have a marksmanship ribbon for the M-16 and the .38 revolver. [Cohen laughs] But not when I was on active duty, no, not at all. So we had to carry medical bags. Okay. You had this big Red Cross on your arm and not on your helmet or whatever. That's it. So if you couldn't get rid of them with the injection of morphine or something, you had to depend on the other guys, the ones with the guns. So, no, I didn't have any, you know. any gun training in active [duty].
[Laughter]

Cohen: [00:48:15] You also mentioned that you'd been underweight in comparison to whatever the weight requirements were to get into the Air Force. Was that an ongoing issue?

Adams: [00:48:26] Well, actually, no. Well, at that time, you were supposed to be for my height, I was 5'5, 5'5 and a half, one hundred pounds. I'd have [to weigh] one hundred pounds or more. Well, I was ninety-eight [pounds] when the recruiter first [met me] and I gained a pound during the time of all of the testing and the filling out of the documents, paperwork and everything. I did everything to try to gain that. You know, I was taking supplements, I think that I mentioned to you that the recruiting man told my dad, "Well, she could probably gain it if she drank beer." And he goes, "Then she won't gain it." He was adamant about that. So but I had

stuff on Nutriment, you know, that kind of stuff I was drinking. I had to hold my nose and drink because I didn't like milk, you know? But when I got out of basic training after that six weeks, I was still just at my one hundred pounds. So I didn't really gain any weight there because I was never really a big eater anyway. But it was it was really a highlight at that point because there was a "Porky Pig List". They called it the "Porky Pig".

Cohen: [00:49:43] Oh Geez.

Adams: [00:49:43] And they actually; didn't want anyone that was overweight. They would post it--

Cohen: [00:49:50] Oh no.

Adams: [00:49:50] --so that the entire base could see it. I mean,

Cohen: [00:49:54] No privacy.

Adams: [00:49:56] They're going to shame you [Laughter] but...and so and as a result of that... I think maybe the only female that was going to Lackland at the time, I mean, not Lackland to Gunther, at the time, I got to take...charge of everyone's travel. They should have told me that that administration was somewhere down the road for me, but I was in charge of everyone's travel documents. So I had the folder that contained [id documents]... We, we traveled by bus, by the way. They didn't fly us, okay?

Cohen: [00:50:28] Oh, from, from--

Adams: [00:50:29] --From Lackland to Montgomery. We were bussed Greyhound Bus, one of those buses. But in my pouch were the orders for everyone that was on that bus. So I was I was the boss! [Both laugh]

Adams: [00:50:53] So weight never became an issue after that. So I got in. Another exemption, like me being able to work at and stay at Hyde Park after... I was supposed to transfer out.

Cohen: [00:51:11] Right, right, right.

Adams: [00:51:12] "Okay," you know, "We'll waive that for [you]" So.

Cohen: [00:51:20] Right. [some laughter and indistinct conversation]. Would you write letters home from either basic or from your subsequent training?

Adams: [00:51:32] Oh yes, letters. It was important for us to write and to receive mail. And so that was, like I said, probably daily, I wrote home or at least kept a journal and then mailed it within a couple of days. And I think so. We always look forward to that. And that was one of the highlights of The Honor Flight, which is something different. But that mail call, because it is it is making those daily trips to the post office [was so vital]. I'll never forget I had given blood and being a medic and being little and everything, I knew better. But instead of my staying down like I was supposed to for the amount of time, I went to the Post Office to see if I had any mail. I got over there and passed out [Laughter]. Just briefly, but anyway mail call was extremely important. And then, of course, when my fiancé, I met my husband at Maxwell [Air Force Base], and he was stationed in Thailand, he was sent to Thailand. And so of course, now I'm expecting mail from him. And of course, I had to send mail to him, you know? So yeah, mail is very important. I was receiving it, sending it, you know.

Cohen: [00:53:05] That's true.

Adams: [00:53:08] And we could make collect phone calls home. Unless you knew someone in Com's watch [i.e. Communication or "Com" Squadron], you could make freebies. Even if they could hook you up with someone overseas, that's even better! So it was really three groups that you, you know, you wanted to become friends with. That was the medical, the communications, and the AP, the police, Air Police,

Cohen: [00:53:36] Air police say. Why the Air Police?

Adams: [00:53:41] Come on, now. If you're driving too fast or if you're in the wrong lane or okay if you're somewhere where you're not supposed to be... you might want to know someone [Laughter] "We'll just give you a warning this time." And your phone calls? Okay,

communication squad. Now, I won't tell you about the medics. We had a little something called cough syrup, GI Gin. [Both laugh]

Adams: [00:54:15] I was going to tell you about that. I didn't have any part in that.

Cohen: [00:54:18] No, it's true. The key, key people.

Adams: [00:54:23] Key people, exactly right. You notice that I didn't say the chaplain or anything like that. [Laughter] But, we has some good base commanders.

Cohen: [00:54:32] So would you live on the base the whole way through...?

Adams: [00:54:38] Yes, yes. Lived in the barracks. And actually...I can't remember how long it was, but because of - I had gotten a couple of promotions. I was able to have a room, a single room, so I didn't have to share rooms. So some of us could have our own private room. And we actually, you know, we had to keep the barracks clean. But the Air Force, and that's why some people today will say that the Air Force is not the real military. They actually had people to come in from downtown Montgomery to help, you know, like a cleaning staff to help the male and female help us with the barracks, okay? And as a medic, I never I don't even know what it's like to pull KP, you know kitchen duty.

Cohen: [00:55:33] Yeah, yeah.

Adams: [00:55:34] I never had to do that. And our food was very good because being a medic, I ate at the hospital. So I never had to go to the regular chow hall or dining hall. So there were, there were some perks there that I didn't realize would be associated with being a medic, but I chose the right field at the time.

Cohen: [00:55:58] Did you think you might want a career like in nursing or medicine?

Adams: [00:56:03] Yes. I thought that would be my next step. So I would be going to college. And I took a couple of courses at Troy State University while I was at Montgomery. But just, a course, here and there. And I also worked temporarily as St. Jude's Hospital, at St. Jude's. And

that was that was, it was hard because it was children. And you know, I thought, you know, 'It's okay... I've seen the wounded come back. I've been in surgery. I've been in E.R. when bikers have been brought in and I've, you know, been tending to a person when they died'. But dealing with the children and just seeing them, that it was a little much for me. It was heartbreaking, right, exactly. So I did not last very long there, and that was just a part time job that we were allowed to do that with the permission of the base commander. And so, you know, maybe a month. But he extended my stay at St. Jude's, but I still wanted the medical field. And when I got out, my plan was to get a job at one of the V.A. hospitals and go into nursing school. And you know, after my tour of the V.A. Hospital here, I told my husband, I was like, "I can't do it. I don't want any part of this." And I had worked, I think that I mentioned to you. I had worked at six months at Oklahoma General Hospital in Clinton, Oklahoma.

Cohen: [00:57:56] Yes, yes.

Adams: [00:57:57] That was fine. I was fine. I was on a maternity ward. So it was okay. So I just figured it was natural, but I just wasn't prepared.

Cohen: [00:58:06] Well, what was so shocking about it?

Adams: [00:58:12] It's really everything, you know, and I don't want to. But it was not the sterile atmosphere that I had seen at Maxwell. You know, not even the cleanliness and stuff that I saw. And I mean, it smelled like a hospital. It looked it just, yeah, it's hard. It's almost it's almost... When I, when my grandmother first went into a nursing home and when I went to see her and I told my mom, "She said she can't stay here, you know?" And then years later, when my mom went into one temporarily, you know, there's a certain places, you know? And that's not saying that the care at the hospital was not, you know, good. I don't know. I didn't give it a chance. Okay? I knew my uncle was a patient there and he got good care. You know, he was in the Korean War and he was a wounded. And as a result of his wounds, he became addicted. And so throughout his life and he was in and out of different hospitals and he always went to the V.A., you know. He never had a problem with it. But it was just, I was just too young at that time and not brave enough to face, you know, what are the conditions that I saw there. That was it. So I told my husband, "No, I can't do this." [He asked,] "So do you want to go on to

nursing school?" I go, "No, no". He said, "What are you going to do?" [I replied] "I don't have any skills, okay?" All I know is medic except for when I was in high school."

Adams: [00:59:51] So when I was in high school, we had a senior year. We had to work, had to get a job part time. You have so many hours in school and then you go to your job. And I worked at Spiegel's mail order house. That was all the experience I had. So I'm like, "I don't want to do that either". So, so as a dutiful husband would do, he cut out, you know, the want ads on the newspaper and said, "This is what you do." We got my resume together and everything, and I went down to the places he'd, you know, cut out in yesterday's paper and I had an appointment and I went to, I think it was Central National Bank. I think it was. And then I went across the street to the Northern Trust Company and was interviewed at both places, and I got hired at Northern Trust on the spot, basically. Within two weeks later, I got a job offer from Central National. That was it. The rest is, yeah, thirty two years later, I retired from the Northern Trust Company.

Cohen: [01:01:06] A whole career. So just to jump back a little bit to the actual Air Force base. Were men and women allowed to socialize or did they try to be very strict? How did you meet your husband?

Adams: [01:01:18] We were able to socialize and we stayed in separate barracks. We did not have co-ed barracks, okay? I did not see co-ed barracks since I was in the Reserves. Okay? And then on temporary duty assignments. But they kept us, we were located pretty much together, like all the women were in the same barracks, and the men the barracks close to ours.[Then there] was the medical where the medical men were. And then others, you know, barracks throughout. We had, the men could come. There were certain visiting hours, they could come to our Day Room, only to the Day Room, okay. And so and the men had certain things in their barracks that we didn't have in ours. You know, for instance, their pop machine might have different [types of pop]. So, you know, we exchange, you know, you call up your buddy over there and you know, "Oh, hey, Jimmy Black, could you bring over some Orange Crush or something?"

