

Glenda Dugar

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Howe: So this starts with the following: we're here today—Tuesday, September 23rd, 2014—
[in] downtown Chicago at the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. My name is Jerrod
Howe, and we're here to do your story of service were here with Misses...?

Dugar: Glenda Dugar, Sergeant First Class, retired [US] Army.

Howe: Thanks for coming in today.

Dugar: Thank you for having me. I'm honored to be able to share my story with the museum,
with you and the public.

Howe: Yeah.

Dugar: I just I felt the need to share with everyone: the public, and you know, veterans, and
also with my children who are now active duty. My daughter is in the [US] Air Force; my
son is in the [US] Army. He's an army officer...Warrant Officer. He started off enlisted,
and so he had aspirations of doing a little bit better than what I had done in the military.
You know kids; they want to show you they can be better than you. I'm very happy that
they had the drive to join. So my son, he's a W-2 right now; he's an aviation mechanic.

Howe: Okay.

Dugar: But I would...I just wanted to start off by saying shortly [that] over a year ago, I had a
major Joperation, and until then my life was just swirling around, and everything was
just fine and dandy, and I was moving from one career to another and then cancer. Just
the thought and the aftermath of the major hospitalization and surgery brought a reality
to my mortality, basically. And even though in the military we've always had wills we
had to keep updated throughout our service--in preparation...in case anything would
happen...you know, anything final would happen to us--it really... the surgery really
brought home that I really need to slow down. And now it's time to reflect on my life.
You know, you never really feel that, while everything is going fine, that you need to

reflect and start putting things in some type of perspective and order, and that's what surgery made me do. So in saying that, I was inspired to write my first book prior to my surgery, and that's where *In My Own Words* came from. It's an all-inclusive short version story of my life, beginning with as far back as I can remember as a child...maybe the age of four, and there's only one or two things that you can remember that far back--and I call them fragments of your memory--and up in to my current time, and up to the current date. So it's a concise, short book of my life. However, it...the publisher...my first publisher, Xlibris, thought it was written so well that it had the possibility for a movie, and what I had included in this book was the memorabilia that I actually collected throughout my life, because I am an avid photographer. I have been since childhood. I don't know, there's something fascinating about taking still shots and...of things of beauty in nature. But in *In My Own Words*, I mentioned and I talk about how I felt about prejudice at the age of...maybe seven, and how sad it was to me to lose a girlfriend that...we used to just walk home. And of course, I go on to different segments throughout my life, such as remembering and recalling when John F. Kennedy was shot, and what I saw in my home, the sadness I saw through the streets, and how really dramatic it was. Same thing with Martin Luther King and the [Kennedy's] brother, Robert. So putting these things down helped me to really come into some kind of full circle about my life. I just was able to reflect and put things in a more chronological order, because my whole concept now-- after spending twenty years in the Army-- it's such... it was such a fast, whirlwind pace. It just went by so fast..The Military. Anyone who's spent a day in the military, as soon as you hit the ground in basic training it's non-stop from the time the drill sergeant said, "Get off that bus and get that smirk off your face," and you're like, "Okay, what did I get into here?" And I continued on in my book, and just narrowing down things that really kind of stuck out in my mind, and I thought that was very significant for a reader to understand...as a woman, what it was like just growing up as a black woman and [in a] not too well-off family either. But I knew that my family and my mom and dad had tried to raise us well, so it was simple for me to share. With me, what I felt goodness was and honesty was and nurturing was and what common sense was...which my mom focused on; she didn't have a high school education, but she knew that if you had common sense, you could get through life. So my dad...he was the...he was the motivator, the other side...flipside, motivator, breadwinner... He wanted my mom not to work at all because there were eight of us. He said, "You will stay home and take care of the children." And...but he knew...he had learned Spanish fluently on his own. He grew up in Texas; he had lots of Hispanic friends, very close friends, and they taught him the language. And it was amazing hearing my dad speak this way, and I knew then my dad was smart. I was so proud of him. He's recently passed in March of this year.

Howe: I'm sorry.

Dugar: Thank you. So it's been something hard to grasp, but my book was written before he passed, even before he had taken ill, because he was working 'til the age of eighty-four. So he has been a figurehead, a strong figurehead, very supportive. And he was the one who encouraged me throughout high school; "You can do whatever you want to do, the world is open for those [who] really want to do whatever they want to do and make a footprint." So that being my inspiration, my mom giving me clarity and knowing that common sense is the core; you can have some educated people that don't have common sense and you have a problem. And I've seen that. And I had some foundation as far as I'm concerned, as far as home upbringing [as] they call it, and family support system and structure. And once I got into high school, I went to Jones Commercial High School, I followed the footsteps of my sister. She went to Jones Commercial High School located right downtown here [in Chicago], and that was a different realm of schooling. It wasn't a Catholic school, but it wasn't a technical school. It was more like a finishing school, where they prepared us to actually walk into the business world. So our attire was...it's a two-year school, junior and senior, so our attire was hats, gloves, stockings, and at least a two-inch heel, and our skirts or dresses could not be any more than two inches higher than our knee. And the men--there were about 100 men in...our school-- they had to wear cardigans or blazers and sharply-pressed jeans or suit pants. So we had a dress attire and the motto for that was, "dress for success," which enabled us to walk into any business once we graduated from our senior year. Matter of fact, we had a...our school was set up that we had to work half our school day in some business that we had become employed with, and so our employment success rate was 99.9% of actually employing all of the "Jonesites," [as] we were called . So I felt I had a good foundation for walking into any business and successfully becoming employed and actually offering my skills of being a machine transcriptionist.

Howe: Okay, so your part time work going through school was in the field of machine transcription?

Dugar: Machine transcription.

Howe: What environment is that exactly?

Dugar: It's clerical. You can work in any type of office: a lawyer's office...I actually wound up working in an insurance office right across from the Sears Tower--now Willis Tower--and I found myself in the personnel department. And that was... that was quite fun, and I felt successful for a young black girl. Even then, in the 70s-- I graduated in 1975-- and I just felt that was a good thing. I mean, I could be happy with this, you know, in the

office. I worked with several other young women of all cultures, and we had wonderful times, luncheons, and we found ourselves going out, and back then you could have a cocktail at lunch. Two was kind of, like, forbidden, but one cocktail was okay. And everyone would come back from lunch, be giggling... come back and have a good time, and I said, "This is nice. We're still doing our work, and we're not really staggering all over the place." So I felt I was in a good position. But then somehow, things became mundane, and I felt I can't see doing this for thirty years. And then getting a gold watch, and retirement, and... life is short. I saw that growing up. Good people die for bad reasons, for reasons unknown. So I think I want to do something else with my life.

Howe: Before we get into that, I'm curious. You gave us quite a bit of information about your younger years, so there [are] a couple things you touched on that I want to pull the thread on if that's okay?

Dugar: Sure.

Howe: What did your father do?

Dugar: My father was a truck driver-- long distance-- and then as he grew older, it was more local travel. And my brothers also took [that] route. I put a chapter in my book, "The Apple Does Not Fall Far from the Tree," and that was only because I had seen in my home growing up that my brothers and sisters fell right behind my dad. And my children are now military. And you have to be careful about what you talk about in your home and what you present to your children, because they're sponges, and what you talk about at the dinner table affects them dramatically. So if there [are] adverse things you're doing in your life, they're going to pick that up. But I'm really proud of the fact that my children did follow in my footsteps in the military. So that was his occupation. I didn't aspire to be a truck driver.

Howe: You had other things on your plate.

Dugar: I had other things on my mind. But even though... when I did take the test for the military, they said I had good mechanic skills and I would be fine working on vehicles, and I thought to myself, "No, I don't think so." I went to Jones Commercial.

Howe: Nicely done. And so... seven siblings?

Dugar: Seven brothers and sisters. Four girls, Four boys. I was born of the 4th of July; I'm the fourth one born. So lots of activity in the home; lots of pillow fights and enjoying each other's company.

Howe: And born and raised here in Chicago?

Dugar: Right here in Chicago. We actually... as far back as I can remember, we lived in LeClaire Courts. It was a small community projects, not a tall high-rise. [They were] more like row homes, and right off Cicero in Chicago...Cicero [and] 45th, very close to Midway airport. So we had several bungalow-type home neighborhoods nearby, so...and walking to school, you know, you meet all kinds of kids, and that's where I had several friends, different cultures that I was able to be exposed to. And things seemed quite natural and normal to me. I didn't really understand prejudice. But later on, we...in my grade school years, we moved to the West Side area, close to the Austin area, and it was more predominantly...I would say it's mixed race there. In my high school...and of course, as more blacks started moving in the area, I noticed the high school was becoming more blacks than half-and-half, our teachers were becoming more black teachers than half-and-half. But I knew then that I...even though I had become a majorette in high school, it wasn't enough to make me stay. I knew I wanted to go to Jones Commercial. So from Jones Commercial, I started working downtown, and from downtown, I knew that it was nice working in the big city. But we had lots of family vacations outside of the city: Mexico, [the] Grand Canyon... My dad really exposed us to as much as he could, because he was born in Texas. My mother was born in Mississippi, so they knew about the southern slow life, and so we were exposed to that growing up, which gives you down time, gives time to reflect and appreciate smelling some good fresh air and eating some good home-cooked meals, and southern fried chicken and watermelon [and] healthy things.

Howe: You're going to get me hungry just talking about it. What other activities--you mentioned majorette--what other interests did you have during the time: academics, athletics, extracurriculars?

Dugar: I've always enjoyed swimming. In high school, I was on the swim team. Actually, I got the letter "A" for Austin High School. There were only one or two of us that were able to swim in "deep water" [as] they called it, so we got to wear the school colors, you know. That was burgundy and white for Austin. And I actually enjoyed running just a little bit. I won't call it track, but just out running and jogging, which helped me significantly in basic training and in Airborne School. So what you do does compile and build some type of foundation for your next step in life, I feel, whether it's good or bad.

Howe: Anyone in your family...prior to you joining the service, has anyone in your family or community served?

Dugar: I was the first one in my immediate family to join the Army. And as I think back, my dad has a brother...his younger brother went to Vietnam, and was very quiet when he returned. I remember seeing him in a uniform, and to this very day, he's very reserved.

He's very reserved. So Vietnam was something else. I think it affects the person; it affects the family. It affects everyone that surrounds this person, and of course, we didn't really put a label to post-traumatic stress syndrome, but that is what I believe he probably suffered from. So I was the only one in my immediate family, and I did confer with my dad and I asked, "Do you think I should join the service?" And he just quietly...he threw the question back at me and said, "What do you think?" I thought that was pretty cool. Now I have to make my own decision. I can't blame whatever decision I make on him or anyone else. And so I told him, I said, "I think I will," even though I had already signed papers. I just wanted to try to just see if there was anything else I was missing, because, you know, the 70s you think about the Army or you think about the military for women, and that's kind of odd. I really didn't think it was that odd as a woman, because I was looking at it as being more adventurous, but I really didn't know the numbers were only like 30,000-40,000 women total in the Army at that time. I just knew after I spoke with that recruiter in the Daley Plaza on my way to work...I told the Air Force recruiter--at that time there was an Air Force rep--that I would love to fly an aircraft. This was the 70s; lots of people were wanting to fly things then, and just explore and try something new. Our economy was booming. I had actually ridden in an aircraft...growing up ...right before high school, I flew with the Delta Airlines, a free ride they had for us city youths. We were just on a work program. "Our supervisor...I was on a work program--a summer work program--asked, who wants to fly in an aircraft?" And I was so surprised only one or two of us raised our hands. And...I looked around and said, "How come it's just me and this other person raising our hands?" and I learned right then that, you know, a lot of people just don't recognize opportunity. You have to first be able to recognize opportunity to make good choices and to move forward. So I wound up riding on that aircraft with the president of Delta Airlines at that time, and... It was a short ride: we flew to...possibly Indiana, somewhere we were able to turn around and come back, and it was amazing riding on a big jet like that. So I had...at that point, I had some aspirations. I became very fascinated with aircraft, and with the fascination of how the aerodynamics of an aircraft work. So when I saw this Air Force recruiter, I said, "Wow, I can fly." But when he found out...and we spoke, and he said, "You don't have any college, but the Army has a flight school...high school to flight school plan." And I said, "Great! Can we see that recruiter?" And so after speaking with the Army recruiter, you know, you have to take a series of tests. My fast test...my GT [General Technical] score did not qualify me to become...to go to flight school, and he promised me, he said, "You join the Army, you can retake your GT test. Then you can apply for flight school," you know. And I believed him, and I learned that a lot of recruiters tell people what they want to hear. However, in my particular case it was true. I retook my fast test and reapplied for flight school. When I retook my GT [exam], I scored a 117, and before I had

