

Hiester, Maryanna US Army

[00:00:14.18] MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, I was born in Dover, New Hampshire on May 28th-- my birthday is coming up-- 1947. I'm the oldest of 10, so I'm part of a big family.

[00:00:22.26] I had eight brothers, one sister. She's eight years younger than I am. So it was interesting for a girl, four boys, girl, four boys.

[00:00:30.35] My mom was a stay-at-home mom. She's of Polish extraction. Her parents were born in Poland. My dad is of French extraction. My maiden name is Dube.

[00:00:40.07] And his family, his father was from Canada. His mother was from the States. So it was a big family, big Catholic family. So we grew up in a very, very small town. It's now called Rollinsford, New Hampshire, but I grew up in the village part of Salmon Falls, New Hampshire. So very small, tight-knit community, French community.

[00:00:59.12] It was just freedom, basically. That's it to say. A very small town, so you didn't have to have a lot of people that were keeping an eye on you. You just-- lots of brothers and sisters, lots of large families in that town.

[00:01:09.47] We all hung around together. We went out and played. Everything was pretty much free.

[00:01:12.98] I mean, you didn't have parents hovering over you or anything like that. So it was fun. It was really-- it was nice, a lot of kids. So it was a good time growing up in that situation.

[00:01:26.98] I actually graduated from high school. I went to a boarding school for high school. Actually, just one mile away from my home, but in the state of Maine, because we were right on the border of Maine. My parents thought, with all those brothers, I should have more girls in my life. And so they thought that that would be a good place for me to be. So I did high school there.

[00:01:45.26] And then I went to college in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania because my mother is from Pittsburgh. So I was familiar with Pittsburgh, comfortable with Pittsburgh. My grandparents lived there, some other aunts and uncles. So I thought that that would be a good place to go.

[00:01:56.62] MARK FRANKLIN: Did you go to Pitt?

[00:01:57.73] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, actually, I went to a small college called Mount Mercy College, which is interesting. In high school, I was always super interested in medicine or medical science, which is more natural sciences. And I thought about nursing as a career, but I did not want to go to a diploma school. And in my mind, that was the only way you could become a nurse.

[00:02:17.41] I wanted college. So I entered college as a biology major and found out that they had a nursing program. So after one year as a biology major, I switched over to the nursing program. And then I finished with a bachelor's degree in nursing.

[00:02:29.74] When I was in high school because this was the boarding school, and I lived among girls, some of their boyfriends or friends were starting to go to Vietnam in the early '60s. I graduated high school '65, so we're talking, maybe, my most memories are probably like '64.

[00:02:42.67] And I remember this discussion about it, but more they were concerned about their friends that were going over there. But I didn't really know a whole lot about the war even in college. I was not really part of that. And I was thinking about this and thinking part of this, my father was Republican, my mother was Democrat.

[00:02:59.05] So I stayed out of politics because it was too heated. Yeah, very safe. So I think that was probably why. It was just-- that kind of stuff, I had no interest in knowing about it.

[00:03:09.52] My father is a World War II vet and he was a disabled vet. He lost his leg in Germany in 1945. He did D-day. He was at Omaha Beach on D-day. He survived that one.

[00:03:22.12] He actually is the person, the engineer, that blew the wall to let the men off the beach on D-day. It was not his original assignment. That man had been killed.

[00:03:31.90] And the man who was-- we know him as General Ploger. But he was, I think, a major at the time. He just said, you an engineer, sir? Are you an engineer? And my dad says, yes, sir. And he said, go blow that wall. And my dad ended up being the one to blow the wall.

[00:03:46.01] And so because of my dad's injuries, we always lived near some kind of military. And my dad eventually ended up working at Pease Air Force Base. So we were just always-- so military was always a huge part of my life because of that, and because of the fact that my dad, because of his injury, he was 100% disabled for some things. And I think 90%-- because he could still work, but it was sort of limited in

some things. So that I think played a large part in my interest in the military and wanting to continue on in the military.

[00:04:16.84] So my brother who was 10 months younger than I am, he actually went to the University of Notre Dame, was commissioned in the Air Force. But was killed two weeks later in a-- you may or may not realize that the bridge going from New Hampshire to Maine on 95, the Pascagoula River Bridge, there were four young men killed when that bridge was being built. And he was one of them.

[00:04:37.37] So it was just a part time little job that he was taking. He was going to go in, in August, for basic training. And two days on the job--

[00:04:44.86] MARK FRANKLIN: He was a part of the construction?

[00:04:45.58] MARYANNA HIESTER: He was part of that construction crew, just a little temporary summer job, and he was killed on it. So I was in Vietnam when this happened. So I am the only veteran in my level.

[00:04:58.29] The Army had a program for nurses that they would pay some of your schooling. And then you went on active duty after that. So I guess you were on active duty, but you went to serve three full years after that. So I joined that program.

[00:05:11.53] So in I think it was June of '67, I signed up for the Army, took my oath, and that was considered enlisted. So I was considered enlisted for those two years that I finished school. They paid for my school, but every time I wanted to go home or anything, you have to fill out the leave papers. You have to do everything. Everything was like you were actually in the Army.

[00:05:32.64] And then when I finished, when I graduated, then I was commissioned as an officer. So they ended my enlistment as an honorable discharge and started a new one as an officer. Went to Fort Sam Houston, Texas for the military, that's where they do all the medical people. So I was there for six weeks for that.

[00:05:49.27] And then when I was there, I volunteered for Vietnam. And that was because with my dad's injuries, I'm a nurse, I just thought some nurse took care of my dad when he was injured. Some nurse helped him out all those times of traveling, and kept him alive, and everything. And here I was a nurse, so I thought that that would be a good thing to do. So I was ready to go and take care of somebody else that was injured in the war.

[00:06:11.82] We saw a lot of various kinds of injuries that were in the hospital. Those who volunteered got sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey for four additional months of

training. If you did not volunteer, you might still end up in Vietnam. You did not get that extra training. So that, I think, was a benefit to me that we saw just various injuries.

[00:06:30.21] I mean, I can't think of particulars, but just about any kind of an injury that you might see there because the Soldiers were coming back from the war. A lot of them would end up at Fort Dix. And then we would be assigned to take care of them. So some of them major trauma, some of them were minor things, but we saw a variety of things, and learned how to do wounds, and dress wounds, and different things like that. So I think that was very helpful.

