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BARB FAULKENBERRY INTERVIEWED BY BLANCHE TOUHILL

Blanche Touhill: Introduce yourself.

Barb Faulkenberry: I'm Barbara Faulkenberry and I'm a major general in the United States Air Force.

Blanche Touhill: Tell me about your early childhood: where you were born; your parents; did you have siblings. When you went to elementary school, was there a teacher or a grandparent or an uncle or somebody who said to you, "Barbara, you really have ability and you ought to focus in on your strengths and decide what you want to do in life." Talk about your early childhood and what it was like and who really spurred you on.

Barb Faulkenberry: Well, I've got a wonderful history in Missouri, as a matter of fact. My family came to the United States in the late 1700's. They moved across the states, settled in Missouri, outside Kansas City, in a little small town called Lone Jack and there, after a few generations, we bought a farmstead in 1836. It stayed in the family until a little period in the 1880s, '90s, came back into the family in 1892 and then the Faulkenberry's have been in it ever since. So my roots are deep here in Missouri. My parents were raised there, married. My dad served in the Korean War, came back with his GI Bill, got his education in Indiana and started a career with Sperry-Rand Corporation. We traveled a little bit until we settled down when I was in kindergarten in Florida and so I basically grew up in Florida. I'll tell you, elementary school is so important and young experiences because it was my English teacher in 6th grade, her name was Miss Rice, and so I remember going into class with Miss Rice on the first day and she hobbled into the classroom; she had a full leg cast from ankle to hip, and she told us that day what she did for her summer vacation and she was a part of an early program called Outward Bound and this was very big in the '70s but it was a chance for people just to participate in the program and to really be tested physically with a lot of challenges. She spent some

time on her bicycle traveling with panniers on the back and as she told her stories, I thought, I want to travel on my bicycle and, in fact, to this day, it's kind of my first love of adventure and taking trips with all my stuff on my bike. Well, with the full leg cast, she also told us, in Outward Bound, that she jumped out of airplanes. It was wonderful except that landing and she broke her leg but the way she told her story, I said, I want to jump out of airplanes. And you see, this is about jumping out of airplanes and this is what Miss Rice got me all jazzed up about and I can tell you about other role models. My history teacher in junior high school, who was part of the Women's Air Service Pilots, the WASPs, the women that were asked to fly for their nation in World War II but weren't recognized as veterans until into the late '70s, I believe. So it's just a matter of people jazzing you up early in life and inspiring you, like my grandmother. She was an adventurous woman. So I can think of a number of people who got me pretty excited.

Blanche Touhill: What did your grandmother do that was so adventurous?

Barb Faulkenberry: Well, she had a challenging life, as many people did, born in 1899 and my grandmother raised her young family on that farm in Lone Jack. She had three children, the oldest, my father and then a set of twins. Then she picked up a boy during the Depression when his father just didn't think he could raise this boy and she raised four children. She lost her husband when my dad was about 14 years old and so they milked because they had a lot of cattle, they milked, and as you know, you milk in the morning; you milk in the evening, and you don't miss a single day. She raised the chickens for the family. She hunt and shot food for dinner and she raised three kids that were wonderful Americans who went on to do great things in their community and she always took a great interest in my worldwide travels and always wanted me to bring a rock back from all of my travels. I shared many of my adventures with her and she kind of lived through me in her later life.

Blanche Touhill: Then, talk about high school a little bit.

Barb Faulkenberry: Okay.

Blanche Touhill: You were an athlete, weren't you?

Barb Faulkenberry: I was. Athletics, I think, is so important to young people and especially young women, but athletics teaches you winning and losing and how to

do both with grace. It teaches you communications and team work and putting yourself second to someone else at the time. It's about social interaction and about healthy living. And so I was an early athlete with softball, basketball and racquetball; kind of my claim to fame, if you will, was competing nationally and internationally in racquetball during my time.

Blanche Touhill: In high school?

Barb Faulkenberry: In high school, I ended as the Florida State Women's Champion.

Blanche Touhill: And that allowed you to go overseas or something?

Barb Faulkenberry: Actually, I only traveled in the United States. I did participate in the World Games in 1980, in the World Games to represent the United States but then I was in college and so I attended the Air Force Academy for college.