scored like 97 or 102 I think...110. At that time...can get you any school in the army. So when I re-tested, I got 117; they said I'm good for flight school. But I'm jumping the gun; I haven't even been through Airborne School yet. But, needless to say, yes, the recruiter did tell me you can re-take this test. It's just...get you in the service, now you can go in as military police. I see that score just works really fine for you, and you know, you meet the height requirements of [a] military police person...needs to be at least...[a] woman at that time [needed] to be at least 5'7", five feet seven inches, and I saw later that was really crucial, really crucial. And serving in that capacity...and he said, you know, "Hey, you can be Airborne," and I remember my eyebrows going up, saying, "Wow, like that sounds fun." So all that was like an adventure for me. [Have] you ever seen the movie *Private Benjamin* with Goldie Hawn? When the movie came out, I was already in the service, and I looked at the movie and I went, "That was me. No initial ideal. What color does this come in--the boots--do they come in any color...other shade?" And so I actually thought, "That sounds like fun." So I went into the Army--the regular Army--even though the WAACs [Women's Army Auxiliary Corps] were still officially part of the service. So it was a gray area. I was joining the Army I was still officially a WAAC but then I was joining under the regular Army. [In] 1978, [in] June, I entered Fort McClellan, Alabama, and my drill sergeant handed me the WAAC emblem and said, "Here, you can have this pin," he said, "but soon they will be no more." And I can tell it meant something to him also because the tone in his voice, the way he looked at me. It was symbolic. Also, his corp and I found out later [that] the WAACs had been integrated in the military...an additional unit to the military, to the Army since 1942. President Dwight Eisenhower signed the order for the Women's Army Auxiliary Corp to be enacted to help support the nation with their skills and knowledge. And really, we were supporting the men who were going to combat. So everything the WAACs were doing was supportive...in a supportive role. So I fit well with that concept of Army clerk typists, cooks, and of course, nurses. Nurses [were] a big thing for the WAACs, which also lead them to be in Normandy. They were the only...as women nurses were the only forces that were able to be in the front lines, they came along in the M.A.S.H. units. They were in the mobile surgical hospital units, they called them M.A.S.H. units. So they have a very admirable history, the WAACs. So I really felt proud just coming in on the end of that Era And I knew there were some very strong and dedicated women that have set the pace for us and broke ground for women being in the service, even though women have been in the military since the Revolutionary War. You know, they bound their breasts and cut their hair just to look like a man to try and serve. When he gave me this pin, I really didn't have a real connection with it, but we did have the WAAC uniforms. We had the mint green two-piece type cotton uniforms. And this was in basic training in June, you know. Basic lasts, what, eight weeks? And within that eight-week course, they

had given us so many different outfits; I could tell they really didn't know how to dress us. What do we do with these women? You know, are they WAACs, are they soldiers, what are they? So we had many. "Here, try this on see how this looks;" that's almost [the] feeling you got. They were just trying things, and the Army was trying to figure out how to dress us. Then we came up with the two-piece solid green fatigues, they called them. So by the time I got into military police school--eight weeks later--still at Fort McClellan. And by the way, Fort McClellan, back in 1978, it was only just...they had the one stop, they called it OSAT--OSAT training--and that's where they had a combination of men and women, and they had just started that. They had just integrated that in the Army a year earlier: 1977. So we were still being put up for experiment and seeing how men and women train together, and I thought it worked well. We had an all-female dorm, and my first concept of working together--really working together--came into full circle in basic training, I thought. And just keeping our barracks clean, that whole concept of, "you're no stronger than the weakest link," and "no soldier left behind" now is what they say... Our drill sergeant would say, "One of you messes up, all of you will suffer," so you've got to get in line. And I realized then [that] this was a whole different concept from what I had been taught...even though I was feeling good with everything...I like the unity, I like what we're doing, I like that we have a purpose, I like the mission statement. "Mission statement" came out as a symbolic way of terming your organization function later, much later, but that was essentially what it was back then. We had to make sure we helped the weakest person along; it wasn't, "Well, I did good." It wasn't a selfie. So basically, in basic training, I went through a lot of internal and external changes, and I couldn't understand what all the yelling was about half the time, and why is he in my face like this? But eventually, I figured out how to keep him out of my face by not speaking up so much. And I remember the drill sergeant walked into the barracks one day because the girls had complained [that] it's so cold. Our barracks at Fort McClellan were brand new: air condition[ed], nice floors...our latrines were nice. So the girls were saying, "It's very cold in here," so I went to the door and I opened it up and I said, "We're going to let some of that hot Alabama air circulate in here," and then the drill sergeant walks in...Drill Sergeant Deaner--I'll never forget--he said, "Who opened up my door? Who opened up this door!?! Private, what are you trying to do, cool off lower Alabama?" And he said, "Who did this?" I said, "I did, Drill Sergeant." All of us had scrambled to the foot of our beds; all of us had learned that's where you go and hang out until they had finished chewing you out, or finished telling you what you had to do. And I put up my hand and said, "I did," and he came right in my face and he said, "What did you do that for?" I said, "Well Drill Sergeant, the girls were cold. They said they were cold." And he looked at me, and I had to write in my book what he told me, because I never forgot what he said to me. He said, "Well, Private, you

had good initiative, but poor judgment.” “Well” I said, “What’s he talking about now?” But it made sense; I wasn’t being economically feasible, for one, even though I had good initiative in helping the girls out, but I really didn’t think it through. And I said, “Okay my first lesson, my first lesson,” And he said, “Keep the door shut,” and walked away, and I thought, “Okay, why did he yell in my face again?” So that was the first lesson, and from then, of course, buffing the floor and then going through basic, the gas chamber, the M-16, the grenade throwing...all of this was just totally amazing to me, just amazing. And I thought, “This is amazing,” you know, the whole aspect of war wasn’t even in my mind, you know. I had told my sister right before I left the house going to basic training, and I said, you know, “I’m supposed to be a military police. I don’t want to have to kill anybody.” And she told me, “You won’t, you won’t.” She saw that I was real. My oldest sister said, “You won’t have to,” and as simple as that sounds, after going through twenty years in the service I never killed anyone, even being a military police--being at Fort Bragg [North Carolina]--I never killed anyone. But I can only imagine the stress and the anxiety that this would place on a soldier, because of the morality of it. We’re all here to serve, but there’s still a morality in hurting someone, even if it’s your duty. So I knew that I was born and raised...I was raised in a church environment. I didn’t want to hurt anyone, but I wanted to join. I wanted to try this adventure, and like so many men and women today, I want[ed] to join the service. But I want to just join for school; I really don’t want to go and fight, but of course, we find ourselves in those positions where you know [that] you joined because of curiosity, and it turned into necessity, and what...you really have to put away all your other concepts of why you took that initial step. It turned into something else, starting by finishing basic.

Howe: What was that “something else” for you?

Dugar: The duty and honor for the country, serving and dedication. That is why I wrote *Career Soldier*. So I started off with *In My Own Words*, and that book was just a concise idea of what made me tick as a person, sharing with everyone my idea of what makes me tick, what makes me happy, and then I went on to sharing how I became a young adult. And then, I became a soldier. And then as years progressed, my commitment to the military changed. It became... I became more interwoven as a person, as a soldier, and of course when you interface with Vietnam veterans-- the reality and the seriousness of dealing with seasoned soldiers— it’s amazing. It’s just... it really humbles you knowing they have sacrificed themselves all this time, their families have sacrificed with them, for the sake of the country. And so many people don’t realize that it’s very necessary to have a group of people who believe in the country enough to sacrifice themselves. Just like you have 911, or you have your ADT security system, you need to have a security system for our country too. You know, “911 what’s your emergency?” Well who [are] you going to call

when our Twin Towers get bombed and things really start happening on the home front, who's going to stand up then? And will they be trained to actually handle the situation? So it takes a group of people and it takes a group of dedicated people and a group of skilled individuals to do that job. We were all one.

Howe: What else do you remember from basic training before we...?

Dugar: Well, basic training... well I kind of went through a little metamorphosis: my hair was nice and curly, and then I found out that I couldn't keep it as curly and nice. I didn't have much time to primp, so at that time we couldn't wear braids--at the most you could have two braids in your hair--so can you imagine that look: a braid here and a braid there, and then you try to prop it up some kind of way. So the regulations have changed since then, but they still have a problem with dreadlocks. However, I had to really try to keep my hair in one ponytail in the back of my head so that all of my hats could fit, and it was a time where I...we encountered in basic training...we had learned so many skills. Things were moving so fast; I realized it was a whole different world I was involved in. You didn't have much time...no room for errors, and somehow I wound up being one of the distinctive trainees in basic. And we stayed right there for military police school training; I didn't have to move anywhere, go anywhere. So MP Training was a little bit more extensive. We learned how to drive the quarter-ton Jeep--the same one you see in the movie, *M.A.S.H.*, and I learned how to drive a stick-shift. At that time, that was part of the course: you had to learn how to drive a stick-shift. And if you couldn't negotiate that; they were telling me, "You're not going pass this course if you don't learn how to drive this Jeep." And I'm thinking...I couldn't understand why it was so important. But when I went to Fort Bragg, that's what they had: the Jeeps left over from Vietnam, and of course we had some sedans there also, which I thought was cool. I said, "Now this is back home," but we still had to use the quarter-ton jeeps because we had range control duty and it was in the Army surplus. They just didn't get rid of things. You think they upgrade it, but you know, they kept the deuce and a half and the quarter ton jeeps, so we had to learn to drive that. And, of course, hand-to-hand combat and firing the pistol and breaking the weapon down, cleaning them, things of that nature, learning a lot about the forms, and shoot-and-no-shoot mock up situations... Because, you know, cops to this very day have problems with, "Do I shoot or not shoot?" And you see on television now, and I think that's just horrific, when a person had their hands up that the cop still shoots them, that's unnecessary, uncalled for, and that's unethical...very unethical. And we actually have mock ups, and we shoot or don't shoot and you get scores for making errors.

Howe: So this is... if I can interject, can you explain this scenario? Is this a range exercise?

Dugar: It's in a room.

Howe: Okay.

Dugar: And the mock up comes up, and you have to figure out if they're friendly or foe, shoot or no shoot.

Howe: Flash cards?

D: No it's like life-size posters of people.

Howe: I got you, okay.

Dugar: And the gun is almost like what you would use at that time, almost like a Wii game or something like that, so if you shoot, it reflects you hitting that person.

Howe: Okay.

Dugar: So that was just one of our training methods.

Howe: So it's testing your reflex against your judgment?

Dugar: Testing your reflex and being able to process what you're seeing and if it's actually friend or foe, and then you get scored with that. So military police training was interesting. And so I was about to do something new and different from all the training I had just received; between basic training to military police, it was time for me to prepare for Jump School. And I remember one of the cadre advised me...because many of the students and soldiers...new soldiers were about to go home to visit their families. You know, normally you go to basic training, you go to AIT, it's time to go home and reconnect with your family. And it seemed as if I had just transformed in to something different since basic, and I felt different. I didn't feel like the same girl I had entered the service as, [but] I'm somewhere in limbo: not quite that professional soldier, but I wasn't that young woman who entered also. And one of the cadre told me [that] you should not go home; if you go home, you will not make Jump School. And I listened to him, and he said...he also told me [not to go home] because you will start drinking soda, you will start eating bad[ly], and you will not make the school, and I decided to go straight from there ...I didn't take leave. I didn't request leave and I went straight from Fort McClellan, Alabama, to Fort Benning, [Georgia] home of the infantry. And that's where things got different for me. Things got different. I shared in my first book *In My Own Words* [that] the mindset for us women in the military...even though we knew it was an option for us as a woman to enter, but it's really kind of like the men's Army ..it was a man's job. And maybe they won't treat us so bad[ly], and that was in the back of

my mind even when I went through initial in processing downtown. I remember a young lady had approached me--I had not even entered, I was just in processing to join the Army at the MEPS--and she said, "You know what?"

Howe: And that's here in Chicago?

Dugar: In Chicago, just going back real[ly] quick[ly]. She said, "I just got out of that. You want to get out the service; you want to get out that commitment." She said, "I'm pregnant; you can have my urine." And I said, "I don't think so; I think I want to do this." So I found that there were a lot of ways to get out as a woman, and I thanked her: I said, "thank you for offering me your urine, but I think I'm going to try this." So there was a real different mindset as a woman, you know what I'm saying? So when I went to Fort Benning, that's where everything changed. I could honestly say that's where things changed, and the reality of everything changed for me. It was almost 400 men in the class that was supposed to start. I got there zero week: the course was supposed to be three weeks long, I got there zero week, which made it four weeks for me. And we were handed all our equipment and our hats, and I was Whiskey 9, and we had twenty-one women in our course. And we still had combat boots, and I didn't think anything else of it. And we began the course ground week, and that first week we lost half our females just in ground week. The runs alone...the men--I put in my book--they ran like Kentucky horses. The pace was fast and strong, and we ran for miles up hills, down hills in combat boots; they didn't expect anything different from us women. And what I found out earlier...the first women who had went through Fort Benning, Georgia, were WAACs back in 1972; a group of them...they actually completed the course. So I didn't think it was unusual either, being in the course, because I saw twenty-one women there with me. So I figured okay, this is almost as many as [were] in my basic training, definitely, as many as it was in my basic training...and in my military police school: we had about eighty of us. We actually had two female Marines who came and joined in, because the Marines didn't even have a military training situation for women. And I thought they were the strictest thing I had ever seen, those Marine girls...their hats were crisp. It was their demeanor; they were even more poised than us Army girls. I figured it was something that they had in their basic that made them sharper and crisper. But we all worked together well. I learned from them. I watched their demeanor, their professionalism, and I...it was slightly different from the Army girls, and probably more so than Air Force girls. So each branch had a way of grooming their soldiers. I kind of watched and saw that, but our first week in ground week--in the beginning--we lost half our female soldiers. Female soldiers meaning female officers enlisted: white, black... We had a combination there, and I was just trying to survive jumpschool...get in formation at 4:30 in the morning, 5:00; it was still dark, stars still out from the night before, birds

just dead silent. And that whole scenario of darkness, standing in formation in a sea of helmets, just waiting for my number to be called for roll call, and I like...I put in my book [that] I allowed myself to let my mind drift only after hearing my name called or my number. They didn't call us by nameWhiskey 9, and then I would allow my mind to drift, knowing that they had expressed to us everything...we tell you [that] you need to respond to immediately. It could mean life or death. And I told myself here we go again, life or death. Military police school [was] life or death, everything is life or death, basic training life or death; everything is life or death. Throw that grenade in, soldier. Put your head down, soldier...life or death. And the runs continued to take a toll on the females running for your life. By the time we started tower week--which is where we actually learned how to drift down from the mock towers, 250 foot towers, we called them--we were down to maybe five females. A lot of the training that really took a toll on the men was the...they call the harness, the swinging harness. And the men just couldn't negotiate that; between their legs, they had a problem with pain. And then, of course, we had the Swing Landing Trainer, where we would hold onto a still bar and, from a tower, we would glide down, and they would tell us to drop, and that's where we had to do our makeshift PLF: parachute landing fall. If we couldn't negotiate that, they weren't going to let us proceed to the next step. If you can't land correctly, you can break your leg, ankle, or both or whatever. So I had a problem with that until maybe half of my attempts I remember about the 10th try, I jumped up and the blackhat instructor told me that was a satisfactory PLF [parachute landing fall]; go and do another. And I started thinking to myself, "I think I can do this now." And I did it again and again, and the way you fall is [that] the moment you touch the ground, you collapse your body; you do not make it a force where the force impacts throughout your body, you have to fold and collapse up as though you were one with the earth, so to speak. So as they became easier as I continued with each try and I must have done about thirty for him before he was satisfied and he said, "Move on." But I saw so many people get marked off in that point right there. So many men...they couldn't negotiate that. So we lost many men in that aspect. The runs were still taking a toll on us—shin splint--so by the time we hit...