Adams: [01:02:17] And then after hours when you were on your own time, of course, we actually, several of us who rented this house outside of, it was off base, and we would go out

there for picnics and stuff like that. So we, you know, you shared it. So this group would have it, maybe on Friday, and somebody else has it on Saturday and that kind of thing. So we found time to socialize. They had clubs downtown Montgomery that [we frequented] on our off-duty times, the Elks was one, the Elks Club, and then Club Leikos. I remember those ones, you know, so we partied and I was kind of like real popular because I was from *Chicago* [said with humorous emphasis]. And everybody wanted the *Chicago* girl to teach them how to do the *Chicago Bop* or the this or that. So it was it was a lot different than basic. Real life now.

Cohen: [01:03:18] How did you meet the man who became your husband?

Adams: [01:03:21] Well, he was an administrative specialist, a medical. So he worked in hospital. And that's how we met. We just would be. There were only two of us, two female Black medics. And I was one of the ones. Okay, and John, just one day he said, "Oh, so there you are." Those were his, my daughter says that to me now today, but I thought he was looking for me, had been looking for me for something. Some reason, someone wanted me, you know? And I said, "I beg your pardon." So he said it again. "So there you are." Well, he was flirting. I didn't realize that. [Both laugh] I'm a little slow at certain things. But anyways, so that was the beginning. We started seeing each other, you know, just casual friend with a bunch a group of friends and then it just developed. And then he got shipped to Thailand and I was left there. You know, he was gone for thirteen months. And so when he came back that we decided, you know, we should get married, right? Marriage was the furthest thing from my mind. [Laughter] With him, okay. I'm going to do these four years, you know, and on and on and on, whatever. He had been in [the Air Force], he was on his second--

Cohen: [01:04:51] --Second tour?

Adams: [01:04:52] Exactly, his second tour. And so when his tour was up, he was like, "Eight years. It's time for me to do something else." I'm like, "Well, I'm not through." Oh, and you know, it was before...I guess the base commander really had become, you know, your guardian in a way because we had to get permission from the base commander--

Cohen: [01:05:24] --To get to get married?

Adams: [01:05:25] To get married. Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, you had to go through counseling sessions and everything, which is, I mean, it's good.

Cohen: [01:05:31] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Adams: [01:05:34] So, so we get married.

Cohen: [01:05:37] Did you get married on the base itself or back in Chicago?

Adams: [01:05:40] Oh yes. We were supposed to come back to Chicago. We were scheduled to have a wedding in June. You know, we were going to come back here and his parents were going to come over from Detroit because it was his home and we actually took a trip so that I could meet his parents and he could be mine. We did all that. And then and I can't, you know, I really don't know. I don't know, it wasn't my idea. "No, way", he said..."Let's just go ahead and do this thing. There's so many things that need [money] and you know, we don't need to be spending all that money and on and on and on and on." Well, I agreed with that, you know? But now, I don't get my wedding! Okay. You know, you didn't have all this loan planning and everything... It wasn't like we had to undo or left it hanging it. It wasn't going to be the grand [wedding] anyway because we were just going to be on short leave and then come back to Maxwell. So we decided to, you know, get married in Montgomery. And that's what we did with some of our military friends and the witnesses and everything, you know? And I was like, "Couldn't we at least have the [ceremony] where they take the swords so we could march through them?" So but anyway, so that was that was it. That was it.

Cohen: [01:07:04] And the other thing is, do you want to talk about like what it was like being a Black in Montgomery versus Chicago? Like you're saying earlier, you know, growing up perhaps it was there, but it really didn't have any impact on your day-to-day life at all. Then all of a sudden you're in Montgomery. And what was it like there? Or was it worse on the base or outside of the base...?

Adams: [01:07:23] No, outside of the base. On the base, we really were, you know, a bunch of youngsters, you know, like if we were at college... I mean, of course, it was much more rigid and whatever. But and we were I mean, we were integrated. Everyone, you know, the barracks, you

were forced. It was a forced integration. You know, your roommates. You didn't get to choose your roommate, okay.

Adams: [01:07:47] And so but it worked. And there were so many women that I met in my barracks and had never seen a Black person in the flesh, only on television or in a magazine or whatever. And so there was so much we wanted to learn. They wanted to learn from me, you know, about my hair and how I did this and that. And well, I was aware of... you know, we had the hair was straightened out or it was, you know, relaxed or something like that. And then to even see them because even though I had friends in Chicago and went to school with them, I never lived with them. So I didn't know that the girls with the long hair would actually put it on the ironing board and do that. Okay, maybe, you know it...

Adams: [01:08:32] So you know, so it's so much we had to learn about each other. So it was fun. I'm getting into the friction if I can use that term, [that] came from those outside because when we went out, we went out as a group. We'd go to the Black clubs. And we didn't go to the White clubs, okay? But the Black clubs accepted the, you know, integrated group that we were. And we'd have a lot of good times where we'd just...And then there were some times when, you know, things were thrown, you know, as a group, you know, slurs and the whole ball of wax. And this is just not, you know, it's not good. So the atmosphere got very volatile if I can use that word, to the point where Army troops, the National Guard was sent down to Montgomery. And so we wanted to be part of that, but we couldn't be part of it. But we wanted to show our support and our frustration at what was going on because in Montgomery at that time, they flew the state flag over the U.S. flag. We did not like it. We went to the base commander about that. He said, "There's nothing we can do about that. Okay, that's not on the base." Crosses were burned and thrown over the fence.

Cohen: [01:10:07] Oh my God!

Adams: [01:10:07] Oh yeah. Oh yeah. It was not. It was. It was not a pretty sight. So what we did once and this was one of the and I put it in my notes as one of the frightful or the dangerous things that we did. And when you see college kids do this stuff like that and you know, "Why would they do that?", you know, so we were just like those college kids. We got together, okay? And we went to the Montgomery Capitol [Building] and we staged a sit in. Now we were not in

uniform. You could not do. We were in civilian clothing. So a lot of them didn't know whether we were military, college people that came that were called the Freedom Riders. They didn't know who we were, and were locked arm in arm and praying that nobody from the base saw us to go back and report or so, okay, you know--

Cohen: [01:10:56] No, nobody from the base saw you?

Adams: [01:10:57] No, no, no. We're praying that nobody saw us. So but, you know, but we were just determined like, this is our [stance]. Let's just show our togetherness in that we're not condoning, you know, this kind of stuff. We had actually been at a club one night and it was about four or five of us and we were going to go to the club. And then we were driving down to Panama City, Florida, over the Washington holiday. So when we came out, a bunch of White guys started after us and we all jumped in the car together and we were driving and the young man that was whose car it was, he said. You know, he says, "I'm Jewish and they hate me just as much as they hate you guys, you know." He says, "We're all in this together." They chased us, and when we crossed the line out of Alabama into Florida, we knew that they thought they had ran us out of town. So we were going to Panama anyway. So nobody was hurt, but they just, you know, they didn't shoot. There was no shooting or anything like that. But there were, you know, rock throwing. But it was it was really, but it was a scary. You know that somebody would just want to hurt you for no reason now just because you were socializing together, you know?

Cohen: [01:12:25] Yeah.

Adams: [01:12:25] So it was it was not. And wherever we went, you were aware of this. So you were you were cautious, you know? And I had not experienced that. I mean, not even in those early years in Mississippi, when I realize it, you know, you can't walk on the same sidewalk. It was still not that kind of hatred [Cohen says in unison, that kind of hatred] that I'd see. Exactly. And that's exactly what this was. It was just pure hatred. I mean, burning crosses, throwing them over the [fence], you know, they were just showing their disrespect. Anyway, that was... we had we had that kind of experience, and of course, everything else that was going on [too]. Now, once...you were really on base, you know, I didn't see it. If people felt that way, you know, I didn't get any repercussions or I didn't see the repercussions from it. Actually, the NCO that was my boss on the medical ward where I worked, he and they were both from the South. Born

and bred there. Okay, so they were in there, just the nicest people I ever met, even the one that I was like, Oh, when I first met him, I didn't. He had that look...

Adams: [01:13:57] This man ended up loaning me his car to go into Montgomery for something once. I had to take a trip; you know? So it was different. We really had, and you know that, and I guess for lack of a better term to say, that cohesive, that family. You know, "Like, we were in this, and we were together"...No matter what was going on out here, you know, we were going to protect each other. So I was really blessed in that and that respect, in that regard. And I know there were other people on the base that felt the same way. So it was all around us, but we were determined not to let it, you know, touch us and--

Cohen: [01:14:37] Unravel.

Adams: [01:14:39] Exactly. Now, of course, there were some situations, so we were able to deal with some. But yeah, okay. We were like, "We belong to Uncle Sam, okay! This is our family. So you mess with one, you mess with all."

Cohen: [01:14:59] When you talked about being at the capital and locking arms, was this, was this part of Martin Luther King's march from Selma to Montgomery?

Adams: [01:15:07] No, no, no. This was during, it was during all of the marches and the Freedom Riders were coming from up North. It was all during that time. But we [emphasized] the reason we did that is because they had to send the National Guard down to try to keep order. So we were showing our support since we could not be in uniform, the National Guard, they were in uniform. They were there. This was their assignment, you know, so we were just want[ing] to go and show that, "We're not like this. We're Black and we're White and we're whatever we are, and we're all together."

Cohen: [01:15:44] Yes, yes.

Adams: [01:15:44] So supporting one another and not supporting this ignorance that's going on out there. No. And we didn't realize how dangerous, we could have been hurt, you know, but we weren't. [Laughter] Everything was fine.

Cohen: [01:16:03] Would you go off the base alone or no? Or only with friends?

Adams: [01:16:07] Never, never. The only time it was only just like a couple of girls that would go off together, it's when we went to the hairdresser, to the beauty shop, whatever and we'd drive together, you know, to get because we had to go. There was no place on base for us to get our hair done.

Cohen: [01:16:24] Okay, okay.

Adams: [01:16:25] So people with hair like mine went downtown to do a beauty shop there. But other than that, you know, it was just [when we] socialized because most of the time we were on base, I guess. And when we'd go out, you know, the house that we rented that kind of stuff. So it was always a group. So...you were not in uniform. When we left base, we were not in uniform. So you were in civilian clothing. So you just blended in.

Cohen: [01:16:54] [Laughs] Right? Sure. Did you-- Okay, I don't know if this was true in the '60s, but I remember hearing at an earlier point, at an earlier point in time people could, so to speak, get rides from aircrafts if they happen to be, if there were some seats available. Like I remember--

Adams: [01:17:16] Hops.