[00:06:52.21] MARK FRANKLIN: So do you think that training, that additional four months, prepared you for what you're going to see in Vietnam?

[00:06:56.43] MARYANNA HIESTER: I think it did. I think it was helpful, yeah. MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, I was 22 when I went to Vietnam. We flew. So I was-- from Fort Dix, I flew to California. And then-- around San Francisco, I can't quite remember the name of it but then--

[00:07:15.84] MARK FRANKLIN: Travis, maybe?

[00:07:16.56] MARYANNA HIESTER: Possibly Travis, yeah. But then we went-- I want to say Flying Tiger Airlines. I think that's pretty much how I went, with a stop in Hawaii partway across. My one time I've been, I can say, I claim I've been to Hawaii. We stopped there. I have a picture of-- there were three nurses that went over there together. I have a picture of the three of us there in Hawaii. It was just a layover. I mean not even overnight, just a refueling stop. And then we flew to Saigon after that.

[00:07:41.19] MARK FRANKLIN: From Hawaii to Saigon?

[00:07:42.06] MARYANNA HIESTER: From Hawaii to Saigon.

[00:07:43.23] MARK FRANKLIN: And where did you land in Saigon? In Saigon in--

[00:07:47.00] MARYANNA HIESTER: Probably-- is it Tan Son Nhut in Saigon? I think that's where we went. I think we were on an Army base or an Air Force base. So to me, it was hot.

[00:07:55.11] I can remember that, being February. I do remember that that was quite a change from leaving New England in February, and then going out there. And I just-- it seems to me like that was the big depression that I had that it was just quite a change of climate, there being hot.

[00:08:09.45] MARK FRANKLIN: Now, did you know you were going to an evac hospital when you landed?

[00:08:12.45] MARYANNA HIESTER: I did not. We got-- all the nurses met in a room. And we were told that our assignments had been set. And we could not ask for a change of assignment.

[00:08:22.71] So I knew one person in Vietnam. My college roommate's-- her husband's best friend was in Vietnam. And he had said to me, try to get Phu Bai because that's where I am. He was the 101st-- he was a Chinook pilot, 101st. And so I heard this comment, you cannot switch, and I was devastated because I thought, oh, no, I mean what are my chances?

[00:08:43.38] And then she said, but you could trade with somebody. If somebody wants to exactly trade with you, you can trade. So they gave out the assignments. And this one woman up ahead jumps up and she says, my fiancé is in Long Binh, and I'm in Phu Bai. And I said, well, I've got Long Binh, and I want Phu Bai.

[00:09:01.17] [LAUGHS]

[00:09:01.86] So we were able to directly switch. So she got her a Long Binh, and I got my Phu Bai. And that's how I got to go to Phu Bai, yeah.

[00:09:08.82] MARK FRANKLIN: And how did you get to Phu Bai?

[00:09:11.37] MARYANNA HIESTER: We went on a fixed wing aircraft. I'm thinking a propeller aircraft from what I can remember from Saigon to Da Nang. And then from Da Nang, we got on a helicopter to fly us to the 85th Evac.

[00:09:21.95] My first helicopter ride, I had no idea how many people you could put on a helicopter or anything like that. So we all were told to get on this helicopter. And we threw our luggage on there and got on the helicopter. And we take off. It was quite exciting. I've never been in a helicopter before. And I'm right on the end. The door is open. I'm right on the end seat on the left. And we were over the ocean. And the only thing I can think of is, I don't swim very well.

[00:09:43.38] [LAUGH]

[00:09:44.08] I hope we don't crash in this ocean. And we were most of the way to Phu Bai when this huge boom, loud noise. And all of a sudden, it was quite obvious that things were not going very well in the helicopter. And the pilot was quite skilled. He was able to auto rotate, which is the weight of the helicopter keeps the rotors going

for a while until we got probably about 70 feet off the beach maybe. And down we came. So he managed to get us over the beach. We came down really, really hard.

[00:10:13.12] So that was my entry into Vietnam. It was crashing on the beach in this helicopter. I injured my back, but we didn't know quite-- nobody was killed. Nobody was seriously hurt. But my back bothered me after that. But I had to get in another helicopter because that's the only way off the beach, was another helicopter. When we landed, the guys in the helicopter that was following us, they all jumped out. They got their guns ready. They were patrolling. I was like, I'm not in Kansas anymore.

[00:10:41.07] MARK FRANKLIN: This is when you got to Phu Bai?

[00:10:42.15] MARYANNA HIESTER: This is when we landed on the beach. So we're on the beach.

[00:10:44.73] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh, OK.

[00:10:44.88] MARYANNA HIESTER: We're still on the beach. And that was what we-- you realize then apparently that area had been hot the day before so they were just patrolling, making sure that there wasn't anything on the beach.

[00:10:55.14] MARK FRANKLIN: Provide security for you.

[00:10:56.01] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah, for that time. And then we got in another helicopter and got taken to the helipad at the 85th Evac Hospital. And I was entered into the hospital as a patient for the first three days. Yes.

[00:11:07.26] MARK FRANKLIN: What did they determine were your injuries?

[00:11:09.36] MARYANNA HIESTER: They just thought that it was maybe some kind of a sprain or just maybe bruising, things like that. They said that I had contusions. I was kind of bruised in lots of places and stuff like that. And they thought that maybe my back was the same thing. It wasn't until many, many, many years later they determined that I actually had a compression fracture in my back. But it took a long time. The X-rays were just not picking that up.

[00:11:30.30] Some very astute VA doctor said to me one day, have them focus in on the area of your back that still bothers you. And that's when they picked it up that it was a compression fracture. I said, I know exactly where I got that fracture. We came down quite hard.

[00:11:48.92] MARYANNA HIESTER: I was-- unfortunately, I was on the medical floor. That is not where I wanted to be. I was taking care of patients with GI-type things, so diarrhea and gastric-type things, hepatitis, malaria, the kind of medical issues that you might get in the jungle, the kinds of things that these guys were up against.

[00:12:05.66] MARK FRANKLIN: What did you want?

[00:12:06.62] MARYANNA HIESTER: I wanted surgical because my dad was injured. I wanted to deal with wounds and people who are injured and talk to them about-- give them hope because my dad had-- he got married after the war. So my mother still married him even with his injuries.