Howe: No, no, I remember running in improper gear; it's not fun, running in combat boots. Was there another option?

Dugar: There was no other option; that was the uniform and that was the SOP [standard operating procedure]. I hear [that in] later years...later they changed it to gym shoes, but it was combat boots for us, and white t-shirts and our fatigue pants. By the time...the end of tower week...the next week was jump week. We had ground tower jump week, the last Friday in tower week. It was only myself and one other female left, and we started out the run that morning, and as soon as the momentum started picking

up I was so exhausted that by the end of those two weeks, I was about to give out like the rest of the women we had lost. But somehow I [kept] telling myself [that] if I don't make this course, they're going to send me overseas somewhere, and I just don't think I can take that. I don't think I can be in that place called Europe, which is one of the best-[kept] secrets in the military. And I was thinking I was afraid to go there; it's like Club Med. And I was running, and we're going up hills and running five miles, and I notice the female is another young black girl. She started falling back, and I think my eyes must have [gone] up like it was the only thing keeping me there. And she started drifting back,...and I knew if she went back just so far that black hat was going to stop her...if she got back about twenty, thirty, forty, fifty feet, that was going to be it for her. You had two chances to fall out of a run in Jump School; after that, you were finished. And the runs this is what got most of the females, because the men run at the pace, and it just...the momentum just keeps building and building, and before you know it, it was extraordinarily fast. And like that cadet had told me, "Don't go home, don't go home; you'll go back to drinking soda [and] eating bad[ly]. You've prepared your body for jump school; go straight to jump school." And I knew [that] had I [gone] home, and if I had come back to this, I would not have made it. That girl, when she fell back, I remember turning to her--I was at the end of the formation--and I yelled, "Come back, get up here," and when she put her head down, I knew that she had given out. She couldn't even respond to me, she was just that tired. And I...it almost drained...pulled on me, because I felt myself kind of dropping a little bit, and when the black hat took off and went back to see...and she started walking, and I knew that was it for her. And he made sure she was okay, and I think he saw something in me, and I think he saw that I didn't know what to do, that maybe this was it, that same black hat ran up to the side of me and he said, "Whiskey, you're the last one left," he said, "you'd better not quit." And I said, "I won't, I won't." I don't know what I was feeling, but I now...his words of encouragement...they instilled me to pick my head up and continue on, and I wished and hoped I had done the same for her. And it hurt me so bad. But anyway, I picked my head up and I fell to that back of the formation, and finished that run. And that night I said, "Oh my God, what have I gotten myself into?" Because we start jumping on Monday. And that's all I could think about.

Howe: Wow. Now you alluded to the fact earlier that Air Force...the Marines, they don't have this school for their services. So we're talking about three different services at this school: women from [the] Air Force and Marines at this school.

Dugar: We didn't have any Air Force there; we had three Marine women who joined our military police course at Fort Benning. There were no Air Force or Marines that I knew of; there were just officers and enlisted for jump school. And you know, Fort Benning,

Georgia, and I found out that for an officer to have jump wings, it's very essential for their career. It's very competitive, so showing you have jump wings shows you're willing to take that extra step. You're a little more courageous than the average soldier, because the average soldier asked me, "Why [do] you jump out of perfectly good airplanes?" That's an interesting question.., with lots of meaning.

Howe: It's a good question.

Dugar: Why did you even join the Army? Why become a ranger? And that's what they're looking for now: more females to try out for Ranger School. So yes, they're taking applications for that. So I was really amazed to see that finished.

Howe: Jump week?

Dugar: I finished ground week, and jump week began. And our first jump was on a C-130, and as I put in my book, it wasn't that jump I was afraid of; it was the one that followed, because we were all comfortable with what to expect. It [was] when the green light came on over the door and we were all lined up with our reserve and our parachutes. And I was the only female. The jump masters...they told us, "Listen, let me explain everyone...everything." We had taken off: "Let me explain everything to you. No one will talk in this aircraft except me, and no one will land in this aircraft either." And I was thinking. "Okay, this may be the part where somebody gets kicked out of the door," because we heard that can happen. So the green light came on, and that person had to stand in the door, and none of us wanted that position because we hear that is the scariest. So I didn't even look to see who had to stand in the door. And once that green light came on, you run. You had to shuffle so that you don't trip over anything; nothing worse than a parachute being pulled out in the aircraft. And when I exited the aircraft, it was a feeling I had never experienced in my life. I looked up, and I saw that aircraft going past me, and it was, like, a huge machine, and there I was out in the open. And my head was swimming and I put my head back down and waited for my 'chute to open. That's what you do: you count and you make sure you're counting enough, and you feel that pull and make sure your 'chute has opened, but if you're counting and your 'chute is not opening, and that's where your reserve comes in. But mine opened and when it did, that...I was like, "Okay, okay, it's working." And then you start negotiating the toggles, and you can talk to other parachutists around you. And you make sure you stay away from each other: drift this way, pull left, right to get your risers, to give yourself direction. So you have a little control over that. So when you see the tree line, you have to get ready for your PLF--your landing--and that went well. So the second jump... All the aircraft was quiet. The guys I knew were feeling...they were feeling pressure. They knew just how serious everything was, the dangers... It was a whole different atmosphere

than the first jump. We knew of the danger. We knew why the drill...the black hats were yelling and screaming, "Pay attention!" Everything was in their hands: to make sure that we would exit correctly, that our lines wouldn't get caught up, that we wouldn't stick a rope, to be alert as to the dangers that can happen to you once you exit the aircraft, whether...first of all, if your 'chute [doesn't] open or if you get tangled with another person, both of you can come spiraling down to the ground at ...really it was 3,000...3,000-4,000 feet.

Howe: Did any of those...was there a bad scenario that happened during the first jump?

Dugar: We didn't...we had a couple of sprained ankles and things of that nature. I don't recall anyone not having an open 'chute. But the 2nd jump the black hat--the jump masters--did something very tricky. I was somewhere down in the middle of the aircraft, and they knew what I had sensed, also that the guys were somber; they weren't really into it. They were probably second-guessing everything. They weren't motivated, and we were somewhere traveling...heading towards the drop zone. We had already taken off, and a black hat says...he said...[the] jump master said, "Whiskey 9." "Yes, Jump Master?" He said, "Unhook up and come here." And all the guys turn and look at me like, "What did she do?" They weren't saying a word either. And I'm like, "What are you asking me to come up there for?" But I unhooked myself and I wobbled up towards him, and I said, "Yes, Jump Master?" and he said, "Stand in the door." And I said to him, "What did I do?" and he said, "STAND IN THE DOOR!" and because of... *In My Own Words*, I was kind of vague about a lot of things, because I just wanted to get everything out. Because of my surgery, I found it necessary to really talk in depth about everything that happened in Jump School when I was stationed at Ft. Bragg. Jumping in the second book...and also they said, you know, what... "This could be a really good movie if you had more content. Could you give us more content so we can get a script for it?" And I said, "You know what? I'll do better than that: I'll write a second book. I have enough information to write a second book." And I titled it *Confessions of an Airborne Soldier*, and I was going to tell more, and tell some of the secrets I had been holding back before I joined the Army. One of my boyfriends told me, "Never tell all your secrets." That's one thing you need to learn in the military: never tell all your secrets. So I said, "I'm going to have confessions; I'm going to confess in the second book." That's why I titled it *Confessions of an Airborne Soldier*. So as I wrote in my book--my second book--everything that was going on in my mind, and I said, "Stand in the door," and I slowly...and it was almost like I was mechanical. I turned and put my hands on the door as I learned in the mock ups we had, and I looked out, and I all I could see was sky. And I said, "Oh my goodness," and I turned back and looked at him, and all he said was, "Stand in the door," and I said, "Okay." And I just stood there. I can stand in the door. I had never thought I would be

the first one to leave the aircraft. So the light was still red. When the light turned green, he tapped me on my shoulder. He said, "Go." The other guys had already stood up. He had given the command stand up: "Okay, hook up and stand and form [a] line," and then everyone started moving towards me. They had kind of squeezed up, and I looked at them like "I don't know if we're going anywhere," but he said, "Go" and he tapped me on my shoulder, and I turned to him and said, "Uh huh." And I knew he wasn't going to negotiate with me. And I looked back out, and I looked at him, and he said, "Go," and I just jumped. And I just...we were in a C-130...no it was a C-141 at that time, and that aircraft...as soon as you hit the outside of the door, that air just sucks you, and there you go, flying on the side of that aircraft, and then you're minutes, your seconds are actually shorter because you're moving faster. C-141 is a faster aircraft; C-130 was an older aircraft [that] they used in Vietnam. The 141 is more like a jet, a huge aircraft. And I said, "Oh my god." I was out the door and, of course, the same thing...checking aircraft, the parachute opens up, checking your distance, and they get away, and they move away from you, and you move away from them, and [you're] trying to keep your distance. And we hit the ground, and I'll tell you, after we made that second jump, those guys were looking at me like, "Oh yes, oh yes Whiskey 9!" And I'm...[whoops] I'm part of the guys now! But don't put me in the door again. I didn't have to do that again; I didn't have to go in the door again.

Howe: Why...why do think he did that? And why do you say you felt like you were one of the guys?

Dugar: He wanted to use me to tell the guys, and show the guys [that] if this girl can do it, you sissies had better do it. And that's what he did. He scared them into showing them that if a woman can do it, you guys had better follow her out that door, because he saw they were somber, and they were really second-guessing everything after that first jump, you know. They were all revved up: oh yeah, jump week, first day, yeah! We can really jump [whoops]! And after the jump, they were like, "Ooh, ah, that's heavy." And he saw it, and I felt it. They were quiet as church mice, and then they...he knew what he had to do. "Whiskey 9, get up here," and they're looking at me and I'm like, "Don't look at me. This is nothing serious." I'm thinking to myself, "Nothing serious happening," then I never returned to my seat. And I was thinking, "Oh my Lord, this is something else." So we went through all five jumps, we graduated, got our jump wings pinned on our chest--we called them blood wings--and the cadre was so proud of me. They said, "Whiskey 9, you are ok" because I had almost sprained my ankle on the last jump--and he said, "You want to just wait here 'til your leg heals a little bit then you can go to Fort Bragg?" So they gave me, like, a little bit of a TDY at Fort Benning, about four days of rest. He said, "We want you to go to Fort Bragg; hold your head up high," and those are the things I

mention in my third book, *Career Soldier*: the things that you don't think about until you realize that's what go you through, like, don't go home between MP School and Jump School, or stay here and rest; we want you to walk tall when you get to Bragg, or guard mount. When I got into my company, the guys..."Here, let me fix your hat, let me fix your beret; you're the sharpest female on this base." Those were the things I had to put down in *Career Soldier*, that when those seasoned soldiers...when they lend you a hand and help you become a better soldier, a professional soldier, I had to talk about that. Taps, reveille, the things that makes you proud to be a soldier that you don't know when you first walk into the military; you learn in time, through seasoned soldiers, through command sergeant majors who take you underneath their wing, where you don't feel threatened but, you know, they're treating you like a daughter. But they're hoping [that] you will pass this on to the next soldier, to the next soldier, to the next private. And that's where *Career Soldier* came in for me, my third book. So we graduated, and as we sat in the bleachers at our graduation, which was on the drop zone, family members were there, officers, commanders, post commanders, because every class was just was really four weeks long, and they only had one class at a time. And remember, WAACs were still there; WAACs had not been dissolved yet. So here I was, graduating October 12th from Airborne School, and WAACs were still official. I was in a gray area; I was the only female in my class. WAACs didn't become dissolved until October 29th, 1978. I went into my unit October 17th, 1978. I was the only female in my unit at Ft. Bragg. They didn't even have anywhere to house me; I had to be housed down at the 503 Military Police Battalion where they had about ten to twelve females at the barracks there, three units of 108 MP, part of the 503 MP Battalion about six blocks down the street. So that's where my unit--118th MP Company--housed me once I arrived at my unit. But getting back to the drop zone at graduation: we had about 250-270 guys that graduated, and we were all seated in the bleachers, and I remember sitting more on the outer right-hand side of where the speaker was, and I had to write and put in my book the feeling that I got at that time. It was very emotional because when the speaker announced our distinguished graduate--the one who exhibited the outstanding characteristics, who performed the corps in an exemplary manner--when he was about to announce who that graduate, was...I turned and looked and half the guys in my formation turned to look at me.