Blanche Touhill: Let's go back to high school. So you had good grades, obviously, but then you were really the scholar athlete?

Barb Faulkenberry: I think so.

Blanche Touhill: When you were in high school and you were playing and you were highly competitive, were there other girls' teams? Were there girls' teams in your high school and did you play other girls' teams, other high schools?

Barb Faulkenberry: We did. So if you think of those three sports, it was interesting: we initially...we didn't have softball in school. It was a city sport and, of course, it was Florida and softball was a large city activity. We played in a nationally competitive junior softball team as I advanced. In basketball, I did play in city leagues into high school. In high school, we had a varsity basketball team and so I competed in that. Racquetball was interesting because it had no affiliation with school and was just competitive from just being in the community and it was the time where racquetball really took off, being really started in St. Louis.

Blanche Touhill: I did not know that. That was part of the World's Fair or anything like that?

Barb Faulkenberry: No, it wasn't created in St. Louis but it became the hotbed in St. Louis at the Jewish Community Center, I believe, but Marty Hogan and some of the world-class athletes at the time came up from St. Louis. But it was on

fire and increasing, professional tournaments and I dabbled in professional tournaments as well as I...

Blanche Touhill: What years, generally, were those?

Barb Faulkenberry: I played my first professional tournament in 1973. It was the very beginning of the Pro Tour.

Blanche Touhill: Were there a lot of women playing?

Barb Faulkenberry: Not a lot. Nowadays, you have age categories, you know, and it's five-year increments all the way up to '85. Then it was the women's division and so there was really only one category. But it was quite competitive at the time and a lot of tournaments.

Blanche Touhill: What did your parents think about all this activity of yours in sports particularly? I think parents expect girls to do well academically but how did they react to your physical prowess?

Barb Faulkenberry: You know, I was always encouraged. I was never discouraged and I was expected to get good academic grades. A B was not one of those optional things. It was A's, and I responded to that, but athletically, they enrolled me when I was younger and needed their support. They supported me when I began to multi-task in high school, of sports and still trying to do well academically. I just remember my dad saying as I slid into bases in softball, and I'd get these big red scrapes on my upper thigh, he'd say, "When you're older, you're not going to like that." But they completely supported me. They wanted the best for their child and I think they looked at these activities as being very healthy activities to prepare me for adulthood.

Blanche Touhill: I know you went to the Air Force Academy. Do you want to talk about that? How did you decide...that's a big decision to make.

Barb Faulkenberry: It is and I'd like to say I knew what I was doing but I wouldn't be truthful. When you're 17 years old or 18, I just wasn't sure. Memphis State was going to give me a racquetball scholarship so I thought, okay, it's nice to be wanted. It wasn't the most outstanding academic location and the academies were opening to women at that time. So what's kind of crazy is to realize that the military academies, West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force Academy, the Coastguard Academy, those institutions did not let

women in until 1976. So, as I was thinking where I was going in 1977 and then entering in 1978, I remember my teachers talking to me, my high school teachers and they really thought this was a big deal. I got the impression from them it was prestigious; it was an honor to be nominated by your congressional member, to be accepted. I liked the honor code; I liked the athletics as part of the curriculum; I liked the beauty of the Air Force Academy. So, I applied...they told me I should apply to Annapolis, West Point and the Air Force Academy and so I applied to all three and then I went to a racquetball tournament, Pro Stop in 1976 and got a back court against an unknown woman at midnight and I lost. So I thought, well, I better go to the Air Force Academy because my future as a professional racquetball player maybe is not assured. So I chose to go to the Air Force Academy.

Blanche Touhill: Was your father in the Air Force?

Barb Faulkenberry: He did spend four years in the Korean War. He supported that from the Philippines so he did...

Blanche Touhill: He was in the Air Force?

Barb Faulkenberry: He was in the Air Force.

Blanche Touhill: Did that have an effect on your choosing the Air Force Academy?

Barb Faulkenberry: I was accepted at West Point and I didn't know the difference. I wasn't sure what I was doing. My father said that he thinks the Air Force would treat women better and that you had more opportunities in the Air Force and I found that true at my time and, knowing now what I know about the services, I'm really glad I chose the Air Force. It's been a really good fit for me.