Cohen: [01:17:17] So were you able to get any hops?

Adams: [01:17:20] I was scheduled for several out of Montgomery to Hawaii. I was even on the plane!

Cohen: [01:17:29] Oh no!

Adams: [01:17:31] On one of them. We never left. [Laughter] Something came up and we happened to be diverted someplace else.

Adams: [01:17:36] So I know I never got to take advantage of that, those hops at all. But when I did travel, I was able to fly in uniform. Then we could always fly, you know. *Military standby* was what is what called. So if you had time, if you didn't have to be where you were going, you know, because you could be bumped off, you know? So give up your seat to a paying customer. You spend a night in the airport. I spent the night in the airport and Oklahoma City. I spent the night in the airport. I think in Kansas City, Missouri. Those were the only two times I got bumped. And then once I was actually upgraded to first class which was fine. And then it was one time I was on the way home on leave and there was a passenger in first class who was well known singer, Black singer. Well, when they said who was up in first class, I'm like, "I know Major Lance! His sister and I are good friends. We lived in the same building in Hyde Park." So he had the stewardess, as they were called at that time, and so they had a seat up in first class. So he got the stewardess to let me come up in first class. And actually, when we landed here, he had his limo to even take me home and drop me off. I'll never forget. My mom opened the door, you know, and I said, "Mom, this is Major Lance." She thought I meant a major, you know, she thought military, thought I was talking about the military. But I said, "Remember him? He was in the neighborhood!" Kind of thing.

Cohen: [01:19:23] Kinda cool.[Laughter]

Adams: [01:19:24] And his daughter is now, I think she's the mayor of Atlanta or something. I said one day, one day, you know, I'll write to her, give a call or something. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I was able to get upgraded because of her dad. But those hops, a lot of people took advantage of it and it was good because I mean, you could go to Germany or wherever you know they were going, if you had the time. You know, you could you could do it. But they were determined to keep me in Montgomery. [Laughter]

Cohen: [01:20:02] Oh gosh. Did you hope to go to Germany or to Europe? Like...in your service, as well? Like, did you want to be sent?

Adams: [01:20:12] Oh, absolutely. And my best friend, she and her husband also got married. I was a maid of honor in the military, okay. And today still, I mean, that's part of...there are some people you become family and you're tied. And so and that's like a lifelong, you know. We met

in 1966 and they're my daughter's godparents and, you know, my sister from another mother and my brother from another mother, you know--

Cohen: [01:20:43] Yeah.

Adams: [01:20:44]-- To this day...I wanted to go. Yes. And maybe had I not gotten married and got out early so I still hold that against my husband. [Both laugh] But no. Getting to see the world, part of my reason for going in didn't quite didn't pan out.

Cohen: [01:21:13] So I'm a little confused when you and your husband moved to Oklahoma. So it was just a point where he was still in the active duty, but because you were married, you had to leave?

Adams: [01:21:26] Because I couldn't get a position. There was no position for me at that base. So the only way I could go with him, I could have stayed at Montgomery and stayed in.

Cohen: [01:21:36] Yeah, yeah.

Adams: [01:21:37] Well, yeah, well, we were thinking like newlyweds. [Cohen laughs] So I had to, you know, had to give up, you know, and I still regret that. I do. I regret it. Anyway, but, So but yes, so he was a permanent party at Clinton-Sherman Air Force Base there [in Oklahoma] and now I was wife dependent. My I.D. card, my active duty ID card got changed green now to brown.

Cohen: [01:22:05] Oh gosh, yeah.

Adams: [01:22:10] And that's what I was working in the hospital in Oklahoma City, not Oklahoma City. I'm sorry, the Oklahoma General Hospital there in Clinton.

Cohen: [01:22:20] Oh...you were still working--

Adams: [01:22:25] On the maternity ward of the hospital. So I'm still I'm still pro, you know, pro-medicine at that time.

Cohen: [01:22:32] Yeah, yeah.

Adams: [01:22:35] That's why I ended up getting out early.

Cohen: [01:22:39] As a couple, did you live in special barracks or special housing?

Adams: [01:22:44] Again, they usually have housing on base for married couples. But they did not. So but what they did is they rented us, you know, so they paid for it. We lived in a trailer. It was a trailer park almost directly across the street from the base. It was called Ralph Crab's Trailer Park. But it was nice. That was my first home.

Adams: [01:23:11] And it was fine, and we made friends there, of course, because there were a lot of other GIs too, that were in the trailer park with us. So even though we were not on base, you know, you still have that atmosphere. And it was very, very small town. They had a post office and the laundromat and pool hall and the laundromat was adjacent. You know, the base was in it but if it were it not for that base, that town probably wouldn't have existed. Because when I made reservations, I was looking for the airlines, I'm looking up Clinton, Oklahoma, Clinton, Oklahoma. It was not listed under Clinton, it was listed under Clinton- Sherman.

Cohen: [01:23:49] So this is just a little Navy [sic, i.e. Air Force] base itself.

Adams: [01:23:52] It's one hundred and twenty five miles from Oklahoma City. I doubt if it's still there. I don't know if that base is closed or not. I had no interest in even checking to see but we were there for six months,

Cohen: [01:24:05] And after that, is that when you return to Chicago?

Adams: [01:24:10] I return to Chicago and this is my husband with me, which was really his [first time]. He had never lived in Chicago before.

Cohen: [01:24:17] So how did he like? How did he like it? What did he do after the service?

Adams: [01:24:23] He didn't [like the service]. He really didn't mind because he was in the communication team while we were in Montgomery. Even though he was in Medical Administration in the Air Force, he had part-time jobs and his job was he was a disc jockey on one of the FM radio stations there. And...it was an all-White station, but because with the disc jockey, you're not seeing [him], you'll only hearing your voice. Okay, so he got the job! [Laughter] Anyway, so then so and he wanted to continue in that. And he, you know, Chicago, as Detroit also was, you know, as far as media and things like that, [were places of opportunity in media]. And he decided that he would try out for television now. You know, he'd been in radio and I think so he got a job at WGN?

Cohen: [01:25:28] Oh, wow, does he still at WGN?

Adams: [01:25:30] Oh, well, he you know, he's deceased, now, but he was at WGN and I can't tell you exactly what years. But I was actually talking to--who was with us – [Adams later clarified the name, Sean Lewis on the Honor Flight]?

Cohen: [01:25:48] Ginny Narsete?

Adams: [01:25:48] No, no, no, the news reporter, [Sean Lewis] oh God, from WGN. And he goes, "Oh yeah", he says, "I know that name".

Cohen: [01:25:53] Ah, they knew of him.

Adams: [01:25:56] Yes, exactly right. So because he was the one of the first or the first street, what they call street reporter. He was not an anchor. You know, he was the one that, you know, out in the street to get the news and would, you know, report from location and that kind of thing. So he did that for a number of years, and then he went to another television station here in Chicago, and then he had his own television show on the station and just, you know. So he stayed in that and opened up his own company, business, and stuff of which I was vice president. I didn't really do anything except, you know, keep the books because I was working full time now at the Northern [Trust Company]

Cohen: [01:26:39] Yeah. So what was his name?

Adams: [01:26:45] John. John Q. Adams Yeah, yeah. Mm-hmm. Real original, right?

Cohen: [01:26:49] [Laughter]

Adams: [01:26:52] John Q. was the name that he went by. He actually had some work put in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. Oh, they did the caricature of him and stuff. So. So he's got some history here.

Cohen: [01:27:05] Yeah, he did. Looks like quite a bit.

Adams: [01:27:07] Yeah. And so that, next when we moved, we moved to the north side. And I, you know, never lived on the north side. So we were in Lincoln Park West and then from there in '72, we moved to Hyde Park. We're coming back home. And now I'm back to my old stomping grounds.

Cohen: [01:27:30] Yeah, yeah. I think you mentioned you have a daughter.

Adams: [01:27:35] Yes, I do. I do. And that was, you know, when I owe that to the Air Force. Because if it had not been had for me meeting my husband in the Air Force and I wouldn't have my daughter. So I have a daughter and she has two sons, so that's my nucleus. And I'm still very close to my husband [i.e. his family]. [He] Had a brother and a sister. His sister is deceased, but his brother is still alive. So we're very close. He still lives in Detroit. So that's actually the only member of my husband's family that is still alive other than his child, you know, of that generation? He has a daughter.

Cohen: [01:28:26] Oh, wow, so you're so you're back, Okay I don't know, in the Chicago area--.

Adams: [01:28:33] We've gone all over the place.

Cohen: [01:28:35] And you walk into Northern Trust and they hire you on the spot?

Adams: [01:28:40] They test me, they went through the testing and everything. And that's why the Personnel Department, Human Resources was called Personnel--

Cohen: [01:28:47] --Personnel, in those days.

Adams: [01:28:48] That's right. And so when she reviewed my aptitude tests and everything, she said, wow, she said, "You would be great in our special events area." "You know", she said, "because you rank high in social services and all of that", she said. "But we don't have anything there." And of course, you know, I've just got my high school and a couple of college courses. And she says, "Well, what we'll do is we will hire you in the Personnel Department as a typist receptionist." Oh, and so that's what they did. And I started in that position and that was my position for six months and then I got promoted. And you know, it's so it just sort of just snowballed. And that was in '68. And then I went into their management training program in 1974 and I was going to DePaul University also. So I was going to school, married, had a child and working. [Laughter]

Cohen: [01:29:59] So how did you juggle all that?

Adams: [01:30:06] I did. I juggled it. It worked out. You know, you do what you have to do. And it was all something that I wanted: love, you know, because I wanted the child, you know? And I was enjoying my job, you know, and I was enjoying my husband. So it made it happen. And now you I love the area I was living in. It worked out just great. And at one time or babysitter, I was able to find one right there in the building. When it was nursery school time, you know, two blocks away, three blocks away was a nursery school right in Hyde Park. And so I joined the Board of Directors of the nursery school so that I could have some input. And then she went to grammar school there in Hyde Park at St. Thomas the Apostle in Woodlawn...

Cohen: [01:30:52] So that's great. You had the opportunity to raise your daughter where you yourself lived.

