



My Life My Story



Allison



United States Air Force

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I had good times and bad times in the Air Force, but it is part of life. If your attitude is positive, you're willing to learn, you can be flexible, then you'll do fine in the military. I always encourage young women to join the military services. It helped me to grow and mature. It also helped me realize I wasn't stupid and a nobody; I was a somebody.

I was born in Texas in an old Army hospital in 1953. My dad served in the Army Air Corps; he was a radioman on a B-29. He was selected and went to West Point, became an officer and then, he became a pilot. When the Air Force became an official branch in 1947, he went into the Air Force. Dad was from Oklahoma, and my mother was from New York; she loved New York. They got divorce when I was nine. I have two sisters and one half-sister.

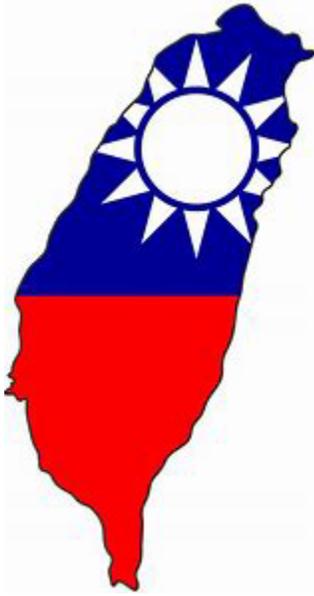
We stayed with my dad when my parents divorced. We went to Japan for four years, 1963-1967. We lived in Tokyo in the beginning, but the Olympics were coming. Everything was getting mowed down. We were moved outside of Tokyo into a new housing development. I liked Japan; the people were starting to get westernized. They still had a lot of Japanese culture and seemed very honest. My dad had left a camera on a train one time, and this little old lady came running up and gave it to him.



We met many different people. Our school was on base. My sixth-grade class had gone to a Japanese school to visit. They had not seen Americans in person. They had seen them on TV, but not in person; we were the first. We played a baseball game against them and of course, they beat us. It was very interesting.



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My family went on many trips around Japan. We went on a snow skiing trip and to a two-hundred-year-old hotel on a beach. We were some of the last people to stay in that hotel before they tore it down. We went on a three-day boat trip over to Okinawa, and I got extremely seasick. Then, we flew to Taiwan and traveled all over the island. We met some really interesting people.

In Japan, we had our favorite restaurant; it had the best noodles. Dad wanted us to try all the different foods. I tried most, but I didn't like dry squid, and I would not eat raw fish. Dad had a lot of friends in the Navy and the Army; he knew a lot of folks. I lived in Japan four years. What an opportunity.

Dad married our housekeeper from Japan. She came back with us to the United States. In the summers, we went to visit my mom, stepdad, and half-sister. We stayed with dad the rest of the time. Dad got orders to White Sands Air Force Base in New Mexico. He had a job that he couldn't talk about – top secret stuff. Dad retired there and unfortunately, became an alcoholic. The military and drinking kind of come together; you have to be strong.

My dad finished up his degree in engineering. He had been working on it while he was in the military. He took a job with Boeing, and we moved to Bellevue, Washington when I was in tenth grade. I went to Interlake High School and graduated in 1972. It's hard on dependents, all the traveling with no roots. When you move a lot, you can't make friends.

After high school, I tried Bellevue Community College and did some odd jobs, but my heart wasn't in it.



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I went to a business school and studied accounting. I was good with numbers, but I didn't like accounting. I was also taught secretarial/clerical skills. I got my degree in clerical administration.

There wasn't really anything I wanted to do in business administration, and I decided to go into the military. My dad said he would disown me if I went into the Marines. I liked the Navy and the Air Force. Between liking the color blue and the fact that basic training was only six weeks back then, I joined the Air Force in July 1976.

I didn't like basic training; it was very stressful. I ate like a horse but lost weight. I was always getting yelled at while marching. I've never been one for giving up. I scored high in electronics, but the heavy lifting knocked me out of that field. I had to pick another field. They picked it for me – administration. I already had the basics because of my schooling, so I went direct duty assignment. I didn't go to clerical school, just to the classes the base command wanted me to take.



After basic, I went to Barksdale, Louisiana. The town didn't like the military. The cops would get our military guys in trouble. The commander decided to pay us all with two-dollar bills, to show the town how much we give to them. All of a sudden, all these two-dollar bills started showing up. They didn't complain as much, but they still weren't very nice.