Blanche Touhill: When you went off, there probably were not many women at the Academy?

Barb Faulkenberry: No. So we were the third class of women. The first class was all male and the seniors was an all-male class. The transition at the Air Force Academy was not without controversy. I do believe the military is one of the very best organizations for accepting social change when they're ordered to accomplish that. So, where military leaders were not saying, "We want to take down these walls for women to come into the academies;" when

that change was made politically, they saluted smartly and then they went out to create the very best environment possible. So, that's the administration, not with 100% agreement at the administration. For the students, that senior class, they thought themselves quite special. In fact, they had a nickname for themselves and in their class rings, there's the initials "LCWB," that's put into their Air Force Academy ring and it stands for "Last Class With Balls" as that last class. Our class, the third class with women, were quite proud of women being in our class and I felt the support of my classmates for this and never had an issue at the Air Force Academy about being accepted.

Blanche Touhill: But I assume the senior had certain powers over the freshmen?

Barb Faulkenberry: Yes, that's a good assumption.

Blanche Touhill: And so it was a year of change for them...

Barb Faulkenberry: Absolutely.

Blanche Touhill: ...and that was very hard, and change for you because you were coming into a different kind of environment?

Barb Faulkenberry: Absolutely.

Blanche Touhill: It probably changed again when you got to be a sophomore?

Barb Faulkenberry: Yes, it did. Just the processes that you go through at the academy: one, no high school student that I know is fully prepared to go into that military environment. I certainly, again, didn't know what I was getting into. So that's a challenge. You're away from home. The academics are very, very rigorous. They stress you on your time; time is not your own; you have limited freedoms. But they really teach leadership. They give the opportunity to explore your leadership style there because the upper class cadets have responsibilities over the lower class cadets. So you're growing as a person, maturing as an adult, thinking about leadership and how you fit in and so it's a significant period of change.

Blanche Touhill: When you went through the academy, did you make special friends?

Barb Faulkenberry: Yeah, a lot of my friends were related to sports and so I connected in time with different groups. As an example, we went through a survival training class after your freshman year, between the freshman and

sophomore year and so my roommates that I went through that with...and that was a very, very challenging time...remain my closest classmates from that time-frame. My coach, I was a one-woman racquetball team basically while I was there and I had a coach who worked with me who stayed a life-long friend. Then, in the Air Force, it's kind of interesting because we don't hire from outside. Everyone that is a general officer started in this organization 25 years ago so we've all grown up together and though we go all around the world and we see each other periodically, it's just this community that continues to get smaller as people stay in the military or leave but you get to know each other pretty well.

Blanche Touhill: And are there people that you went to school with in all years that have moved up those ranks as well as you?

Barb Faulkenberry: Yes. As a matter of fact, at this point in my career, you are not able to stay in the military past 30 years of service unless you're a general officer in the active force. So I'm at year 31 ½ and so all my classmates who didn't make general officer are now all out of the Air Force and so I think there's about five of us that remain from my class who are generals or just recently retired as a general that are left.

Blanche Touhill: Are any of them from your survival course?

Barb Faulkenberry: No. Of my roommates, one of the women left after her initial commitment so that was probably year 5, and the other one retired after 30 years, a very successful career as a colonel.

Blanche Touhill: I know you were a champion, weren't you, of racquetball while you were in the Air Force Academy?

Barb Faulkenberry: Yes, I was a three-time intercollegiate champion, so didn't make the fourth.

Blanche Touhill: And you had to keep your academics up as well?

Barb Faulkenberry: Yes. I did quite well in academics. I was number two in my high school class of over 900. I wasn't number two at the Air Force Academy of my graduating class of about 700. So I was...

Blanche Touhill: But you were up there?

Barb Faulkenberry: I was up there. I had a 3.6 or something like that or whatever it was. Nobody asked you your grade point average once you left but the skill sets and the time management, the very science and engineering-heavy focus of our curriculum and yet, broad-based with humanities, philosophy, I think it prepared you well for the challenges of leadership in the Air Force.

Blanche Touhill: Did you have a major?

Barb Faulkenberry: I did, operations research.