[00:12:21.05] And so that was-- really I wanted to do that. But I was assigned to the medical floor. And I did a lot of that kind of stuff. I learned a lot about malaria. I learned a lot about taking care of hepatitis, the signs and symptoms. So it was quite an interesting thing because we don't see malaria in the States.

[00:12:39.82] MARK FRANKLIN: Right.

[00:12:40.16] MARYANNA HIESTER: So there was a lot of malaria there. The fevers would go very, very high. The guys would be really, really sick.

[00:12:49.31] MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, on the medical ward, it was mostly just keeping track of them, monitoring them, giving out medications. It was more of a-- it was not quite as strenuous as I would say the surgical floors were. So most of what I was doing is just, like I said, monitoring the guys who had real high fevers. We put them on ice machines to keep their fevers down.

[00:13:10.37] The advantage of the medical floor, it was the only place that was air conditioned. And the reason was because of the malaria patients. We had to keep their fevers down. And so they kept that particular ward air conditioned. So if there was an advantage to being on the medical floor, it was the air conditioning.

[00:13:24.17] We lived in hootches. I'm sure you've heard that term before, the wooden buildings that they had. No windows, just a plywood board that came down over the space that had a screen on it. That was your window. And so it was just a small-- very, very small room. It had a single bed. It had like some kind of a place to put clothing.

[00:13:46.11] MARK FRANKLIN: Was it for-- was it just you or did you share it with somebody?

[00:13:48.78] MARYANNA HIESTER: I shared it with another nurse. So we had our own little room. And then we had a common-- very, very small area. It's was like a sitting area like that. And then there was just several of these lined up. And two of us each had one of them.

[00:13:59.68] MARK FRANKLIN: How about the food?

[00:14:00.72] MARYANNA HIESTER: Food was OK. I mean, when you're the oldest of 10, you eat anything so-- [LAUGH] my mother did not cater to us at all. So I can't say that I was concerned about the food. I don't remember there being a problem with it. I remember you get your tray. Kind of like a cafeteria line, you get your tray. You go through and pay with your money, your Vietnamese money or your American money, but-- that kind of thing.

[00:14:26.24] I remember salt tablets being there because if you-- because you're out in the jungle, you need extra salt occasionally. So there was always a jar with some salt tablets in it. You could take one if you felt like you were a little bit dehydrated or you feel like you needed some salt.

[00:14:40.52] MARK FRANKLIN: Supplement, yeah.

[00:14:40.97] MARYANNA HIESTER: Something like that, yeah. Can I just back up a minute?

[00:14:43.04] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:14:43.19] MARYANNA HIESTER: Because you had asked me-- I was outside the medical ward. I drove them crazy, though. And so I was on the medical ward for eight months. And then the last four months, I was in ICU recovery room. And that's-- I liked that.

[00:14:52.67] MARK FRANKLIN: I was going to ask you if you stayed there the whole time, or if you were able to move.

[00:14:55.09] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah, no.

[00:14:55.40] MARK FRANKLIN: Well, that's good.

[00:14:56.12] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah.

[00:14:56.36] MARK FRANKLIN: So then you moved to ICU.

[00:14:56.84] MARYANNA HIESTER: So that was-- I moved to where I wanted to be.

[00:14:59.04] MARK FRANKLIN: OK.

[00:14:59.09] MARYANNA HIESTER: And so then I was working with those who were injured. And that was to me much more rewarding. That was the reason that I went there. That was what I wanted to do. I was really interested in working with the amputees because of my dad's situation. And I think that was good. It was good for the patients. And it was good for me.

[00:15:16.34] MARK FRANKLIN: Any patient in particular stand out in your memory?

[00:15:20.27] MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, I mean, a couple sad things. I can remember this one guy. He was in the intensive care unit. And he got injured because he was loading a deuce-and-a-half truck. And something fell on his leg and broke his leg. And he eventually died. And that was just really sad. I can remember that.

[00:15:38.15] He threw a pulmonary embolism, which is a blood clot, from his leg into his lungs. And that's what killed him. I remember that-- coming to work one day, and he was not there anymore. And I thought he had been transferred out. And they said, no, that's what had happened to him. So that to me was really sad because it was just an injury that maybe could have--

[00:15:54.02] MARK FRANKLIN: He should've recovered from.

[00:15:54.11] MARYANNA HIESTER: --been prevented or somehow should have been recovered from. And he never did. So that was kind of tough. When Bob Hope came through at Christmas time, we had a guy who basically shot himself in the foot just to get out of doing things. And Bob Hope spent a lot of time with him.

[00:16:08.96] And I was so mad because I had four amputees just a little bit further down. And he kept talking to this guy because he was right where the door was when Bob Hope came through the ward. And I'm like-- I tried to tell his-- the people with Bob Hope, like ignore him. He's not worth it. I got these four guys over here that I want you to spend time with.

[00:16:26.81] MARK FRANKLIN: Sure.

[00:16:27.11] MARYANNA HIESTER: And he just didn't have much time. He just went by those other four guys quickly afterwards because he had used up the time talking to this guy. That, I just really remember being so frustrated over that.

[00:16:42.35] MARYANNA HIESTER: Again, it was-- when you came to Vietnam, you came alone. In my case, I came with another nurse that I met in Saigon. But mostly, that was I think the hardest thing about being in Vietnam is you didn't come as a unit and go back as a unit. You came individually. So you went and joined the hospital. So it took a while to get in with everybody. And then you have the hi-bye parties. Hi for everybody coming in that month, bye for those who are leaving that month. And so you got to know people mostly through that kind of thing.

[00:17:12.83] Joan, who-- that I came in with, she and I stayed the whole time. She was on the surgical floor. I got the medical floor. We did R&R together so probably she was the closest one to me when we were there. We did our vacations together. We did everything else together. And I still occasionally keep up with her.

[00:17:30.74] But then my roommate, again, she was there for just a few months. And then she left. And somebody else came in. So you were never with the same people the whole 12 months except unless-- like Joan came in with me. But other than that, people would come in. People would leave. So I don't have any close friends that I made there that I've kept up with other than Joan.

[00:17:49.19] MARK FRANKLIN: When you went to Vietnam, there was-- the civil rights movement was in full motion back in the States. And there was some racial conflict. There were some rioting. There was some social upheaval in that. Did you witness any of that there, in Vietnam?

