

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center**

Transcript of an  
Oral History interview with  
REBECCA KOHLS  
Combat Medic, Army  
2004

OH  
798

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**798**

**Kohls, Rebecca** (b.1975). Oral History Interview, 2004.

Approximate length: 1 hour 1 minute

*Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording*

**Abstract:**

In this oral history interview, Rebecca Kohls, a native of Grafton, Wisconsin discusses her experiences as a combat medic in the U.S. Army Reserves from December 1992 to September 2001, including her decision to join the military and her struggle to choose a career after her service. Kohls chose to join the military in high school as a way of exploring future career options and began drilling with her future unit, the 452<sup>nd</sup> Combat Support Hospital in Silver Spring (Wisconsin), before graduation. Kohls enlisted in the Army with the goal of becoming a nurse. Kohls describes her basic training in Fort Leonard Wood (Missouri), her medical training at Fort Sam Houston (Texas) her difficulties with aspects of the training, and her eventual decision to leave the nursing program. She describes her years of inactive reserve duty with the 300<sup>th</sup> Postal Support Unit in Chicago Heights (Illinois) and the 863<sup>rd</sup> Engineering Battalion in Darien (Illinois) before being discharged in September 2001.

Kohls describes her friendships with other women and men she met during basic and medic training and the difficulties of maintaining those friendships after she was discharged. She explains how she considered reenlisting after the events of September 11, 2001, but chose to stay in the civilian world. Kohls relates her struggle to choose one career path and expresses interests in multiple fields. Kohls reflects on her time in the military and says it was a positive experience for her, calling it a “wakeup call” that allowed her to meet and form friendships with all kinds of people.

**Biographical Sketch:**

Kohls (b.1975) served with the 452<sup>nd</sup> Combat Support Hospital, 300<sup>th</sup> Postal Support Unit, and 863<sup>rd</sup> Engineering Battalion as a combat medic from 1992 to 2001.

**Archivist's Note:**

Transcriptions are a reflection of the original oral history recording. Due to human and machine fallibility transcripts often contain small errors. Transcripts may not have been transcribed from the original recording medium. It is strongly suggested that researchers engage with the oral history recording as well as the transcript, if possible.

Interviewed by Vicki Schanen, 2004.

Transcribed by Caitlin Downey, 2018.

Reviewed and abstract written by Caitlin Downey, 2018.

## Interview transcript

### [Beginning of WVM.OH798\_tape1\_A]

- Schanen: This is an interview with Rebecca Kohls, who served with the U.S. Army Reserves from 1992 to 2001. The interview is being conducted at the home of her uncle, [REDACTED] in Kaukauna, Wisconsin, on December 25th, 2004. The interviewer is her mother, Vicki Shannon. So, Becky, why don't you start out by giving us a little bit about your background: the year you were born, your hometown, family, like how many brothers or sisters you might have, and what your education was before going into the military.
- Kohls: I was born in 1975 in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, and grew up in Grafton, in Ozaukee County. Um, I have one brother and one sister, both younger. And--
- Schanen: What, how much education did you have before you went into the service?
- Kohls: I had a high school diploma.
- Schanen: All right. And what were you doing at the time you entered the service? Working, or in school?
- Kohls: Working in a nursing home at Wausaba??
- Schanen: Okay. And you were out of high school already?
- Kohls: I joined when I was still in school, actually. I was actually drilling when I was seventeen and still in high school. I was drilling with the 452nd Combat Support Hospital in Silver Spring.
- Schanen: Okay, so you were in high school and were able to join the military?
- Kohls: Yep.
- Schanen: How did that work?
- Kohls: We couldn't go to basic until we were eighteen, but we could drill with the unit that we would be placed with once we were back from basic.
- Schanen: Okay, and when you entered, what kind of a commitment were you supposed to give them, and, um, had they made any promises to you of any kind?
- Kohls: Uh, the commitment was for six years active reserve and two years inactive, a total of eight years, and, uh, there was a few promises given. It's the recruiter's job.
- Schanen: Okay [laughs]. All right, we'll get to what those mean. Anything you want to mention specifically, I mean, were you going to be trained for anything in particular?

Kohls: Uh, more of the, uh, monetary benefits after graduating weren't as easy to get as they told you they'd be.

Schanen: Okay. Um, so you had to finish, you were working as a nursing assistant and still going to high school. So you graduated from high school, and at what point, then, did you leave for your basic training?

Kohls: I left three months after graduation, on September 16th, 1993.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: And I joined the Army December of 1992.

Schanen: Anything in particular you remember about your induction interview, or physical [exam], or, um, leaving for basic?

Kohls: We got to stay at a hotel the night before. That was pretty cool.

Schanen: Oh, okay.

Kohls: [Laughs] At that age, it was like--

Schanen: Woo! I'm in the house! So, uh--

Kohls: The test was really hard, I remember that. There was one section where they told us not to even worry if you didn't know anything on it, because they were testing for higher intelligence, CIA-type code breakers and stuff, and it was just the craziest kind of questions.

Schanen: Oh, okay--

Kohls: It was pretty memorable [laughs].

Schanen: This is when you were, um, testing to--

Kohls: The ASVAB [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery] test.

Schanen: Oh, okay. Something--

Kohls: Or, actually, it might have even been the placement testing after we took the ASVAB. They had given you a test to see which jobs you were qualified for.

Schanen: So when you agreed to join the military, had they picked out a certain job for you yet, or was that going to be after your basic training had been, figured that out.

Kohls: You pick it before basic.

Schanen: And you had picked, you get to pick it?

Kohls: Kind of. They give you options of where you fit, like, what your scores, you know, depending on your score, you could do a certain type of job. People who get low scores would probably, they'd recommend you do infantry and stuff like that. But we scored pretty high, and we wanted to become nurses, and I went in with Tammy Bailey.

Schanen: This was a girl you went to school with?

Kohls: My best friend in high school.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: We joined in the buddy system.

Schanen: Oh! Can you describe that little bit, what the buddy system is?

Kohls: Um, they send you to this, two, two friends, you can go to the same basic training, same jobs if you want.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: Helps out in a basic situation.

Schanen: [Laughs] To have moral--

Kohls: The stress! To have somebody there--

**[00:05:02]**

Schanen: Moral support--

Kohls: That you know [laughs].

Schanen: Okay. So, now you left for basic training, in September, you said, of '93, and where did you go?

Kohls: Fort Leonard Wood, misery. Missouri.