Howe: What did you feel they were reflecting to you in that look?

Dugar: [Long pause] You know, they have...I knew what they were feeling, because I knew that, between all the runs and everything, I had pushed through. It was hard, and being the only female out of twenty-one, that I had really dug deep after that last female had dropped out. And I knew what they were feeling in that aircraft on the second run, and

what it took for me to go out that door. They were just letting me know they get me they respected me as being one of them. And I wrote in my book [that] as far as I'm concerned, I received all the accolades that I needed. Airborne, you know I was happy for the male distinguished graduate. I was so happy to have finished that course that I didn't know what to do. And it was only into my later years, and having served twenty years, [that] I realized that, other than Ft. Bragg, you hardly ever see a female Airborne soldier. Throughout the European Theater, and throughout the rest of the United States bases and posts, it's very rare. Now you go to Ft. Bragg, you're going to be [saying], "Hey, Airborne, hey, Airborne," every....street. But it's rare, and I know it's rare because when I run into other soldiers, they look at my chest and they look at my wings--by that time I had air assault wings too, I got that at Ft. Campbell [Kentucky]--and they're like, "Ohh, she's a force to be reckoned with," and I'm like, these wings...they just...they are awesome. And that was throughout my entire career. I would have sergeant majors looking at me like [whoops] colonels like [whoops]. So the wings are very symbolic and special to the history of the Airborne...is very symbolic and special. So going into Ft. Bragg and being with the Military Police, and being with the guys...the guys were proud, very proud guys in the 118th MP Corps. Their emblem was called "sky dragon," and our mission was basically to supply support to the post and to the general on mainpost, we called them legs non-Airborne; they got [on] a lot of world missions also, and of course, 82nd Airborne MPs course, and I was in corps, but the 118th MP had their own little make-up there. They had their own unit, their own mess hall; it was a three-story building. It had also a supply downstairs. We had all kinds of machine guns; we had all our M-16s down there, bayonets claymores, you know. We had a full arsenal down there. We had our dining room on the first floor. We had...the males...their rooms were on the second floor. We had the platoon sergeants' rooms on the second and third floor, the commander's and the first sergeant's room was on the first floor. We had everything but a room for females, so I lived somewhere else. But I walked...I high-tailed it down there every day for whatever mission, and our motor pool was right there. Of course, we still had guard mount; we had guard mount for our military MP duties, and that was a whole different animal in and of itself. And we still had our jumps that we were committed to, supposedly one every quarter, which was really more than that when you look at it. We were jumping...we would begin to jump...it seemed like once every month we had a jump, and that changed from C-130s, 141, UH1, CH47, chinooks out of Fort Polk Air Force base, which is connected to Ft. Bragg. Ft. Bragg is a huge base: 258 square miles. Nothing but drop zones. The main base was huge, and all you would see [were] the black berets, special forces, the green berets, the rangers, and the burgundy burets [which were] what we wore. And our runs were amazing. We ran with our berets; our MP dogs ran with us, and MP duty was amazing. It was amazing. I had

consummate professional Vietnam vet, who was my supervisor. A couple of times while I was on duty, he taught me a lot. While I was in the sedan with him...and we had Captain McDonald, who...I think he was a ranger. He had made news; he had murdered his family on Ft. Bragg and claimed that hippies had done it. The case was still on-going. We had to drive around, and because the jury was still out on that, they made a movie on that too. So we had to drive through housing and make sure that crime scene remained untouched. That was interesting: to go through that. We would have cases where a lot of the soldiers would get into brawls. We had a lot of domestic disturbances, and it was interesting. And I had to talk about that in my third book, *Career Soldier*...I'm sorry, my second book. *Confessions*. Not only was I a soldier and ready to go to war, but I was also a police for the soldiers and some of the [most bad] ass soldiers in the army at Ft. Bragg. They [drank] beer out of boots, and they [drank] beer out of glasses, and then they would bite the glass and chew it up, just to show you how bad they were. It's something about the 82nd Airborne soldier...something about the ranger. We would..."Ohh, the rangers, the rangers, the Special Forces." You just had to respect them. We respected them because we knew what their training consisted of. They got the best schools; they got the best training. They worked in small groups. They were initially Seal Team 6s; that's what they were. And we knew that, and only if you were there did you know that, because you knew who got the allocations for schools and what kind of schools they were getting. "Oh we can't get that or that, but we can get this, or—" that's why they are so special. Then came 1980. We had a--

Howe: Really quickly—there's that respect, but you're there to also, like you said, police those soldiers. How did you weigh the responsibility with that emotional component?

Dugar: Um, it's really a fine line. But I noticed the MPs in my unit--and really all MPs for that matter—they're arrogant, because we have an innate...a dual responsibility: not only are we soldiers; we have that weapon on the side of us. That's why I really don't...and I wrote that in my book, I don't necessarily agree with concealed weapons. I don't agree with this whole idea of being able to have weapons, because having a weapon demonstrates a certain amount of power that a person has over you. And we knew as MPs [that] we had that authority. I know one MP: he stopped a colonel for speeding. He said, "Sir, [do] you know who I am? I'm Colonel such-and-such," he said, "Sir, do not confuse your rank with my authority." I said, "No, you didn't say that to that colonel." Those MPs were pretty hardcore, and they knew the authority they had just by having their 45s. As a female, I had a 38; they gave the guys 45s. And we knew how to work the 38 and break it down and all that, and the 38's the same way, but they didn't give us 45s. I knew that a 45 would stop a man at one bullet, but I knew my 38 would take

about three. So we had a little problem with that. Once another female got into the unit and, you know, we started talking about that.

Howe: What did you guys discuss?

Dugar: That we really needed more gun, more firepower. We really did, because if it got down to a hand-to-hand, or many times we would patrol the parking lots, and a lot of soldiers [would] be loitering, we called it. "Hey, you need to get into the building or get into your vehicle and leave." Some would give us a lot of mouth, and even one case, we had a group of 82nd soldiers confront our MPs. They were in a Jeep; they had their lights on. They stopped them and they said, "Stay in your vehicle," but all four of them got out. And it was dark out, and they called for back-up, and my partner and I were back-up, and by the time my partner and I got there, the MP had already shot one of the guys. And I knew that 82nd guys...at [the] time we got a call, I'm in...we had a name for it: I'm in the 82nd area. We had to go help them, because those guys are crazy, [the] 82nd. They're on a whole different ball game. You know, we [have] to go, because they all act like they're Rambo. And so we came right away, but it was too late. And I walked up to him and I said, "Why did you shoot him?" and he said, "They wouldn't...he [kept] coming, all four of them." And I said, "Okay," and I walked back to the guy who had been shot, and I said, "Lie down, lie down; you're making me nervous. Lie down." We called for an ambulance and everything, but that's just how it is. They were guys that [were] unpredictable. So we knew what we had to deal with, being cops there. We had to be tough, because they were a whole different breed of animal.

Just to mention: we had...they did a report they did an article on me because I was the only female in my unit, back in 1979 when I first...a little bit after I arrived. And they wanted to show females in military police, in Airborne, females in combat, their roles. And I had to jump off the quarter-ton Jeep and, you know, have the M-16. And they had me doing that over and over and over again. And I thought, "Oh my God, I'm going to hurt tonight," but I [kept at] it with a smile on my face. And I was looking serious, and they had a group of people taking pictures and everything, and they really wanted to show that females can be in [a] military combat role. So I didn't know I was ground-breaking then, but I was, and that article...of course, Fayetteville published that, and to follow in 1980, we had our first all-female parachute jump combat. "Combat" meaning fifty-seventy pounds each that we were going to carry. We even had our M-16s at our sides. M-16 breaks down into two pieces and it's in this padded case which can cause injury [if] you fall. [If] you don't do a good PLF, that M-16 can break your leg, that kind of thing. So it turned out to be a wonderful day: no injuries. We had a female general jumping with us. She was Airborne 152. And *Fayetteville Observer*...they came and did a

newspaper article of that, and I got raves of that. All of this stuff is in the archives; you go online, you google it, you may not ever find it. And thank goodness I [kept] all this memorabilia. I [kept] all of this and I was able to put it in my book.

Howe: You said there were 152 women in the jump?

Dugar: All from the entire post: 152 females. They made sure every female got involved in that.

Howe: That's just Fort Bragg?

Dugar: That was. But you remember, really Fort Bragg was the only post that had Airborne women. Everyone else...it's like, you're Airborne, you're going to Fort Bragg. Airborne, Fort Bragg.

Howe: Okay.

Dugar: So really you could probably say we were the only Airborne females in the Army, 152 of us. And at that time, we had essentially...[around] 1980, we had close to 44,000 almost 50,000 females in the service.

Howe: How big was the post at Fort Bragg?

Dugar: 250 miles.

Howe: And how many people?

Dugar: Oh my God, I can't tell you how many soldiers. 166,000? I can't tell you.

Howe: 152 out of 166,000...

Dugar: We were only a drop in the bucket. It was rare to see a female paratrooper walking around. I...people would stop and look when we were running and I was in a formation, and I was the only female running in the formation. Yeah, it was rare. And that's why they did the article on me, because when I walked in, in 1978--and remember, this jump was in 1980--I walked into my unit in October of 1978. They did the newspaper article on me in 1979. There really wasn't anyone there [in] Airborne.

Howe: You say it now and you're not aware, but even with this time elapsed, or if you can recall being there, how do you feel it changed that environment: your presence and 151 other women like you?

Dugar: At that time it was even fewer. I was happy to see the second girl come into my unit.

Howe: Debra.

Dugar: Debra. She didn't make three years; she got pregnant and she got out. However, we knew we were special. We just...it's something about that whole...the entire, um, the entire M.O., the entire pin: what you have to go through to get it, how many people try and fail. But the guys who see you with this, they know. Just like at graduation--they gave me my props right then and there--because they knew what we went through to get it. So when I went to my unit, they respected me from the day I walked through the door. They would pull a prank or two if they could; they sent me to the colonel's office--me and another private--they said, "You need to go to the Provost Office, Marshall, to the colonel; they're expecting you. You're going to get the key to the drop zone." I said, "Okay, I'm on it." He and I both walk; "It's a nice day, isn't it?" We both get there. The colonel's secretary was in on it too, because she says, "Okay, you're here to see the colonel?" "Yes, Ma'am, we're here to get the key to the drop zone." "Well, he's right down the hall in the office." And both of us go down the hall. We stand in the hall, parade rest, we say. "Sir--" he's looking down at his notes. We stand parade rest, and we say, "Sir, were here to get the key to the drop zone." And he didn't even look up right away. His eyebrow went up first, and I can see that, and I'm thinking, "What's wrong with him?" I'm still at parade rest, and he looked up and he said, "GET OUT OF HERE!!" And I, you know...you can't just turn and run. And I can hear the giggles behind me. It was the secretary and some of the sergeants; they had run over there. You could hear the giggles, and I said, "They got us good," and I dropped to attention, and the private next to me, he dropped to attention, and we turned around and his face was so red, I thought if my face could turn red, it would probably look like him. And we walked out, and I said, "Oh, they got us good. Oh," I said, "I can't believe that." So I watched out from that point on, all the jokes they would try to give to the new soldiers, but it was all in good fun for them, because like I said, at guard mount..."Let me fix your hat, you're the sharpest one," and that sergeant...all the soldiers down at the 503rd, you strapped. So they had my back. They looked out for me: the older, senior ones. They trained me well to be careful when you're getting out of your vehicle, you're checking another vehicle, you make sure you press the trunk down; sometimes they pop out [of] the trunk. Domestic disturbance always have your back. They'll gang up on you once you start separating them. "Leave my husband alone; leave my wife alone." They start attacking the cops. So it was amazing how we weren't really a threat to the guys. They always knew they were stronger than us in reality, but we were stronger in spirit. And that goes a long way when working with them. So we meshed well with them, I thought. And I think I just have to mention one more incident where we had a combat jump with 82nd Airborne MPs. We were going to do an aggression-type thing. So my unit had three aircrafts. It was three aircrafts, and then we had two more aircrafts with all our gear. So this was going to be an all-night thing.

Howe: This was a tactical scenario?