[00:18:02.87] MARYANNA HIESTER: Not in Vietnam. Not at least where I was. I mean, I was on a compound, a medical compound. So maybe my experiences there were a little bit different. We had a couple of black guys that were there. But I don't remember Hispanics at all, but I do remember some of the black guys. I don't remember anything. I remember being friends with them.

[00:18:21.35] Where I grew up, you talk about this little tiny little town with fewer than 2,000 people. So we didn't have a whole lot of anything other than the French Canadians. Let's put it that way. I mean, we were all French Canadians. So I didn't have a lot of experience with that when I went over there. But I was not-- I was never taught to be any kind of biased or anything against anybody or racial. So to me, it was just they were just people like we were. And I didn't see anything, at least with them, that might have been a problem.

[00:18:50.99] MARK FRANKLIN: Sure. What did you do for recreation?

[00:18:53.03] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, we just hung out at the officer's club, unfortunately. We drank too much. We went to the MACV club. There was a MACV compound up the road not too far from us. They had a swimming pool, so we'd go there. I hung around the Dust Off pilots. And I-- remember, I got eight brothers, right?

[00:19:09.22] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh.

[00:19:09.35] MARYANNA HIESTER: I'm used to being around men. I'm not used to being around women. In spite of my high school and college, I liked to be around the men. And so I hung around a lot with the Dust Off pilots. So if I had some free time, their compound was just on the other side of the airfield. There was an airfield between us. They were on the airfield, but they were there.

[00:19:25.25] MARK FRANKLIN: You got to know them pretty well? What were your impressions of them?

[00:19:26.78] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yes, very well. Yeah. I liked being around them. I think that they did a great job. Their flying was incredible. If I was off-duty and a flight came in, a Dust Off flight came in, I could go and help pull the patients. I didn't work in the ER so I couldn't actually work in there, but I could help bring the patients off the helicopter. I think they did an incredible job. And they were young. Oh my goodness, they were young.

[00:19:52.31] MARK FRANKLIN: And so were you.

[00:19:54.17] MARYANNA HIESTER: But I was 22, they were 19, maybe--

[00:19:56.21] MARK FRANKLIN: OK. Was that--

[00:19:56.54] MARYANNA HIESTER: aircraft commanders. I mean, this was unbelievable. And the job-- and we look at a 19-year-old today, and you think, oh my. What they could do and what they did with those helicopters was just amazing. I mean, there's various ages. But I mean I can think of some that young as 19, 22. I mean, just unbelievable. So yeah, they were great. And they treated me very well. I mean, I just--

[00:20:20.54] MARK FRANKLIN: Do you have any memory of the culture at the time? And by that, I mean, is there any one song that you hear today that reminds you of Vietnam?

[00:20:27.05] MARYANNA HIESTER: Song?

[00:20:28.37] MARK FRANKLIN: Any one song that makes you sad? or--

[00:20:30.56] MARYANNA HIESTER: The same one probably everybody remembers. What was it? "We Gotta Go Home" by The Animals.

[00:20:35.78] MARK FRANKLIN: "We Gotta Get Out of This Place"

[00:20:37.04] MARYANNA HIESTER: "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" by The Animals.

[00:20:38.30] MARK FRANKLIN: I hear that a lot.

[00:20:39.20] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, yeah. That one, the "Sloop John B." Was that by The Beach Boys? Is that The Beach Boys?

[00:20:44.38] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:20:44.63] MARYANNA HIESTER: And then the other one I remember is the MTA, the "Charlie on the MTA." That was-- I think The Kingston Trio did that one. Because all of them have to do with, uoi gotta go home, or I want to get out of this place, or something like that.

[00:20:56.81] When we were at the Vietnam thing last summer here in Boston, Ed was with me. And they started to play that song by The Animals, "We Gotta Get out of this Place." And they start playing it. And I said to him, wait a minute. And all of a sudden, when that line hit, everybody in the place exploded. And he was like, oh my. It was-- definitely, definitely was the song.

[00:21:22.53] MARYANNA HIESTER: My hospital, I think, had good leadership. I don't remember there being any problems with anything like that. I just remember that everything seemed to go OK. Maybe some of the other nurses did. I don't know. But I mean, they certainly didn't mind me badgering them to get into the ICU or the recovery. I would have taken any kind of surgical for them, yes. And they were very kind to me.

[00:21:44.06] My brother, I mentioned before, was killed when I was in Vietnam. And they were very kind to me when I got called into the commander's office to-- I thought I'd-- let's put it this way, the nurses were not supposed to be in helicopters. And I was.

[00:21:57.56] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh.

[00:21:57.95] MARYANNA HIESTER: So I thought I was in trouble. Maybe I'd gotten caught having flown with the Dust Off pilots, but he basically just called to tell me that he had received word from the Red Cross that my brother had been killed. And he was asking me questions, but my brother had only been on the job for two days. So I didn't have any information at all. I had no idea what was going on at all. I just--

[00:22:16.91] MARK FRANKLIN: Did they let you go back?

[00:22:17.78] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yes.

[00:22:18.14] MARK FRANKLIN: They let you back?

[00:22:18.53] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah. They were very good about that. They made all the arrangements. They got me out within an hour. I was on my way to Saigon to get a flight. And I was flying on-- I believe it was a C-5. It was a big cargo airplane that I was in a sling seat. I can just remember there were about four or five of us that were going back to the States for the same, similar reason.

[00:22:39.57] And we were just on a cargo plane in a sling seat going back. And I don't remember a lot other than just I think we stopped at Guam on the way. And-- but it was just a tough ride back. And even from-- I landed in San Francisco. And they had made all the arrangements for me to fly to Boston so all I had to do was just follow.

[00:22:57.49] MARK FRANKLIN: Talk to me about a typical day on the ICU.

[00:23:01.12] MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, we just-- we would get people coming in who had surgery and then dealing with-- so the room was sort of separated. The ICU people were on one side. And then the recovery room was on the other side. So they were more of the more serious type injuries. So a lot of the amputees that were-- they didn't stay too long. Most of these people went to Japan.

[00:23:18.23] So where the patients I had on the medical floor would just go back to their units, these patients would be aerovacked out. And they were the ones who were the most serious injuries. So a lot of the work I did there, in addition to dressings and monitoring patients and stuff, was just talking to them, psychological, talking to them. Especially the amputees, I really have to say that those were my favorite patients.

[00:23:40.25] MARK FRANKLIN: Why?