Schanen: [Laughs] misery.

Kohls: Missouri.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: That's just what they called it.

Schanen: Oh they call it, the, the recruits call it "misery"?

Kohls: [Inaudible] the soldiers.

Schanen: The soldiers call it "camp misery"?

Kohls: They called it "Fort Misery".

Schanen: Fort Misery? Is there a reason why they called it that?

Kohls: Probably because it was just Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri [laughs]. There wasn't much there but Fort Leonard Wood.

Schanen: Oh, so, for high school kids who were just used to having freedom and that, now you're kind of stuck in the middle of nowhere.

Kohls: Getting screamed at 24 hours a day.

Schanen: All right. Um, can you tell me a little bit about your basic training? How, how that was for you?

Kohls: Well, I'm glad I did it. And it wasn't that bad going through it, but I wouldn't do it again.

Schanen: Okay, so, you left home, and you were just eighteen then.

Kohls: Yep.

Schanen: And, um, what was your first impression, then, when you got to basic training?

Kohls: Well I showed up with half a head of hair. One half was shaved, and the other half was, I had pretty much a wild hairstyle. I had dyed my hair pitch black, so I definitely wasn't, like, the typical-looking soldier when I arrived. And they all looked at me, like, "Whoa! We're going to have to work on this one!" [laughs].

Schanen: You shaved half your head?

Kohls: Half my head was shaved, but the other half--

Schanen: By who?

Kohls: I had done it.

Schanen: Oh, okay.

Kohls: I got the most unique hairstyle award in the graduating class of 1993 [laughs].

Schanen: Okay--

Kohls: I would hang bells and things from my hair, and it just wasn't military-friendly I guess.

Schanen: Oh, okay. So they kind of pegged you right off?

Kohls: Yep.

Schanen: So what, what special kinds of treatment did you get then, for having such uniqueness?

Kohls: I got in trouble before I even got to basic training.

Schanen: At the hotel?

Kohls: In the barracks. We did in-processing. We spent three days in-processing, and then you get to go to basic. They ship you into your cattle carts, your cattle trucks or whatever, and you get to go. But they dared a couple of us to run into the men's barracks and I, I took them up on that dare and ran in and out, and we got in trouble [laughs]. I almost didn't make it to basic with Tammy.

Schanen: Oh--

Kohls: They almost held me back, all because of a dare.

Schanen: And how were you rewarded for the people who dared you?

Kohls: They didn't even get in trouble. And, cause I--

Schanen: [Inaudible]--

Kohls: Cause I, I was scared and I admitted that I was in there when they said, "we know there was people", and I raised my hand, Yes I was one of them.

Schanen: But you got no reward for the dare, from the people who did dare you, huh?

Kohls: No.

Schanen: They just thought--

Kohls: I got to spend three days, actually I went into heat exhaustion and was in the hospital doing some of their extra duties because I got in trouble as my punishment.

Schanen: Oh, okay. What kind of extra duties did you have to do?

Kohls: Mowing the, uh, the commander's lawn, or, painting his office walls, and all of kinds of little extra jobs and I was outside during the heat and I just, got pretty dizzy.

Schanen: Okay. Did you take any further dares in your Army--

Kohls: No, that was it. I learned my lesson right there. I said, The military doesn't mess around! You can't get away with things here.

Schanen: Have you carried that philosophy over to civilian life?

Kohls: I would say that was a pretty good, uh, pretty good punishment for me, to scare me into not going to basic with my friend.

Schanen: Okay, so, now you did eventually get to basic with your friend, and what, what was your normal routine in basic now? They greeted you with a welcome party?

Kohls: Oh yes, they had cake, and flowers--

Schanen: [Laughs]

Kohls: And hotel rooms, and--

Schanen: Yeah? And for real?

Kohls: Um, they kept us up for, I believe we did not get any sleep for the first two days we were there. They did that on purpose too, and they kept insisting that we're supposed to get eight hours of sleep a night, but, it wasn't, people were having a lot of trouble staying awake. I fainted, that third day, when they, before they even took blood, I fainted in the lab, because I think were up for so long, and, and then I saw the tubes of blood being taken and just kind of "whoa!" [laughs].

[00:10:01]

Schanen: You said you want to be a nurse? [Laughs]

Kohls: I know! And I actually, when I fainted, I lost track of where I was, and I thought, I didn't remember joining the Army until I got up, until I smelled those smelling salts, then I looked around and I saw all these people in Army uniforms, and I'm like, Oh my god, I'm in the Army! I'm really in the Army!

Schanen: [Laughs]

Kohls: [Laughs] It's not a dream! I joined the Army!

Schanen: Does that seem, unusual to--

Kohls: At that age, at that age, it's just a lot of, because, it's either the options of going to college, you have to try to think about what you want to do. I'm still going through that right now, at 29 years old. But, it just was a lot of, lot of stuff for someone at eighteen to be like, Should I do this? Should I do that? Is this going to affect me this way?

Schanen: Did I ask you why you joined? Oh, yeah--

Kohls: No.

Schanen: Yeah, why did you join, the, why did you decide to join the military, and why did you choose the Army over everything else?

Kohls: Well, I was always, I would say I was always a really good student in school. I got very good grades, was on high honor roll, active, loved playing sports, choir, band, loved being in any clubs or groups. Um, and then when it was, you know, your senior year, and everyone's "what are we going to do now?" And I'm thinking, Man, my mom was kind of strict a little, and I would love to go to college but I don't want to fail, cause I knew I would party too much, so I figured, Why not take some time off and try to think about what I might want to do, what field I might want to get into, and join the Army. And then I picked something that my mom did and my dad did. My mom was in medical, and my dad was in the military reserve. And I kind of just, mushed it together and chose that, a medical field in the military.

Schanen: All right. And why did you choose the Army over Air Force or Navy?

Kohls: I should have joined the Air Force, from what I hear [laughs]. If I would have known back then, I probably would have joined in the Air Force. But I think I was more scared of jumping, I thought in the Air Force, you had for sure, I think you have to jump out of a plane and I was a little scared of that.

Schanen: I, I don't know that that's the requirement, but--

Kohls: [Laughs] Maybe not.

Schanen: That was the story going around--

Kohls: That was really scary for me.

Schanen: Okay. So what would a typical day have been like? How long was your basic training?

Kohls: Two months. Eight weeks.

Schanen: Eight weeks. And what would a typical day of those eight weeks have been like?