Adams: [01:30:58] Absolutely. Absolutely.

Cohen: [01:31:00] Yeah...Oh yeah, so this was what I was about to ask you. So after seventeen years, you decided that you would like to join the Air Force Reserves. So what motivated you?

Adams: [01:31:20] Do I really have to tell you? [Laughter]

Cohen: [01:31:22] Okay, do you want to? It's up to you.

Adams: [01:31:27] Life changes. I said earlier sort of under my breath that I always resented the fact that I had to get out. There were two things that I resented. For my twenty-first birthday, I had bought a brand new 1968 Cougar, my first car and I got [1:31.47] real [excited] about it. Well, when I got married, my husband was like, "We can't afford two cars. You know, one is more practical." So we got a Ford Fairlane 500. So we had to give up the Cougar, okay. Anyway. And then the other ones was me having to get out early. So I really still, you know, I kept saying, "What if I had stayed?" What if? How would things have been? Where could I have gone?" I mean, you know, all this hindsight stuff, but I was, you know, I was out of college. I graduated again, you know, rank promotions at Northern Trust, you know, my daughter was doing great. You know, John was doing fine. I mean, it was still something missing. 'Maybe I should go to the Reserves?' My uncle, who's all along, he was my impetus for going in the first place, you know? "Uncle Andy, what do you think about it?" You know, "Why? You're busy. You got your hands full." I said, "There's just, you know..." He said, "Hey, do it." He said, "You'll be a weekend warrior." He said, "That's no big deal. You know, you still got your regular job and you know, you don't have to do, you know, a weekend, a month and everything, you know, and you got another paycheck coming in." I mean, he gave me all these problems solved. I go, "I'm going to do it." So I go home, called a recruiter... "How old are you?" So I told him my age at the time, he was like, "We got to work fast because you're just under that!"

Adams: [01:33:26] Anyway, when they told you that I would be stationed right at O'Hare because I thought that I might have to do my weekend duties, maybe at Scott or some other airports, because a lot of them do have to fly away and, O'Hare, oh my, this is prime. And it was just meant to be. So I talked to the bank [i.e. Northern Trust], you know, my manager then told him and he said, "Well, that's one thing we cannot say no to." You know.

Cohen: [01:33:53] That's right. By obligation.

Adams: [01:33:57] So, Okay, no problem. And I go a weekend, a month, that's no biggie, you know, and it's not affecting, you know, the job. Well, little did they know.[Laughs] And little did I know that I was a very, very busy [reservist]. I was in the Airlift Squadron. This is the pilot, pilots have to have so much flying time and all the whole bunch of other stuff. So in addition to my one weekend a month, I get off work by 5:00, 5:30 and get out to O'Hare. That was during the week, you know, because most of them, you know, the pilots want to get some extra flying time in. And I do this because I'm in administration, keeping the records.

Cohen: [01:34:41] So, you'd constantly be keeping track of how many more hours they were adding to their practice and be there, as well?

Adams: [01:34:49] And be there as well and [do] filing. And no, I didn't have to do any flying. ...But I was strictly in the office.

Cohen: [01:34:56] Yeah, but you have to be in the office at O'Hare?

Adams: [01:34:59] Yes. Yeah. Oh yeah. Oh yeah,

Cohen: [01:35:01] There wasn't remote! [in unison]

Adams: [01:35:01] No, it wasn't so bad, you know, and I really didn't mind, you know? And so that and then I started flying more weekends than that one weekend a month. That one weekend--these aren't your...only obligated [weekends]-- and I said, "Well, I am only obligated, but you know, they've got a group going up to Alpena [Michigan] and, you know, I really wouldn't mind going." and on and on... So after a while, you know, my manager is kind of like, "You know, we think maybe you need to make a big decision here, okay." Yeah, okay. I know which side of the bread is buttered on or whatever. You know? So I was like, okay, so you know, I laid back and just didn't work so many hours in my regular time. And because I enjoyed it, I enjoyed going out there. I enjoyed the... friends that I met out there again. You know, you just become buddies...? And actually, I brought some pictures for you to take a look at, too. And now there's another addition to my family. You know, my Reserve. This is a much older, more settled, you know, adult group. You know, they're all working other jobs. Not all, but most of

them working other jobs. You know, full time and, you know, worked for, you know, government full time. But and so we socialize together and, you know, we just enjoyed it. I enjoyed that. I had fun,

Cohen: [01:36:41] A lot of camaraderie, it sounds like.

Adams: [01:36:43] Absolutely, absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. I think I made a note. I have ...there was something I had a note on this. I said, other than just come right. Oh, it was just about being becoming a family, you know, other than just discovering it. And that's the way I feel with the organization that I'm with now, which I'll tell you a little bit about later on. Yeah. So I enjoy it my entire, everything. The only regret is that I had that break in and that I did not stay in and end up retiring.

Cohen: [01:37:17] Oh, you mean retiring from the Reserves?

Adams: [01:37:21] Or from active duty.

Cohen: [01:37:21] Active duty after you got [married]? Yeah right.

Adams: [01:37:24] Yeah, yeah, that's exactly right...

Cohen: [01:37:28] Well, what were your thoughts on the U.S. invasion of Panama in December 1989 to January 1990? And do you want to talk about your experience?

Adams: [01:37:38] Oh, well, that was my only [both laugh] real assignment outside of the United States.

Cohen: [01:37:47] Finally!

Adams: [01:37:49] I got to go to Panama! I was so excited! I wasn't thinking, you know, anything about whatever the hell was going on down or whatever but I get to go someplace. And so when we got those orders and I thought, 'Not bad. it, you know, it's not Germany, which has always been in the back of my head to go because everybody who went to Germany talked

about it, "It was so great". But I was excited about going and one of the friends that I met there and became very close friends with, she also had the same assignment. And so we were the two females [laughs] from our unit that went down together. And they I mean, we were treated royally on the plane because, you know, we're supposed to sit back and C-130 is how we travelled. So you'd sit in the belly of the plane, you know, and you know, at these against the wall with the straps and all that kind of hard... Well, the pilot, because we worked in the squadron he goes, "Oh, you guys can stay up in the cockpit."

Cohen: [01:39:02] Wow.

Adams: [01:39:03] So for eight hours, we were up there with the pilot and navigator, the flight engineer, everything, and just seeing everything from their point of view, which was awesome. And the duty there was not was not bad at all. We didn't have to go in any combat zones or anything like that. It was others that [had to do so.] We were strictly on base and just doing our little administrative task. We were stationed...[In] the hangar was an office, within the hangar, which was right on the flight line. And so we were surrounded by jungle. So we had all of these animals and snakes and stuff that you could find at any given day just coming into the office, maybe, you know. So yeah, we got pictures

Adams: [01:39:55] of all those, too. And there were these long things, these long tails, they were monkey-like animals or something. I have no idea. I don't think I brought a picture of that for you to see, but it shows it shows I'm out because I was kind of a brave one for that. You know, as long as it was somebody that could grab me and take [me], but I was a lifeline, you know, because he [the animal] just came right off the jungle area, and they were all around me.

Cohen: [01:40:26] Oh my goodness.

Adams: [01:40:27] "Take the picture. Take the picture". [01:40:38] Pull it off]. And then there was once a snake just crawled right in. One of the guys that actually picked it up, and they're holding it while they take a picture and everything. I mean. You know, these were not kids now. We were all adults, just,

Cohen: [01:40:45] But we're not used to it...

Adams: [01:40:47] Exactly.

Cohen: [01:40:48] ... in cities.

Adams: [01:40:48] but I did get to fly in the Black Hawk helicopter over the jungles of Panama while they were on some of their tours and stuff, and that was my first time in the helicopter. And after a while, I got brave and it's okay, "Can we have the door open?" So, yeah, so I actually had the door open, a little Kodak, my Kodak Instamatic, and I'm taking pictures of, you know, the squirrels hopping from the top of trees, but not squirrels, monkeys...Yeah, it was. It was that fun, but that was really it. And then from there, which I put down was one of one of my highlights, at some point in time, we had to take some supplies to Ecuador, to Quito.

Cohen: [01:41:41] Oh yeah.

Adams: [01:41:42] And it was over the Thanksgiving holiday and I wasn't really assigned to go, but I asked if I could go and I was given permission to go. And because I'm away from home at Thanksgiving, so already, you know, I want to do something that...was great. It was, I think, twelve guys and myself and I think I brought that picture for you, too. And this was my I never forget when we took it as, "You got to take this picture because this is my Thanksgiving family." And also, we were actually in, we went to this restaurant and in Quito, and we were in some vehicles because we could not go into town. So we had to change our clothes in the airway of the plane...[Laughter]

Adams: [01:42:34] And we had this meal around the table. This was our Thanksgiving. And I'm like, You know, it...If I couldn't be at home with my family, this was this was the next best thing. And it was. It was. It was great. It was such an experience that, you know, just and we were just, just us... This was Thanksgiving. We were thankful to be there to dine together, you know? We had no, you know, I think we had maybe a major or some other officer, but it was not any of that [hierarchy]. You know, we're all just, you know, simply celebrating Thanksgiving. And, you know, it was our Thanksgiving. It was in Panama, okay. [Laughter]. This is a US thing. We were loved, too...you're in the military. So that was that was great, that was awesome, I'll never

forget that, and that was one of the highlights of, actually my whole time down there in Panama. That day,

Cohen: [01:43:41] Coming together for Thanksgiving.

Adams: [01:43:44] In Ecuador!

Cohen: [01:43:46] Quito. But finally, you know.

Adams: [01:43:50] I didn't get to Germany, but I did ...

Cohen: [01:43:55] Where did you end up staying in Panama?

Adams: [01:43:58] Where we went? Howard Air Force Base. So we were actually staying there, in barracks. And there were nice accommodations, were very nice and we had some parties. We had parties on base and we'd go off base to some of the restaurants a little bit. And we wouldn't... They would just warn us there were certain areas not to go in. And I can't remember, I think it was...something they told us not to wear, not to wear shorts and something else. So we had to be careful that way because of what was going on. But other than that, we didn't see any danger.

Cohen: [01:44:34] Well, it's good, thankfully,

Adams: [01:44:39] And I still have a desire to take the back to back Panama Canal cruise. So that's what my to-do list.