Dugar: It was a tactical scenario. We were going to be loaded up and dropped off in one of areas to just have to put our equipment together, and [the] 82nd was going to be our aggressor. So as we sat on the flight line, we had put our camo sticks on, you know, zigzags, you know, the light green and the oldie green. "How do I look?" "Ok, you look ok," "Mhm." We got our parachutes on and 82nd soldiers started coming in. We were sitting there, they walked past us. They had bandanas on; they had their camouflage put on like kisses. They had diamonds; they had zigzags. I was thinking to myself, "Oh my gosh, it's going to be a long night. It's going to be a really long night." Then I'm looking down at their boots, of course we were wearing jungle boots, then they were bad. We had the green mesh and the black; they had six-inch knives strapped to their legs. And I remember thinking, "That's not even regulation," you know. But forget it; this going to be a long night, I can just see it now. And it was. We hit the ground...when we hit the ground, we saw the aircraft taking off with our equipment. We actually saw the equipment landing with the parachutes, and we knew we had to get to it quickly. And we knew we were going to have to get to it quickly. It was dusk then, and we were going to have to have to get to our equipment, break it down, set up the Jeeps, set up whatever we need to perform our tactical movement, and then we boarded the aircraft. And they were in two aircrafts; we were in three. My unit was in three. By the time we landed, they were on us like white on rice. They showed us no mercy. The things they were doing...I was thinking to myself, "This is so not right." They were cutting our Jeep tires, they were...they were just...but when they walked past us, I could tell they were assessing us. And [I] said, "Okay, we know how we're going to get that, okay," and then they turned their heads, and they were like, "Okay, what's next?" It was done. So 82nd any time, any day, they're the guys to go with.

Howe: Glad they're on our side.

Dugar: Glad they're on our side. I was thinking to myself, "It's going to be a long night," and it was. We were out all night, all night long, all night long. So that was pretty much my three years of rocking and rolling with 118th. And experiencing more women in our unit...we had a supply clerk come in. She's passed since then. She had cancer; she died. We had a reunion a year ago with the 118th. We stood and took a picture by Iron Mike. I mention Iron Mike in my book, and I told they guys I had written a book. And I actually went down to the 503rd Military Police Battalion. I gave up my wings and became a leg; I had actually grown fearful. I mean, it was...it had gotten to a point where I just couldn't do it. We had night jumps, we had people breaking their legs. I was going to a memorial service, I think a rigger [a person trained to maintain or repair parachutes] had cut some

lines, and I think a captain had fallen to his death, and I had to make a decision if I was going to do this: possibly go to flight school. And after re-taking that test, things just evolved where I just couldn't stay a jumper. And it was hard, but I did it, and I went down to the 503rd and it didn't feel that different. I actually lived there. I spoke with the girls on a daily basis: we hung out together, we partied together. So that's where I was relocated to.

Howe: When did you make the decision to [relocate]?

Dugar: It was the end of 1980. It was very soon after that all-female jump. I knew after a couple of memorials... I would sit in the memorials and [I] said, "This isn't going to last too long for me. This is going to be a matter of time." I know that there is a lot...there is a lot of history here already, but in order for me to survive this, I'm going to have to make some choices, some life-changing choices I may not have made twenty years [ago]. I don't know; all I know is that I was sad to hear of the trooper that had died when I went to the reunion. I think she was the third female in the unit. Her name was Janis. She had a very strong personality, and she was a very rugged outdoor girl, and it was...several times she had my back. That I wouldn't even mention to the guys, but that's just how it was. You form a camaraderie with these females. There [are] certain things you go through, and you say, you know, she's a stand up kind of girl, she really is. She had my back, because a lot of things you don't say, [a] lot of secrets you don't tell. So just like the guys don't tell everything, you don't tell everything. And moving down to 503rd, that's when things really changed. Ronald Reagan had just come on board, and he was calling on us to assist with his inauguration and fly to West Point. That's when we were assigned and tasked to help with the Cuban resettlement, when Castro ousted some of his citizens. We had to pack up and literally set up ground there in Pennsylvania.

Howe: That's Indian Town Gap?

Dugar: Fort Indian Town Gap, Pennsylvania. And that's where the movie *Scarface*...you know, the movie *Scarface*. They were showing the Cubans and their resettlement, and I found that interesting; a lot of movies are actually based off real military influences, a lot of military situations and duties.

Howe: So this was the Mariel boatlift, and people decided they didn't want to live in Cuba anymore, and the Cuban government was going, "Hey, go ahead. You want to leave go ahead."

Dugar: But Castro also did something: he got rid of a lot of people out of his jail cells.

Howe: And mental institutions.

Dugar: Exactly, because yes, you can tell you had a different kind of people there, because they were flamboyant and they were cussing us out. And be prepared because they can throw a rock and hit you right on the side of you head, like, perfect aim. And they were spitting at us, kind of rough duty, but that's military police, you know. Military police, you're right there with POWs. That's a tough job. It was so close to being infantry, being a military policeman or woman, and that was tough for me. When we went out to the field...and I knew I [was] doing this, but can I stay military police forever? It's really tough duty. It was very close to being infantry. You dig your little area: your perimeters, your fields of fire, your sectors of fire grenades. You're combat-ready as military police, because you're right there on the front lines of the enemy; you're the one who [are] supposed to get the POWs from your infantry soldier and take them back and process them. So you're handling the enemy, 100% contact.

Howe: The army has the executive authority on detention operations, in whatever regard that works, whether it's on combat lines or people coming onto U.S. soil, you guys are it. You're the ones who are going to deal with them.

Dugar: We're the ones who are going to deal with them. So that was going to change for me, also, if I was going to stick around.

Howe: How long were you in Pennsylvania?

Dugar: Oh, I think we rotated several...because we were Battalion 503, we had three companies. I was in 108 MP, so we rotated with the other company--21st--and things like that. So I would say we were there, like, two to three months, and another company would rotate in and take over.

Howe: And this is before you...you're still with 118th at this time?

Dugar: No, I had left 118th, I was with 503rd.

Howe: Okay, 503rd.

Dugar: That's where my duty really changed. I started having duty real-world stuff [like] supporting the President, and I remember an incident where he flew our entire unit to West Point because he was speaking there to the graduating candidates...cadets. And we hit severe turbulence, and I was with...we call them "leg" then, and I was with an aircraft full of legs: the non-Airborne. And the guys started...the turbulence was so bad [that] the stewardess had to squat in the aisles and the guys are yelling, "Crash and burn" and I'm thinking, "First they criticize us for jumping out of a perfectly good

airplane, and yet they want to go down on an aircraft. I'm going to die in an aircraft now, instead of jumping out of it." Now...so, hmm, that's funny. So anyway, we landed safely. And just standing on the field, and seeing Reagan...same thing...he had us there for his inauguration at the White House. There was a lot of duty involved in switching my status from being in the Airborne unit 118--and, as you can see from my book, that's where my heart is--but 503rd did offer a different view point as serving as a military police and the extensive duty it involved. And it was very creative, and it was very functional, and it was very exciting, but as soon as my three years were up--my enlistment—I...and Reagan fired the civilians: the air traffic controllers. I then...yeah, he fired the civilian air traffic controllers.

Howe: This is nation-wide?

Dugar: Nation-wide. They were striking, and Reagan...he was going to show them he meant business. Can you imagine how that affected air way travel: striking air traffic controllers, both nation-wide and world-wide? So, he replaced them with Army air traffic controllers, thus opening a gap for the need for Army air traffic controllers. So there was a bonus involved, and of course, my thought was [that] I remember seeing the first female helicopter pilot, black, and I remember thinking that should have been me. I hit the ground running, and hadn't stopped. So I re-enlisted for air traffic control. There was a bonus involved, and I knew that aviation was the branch in the Army. It was either that or crew chief, and I knew I was going to be something that dealt with flying, and air traffic control was pretty good. So I went to school for that at Fort Rucker, Alabama, and that's where I began my third book, *Career Soldier*, because technically that's where my career began. Once I finished that first enlistment, I noticed a lot of people say, "You know what? This is where I stop: three years and that's it." But once you re-enlist, something happens. You say, "If I'm in this, I'm in it to win it now," and that's when I kind of consider myself becoming a career soldier starting off, which lead to the school's intense, almost a year-long...and from there I went to Korea as an air traffic controller.

Howe: This is with the 244th?

Dugar: Yes, and I think it was the 1st ID Division whose...that handles the DMZ [demilitarized zone] over there. But my duty was off-base in the small city of Uijeongbu in Korea, and I spoke about that in my third book also. And that was just fascinating, just fascinating living in Korea. But as the plane was landing, all I could think about was M.A.S.H. I could only think about **Stalag 13**, these movies...these old movies...concertina wire, the rice patties. I was seeing how torn and broken-down the country...and I remember thinking, looking out the window, [it] was so cold that December day, and I said to myself, "Oh

my God, God had forgotten about this place.” And they were still recovering from war during that time. And one thing about Seoul: Seoul was beautiful, Seoul was beautiful. They had a lot of tall buildings just like Chicago, almost. So spending a year there was amazing: meeting lots of friends, and you work in small groups [in] air traffic control. You don’t have a lot of people in your units. You’re...you work more individually, like...and we would have pilots who would fly in, and it’s almost... I was here for a briefing. I saw *The Korengal*. The pilot who wrote that, and...ah...then there was another pilot who did a book on viper pilots. And I remember, as an air traffic controller, we would talk to the viper pilots a lot, and then we would talk to the F-16s that would fly overhead. And they would always come in, it was just me and another female in the tower, and we would smile to each other when they would hear because they sounded so sexy. They would say “Lagoya tower,” we would look at each other and say “You or me?” We would say, “Yes, this is Lagoya tower.”

Howe: Nice.

Dugar: And they said, “Roger, this is such-and-such and we’re transitioning your air space from north to south at such-and-such a height. You got any traffic in your area?” “Oh roger, we have UH1 transitioning at dah dah dah and at banana split, we have checkpoints.” We would give them and the wind and [the] altimeter is dah dah dah. And they sound so crystal clear on their mics, and we would just look at each other and go, “Ooh!” It was funny when I think about that. I wrote in my third book about that. I thought it was funny. We thought they were so sexy, and of course, the other...the UH-1 pilots would fly in in formation and would take off in formation runs, and it was just amazing doing that kind of work. Air traffic control was just a whole different ball game of work. And working very close with pilots, when we went out to the field, [they were] different field environments. No more pup tents or digging trench holes, we either slept in some kind of hangar or some type of building formation. The pilots were treated very nicely, and they needed us air traffic controllers, so we were right there. Whatever they got, we got. So it was a good step up in the military. And it reminded me of the WAACs: they had female air traffic controllers back then—we’re talking about 1944/World War II--so it really brought everything back full-circle to me again. So I remained air traffic control for some time. I returned back home after a year’s service in Korea. I stopped off in Japan for two weeks, and it was amazing looking at Japan. Japan was fascinating to me. I just knew their technical skills were far more advanced from ours. They just had all the glitz and glamour, as if you would see in Times Square. It was so different from what you would see in Korea, that was so broken-down. Then you would go to Japan which was all paved and nice vehicles, and you saw money. You saw money when you saw Japan, and I thought to myself, you know, if it [weren’t] for their geographical position, they

could possibly be on top of the world. That was just my impression of them, and I noticed the children go to school. The way they go to school is almost seven days a week; they're very studious, and their math was second to none. Incredible, smart kids, and the family structure and the cultural...and the heritage and the pride that they had...and I just thought that was something we can learn in the States from this. There's something we can learn from every country I've visited, and for us to think that there's nothing we can learn from these other countries...that's a shame.

Howe: How long were you in Korea?

Dugar: A year. One year.

Howe: Was this closed base?

Dugar: We had curfew; you had to go through base check IDs. Every base, every post, you had to check IDs. Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek...and you go up to the DMZ. I have pictures of that in my book. They had a special group of soldiers that monitored the DMZ, especially with that incident they had years earlier with the...they called it the tree-chopping incident, where some soldiers were chopping with hatchets there. So they had a make-shift village there; you could hear the propaganda there. You could hear the voices over the intercom...the conference table: if you visit there, there's a conference table there where the North divides the South. So there [are] some real issues going on there. There [are] some really serious issues going on there on the DMZ between the North and the South. So it was very essential that there was a presence there; a strong presence was needed there, without any doubt in my mind.

Howe: And the traffic you're helping to direct...is that going into Seoul or is that close to Seoul?

Dugar: Air traffic? Actually, it was to unit. We were about an hour bus ride away from Seoul...Uijeongbu. We were about an hour bus ride away from Seoul, and then there were other base heliports. I was just at the one, LaGuardia in Uijeongbu, and I rode my bicycle there from where I lived in the closed base. And we had a curfew we had to be back inside the base by midnight or somewhere, but not on the street, because they still had to control the area, the city. And that was one good way of doing it, but where I lived, we had Quonset huts, and they actually had an in-ground...underground bunker where the Air Force was, and that's where they controlled a lot of the squadrons...the aircrafts flying. I have Air Force girl friends; she took me there once. So everything was very...you would never know it was there. So that was interesting, but the guys that took off from my heliport...Cobra Apache AH-1 attack helicopters, UH-1 Chinooks--we had some Chinooks there, Ch-47's--all of them had their little fancy call signs. You get to know them if not by face than at least by voice sound. So Korea was a one-year tour,

and I did...I became pregnant, I had a child. But my mom was watching my son, and I found time to get home after that tour, and that's where I was stationed at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. And so my son moved with me there, and that's where I went air assault, and let me try to put that all into perspective.

Howe: That's where I decided to get back up on the horse and grab the lasso, and you left the fast-pace for a nice vacation in Korea, only to come back and bring your son with you into the fast-pace.