Kohls: The worst was the first month. Getting you up at, like, four in the morning, and telling you that you're supposed to go to bed at, like, nine, but you don't actually get to, if you want to look good the next day, and not get in trouble, you don't actually get to bed until about two, and you get a couple hours of sleep. And it's just--

Schanen: What time did they make you get up? What did they make you do during the day?

Kohls: About four, and then it was straight PT, physical training, and then breakfast, and showers, and then we'd have class. Depending on what mode, module you were in that week. Two weeks we spent on weapons and firing, um, one week was, like, the soldier manual, tasks and stuff, landmines. And then the last week was, a whole week in the field, in pretend wartime situation.

Schanen: Living in the field?

Kohls: Mmhmm.

Schanen: Day and night?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: And it was November, the end of November. In Missouri. In misery.

Schanen: So it gets--in misery [laughs]. So the temperature--

Kohls: Snow on the ground--

Schanen: All right--

Kohls: And we're in the tents--

Schanen: You're sleeping in tents at the time. Did you have any heaters in the tents?

Kohls: Oh yeah. They provided us all with radiators, hot water heating--

Schanen: Oh yeah--

Kohls: Yeah. Uh, electric blankets--

Schanen: Yes, right, plugged into the currant bushes--

Kohls: Fleece, fleece pajamas. No, actually, we had to pitch up a little, maybe--

Schanen: Pup tent?

Kohls: Pup tent. Fit two people in there really close together. And, uh, they told us to sleep naked and that we'd be warmer.

Schanen: In your sleeping bags?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Oh, okay. So the sleeping bag is trapping the heat? And keeping you warm?

Kohls: It was so cold.

**[00:14:58]**

Schanen: Now was this a mixed group, or just women?

Kohls: Mixed.

Schanen: It was a mixed group, but in your pup tent--

Kohls: We were co-ed in basic.

Schanen: In your pup tent though it would be two women in one pup tent--

Kohls: My battle buddy.

Schanen: Your battle buddy, they called it?

Kohls: Yep. Johnson.

Schanen: And what kind of food did you have when you were out there?

Kohls: I was vegetarian at the time, so basically I ate pasta with soy sauce.

Schanen: They provided special diets for you?

Kohls: No. You just had to not eat anything else but the noodles, plain noodles, and soy sauce, or a bowl of lettuce or something.

Schanen: And they provided that out in the field for you?

Kohls: In the field they actually had, like, meal trucks come out and they had, like, a hot, hot meal, and then they always gave us these Twinkie things, which I couldn't figure out. I'm like, We're in the Army, we're supposed to be eating healthy, and they're giving us Twinkies for dessert.

Schanen: Okay. Maybe they thought they were giving you a treat.

Kohls: Oh, and in the field we had to eat MRE's.

Schanen: What is that?

Kohls: Meals Ready to Eat. Prepackaged, could probably, shelf life of a 150 years or something.

Schanen: [Laughs]

Kohls: And it makes you constipated.

Schanen: Nice.

Kohls: They say that the gum that they give you in those meals is a laxative gum, so that you can [inaudible].

Schanen: Oh really?

Kohls: Cause the meal, the food is so like [smacking sound] air, astronaut food, it's all pushed together and, like, dehydrated.

Kohls: Uh--

Schanen: I mean, this may be why they gave you stuff to make you constipated.

Kohls: We did have outhouses when we were in the field. But at one point they were teaching us how to take care of business if it really were, if it really were necessary. How to dig a hole, and--

Schanen: Any other memorable experiences about your basic?

Kohls: Um--

Schanen: Well first I should ask--

Kohls: I was the guidon bearer, the company guidon bearer.

Schanen: The "guidon bearer"? What is that?

Kohls: Uh, the guidon is like the company crest, like, each company has their own crest, and it's like, the flag. I walk up in front of the company.

Schanen: And, was that just for special occasions, or did you always have to carry that?

Kohls: All the time. I had to sleep with it every night, and one night I guess I had left it by my bed, right next to me, and I didn't sleep with it--

Schanen: You're supposed to sleep with it in your sleeping bag?

Kohls: In my sleeping bag. And the drill sergeant stole it from me, and the next morning I had to show up to formation without my guidon, and stand in front of the company. And he knew what he was doing the whole time, and he just kept yelling at me, "Private Kohls! You're missing something, Private Kohls!" Just screaming at me [laughs]. And he made me do push-ups in front of the whole company cause I didn't sleep with my flag.

Schanen: Oh. Did you ever have to run with the full packs or anything?

Kohls: Yeah. We had to, um, twenty-mile road marches in full gear--

Schanen: Not running--

Kohls: Weapons--

Schanen: Not running twenty miles--

Kohls: Not running twenty miles, but we, they would pretend we'd be under attack and we would have to get down and get in--

Schanen: And you're carrying this pack--

Kohls: And we're carrying our whole duffel bag, and water bottles, weapons, everything. The tanks, the sleeping bags, everything was in there.

Schanen: Okay. And you had to carry this guidon--

Kohls: Wear a helmet, yeah. And I had to carry that.

Schanen: Oh boy. Okay, and you said this was co-ed during all your training? But, the barracks--

Kohls: The barracks weren't co-ed.

Schanen: The barracks weren't co-ed, but all your classes--

Kohls: I hear they are now, though.

Schanen: Okay. Your classes and trainings and all that were co-ed.

Kohls: Together.

Schanen: Okay. And did the girls get any flak from the guys?

Kohls: Um--

Schanen: Did they pretty well get along because they were all in the same boat?

Kohls: Yeah, I think everyone pretty much got along. Sometimes when we'd have company runs, where the guys and the girls, the whole company would run, and sometimes if the girls were in the front the guys might get a little irritated because they're not going fast enough, er, but they should be happy about that, they're getting a little break for the day [laughs].

Schanen: All right. Um, and what, when you worked in the field that last couple weeks or something, when did your typical day end?

Kohls: Um--

Schanen: Like four o'clock? Nine o'clock?

Kohls: Seven.

Schanen: Seven? Okay.

Kohls: Seven is probably, like, after dinner, but then they'd keep us in formation for a while and just talk, and talk, and sometimes I think they just wanted to see if we could stand there for three hours and not move or something.

Schanen: So they'd talk to you for three hours?

[00:19:57]

Kohls: It would, sometimes, just shifting back and forth [laughs], trying not to move.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: You'd just be like, maybe cause you're waiting to get a pass, or, you know, talk to your friends.