Blanche Touhill: So you graduated and then what happened? Did you go off to a specialized school to train for what you wanted to do in the service or...

Barb Faulkenberry: Right.

Blanche Touhill: Or do you choose that when you're in the undergraduate program?

Barb Faulkenberry: You rank what you wanted to do.

Blanche Touhill: In your senior year?

Barb Faulkenberry: In your senior year, late in your junior year actually, and in the Air Force, a lot of people want to fly and my eyesight was quite bad and so I didn't meet the qualifications to be a pilot so my choices were being a navigator, so flying but not being behind the controls, or, because of operations research and the analysis that we do with new airplanes and systems, I thought I could have a future there. And so as I weighed these two lifestyles, the advice from my academic faculty would be to go into the analysis and the work with aircraft systems and things like that. Then I looked at the flight suit and thinking about traveling all over the world and the unusual things and the exciting life and I chose to be a navigator and to fly for my career.

Blanche Touhill: When did you do your jumping out of the airplane?

Barb Faulkenberry: That was as a cadet and I should say that it's easier to jump out of an airplane as a 19-year-old than when I did it last year as a tandem jump. I remember sitting on the edge of the airplane last year and going, "You know, I think when you're 19, this sounds like a better choice."

Blanche Touhill: What do you talk about a tandem jump?

Barb Faulkenberry: It's when you have an instructor, you're actually slapped up close to an instructor and then that person actually has the parachute and they guide you. So, it's the beginner's version of it and quicker to go through training. But we did free-fall parachuting at the academy so we went out, counted to 10, pulled our own ripcord, landed, and that was pretty exciting.

Blanche Touhill: Just for my information, what part of the country did you do your jumping?

Barb Faulkenberry: At the Air Force Academy. They have a sophisticated jump school as well as soaring instruction. So you can just imagine the Air Force Academy, if you've seen it with the chapel and the rocky mountain snowcap and if you can just picture yourself flying gliders, which I've done and we would be towed up with, quite frankly, very little training of fundamental instruction, a little bit of training and then you were alone in that gliding plane and they clicked off the front plane, tow plane, and there you were. There is no sound because there's no motor and you know basically you're only going to go down and so it's beautiful, you're looking around, but you're looking at that runway, going, I'm going to keep that in sight because that's where I'm ultimately going to try to come down.

Blanche Touhill: So you've always been adventurous?

Barb Faulkenberry: I think so. I think it's my grandmother; I think it's Miss Rice at my earliest times and the support of my parents.

Blanche Touhill: So you get out of the Air Force Academy and you go to navigator school?

Barb Faulkenberry: Mm-hmm.

Blanche Touhill: Then you do what?

Barb Faulkenberry: Well, it's interesting. So you've gone through the nav training. Women, at the time, could only navigate very few airplanes. So there were 13 different airplanes that were even possible but about 8 of them were 135 variance so fighters were off limits; bombers were off limits; tactical airlift, C-130s, little small cargo...

Blanche Touhill: Was that because you couldn't be in combat or...

Barb Faulkenberry: Yes, but it was a definition of what combat was. So even things that today people go, "Well, C-130s, why did they keep you from doing C-130s?" It was thought that they're tactical. They could be over enemy territory. You couldn't fly any of the reconnaissance, the U-2, so there were a very limited number and I ranked my very limited number and I remember I got my Number 12 of 13 airplane and my Number 8 of 10 bases in that relative pecking order. So I didn't necessarily get my first choice. But I went off to be a navigator in the air refueling airplanes so those are the kind, all full of gas. Your job is to air refuel fighters to allow them to stay closer to the combat area; cargo airplanes, if they're trying to extend the range, but that was my fundamental responsibility as I was growing up.

Blanche Touhill: But that could be very dangerous, couldn't it?

Barb Faulkenberry: You know, a little bit before I came in, the crew members in the 135 actually donned a helmet and a parachute and had it on when they air refueled. So the thought was, the aircraft themselves are only about 35 feet apart flying about 420 miles per hour. So it's very precise flying, and yet, the whole Air Force is so good that we have very, very, very few incidents. So, just before I came in, they decided the safety standards were such that they would no longer require you to wear your parachute. We had one available but...