Dugar: Well, it was time for him to be with me. My mom had...I had become pregnant right at the end of my tour in Ft. Bragg, and I couldn't take him to school with me--air traffic control school--so my mom took him. And I was happy for that, because many women didn't have that option. Like my girlfriend, her mother wouldn't take her child for her, so she had to get out. So it was time for my son to be with me. We were at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, and we did air assault, and my unit was deployed also to Afghanistan. We had that Black Hawk Down situation, and in support of that, we were situated...our unit was situated to be somewhere near Afghanistan, even though that was [in] Somalia. We had things going on...a lot of things have been going on with Afghanistan for a long time now.

Howe: And this was in the 80s?

Dugar: In the 80s.

Howe: Okay.

Dugar: Um...but we returned...I actually did not deploy with them. And my commander told me he made that decision because I had my son there with me, and I said, "Wow, okay." It was bittersweet in that also because your fellow soldiers look at you differently, "Hey, you are being back...left back in support," and there were one or two who were Vietnam veterans still, and they were trying to bring their own weapons...their knives, everything like that. And I said, "Wow, this is serious," and they said, "Yeah, we're not getting caught like we were in Vietnam." You know, with limited resources. So I want my own. So you start looking at the mindset of some of the older soldiers and what they may be going through; post-traumatic stress manifests itself in different ways, but go ahead. My tour there, at Ft. Campbell, there [were] probably a little over two years. Then I came down on orders for Germany.

Howe: Okay. Was there a change of MOS [military occupation specialty]? Did you have to go through some training to enter into the air assault community, or as an ATTC [Aviation Technical Training Center] [you can] continue to do work?

Dugar: No, air assault was just another identifier close to...it fell underneath airborne. Air assault is actually repelling out of the helicopter. It's a very prestigious identifier. Also, however, everyone knew where Airborne fell...where air assault fell underneath airborne. It was a...I'm thinking...I'm recollecting it's possibly a two-week course. It reminded me of mountain climbing, where you actually repel down the mountain. You have a belayman: someone to help steady the rope and guide the rope and all. That is for a quick assault; you see a lot of it with civilian policemen. They may be able to fly a helicopter over a building in mid-city and repel down, so, you know, air assault has its purpose. Also, I thought it was a unique school to have, and they encouraged it for soldiers stationed at Ft. Campbell. So I went on and completed that course and was happy about that, and then I went on to Europe. And Europe...I spent three years there, and that's where I did a lot of traveling. And I was stationed doing air traffic control outside of Nelligan Barracks across the street from Bismarck concerto which is a tanker concerto [ship]. We had lots of travel there, lots of fun there, and I did a lot of traveling [in] Nuremberg...found out all about the Nuremberg trials, and I talked a lot about that in my third book...Berlin. So it was a place where a time where nothing significant was going on, except Muammar Gaddafi. I remember where we were up in the tower, and we had just learned that France had not let the pilots fly through the air space. They had to circumvent the air space. The pilots who dropped the bomb on Muammar Gaddafi...so that was our water cooler talk that day. But the duty was kind of mundane in that way. It was a quiet airfield. We got a lot of fixed wing, and I spent a lot of my time going to school.

Dugar: [A] lot of people there. [I] got a lot of college, in a lot of education in, and I was dating more. Then I got pregnant with my second child during that time, and when my tour was up, I went back to Ft. Rucker at the end of the three years. I went back to Ft. Rucker, and after several months there, I gave birth to my daughter. So I have a son and a daughter now, and I switched my MOS. I went...I actually stopped working air traffic control and I started working as a flight operations sergeant, which is the downscale from ATC [Air Traffic Control]. We process paperwork, we process the flight plans, the pilots come in... We actually get a chance to meet the pilots there. We tell them about the weather--what the weather is looking like--we give them their off time or whatever. We're monitoring the strips, we talk to the tower as far as what their status and situation is. We worry more about the air field conditions, and I actually enjoy that because tower was a little bit confining. You really had to stay in that glass box for eight hours. So I actually enjoyed being flight operations, and at that time, I was supervisor. And there it was nice duty: you got to meet a lot of people. So I found that to be very interesting, and I soon came down orders again for Germany. So I actually went back to Europe and both of my children followed me. Shortly after, I got housing.

Howe: This time with the HHC [Headquarter and Headquarters Company]?

Dugar: HHC 6th ASG [Army Support Group]. So that was in Stuttgart, Germany, and while my children, of course, couldn't meet me just yet because I was on a housing list, I got involved in plays and with things of that nature. And Stuttgart was a very fascinating place because there was style, there was culture there. Stuttgart had a really great history. But I got involved in *The King and I* play, and that was a very big production, and I still have the video for that. And I actually had that put in DVD form, and last Christmas, I sent copies to everyone and some popcorn and said, "Movie night on me." And it actually showed the entire run that we had. And my family did finally arrive, and I was working out of the Stuttgart Army Airport, and we worked hand in hand with the Stuttgart International Airport. So we shared the runway, and I worked with several civilian, dual-speaking German and English controllers. They called themselves controllers. Really, they were flight operators, and my boss was a retired Army pilot, German national. Really, he had German descedants, and he was a pleasant man to work for, but it was right after that time...being in the play, and having my kids kind of come with me and watch rehearsals, and getting involved in school and boy scouts and girl [scouts] and all kinds of programs that help keep them occupied. People kind of wonder what happened to that: what happened to your kids? What's up with your children and the military? Well, they have schools there too. They have base housing, they have base daycare and schools, and it was very nice having them there with me. But then the balloon went up for Desert Storm, and everyone in the southern sector of Germany had to come through my air field, and my boss and I were responsible for getting them uploaded and out. We had 747s come in, Tower Air, Pan-Am World Air to load up soldiers and ship them over to the 'Storm. So that was a time where [there were] a lot of emotions running through that, because I wasn't deployed for that either. I didn't go to the 'Storm; I simply assisted. And so luckily, it didn't last long, but it seemed as if it just went on until they said it was over, and before you know it, they were coming back. And they came back in the same fashion that they left, you know, the 747s. And I was speaking....I was talking...me and my trans alert team. I was supervising them. We would greet some of the aircraft, and go onboard and talk with some of the stewardesses and stewards, and get a lot of feedback, and because...where I worked, the Air Force worked underneath us, and they had fixed-wing Learjet. So some of the colonels would take VIP flights out, and once or twice I flew on the Learjet. We had one of the jets that went down in Italy, and it was amazing: just taking off on the runway, feeling all the G-force, and the pilot..."You okay?" "Sure." It was just amazing working hand-in-hand close by with pilots. So I really enjoyed making that change in my career field overall, just one career change after another, which [kept] everything exciting, which [kept] the momentum just going. It was never really a dull moment. I

was so fortunate in my twenty year career to have made so many changes. And another thing that affects that, if you re-enlist for another six years, you're pretty much stuck for six years in that career field. So it was always [a] three-year pitch for me, three years, and this way I can bargain on what I get, where I go, and how long I stay. So it was...to me, it was a strategy in being able to stay in that long, because not only did I want to work for the military, but I wanted to work for me too. So I took small increments like that so I would have more leverage in how I controlled my life. So at the end of Desert Storm, General Franks and Colin Powell flew into the airfield, and it was amazing seeing Air Force Two fly in--you know, the blue-and-white aircraft fly in--and my boss and I walked out on the ramp and we shook hands with General Colin Powell and his wife. And I remember shaking hands with him and nodding to his wife. And I wrote in my third...in my *Career Soldier* book [that] they looked like a couple that had always been together, maybe in their high school days. And we escorted them back to the waiting cars because General John Frank was going to address all of the troops that had arrived back, and announcing the end of the campaign and how very satisfied and proud of their work...and I took pictures of him and Colin Powell so that...those pictures are in my third book. So it was very interesting seeing these generals and their black belts, because you know they can decorate their own BDUs [Battle Dress Uniforms] as they deem. And I started winding down for the end of that tour. Before you know it, you're here one minute and you're gone. That's the whirlwind; that's the whirlwind of everything. You're here; you're gone. And I remember re-deploying to Fort Rucker, that's where I went through Air Traffic Control School. That's where I went to flight operations school. I got distinguished graduate from...for flight operations also, and I went to a brigade unit, aviation brigade. Aviation brigade put me at training brigade. We actually worked hand-in-hand with the soldiers that were new in the army whose training post...basically for flight operations, for air traffic control. I actually worked as a first sergeant for a short period for pilots coming in for their second go-around, for additional aircraft identifier. [I] did that for a short period of time, maybe a year or so, I worked at the brigade level assisting with SOP and S-3 and outlining ceremonies. I actually worked as a narrator on the parade field for a sergeant major or whoever, whatever ceremony was taking place...from spraying the field, to where the troops line up in line, to actually narrating the ceremonies. I became a member of NCOA: Non-Commissioned Officers Association, and that was the Saxon group. Great, great sergeant major. The guy I was...my significant other at that time--it was funny--he told me, "The sergeant majors missed you at the meeting this morning." And I had [gone] to Hawaii; I had left him to watch my son, and one of my sergeant major's girlfriends, she watched my daughter. And it was a ticket I just had to use, and I said, "I'm going to go to Hawaii," so he said, "Okay, I'll watch Jason." And so I went there and I said, "I'm only

going to be gone like four days,” just two and get it over with, right? I don’t want to lose the ticket. You use it or lose it after about a year or so. When I flew into Hawaii, I put in my third book...oh, the salt air, the birds, the tropical birds, oh...the green, lush plants...and that was just in the airport. And he was telling me, “Glenda, the sergeant majors were asking ‘where’s Sergeant Dugar?’” And he said, “She’s in Hawaii,” and they said, “Must be nice,” and I put...it was it really was. But it was fascinating because, in the military, anyone can travel. That’s the great part of the military. So I added that in my third book. Also, along with *Career Soldier*, not only are you serving, you’re traveling. It’s so much travel involved. You can travel around the world. Because even though we have all these conflicts right now--sure the ISIS thing is happening right now, we had the Desert Storm thing, we have had the Afghanistan thing--but for a while it was really quiet for a ten year period. It was really quiet. We didn’t really have any major conflicts going on, so it was right before Desert Storm. We were like, what’s happening? We’re in a war. We had...during the volunteer service time, between Vietnam and Desert Storm, there was nothing really major going on except for those little missions that we would send the little, small Navy Seals or teams. Well, you know what I’m trying to say. You’re rangers or someone else that would do those little small hush hush operations. So we got really complacent with the comforts of not having a war. So things are really kind of torn-up right now, and things are kind of in an uproar because we’re almost back in a situation where we have to look at the vulnerability of the soldier. And so all those people who joined for education and things like that, that’s where the tables kind of flipped. Even though we did have missions, I was so fortunate that my commanders made the decision not to send me or to use me in a different capacity, and I thank them for that too, even though I know there’s a different type of feeling that the next soldier may have. The same on...as if in Jump School, she didn’t really jive with us, she’s not really part of us. You kind of get that feeling, a little bit. So being back at Ft. Rucker, and all of these duties that are really in a training environment, it was kind of easy-goiRuckeg. And then I became the flight operations chief for 93 Papa, and that was a really good duty. And then, you know that you’re the pivotal...you’re at a point where they’re relying on my expertise in the field to get these new soldiers. I was responsible for the instructors to train the new kids coming in, the soldiers and the sergeant major relied on my opinion at that time, and I knew then that I’m almost a seasoned soldier. They’re looking [at] and relying on me even. So a couple of ceremonies I narrated: one in particular [was] the TH-67 Creek, a new helicopter that was brought into action at the training center, and I narrated that. And a general sent a letter to my house, and he said, you know, “What...that was fantastic work you did. That’s what...that’s the kind of work that makes movies.” And I remember doing another ceremony where a sergeant major was retiring, and it was hard for me to watch him, because he almost brought tears to

my eyes as the soldiers marched past, and you could hear...you could feel the drum beating through you, and the music that was playing, and, "Stars and Stripes Forever," and you knew...and I knew that. And looking at him, and he was standing in the stands, and he was watching the passing review, and I knew that was a moment he would remember for the rest of his life. And you look at that seasoned soldier and wonder where he would be a year from now. And you knew...you knew the work he did, and how professional he was, and how the troops would jump at attention. And there he was, about to leave out the door and say "goodbye" to everyone, and that's what really made me...I was really forced to write *Career Soldier*. And those are the things the average person [doesn't] see [or] understand: what embodies that soldier and what makes them special, because they have sacrificed so much, not only themselves but their family has sacrificed with them. And that, each day not knowing whether the balloon will go up, where they will be, [is] today the day I give my life for my country, you know, or will everybody be nice today...all the world leaders be nice today so I don't have to give my life, so that their soldiers don't have to give my life? So that's what really prompted my three books. And, of course, me retiring...my retirement and prior to my retiring, I went to night school and I got my nursing degree. So I when I got orders to go to Europe--I mean, to go to Egypt, excuse me, I knew that was it; I wasn't going to make that trip. I was already at twenty [years of service]; I was not going to do Egypt. I had a girlfriend sergeant major; she had done Egypt, she had her own private driver, her own house there. She had to watch what she wore outside. She had to watch what she said, how she looked at people, and I just knew [that] this is where I will bow out. So, my twenty [years] ended there, and my children soon followed my footsteps: my daughter's in the Air Force, my son is a Warrant Officer in the Army. He just came from Afghanistan. The tours I didn't make, they did: my daughter's about to go to Romania. She's been to Afghanistan, even, with the Air Force. She's worked on Air Force One. She's a smart girl. She's in IT; she does a lot of navigating of the equipment in the cockpit. My son...his unit just came back from Afghanistan. He had been to Iraq. So we're a military family still.

