

MILITARY WOMEN AVIATORS ORAL HISTORY INITIATIVE

Interview No. 14

Participant-Edited Transcript

Interviewee: Captain Lucy Young, United States Navy Reserve, Retired

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By: Lieutenant Colonel Monica Smith, USAF, Retired

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SMITH: I'm Monica Smith at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Today is August 27, 2019, and I have the pleasure of speaking with Lucy Young. This interview is being taped as part of the Military Women Aviators Oral History Initiative. It will be archived at the Smithsonian Institution. Welcome, Lucy Young.

YOUNG: Thank you very much for inviting me.

SMITH: You're welcome. So let's start with your full name, and...

YOUNG: Lucy Burwell Young.

SMITH: ...your occupation.

YOUNG: Right now, I'm a commercial airline pilot for American Airlines.

SMITH: And you were in the Navy. Can you tell me the dates of service and your —

YOUNG: I was active duty from May of 1976 to July of 1983, so seven years, two months, and 17 days.

SMITH: Great. And —

YOUNG: And then I was Reserve for another 15 years, and I retired in August of 1998.

SMITH: Great. So that covers the changing component [laughs].¹ And what was the highest rank that you attained?

YOUNG: Captain.

SMITH: You're wearing — so, you're wearing commander rank.

YOUNG: Right. This is my flight suit from my DC-9 squadron, and I was a commander in that squadron. I made captain later.

SMITH: So that — we will talk about that later, but obviously, it holds significance to you. So what were your total flight hours?

YOUNG: Right now, my total is just under 20,000 hours.

SMITH: Wow.

¹ Young changed her military component in 1983 when she left the active duty Navy to join the Navy Reserve.

YOUNG: I'm coming up on it now. I don't know if I'll reach it in the next month or so, but I'm getting very close to 20,000 hours.

SMITH: Okay. So, do you have any idea how many of those were military?

YOUNG: Oh, I should have brought my log books. I want to say —

SMITH: You can approximate it.

YOUNG: Yeah. That's hard. 3,000?²

SMITH: About 3,000?

YOUNG: Yeah.

SMITH: Okay. And let's list your aircraft. [laughs]

YOUNG: Okay. The first — well, I trained in a Cessna 150 and got my private pilot license. And then went into Navy flight training, flew the T-28 Trojan, the T-44 King Air, and the TA-4 Skyhawk.

SMITH: Alright.

YOUNG: And then I went — when I got my wings, I went to the fleet.

SMITH: Okay. And what about civilian aircraft; we're going to get all of them.

YOUNG: Civilian aircraft I've flown — I flew for the FAA for two and a half years, so I flew many different airplanes in a test capacity. So, Piper, Gulfstream, Maule, and then for the airline, I flew 727 Flight Engineer, 737 First Officer, 757 and 767 First Officer, then 737 Captain, then Airbus 320 Captain, and now 767 Captain.

SMITH: Wow. That's fantastic.

[TAPE PAUSED at 03:21]

So I just paused, and we're going to start with — or resume with your road to the military, how you got there. So let's start with where you were born. I know you grew up in Connecticut.

YOUNG: Well, in high school, it was the height of the Vietnam War, and my brother was a Navy pilot flying the F-8 Crusader in Vietnam. And I was mesmerized by his bravery and courage, and the whole idea of Naval aviation. And fortunately, my senior year of high school, they opened up the Navy ROTC program, so I applied and was accepted at Purdue University and went into the four-year ROTC scholarship program at Purdue. Toward the end of that training, actually two summers of the midshipman training, I got to fly Navy airplanes. And that pretty much sealed the deal. That was the only part of the Navy that really excited me, and it was very motivating to see Naval aviation in action. So as soon as I could, I applied for the Navy flight training program and was accepted in the summer of 1976, right after I graduated, because women had to go before a national selection board. And luckily, I had

² 4,163 military flight hours. Young email to NASM, 11/27/2019.

the good test scores, I had my private license, and I guess they thought I could do a decent job. So they selected me for flight training.

SMITH: That's great. We'll get back to that.

YOUNG: [laughs] Okay.

SMITH: But where were you born?

YOUNG: Roxbury, Connecticut — I'm sorry — Waterbury, Connecticut. And I was raised in Roxbury, Connecticut.

SMITH: And how many siblings did you have? You mentioned your brother.

YOUNG: I have five. Yeah, my older

[5:00]

brother was 12 years older. He was a ROTC graduate of Yale University, and he went in and served in the Vietnam War as a Naval aviator. And then I had two older sisters, a twin sister, and a little brother.

SMITH: Alright.

YOUNG: But my brother and I were the only military siblings. My father was a Naval officer in World War II, and he was in the Normandy invasion.

SMITH: Fabulous.

YOUNG: So I used to — I was just so — I was very moved by his Naval service. And he stayed in the Reserves and served, and got his 20 years as a reservist. I just thought that was super. Great way to serve your country.

SMITH: What was his name?

YOUNG: His name was Karl Young, Jr.

SMITH: And your mom?

YOUNG: Cynthia Noland Young. She was from Richmond, Virginia.

SMITH: And what did she do?

YOUNG: She was a homemaker. Raised six kids. [laughs]

SMITH: Yes. Yes, she did. Alright, so when you were in high school, what did you think you would be doing with your life?

YOUNG: Well, I was gravitating toward the military, because every time we had a career day, I'd listen to all these different presentations, and the only thing that really excited me was the military, because I knew I could get equal pay for equal work, and I would be able to advance in a reasonable manner and rank, because my dad had been in, and my brother, of course, was serving. And I was excited by the thought of travel.

SMITH: Was your family excited about your decision?

YOUNG: I think they were, yeah.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: Yeah, they were all proud of me.

SMITH: And you mentioned that you were in ROTC at Purdue.

YOUNG: Yes.

SMITH: So very early on, ROTC.

YOUNG: It was the first group of women ever.

SMITH: So tell me about that experience.

YOUNG: Well, that was really exciting too, because seven of us showed up at Purdue. There were only — oh, boy — 19 in the whole country, I think. And there were only four schools that had women — Naval aviator women—midshipmen. And Purdue put a female officer on the staff to help us get trained and have a — properly wear the uniform and the regulations, and etcetera. So there was a female officer on the staff, and then we just blended in with the male classmates and tried to excel in every opportunity, because we knew the better we did, the more we would be apt to get the jobs that we wanted when we graduated. So I loved it. I was — I loved wearing the uniform. I loved marching, and I loved the summer training sessions.

SMITH: So you mentioned there was some flying before you actually went to AOCS.

YOUNG: Yes. I was able to fly in at least two types of Naval aircraft when I was a third-class midshipman in Jacksonville, Florida: the P-3 and the A-4. And then my summer before my senior year, I was in Hawaii, and I was able to fly in a T-28.

SMITH: Oh, great.

YOUNG: And two were about eight or nine other type of aircraft, helicopters and whatever else happened to be on those air stations, I was able to at least see those aircraft. So I think I flew in, or toured, 12 different aircraft before I even graduated from college.

SMITH: Would you — how would you characterize the reception of the seven women in ROTC at Purdue?

YOUNG: I think it was overall positive, because they knew we had competed at a national basis with our grades and our records to get those scholarships. And they were based on merit. They were merit-based scholarships. So I think they knew that we had pretty much earned our spot to be there. And then the female signup policy would dictate what we got to do when we graduated...

SMITH: Were any other women —

YOUNG: ...because women, of course, couldn't go into combat in those days, at all.

SMITH: Right. Were any other of the women destined for aviation training?

YOUNG: No, none of the other ones went into aviation.

SMITH: What sealed — you said what sealed the deal were the third-classmen and the —

YOUNG: Right, the third-class training and the first-class training...

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: ...because there, I had exposure to Naval aviation.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: And the second-class summer was in Newport, and we were mostly doing shipboard type stuff. And that just didn't excite me at all. [laughs] But it was interesting.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: And I was glad to know about it, because as a Naval officer, that's what we were trained to be, is unrestricted line officers. That's what ROTC was training us

[10:00]

to be. So even if you're an aviator, someday you might actually be in command of a ship.

SMITH: Exactly.

YOUNG: So it's all good to know. [laughs]

SMITH: [laughs] Yes. So you graduate from Purdue. What was your major?

YOUNG: Biological sciences, and minor in chemistry.

SMITH: Fantastic. In 1976.

YOUNG: Yes.

SMITH: And tell me what happened that summer. Did you have any more training that summer?

YOUNG: Well, I actually got stashed at Oceana Naval Air Station, because they can't send us all to Pensacola at once, because the Academy graduates, and the ROTC graduates, within a month. So they gave me — well, first of all, I had to go before a selection board, because I was female. The men were guaranteed a slot if they pass all their tests. But I had to go before a national selection board in July of that year.

SMITH: When were you tested?

YOUNG: Sorry?

SMITH: When were you tested? You said you had to —

YOUNG: Oh. We had to take an AQT/FAR test.³ I had taken it twice, I think. I don't remember the dates of the tests, but I'd taken it...

SMITH: But, that year?

YOUNG: ...at some point probably in 1975 or 1976, I had taken the test, and I had to take a flight physical, and then I had to submit a package with a formatted letter, which I have right here, and put that into the Bureau of Naval Personnel. And then they selected eight people to go to flight school — eight women, and I was one of them. Oh, I was so happy. [laughs]

SMITH: Across the nation, right?

YOUNG: Yes.

SMITH: Right. So —

YOUNG: Eight women. That's pretty much what they had started doing. They'd do eight, and then when those eight pretty much graduated, they'd pick another eight. And then I was in the first group of ROTC graduates to get selected. There were four of us that came out of ROTC. Four. Well, women.