Cohen: [01:44:45] Yeah, to see. To go back, yeah. Did you get commands to go to Saudi Arabia or the Middle East, elsewhere in the Middle East during Operation Desert Storm?

Adams: [01:44:58] Yes, actually, I did. I got orders to go to. This is how it was described as "an undisclosed location for a minimum of thirty days." And I was like, "Oh boy". Okay, well, my dad was very ill during that time and I went to the base commander and I told him about, you know. And so I got a waiver.

Cohen: [01:45:23] Yeah, yeah.

Adams: [01:45:26] He said he understood, you know, because, you know, my brother's deceased now [by the time that her Daddy was ill]. So it was just me and my mom, you know? And so that's why I said it's, you know, there's humanity there. You know, there's compassion. And you know. It was all shown to me at that time, he says, "Okay, we understand. So you won't have to go", he says. I'm not sure if there's another come down if I'll be able to do it. You know, next time somebody that might have to go, you don't have to go now. So I said, "Okay". So yeah, this is the kicker. The young lady -- well, thank God, nothing happened to my dad -- You know he was okay, but I was still there to help with him but she only had to stay thirty days.

Adams: [01:46:06] When she came back, she was rubbing. She said, "Jeannie, you would have loved it." They had me staying in the desert but I'm in an air-conditioned trailer. The hardest duty was serving beer and ice cream to the guys think,

Cohen: [01:46:20] Oh no, she's really rubbing it in.

Adams: [01:46:24] I know I could have done that. I made the right decision, right?

Cohen: [01:46:31] Right. Whose to know how things are going to turn out?

Adams: [01:46:34] I mean, come on, you know. That's not to say, "Oh yeah, I was in Desert Storm." Yeah, well not really. [Laughter] So that that and I never was given orders again.

Cohen: [01:46:50] Yeah.

Adams: [01:46:51] That was it.

Cohen: [01:46:57] But on the subject of travel, you did seem to tell me that Northern Trust, you traveled several times for work to Israel. But one time I think you said you were partially

sponsored by the Jewish United Fund and you met Israelis. And once they heard that you were in the service, they treated you differently. So would you like to talk about it?

Adams: [01:47:19] Yeah, they did. I think this was it was '89 or '90. They, there was a tank. We went out, they took. They were always, they wanted to show me the base, every time. And there everybody, I don't care if the young ladies were eighteen years of age, you could have been in a swimming suit on the beach, and you had an M-16 or something strapped across you. You had your weapons, always. And so they were taking showing us the MASH units and everything that was going on, and there was a tank. Well, I'm like, "That's a real thing, and it moves and everything!" "You want to come aboard?"[they asked]. So they let me get in this tank and I searched and searched for that picture because I was going to bring it to you. I couldn't find it. But yeah, so I was able to get in a tank and they actually moved it a little bit in the ground so I could get the feel of it, you know?

Adams: [01:48:20] And I was like, I wonder if this is what a submarine is like, you know, only under water? But and then and actually, I was able to go in one of their fighter planes also. And I do have the pictures of those and it was one of the pilots. Now we did not go outside of the hangar. You know, so but they let me get in and sit in the cockpit, all right - photo-op and everything. [Cohen laughs]

Adams: [01:48:45] They were very, very, very proud of their military. And, you know, showing it off. And it's kind of, I guess, ironic when my uncle, I think my cousin, my first cousin, of the same uncle that I went [to visit over the summers], his son went in the [US] Air Force and his son went to NASA, became an astronaut. Okay. Well, when his son went up on his second, the Columbia, his second time in space, there was an Israeli astronaut on there with him.

Cohen: [01:49:21] Oh oh, Ramon? Ilan Ramon? So your cousin was--

Adams: [01:49:24] Right, the one that went down.

Cohen: [01:49:28] Oh my goodness.

Adams: [01:49:28] And I got letters from Israel, condolence letters from people that I had met over there.

Cohen: [01:49:36] Yeah.

Adams: [01:49:38] So kind of an aside from that. ..once I actually was part of a ribbon cutting and it was like a recreation center, that one of my clients had built over there for the soldiers, for like the weekends where their family could come and visit them. And that is like being on a strong base and everything. So it's a beautiful social setting with an outside park like some kind... what do we have here where we have picnics? The Forest Preserves.

Cohen: [01:50:18] Oh, Forest Preserves, yeah, yeah.

Adams: [01:50:20] Yeah, something like that. It's a beautiful, beautiful thing. And so on that trip, when I went over, they said, "Oh, well, we want you to be part of the ribbon cutting ceremony and everything."

Cohen: [01:50:30] Yeah. Did they have some? Did the Israelis have respect for people in the U.S. forces or like?

Adams: [01:50:39] Well, you know, I can only speak for...I was treated right. And I don't think that they would have given me all of those opportunities had I not had this military experience. I think that just sort of... connected us here and especially taking me to the hangar because their pilots are not allowed to be photographed with their faces, the identity showing. So he told me, he says, "I'm going to have this on... if you want me in the picture". "I know that you're in the picture"... So, you know, so we were very cognizant of that. But a lot of the things that I got to see and do while I was there, I think was a very direct result of my military experience because they [knew] what I was doing for Northern Trust. They didn't have to do this. It wasn't that, it wasn't necessary taking care of the business that I had...for Northern, and that would have been the end of it. But even I did [see]... Prime Minister Netanyahu at one time. You know, we had to go to where he was speaking and I got to sit in parliament [i.e., the Knesset]. And so a number of things, and I know that was only because of the military, you know,

Cohen: [01:52:00] Out of curiosity. what was Northern Trust like doing in Israel? What was the--

Adams: [01:52:06] Oh, well, it wasn't. We don't have an office or anything like that, but a lot of my clients [had trusts of Israeli institutions]. I worked in personal trust and estates. I was a personal trust administrator. So a lot of my clients were Jewish clients, and they would leave in their trust or their wills bequests to Hebrew University, Weitzman Institute, some organization like that. So I got to travel [Both laugh]....which believe me, I was not traveling for the Air Force. I got to see a lot of the world right--.

Cohen: [01:52:45] --Nonetheless.

Adams: [01:52:48] That was that was the reason. Each time I went, it was on behalf of a client.

Cohen: [01:52:55] Wow. So one thing I wonder about is what was it like as a woman...and how would you compare and contrast the years of active duty from '65-'68 to the years of the Reserve from, I think '86 to '96?

Adams: [01:53:11] Hmm...To be perfectly honest, I had such a positive experience, both on active and Reserve. And when I hear some of the things that others went through, you know, I'm like, 'Why was I so blessed?' You know, 'Why didn't that, you know, touch me in that way?' Because... some of the things that I hear - there were some negative things on active duty, especially after my fiancé at that time, went to Japan and then to Thailand...[Cohen interrupts]. After he left, there were some negative things that happened from men, you know, that had not happened before. So, you know, and that's partly because he wasn't around. They thought maybe they could...? So there were a few unpleasant situations that way, but they never, you know, really got out of line. And it was mostly and it was not during business hours. Yeah, okay. So nobody was *really* pulling rank, really but they were.

Cohen: [01:54:41] Yeah [said slowly]

Adams: [01:54:43] Okay. All right.

Cohen: [01:54:44] But you're somehow able to put the kibosh on it.

Adams: [01:54:47] I was in one situation where another friend and I, they were going to just take us out to get something to eat. Well, then, you know, "Oh, well, let's see what our Sarge wants to do over here." What are you? And so the conversation started weaving and I told her, "This is not good. You know what's going on?" And we were in an area where we were not familiar with it. We were not close enough to get back to the base. And so and I'm telling you this was just, I hope you don't mind me saying this, is just the grace of God. Yeah, because I leaned over to her and I said, "Go with me on this". And she didn't know what I was going to do. I faked an asthma attack. Okay. Really? Okay, maybe that was my medical training.

Got to do something. And it frightened them enough that they turned around and went back to the base. Okay, so that could have been an ugly situation. And really, that's that one. And there were a couple of other things on base, but, you know, kind of minor, nothing that we couldn't handle. I was never put in that position with anyone my superior. And on the active, I mean the Reserve, I mean, we were just, you know, we were just great together. That's all I think because now, you know, we're adults, you know, we've got all of this...kid fun out of our system. You know, we've got responsibilities, we've got families and everything. So it was it was a different kind of atmosphere now. In Panama, a couple of girls and I, you know, we got dressed up and...we took great pictures in the barracks and everything to make it look like, you know, we were just having a ball. After we had the picture taken, we went back to the room, took the clothes off and got comfortable. But so I didn't have any idea, really, that the harassment and that negative stuff that has been so prevalent and that we hear so much about. And I it's just I'm so thankful that I didn't come face to face with that. And if I could just say, I had more of that in the corporate world, so than I did in the military.

Cohen: [01:57:17] Yeah, that's it. It's not divorced from the society.

Adams: [01:57:22] So it's not...Now they're in the military, of course, you're more close quarters and everything but it's still, it's just, you know, I don't know how to describe other than just ignorant, nasty, low down dirty people. You know, being male or female, you know. If you've got that mindset, you know, you're going to do it. You are going to do it in church because it has happened in church. [Cohen murmurs something]...Anyway, okay, okay, I hope that's it...I'm just trying to be honest without being negative.

Cohen: [01:58:05] Yeah, no. I know what you're saying, right? Well, that's good. You told me, you quoted Dr. King on the phone something to the effect of he said, "Put the title of servant on yourself". And how do you live your life and continue to live your life because it sounds like you're a person who's always giving, you know?

Adams: [01:58:26] And again, like I said, that is the way I was created. Okay. But I've always been taught that and...I love Dr. King, and a lot of his quotes are just so, you know, positive and so uplifting and just affirmations. But that, he wasn't the first person to say that. Okay, because, you know, I grew up in the church. So, you know, and that's what Jesus did. You know, he showed by example of how we are to live...? And he became a servant now, you know, with his title and everything, okay? But in the very act of washing the disciples' feet. But he also, whenever is it that he never left a situation the way he--

Cohen: [01:59:21] --Found it?