[00:23:40.73] MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, because my dad was an amputee. So I could say to them, you know what? I know-- you're not defined by your leg. You're not defined by your arm. You're still who you are. I could talk to them and say, my dad married-- my mom married my dad after his injury. There's a girl out there that's not going to care that you're missing-- because that was their big concern.

[00:23:58.64] Who's going to want me now with this amputation? That was their major concern. And I would say to them, you know what? There's a girl out there that's not going to care whether you had an amputation. My mother's proof of that. My mother married my dad after his amputation. And so--

[00:24:11.81] MARK FRANKLIN: And that seemed to help you, do you think?

[00:24:12.95] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, yeah. I think it did. I really think it did. And that was really-- what I really wanted to be able to do.

[00:24:18.44] MARK FRANKLIN: Sure.

[00:24:18.80] MARYANNA HIESTER: You can still do a lot of things-- that it's not the end. You have to adjust to it, obviously. You're going to have some pain. And you're going to have to deal with this, but you are still who you are. And that, for me, was really what I wanted to say to them. And so for me, that was-- and not just the amputees. But I mean, a lot of the other injuries too. But, I mean, particularly for me, the amputees were important because of my dad.

[00:24:43.80] MARYANNA HIESTER: It's really a sad one. It's the memory of when four or five different Dust Off pilots were killed in one night. And I actually was dating one of those guys.

[00:24:52.17] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh.

[00:24:52.98] MARYANNA HIESTER: Not exclusively.

[00:24:53.63] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:24:53.94] MARYANNA HIESTER: But I mean, he was very, very close to me. And that was really, a really tough night. I remember when I got the call that the first helicopter-- two helicopters went down. The first helicopter had gone down. And I drove over. I got-- I managed to get myself a driver's license for a Jeep. And so I frequently-- and the Dust Off-- the, Dust Off-- I know I called him commander, but anyway,

[00:25:17.22] he-- I frequently could get to his Jeep. And so I think I must have had it that night. And so I drove over. I remember driving over the Dust Off compound and being there and listening to the radio and listening to what was going on. And that we knew that one helicopter had gone down. We didn't know how many injured or killed on that helicopter. We knew another one was out. Horrible, horrible night-- monsoon rain, really--

[00:25:39.41] MARK FRANKLIN: Was it weather-related?

[00:25:39.70] MARYANNA HIESTER: --really bad, weather-related. Oh, totally weather-related, yeah, really, really bad night.

[00:25:43.54] MARK FRANKLIN: All found?

[00:25:44.40] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yes, the guy I was dating was piloting the-- was commander of the second helicopter so that one went down. They didn't find him till the next morning, but they knew they'd gone down. And that was probably my worst time.

[00:25:56.85] MARK FRANKLIN: Worst memory.

[00:25:57.30] MARYANNA HIESTER: Worst memory of being there, yeah. That was a really rough one.

[00:26:05.97] MARYANNA HIESTER: A little bit. They sent a lot of letters. We sent a lot of letters back and forth. So I would try to write when they would write to me. With all my younger brothers, I had lots of them writing letters to me. And I kept a lot of them. So they were quite young. They were 4, 5, 6 years old, a lot of the younger ones. And so the letters are really precious. I think I called home twice. And it was through a radio, ham radio.

[00:26:29.79] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah, the MARS station.

[00:26:30.24] MARYANNA HIESTER: So you would set it up. And they would call you and say they've got somebody. They would work it out. You'd have to plan this a little bit ahead of time. And so that was interesting. But the conversations were, I would say, stilted because you maybe had 5 minutes. And you had to get-- you had to say what you had to say. And you had to say, over. And then they had to learn how to do that and say, over. And so you couldn't say too much.

[00:26:50.01] MARK FRANKLIN: How hard was that? Getting them to say that?

[00:26:51.18] MARYANNA HIESTER: I'm not sure. I didn't have to deal with that end of it. But I mean, so that was the way we did it. But I think the one thing-- communication I liked the best-- we sent cassette tapes.

[00:27:00.23] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh.

[00:27:00.90] MARYANNA HIESTER: And so that was the best, I think, because I could just talk into the cassette tape as the day was going on or something like that. Or If I have something interesting to say, then I'd send off the cassette tape to them. And then they would cassette tape things back to us. So that was to me the best communication, was the cassette tapes.

[00:27:18.09] MARK FRANKLIN: Did you hear much about what was going on back home through that communication?

[00:27:21.84] MARYANNA HIESTER: With my family?

[00:27:22.52] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:27:22.77] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah, I--

[00:27:23.31] MARK FRANKLIN: In other words, they would tell you some of the problems going on in the country?

[00:27:25.77] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, not--

[00:27:26.34] MARK FRANKLIN: The antiwar movement?

[00:27:26.76] MARYANNA HIESTER: I don't think they-- they really didn't. They didn't do that. And probably, if we got any of that information, it was through Stars and Stripes. We did get that. And we would see some of the things through that. But even then--

[00:27:35.04] MARK FRANKLIN: Did that have any effect on you or your Soldiers?

[00:27:36.57] MARYANNA HIESTER: Not. No. At least not for me anyway. I didn't-- again, I stayed out of politics earlier. I wasn't there for the politics. I was there to take care of the war injured. That was my purpose of being there. And so I kind of stayed out of it. The one thing that was maybe a little bit hard was the in-country talk. So we knew that-- we knew that the civilians were running the war. The guys would say-- they'd be upset because we know where the enemy is, we can't shoot at them, that kind of thing. That bothered me. That kind of stuff, we obviously--

[00:28:08.28] MARK FRANKLIN: So you heard from the troops.

[00:28:09.75] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yes, yeah. I would hear from them, things like that were going on. We were not in Laos except we were, things like that. So that's the kind of stuff that-- one of my friends, just as I was leaving country, was killed. And pretty much, it was in Laos. He was a Dustoff pilot, but he was pulling people out of that section. And they had been shot down. And he was trying to recover radio so that they could have some communication. And he was shot and killed.

[00:28:35.64] So that was kind of-- leaving country for me was bittersweet because of that. Joe had just been killed. And I just got the word as I'm leaving so it was a little bit-- I wanted to stay. I wanted to be with my guys. I wanted to stay there. And my time was up. And they said they had plenty of nurses so they were reassigning me. And it was kind of tough.