SMITH: Did you meet any?

YOUNG: Three of us made it through.

SMITH: So do you know the others, or —

YOUNG: The three that made it, yes. Yup. Yup.

SMITH: Well, if you want to share their names, you're more —

YOUNG: Yes. Andrea Rice came out of the University of Minnesota, and Janet Rollings came out of Duke University.

SMITH: Great.

YOUNG: And I came in out of Purdue. And we all had private pilot training, so I think that helped. And then the other woman, Gayla Ambrose, she dropped out during primary training.

SMITH: Tell me about your private pilot training.

YOUNG: I did that my senior year at Purdue. I did it at Purdue Airport. I did it using my babysitting money, my lawnmowing money. And the flight instructor program, which used to provide 40 hours of training to midshipmen, had been cut back, because again, this is like, post-Vietnam. It had been cut back to 15 hours of flight training. So the male midshipmen were getting the ground school and the 15 hours of flight training paid for by the Navy. Me being female, they said: well, you can't get that flight training paid for, because we're not sure that you'll be able to go to flight school. So we don't want to put you in the flight program. So I said: well, how about if I pay for the lessons? They said: oh, that's fine, if you pay for it. So at least I got the Navy-contracted ground school at the fixed base operator—at

³ Aviation Qualification Test (AQT)/ Flight Aptitude Rating (FAR).

Purdue Airport. And then I paid for my lessons, and I loved it so much I just kept going all the way to my license.

SMITH: Oh, that's fantastic. So before you graduated from college...

YOUNG: Well, I did a bunch of training...

SMITH: ...you had your license, or was it the summer?

YOUNG: ...in the fall, and then the weather was so bad in the winter that I ceased training in the winter.

SMITH: Sure.

YOUNG: And then in the spring, I picked it up again, and I was able to finish up because there was all these different phases you have to go through. And so three days after I graduated, I took my private pilot check ride.

SMITH: What did you take it in?

YOUNG: I took it in the Cessna 150 in Terre Haute, Indiana. Terre Haute Airport.

SMITH: Fantastic. Did that — obtaining your private pilot's license, did that mean that you didn't have to go through some additional training, or —

YOUNG: No. It didn't change it at all. But it helped for about four flights. It helped me, because I could fly the airplane pretty well, just based on my previous training.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So I'd say I had a little bit of an edge for about four flights. [laughs] And then it was all new stuff.

SMITH: [laughs] Alright. Well, let's get to flight training.

YOUNG: Okay.

SMITH: And tell me about your first day.

YOUNG: Ah, well, the first part of flight training is ground school in Pensacola, with water survival, land survival, engines, aeronautics. I can't remember all the actual classroom names — the class names, but it's a bunch of basic information that you need before you start flying. So you take a bunch of classes, and you get a lot of survival training.

[15:00]

SMITH: How were you received there? This is still —

YOUNG: Pretty good, because everybody was super motivated, and they knew that we had earned a spot to be there. And the guys didn't want to get shown up by a woman, so they tried harder. [laughs] So — and we were all trying to help each other get through. I mean, it wasn't dog-eat-dog at all. It was like: gosh, this is fantastic that we're here, and we all want to do well.

SMITH: Well, that's good to hear. And when you started flying, did the competition increase, or was it the same?

YOUNG: Not really, because every flight was graded, and every flight was — we were flying with all different instructors. And I think the guys knew that we weren't going to take their fleet seat, so they didn't feel resentful, because they knew we would be doing mostly fleet support type roles. So that probably helped a little bit. They knew we wouldn't be flying fighters and taking that option away from — taking one of those seats away from one of the men. So that probably made it even easier for us to get along. I was just excited to fly any Navy airplane. I just wanted to get my wings. [laughs]

SMITH: So you start off. Your first flight is in a — is it in a T-28?

YOUNG: T-28.

SMITH: 28? Right.

YOUNG: Yeah, the T-34 Bravos were the piston bonanzas. They had just retired them, and the turbine version was late. So rather than start out on the T-34 Charlie turbine Mentor, they came up with a syllabus to do the whole primary intermediate in the T-28. And that was a handful of an airplane. It had 1,450 horsepower. It was carrier capable. It had a turbocharger, so you could fly it up to like, 18,000 feet. It was a beast. So they had to devise a syllabus that would sort of bring us along slowly, because it was so much of a high-performance airplane. But they did a great job. The syllabus was designed well, and it took you up through several flights and then solo, and then you just kept building from that with the advanced maneuvers formation and instruments, round-robin navigation,⁴ night navigation, and you just kept building on your knowledge. So it was great.

SMITH: Tell me about your first solo.

YOUNG: My first solo? Oh.

SMITH: Well, the — actually, I didn't ask you about your civilian solo.

YOUNG: Yeah. Well, the first solo was at Purdue in a Cessna 150.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: And I did it in like, seven hours, which is pretty fast.

SMITH: Oh, that's great.

YOUNG: And my instructor was a sophomore. He was a fellow student. I was a senior. He was a sophomore. And he turned me loose and said: okay, go fly around the pattern for three flights. And the thing I remember most about that solo was how nice and quiet the cockpit was, [laughs] because he wasn't talking to me. He wasn't correcting me or telling me what to do or anything. It was just like, blissfully quiet. So I loved it. I loved it. And then the Navy solo was fun too, because I was out there with

⁴ Flight and navigation training which plans multiple points along a route, then returns to the point of departure.

this fabulous high-performance airplane, and they just told me to go fly around and sight-see, and then come back and land. So it was a confidence-builder.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: Yeah.

SMITH: Well, that's great. How did you celebrate? Was there some special ritual?

YOUNG: Oh. Well, they have a tie-cutting. They cut your tie at the club, and everybody drinks beer, and you get to say silly things about your instructor, and they get to say silly things about you. [laughs] And it's all in good fun. That's called a tie-cutting.

SMITH: So was it — is it a ceremony, or is it more —

YOUNG: Yeah. Well, it's a — yeah. It's a ceremony at the O' Club.

SMITH: Great.

YOUNG: Yup.

SMITH: So after the Trojan, you flew what in training?

YOUNG: Yeah, a T-44 King Air. And those were brand new in the Navy. They were a cabin-class King Air made by Beechcraft. They were air-conditioned, which was wonderful in the summer in Corpus Christi, Texas. And they were, of course, a two-pilot airplane, so we learned how to work as a crew. And I went through with a flight partner named Chip Youngblade. And he and I would take turns flying, and the instructor would be in the other seat. And we learned multi-engine operations, cross-country operations. We learned how to do patterns like they do when they're looking for submarines. They have these set patterns that we would fly. So when we soloed that, it was the two students. So we got to take the plane from Corpus Christi to Pensacola, and that was our solo, because it was two students. And that was really exciting. [laughs] That was fun.

SMITH: Now, had you gone to Corpus Christi from —

YOUNG: Yeah, I transferred. Once I finished the T-28s at Whiting

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Field in Milton, Florida, then I went to Corpus Christi to fly the T-44 King Air. Right.

SMITH: Was ground school at Pensacola? Is that —

YOUNG: Yeah, that was at Mainside, Pensacola.⁵

SMITH: Mainside.

⁵ Mainside was the part of NAS Pensacola that housed Naval Education and Training Command and Naval Aerospace Medical Institute, U.S. Naval Schools of Photography, and other units. Flight Operations was located at Forrest Sherman Field (adjacent), also home to the Blue Angels.

YOUNG: Mainside, which is another air station area in Pensacola. Milton is outside Pensacola.

SMITH: Got it.

YOUNG: Whiting Field, which has a North and a South, and one is fixed-wing, and one is helicopters.

SMITH: Thank you.

YOUNG: It's a busy place. [laughs]

SMITH: Yes. Yes, it sounds like it.

YOUNG: And then we went to Corpus Christi to fly the multi-engine aircraft. And then we got our wings. When we finished that, we got our wings.

SMITH: Alright. So tell me about — it sounds like you really liked the King Air.

YOUNG: Yes, I did.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: Yeah, it was super comfortable. And the other students had to fly. We drew straws, because some of them had to fly the old plane, which is the S-2 Tracker. And those were noisy, oily. They were always having emergencies. They were these big, lumbering, carrier-based — you know, anti-submarine airplanes, S-2 Tracker. But I didn't have to fly that one, because I drew the right straw. [laughs]

SMITH: Were there any other women going through flight training...

YOUNG: Yes.

SMITH: ...at the time you were?

YOUNG: Andrea and Janet, from ROTC. They came down just after I did. They immediately followed me. And then there were four women. Let's see. There were three women that were picked from the civilian world based on their flight qualifications. The Navy actually went to the FAA and got records and figured out: hey, we want to recruit some women pilots. So they picked women that had pretty good experience. And they selected them, put them through Officer Candidate — Aviation Officer Candidate School, which was the first women ever to do that. And that was February of '77, I believe.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: And then they got fed into the Navy INDOC⁶ at Mainside, Pensacola. And then they went to Primary and Intermediate, and then they went to multi-engine.

SMITH: So can you just list the phases — all the phases that like, you talked about INDOC — you didn't —

YOUNG: [crosstalk] Well, okay. INDOC at Mainside, Pensacola, which is all ground school and survival.

⁶ Aviation Preflight Indoctrination (API).

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: And you finish all that, and then you go to your first air station training, which is at Milton, Florida, which is Whiting Field. And there, you fly the — in our case, the T-28. Now they fly something different — but back then, it was the T-28.

SMITH: Is that considered Primary?

YOUNG: Yes.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: And then we continued in the Intermediate in the T-28.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: And none of the women in my group went helicopters.