Adams: [01:59:22] Found it. Exactly. So he was always serving and always doing for someone else. When there was a need, he met that need. I just kind of grew up as a kid, even, you know, helping. Helping Grandma because I had to, doing this, doing that, doing things I didn't want to do, [or rather] didn't want to do. You know, so that [it later] became part of me. Then I saw my grandparents, I saw my grandfather now, if no one else. He was an example of someone that gave. Like I said, he was blessed to be able to have lots of land. Okay, thanks to his mother, you know, and his father. And he inherited, family members did, but he decided to take his and make a farm. So they actually said that Granddad was one of the plantation owners in that area. But what he...would do; so many people said that they would not have had their first home had it not been for him. They would not have had their first car had it not been for him. I mean, I saw him just giving, giving. I saw my grandma working in the gardens to feed other relatives and other neighbors. You know, they would come to him and in his fields, you know, he would give them jobs to pick cotton or chop, whatever it is that they needed to be done, you know? And it was just--

Cohen: [02:00:53] --To help further their lives.

Adams: [02:00:54] Exactly. And I was like, that's just, that's me! I grew up seeing it. And that's to really to impact someone's life and have that live long after this earthly life, you know, has ceased...? To me, what real legacy, you know, can you leave for your loved ones is through to be a giver? And that is it..."I'm a servant of the Apostle", Paul said. You know, he does what he had described himself... "Don't call me this, don't call me that, call me a servant." And we're to serve. You know, I started out, you know, not really knowing what serving was all about. I said, I want to serve my country. You know, I didn't know what that meant, really.

Cohen: [02:01:44] [Interrupts] I don't think anybody knows before they go in--.

Adams: [02:01:47] Eighteen years, okay, I'll handle it. But anyway... it's just something that is inherent in my family, really. You know, I saw it in my mom. I saw that my dad, you know, like I said, my grandparents. And that's what I want my grandchildren to see. I want others who come in contact with me to see in me and say, "Oh, that's a quality. That's something that I want to emulate." You know, so that everybody can do that. Everybody can be great. I mean, that's something else, Dr. King said and said, "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve." Yeah, anybody can serve. You've just got to have a heart and a desire to want to do that. So and that's kind of my life. And I'm just and I'm thankful to be able to do it.

Cohen: [02:02:39] And which organization are you serving with now?

Adams: [02:02:44] Well, I'm on the board of a number but the majority of my time right now is is with I'm on the board of a senior citizens organization and that was started seven years ago. I'm on the Board of Scholarship Foundation and it's over twenty plus years old and there are others, even a golf association. And I don't golf. The most boring time I had was being in that golf cart on the golf course for eighteen holes. But I was its financial secretary and treasurer. Okay.

Cohen: [02:03:25] You had to be there...[indistinct]

Adams: [02:03:26] Behind the scenes person. But anyway, you know, but again, I was giving of my talent to the organization. The National Women Veterans United. So after I separated from the Reserves, now I've got again, no military, not even thinking the military, don't go to Fort

Sheridan to the commissary anymore. Don't go to Great Lakes to, basically, to shop anymore or any of that. You know...O'Hare has now closed and you can't even say, "Oh, I'll go by and kind of wave" and see some C-130s. So military is gone. And my godbrother, who's the one that I said I saw back in Vietnam on the television when he was over there, he was like, "Why don't you get with Rochelle's group?" "What are you talking about?" "The National Womens Veterans United, it's some women's group, why don't you? I said, Oh, I said, "I know her. I've met her." She called me when the Columbia went down and she wanted me to speak at that time about my military experience. But that was extent of it. I was at Daley Plaza and I did whatever. I don't even know what I spoke on but I talked about my active duty time and whatever. But also we talked about the, uh, the, you know, my cousin, the astronaut, and I really hadn't had any more contact. And so when he mentioned it, he said, "And um, you know, they have their own license plate now." I go, "What?" So I said, "Okay". So but I still didn't do anything. And then I was at a funeral and there was a young lady that I met at this funeral and we started talking. And so we got in the military. Well, she was in the military. She was a nurse. We just happened to know this person, you know, that was deceased. And then she started telling me about National Women Veterans United, you know, with Rochelle Crump. And I said, "Oh, that's the same lady. Oh, okay, I'll tell you what, I'll go to a meeting with you, your next meeting. Let me just go to the meeting and I'll kind of assess it and see if it's something I want to be a part of." So I went with an open mind, but like my hands are full, I'm on this, this, this. You, this, this, you know, I can't get involved in anything else, but let me just see. So I was partially closed already. I joined at that meeting. When I heard the vision and the work that they're doing and why they're doing it and the people, the lives that they were touching. I'm like, 'Okay, I got to be a part of this.' So I joined right there, you know, pulling out my checkbook, you know, wrote my membership dues and everything and got my little uniform and everything. So.

Adams: [02:06:21] And so I've been with that organization and everything, I think they were maybe ten years at that time or eight or nine something I can't remember exactly, keep track at the time in existence. But and now I'm on my second term as treasurer and on the board of directors of that organization, and it is such a worthwhile and it keeps us tied to the military. Okay, so you know, so we're entwined because the people that we're helping are veterans and their families.

Cohen: [02:07:03] Oh, so it's veterans helping veterans?

Adams: [02:07:05] Specifically, female veterans, female veterans. Exactly. And so and these are people that we, our membership consist of veterans, active duty, and reservists in all branches, you know, even the Coast Guard.

Cohen: [02:07:24] That's interesting because I was looking to see had we did interviews of women across all the branches and I said, "No, we don't have anybody from the Coast Guard!"

Adams: [02:07:35] Oh, Okay, well, I have someone.

Cohen: [02:07:36] So send them over!

Adams: [02:07:37] Okay, I definitely have someone from the Coast Guard. So we're doing a wonderful work. We've got a good group, great leadership and, you know, support and these women need all the help that they can get, you know, and we're there when the VA is closed on the weekends or at night or whatever. Our president has gone out at one o'clock in the morning because she's gotten a distress call of know some woman with her child that had to leave home because of domestic abuse or something like that.

Adams: [02:08:11] So we're there to answer those calls. Those "Oh, my lights are going to be turned off." Or "My gas is going to be turned off." So we have right now services that we, you know, "Okay, here we are, you know," So it's just amazing. It's so well, it's it's a very important work, and I'm just really, really, really pleased to be part of that and everything. And this past Saturday, I know we hosted a luncheon for former P.O.W. Jessica Lynch. Oh, she was released during President Obama's time in office. She was captured when she was nineteen years old. So she was at the luncheon, as well as a couple of, well, Lieutenant Governor Stratton was there. Lieutenant Governor Stratton. I think...And also Congressman Jacqueline Collins attended and many dignitaries from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Cohen: [02:09:14] Can I follow up with you later?

Adams: [02:09:18] Oh sure,

Cohen: [02:09:18] Because I'm wondering if you know -- the next exhibit will be on prisoners of war here. I don't know the details of what the curator is planning, but oh, you know if I could maybe introduce you to him through email or something of the sort?

Adams: [02:09:34] Absolutely.

Cohen: [02:09:34] Yeah.

Adams: [02:09:36] So that is what's taken most of my time, now. [word not heard] you and me are okay. [Laughter] And you met so many of us on the Honor Flight, which I'm still flying high from that. That was ah [sighs happily]

Cohen: [02:09:52] Yeah. What was the like the highlight or the strongest, the most positive point of it for you?

Adams: [02:10:01] Oh, okay. Well, I can tell you the most moving point was the Changing of the Guards, you know?

Cohen: [02:10:10] Yeah.

Adams: [02:10:11] Because, you know, I had been to all the memorials for many, many, many, many times. Oh yeah. And I had all my, you know, cried out from that but I had never gone to the Changing of the Guard. You know, I had gone to the Changing of the Guards in London. Okay? But never in Washington [Cohen and Adams say it in unison].

Adams: [02:10:29] That was it was. Yeah, and it was just it just the feeling that, you know, that comes over you, you know, and just knowing, you know, the meaning behind it and just you can just see all of the faces of, you know, of people that have served and the ones that have gone on and given their lives. It just like going to Arlington, you know. It, just you can't just go there. You know, I can't just go into, it's unlike going into any regular cemetery. It's just so special. But anyway, so that was...but then everything was just great. Great. Great, High, high. But then roll call, mail call. We were up thirty-five, forty thousand miles up in the air! I've got a splitting headache from the day. The flight attendant had given me an ice pack already. My seatmate is

taking care of me and then she said, "What are they doing?" I said, "What do you mean?" "They're taking down all of those things out of the compartments." "What", I go, "I don't know. I'm sure they know what they're doing." I'm not thinking anything, you know, just try me.

Adams: [02:11:48] And then when they asked, "You know what, when you were serving, what was you look forward to?" And I heard these voices go, "Yeah, mail, mail call" Yeah, I'm going, "Mail call, telephone call." You know, something like that, you know? And they said, "When you hear your name" and I'm like, "What are they doing?" So it's like I came up now to see what's going, and I tell you that I just lost it. [Both laugh]. I think it was just like everything from the beginning [of the day onward]. You know, all of the action, all of the state policemen and everybody standing as we entered the city, you know, stopping the traffic and just standing and saluting us. All of that and everything, it just all, just sort of, you know, just kind of came down on me now with this and that was-- I was speechless. I was just...I couldn't. The guy, Sean, I think that was his name, whatever, was trying to ask me something and it was like, it wasn't even my voice. You know, I don't know what I was babbling, you know? And they gave me this big package and I'm looking through it and all of a sudden I'm seeing names and return [addresses]. Because "What is this?" I mean, I couldn't, you know, It was like I'm watching the movie or something because I think this can't be real. And I see names of family members, I thought, "Oh, I haven't talked to these people in years!" And then I saw, you know, my friend who I, you know, I met him in 1966. That's what my daughter's godfather. And I just sort of went back in time. It was like, "Is this real?"... It took me a while to really, you know, comprehend what was going on. Okay, so that was just it. And then when I got off the plane, Teri, my guardian, and my date for the day, such a sweetie pie...said, "Jeannie", she said, "Don't leave". Everybody was getting off. She told me, "Don't get off," she said, "because, you know, I want to, you know, walk off with you and I've got to make sure that everybody that needs help gets off the wheelchair and everything." And I go, "Okay, I'm fine." I'm just sitting there as people passing me by down the aisle to go, "Jeannie, aren't you coming up?" No, I'm waiting for Teri." So I said, "I'm okay" my head aches by the way and everything, right? And then when it's my turn and we step off the plane, now the plane is empty and it's just me and I think maybe a couple of other people and Teri and all I see is this line.