Schanen: Okay. And what were your sleeping facilities like?

Kohls: In basic? I got lucky. I got lucky because I was held back [laughs]. I got lucky, cause everybody else was, like, fourteen, twelve or fourteen people to a bay, is what they called them.

Schanen: Is that one big room with--

Kohls: One big room with a bunch of bunk beds.

Schanen: Oh, bunk beds? Okay.

Kohls: And then, I got lucky and was in my own room with one other girl. It was just the two of us.

Schanen: For eight weeks?

Kohls: For eight weeks [laughs]. I slept on the bottom bunk.

Schanen: Uh-huh. Okay. And how did you get the bottom bunk?

Kohls: I think I was the last. She probably picked hers before I got there or something.

Schanen: Oh really? She picked the top bunk.

Kohls: I guess so.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: Peaches was her name.

Schanen: Peaches? [Laughs]

Kohls: I don't even remember her other name. We just called her "Peaches" [laughs].

Schanen: Was she from Georgia or something? Did she have the name Peaches?

Kohls: She was from the South. She was from the South, and I remember one of our female drill sergeants had it in for her pretty bad. She would stand across the hallway, and drill sergeants have their own areas to change, but she would always stand across the empty room in the hallway and change in there. And, like, being really friendly into my, my roommate.

Schanen: Oh really?

Kohls: And my roommate would always be like, "I think she likes me or something"

Schanen: Oh, no, she really--

Kohls: But then she'd play it up, too. She's like, "I'm going to use that", [laughs], "I'm going to use that to get away with things now", [laughs].

Schanen: Oh, dear.

Kohls: She was sneaky, that girl. I forget her name now.

Schanen: So after eight weeks, then you're finished with basic. Then what happened?

Kohls: Then my mommy and my family [Shannon snorts] came to see me for graduation. And, uh, I went, I was shipped over to San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston, for medic training.

Schanen: And how did you get to Fort Sam Houston from Fort Leonard Wood?

Kohls: A bus. With all the other medics that were going to be going over there too.

Schanen: So, they determined now that you should go to medic training?

Kohls: Yeah, I [inaudible].

Schanen: To be a medic? And who, was that your input, did they determine that--

Kohls: Well, because of the nursing program, you have to go through the medic program first. So, you have to become a medic first, and then you start the nursing program.

Schanen: All right. So you're, you're off to Sam, Fort Sam Houston, in Texas you said, via bus.

Kohls: Yeah. A Greyhound.

Schanen: Oh, Greyhound, okay. And, uh--

Kohls: And the bathroom stunk, by the time we got there.

Schanen: The bathroom stunk on the bus?

Kohls: Sure did. I'll never ride a bus again.

Schanen: Uh-huh. You'll never ride a bus again? How long was this trip?

Kohls: If I was driving, [laughs],

Schanen: But the bus driver--

Kohls: But for somehow, some reason, it always takes double the time it should take. I think it was about twenty hours or something.

Schanen: And did you have stops for meals?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Okay, but you had a--

Kohls: They gave us money and everything. The Army gave us money--

Schanen: An eating allowance, or something? So, now you've arrived at Fort Sam Houston, and what happens then?

Kohls: Uh, it was a lot different than basic.

Schanen: What's the--

Kohls: The first, like the first few days they started, they were just a little tough with us, just trying to pretend, then they were, it was a lot more, laid-back, and you just felt more like you were going to school instead of being screamed at, but yet you still had drill sergeants. When I got to Texas, in medic school, we actually had probably 20-people open bays, open showers, there was only two shower rooms for all of us. And every morning, I was just, it was like twelve showers and you're all facing each other, it was, that was weird for me.

Schanen: Okay. And you're in bunk beds again?

Kohls: Mmhmm.

Schanen: And, did you have foot lockers, or regular lockers?

Kohls: Foot lockers.

Schanen: Foot lockers. Okay. And your typical day there then would have been, what--first of all, how long was your medic training?

Kohls: Uh, was it three months? Three months. Yeah, twelve weeks.

Schanen: All right.

Kohls: Fourteen, because I got two off for Christmas.

Schanen: Okay. So your typical day then, medic training, would have been what?

Kohls: PT three days a week: Monday, Wednesday, Friday.

Schanen: What time did--

Kohls: It started at about six [o'clock in the morning] I believe.

Schanen: So now you had to get up at five? You got to sleep an hour longer? [Laughs].

**[00:25:07]**

Kohls: No, the other days it would seem that way on the schedule, but then they would wake you up and say you didn't clean something right, or, you know, something. They would always find something.

Schanen: So you had to clean when you were there?

Kohls: [Laughs]. And they wouldn't tell you the right way to do it. They made you figure it out on your own. They couldn't just easily tell you Windex removes soap scum. They're going to make you go out and buy every single product, use toothbrushes and everything, trying to get it off, before you figure it out. They'll take away your weekend passes because they run their hands over the showers, and they get white on their fingers or something, so we lose our weekend passes and have to spend the weekend with toothbrushes in the shower rooms, trying to get soap scum off, until we found out that Windex is the miracle worker.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: And we got to go out every weekend.

Schanen: And what did you do on these weekends, then?

Kohls: Well, I was a little different than the rest of the bunch. I just, the first weekend, everyone got off, it was the hotel party thing and I just wasn't, having that much fun there. It wasn't cool to me. It seemed like guys that were my friends, trying to hit on you then all of a sudden. It just wasn't, heard too many stories of things that went on, so I started going to dance clubs and things on my own. Just going out to the nightclubs and dancing. I danced, saw the clubs were open until ten in the morning, and I would just dance all night long.

Schanen: So there was more around Fort Sam Houston than around Fort Leonard Wood?

Kohls: We went to Mexico one weekend.

Schanen: Okay, but much more opportunity there. Did you even have--

Kohls: We were in basic in Fort Leonard. But even then there wouldn't have been much to do.

Schanen: Okay. So did, did you get much time off when you were in basic training?

Kohls: No. Only on Sundays. Everyone would be excited to go to church. Cause that would be the time you could talk, kind of, to other people. But they'd still yell at you if you were caught talking.

Schanen: Oh, okay. And was there anything in your basic, like graduation day, anything in particular that you guys did?

Kohls: For basic?

Schanen: Yeah, did you--for graduation, did you, uh--

Kohls: I was in Parker.