[00:28:59.19] MARYANNA HIESTER: I came home February of '71. I was the tannest I've ever been in my life and will ever be. Being-- even with the winter having just ended there in the season, but that they was getting warm again. And so I came back then. And I came back. I came back to my hometown and spent a month there.

[00:29:17.28] MARK FRANKLIN: What was that journey home? Describe that journey. What was that like?

[00:29:19.65] MARYANNA HIESTER: It was fine. I mean, I did not have any problems with it at all. I don't know whether because I was a woman that people didn't quite believe that-- I mean, to this day, nobody believes I'm a Vietnam veteran. So I think that back then for me, it was not a problem because I was a woman. I think that probably people would look at me as being in the Army, but there was nothing to distinguish that I had been in Vietnam. So I had no problem. It was just a flight back. And I'm happy to see my family.

[00:29:45.19] MARK FRANKLIN: What was the reception at home like?

[00:29:46.71] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, happy to see me.

[00:29:48.63] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah?

[00:29:49.65] MARYANNA HIESTER: Very happy to see me.

[00:29:50.46] MARK FRANKLIN: Was there any kind of celebration, party, or anything like that?

[00:29:53.28] MARYANNA HIESTER: No, my family is not one for major parties like that.

[00:29:57.43] MARK FRANKLIN: Until you ate like that again.

[00:29:58.32] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah. Yeah, just-- yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:30:01.14] MARK FRANKLIN: What did you do after? Did you just stay in?

[00:30:03.30] MARYANNA HIESTER: I did. And I was originally assigned coming out of Vietnam to West Point. And I said, I don't think so. Because you're in Vietnam, everything is casual. You're wearing your jungle uniform all the time. And going back to West Point was going to be brass. And I knew that.

[00:30:19.50] So I wrote them a letter. And I said, I'm from the East Coast. You've just assigned me to the East Coast. Is there any possibility that you can give me an assignment somewhere far away from home? I never said, I don't want West Point. Far away from home that I could see another part of the world. I joined the Army. And I don't want to be back in the East Coast. And so they sent me to Fort Ord, California. So I would--

[00:30:39.71] MARK FRANKLIN: Fort Ord?

[00:30:39.93] MARYANNA HIESTER: --love to have gone to Germany or something, but I was happy at Fort Ord. I was assigned at the hospital. Unfortunately, back on medical ward again.

[00:30:46.73] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh.

[00:30:46.98] MARYANNA HIESTER: I was basically on a ward of hepatitis patients who were basically drug addicts. And so it was a lot of babysitting, which I did not care for at all.

[00:30:54.78] MARK FRANKLIN: These are veterans that they got hooked on--

[00:30:56.70] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yes, hooked on drugs. A lot of them because they had been in Vietnam. I've heard people say, oh, there were no drugs in Vietnam. Yeah, there were. I mean, I saw it.

[00:31:05.88] MARK FRANKLIN: Did you see it when you were in Vietnam?

[00:31:06.66] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah, because that was the medical ward that I was on, with the hepatitis and stuff. That was-- a lot of it was because of the

drugs. Some of it was because of the water and things like that. Some of it was because of the drugs.

[00:31:15.15] MARK FRANKLIN: Was there any kind of treatment that you witnessed for these guys?

[00:31:17.94] MARYANNA HIESTER: Not so much there. In the States, they just tried to-- they were dealing with their hepatitis, but they were getting their drugs. I mean, there was a lot of keeping an eye on them and seeing who was their visitors and who was bringing in what. That kind of thing, I did not care for that at all. I didn't like being a policeman.

[00:31:35.07] MARK FRANKLIN: Ah. But that was one your duties?

[00:31:36.16] MARYANNA HIESTER: That's part of my duty. I mean, because their livers were damaged because of the hepatitis. And they still were trying to get their drugs. And that was my job to try to keep them off the drugs and take care of the hepatitis. So it was not fun.

[00:31:49.47] MARK FRANKLIN: Any particular instance stand out in your memory from that time?

[00:31:52.02] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, I caught somebody and had to go to court, which I did not like either. I don't think I made a very good witness because-- you know, I was very-- believe it or not, I was extremely shy, extremely shy. And I came out of that a lot in Vietnam. But then when I got back-- and I'm rather intimidated now by this courtroom, so I didn't care for that part of it at all.

[00:32:12.71] MARK FRANKLIN: You stayed in the Army?

[00:32:14.43] MARYANNA HIESTER: I stayed in the Army until '72, February-- June of '72. So another year. That was the end of my three years that I gave them afterwards. I would have loved to stay in the Army, but I got married in April of '72.

[00:32:26.43] And at that time, if you're pregnant, you got out. They didn't keep you if you were pregnant. And I wanted to start a family. I'm the oldest of 10. I wasn't going to wait a long time for a family. And I wanted an honorable discharge. I didn't want a medical discharge.

[00:32:37.55] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:32:38.02] MARYANNA HIESTER: And so when my time came up in June, I just said, OK, I'll get out. Time to go.

[00:32:42.06] I started-- continued nursing.

[00:32:43.74] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh, you did?

[00:32:44.22] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, yeah. No, I continued nursing. And I worked in Hayward, California. I stayed-- we were married out in California, so we stayed out there. I met my husband at Fort Ord. At the time, he was a civilian already. He had finished his Navy service. So we just stayed out there. And so I worked at the Kaiser Hospital. I love kids so I ended up working in the pediatric ward, which is really what I wanted to do.

[00:33:06.45] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh, really?

[00:33:06.75] MARYANNA HIESTER: So I worked at the pediatric ward at the Kaiser Hospital there. But it was very hard going back to civilian nursing after Army nursing.

[00:33:12.42] MARK FRANKLIN: Why?

[00:33:13.56] MARYANNA HIESTER: Because in the Army, they give you a lot of responsibility. You can do a lot of things that-- for example, if you see that a patient has the symptoms of a urinary tract infection, you can send in the urine for an analysis. And you can then give the doctor all the reports. And he's just going to then prescribe.

[00:33:31.05] If you're in a civilian hospital, you notice those symptoms, you have to call the doctor. He's going to come in and check out the patient. I knew what to do, but I couldn't do it. My hands felt like they were really tied.

[00:33:40.62] Where in the Army, a lot of things, you could just take the initiative to do on your own. And then the doctors would come in. And they trusted that you knew what you were doing. And they were busy. They didn't want to be bothered with the simple stuff that you could do. And in the civilian nursing, you call the doctor for everything.