Adams: [02:14:33] It was just so; it was just so amazing thing. They're here for me? This [US] Navy person just steps up and she says, "You know, can I escort you?" But then I see this this

person in uniform and I'm looking at and I've go, "Jerry!" It's one of the ladies from my church. I bet she's a TSA at Midway [Airport]. I see her and I'm still I'm going in this fog because I'm seeing all these people lining up and there's nobody in front of me because of everybody else, I'm hearing all this noise from downstairs. And the Navy, I can't even remember her name now. It's like, "This is all for you. This is your party. This is your welcome home party. You hear all that noise? They'll be here for you." My knees went wobbly. I had two people on each side of me. Teri's on one side holding me up. The other person carrying my mail for me, and I just... It was just, it was just too much. It really was. That was. It's just hard to describe. It really is.

Adams: [02:15:39] It's just it's like you had to have been there and had to experience this for yourself. And it just kept getting better and better. And the noisier and the closer I got to getting down to the baggage claim, and then when I saw my daughter and my grandkids...

Cohen: [02:15:55] Oh my gosh!

Adams: [02:15:55] It was the whole thing. I just okay, and I know we're not supposed to tell everything, you know. And all I could say is, "You know, I want to help someone else to experience this." I mean, sure, I'd love to go back again. But my number one goal that I told you is I want to be on the volunteer committee to help make this happen for the ones that have not gone.

Cohen: [02:16:18] Yes.

Adams: [02:16:19] So but the Honor Flight, I mean, it was that name. I mean, they did it. They did it up. I mean, no one can have a better parade or better, you know, recognition...

Cohen: [02:16:34] Unbelievable. Yeah.

Adams: [02:16:34] Yeah, well, I mean, you, you were there. It just--

Cohen: [02:16:38] I also just found the whole mail call really moving. First of all, I knew there was, so to speak was going to deliver a mail. But to be honest, I didn't know the details and I assumed it would be like, I don't know, pamphlets or flyers. And then it seemed like... Then I

had volunteered to take the bag of mail. 'Oh, what? What could be in here?' I'm thinking to myself. And then, I'm sitting next to a veteran that she pulls out an envelope and she's really moved. It's from her beloved sister, who was super supportive of her her whole life, but particularly [during] the second year of her service when there are a lot of family tragedies going on. And she said, "I'm not even going to read it now." She just couldn't believe that that was her first [selection]. And then the other one [veteran, seated on Cohen's other side] was, "You know, I think I'd better open up at home because I'm going to start crying."

Adams: [02:17:27] I didn't. I just saw the outside and I'm like, "Okay, I can't do this. I can't open it." So I didn't open anything. And then I all these loose sheets and I start pulling them out and I go 'The Chicago Bears president. You know, the Bulls and Garrison Bears. Oh, wow, Okay, this is going to happen! So I wanted to make sure that I was at home and I was in some quiet time where I could just surround myself with this and give it the attention. And I'm not going to tell you what happened. I just started; I just lost it. The very first letter was from a cousin who is over sixty or at least sixty years old now, and she started telling me, you know, from when she was in school and how her first party or her first prom dress, I took it to her first concert and all these and then all the way up. She highlighted all the way up till my military and it's so, it just so. It just so like, 'Okay, I can't keep doing this right now. I got it.' So I really, I put everything away and I waited. It was at least two weeks before I sat down and went through everything, and I was able to digest really take it in and it's still, I get the [butterflies] in my stomach when I when I think about it, you know. And the people that they would actually take time, you know--

Cohen: [02:18:57] --to write you.

Adams: [02:18:59] And the younger generation who I have yelled many times because of like, "When you were a kid, I sent you cards, I sent you letters, but you got to text me or you got a Facebook. I don't do that. So if you can't send me a letter or a card, then I don't need to hear from you." I mean, I had done all this stuff, you know, years ago. And here are cards and letters from them!

Cohen: [02:19:22] Not only texts. [Laughter]

Adams: [02:19:22] Wow. Well, I had an influence on them... Again, this was up here. Okay? All right? So they still know how to write letters, real letters and put a stamp on it and mail it! But yeah, and so the military will always be a part of me. You know, it's just it. It started at such a young age and then throughout, and my uncle, whenever, he's gone now, he passed a few years ago. But my aunt is still, you know, is still up in Spokane, right outside of Fairchild Air Force Base, and I went up to see her in May. I'm like, I got to go to the base! Actually, there now, they have a lot of things - their grammar school and other things that have been named after my cousin, the astronaut. I go, my cousin, the astronaut. And my grandson, my youngest grandson, ever since he was about three or four years old, he wants to be an astronaut, a preaching astronaut. He wants to go to the clergy and be an astronaut.

Cohen: [02:20:35] I love that.

Adams: [02:20:38] I know. With the way they're going up now with the civilians, by the time he's old enough, we will be living up there, so... Elon Musk and those guys...but I am not paying no big money, okay? Oh, no, no. I'll tell you that right now. Give me a trip like they did with the Honor Flight then, I may take them up on it.[Laughter]

Cohen: [02:21:05] What would you like the younger generation to learn from your experience or about the military or service?

Adams: [02:21:13] Well, you know, I I have talked to some young and I still, there's a lot of negative press about the military, but I am so pro. I tell the young people I think it would be a good experience if you're given that opportunity. And I don't mean just ROTC while you are in high school. But you know, if you have a desire to go beyond that, then do that. I just think it would do a world of good. And, you know, if nothing more, it's learn how to take orders, you know, and then you can learn how to delegate when you get out and you can give orders! You know, the discipline, the camaraderie...just learning and to have respect for people that are so different from you. And I just, it's an experience that, you know, you know, that experience I could not have gotten anywhere but the military, you know that way?

Cohen: [02:22:14] No, okay, in a dense way.

Adams: [02:22:15] Exactly. Yeah, and you're forced. I mean, come on, you're in a foxhole with somebody or you're in a tank with somebody. You're in a barrack, a room with three other people and you never laid eyes [on] and I always like my privacy. Now that was something. So I made sure that I passed those tests and I got rank so that I could have my own room. [Laughter]

Cohen: [02:22:43] So I feel like you adapt and then it's time to move on.

Adams: [02:22:47] Right. But you do. And you learn there now to and to respect, Okay, we have to share this space and I respect your space, you respect mine, you know, and we'll get along just fine. And you know, it would be a boring, boring, boring world if we were all the same, right?

Cohen: [02:23:04] Right.

Adams: [02:23:04] Okay. So you need that diversity, the difference, and it's a great learning experience. And so I would not discourage anyone from going in, even if you're shy or scared. Because like I said, I was, I was kind of a wimpy, you know, and, you know, spoke only when I was spoken to kind of thing, and now you can't shut me up.

Cohen: [02:23:31] Were there, well, you mentioned already several of the lessons learned, you might say, from having been in the service. But is there anything else that you feel you gained or contributed to you as a person or to your civilian life or jobs? Oh, you mentioned a lot of already, that's true.

Adams: [02:23:49] Yeah, yeah. It's just so much. Yeah. You know, I just think I, you know, and I'm not saying the military was part of it, but just my personality, I think, became more developed in the military, and has, you know, carried forward and I think, you know, just my ability to get along with people, you know, and I'm not trying to fill. And I try to maintain a positive attitude in the most negative situations. I'm always going to flip it, you know? And a lot of people don't like that. No doubt they want to stay. No, I'm going to look, you know, [Cohen breaks in: look for the good], always look for good because there is there is good in everything. And I say that and I didn't coin this phrase, but I've heard it said. A friend of mine said that

there is a blessing. Uh no. [corrects phrase]. There's a lesson in every experience. And there was a blessing in every lesson.

Cohen: [02:24:57] Oh, that's really nice.

Adams: [02:24:58] And you know, like, that was my golfer friend. So he went through a lot of, got a lot of lessons. But you know... Just give. If you just be you and we can't be anybody else, you know? I think it was what somebody said. I saw it on the message wall, the wall of the massage therapy. "You got to be you because everybody else is taken." So just be the best you. And do the very best that you can and make a difference in somebody else's life. And you can't. I'm telling you; you cannot help somebody else without it helping you inside internally. You know, and I so when you give, it's reciprocal. So take every experience, you know, get what you learn from those experiences, you know, package it, and then share with someone else when it can be a benefit to them.

Cohen: [02:26:02] Yeah, at the right moment.

Adams: [02:26:04] And it can benefit somebody else. You know, they'd be open and willing to do that. There are some things that I didn't share here, but I have said given the opportunity, if it would help someone else in their struggle or in whatever they're going through their situation, then I believe it's meant for me to share that part of my personal experience and how I got through. Because I'm still here, so I had to have gotten through it, right?

Cohen: [02:26:33] Right. That's right.

Adams: [02:26:36] That's the operative. No matter what you're in, look for, look for the other side. You're going through this life, okay it's a journey. You know, we're not here to stay. Okay, so we're looking for something beyond this journey. Okay, so as long as we're here, as long as we've got, we've got breath in our bodies, you know, Okay, what is get up in the morning thing? Okay, now whose life can I touch today? What good can I do for somebody, especially somebody who can't do for themselves? That should be the first thing in my mind when I get up is, you know, let me look for somebody that I can help, you know, whether it's a daughter, child or just something. If it's no more than a phone call, just to say, "Hi, how are you?"

Cohen: [02:27:22] Somebody who needs a phone call.

Adams: [02:27:23] Exactly. You know, I have a ministry where I got to go out on the street, you know, to help the homeless and the hopeless, you know, some of those that feel alone. This man went into tears. Big six foot three hundred pound guy started crying. He was telling the lady that was with me, he said, "This lady was not afraid to approach me. She did on and on and on" and I'm okay and I had to stop and think back for when he was even talking about, because it's just what I do--.

Cohen: [02:27:59] Do all the time, all the time.