Schanen: Oh, when did you, uh--

Kohls: Lived in San Antonio

Schanen: Oh, that was in San Antonio. All right. Scratch that, okay [laughs]. All right, so while your typical day now, other than having to clean on the days you weren't having PT? What, you'd get up, like, five in the morning now, instead of four?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: Like five. Seven would be breakfast, about, and like eight I think you'd finally be in your first class. And each day it was different modules, different classes. Sometimes you'd go to different classrooms, depending on what they were teaching you, if they had, you know, like, dummies for the CPR and stuff lying all over. You'd go to a different room. The worst part for me I think was, again, the needles and the blood. Cause I didn't know that they practiced on each other when you're learning to give IV's and take blood, that we had to practice on each other. That was a little much for me, especially since my instructor decided to use me as, uh, for the demonstration, and he screwed up, and I wasn't even looking and all of a sudden I just remember, hear, feel warm blood just pouring down my arm, and I, he's like, "you're not supposed to do that" [groans].

Schanen: Kind of like the Berenstein Bears [laughs]. "Please send this away!"

Kohls: [Joking] "You're supposed to do it! This is wrong! This is what you're not supposed to do!"

Schanen: And now, just so you learn that lesson--

Kohls: Thanks for using me!

Schanen: All right, but you managed to get through the, the medic training then?

Kohls: Yes.

Schanen: In twelve weeks? Okay.

Kohls: I got, I think I got a 92 percent on the whole--

Schanen: All right. So then what's your title now? In the Army?

Kohls: Combat Medic.

Schanen: Combat Medic.

Kohls: 91 Bravo. It used to be 91 Alpha, now it's 91 Bravo.

Schanen: Okay. It's--

Kohls: It might even have changed now, still.

Schanen: It was 91 Alpha when you graduated?

Kohls: No. Cause when we were in it was just 91 Alpha, and we got the modules that said 91 A/B because they were just changing it to 91 B.

Schanen: Okay. All right. Um, anything, any memorable little stories about any, any of your instructors or buddies? Any little pranks?

Kohls: Well I remember one, it wasn't really a prank, but it just kind of, when, when they're, when they have fire drills, everyone's supposed to run outside, and, you have to count and make sure everybody's there before you can go back in.

**[00:30:04]**

Kohls: Somehow, I must have been in a deep sleep and never even heard the fire alarm. Nobody ever even knew I was missing. Nobody, like, missed me, and I'm the one that's with the flag at the front of everybody. So they're, like, taking the count, like, everyone's here, and they come back in, and I'm getting yelled at--

**[End of WVM.OH798\_tape1\_A] [Beginning of WVM.OH798\_tape1\_B]**

Schanen: All right, so you got in trouble for not showing up for the fire drill?

Kohls: It wasn't my fault, I didn't hear it [laughs]! They couldn't believe I didn't hear it. The lights were on, everything, it was just bright.

Schanen: At what point did they realize--

Kohls: I was still sleeping.

Schanen: Yeah, when--

Kohls: When they came back in and saw me, I was still lying there, and I kind of woke up and I looked around, and I'm like, Everybody's gone! I'm like, Is there a war? Did something happen? Oh my god, nobody told me! I'm going to get in trouble! And then I just kind of laid there, waiting for people to come back, er, I didn't know what to do [laughs].

Schanen: So when they came back, they saw that you had not been out there, and that was a no-no, huh?

Kohls: [Laughs] A few of my buddies tried hiding the fact, like, "just get back down and pretend that you were out there! We're going to get in trouble for not knowing that you were still in here!" [laughs].

Schanen: Okay. Any other little--any buddies or anything that you made while you were--friends you made while you were in basic, or your medic training?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Now was your--

Kohls: I had close friends but--

Schanen: And your friend Tammy was still with you at this time?

Kohls: Yes.

Schanen: The buddies were still together?

Kohls: We actually were able, when we finally graduated the medic school, and then they moved us up the hill, to the nursing school, and that was like living in hotels. We got our own room, our own bathroom, um, could have guys in the room if you wanted as long as the door was open. And you had dressers, TV, we didn't have any drill sergeants on the floor or even for the building. So as soon as you were done each night you could leave the post. I played on the Army basketball team while I was out there. That's another thing I did to stay away from all those parties.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: Wasn't my thing.

Schanen: Okay. You had played basketball prior to going into the military?

Kohls: Mmhhh. Yeah. We played, like, the Air Force and stuff like that.

Schanen: Oh really?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Did you travel at all for that?

Kohls: No, it was always on the base, right in San Antonio. On our base they had a really nice gym there.

Schanen: Okay. Was there an Air Force base nearby?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Okay. All right, well that's cool. How else did you guys entertain yourselves, then, in your free time?

Kohls: Shopping! [Laughs]. Tattoos--

Schanen: Tattoos? Girls too?

Kohls: Yeah. Every, I think everybody had to get a tattoo when they got to San Antonio.

Schanen: Why was that?

Kohls: Cause you're getting, so much--at that age, it was like a lot of money, and you're getting it all at once, and then the river walk is there, downtown San Antonio. So everyone would go there as soon as we get our check, and spend their money. And the tattoo parlors were right there, and people are in groups, like, "let's go get a tattoo! Okay!" [laughs].

Schanen: So you have a tattoo personally?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: On my ankle, my right ankle. An Egyptian cross.

Schanen: And how did you pick that? What made you decide to pick that?

Kohls: I already had a necklace before I had joined the Army that I was wearing that I had lost when I was snowboarding one day. It fell off.

Schanen: And that was, what, an ankh?

Kohls: An Egyptian cross.

Schanen: Oh, okay.

Kohls: A symbol of life and fertility.

Schanen: So you figured if you tattooed it on, you couldn't lose it?

Kohls: Mmhhh.

Schanen: Oh, okay.

Kohls: [Laughs] It'll never fall off.

Schanen: All right, now you're in the nursing school, and how long was that?

Kohls: It was supposed to be a year and a half. And I went through four, about four months, five months, because my best friend Tammy failed a test and was getting sent home. Because if you fail one test, you don't even get a re-test, you go home. Actually, you get one re-test, and if you pass that you get one more chance, but if you fail that re-test one time they'll only give you one chance. You have to go home, you don't even ever get another chance if you fail another one. You won't get another chance. And she was going home, and getting on the phone all the time--

Schanen: Failed the second one?

