

Darlene Harris

I joined the military when I was 17. My Navy bootcamp and C school was in Pensicola, Florida. After training as a Deck Hand. The Military sent me to San Diego, California to serve aboard the U.S.S. Jason and Auxiliary Repair Ship. Where we fixed Fast Frigates, Destroyers, and other ships. We were a West Coast ship and traveled to Philipines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Tiland, Guam, Diego Garcia, Persian Gulf, Iraq, Iran. At ports we would have to pull guard duty with M-14 and take a boat and patrol around the ship for 8 hours to avoid swimmers. Also while on board; my job was to maintain ships integrety, repair electrical on boat booms, be a lookout for other ships, planes, submarines, mines, and torpedos. I was promoted several times on ship. I became in charge of the helo locker. Where I maintained, repaired, replaced all equipment to accept helicopters aboard our ship. I was the only one to ever pass inspection with a 99%. I missed a cross on one of the helmets because I did not know it was suppose to have one. From there I went into Supply. I, then chose a field of Cryptological Technical Technician, ie computers. I had a top secret clearance with the same clearence as the President of the United States. The only difference was need to know. I got promoted to E-4 Petty Officer 3rd Class. I received numerous awards for going above and beyond on my job. The Command felt like I was the canidate to take over the Day Shop. So, I became the first E-4 to run our Day Shop. I helped members from the Pentagon, install and repair equipment for our job. I also wrote training and SOP (Standard Operating Proceedures) for all now and future CTT Wizards. I had 450; Army, Marines, and Navy personnel that I supervised daily. If equipment broke or software problems occured; I would have to troubleshoot the problem til it was resolved no matter how many days it took. The bad side of the job was if our base was ever overrun. We had less than 3.6 seconds to live; because the Marines that guarded our facility had instructions to kill us; so we could not be captured.

Because of family problems, I decided to get out of the Navy and go into the Army so I could be closer to family. I had to loose a rank where I became a Specialist 1st Class. I had to drop a rank from the Navy to join. I worked on tanks, trucks, guns, opticals; basically anything they put in front of me. While there I received the State Adjutants Award, which only one was given out a year. From there I went to Germany and served on the Army base in Kaiserslautern, Germany. I repaired SAW's; 50 & 60 Calibers for Afganistan, Iraq, Iran, and Kuwait. After over 14 and half years; my injuries I got while in the military made it impossible for me to pass the physical test required to stay in. So, I got out.

The End,

Darlene Harris

Manager Paulette's Manor