SMITH: Interesting.

YOUNG: Yeah. Interestingly. And I'm kind of glad the Navy didn't force us to, because I really didn't want to fly helicopters. So luckily, my grades were decent, and they just let us continue on in the propeller aircraft.

SMITH: That's great.

YOUNG: So when we finished intermediate at Whiting Field, then we went to NAS Corpus Christi and flew the King Air.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: And that was considered — they called it maritime training, which was basically multi-engine training — propeller training. Turbo prop.

SMITH: Did you have any media attention during your training?

YOUNG: Thankfully, no. [laughs]

SMITH: [laughs] Okay.

YOUNG: Not really.

SMITH: Yeah. Good.

YOUNG: I did have some when I was a Midshipman, because we were the first group of women Midshipmen.⁷ So I — we ended up in the base paper, and my hometown paper picked up articles about me being a Midshipman.

SMITH: Fantastic.

⁷ Young is referring to her time as a Naval ROTC Midshipman at Purdue University when she flew a P-3 and an A-4 (at NAS Jacksonville) and a T-28 (in Hawaii).

YOUNG: But I was glad that they kind of left us alone for — while we were in flight school.

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: That made it easier.

SMITH: Yes. Towards the end of training, when you were winged, did you have any —

YOUNG: No. My sister pinned on my wings. They were my brother's wings, so that was really cool.

SMITH: Oh, how nice.

YOUNG: And there were just the usual releases in the base paper about who got their wings and that. Yup.

SMITH: How did you get your assignment?

YOUNG: Well, we had to fill out a preference sheet, and I knew that I could fly — somewhere along the line, Andrea and I decided we wanted to fly jets, which was kind of out of the norm, because all these propeller training flights were geared toward the C-130 and the P-3, because that's where the guys were going to go, or they were going to go to the E-2, which is a carrier-based aircraft, which they wouldn't let us fly. So Andrea said: hey, they've got a few women flying jets. We should go jets. And I'm like: okay. You know, it was just one of those things where we just sort of got this bee in our bonnet. And she was

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really the instigator. And I thought: yeah, because you can't fly tactical jets outside of the military, but you could fly turbo props outside the military. So I thought that would be a unique opportunity for me. So we did. She and I put in for jets, which meant we had to have a — had to have orders to a VC squadron. And we both got assigned to VC-1 in Hawaii. So we went to a jet transition program in Kingsville, Texas, got trained in the A-4, then did some more temporary duty on our way to Hawaii, and then we did three years in Hawaii, flying the A-4 Skyhawk, which was a blast. [laughs] Wonderful.

SMITH: Can you explain the nomenclature — the VC, VA?

YOUNG: Oh, yeah. VC is a composite squadron. It's basically a fleet support squadron. We helped train the fleet. So, tow targets, practice bombing, photography, whatever they need...

SMITH: Fantastic.

YOUNG: ...we do it. [laughs]

SMITH: What about the A-4 made it so special?

YOUNG: It was the Vietnam-era attack jet that was just a wonderful design by Ed Heinemann. It was a delta wing, very compact airplane that was designed so it wouldn't have to fold its wings on the carrier. So the wings were swept back in a kind of a delta wing, and it was — it sat up real high on the gear, so it could carry a nuclear weapon. And it had no internal source of air or source of electricity. So you always had to plug in external units to start up. To start the engine, you had to have external air and external power, so it was basically a carrier-based, very efficient, air-to-ground aircraft for the Vietnam era.

SMITH: And how long was that training?

YOUNG: Jet transition training was about six months.

SMITH: Okay. So, graduation from flight school was —

YOUNG: October of '77. Yup.

SMITH: And complete transition training —

YOUNG: And then my transition training. I went to Kingsville, Texas, for that. VT-21. And it was several months. Several months. Yeah. And then in May of '78, I reported to Hawaii, VC-1.

SMITH: Okay. So I might have missed one. The jet transition was six months?

YOUNG: It might have been actually more like four months.

SMITH: Four. But that was the VT —

YOUNG: That was in Kingsville, Texas.

SMITH: Kingsville. Okay.

YOUNG: VT-21.

SMITH: I just want to make sure...

YOUNG: Yup.

SMITH: ...I'm tracking with you. [laughs] Okay, so May of '78, and you report to —

YOUNG: I reported to VC-1, and I was the first female to show up there. And Andrea came right behind me. We each did three years there.

SMITH: So how was your reception at the unit?

YOUNG: It was great. I think the commanding officer was excited. It was a small squadron. There were only eight pilots, and there were five airplanes. So we stayed busy, and it was a non-operational assignment. It was a shore-based assignment, so you didn't work on weekends. You flew Monday through Friday doing missions for the fleet.

SMITH: Now, describe some of the missions.

YOUNG: We did target towing for the ships to shoot at the targets.

SMITH: So tell me what that entails.

YOUNG: That entails reeling out a small — it looks like a small rocket, but it's just a tube with radar reflectors in it. And you reel that out about three to five miles behind you, and then you fly overhead of a ship. And as soon as you get overhead, you clear them to fire, and they start shooting at the target.

SMITH: What altitude are you flying?

YOUNG: We wanted the target to be at 1,000 feet, I think. 1,500 feet. So then we had to account for the droop, and I can't remember how we calculated, but we would fly at an altitude that would put the target at a certain altitude...

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: ...for flying over the ship.

SMITH: And that's — you know, live fire.

YOUNG: That was just one of the missions.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: We did like, 10 different missions.

SMITH: Wow. Live fire has always got its hazards.

YOUNG: Yeah. We could see the gunfire. We could look down and see the fire as soon as we cleared them to fire. A five-inch gun is pretty impressive on a destroyer cruiser.

SMITH: So what happens if they hit the target?

YOUNG: It's highly unlikely, because the target's very — it's only this big.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: And they're shooting like, five miles, or three miles, or two miles, but...

SMITH: So how do you land — how do you recover?

YOUNG: ...at one point, the target did get hit, because we were towing for a ship that had the Phalanx close-in weapons system, which is a burst

[30:00]

of like, 100 rounds a second. It goes "Brrrdrup, Brrrdrup," and that thing could react so fast, and it was so accurate, that it — one of those missions, they actually hit our target. [laughs]

SMITH: So —

YOUNG: But they were cheap. They were just these tubes with little radar reflectors in them, so it wasn't like, the end of the world when they hit the target.

SMITH: How do you recover?

YOUNG: You reel it back in. You reel the target back in.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: There's a control box in the cockpit, and there's a big reel on the belly of the airplane, and you had a propeller on the front of it. And you would give it a command to either unwind the spool and pay

out the wire, or you would change the pitch on the propeller blades on the front of this thing, and it would reel it in.

SMITH: Wow. What about —

YOUNG: And there was a counter, so we could see how much we had reeled out.

SMITH: What were your favorite missions to fly in that squadron?

YOUNG: Probably aerial photography. We did movies. We did movies of missile launches from other aircraft, and we actually did missile launches — target missile launches, where we'd drop a missile off the belly, and it would ignite, and it would turn away, and like, the fighters would like, shoot it down. [laughs] So that was...

SMITH: Very exciting.

YOUNG: ...actual missile launch. It's called AQM.⁸ And we did practice bombing to train the FACs, the Forward Air Controllers, on the Big Island. We did practice strafing. We didn't actually shoot anything, but we would pretend like we were strafing. We did chaff, where we'd drop little pieces of foil and create a radar curtain or whatever, to make it harder to see us. That was called chaff. And we also carried jammer pods and threat emitter pods, which we could dial up in the cockpit to simulate the enemy. So it was all for fleet training. It was all fun.

SMITH: Wow.

YOUNG: And the aerial photography was just fun, because you're flying formation, and you have a photographer's mate in the back, and they would get some fabulous shots. We had our own photography department, so I ended up with some great pictures.

SMITH: Wow, that's fantastic. So let's talk about — is this during the time that you got your carrier qual, or is that next, with your instructor?

YOUNG: That was on my second tour I got my carrier qual, because initially, going through, they wouldn't let us do any of the carrier quals⁹ and the jet transition training. They wouldn't let us do dogfighting and wouldn't let us do the bombing. So the jet transition training was curtailed or limited for

⁸ The AQM-37 is an air-launched, pre-programmed, non-recoverable supersonic target, powered by a liquid bi-propellant rocket motor used by the US Navy and NATO nations. The target missile was initially developed in 1962, and has been continually updated for improved performance. The current version flies at altitudes ranging from 1,000 feet above the surface to 100,000 feet at speeds up to Mach 4.0. The AQM-37, with special software, has flown simulated ballistic missile profiles at altitudes up to 300,000 feet. The target missile includes a digital autopilot, a telemetry system for flight evaluation, and a command/control system permitting lateral maneuvers for course correction, as well as dives and pull-ups to simulate missile threats. The target provides weapons training and weapons development and evaluation for the DoD and NATO countries. Young email to NASM, 11/27/2019.

⁹ Carrier qualification. Landing on an aircraft carrier is explained by Christopher McFadden, "How Planes Land on Aircraft Carriers With Short Runways," Jun 23, 2017. Accessed Nov 6, 2019, <https://interestingengineering.com/how-planes-land-on-aircraft-carriers-short-runways>.

the women, because we could not fly operationally. But again, I was just happy to get tactical formation training and the level training. That was fun.

SMITH: That's neat. So next, you're VT-21, right?

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: [crosstalk].

YOUNG: I became an instructor in VT-21, which was my old squadron, which was really neat. And I was the first female jet flight instructor in the Navy. And this was the Advanced Strike Program, which is the A-4 Skyhawk. And I was there for about two years. And while I was there, I figured that was my golden opportunity to carrier qualify. And I thought, you know, there's not going to be another chance, so if I don't carrier qualify while I'm in the Navy, that's not going to happen.