Blanche Touhill: Well, when you took your first flight, were you nervous about finding the right spot?

Barb Faulkenberry: Well, I've got a few stories on that, because, being a navigator, especially in a time under strategic air command, which had the mission, one of the fundamental missions, of always being on alert and ready to refuel the bombers, to have the nuclear deterrents that it would take that show the Soviet Union that they could not strike us with nuclear weapons because our bombers and tankers would get off the ground before that and we'd be on the way to strike them. So, it was that time of mutually assured destruction, as crazy as it sounds, with two rational actors, it worked for a number of years after the nuclear era of 1945 and continued through. But that's a lot of math. For a navigator, you're using a sextant with the same principles as Magellan used to go across the ocean and shooting the stars and the moon through the sextant, doing the math, plotting everybody in the air can give you a line on Earth and so you have a line on Earth; if you have stars, you're going to get multiple lines and you were

theoretically in the middle of those lines and so navigators worked hard, to be accurate.

Blanche Touhill: And I would think it would be nerve-wracking. There's tension. You've got to do it in a certain time and...

Barb Faulkenberry: And crossing the ocean was always the most challenging. The GPS of today with its incredible accuracy, of course, was not even a concept then and the age that we had had some error drift rate and so it doesn't take much as you leave the United States and you're on your way to England, a degree or two is impactful over that long length of time. So, it was a little stressful.

Blanche Touhill: But you liked it?

Barb Faulkenberry: I did like it. I liked the unpredictability of it; I liked showing up in the middle of the night; I loved traveling; I loved seeing new locations and, in my first assignment flying that tanker, a variant of the tanker actually was chosen to be the precursor of the central command general, his aircraft, to take that general, four-star general over to the Middle East which was his region of responsibility. So I was doing that in 1986 and '87, going to places at the time that Americans didn't know how to pronounce. Now we're all very familiar with the geography of the Middle East but going to places like Abu Dhabi and Dubai and Muscat and (Bushauer?) and places that then just...they were exotic.

Blanche Touhill: How did those Middle Eastern countries react to a woman soldier?

Barb Faulkenberry: You know, it was interesting because we always dressed modestly and that meant, to cover your elbows and your knees and to not have tight clothing on and so, of course, I did that. I've been to the Middle East since 1983, which was my first time there, and an awful lot of times between then and now. I saw the Middle East move to the right, more conservative, much like our country did, for an era in the Reagan years, of kind of moving to the right and, quite frankly, I think the region continues...a lot of the region is becoming more conservative. So, my first time when I went to the Middle East, I wore three-quarter length dresses, skirts, and a blousy shirt. The last time I was in Saudi, when we went down, I wore an Abuya, a black gown and a head covering of my hair and that was much more recent.

Blanche Touhill: That's a fascinating...

Barb Faulkenberry: Where we used to stay in Saudi Arabia, it used to be in a hotel in the City of Riyadh. Then we moved to two bases far from locations after the bombing in Dhahran that took so many American lives.

Blanche Touhill: I don't know how to phrase this exactly but when you go in the service, you are putting your body on the line. Did that affect you? You must have to accept it...

Barb Faulkenberry: We talked about it a lot at the Air Force Academy. Any military member needs to understand that when they go into the military, they are going to be told to do things that can put them in harm's way and the beauty of young Americans which I look at the Americans who have come in in a post attack on September 11th and they knew they were entering a military where they would go to war and the selflessness of individual Americans, to put their life on the line for their nation and the ideals of their nation and especially for the person on their right and left. The stories of heroism are phenomenal in this time and Americans have been heroic in this time and, as you know, we've lost over 4,500 servicemen in this time of war. So, yes, you have to think that through. You have to be ready to put your life on the line.

Blanche Touhill: As you moved up the ranks, what were those experiences, and moved around the world, would you talk a little bit about your life and where you've been. I guess you've been all over the world.