Adams: [02:28:01] Yeah. And he was saying how much it made him feel [good]. And I always ask, I don't just say, "Oh, here..." I asked them their name. I want them to know that you're not just somebody that's...on the street. You got a name, you're a person. You matter, you know, because I have to flip it because it could be me.

Cohen: [02:28:20] Yeah, it could be all of us.

Adams: [02:28:22] It could be somebody that I -- and you have to look at life that. You know, we're, we're here. We're in it together. Like it or not, so make the best of it. [Laughter] All right. That's it.

Cohen: [02:28:39] That's it. Is there anything that you wanted to mention that you didn't talk about or--

Adams: [02:28:47] [Said reflectively] Oh, okay I think the highlight speaking with...I think I've got it just about everything. Oh! I was you about to tell you how we were youngsters almost like away at college, you know...This was at Maxwell [Air Force Base]. And I know we had to have lied about this because I can't imagine it now. But we said that we got thirteen people at a Volkswagen, okay. [Laughter] That was our story. And we did but we used to crowd into those. I mean, you know, really, you got to bend up. So, okay, I was tiny so it had to be some other tiny people. But we would get so many people...And the smallest car that we could find was the

Volkswagen Bug at that time. And then we'd go to the drive in. You had to pay by the car, you didn't pay by the person. And I think that that is one of our fun, we were young. We were silly and we were serious, you know, it was when time required for us to be serious, but we had some very silly times.

Cohen: [02:29:54] Playful.

Adams: [02:29:55] Playful, right. That was what one of the ones.

Adams: [02:29:58] Now that was it. I'm thinking that I've gone to the circus and they've got they come out with this car and these people just keep coming out. I mean, every time I see that, I think about us. I don't know how we get out of it. [Laughter] And I do know we were crowding in, and I think that was it. That was it. And the Thanksgiving in Ecuador, in Ecuador. That that that's something that I will always remember that the Thanksgiving away from home...That was my, and that's...when I sent that picture to people, I said, "This was my Thanksgiving family."

Cohen: [02:30:37] Oh, wow. So here's more of a personal question. Did you did your husband ever want to go into the Reserves? Was he inspired by you, let's just say? Or was he a happy or upset that you were part of the Reserves?

Adams: [02:30:53] My husband said he went into the military -- now, he was married before me and had three children -- and he went into the military out of responsibility. Okay, okay. So anyway, that's important. He had gotten divorced on his first enlistment and needed a paycheck or whatever... he needed the military. And he said after his first four years were up, then he wasn't sure what he wanted to do. Okay, and how he was going to be. So he re-enlisted. And so I met him on his second enlistment, but he couldn't wait for that eight years to be up. [Laughter]

Adams: [02:31:34] But no, he did not [mind] because he knew I loved it. And I think he always felt badly about the fact that I had to give up my Cougar and my Air Force so.

Cohen: [02:31:46] So he was glad you could jump back in.

Adams: [02:31:48] Yes. And we still had, you know, close contact, like I said with my friends, you know, military friends. And then when, of course, when my daughter was born, there was no -- I didn't even ask him if he had any suggestions on who's going to be the godparents -- I'm like, it's going to be Step and Vonn, period, okay? They were my buddies, so that was fine. But no, -- the time that he had, he said he was able to accomplish what he needed to accomplish. He did not like taking orders [Laughter] and he made no bones about it. But like I say, though, he looked good in his uniform. He wore it well and, you know, he was always respectful of it. [Laughter] No, he wasn't, he wasn't upset when I went in.

Cohen: [02:32:46] Yeah.

Adams: [02:32:46] And especially the fact that I was at O'Hare, you know, and I could still make it home on the weekends and nights to cook. [Laughter] And you know, and my daughter and my grandkids, they are so proud of their nanna, their military, and Jayden was like, "Now you haven't gotten my shirt yet!" He wants an Air Force shirt and he wears my caps all the time. I'm going to get one for you. You can't wear that, you'd be perpetrating, you know. [Laughter] They're very, very, very proud. In the letters that I received from them. I read their letters and I told my daughter, I said, "Did you dictate this?" She said, "Mom", she said, "I promise you." She said, "I told them they had to write letters for the Honor Flight." "They were downstairs", she said, and she "was upstairs", she said. When I read those letters, I could not believe it. They were just, I tell you, it was so heartwarming and they just poured of themselves! You know... they feel about me, but the way they were able to articulate it, you know, and in writing like that.

Cohen: [02:33:58] Oh wow [emphatically].

Adams: [02:33:58] I guess I've done something good.

Cohen: [02:34:01] Yes, that's what I was thinking like you are an example.

Adams: [02:34:05] So they use that and they go with me. Sometimes when I go, like a special holidays [I go] to give out special treats and things to the homeless and the tent city and

everything. So yeah, and they most of the time, one of the guys will say to them, "Stay in school. Listen to your mom. Listen to your grandma. Do this, do that, so you won't end up like this." Now, you know they are homeless for a lot of different reasons. But for them to take that time, some of them, to give that advice to my grandkids, you know, it's like, it's very meaningful.

Cohen: [02:34:56] Okay. [Breathes out loud]

Adams: [02:35:00] So I don't think, oh, gosh... [checks her notes] Oh, well, I told you about that, too. That was it meeting and marrying my husband. Okay, well, I was blessed because I would have been blessed with my daughter, of course, and my grandkids. So I can. I have to say I've got to put that as a highlight of my active duty, now...

Cohen: [02:35:22] So...the Pritzker Military Museum & Library is dedicated to collecting the stories and artifacts of, so to speak, the Citizen Soldier. There's no right or wrong answer, but what does the term Citizen Soldier mean for you?

Adams: [02:35:43] Citizen Soldier? Well, I would. I guess I would have to say I'm a citizen first. Okay? [Laughter] You said citizen, right?

Cohen: [02:36:00] Yes.

[02:36:00] Okay, yes. So you know,

Adams: [02:36:02] I'm a citizen and I believe we're all soldiers in some respect. You know, whether it's in the military or not -- now this is particular for military -- but you can edit whatever you want. For years, you know, one of my favorite songs is *I'm on the Battlefield*. Okay? But it's...a hymn from church, okay? So I consider myself a Citizen Soldier, but in the Army of the Lord.

Cohen: [02:36:38] Yeah.

Adams: [02:36:39] Okay? Versus military, you know, which is, you know--

Cohen: [02:36:44] [Interrupts] -- Specific.

Adams: [02:36:45] Exactly. But I think, you know, we're all soldiers in some aspect, okay? Just because we're not donning the uniform or whatever, you're serving in some capacity, even if it's just your family. You know, everybody doesn't have that desire to go out with strangers or to know. But you know, there's service within you. And that's what the military is all about [emphatically] *ser-ving*. Okay, you're doing something now. Under that you've got a whole list of descriptions and things. Just like, you know, as a mother, you're *ser-ving*. Now under that category, goes a whole lot. You're not anything that's [emphatically] just a housewife. Come on.

Cohen: [02:37:36] No.

Adams: [02:37:37] Okay, then you heard that before. So if we just look at our life, you know, what is my purpose..? And you know, I don't want to keep going on [about this point]. I said, if people don't know their purpose and the book of Bible, the Old Testament, the book of Psalms, okay, [chapter] 103 says, that third verse says, to serve the Lord with gladness. So if you don't know what your purpose is, that tells you. If you're here, if you're alive, if you're breathing, God has allowed you to be here for a reason. Okay serve. Now. You [should] start looking for ways to do it. So Citizen Soldier, we should all be wearing that.

Cohen: [02:38:35] Yeah.

Adams: [02:38:35] Okay, yeah...Then you designate okay, military, because I have actually served in the Armed Forces of the United States...

Cohen: [02:38:51] That does make sense. Yeah.

Adams: [02:38:54] To me, it's apparent. I had actually watched a little bit because I'm like, What is this Pritzker Library? This was years ago you were on one of the cable stations.

Cohen: [02:39:04] But we still are.

Adams: [02:39:04] You are, oh, okay. And I was going, you know, "What is this?" You know? And so that's when I was first introduced to it...and I just... saw something and somebody come out, 'Oh okay.' And then the first time being here was when we came for the press conference when we were going on the Honor Flight the first time before Covid. And so that was my first time actually stepping foot here. So I passed by it many, many times, but I'd just never been inside. So, you know, this in a way, you know, this, not that it looks [like the Military Women's Memorial], but I think of, what I think of it here, I think of the [Military] Women's Memorial, [Cohen interjects: Oh], in Smithsonian. It's a museum. It's history, basically of women who served, but, you know. So I have no idea what all of your goals are. I don't know, but I could look at that as being similar. Only this would cover, you know, and we [National Women Veterans United] are that specific, the women's role. The women's role is specific.

Cohen: [02:40:13] Yeah, I think here's very much to the idea of having an open forum to discuss military and political affairs and also to sort of also to, I think, honor veterans, honor people who...really are in effect, maintaining democracy. And also, I think [I connect] very strongly the idea that it's like a nonpartisan, non-governmental. And so it's a place to learn and discuss and hence the, the library, the archives, the programs, the cable television programs.

Adams: [02:40:52] Right, I see. Well what not like our organization, but that's what... We're, we're not religious, nor are we a political organization, the National Women Veterans United. I want to make that clear, too.

Cohen: [02:41:05] No, that's fine. I know that...on a personal note, I certainly can relate, too. You know, hearing a sermon a few weeks ago, "Everybody has their unique mission." You know, from my rabbi, how do we.. Like to be committed to our unique mission which might be different than our neighbor's. So I certainly can relate to that idea.

Adams: [02:41:23] Yeah, yeah. I tell you, there's so much that can be changed. So much that can be different...And once you when you turn the camera off, then I got something else I need to tell you.

Cohen: [02:41:40] Okay, okay, okay. Well, but I will say, have I really thank you so much for your service in the military and your service in life in the broader sense, as we discussed. And if

I can find the challenge coin, yes, it's right over here. I would like to present, present you with it and thank you for the Pritzker [Military Museum & Library].

Adams: [02:42:00] Oh, thank you.

Cohen: [02:42:02] Thanks so much. Thank you, really. Thank you very much.