SMITH: Right. So you...

YOUNG: So I —

SMITH: ...arrived there May 1981?

YOUNG: May of '81.

SMITH: Okay. I just want to get those dates. [laughs]

YOUNG: Yup, May of '81. And I got out in July of '83.

SMITH: So tell me about the carrier qual.

YOUNG: Oh, it was so exciting. Well, of course, all the landings we do in the A-4 are based on a carrier pattern. So when I'm training students, or when I'm landing the airplane myself, every pass is a carrier pass, based on an optical landing system. So I had been doing them at the field for years, but I'd just never done it on a ship. So I finally — finally the powers-that-be decreed that women could carrier qualify. And the commodore on the base, Les Jackson, he said: hey, send her to the ship. She can carrier qualify now. So my commanding officer said: okay, you're going to the ship. So I trained with students, you know, in the same pattern as the students. And I got graded by the LSO, the Landing Signal Officer, and I got about 75 field carrier landings. And then he decreed that I was safe to go to the ship. So in May of

[35:00]

'82, I carrier qualified on the *U.S.S. Lexington*. And it was — I had to go out twice to finish my six traps, but I had to go out either real early in the morning or real late at night, because I was lower priority than the students. So I can remember the sun glinting off the ocean, because it was so early. [laughs] Or, it was so late. And — but I did well. I won two bottles from the LSO because my landing grades were good enough.

SMITH: You had a bet?

YOUNG: Yeah. I won both bets. One bet was the number of three-wires, and one was your overall grades. So I won two bottles.

SMITH: How did that come about? Like —

YOUNG: The LSO just did that as a kind of a motivator for the students.

SMITH: Oh, okay.

YOUNG: It was a standard bet that he would make.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: And one, like I said, was the number three wires, and one was based on your grade point average, so I qualified for both. [laughs] But I've got to remember, I had like, 1,500 hours in the airplane, at least. And so I had a lot more time in the airplane than the students. The students had like, 150 hours or 200 hours. So —

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So I should have been a steady hand, and luckily, you know, it all worked out great. And then I was thrilled to get my tailhooker qual. And I was the first woman to do it in the — well actually, the second woman to do it in the A-4. Pat Denkler was first. She was in Pensacola. Pat Denkler.¹⁰

SMITH: Denkler. Okay.

YOUNG: Yeah. She was in the Pensacola squadron, and she went out, I think, in September of '81. She carr-qual'd in the A-4, and I carr-qual'd in May of '82. So I was the second woman to carr-qual in a jet.¹¹

SMITH: That's fantastic. I also noted — and thank you for providing your biography. It was very helpful.

YOUNG: Sure.

SMITH: That you were the first woman to instruct in air combat maneuvers.

YOUNG: Yes. I became an ACM instructor when I was in Kingsville, and it was so interesting to watch the evolution of the squadron. Because when I first got there, I told them. I said: I did air combat maneuvers when I was in VC-1, because we did get qualified. And there was this Marine that was in charge of the ACM program. And he's like: no woman's going to fly ACM in this squadron. And I'm like: okay. [laughs] I'll just bide my time. And sure enough, within about a year, they're like: okay, we need another ACM instructor, so you're going to get qualified. So I got qualified.

SMITH: It was really the needs of the Navy outweighed the...

YOUNG: Exactly. Exactly.

¹⁰ LT Pat Denkler was assigned to VT-4 when she qualified to land a TA-4J Skyhawk aboard the *USS Lexington* in Sept 1981. Accessed Nov 4, 2019, <https://www.navy.mil/>; <https://picryl.com/>.

¹¹ Carrier-qualified.

SMITH: ...gender restrictions. Now, at that time, were there any restrictions to your assignment in terms of performing?

YOUNG: Well, when I was in the training command, pretty much you either went the air-to-ground bombing side, or you went the air combat maneuvering side. So I ended up instructing in air combat maneuvering. But I knew that my next tour would be very limited in what I could do, so that's why — one of the reasons I got out of the Navy. I was just so limited compared to what the men could do.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: It just — it got to be too constraining for me.

SMITH: So you made this decision to transition to the Reserves.

YOUNG: Yes.

SMITH: Did you do that — like one day you were active duty and--

YOUNG: I did that actually in Kingsville. I was able to sign a Reserve commission. They found a billet for me, flying the A-4 part time, so I continued to fly the A-4 part time as a reservist.

SMITH: Fantastic. And that was July of '83? Is that correct?

YOUNG: Yup.

SMITH: Okay. So —

YOUNG: And then I got a job with FAA, so I left Kingsville, went to Atlanta, and affiliated with a non-flying Reserve unit and a Reserve billet in Atlanta, Georgia. NAS Atlanta, Georgia.

SMITH: Is this — so that's not VA-2267. That's —

YOUNG: Well, actually, it was.

SMITH: It was? Okay.

YOUNG: Yup. VA-2267.

SMITH: Okay, January of '84.

YOUNG: Yup.

SMITH: And I have here that you were the first woman FAA test pilot.

YOUNG: Yeah. Yes, I was.

SMITH: Tell me about that experience.

YOUNG: Well, the manager of the Atlanta office, I think, decided he wanted more diversity. So he kind of went looking for female pilots that had the background, and he called the Navy and said: who's getting out of the Navy? And my name came up. So at one point, I actually flew a plane from Kingsville to Atlanta. I interviewed with him, and he told me what the job was all about. And I said: well, that

sounds pretty good. Flight testing aircraft. And the FAA provided the training, so I took that job, and I was there for about two and a half years.

SMITH: So these were aircraft that had gone through — what? Some type of —

YOUNG: Any kind of modification. Civil aircraft that had either — they were either new or modified aircraft that needed to be flight tested for airworthiness to get a

[40:00]

type certificate or a supplemental type certificate.

SMITH: Any hairy flights in that period?

YOUNG: No. Not really.

SMITH: What were your favorite aircraft?

YOUNG: Well, I did a spin program on a Mooney, and I really enjoyed that. It was very interesting. I got to fly brand-new Maules, brand-new Pipers, and occasionally I'd ride along when they did a production flight test on a Gulfstream. And those are beautiful brand-new airplanes. [laughs] And then Maule made seaplanes. I got to fly in a seaplane.

SMITH: Sounds like a dream job for you. [laughs]

YOUNG: Yeah, it was, but my heart was in the airlines. So —

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: I didn't want to stay with the FAA forever. [laughs]

SMITH: So you must have accumulated a fair number of hours during —

YOUNG: Well, not that many, because flight tests are very ground-intensive. It's a lot of paperwork and a lot of going over engineering data and flight planning and figuring out what you're going to test and how, and then the actual flight time is kind of limited.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: Because we would just spot-check their — if they did a new aircraft, like the Piper Malibu, we would just go down and fly parts of the flight test program, because we couldn't be there full-time. So I actually didn't get that much flight time, but it was very interesting. A lot of different types of aircraft.

[TAPE PAUSED at 41:27]

SMITH: Alright. So we were just talking about your FAA flight test time down in Atlanta.

YOUNG: Right. I was a certification test pilot. I started out as a GS-11 and ended up in the GS-13. And as I said, it was an extremely interesting job. They sent me to some flight test training programs at University of Tennessee Space Institute.

SMITH: Wow.

YOUNG: So I learned a lot about performance flight testing, stability flight testing, and was able to participate in numerous flight test programs for the FAA.

SMITH: How many years did you do that, or how long —

YOUNG: Two and a half. Yup.

SMITH: That's —

YOUNG: I got hired by Piedmont in May of '86. I started that job in December of '83, so yeah, about two and a half years.

SMITH: And you were flying 72s for Pied— no, what —

YOUNG: Well, for the FAA, I flew whatever the applicant had. So like, say an applicant modified a Piper Clipper. Well, I would do all the ground work, look at all the engineering that had been done so far. We were like, the last stop, the flight test, after all the engineering and the flutter testing. So I flew all types of different civil aircraft for that job.

SMITH: And then, at Piedmont, you —

YOUNG: And then when I got hired in May of '86, of course, then I went to the 727.

SMITH: The 72.

YOUNG: Flight engineer.

SMITH: Right. So then before that time, you actually — in December of '84, I show that you were flying the C-9...

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: ...with the Navy.

YOUNG: I did get a C-9 billet, finally. I didn't initially, but I was able to get a C-9 billet in Jacksonville, Florida, in VR-58.

SMITH: Great.

YOUNG: And I flew with them for about a year, and then I was able to swap with a guy who wanted to be in Jacksonville. And he was in the Atlanta squadron. So I swapped and went to VR-46 and flew the DC-9 for VR-46 until 1991, I think.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: So a total of about five years flying the C-9s in the Reserves, which was a part-time gig, but it was wonderful. I mean, it's the Navy's airliner. So we flew all over the world in those things.

SMITH: Tell me about the C-9 — with the qualification —

YOUNG: Well, we would do a lot of round-robins between all the different Navy bases in the U.S., carrying sailors and cargo, and then we would do two-week deployments to Europe to Sigonella, Sicily.

And we would fly sailors all around the Mediterranean, and cargo. And it was fabulous. And we would spend time in Spain and Italy mostly, and then we would do round-robin flights to wherever they needed to be — sailors needed to be taken. And one really neat flight we did was to Bulgaria and Romania, just after they lifted the Iron Curtain. And no Navy planes had been in those countries. They were East Bloc countries. So we were like, the first, or one of the first, Navy airplanes to land there after they lifted the Iron Curtain.