Barb Faulkenberry: I've travelled all over the world. The diversity of the military is what makes it fascinating and just kind of a snapshot of my responsibilities: as a colonel so Year 20ish of the military, in the Pentagon, I had the responsibility for our military relationships with the Western Hemisphere. So, okay, that's a big job, of helping in the Western Hemisphere. I had a job on the Conventional Arms Control negotiation in Europe to provide our state colleagues military advice. I've been the director of Logistics and U.S. Africa command and so, all of our activities with Africa: Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine type of activities vastly exercises. I facilitated that through Logistics and in the Combat Operations we had in Libya. I had a job in California where my responsibilities were to prepare the ground processes and airmen that allowed airlift airplanes to fly anywhere we wanted to do in the Pacific and be used efficiently and effectively. So we

had the airmen on the ground who could fix the airplanes, who could off-load the airplanes, who could command and control and so that vast Pacific enterprise, and now I'm the vice commander of 18th Air Force and we have 39,000 airmen, and every day we're flying all over the globe to bring airlift, air refueling and aeronautical evacuation to the United States military.

Blanche Touhill: When you get into those jobs, do you have the training necessary to carry them out?

Barb Faulkenberry: The wonderful thing about the military is our leadership development processes are the education that we invest in in our people. Early today, I was on the computer because we had a class of our youngest people, people who have been in the military five years and we had taken five days in their day out of their productive work. It was a computer session. So we gave them a session. I was only one presenter and I presented a little bit on leadership and a little bit about the role of the 18th Air Force and I use that example of, the Air Force invests in its people. We give them training, experiences and education so they're ready to take the next level. The military has invested almost three years of academic training on higher learning for me. I've had a developmental assignment where I was given exposure to the highest levels of the military's leadership in government when I was a captain, lots of different things but they always throw you into the deep end right past where you think you might be and 99% of the time, people excel out there. So you haven't done it before but you have the experiences, the development that you will succeed in that position, and they're always pushing you higher.

Blanche Touhill: Weren't you in the remote islands in the Pacific one time?

Barb Faulkenberry: I've been all over the Pacific.

Blanche Touhill: No, I'm sorry, in the Indian Ocean or something, didn't you get assigned for six months in...

Barb Faulkenberry: Vastly, my long assignments forward have been throughout the Middle East.

Blanche Touhill: Well, in the Middle East someplace, but you were alone or you were one of the few generals or...

Barb Faulkenberry: You know, I've been in leadership positions and not with a lot of women colleagues of my rank.

Blanche Touhill: I see. Well, maybe that's what was meant.

Barb Faulkenberry: You know, I think...it's interesting, at the higher...I can remember a really funny e-mail when I was at the Pentagon and I was a lieutenant colonel at the time and I had to e-mail for the first time a senior woman and I didn't...you know, you hear "Ma'am" and "Sir" but how do you type "Ma'am" and I remember going, well, actually, I've never written it before because I've never had a senior woman to talk to and it was so funny because I think I did do it "M-a-'-a-m" and the senior woman who was a general at the time...I was a colonel...she e-mailed me back and she said, "Barb, is that what you used?" It's like we were all going, "Hey, we don't know how to know if there's...to address a woman higher than us" because we hadn't had one before.

Blanche Touhill: Well, you must have gone into a lot of places where you were the first woman that came but do you want to comment on that at all?

Barb Faulkenberry: You know, I have been in a variety of positions. I've been behind the true trail blazers so...

Blanche Touhill: But you were second or third.

Barb Faulkenberry: I was second or third.

Blanche Touhill: I would say that's a trail blazer too.

Barb Faulkenberry: But I really attribute those women who began to fly in 1976, the ones that came into the Air Force Academy in 1976. The women generals of the time that...the first women generals. You couldn't even be a woman as a general in the Air Force until 1967. I mean, it was against the law. It was colonels, you were capped at colonels. So there's just been one door after another opened and the last door to open in the United States military is for full combat. Now, women have flown fighter aircraft and bomber aircraft over enemy territory since the mid '90s. That was open only in the mid '90s, 1996 but just earlier this year, it was announced that full combat, so ground combat, would be open in 2016 and services basically were not allowed to prohibit women from coming in, to set the standards and women had to meet the standards. So, that's a

developmental process we're going through now, to set the standards because some of our standards were not set on requirement. It just was because we always did it that way. So they said, "How much weight do you have to carry? How long do you have to go? What are these aspects?" and the first women have graduated from Marine Corps combat training just literally, in the last few weeks. So we're on a journey where you will not have any artificial limitations to maximizing everyone's contributions. Perhaps the number of women who can succeed in ground combat or who want to go into ground combat will be lower but there will be no one who can say no to a fully qualified woman.