Kohls: She failed the second one.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: And she was calling home, and talking to all her friends, and talking about she was going to see so-and-so and so-and-so when she got back, and go to so-and-so's house for a party. And I started thinking [audio cuts out] I wanted to go home, too [laughs].

Schanen: Let me guess what you're going to say. Okay.

Kohls: I wanted to go home, too, cause I missed the friends, too. You know, we were gone for almost a year, and [laughs] at that age it was, like, friends were so important, of course.

Schanen: And you're how old at this time?

**[00:04:59]**

Kohls: I was just, no, eighteen still. Just about to turn nineteen. And then I purposely failed a test. And it was so bad, and my grades were so good prior to that the instructors were willing to give me an exception because they were like, "we really think that maybe you just didn't study hard enough, because your grades don't reflect that". You know, and then they were like, "if you purposely failed this, you're going to get in a lot of trouble" and you could, you know, still lose everything. And I was like, I really tried, and I just couldn't understand. And I remember that module was on neurology, the neurons and the brain waves. And I just said that, it was just too hard for me to really understand all of that.

Schanen: And was it? Too hard for you?

Kohls: It was one of the harder modules for me, but I just didn't try because I was homesick. And I figured I was already a medic and I would still get my GI Bill, and, you know, it was not like I was doing a dishonorable thing or I would be discharged from the Army or anything, but I just chose not to be a nurse anymore and go home. Hang out with Tammy [laughs].

Schanen: So you took the buddy system literally? She's going home--

Kohls: I really took the buddy system literally. She's leaving, I'm leaving. I'm done too [laughs].

Schanen: So you took that as the first fail, and proceeded to fail a second time, a second test?

Kohls: Yeah. Well then they asked me, after that, then they asked me if, because that's when they talked, they sat me down and talked to me, and they didn't think--they thought I did it on purpose. And, uh, they were willing to give me another test. And I told them no.

Schanen: Now, did you seriously not want to be a nurse? Or you just wanted to go home and party?

Kohls: At that time I still did want to be in the medical field. I still did. It was more of just, a, go home and party.

Schanen: Okay, so this is when now, that you've managed to get yourself sent home? Where did, um, where were you sent to, you were sent home from the school but you're still in the military.

Kohls: Right. So they sent us back our unit in Silver Spring. 452nd.

Schanen: In Milwaukee?

Kohls: Mmhmm.

Schanen: And what was--

Kohls: We started drilling, and going to our drills.

Schanen: What was required of you for drills?

Kohls: One weekend a month and two weeks in the summer.

Schanen: And where did you do those drills? You're a medic now--

Kohls: Silver Spring.

Schanen: You did them right at Silver Spring?

Kohls: Yeah. Sometimes we went to, uh, it was the Milwaukee County Hospital. Actually, a lot of--

Schanen: Milwaukee County or VA [Veterans Administration]?

Kohls: The County.

Schanen: Okay. And what would you have to do there, then?

Kohls: Um, we would, we weren't really allowed to do, like, CNA [certified nursing assistant] duties and stuff, but we just kind of were with them in the room, and, you know. There were a lot of doctors and stuff in our unit already that were civilian doctors, civilian nurses, so they could more do stuff on the floors, but the hospitals and the nurses that

worked there weren't too willing to have weekend military people come in and, you know, screw anything up.

Schanen: All right.

Kohls: So they had to deal with us all the time.

Schanen: So when you weren't at the hospitals, you just trained at Silver Spring? What did, what were your duties there, then?

Kohls: [Pauses, laughs]. Try not to be seen? I don't know [both laugh]. They didn't really have anything specific for us. We were just privates. We were, you know, the "freshies" of the unit, and they just kind of let the youngsters--

Schanen: How about your two week summer drills? For summer, where did you go for those?

Kohls: Fort McCoy.

Schanen: And what did you do there, then?

Kohls: Two weeks of pretending you're in the field, in a wartime environment.

Schanen: And what would that entail, as a medic?

Kohls: Setting up a hospital, and having fake casualties, and the helicopters, and, you know, just, performing the way you would if it was a real war. We'd have like, the colored gas, grenades, and, um, blanks, firing blanks and stuff. So it was, you hear all the sounds and you see all the, you know, and even the wounds would look real sometimes. But you had to, you'd find somebody injured, and you'd have to assess them and figure out what was wrong with them, and triage, who needed to be put on a helicopter first, who was more serious than, you know, and get them back behind the front lines back to the hospital, which is--So I was the front lines, and we had to get them back to behind the lines, back to the hospital.

Schanen: So in a combat position, you'd have to go out during the fighting, pull people back?

Kohls: Yep.

Schanen: Okay. Um, and, did you go back to being a CNA then when you got home? What did you do for work?

**[00:10:02]**

Schanen: Partied? [Laughs]

Kohls: Wasn't I working at Little Cesar's? I think I just--

Schanen: You kind of gave up on the CNA even, huh? [Laughs].

Kohls: Well I think it had a lot to do with the needles. I, when I fainted, and now even when I get my own blood taken I just, I get real dizzy. Any kind of needles. When I got ears pierced, or my nose pierced, I get faint. And so I knew I couldn't do that on a daily basis. Like, I'm taking care of somebody and then I'm going to pass out on them.

Schanen: Okay, but as a CNA you're not dealing with needles, are you?

Kohls: No. I liked, I liked doing the CNA. I just got yelled at for being too nice to the residents and spending too much time making them feel comfortable. I'm just a sensitive person and I like to care for people.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: If it's a little extra, I think they should get a little extra.

Schanen: So you finished then the rest of your, um, seven years or something? You said it was six years active reserve and two years inactive?

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: So you finished up your time then in Silver Spring, in Milwaukee?

Kohls: Nope. Um, I moved out to Chicago. Hmm, what year? '99? No. I don't remember.

Schanen: You went into the service in '93, right? You got in '94 or '93?

Kohls: Ninety--

Schanen: You were back in '94, so--

Kohls: Yeah, in '94 I wasn't even in Wisconsin that long when I came back.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: I came, I moved out to Chicago and I was still drilling with Silver Spring and driving every time. And it just started becoming too much of a drive, and, so I asked to transfer units to somewhere in Chicago and they transferred me to the 300th in Chicago Heights, and it was a postal unit. Postal support unit.

Schanen: Oh, so now you're not doing medic-type things?