SMITH: In '89, or —

YOUNG: Yeah, somewhere around '90. Yeah, 1990.¹²

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: Sorry, I don't have my log books.

SMITH: No, that's —

YOUNG: I can't look up the exact date, but all I remember is the DOD charts didn't even cover those areas. We had to get — we had to order civilian charts from Jeppesen, because the DOD charts ended at the Iron Curtain. They were like, blank, because we weren't supposed to go there. [laughs]

[45:00]

SMITH: Right. And they didn't want us there at the time. [laughs] So —

YOUNG: Yeah. But we went in there. We took the Navy band so that they could meet the ships when they came into the Black Sea.

SMITH: Oh. Great.

YOUNG: So it was all very positive, and the Romanians and the Bulgarians were fairly poor people, so the people that we encountered were just happy to see us. And we would give them whatever we could give them. You know? You know, a six-pack of beer, or whatever we felt we could give them as a gift.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So I felt like a diplomat. It was neat.

SMITH: Were there other women flying the C-9 at that time?

YOUNG: There were some scattered around the different squadrons. And on one of the deployments, I got to fly with another woman. Yup.

SMITH: Do you remember who that was?

¹² Nov 9, 1989 marks the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the end of the Cold War. East and West Berlin were officially reunited on Oct 3, 1990. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics dissolved in Dec 1991. "Berlin Wall," Oct 11, 2019; "The Berlin Wall Falls and USSR Dissolves," n.d. Accessed Nov 4, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/berlin-wall>; <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/berlinwall>.

YOUNG: Yeah. Marty Leeds. Yup.

SMITH: I just try to get people to mention other [crosstalk about taking a sip of water] —

YOUNG: Yup. She ended up at United. Yeah, it was fun to fly with another woman. But I was the only woman in my squadron — pilot.

SMITH: Okay. And this is — yeah, we're still talking VR-46.

YOUNG: VR-46. Right.

SMITH: So you were promoted to commander...

YOUNG: Yup.

SMITH: ...in July of '91.

YOUNG: Yeah.

SMITH: And did that change your assignment?

YOUNG: Yeah, they basically — I had to leave the squadron, because there weren't enough billets for that many commanders. I left the squadron, went to the VTU, and went to a non-pay status. But the war was winding down — the first Gulf War — and they were allowing early outs. And a lot of people bailed out. And so I just stayed in, because I wanted to get my 20. And next thing I knew, I was on the captains' list.

SMITH: Well, let's talk about the first Gulf war, about Desert Shield and Desert Storm and your involvement as a C-9 pilot, and where you went.

YOUNG: Yeah. I did two deployments, I think, to Desert Storm during the — it was actually a pretty short logistics war.¹³ So I think I did either one or two deployments that counted as in-theater, because we went to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. So I got the — you know, the ribbons for Southwest Asia and the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal, and the Reserve Overseas Service Medal. So that was actually a lot more operational flying than I had ever done in active duty. So for me, it was exciting.

SMITH: How were you received, you know, when you would deploy, when you were interacting with other troops?

YOUNG: Well, we would be based, like, in the Sigonella for two weeks. We would stay in the barracks there, and we would just operate out of there for two weeks. And Sigonella was used to it, because they had a steady stream of these deploying Reserve squadrons. So we were received fine.

SMITH: Great.

YOUNG: And we were carrying sailors where they wanted to go, so —

¹³ Desert Shield commenced in Aug 1990, but the actual war (Desert Storm) commenced in Jan 1991 and lasted less than two months.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: The sailors usually were pretty happy to be on our airplane.

SMITH: Did you notice any difference in, you know, either the treatment of women or just how you were received from being on active duty versus being in the Reserves?

YOUNG: Well, the Reserves, the only time I sensed some kind of discrimination was they had an international event where a ship — an Italian cruise ship, the *Achille Lauro*, was hijacked, basically.¹⁴ And they — the hijackers forced the ship to go into a different port, or something. Well anyway, the Navy flew some missions in support of the *Achille Lauro* to liberate it, to help. And so we had a secret mission to the eastern part of the Mediterranean, and they would not let me go on it, because they said women couldn't go on it. And I was really upset. I was mad, because I'm like: there's no mission that a C-9 does that I can't go on, because it's all non-combat. It's not a combatant airplane.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So I was miffed. And when I got back from that, I said something to the commanding officer. I said, you know: are we restricted in any way as women from flying these airplanes in different missions? And he said: no, you're not. But it was just the way the commanding officer — the commander of the det, the detachment, in Sigonella — he said: no, you can't go on that one. Only the men can do that one. So I was not happy.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: But what are you gonna do? You just have to accept — I was the co-pilot. You have to accept your assignment as it's given.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So I just did my job. But the guys thought that they were superior, that they could do that mission, and a woman was not allowed to, which was not true. [laughs]

[50:00]

SMITH: Was there any explanation, other than gender, given to you?

YOUNG: Nope. No. Yeah, that was a — and there was an Egypt Air aircraft involved. I can't remember all the specifics, but it was a secret mission. It was secret. Like, they couldn't tell you where they were going. And there was no flight plan. It was one of those missions that doesn't really exist on paper, but it gets flown.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: And so they said: nope, you can't do it. That was disappointing.

¹⁴ The *Achille Lauro* was hijacked on Oct 7, 1985 with 11 Americans on board. "U.S. Navy SEALs and the Achille Lauro Mission," n.d. Accessed Nov 4, 2019, <https://www.navysealmuseum.org>.

SMITH: Yes. So let me ask you about how things changed before and — or, just take us through the combat exclusion policy change...

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: ...in '93. And —

YOUNG: Yeah. I was already in the VTU at that point, and that was 1993, I believe it was.

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: And Trish Beckman,¹⁵ who was a real pistol at taking on these issues, she called me and she said: you need to come to Washington. Put on your whites, and put — you know, come to Washington. We're going to educate Congress on women's capabilities. And I was one of the few women that was dogfighting capable, and I landed on a carrier. So I was kind of a good person to put up there as Exhibit A, you know? [laughs] So I did. I went up there, and I was —

SMITH: When was this?

YOUNG: I went up to Washington. I was on the Hill, and Heather Wilson was there helping us — helping us strategize. She was a White House Fellow and a Rhodes scholar — no. She was — I can't remember her exact job, but she was a — working on the Hill. And she had been a Rhodes scholar.¹⁶ She became Secretary of the Air Force later. [laughs] So —

SMITH: Right. What year was this?

YOUNG: 1993, I believe.¹⁷

SMITH: But — so — you remember roughly the month that you — that Trish said this, I'll come up to—

YOUNG: You know, I wrote a complete story about it. I can email you the story.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: But I don't have it with me. I can't remember.

SMITH: That's okay. I was just curious about the time of the year.

YOUNG: Luckily, I wrote all this stuff down in my diary. I was able to recreate it for my diary.

SMITH: So tell me what happened.

¹⁵ Trish Beckman is a pioneering Naval Flight Officer (NFO) who flew more than 67 types of aircraft, including the F-15E and F/A-18D. She is a founding member of Women in Aviation International. Accessed Nov 4, 2019, <https://www.wai.org/pioneers/2010/trish-beckman>.

¹⁶ In 1991, Heather Wilson was Director, Defense Policy and Arms Control, NSC Staff, Washington, DC. Wilson served as the Secretary of the Air Force from 2017 – May 2019. "Heather Wilson," Jun 2019. Accessed Nov 4, 2019, <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Biographies/Display/Article/1183103/heather-wilson/>.

¹⁷ The hearings on the Hill were held in July 1991. Young email to NASM, Oct 21, 2019.

YOUNG: Well, a whole bunch of us met in Senator Roth's office — Senator William Roth. And he was a co-sponsor with Ted Kennedy of the legislation to remove the combat exclusion.¹⁸ And we strategized in his office. And there were all these other women's groups that were assisting. Like Carolyn Becraft was there.¹⁹ And we came up with a list of places to go visit, and I just went around with some of these other women, and we — like Barbara Bell, and of course Trish Beckman, and gosh. I can't remember all the names. But they were — we looked great in our whites. We just went in there and said: yeah, I fly, you know, a tactical jet, and I've landed on a carrier, and I've done this and that. And women really should be allowed to do all the different jobs. And I guess it worked, because it won 69-30, I think. The next day they had a press conference, and they — the legislation passed...

SMITH: So the places you —

YOUNG: ...to remove the combat exclusion.

SMITH: The places you visited, you were visiting other congressmen.

YOUNG: We were — Congress — congressional offices.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: Yeah. And I didn't write them all down. I wish I had.

SMITH: No, no.

YOUNG: But I have some of the paperwork that we were given to strategize.

SMITH: And would Senators Roth and Kennedy go with you?

YOUNG: No, but Senator Roth, we were working in his office, so of course, he was super nice. And Senator Kennedy — the next day when we went to the press conference, Senator Kennedy spoke. So I heard him speak at that one, along with some other of the leaders.

SMITH: So they would set up these appointments, or their office staff would set up appointments for you.

YOUNG: Yeah, we would meet with a staffer. We didn't actually meet with a congressman.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: Like, we would go to these offices, and we would meet with like, a military staffer, the person that was covering military issues for that congressman.

¹⁸ Rep. Les Aspin (D-WI) introduced H.R. 2100, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 on 4/25/1991; the bill was received in the Senate on 6/4/1991 and referred to the Committee on Armed Services. There were 17 roll call votes on this piece of legislation and public hearings. PL 102-190 was signed into law on 12/5/1991 by President H.W. Bush. Accessed Sept 25, 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/house-bill/2100/all-actions?overview=closed#tabs>.