[00:33:56.07] And I just found that so restricting after having been given such freedom in the Army to do so many things. It was really-- that was more of a transition than anything. Not coming out of Vietnam to hospital nursing in the Army,

no. It was going from Army nursing to civilian nursing. That was hard for me-- very hard.

[00:34:11.65] MARK FRANKLIN: How long did you stay a nurse, as a civilian nurse?

[00:34:14.28] MARYANNA HIESTER: I worked off and on until I had three kids. I worked pretty much part time. And then by then, we moved back to the East Coast. I did part time nursing again there for a while. So probably maybe 10 or 12 years, I did active nursing. And then by then, I'm four or five, six, seven kids.

[00:34:30.93] MARK FRANKLIN: How many children--

[00:34:31.68] MARYANNA HIESTER: I have seven children.

[00:34:32.31] MARK FRANKLIN: Wow.

[00:34:32.57] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah. So by then, I wasn't working.

[00:34:34.59] MARK FRANKLIN: It's time to be--

[00:34:36.03] MARYANNA HIESTER: Time to be the mom.

[00:34:36.90] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:34:37.32] MARYANNA HIESTER: And I did some off and on private duty nursing for a child. And then I did some case management work. Once my kids were all gone, I started to do some case management work for workers' comp. And then once my parents became so elderly that I needed to take care of them, I pretty much stopped nursing after nursing them.

[00:34:56.71] MARK FRANKLIN: Did you have any trouble readjusting? Other than becoming a civilian nurse, other than that, any other issues readjusting life after retiring from the military?

[00:35:04.85] MARYANNA HIESTER: No. No, I think-- it was a gradual transition, I think. I was married so I moved right into married life. And so-- yeah-- and then-- yeah.

[00:35:12.27] MARK FRANKLIN: You mentioned the other nurse that you flew in with, Joan.

[00:35:15.96] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah.

[00:35:17.07] MARK FRANKLIN: Do you stay in touch with any other veterans?

[00:35:19.75] MARYANNA HIESTER: I get the-- Dust Off reunions, I've been to some Dust Off reunions. Of course, we don't have 85th Evac reunions. But the Dust Off pilots, because I hung around with them all the time, I found out they were having a reunion. I wrote to them many years ago. I wrote to them and said, do you care if I join your reunion? And they said, no, come on down. They all remembered me from when we were there. So we did a few reunions with them in different places-- Las Vegas, Colorado Springs.

[00:35:46.11] The one reunion that I was going to go to in 2010, my husband had open-heart surgery, so I never did make that reunion. But that was the one I was going to get to ride in a Huey helicopter. That reunion, they had-- in Indianapolis, they had a Huey. And they were offering rides for all folks who wanted to take another Huey ride. But we never made the reunion.

[00:36:06.81] MARK FRANKLIN: So you missed out on that.

[00:36:08.16] MARYANNA HIESTER: I missed out on that one, yeah.

[00:36:15.24] MARYANNA HIESTER: It was great for my career in the sense that I learned a lot of nursing. I mean, I was put in situations where you had to just learn. I mean, I would never have experienced like malaria, how to deal with that. I wouldn't have experienced even some of the stuff that I did in ICU and in the recovery room.

[00:36:30.69] I think I learned-- just as a nurse, I just think I grew tremendously by being able to do that kind of work. So when I went back to the hospital, I think that I really had an advantage. I felt like I was well trained. So that was good. As far as other things, I'm interested in politics today. But back then--

[00:36:46.82] MARK FRANKLIN: No?

[00:36:47.34] MARYANNA HIESTER: No. I don't think-- I don't even remember-- a lot of the stuff that happened in, I think, Kent State was while I was in Vietnam, so I missed out on a lot of that. So I don't-- it wasn't active in my brain that that stuff had happened because I really wasn't around when it happened. So I don't know that I was that interested in too many things. I was married, started with the kids. And my life is moving in that direction so I didn't really keep up.

[00:37:09.66] Joan and I were separated again. She went to someplace else. Again, the way they took people out of Vietnam was the same thing. You had nobody with you that was with you and shared your experience while you were there. That was--

probably if I'm going to say anything about that experience, that was what was the bad part of it. Because if Joan and I had been together, we could have gotten together more afterwards, worked together in the same hospital, gotten together afterwards. Probably, we would have kept up more with each other.

[00:37:36.48] MARK FRANKLIN: Right.

[00:37:36.81] MARYANNA HIESTER: But that happened to everybody. And so you were on your own to deal with whatever you had to deal with while you were there. And so that was really, really rough. I think for me, maybe not so much. But for a lot of the people that came back from Vietnam, you had no support because your support was those you lived with. Your support was those who experienced what you experienced when you experienced it.

[00:37:57.06] Your support wasn't somebody who said, well, I was also in combat. Well, yeah, but it was a different combat, a different situation, a different place. That was really bad. That was really bad. And I think for the Vietnam veterans, that's what really hurt. I don't remember that I came back with that-- too much problem from that, but I do think that was really hard on them.

[00:38:16.62] MARK FRANKLIN: Think about veterans coming off the battlefields today.

[00:38:19.50] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah. Again, just like I just explained, because we all came back singly, I think that we are all definitely supportive of those coming back. And we want to see them be with their people, be with those who they-- part of their units.

[00:38:35.22] And I think that-- I mean, we have a son that was a Marine-- he spent two tours in Iraq-- not doing great because of that, but still can contact the people. He was kicking back with these people. And once he got out of the Marines, because they had enough of a bond, he still was in touch with some of them. I don't think that I have that. I think a lot of the Vietnam veterans didn't have that. And that was-- for us, that was probably the hardest part, coming back without that, yeah.

[00:38:58.83] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah. Well, it's good to have that support group.

[00:39:00.57] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, yeah. I think it's really, really important.

[00:39:03.03] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:39:03.70] MARYANNA HIESTER: Especially somebody who shared with you your experience. My son will say to me, Mom, yeah, you were in Vietnam. But we don't have anything in common. So we have two things in common. We were away from our family for a large period of time. We both spent Christmas away from home. That's it. I'm not trying to pretend that I know what it was like for you when you were in Iraq. But it's been hard because he's just putting up some walls because he's-- you think you know. And actually, I don't know.

[00:39:31.05] Because we're on an airfield, they were aiming for the airfield. Sometimes they missed.

[00:39:35.87] MARK FRANKLIN: How close did they get?