Kohls: Well I was, I was still a medic.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: I was still a medic and they were going to train me to become a postal assistant-- administrative--and I had two weeks left, they had to enroll me in the school, they were just about to send me off. I believe I was going out to Texas again or somewhere, and I was going to be gone for two months and become 71 Lima, which is administrative with postal. And our unit got called up to go to Bosnia. And they picked me to go.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: And then I asked them, I said, Wait a minute I'm not qualified to go, is this, is this right? I mean, should I really be called to go to Bosnia? And they said, "Well, what better training than on-the-job training?" And I said, Well, um, I'm still a medic--

Schanen: On-the-job for what? For postal?

Kohls: On the job, go out, go out to Bosnia and learn how to become postal while you're out there. And I said, Well I'm not too sure I really need to be a postal clerk anymore. I think I'll keep my medic training. And then I found another unit that needed a medic, in the 863rd Engineering Battalion in Darien, Illinois.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: And that's where I spent the remainder of my reserve time.

Schanen: And what were you doing--

Kohls: My active reserve time.

Schanen: Again a weekend a month?

Kohls: I, we were, we had our own cage, our medic--

Schanen: A cage?

Kohls: It was an engineering battalion, an engineering unit. So it was all, like, trucks and vehicles and they build, you know, they build things. We were, there was five, maybe five medics. So we were like their little doctor's office I guess. We had our own little cage, and, they call it a cage. [Talking in background].

Schanen: They call it a cage because you're all--

Kohls: It was all fenced in, all our, all our supplies, everything we need is in there. Basically our duties every weekend were just to make, you know, kind of sit around, and if anybody needed any Band-Aids or help with anything, if people were feeling sick.

Schanen: Kind of a first aid station?

Kohls: Right. We were kind of like the first aid station. But then we also had to give immunizations, like the hepatitis B vaccines and stuff, and, we had to give classes on medical training and stuff like that. Basic field medical training.

Schanen: And, so that was one weekend a month there, and then your training, your two weeks in the summer you did right there, or did you have to go someplace else?

Kohls: Fort McCoy.

Schanen: You went to Fort McCoy again. Same thing?

Kohls: Yep.

Schanen: Okay. All right. And, um, so when did you finish your military obligation?

Kohls: The exact date?

Schanen: Do you know the exact date?

Kohls: 9/14/01, three days after 9/11.

**[00:14:59]**

Schanen: And how did you feel about that? Being discharged and, probably at that time considering, that--

Kohls: For about twenty-four hours I didn't open the packet, because I remember walking home from school that day and seeing a big orange packet in my mailbox and it, I could see really big, "Department of the Army". And at that time, I just freaked out. I could see that there were orders through the envelope.

Schanen: And this is three days after--

Kohls: And orders mean that you're getting sent somewhere. So, I remember I had called you, my mom, and told you I wasn't going to open this envelope but I think that I was called up. And I finally got up the nerve to open it, like, the next night, and I had a celebration. It said, "you are ordered to be honorably discharged from the military". And I went out that night and partied [laughs]. I told everybody, like, Come on! [Laughs].

Schanen: Because 9/11 of '01 is when the planes flew into the Twin Towers in New York. So the country was in just total--

Kohls: I was still in a state of shock. I still wasn't quite sure if, if that night I was happy that I found out I was out, but then about a week later I started getting ideas of maybe I should go back in. Maybe my patriotic duty started kicking in, and I thought maybe I should reenlist. Maybe I should. And it wasn't, if it wasn't for my brother giving me a phone call and saying that he would join if I did, then I just, I didn't want him to join, so I didn't.

Schanen: And why was that?

Kohls: He was the only boy of the family [laughs]. He can't go!

Schanen: You didn't want him putting [inaudible]--

Kohls: He's my little brother! He can't go! I can go, but he can't go.

Schanen: Okay. You didn't want anything to happen to him.

Kohls: No!

Schanen: Okay. All right, and that--

Kohls: But then I didn't even think about, he probably couldn't have gone anyway because of all his shoulder surgeries [laughs].

Schanen: I don't know--

Kohls: I'm glad now that I didn't go back.

Schanen: Yeah.

Kohls: It's too scary now.

Schanen: Because, actually, 9/11 was just at the end of your two years of inactive reserve, so, had you been called up--

Kohls: It just ended my inactive, yeah. So for two years I wasn't doing anything, but when 9/11 happened I'm like, Oh my gosh, I still have six months left in the Army, and I'm a medic. They're going to call me immediately, and sure enough I got that packet, and I didn't know what to think.

Schanen: Oh, okay. So you had six months left?

Kohls: I thought, yeah, because I joined in December of '92, and so I figured I had until December of 2001.

Schanen: All right.

Kohls: But then again, that's right, we did drill six months, six months early, so that kind of--

Schanen: Yeah, that would have been--

Kohls: That did count towards our time.

Schanen: Right.

Kohls: That's why! I figured it out! [Laughs].

Schanen: All right, so when you finished, um, now you already were working here doing whatever you were doing, so, it wasn't that you're coming back into the civilian world at this time. Were there any friendships that you made in the service that you've maintained?

Kohls: I haven't maintained any, unfortunately. Um, I lost track of the few of my friends in Germany, that were sent over to Germany. And actually, the other day I was online on a website where you can find people and I found a couple friends from the Army that I'm thinking of paying for the service to get their addresses and send them a little line.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: My friend Michelle who was in basic with me, and in Texas, and my friend Lillian Mongan?? Mongan.

Schanen: Okay. Um, have you been able to take any, advantage of any veterans benefits of any kind?

Kohls: I've been trying. That's what I meant with my earlier comment about they've promised quite a few things that are just a little difficult to obtain after you've served your time.

Schanen: They try to make it difficult, hoping you'll forget about it?

Kohls: I think that's the point.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: I went back and forth so many times trying to get my GI Bill for school, and they, they have my paperwork screwed up, and unless you keep every single piece of paper you got in the Army, which you have to, everyone needs to know that before they join. Keep every little piece of paper, anything. Because they lose it all. And they basically have

told me that before I was even discharged when I was trying to go to school, they were telling me that I was already discharged. And I was like, I don't even have my DD214 [discharge papers] yet.

Schanen: Okay. Um, have you ever joined or become involved in any veterans organizations of any kind?

[00:20:02]

Kohls: No.

Schanen: Okay. Um, have there ever been any kind of reunions or anything? Anyone from--

Kohls: That'd be cool.

Schanen: Your basic or something?