¹⁹ In Oct 1998, Carolyn Becraft became the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Previously, she served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families, and Education. Accessed Nov 4, 2019, https://1997-2001.state.gov/picw/acwbio_becraft.html.

SMITH: Right, the one that's going to brief them whether or not they should... [laughs]

YOUNG: Yeah, exactly.

SMITH: ...vote "yay" or "nay."

YOUNG: They were the staffer that we had to convince.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: And then they would turn around and tell their boss. Like: hey, you should really get on board with this.

SMITH: So how long did you do this?

YOUNG: We were only there for a day. I flew up that morning. Just like I did to come to this.

SMITH: Wow. [laughs]

YOUNG: Flew up that morning, met, grabbed some lunch, and then we fanned out. For the rest of the day, we fanned out. Then we went to dinner that night, and then the next day, we came in and went to that press conference. Some of the women stayed longer and did more work, but I had to go back to work, I think.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So I just flew back

[55:00]

the next day to Charlotte. I was based in Charlotte. So —

SMITH: Well, thank you for opening so many aircraft—

YOUNG: Yeah. Well, I've written a story about it, which I can share with you.

SMITH: Fantastic.

YOUNG: I wrote it down and made a little — because the 25th anniversary came a couple years ago, and we were like: hey, people need to...

SMITH: Remember.

YOUNG: ...realize how far we've come and what all happened to make this come about.

SMITH: Absolutely.

YOUNG: So I wrote a blurb on it. And I have it on my computer.

SMITH: I hope you published that.

YOUNG: Sorry?

SMITH: I hope you published that.

YOUNG: Yes, I published it in Women Military Aviators...

SMITH: Good.

YOUNG: ...and shared it with a lot of people.

SMITH: Yeah. Let's talk about what aircraft you enjoy flying the most.

YOUNG: Boy, that's hard to say. A-4 was absolutely fantastic. It's a tactical jet that was extremely well designed and a lot of fun to fly. Very reliable, very sturdy, and you could do so much with it. You could tank. You could land on a ship. You could drop bombs. It was just a very versatile aircraft. So I would have to say the A-4 was my favorite. And then as far as civil aircraft, gosh. The Mooney. I loved the Mooney, which I owned one for a while. And I like the Airbus 320 series. It was an outstanding airliner. And right now, I'm flying the 767, which is — I love. It's fun. Very nice.

SMITH: That's great. I didn't ask you and I should have, after the combat exclusion policy was lifted...

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: ...were there any changes that you noticed in Navy flying?

YOUNG: Not in my life, but the — of course, the women immediately started getting sent to fleet squadrons, so it was too late for me, but I was thrilled to see it.

SMITH: That must have made you feel...

YOUNG: Oh, yeah.

SMITH: ...a tremendous sense of accomplishment.

YOUNG: Oh, yeah.

SMITH: So that's awesome. Can we talk about your mentors? Like, who mentored you?

YOUNG: Well, of course, the most important one was Rosemary Mariner,²⁰ because...

SMITH: Let's talk about Rosemary.

YOUNG: ...she was the first woman to fly Navy jets, and she was at Oceana and VC-2 when I was a Midshipman. And my brother was at Oceana. So I thought: well, I'll just go see my brother, and then maybe I can meet Rosie, because she had been at Purdue. Just around the time I got to Purdue, she was leaving, so I never got to see her at Purdue.

SMITH: But you knew of her.

²⁰ Rosemary Mariner (1953-2019) was the first woman—in any service—to command an aviation squadron. As mentioned, she was the first woman to fly jets in the Navy, and retired as a captain in 1997. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/people/trailblazers/rosemary-mariner.html>; <https://www.wai.org/media/press-release/2016/12/15/wai-announces-pioneer-hall-fame-inductees-2017>; <https://mailchi.mp/f658adedd4cf/wma-the-flyer-february-2019>.

YOUNG: I knew of her.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: Absolutely. Because I heard she'd gotten her degree at Purdue and then gone right to flight school — Navy flight school. So I knew all about her. So sure enough, I got to meet her at NAS Oceana, and she encouraged me to fly jets. And she encouraged me to just go for as many new and unique qualifications that I could get, and basically shoot for the stars. And so she remained my mentor, basically, throughout my Navy career. Yeah. Wonderful woman. And it's sad that we lost her in January...

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: ...of this year.

SMITH: Yes. What about your support network? Who was — who did you have in your corner to kind of go to when things didn't go well, or —

YOUNG: Well, usually the other women were supportive. But I think there were a couple of key commanding officers along the way that were very important as far as support. Because if your commanding officer didn't really have your back, then you could kind of flounder. I mean, you wouldn't get as far in your career if your commanding officer wasn't totally behind you. So I had a couple very supportive commanding officers, and an admiral, Paul Gillcrist,²¹ who was the admiral of our wing when I was in Hawaii. And he was the one that decreed that we could get air combat maneuver qualified in VC-1, because we didn't have a program before that. So he said: do it. [laughs] He was a fighter pilot's fighter pilot. And he said: yup, you guys should be able to get qualified to do air combat maneuvering in the A-4. And so we did.

SMITH: Sometimes that's what it takes. One voice.

YOUNG: Yup. One leader...

SMITH: One leader.

YOUNG: ...to step up and say:

[1:00:00]

you guys are going to do this, and you're going to do it well. And we did. Yup.

SMITH: Awesome. So we're going to transition a little bit into policy and also — well, I'll just ask you. Any other policies — we talked about the combat exclusion policy...²²

YOUNG: Right.

²¹ Paul Gillcrist (1929-2016) was a Naval Academy graduate, test pilot, and commander who retired as a rear admiral in 1985. He authored *Feet Wet: Reflections of a Carrier Pilot* (Schiffer Publishing, 1990). Accessed Nov 5, 2019, http://www.epnaao.com/BIOS_files/REGULARS/Gillcrist-%20Paul%20T.pdf.

²² Women were excluded from combat aircraft by law until PL 102-190 was signed into law in Dec 1991; they were excluded by DoD policy until it changed in Apr 1993 (SECDEF Les Aspin), and 2013 and 2016 (SECDEF Leon Panetta).

SMITH: ...that became challenging for you.

YOUNG: That was very limiting, yeah.

SMITH: Yeah. And anything else that was — you saw as an obstacle or a challenge?

YOUNG: Well, when I first got to Hawaii, if you were a bachelor — if you were single — they wanted you to live in the BOQ and — because that was a leftover from the old days, where if you were a single officer, you lived on the ship. Well, of course, I was at an air station, so at first, they're like: well, you have to live in the BOQ, which is kind of a dumpy place. [laughs] So I had to fight to get what was called BAQ, bachelor allowance for quarters, and that way I could move off base. But the policy really started shifting away from making us stay in the barracks. Luckily, my skipper backed me up, and Andrea and I were both able to get a BAQ room off base. So that was kind of a sea change that was happening. Of course, the pregnancy policies were evolving, and I think for the better. And they still had like, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" type environment.²³ And I asked if they found out — if they were told somebody was gay, they would go after them, and they would try to convict them, basically, of being gay when you're not supposed to be gay in the military. And they would try to, you know, process people out. So I was a legal officer, and I had a sailor come to me and say: okay, I've had enough of the harassment. I'm telling you that I'm gay, because I want to get out. And I was like: ooh, because I was wrestling with my own sexuality. So I'm like: oh. [laughs] This is unique.

SMITH: You were the legal — can you explain —

YOUNG: So I was the legal officer. In other words, I was the — I had the collateral duty in the squadron of processing legal cases, if a sailor broke a rule — a military rule, I would have to investigate the case, put it together, and present it to the commanding officer...

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: ...for adjudication at Captain's Mast.²⁴ So this sailor came to me, and she was an outstanding first-class photo mate. And she had — I guess was having a relationship with another woman on the base. And then people in her squadron got wind of it, and they were starting to pick at her and harass her. And finally, she said: you know what? I've had enough. So she came to me and said: I'm gay, and I want to get out. And I'm like: okay, let me look into this. So I started reading up on it and how that type of case is processed. And I went to the skipper, and he was wonderful. He said: look, tell her that tomorrow, you know — come back tomorrow, and if she has changed her mind, I'll just forget it ever happened. She can just keep doing her job, because she was outstanding. But she pushed it. She said:

²³ Don't Ask, Don't Tell was a 1993 policy, enacted by Congress, that prohibited inquiries about sexual orientation, allowing lesbian, gay, or bisexual men and women to continue serving in the military (as opposed to the threat of judicial punishment or discharge), providing they did not disclose their sexual orientation. The policy was repealed in 2011. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/dont-ask-dont-tell-repeal-compromise>.

²⁴ A forum for non-judicial punishment. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, https://www.jag.navy.mil/legal_services/legal_services_faqDEFENSE.htm#dq9; <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/o/origin-navy-terminology.html#cap>.

nope, I want out. So I processed her out under the honorable discharge provision, which was one of the paths that you could take when you process somebody out.

SMITH: This was during the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” era, or no?

YOUNG: Not really. It was before...

SMITH: Before.

YOUNG: ...the Clinton era. The Clinton era actually was the official “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” This was like, before that even.

SMITH: So —

YOUNG: This was the — this was just where when you came in, they asked you if you were gay, and if you said you were gay, you couldn’t even come in.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: Or if you were in, and they found out you were gay, they would try to kick you out, if they had evidence, obviously. So there was a lot of people sneaking around. You know? This is — they were very under — what do you say, radar — activity of sailors that were gay, just trying to not get caught but have some kind of social life.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: So I was wrestling with my own situation. I don’t want to get in trouble. I don’t want to get kicked out. So I was just playing it very [laughs] — playing it straight by the rules. And so I did process her out. And the Navy lost a great sailor. So that was in about 1980, I guess. And “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” came along with Clinton in 1992, maybe.