[00:39:37.08] MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, they got a couple of things into our compound. And we were-- there were times when we had to go into the bunker. We had to get-- we all had helmets. And we all had flak jackets. And so there were times that we had to do that, but they weren't aiming at us. I mean, the one nurse who was killed in Vietnam, Sharon Lane, she was-- their compound was overrun. And so she was the only one that was actually actively killed by enemy fire in Vietnam.

[00:39:59.16] Other nurses died of maybe heart attacks or other illnesses. Some nurses died in helicopter crashes and things like that. But she's the only one that was in enemy fire type situation. And that was about eight months before I went there or something, close to nine months before I went there.

[00:40:14.06] MARK FRANKLIN: How do you think the Vietnam War is remembered today?

[00:40:17.34] MARYANNA HIESTER: I don't think it's remembered very much, frankly. I really don't-- I don't think we teach it to the kids. I don't think-- I think it was considered basically a lost war. And I don't think that people think about it too much. When I was growing up, we heard about World War II. We heard about D-day. We heard about all those things that are going on. And in France, they still teach the children about D-day and the liberation.

[00:40:37.68] Here, we just-- I don't know. We just don't really-- I don't know if it's just Vietnam. I think we don't give our children enough background history of anything that happened with us. They seem to think everything has always been the way it is today. So they don't see the sacrifice that people had to make to have the country that we have right now.

[00:40:55.26] MARK FRANKLIN: Did you take any lessons from Vietnam you'd like to pass on to future generations?

[00:41:02.26] MARYANNA HIESTER: Well, I think just the support. I think that that's the important thing. We need to support each other. And we didn't have that.

[00:41:08.97] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:41:09.39] MARYANNA HIESTER: We went in-- like I say, we went in. We had the hi-bye parties. You went in as an individual. You left as an individual. You were part of a unit while you were there, but there was-- in my case, I went in with Joan. But there was very few people that went in with anybody that they knew. And then they left on their own. And then they went to an assignment.

[00:41:25.45] Even like Joan and I got split up once we came back to the United States, so that was just such a bad thing. So I think the lesson has to be that we need each other. We need support. We need to be able to rely on each other. And we just didn't have that. That's a hard thing.

[00:41:44.23] MARYANNA HIESTER: I love that memorial.

[00:41:45.19] MARK FRANKLIN: Do you?

[00:41:45.49] MARYANNA HIESTER: I really do. I think it's a place-- well, maybe because I know so many people on it. It's such a great place of reflecting. It's a place of peace. It's a place of just, I think, maybe honor, respect. I mean, it's just the mood when you go there, it's just a place where you can just think. You can think about the people that you know that are on the Wall. I've done tracings of the people that I knew that are on there. And for me, it's just peaceful. I know this fellow that I talked about that I knew that I had been dating, I've kept up with his family.

[00:42:16.11] MARK FRANKLIN: Oh.

[00:42:17.11] MARYANNA HIESTER: His brother lives in Herndon. And so he goes there quite often. And he will send me sometimes pictures and tell me he's been there and things like that. And I've met his whole family. I keep up with them. And that's been-- it's been good for both of us, I think. It's been good for him. And the day that-- his name was Bob. The day that Bob died, or the day after, or around that time, I made a cassette tape of everything that went on at the time because I wanted to forget it. And I let his family listen to it.

[00:42:46.03] So that was really special, yeah. They were happy to have that. And so I've kept up with them. And I think it's been healing for both of us to have that happen. But yeah, when I go there, it's a nice-- I like it. I like the way they did it. I really think that it's a place of just thinking, peaceful-- for me, it's been good.

[00:43:12.80] MARYANNA HIESTER: Oh, it's important. I think it's important. It's important to keep the memories alive because my-- World War II is almost all gone now. I heard the stories from my dad-- what he did. But those are the stories that I know. And I think that it's important to pass down to people. And maybe someday, our country will awaken to the fact that these wars were important and that people did sacrifice and that what we have today is a result of people sacrificing.

[00:43:40.67] And if we didn't have World War II and what my dad did on the beach of Normandy, we might have had a different war today. And the same thing with those who sacrificed in Vietnam. It didn't go the way we wanted it to go. But at the same time, people did what they were asked to do. They went.

[00:43:56.36] MARK FRANKLIN: Yeah.

[00:43:56.83] MARYANNA HIESTER: They tried to do their best. And I don't think-- I think most of us were apolitical at that time. We went because we were called to go. That was--

[00:44:05.93] MARK FRANKLIN: Some made different choices.

[00:44:07.34] MARYANNA HIESTER: Yeah, they did. They did. Yeah, some of them did decide not to go, yeah.

[00:44:11.87] MARK FRANKLIN: I see you have your Vietnam veteran lapel pin.

[00:44:14.29] MARYANNA HIESTER: I do.

[00:44:14.69] MARK FRANKLIN: That's great.

[00:44:15.20] MARYANNA HIESTER: I do.

[00:44:15.65] MARK FRANKLIN: What are your impressions of that? What do you think about that?

[00:44:17.33] MARYANNA HIESTER: It's nice. I think it's nice. And I think it's something that people are going to recognize. I hope they do. I have a tough time. People do not think of me as a Vietnam veteran.

[00:44:25.46] MARK FRANKLIN: Well--

[00:44:25.79] MARYANNA HIESTER: It's been really--

[00:44:26.81] MARK FRANKLIN: There's a little chauvinism there. That's part of it, I'm sure.

[00:44:29.09] MARYANNA HIESTER: I suppose. But we were at an Applebee's or something last year. And my husband is here with his hat on. It's not a Vietnam veteran hat. It's his Navy hat. And I'm wearing a Vietnam veteran hat standing next to him. And there's another Vietnam veteran standing next to me with a Vietnam veteran hat. And his wife is standing next to him.

[00:44:45.47] And somebody came up and shook his hand. Thank you for your service. Went right over me, he thanked my husband for his service. And I'm a Vietnam veteran.

[00:44:52.61] MARK FRANKLIN: Good for you. Get over here.

[00:44:54.38] MARYANNA HIESTER: But it happens frequently. You know? And I finally have gotten bold. So I think maybe having this pin--

[00:45:00.26] MARK FRANKLIN: They'll know.

[00:45:00.53] MARYANNA HIESTER: --I think that we can recognize each other as being Vietnam veterans. It's nice.