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I was working with the instructor of crew members. The instructors evaluated and reinstructed the crew members of the KC-135 and B-52G. I was surrounded by officers and NCOs. I had no stripes, and this master sergeant saluted me. I kinda laughed at that one. I was stationed there for a year and a half.

I called up the assignment people to get me out of Barksdale. I said I would go anywhere to get out of this assignment. I received orders to Shemya, Alaska. I called my dad, all excited. He asked, "What did you do to get that assignment?" I said, "I asked for it." My dad had been stationed there during WWII.

The island is small and on a clear day, we could see Russia. I worked admin and supply, and I was also the postal person. I had to borrow typewriters, mine kept breaking. There was only my supervisor, a master sergeant, and myself. Soon, it was just me.



It was considered an isolated, remote assignment. We got a phone call once a month for five minutes, so letters were very important. While I was there around Christmas time, there was a back log of packages and letters in Seattle, Washington. The weather wasn't being friendly. It was the worst time of the year not to get mail. Morale was low, and the base commander had to call to get our mail to us.



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We had a full plane of mail to get out to our people. Everyone helped out, and morale got a lot better. We got fresh fruit and vegetables, but sometimes what we got was already rotten. The base commander made a phone call again and got it straightened out.

I received orders after my year in Shemya to Pease Air Force Base, New Hampshire. I enjoyed going to the different commands. I always learned something new.

My first assignment was in quality control of a F-111 Maintenance Squadron with over three hundred personnel. My second assignment was in the ordering room. This assignment was hard because I had to deal with sexual harassment, but I still did my job. I helped this office get an excellent rate from a low satisfaction on the next ORI inspection.

I decided to reenlist. I was on a KC-135 at 40,000 feet with a master sergeant when I reenlisted. It was my first and his last.



I took orders to Iceland. I was there a year. It was also considered a remote assignment. I met my husband, George. I was working in radar maintenance on a site that was about twenty minutes away from the main Navy base. I was promoted to staff sergeant, E5. We had another ORI inspection. The guys were willing to work with me, and we received an outstanding.

The inspector told us that we had the best-looking files. That made me feel proud.

Just before the end of my assignment in Iceland, George and I got married in November 1981. We married in Bellevue, Washington and my family and friends attended.



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Next, I went to McCord Air Force Base in Washington for a year. I was working in a secure building, a different part of radar maintenance. One of my proudest moments was when I received an award for all the hard work I had done in Iceland. A one-star general presented the award. He went up to my dad and told him how proud he was of me. That was the proudest day for my dad. My family got to see the ceremony.

George had gotten out and was looking for a job. He got an offer from a company in Las Vegas, Nevada. When my position closed, I was offered three assignment choices. I was able to get Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. My assignment was quality control of the F-5 Maintenance Squadron. I was the supervisor over two personnel. By this time, I was getting frustrated with the disrespect the higher I went in rank.

I decided to get out. When I discharged, I was asked why I was getting out. I said, "It was because I didn't want to take the crap anymore. I was tired of the disrespect." I had a chief who knew what was going on, but he didn't do anything about it. He did, however, get reassigned to a position for people who failed to do their job properly. I saw him later on base, and he admitted to me he knew what was going on and did nothing about it.

I discharged in 1984 after eight years in the Air Force. As a woman veteran, I believe, we are of value in the military service. Later in my Air Force career, they were trying to be less prejudiced toward women, but they had a long way to go.

George and I have been married for thirty-six years. We live here in Fallon on five acres. We have dogs and cats; they are our four-legged fur kids. I worked many jobs – almost all in the admin field. For two years, I wanted to try something new, and I worked as a cashier/clerk.



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When it was time for me to retire, I did. I got my social security disability; I knew it was the Lord. A friend of mine, who is a Navy Veteran, told me to apply at the VA. I didn't know I could have been with the VA. When I went to apply, I found out I was already in the system. I like the VA. They have been really good to me; my experience has been very good. The people are great, and they are appreciative. I think that we need to show appreciation also.

I have MS, multiple sclerosis. I was diagnosed in 1991, but I started showing symptoms in 1978. I quickly realized, there are things that I can't do. My doctor said it is amazing I am doing as well as I am. "With all the plaque on your brain, you are doing pretty good," he said. I told him, "It is the Lord and my attitude."

You're going to have your bad days and your good days, and me trying to have the right attitude is important. I am getting all my MS treatment through the VA. I know this is the Lord because they usually don't give a service connection with MS.