SMITH: Yeah, ’92 or ’93.

YOUNG: Because he came in, and he tried to change it, because he knew the whole sexuality exclusion really wasn’t good for the military.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: But the senior leaders just went crazy and said: oh, my God, we can’t have that. So they compromised and went to “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” But that was just another — I had already gotten out by that point anyway, because I just got tired of the whole idea

[1:05:00]

of having to present yourself as something that you’re not...

SMITH: Oh, so —

YOUNG: ...and not be — because I got out in ’83.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: But I was in the Reserves, so I was still subject to the UCMJ.

SMITH: Correct.

YOUNG: And I could have still been processed out if I had come forward and told anybody I was gay. So I just — being a reservist was pretty easy to just stay low profile. [laughs] So that's what I did. Stay low profile, stay out of trouble, and nobody knows your business, and everybody's happy.

SMITH: So you're processing this sailor out, and then the policy shifts a little bit to the left, not very far, with the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: But how are you feeling about the Navy during these changes?

YOUNG: Oh, that they've changed it in 2015 or whatever. Oh, fantastic. It's the way it should have been all along.

SMITH: No, I mean, how are you feeling about your — I know you said you were just under the radar, you know.

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: Keeping a low profile in the Reserves.

YOUNG: Right. I was very discreet, yes.

SMITH: So were you concerned at all that any of your reservist squadron mates would say —

YOUNG: Would report me or something?

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: No, not really.

SMITH: Never a concern.

YOUNG: Nope.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: Because I — being a reservist, they really only have jurisdiction when you're at work, on that one weekend. And the rest of the time, you're out in the civilian world, and unless you do something that gets — you get picked up by the cops doing something, or it'd have to be something blatant for them to even go after you.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So, yeah. [laughs]

SMITH: So — and then 2015, as you said, you were elated.

YOUNG: Yeah.

SMITH: Yeah. So —

YOUNG: Yeah. Finally got rid of the gay exclusion in the military, which was not accomplishing anything. If anything, it was kind of counterproductive.

SMITH: Right. And like you mentioned, good people...

YOUNG: Oh, lots of good people got kicked out. Lots.

SMITH: Or left on their own volition.

YOUNG: Yeah. Yup.

SMITH: Yeah. So did you ever face any type of sexual discrimination or unwelcome advances?

YOUNG: I did at the airline, at one point, and I brought it to the attention of my superiors. And you know, they dealt with it as best they could, but I learned a lesson that I needed — they needed more awareness and training. So the airlines now have very good training, with all the employees, about sex discrimination and how it's illegal and not allowed at the airline. So it's — but I did have one episode where I had to report it. And it was pretty depressing to see that that kind of stuff is still there for — some of the men felt like they could say stuff around the women and just get away with it. And it was a hostile work environment. So there was always some kind of backlash, but I felt I had to report it.

SMITH: Well, I'm sure that benefited others. So —

YOUNG: Yeah, I think it woke some people up. Yeah, made them more aware of what was happening.

SMITH: Yeah. So jumping back a few years, in the Navy — going to go back to Tailhook, '91.

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: We'll talk about the — you were also a member of the Skyhawk and the Tailhook Association.

YOUNG: Right. Right.

SMITH: But — well, let's talk about those two associations first, and then —

YOUNG: Well, Tailhook came along first, because...

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: ...it used to be you had to have arrested landing²⁵ to be a regular member.²⁶ So that was another motivation for me to land on a ship, because I wanted to be a regular member of Tailhook. So as soon as I got my landing, I called them and wrote them, because I knew the guys, and I said: okay, I want to be a regular member. And they were like: great. So I became a regular member of Tailhook in

²⁵ Landing with the help of an arresting cable on a carrier.

²⁶ The Tailhook Association has regular and associate memberships; a carrier landing is required for the former. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, https://tailhook.formstack.com/forms/new_membership.

1982. And then in '86, I was on the Tailhook committee, and I helped them out at the convention in Vegas. And then in 1990, I went to the Tailhook convention. And then in '91, they had the big blow-up.²⁷

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: And the big meltdown. And it was sad, because it was a combination of the Gulf war, and women being opened up into combat roles, that created this kind of a perfect storm. And it all kind of blew up at that Tailhook, unfortunately. And a lot of good leaders got —

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you know, had to pay a price, because unfortunately, things got out of control at that Tailhook. And it shed a very bad light on the Navy. So —

SMITH: Was there a difference, even in the Reserves, in the way people acted after the '91 Tailhook?

YOUNG: After '91?

SMITH: I know you had already been in the Reserves over 10 years.

YOUNG: Yeah, I was just finishing up my C-9 time. I was pretty much going into the VTU. So we would talk about it, because a bunch of us senior officers would talk about Tailhook. But you know, we didn't get too political in there. It just — [laughs] we just — there was fallout for years anyway.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: The Tailhook — it didn't get adjudicated immediately. It was — it dragged on for a while. So in 1994, they asked me to be on the board, because I think they wanted to have a woman on the board. So I called up Rosemary Mariner, and I said: what do I do? She said: go ahead. Accept the nomination. Run for the board. And when you get on the board, just be a participating member and try to show the guys that yeah, women are part of the Naval Aviation team. Don't forget about the women, because we're there. We're doing the job.

SMITH: Yeah.

YOUNG: So I did. I did like, three years on the Tailhook Board.

SMITH: Wow. And '94 also, that was the year Lieutenant Hultgreen had her accident.²⁸

YOUNG: Hultgreen had her accident. Yes. Ah, that was another bad, bad year.

²⁷ Norman Kempster, "What Really Happened at Tailhook Convention: Scandal: The Pentagon report graphically describes how fraternity-style hi-jinks turned into hall of horrors," Apr 24, 1993, *LA Times*. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-04-24-mn-26672-story.html>.

²⁸ LT Kara Hultgreen was a Navy F-14 pilot who died during a failed ejection attempt following a port engine failure while landing her F-14 aboard the *USS Abraham Lincoln* on Oct 25, 1994. H.G. Reza, "Navy Pilot's Errors Contributed to Fatal Crash, Report Says," Mar 22, 1995, *LA Times*. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-03-22-mn-45801-story.html>. Controversy over Hultgreen's actions, aircraft design, investigation/findings, and the future of women fighter pilots continued for years.

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: Yeah. Yup.

SMITH: So tell me about the attitude towards women.

YOUNG: Well, the guys who were in the Naval Air Station in Atlanta, which is where I was drilling, some of the fighter guys were pretty dismissive. And they said: well, you know, if the women can't hack it, they shouldn't be there. They were mad that they — they salvaged the aircraft with her in it, because this one guy said: oh, well, a friend of mine had an accident, and they didn't salvage his aircraft, you know, and he was resentful. And like, well, the women didn't make that decision. That decision was made by Navy leadership...

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: ...whether or not to salvage the aircraft. That's not something the women tried to do to the men. So it was kind of weird. I mean, there was a little bit of — you could tell it still wasn't a solved issue for some men. But it was really sad when she died, because that type of accident — that engine had the propensity to compressor stall if you side-slipped it. And it could have — it had happened to men, also. So — but she was high profile, and they made it look like women couldn't handle it. And it set us back. And then Carey Lohrenz,²⁹ who was also on the ship, they boarded³⁰ her for unsatisfactory performance. So they basically put so much scrutiny on the women that they faltered, because you can do that if you over-scrutinize somebody, and you're not supportive. You can actually, I think, reduce their performance.

SMITH: Right, because then they are second-guessing themselves.

YOUNG: Yeah.

SMITH: And you don't want that.

YOUNG: Because then they're like — they feel like they're in the hot seat all the time.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: So it could degrade their performance. That's what happened to Carey Lohrenz. That was really sad, too.

²⁹ LT Carey Lohrenz was a Naval F-14 pilot and author of *Fearless Leadership: High-Performance Lessons from the Flight Deck*, 2014. She earned her wings in 1993 and served until 1999. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, <https://careylohrenz.com/about/>; <https://www.celebrityspeakersbureau.com/talent/carey-lohrenz/>.

³⁰ A review of a pilot's ability—an evaluation board. A Field Naval Aviator Evaluation Board (FNAEB) is convened to evaluate the performance, potential and motivation for continued service of a naval aviator ordered by competent authority to appear before the board. "Public Affairs Officer Aviation Mishap Guidance," Sept 28, 2015, COMNAVAIRFORINST 5420.1G, Aug 18, 2017, 4. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, https://www.public.navy.mil/NAVSAFECEN/Documents/aviation/investigations/PAO_Gouge.doc; <http://www.sailorbob.com/files/CNAFINST5420.1G.pdf>.

SMITH: Wow. Well, I said we were going to talk about two of the associations. You were also a member of the Skyhawk Association.

YOUNG: Yes. It's actually just a proud group of A-4 drivers, [laughs] which is a lot of fun. It's nice.

SMITH: Did you join that after — when you were an instructor, or —

YOUNG: You know, I can't remember when I joined.

SMITH: Yeah, I was just curious...

YOUNG: A long time ago, yeah.

SMITH: ...what the motivation — yeah.

YOUNG: Because I just wanted to stay up to speed on Skyhawk history. And I wrote an article for the magazine on an airplane that was put up in Middlebury, Vermont, on a pedestal.³¹ So I wrote a story about how they decided to put an airplane up in front of the American Legion in Middlebury, Vermont. [laughs]

SMITH: Oh, nice. Did you — I don't know that you necessarily saw how the Navy handled the integration of women into combat. Well, that's a bad lead-in.