Howe: What year did you retire?

Dugar: 1996

Howe: Okay.

Dugar: 1996. End of '96.

Howe: And that did that put you at twenty?

Dugar: That put me at nineteen [years] and six [months].

Howe: Ugh.

Dugar: And they allowed me to still...you know, even the Army has an early out. So, I was considered still at twenty. So, they did all the calculations, so they were downsizing, and everything fell perfectly, because had I went on that tour, I would have been, like, twenty-three years in. And they allowed me to still depart the military at nineteen and six, so I took it in full retirement.

Howe: Hahaha. You're like...and you were studying to be a nurse, and you left the military with enough to...how long?

Dugar: I actually graduated--as a licensed practical nurse, LPN--night school, so I would turn around, go to night school, and be back in formation the next [morning] at 6:00 am. And the school was about thirty miles away in Dolton, Alabama. But, you know, with that tenacity, my children saw what it took to actually accomplish something, start it and finish it, and they knew academics [were] important. So, both of my children now have Bachelor's Degrees--even though they're in the service--and they're working on their second degrees. Because even though I got out as an LPN, I then went back to school as a physical therapist assistant. And then, after I became a physical therapist assistant, I went back and got my Registered Nurse. So, I held the Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management, which...a lot of those credit units were acquired through being an air traffic controller. They give you credit based on MOS, and then I have the Associate's [degree] in Registered Nursing, and I have the Associate's [degree] in Science in Physical Therapy. And I have the Licensed Practical Nurse.

Howe: [Did you] ever work as a nurse?

Dugar: Sure! Yeah.

Howe: Okay.

Dugar: Registered Nurse. I did registered nursing in Indiana; I worked at North Methodist. I talk about that in *Career Soldier*, because it's ironic that the wax...nursing is great foundation, and I did...they actually let me...even in the Army, when we had mass...we...we [had] influenza shots; they let me actually give injections, because they... And that's how well they worked for me, knowing that I was preparing to get out. And that segue, that transition for me... The military allowed me to work with some of the Army nurses in giving injections and things of that nature. So, I worked as a registered nurse in North Methodist in Indiana for two years, and I was still working as a physical therapy assistant. So I was working night shift 11:00-7:00, so I [was] burning that midnight oil, and then turning around and coming to Chicago, working as a physical

therapist. The money was actually very good. And the reason why I worked at Indiana [was] because when I left Alabama to come move back here to Chicago, I had the LPN license, but then when I got the Registered Nursing License, I moved to Chicago and they said, "You don't have any registered nursing license...registered nursing experience." So they made me work somewhere else than the state of Illinois. Illinois has strict, strict guidelines for their licensure.

Howe: Mhm.

Dugar: So, it was easier for me to get a license in Indiana working as a registered nurse, so I did that. Which, across the border it was no problem, because I lived on...close to Obama, really, in Hyde Park. Matter of fact, they moved to my neighborhood. So funny! So, I worked across...I went across the border, worked at a small nursing home for a while, maybe about a year, and then I moved further into Gary, Indiana, to work as a registered nurse, at the bigger hospital on the orthopedic floor. So it was interesting, because I did get the experience of dealing with patients that were shot twelve times. Gary is notorious for the crime that's there. And it put me back in this war zone feeling, because of the helicopters flying overhead, and the shootings that were going on. And someone actually shot into the ER door, because the gang member that they thought they had killed was actually still alive in the emergency room. Things of that nature. So it was very interesting working just that duty! You're like, Man, I leave the jungle, or the concept of the Army, and just to get...hit the concrete jungle, you know. So, I did that for about two years, and got my licensure for Registered Nursing confirmed with Illinois. But I still...I worked more so as physical therapy because the hours were more flexible; it really helped me with my family situation. My daughter had then gotten married, and she had a son, and it was so funny because I was then helping her with her son. Yeah, she was in the Air Force, and so I assisted her with her son, for a year...a little bit over a year. So yeah, I got a chance to utilize both of those trades, and I'm still licensed registered nurse and I'm licensed physical therapist assistant, actively.

Howe: How do you feel your time in the military prepared you for that?

Dugar: For nursing? Immensely. You know, even from basic training, you're taught first aid. You're taught tourniquet, you're taught, you know, your first...the first...your first action: someone's bleeding, you stop the bleeding to prevent shock. Once you get shock, it's hard. It's hard to fix a person once they go into shock. So, in essence, we learned a lot of field nursing in basic training, and of course, nursing is [an] amazing field. It's [an] amazing field. I respect it immensely, because, as a nurse, you are the doctor's backbone. I remember...I saw more bodies as a nurse than I did as active duty. Yeah. So, when you start talking about the trauma, and the...the stress, and your outlets...at

needing some type of outlet, the soldier needs outlet. When I told my sister, "I don't want to have to kill anymore." For a soldier that has to kill someone, the morality in that is profound. I'm sure, it's just profound. Because you still have to deal with God. Everyone has to deal with God, if you believe in God. And so, as a nurse, I had to deal with a lot of dying patients. I talk about that in *Career Soldier*--my third book--also, because everything just seemed to just come in full circle. And, when my dad [passed], I mention some of the...my own soldiers, my own warriors: people that [were] very good of influence to me, as a...as...throughout my career. And some of the patients that I learned from, who I knew were dying. And I mentioned how one of my patients...I was combing her hair, as a therapist. And I loved combing her hair because, you know, it was just soft, and she was such a pleasant patient. And she says...and I'm standing next to her, and I was combing her hair, and she says, "My husband's here". And I said, "Oh, really?" And I knew from talking with the nurses on staff that her husband had passed. And I said, "Oh, really?" And she said, "Yeah." I said, "Okay, so where is he?" She [says], "He's right there," and she pointed to the side of me. And, you know, I'd already been working in nursing for some time; especially in the nursing home, you see a lot of passing patients. A lot of patients on their last days, and some of the things that they do, some of the things they say to you, some of the things they say they see... And so, I just...I kept on, I continued to comb her hair, but one thing I know is that you learn to treat all your patients with respect, because some patients are lucid. Some patients are really not there, because [of] medication. But I don't underestimate what a person says they feel or see. And so, when I say everyone has to deal with God, even if there's another realm, there [are] things you're going to have to deal with. So, I think that's where most soldiers find stress, when they come back. And I think that's where most of that post-traumatic stress is from: how do I confront my Lord? Even though I'm doing a job for my nation, how do I confront my God for what I've done? So, I...like I told my sister, "I don't want to have to kill anyone." And I don't know if I would've done so, and I...had I been put in that situation, I probably would have, to save my life, you know. But, as a nurse, I've dealt with dying, open bodies... bodies. I've had my CNAs [Certified Nursing Assistant], I've had to go into rooms, and [find] that my patient had died. I went into one room and found one patient on his knees, and he had just come from ICU, and I had checked on him, and he was on his knees. He had probably attempted to get out of bed, he had...we call it esophageal-varices; that means his [esophagus] had ruptured. And so he...when I turned him over, he literally bled. And I pressed the button for help, you know, and he was gone. He was already gone. He was almost cold. And so, you deal with...as a nurse, you deal with a lot of death, or dying. Just like a veteran, just like a soldier. So when I say these wax, they were the...they were there at the front line. I know what they had to go through, just by dealing with it in a hospital situation. So, I

still felt that I was still committing myself to the nation by giving my services as a nurse. You know, almost like a Joan of Arc, Clara, as you may say. Um, but, it's a selfless service, and I believe that it's a needed service. So...but I never once have doubted that there is something you have to deal with after life.

Howe: Do you...walked in here, you said that you don't work in that profession any longer.

Dugar: In nursing?

Howe: Yes, exactly.

Dugar: I don't, I don't work in nursing... For the last six to seven years, I've been working as a physical therapist. The hours are just more...better. I was coming home, talking to my children about my nursing, the stress, the outlet of it. It's a tough job. It's a tough job. But it...it's an amazing job. I remember calling [the] doctor in the middle of the night, and tell[ing] him, "Doctor, the patient is projectile vomiting, his gonads are like the size of golf balls, I think that the stitching is coming loose," because he had...he had...his wife and [he] had decided just not to have any more children. And I said, "I measured it when I started duty, and now it's like twice the size." He said, "Well okay, get the surgery team, tell him I'll be there in a couple [of] hours." "No doctor, you need to come now!" You know, and sometimes you have to do that with the surgeons...physicians. As a nurse, you have to make a call. You know that in a couple hours, he could be dead. So, it's a great job, as far as the respect I have for nurses. But I included all of that. When I say *Career Soldier*...soldier for not just the Army, but for life. And so, I added all of those things in my nursing career, in my encounters with individuals and the things I've learned from people. The foundation of the Army, the foundation of my parents and how they raised me... And becoming a seasoned soldier, a seasoned person also. So, my first book, *In My Own Words*...I was fortunate to have Michelle Obama have a copy. She has a copy, and she's written a letter back to me, and I included that in the...one of the pages as acknowledgements, and... First Lady Michelle Obama. And, my second book, *Confessions*, is basically my Airborne experience: my three years at Fort Bragg, jumping, dealing with the paratroopers. And then the third book, *Career Soldier*, like I said, just rounding everything out. The first book, *In My Own Words*, is available now...Amazon, Barnes and Noble, you can order. Or you can just order straight through Xlibris, which is the book company. And *Confession of an Airborne Soldier*, and the kind of *Career Soldier*, is through a different publishing company, it's Tate publishing. [Spells "Tate"] And *Career...Airborne...Confessions* is...should be available hopefully within a month and a half. We're finishing...doing finishing touches of proofing. They were very excited over the book. They read it and just thought that the way I explained the soldier--the female soldier--the things that we go through, and they felt also that it deemed commercial

coverage. So it should have some TV...television commercial coverage. But they also said to me that they thought it was so interesting that, with my second book, they're publishing [the book for] free. And it has the same coverage--television coverage--and things of that nature. But, we'll see where it goes from here. Nothing's set in stone. But I was prompted to write these books, like I said, because I had surgery and my life has slowed down dramatically. I haven't worked in a year, but my license is still good, and maybe I'll find myself back on the battlefield somewhere.

Howe: Or in scrubs!

Dugar: Or in scrubs!

Howe: Do you have a little bit longer? [I have] just a couple more questions for you.

Dugar: Sure.

Howe: So, how do you feel about your service, after having transitioned into military life?

Dugar: The aftermath?

Howe: Mhm. I mean, talk...you can talk about your transition. Because sometimes that takes...

Dugar: Time.

Howe: Yeah.

Dugar: Transitioning out of the active duty and to retirement is kind of rough. It was so rough that I actually went back to the dental clinic and said, "Can I get served here?" They said "No, you're out of the service." But, I...one thing I think is very important is that you prepare yourself for these transitions, and I knew that the nursing had given me a good foundation for my next step. So I wasn't...I was ready. And I knew my children were kind of ready. Even though they had no...they had...there was nothing else they knew but military, so that's why they're military. Thus, the apple does not fall far from the tree. But, by them being in the military, I frequent military bases. I'm not really totally detached from the military. So I transitioned... I stayed close to a military base, even for years after I retired out. So, still going to the PX [Post Exchange in the Army], BX [Base Exchange in the Air Force], made it easy. And then, of course, when I moved back here to Chicago, there's a little bit more distance in some of the military facilities, but, emotionally, I felt that many of the civilian citizens, or just citizens, really don't understand how much of a sacrifice that the soldier is giving on a daily basis. I don't think they really understand the threats that are out there, and the reasons why we're needed. You can go to any...almost any other country, and they will have full staff

security, military, in their airports even. With their weapons loaded. Because they know that terrorists walk through their doors every day, and we don't even know it. So, 9/11 when that happened, I had just left Fort Rucker to be...to move back here to Chicago. I knew something was up because I had all my things packed in a U-Haul, and I went through the gate at Fort Rucker, and it was closed. And Fort Rucker...I'd been there for air traffic control school, flight operations, I was just there for years after I retired. They never shut their gates, they never asked for IDs. Show my ID, okay, proceed through. Something's... I told my sister something's up; this has never happened in all my years here. And two days later 9/11 happened, and I put it all in perspective. I was in Chicago. I was like, I knew something was up. Somebody knew something; somebody had been warned or something. Intel was out there. Because when habits change, it's for a reason. So, 9/11 to me was a wakeup that individuals need to understand: the threat is real, the threat is constant, there is a need for the military, as much as I would not like to see anyone get hurt, the need is still there. I just wish there [were] a way we could combat terrorism without one soldier getting hurt. So, when I see presidents or leaders making calls to...keep soldiers on the ground indefinitely...and I knew for a fact bodies were coming back to Dover, twenty a night; my daughter [was] stationed there. That's the mortuary. And knowing that their duty was non-stop in trying to get them...their bodies processed, and ready for the family. And I knew how Reagan was as a president. And to me he was a compassionate president, I put that in my book. I knew he was compassionate because I saw firsthand on how he spoke, how he thought, how he felt, how he handled missions without using one soldier. And then you go to the next leadership and the next. We're just going to let...like we're growing soldiers. Soldiers don't grow on trees. These people have families, they have [lives], they have hopes and dreams. We need to utilize our forces smarter. We're a smarter Army now, we don't have to just send 'em out there. So, that's how I look at the military. How we can do things smarter if need be, you know. To save the soldier's life. Remember, a lot of 'em are in for education, for this or that, and we're using more technology, versus more footwork. The Bradley [Fighting Vehicle] ...the...we had the Bradley, then we had the Abrams [Tank]. Abrams, Bradley, and with that...that's what made Desert Storm successful, our mechanized unit. So, it...they were back, in and out. Unlike many other wars, unlike the Vietnam War, so... That's my only thing: how we treat the soldiers who are willing to sacrifice their lives. Do we really just take it for granted that they're willing to sacrifice their [lives], and just treat them any kind of way? Do we send 'em out there just to say that we have boots on the ground? Or do we really... I think what we're doing right now with ISIS is the smartest thing we could do: get it minimized and then go in, if we have to. It's got to be minimized because, when you're dealing with fanatics, and they are... other countries, they do not think like we do. They do not think like we do.