Kohls: I keep, I want to go back to some of my old units, the, like the postal unit, I saw them on the news coming home a few months ago from Iraq it was pretty cool to see all my friends on TV, like, Oh my god!

Schanen: Yeah.

Kohls: Actually I do! There is a friend of mine that, we still see each other. We email every now and then and keep in touch. He was in the, he was in the postal unit with me. We still keep in touch, he sees me at the Reicher's?? store sometimes.

Schanen: Okay. And what's your overall feeling about your military experience? What do you think it's meant to your life? Are there any skills you learned in the military?

Kohls: I definitely enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. I'm glad I did it. I'm glad I chose to do that instead of go to school right away because I do feel like the discipline is really good. Like I, I know people that you could just tell they were in the military because they're just, they can control their emotions a lot better than they probably would have been able to. Because when you're not allowed to really control your emotions, and you just have to kind of sit there and hold your tongue [laughs].

Schanen: [Laughs] When you're not allowed to express your emotions--

Kohls: Not allowed to express them, yeah.

Schanen: Okay. So it's learned you--it's learned you--it's taught you a little more self-discipline?

Kohls: [Laughs] Yeah.

Schanen: Any skills that you feel you've learned other than that?

Kohls: Um, survival.

Schanen: You think you're able to survive better, having gone through your somewhat survival training?

Kohls: Definitely.

Schanen: Field training--

Kohls: Definitely. I also enjoyed, I'm not much of a hunter or anything, but I definitely enjoyed the rifle and the shooting. I was pretty good at that.

Schanen: You did well at it?

Kohls: Very good, actually.

Schanen: Did you get any kind of awards or anything?

Kohls: Marksman. Wait, uh, expert. I missed one. I don't know what it was.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: Marksman Expert. It was one of the best ones.

Schanen: All right. Okay, any other stories?

Kohls: I worked at the recruiter's office for a while. That's what I did when I came back from the Army. I did, I worked with the recruiters for a few months. Going to the high schools and helping recruit the students and stuff into the military. The same recruiters that recruited us, they hired us to work there for a little while.

Schanen: Again, your friend Tammy?

Kohls: Yep. Me and Tammy.

Schanen: The buddy system, you're working together?

Kohls: The buddy system, working together.

Schanen: Okay. And did you ever go back to be a nurse or anything like that?

Kohls: I think it just changed, it just made me see that I couldn't do the whole, I love working, I love the medical field and I love the health profession, but I can't handle the needles in certain--as I get older I've noticed it, though. It's not that--when I was younger it wasn't so bad, but if I saw somebody bleed right now I'd probably freak out a little more than I used to. I'd probably be like, eugh!

Schanen: As we get older--

Kohls: Can't touch it--

Schanen: We realize we are just mortals, and I think we're less daring.

Kohls: That's it. Cause when I was younger, it was just like, Okay this is my job, I have to do it. But now, it's just like, Wow this is actually somebody, and they're bleeding this bad, or have an infection, or something that's just like, eugh! And it just--I can't control the way I feel and I knew that I couldn't do it anymore.

Schanen: Okay.

Kohls: So now I'm caring for dogs and cats [laughs].

Schanen: [Laughs] You're caring for dogs and cats, okay.

Kohls: As long as I don't have to see them hurt. I don't like to see things, any living creature hurt.

Schanen: And, um, do you think that's what you want to be doing, then? Or do you have goals to go into anything? You said when you went into the Army you weren't sure what you wanted to do yet. You said that was a good--

Kohls: I'm still going through that. I thought I'd figure it out someday, but I've, it's like one day you think you want to do this, and the next day you're like, "well that looks kind of cool too, and I could do that". So I guess, in the next year, I'm going to be, you know, probably taking some home study courses or something in different fields and trying to - definitely like medical billing and stuff. I'm interested in that. But I'm also interested in veterinary health, and veterinary assistant kind of thing maybe where I don't have to cut anybody open cause I couldn't do that.

Schanen: Uh-huh.

Kohls: Or, even, like web designing. It's just a wide variety of things I'm interested in.

Schanen: You've dabbled in--

Kohls: Yeah.

Schanen: You've dabbled in a lot of different things, huh?

Kohls: I like to do that. I guess I get bored easily on one thing and I'm willing to just do everything.

Schanen: You're a firm believer in "variety is the spice of life"? [Laughs].

Kohls: Except in new relationships [laughs].

Schanen: Oh, okay [laughs]. That's good, that's good. Okay, anything else you want to share about your military experience?

**[00:25:02]**

Kohls: You probably want to hear "good idea to join now", but [laughs].

Schanen: Unless you're ready to go into battle--

Kohls: Unless you're ready to go to Iraq.

Schanen: Yeah. All right. And as far as what the military meant to you, any other thoughts on that?

Kohls: It was a wakeup call.

Schanen: A wakeup call?

Kohls: A wakeup call that I needed.

Schanen: Can you elaborate on that at all? How do you think your life would have been different?

Kohls: [Inaudible] ten years ago [laughs], but you were interviewing straight veterans, and here I am, like, ten years ago, I don't remember.

Schanen: How do you think your life may have been different had you not gone into the military? Have you ever thought about that?

Kohls: Well, I might have been in jail, too.

Schanen: Too?

Kohls: [Laughs]. Well you were saying some other people said the reason they joined was cause--

Schanen: It was a choice--

Kohls: Jail, or [laughs]. I think, I think I would have probably, something could have happened to me, probably bad, maybe.

Schanen: Were, are you saying that--

Kohls: Little too much partying--

Schanen: You weren't the model child?

Kohls: I was, like, on the outside, I guess. Like, good grades, you know, all the teachers, everybody was like, "she's a good student!", and, I mean "she's into everything, and she's good at it all!" You know, I was pretty good at showing that [laughs].

Schanen: Into mischief also?

Kohls: I was pretty mischievous as well. I was trying to find a way to, but not where I'd let anybody know that I was bad, like my teachers and stuff, [child talking in background] I didn't want them to know that I just would be sneaky with my friends, I guess.

Schanen: Oh, okay. All right. Okay, so you, you think it had a positive effect on your life, is what you're saying?

Kohls: Definitely.

Schanen: Okay. All right, well, thank you very much. And I appreciate it--

Kohls: And you meet a lot of people that you form close friendships with, especially while you're there, and I feel bad that I didn't maintain a lot of those friendships, because now I realize how important friends are.

Schanen: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Kohls: Thank you.

**[End of WVM.OH798\_tape1\_B] [End of interview]**