YOUNG: Yeah, not really, because I was already in the Volunteer Training Unit. I was doing minimal drilling. You know?

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: I really was out of the operational Navy.

SMITH: Yeah, I was just going to ask what your impression of — but —

YOUNG: Well, like I said, with Naval aviation, we were set back by some unfortunate incidents.

[1:15:00]

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: But as time went on, women — Rosemary was in an A-7 unit, and she helped women get into F-18s. Pam Carel³² and Lori Melling and — who else flew F-18s? Anyway, there was —

SMITH: Tammie Jo Shults did, too.

YOUNG: Say again?

SMITH: Tammie Jo Shults did.

³¹ Middlebury American Legion Post 27.

³² Pamela Carel earned her wings in 1988, flew the A-7E, and was the first woman to qualify in combat training in the F/A-18C. She served as a flight instructor, amassed more than 3400 flight hours and 350 carrier landings. She retired from the Navy in 2017 as a captain. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, http://3rd-events.homestead.com/bio_-_Capt_CAREL_Bio_2015.pdf.

YOUNG: Oh, yeah. Tammie Jo Shults, exactly. Yes. Yes. They led the way in the F-18s, and they did a great job, so that really helped a lot.

SMITH: Wow. That's awesome. Were you aware of the *Owens v. Brown* decision in '78 that changed Naval — restrictive Naval assignment policies for women? I don't know that it would have been public knowledge, or you know —

YOUNG: It changed the female Naval aviator assignment policy?

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: Or female officer assignment policy?

SMITH: Just gender-restricted assignment policies. So I was just curious whether anybody —

YOUNG: And was that a legislation or a —

SMITH: It was a court decision.

YOUNG: Oh, no.

SMITH: So — that actually, Joellen was part of —

YOUNG: Yeah, Joellen was involved. I heard of that one.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: But I wasn't really involved in it, being in an A-4 out in Hawaii.

SMITH: I just wondered whether or not anyone heard about it while you were — this would have been...

YOUNG: Yeah.

SMITH: ...while you were in flight school.

YOUNG: In Hawaii. Or, maybe in —

SMITH: Flight training, in '78. So —

YOUNG: Oh.

SMITH: Just curious.

YOUNG: Yes, I heard about it, and I was glad that they — that Joellen made that advance as far as women flying helicopters.

SMITH: Right.

YOUNG: Yes. Oh, yeah. I remember that.

SMITH: But was that something you remember while you were in training, that — hearing about it?

YOUNG: Not really.

SMITH: No?

YOUNG: Because I wasn't going into helicopters.

SMITH: Right, so that part didn't really impact you.

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: Okay.

YOUNG: But I was happy that she did it. Oh, yeah.

SMITH: Great.

YOUNG: Definitely. Because some of the limitations were just stupid. I mean, like, they wouldn't even let her hover over a ship.

SMITH: [laughs] Exactly.

YOUNG: I mean, in San Diego Bay. I mean, it was just ridiculous.

SMITH: Exactly. So tell me about earning the captain rank, and how that made you feel, and what opened up to you as a result of that promotion.

YOUNG: Oh, making captain in the Navy Reserve?

SMITH: Mm hmm.

YOUNG: Well, it was a nice promotion to get, because that's kind of the highest I ever thought I would possibly get, and I felt like it was a culmination of all the hard work I put in on all these different jobs I had, and all the flying I did in the Reserves. Some reservists just do the one weekend a month and that's it. But for years, I did like, six days a month, and flew, and went overseas, and I felt like I had really worked hard. So it was a nice promotion to get, because I felt it showed that my hard work paid off. 15 years of drilling.

SMITH: Yes. And when were you promoted to captain?

YOUNG: Let's see.

SMITH: Just a year.

YOUNG: '97.

SMITH: '97?

YOUNG: Yeah.

SMITH: Okay. Tell me about your transition to civilian life. Like, you kind of had two —

YOUNG: When I went off active duty?

SMITH: Yes, not just off of active duty, but also retiring from the Reserves.

YOUNG: Oh, well, when I retired from the Reserves, that was —

SMITH: I have '98.

YOUNG: That was — yeah, in 1998. That was nice in a way, because it just freed up more time. I didn't have to give up one weekend a month and go out to the base and you know, spend a whole weekend doing my Navy training. And I wasn't getting paid, so it was nice to just know that I could just — I had my Navy career, have a retirement ceremony, and not have that obligation anymore.

SMITH: You said you weren't getting paid for your one weekend a month?

YOUNG: No.

SMITH: Why?

YOUNG: Not after I got out of the squadron, because there aren't enough pay billets. So the Volunteer Training Unit is all unpaid. It's just a catch-all unit for people who want to continue drilling, but it was all non-paid. So it was about five — at least five years of non-pay. So when I retired, it was actually a — you know, a little bit of a relief. [laughs]

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: All we were getting was points for our retirement, which is why people kept drilling.

[1:20:00]

SMITH: So it was drill, but it was also flying?

YOUNG: No.

SMITH: No? This was not flying.

YOUNG: Once I left the squadron, I was no longer flying.

SMITH: Oh, my goodness.

YOUNG: All flying billets are pay billets. But the VTU billets are not paid. That's why they call them Volunteer Training Units. [laughs]

SMITH: Volunteer Training Unit. Yeah.

YOUNG: We got to do some neat things, though. But it's just a matter of — you're giving them that time.

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: You know? Two days a month, you're giving the Navy, and you're not getting any pay. You're just getting points.

SMITH: Yeah. So I'm glad you explained that, because I did not understand the VTU.

YOUNG: Oh, yeah.

SMITH: And I think that's very important for your oral history...

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: ...to make sure people are very clear about that.

YOUNG: Right. And I could have — I became the XO of the VTU, and I could have been the CO of the VTU. But I thought: why would — I didn't want to take on extra workload when I knew I wasn't — wouldn't be getting paid.

SMITH: When you were the XO, that's a paid billet.

YOUNG: Second in command. No, none of them are paid.

SMITH: No?

YOUNG: No. In the VTU, none of the billets are paid.

SMITH: None.

YOUNG: No.

SMITH: Okay. That's —

YOUNG: Yeah, we were mostly commanders in there — commanders and captains.

SMITH: Wow. So tell me about advice — hindsight advice you would give a woman, or anyone, going to flight school in the Navy, or you know, becoming a commander, making a decision about going to the Reserves. Any advice you would —

YOUNG: Well, the advice would definitely be to fly the most technologically advanced and the most operational type aircraft that you can, and get as many quals as you can. Like, section leader, division leader, post maintenance check pilot, instructor pilot, NATOPS³³ instructor pilot. Try and get as many quals as you can, and then definitely, if you do separate from active duty prior to getting your 20 years in, by all means, stay in the Reserves. Absolutely. My dad did it. My brother did it. And I did it. And it turned out to be a very good form of security for later on, when you get your pension and your medical care. And it was fun. A lot of the Reserve duty is fun. So —

SMITH: Yeah. So Captain Young, you've also been instrumental in Women Military Aviators and Women In Aviation International.

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: So tell me why those organizations are important to you and maybe talk a little bit about what you do.

YOUNG: Well, Women Military Aviators are really kind of a group that evolved out of Rosemary's group. She had a Navy group that she started, and then the Air Force women had a group that they started.

³³ Naval air training and operating procedures standardization.

And then we ended up just sort of blending in together to form Women Military Aviators.³⁴ And I think it's just really important to have that networking, that support, and mainly — like, I'm getting really big into the history aspect of it. So Rosemary helped me a lot. I mean, she was — had already been diagnosed, but she — I would go visit her, and I would ask her, you know, if I can help sort her materials, and maybe send some of them to TWU.³⁵ And she said yes, so I just got thoroughly involved in doing history of women Naval aviators. And I think it's really important to have women write down their stories or tell their stories. So that's one of the reasons I'm doing this. [laughs]

SMITH: And I thank you. Yes. I agree. We're getting close — very close to the end of the interview.

YOUNG: Oh, okay. Yeah.

SMITH: So I just wanted to ask: is there anything that we've not talked about that you want included in your oral history?

YOUNG: Nothing specific. Just overall that the early women, of which I was one — we made inroads thanks to some very supportive men that were in high positions and believed in us. And if it weren't for them, we probably wouldn't have gotten nearly as far. So it was important to have support at some of the higher levels of Navy leadership, some rear admirals, some captains, that believed in us and wanted us to do great things. And so I would have to say that was instrumental.

SMITH: I'm very glad you said that, because sometimes when we talk about mentors, women — mentors of women...

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: ...some people assume that those mentors have to be women.

YOUNG: Right.

SMITH: And they do not. So I'm so glad you...

YOUNG: Absolutely.

SMITH: ...said it that way.

YOUNG: Not — especially when you're the only woman on a base or the only woman in a squadron. Your mentors are going to be men. [laughs]

SMITH: Right.

[1:25:00]

YOUNG: By necessity.

SMITH: Right.

³⁴ Barbara (Brumme) Garwood, "History of Women Military Aviators," n.d. Accessed Nov 5, 2019, <https://www.womenmilitaryaviators.com/history-of-wma.html>.

³⁵ Texas Women's University Archives.

YOUNG: So —

SMITH: And it's nice to hear about men that made the right choices and mentored women.

YOUNG: Yeah. They were supportive. Right.

SMITH: Yes.

YOUNG: That's right.

SMITH: So thank you. Well, with that, I think we're going to close. Captain Lucy Young, on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, thank you. Thank you for your service to the nation — the Navy. Thank you for taking the time to record this oral history interview.

YOUNG: It was an honor. Thank you for inviting me.

SMITH: You're welcome.

[1:25:37]

[END]