Their values are different, and... it would just be horrific to waste a life when you...there is someone you really, just...you're not seeing eye to eye at all. I say use the bombs. Use 'em first, and then clean it up later. So that's how I feel. You know, I'm still part military. My kids are military, so I'm still military technically. It hasn't gone away.

Howe: I think it's a part of our experience that we'll never...we'll always identify with. You can't wash it off, you can't bleed it out.

Dugar: The military is so much a part of me; it is who I am now. I'm always a soldier. I can talk about certain things, or think about certain things, and it's over. I am a wreck. Because it's...that's what the career does to you. You become from just a private, someone in unsure of your gifts... And then you realize why he tells you [to] get rid of that smirk. Or, I heard him tell a soldier that... "Soldier, get that smirk off your face, what's so funny?" You realize in time, nothing is funny. Nothing is funny to these soldiers. Not the ones that have seen it, done it, watched their friends die, you know. Nothing is funny. Life isn't really funny. You enjoy it, you're blessed to have it, but you have to take it very seriously. And that's part of being a soldier, you know. It's like man, then you realize -- why is that soldier so serious-looking, or...you know. But then you...they do have a humor to them; there's always a humor to everything, but they have kind of a dry humor. But, for the most part, they're serious people. Because they realize the value of life.

Howe: Are there soldiers, people with whom you've served, that you maintain contact?

Dugar: Mhm. I was on...I was talking to some of Steve Harvey crew--the talk show host--and they're really interested in this book, and they're like, "Do you have any soldiers that...maybe we can have a forum, you can get together?" And so, I was really hoping that after *Confessions* come out that I could... There was one I speak with, and she's mentioned in the first and second book. Her name is Kelly. And I talk about her because she really had my back. We had fun together too. She was military police, she wasn't Airborne. So I see her on Facebook all the time. She just finished retiring from being a corrections officer, so she never stopped being a military police, in essence, or a cop. Never stopped.

Howe: [Is] she here in Chicago?

Dugar: No, she's in North Carolina now. But she...in my book, I tell you about her. She's from Kentucky, and the guys loved her. She was quick at the tongue. We used to play pranks on the guys. We learned how to play pranks after we saw how they played pranks on us. So we played pranks on the guys together, and they would flirt with us. "Hey you, girls!" They'd be on duty, "Hey!" in their Jeeps, and we'll stop and talk to them if we were out

walking. "Hmm, how [are] you doing?" And they'll get out of their Jeeps with their weapons like they're all macho. And then we run and hop in their Jeep and drive off with it. [laughs] And so, she was like, "Yeah! Oh, she tells me, "Dugar, remember when..." I say, "Yeah, I remember, so funny." "Remember when we got tattoos?" "I do remember, yeah." So, I told her that the second book is coming out, and I have some confessions in there, and I... she said, "I don't mind. I don't mind you sharing some of my..." I said, "Good, good." But of course, you know, I'm not going to tell every secret!

Howe: [Both laugh] Fair enough. You had a career that spanned nineteen and a half years, and at least three separate positions.

Dugar: Yes. Three.

Howe: At least three. Not to mention all the different things you've learned, the different training opportunities, the different countries, the travel that you've incurred. And that fact that you were also building a family during that time.

Dugar: It was busy. It was busy.

Howe: What was the greatest challenge for you, during that time?

Dugar: I was... I had a dual role, trying to build my career, my profession, trying to stay competitive as an NCO. But I also was trying to make sure that my children were safe, and understood how we had to conform within the rules and regulations of the society that we lived in. But it wasn't a bad conforming. It was best for us. Because the rules...everyone needs rules, and so...the cutest kids. And, now that I have four grandkids, the cutest grandkids. So they were just in activities. I had my daughter in dance: ballet, tap. My son was in Boy Scouts, and...which Boy Scouts is really just another little short form of soldiering. You know, he had to learn honor, service, and dedication, and, you know, commitment and all those things, so it was a great foundation. Just juggling those two balls. Mother...motherhood kind of comes naturally in a way. I mentioned in my last book *Career Soldier* how we had just come back from the Commissary shopping and my daughter and son were with me. I got out [of] the car, we had a carport, we lived on base. I went into the house, with my bags, [a] couple [of] bags. My son followed me, and my daughter had got out, she was following us. And I thought to myself, "Okay, I'm [going to] run to the bathroom." But then I noticed I didn't hear my daughter's voice, and I turned back around, and I told my son, "Where's Stacey?" He said, "I don't know, she didn't come in yet." And I went back to the carport, and my daughter was standing with her hand on the car door, and she had her hand like this, and I knew she must be choking. That's the only... I mean, I had no nursing experience then. She was just about five. And I walked over to her, and she looked up at

me, and she couldn't talk, and her eyes were starting to water just a little bit, because I think she knew she was in trouble. And I just automatically...I just walked behind her, and I started pushing up. One, two, nothing happened. And I looked at her, because, you know, you're really not sure. I didn't know what had... if I Had I stayed in the bathroom, she'd a been out on the ground, and I wouldn't have known what had put her there! You know what I'm saying? This was a crisis here. And I looked at her, and her eyes was watering up more, I think the fear was really surfacing in her. To this very day she doesn't remember it. And I yanked up twice more, boom, really hard, boom, and a piece of bubble gum spat out, like six feet in front of us. And she said [sighs]. And I said, "Oh my God... Oh my God." Had I just [gone] to the bathroom, and my son would have [gone] to his room... All it takes is two minutes for a person to go unconscious. So, these... I said the beauty of it, the beauty of instincts, the beauty of God just turning you around. Um, because you know, as women, we get in the bathroom, [we're] about, "What's this?" [hums] you know, we start doing other things, before you know it, fifteen minutes in the bathroom! Something just turned me back around. So, just doing that, juggling all that, being a mother and still being a soldier, and then progressing. Just juggling that, I think, was a real challenge, but I had other friends who had families too. I had other girlfriends who were master sergeants, you know. I worked with the finest group of female soldiers that I could have ever worked with. Constant professionals. You...I...you know, they looked up to me for being Airborne, air assault. But they...there was always something I could learn from them, always. And they were the best friends. They would watch my children. I would watch theirs. And it was just girls just trying to make it.

Howe: Hmm

Dugar: Great career.

Howe: I mean, sounds like it! I'd... So, having had these experiences, and obviously serving with that caliber of people that you've been serving with, how do you feel your service has had an impact for those coming after you?

Dugar: Well, I think... you know, even the trainees coming through, you get to a certain part in your...or certain time in your career where things just change. You become someone... And you know what has a lot to do [with] it? Once you get that half circle there [gestures]. That sergeant stripe, it's where everything changes. Everything changes. And then you get that little echelon underneath it, that marker. The soldiers just know that they need to listen to you. And, I'm thinking...when I was in the chief instructor--the branch chief of '93, Papa--the soldiers there, they would welcome your advice and input, especially when they had to go out to the field problems. So what I did was I had

the RNU person from battalion come and draft up a big...field display with small men, it had the trucks in there. He had the terrain, and I had under Plexiglas. And that helped them formulate what they would have to do in a field environment. They appreciate those little things. My sergeant major came and said, "Wow, okay Sergeant Dugar, you're doing stuff here." Sure, you know. This is how I felt. I had a lot of questions in my mind, going through what is this going to be like. Then you could picture it, you know, you can see. And you being candid with the soldiers, you know, being able to tell a joke. The yelling in the face isn't necessarily necessary. You can say it in a way where they get it, in a joking way. "Yeah, I get it Sergeant, okay." Then you tighten that up then, okay. So, it's more of a 90s type attitude. Where the soldiers say, "Oh that sergeant's cool. You know, boy, you be like that sergeant." You know, it's how you wear your uniform, how you shine your boots, and then they'll know they look, and they...you know. It's like training a child. This is the way you do it. So, the respect comes because you demonstrate it. Demonstrate that you're respecting them, and therefore I want it in return. So, they're learning by your example. So, you know, if you [are] setting a good one, they're learning from the best you can possibly give them.

Howe: Leaving that behind.

Dugar: Leaving that behind. And, you...you know, you don't come into the military...every person isn't brilliant. We had some Gomer Pyles. But it was up to us to grab their hands and help them for that light to come on. You got to help get that light to come on. And once it gets on, you [are] looking back and you say, "Remember, look at that." Marching... left, right, left... they got it. They got it, so... And that's what I put in my book. My daughter...the newspaper came and they did an article on her first grade class: "What does Thanksgiving mean to you?" And a couple of the kids put, uh, "Eat mashed potatoes and turkey" and, "Playing with my dog." And my daughter put, "It means being nice to everybody and saying 'thank you.'" And when I read that I said, "I'm so proud of my daughter." I say, "She gets it." Now all I have to do is just stick with it. Because, overall, you want to produce a good citizen. You want to produce someone that can be an asset to our country and to themselves. And if they don't get that at an early age, it's hard to knock it in later.

Howe: It's a lifelong thing.

Dugar: It's a lifelong challenge, because you have so many factors playing against them.

Howe: Well, at any point in time, no matter what you do, life happens.

Dugar: Life happens.

Howe: So you hope that...

Dugar: They're ready.

Howe: Yeah, that you've given 'em enough to beat it back, or you know, face the challenges. What's been your proudest moment?

Dugar: Oh... I think it goes back to Jump School. Going out that door, number two, and knowing that those guys [were] going to follow me. In the military.... proudest moment in the military, yeah. My children, of course, that's it. They're my legacy, you know. But if we're talking military, it was getting through Jump School, because that's a whole different animal, there. And knowing what those guys were feeling...and putting it all together.

Howe: Very cool. One last question. I know, we're getting close! Why do you feel it's important to share your story?

Dugar: I'm hoping that... I wrote the first book when I, like I said, I knew I was having surgery. People do that; they have to come to grips of, "What if I don't make it?" I knew I was going to be in ICU after my surgery. I was [in the ICU] for six days. So I wanted to share my story with my kids. Because even though they lived it with me, a lot of things they just didn't know. It was almost like writing a diary. And I wanted them to know some of those fine, little things. And, book one turned out to be book two. More details. More sharing of how the military evolved me as a person. You know, a person to a soldier. Because I think I'll always be a soldier. I want to be buried in my uniform, you know. So, my children are...they're on their way. My son has fifteen years in now. He has four years left. He's going to...he's a career soldier. I think anything after ten years you're a career soldier. Even though you can...it's you; it really depends on your duty. You can have three years, a six-month tour in Afghanistan, [and] you're a career soldier because you know what it's like. You know what it's like to be able to want to give your life for the other person. Or, you know what, we're all sacrificing ourselves, and if we got to do it, we're going to do it all together, or I'm going to do it for him, or whatever. So it's really not a time limit, but in the downtime that we had--where there was no war--you know what, if a person stays in after ten [years] they're a career...they're going to...they're in it to win it. So I basically wanted to share my story for women who had no concept of what the military was like, like I did. I went in, like, "Oh, do these come in a different color?" You know, I want them to know what the military is about, the seriousness of it. My girlfriend joined, I put in the second book, she had no idea. She said, "Glenda, I knew you went in, so I was going to try it." She told me how she ran, and went AWOL from church service, and she ran down the road, had coordinated with her

brother to be waiting, and she threw her helmet as far as it can go. She said, "Uh-uh, not this, this is not for me." So, a person should know. Even the woman that tried to offer me her urine, she knew right then and there, she wasn't getting passed end processing. She realized. People telling her to stand in line, you know, she that wasn't for her.

Howe: Right.

Dugar: You know. So I wanted females to know my point of view. Even though I was a hardcore female compared to other military females, because of the Jump School, air assault, being military police; that's hardcore female duty. That's just not "I went into the administration," you know. To sit behind a desk and process people, in process and out processing. I was a grunt, technically, for a woman. So, I wanted them to know what I endured with that, and just share with the public that it was an adventure, it really was an adventure, but serving your country...someone has to do it! Just like 9-1-1. Someone has to serve your country. Only one percent of our...one percent of Americans serve in the Armed Forces. That's a small number, to sacrifice their [lives] for the rest of everyone else. So, right now, we have about females...15-17%, of the military. 17%! The rest is all men, so it's still only a handful of us compared to all the other men. We're still secondary to them, in a way. But we have more and more females making a difference. They're breaking that barrier. They want to see them in Ranger School now. They want to see how they fend in Ranger airchool.

[end recording 1:07:37.9]