Blanche Touhill: What are the opportunities for women in the service today?

Barb Faulkenberry: I would say the sky is the limit, but then we should go into space because they are limitless. There is no career field that is off limits. There is nothing that prohibits a woman from meeting her full potential. Now, I'm not going to say it's going to be easy necessarily. One, it's not easy as a man to obtain those high standards and high ranks, but I do think women have some special challenges to do that and certainly that still exists, but policy speaking, we've now taken away any policy that would limit what the United States military can get out of the women of this country and, as world travelers, as many people are, but the thing that strikes me in all of my travels is America is as good as she is because she, almost alone, has shown how to accept radically different peoples from racism, religions and ethnic cultures and every different thing you can think of. We assimilate in the United States very, very, well. Then, we take away, slowly, sometimes ever so slowly, but we take away artificial limitations to potential. And so with a nation that has all of its wonderful manpower and it seeks to say, contribute to your highest potential, that nation is going to succeed economically, politically, because their best will come forward and the best of the world will want to come here. So it's not to say we don't have our problems but we have a structure and a philosophy that we must safeguard that allows people to meet their potential.

Blanche Touhill: Do you want to comment on the problems that some women have met in the service, where they have been harassed?

Barb Faulkenberry: This continues to be a problem in the military and in our society. The United States military, just like society, has long had a problem with individuals who may seek to sexually or assault women.

Blanche Touhill: And, I guess, men as well?

Barb Faulkenberry: And men as well. The statistics are not as high as women but it is not a sole...

Blanche Touhill: It's present?

Barb Faulkenberry: Yes, and it's male on female; female on male; male on male; female...I mean, you can just go across the gamut. So there is a group of people that have not gotten the message about, that this is intolerable, and the military itself has changed in its understanding of the negative impacts of, again, limiting the potential of some of their people. Things that used to be okay, as our society has changed, is not okay and, of course, we've seen that same evolution in every profession and we really have to do a fundamental culture change that says: harassment, assault is incompatible with military service and will actually get you completely removed from that service. So we've gone through some policy changes. We always use the fairness principles of, you're innocent before proven guilty and that we go through due process, we have a rigorous due process system, but we have the attention of the highest levels of our military. There's a realization of, we do have a problem and we are aggressively fixing it and we're going to keep our attention on it. But I'd, unfortunately, say that I believe that we have this problem throughout our society. It's in our schools; it's in our society. So I think we all need to tackle this as robustly as the military is and perhaps we will begin to turn the tide.

Blanche Touhill: If you had been born 50 years earlier, what would your life be like?

Barb Faulkenberry: Fifty years earlier, I would have probably been even more radical than I probably appear to be now sometimes. With the limitations of the time, I would probably have been a lot more frustrated than I've been now, but I would hope to be like my grandmother, so 50 years ago, she would have been in her 50's or 60's as a matter of fact, and when she traveled...and this might have been around the 1950's...she used to like to go to rocks, quarries and really enjoyed getting out in nature and so she took her hair and she stuffed it up under a ball cap so she wouldn't be harassed and

she drove solo out long distances to these remote parts of the area to look for different rocks and gems. I hope I would have still been on my bike and still been looking for rocks and being out like my grandmother was.

Blanche Touhill: Do you want to talk about any awards you've gotten over the years that mean something very special?

Barb Faulkenberry: You know, I was a racquetball champ and 12-time military champion. I've had different things. You know, maybe one award I talk about is this one and, you know, these little military decorations, for someone in the military...everyone has a story, some better than others, but this one has a good story and it talks to raising young girls confidently and then the value of being physically fit and kind of comfortable with your body. But the story goes: when I was in nav training, so this was right at the beginning of my career, there were three of us girls, it was in the middle of the morning...

Blanche Touhill: What's nav training?

Barb Faulkenberry: Navigation training, so I was learning to become a navigator but I had an evening simulator, so I was going to go in a box with knobs and stuff and train but, because of the sim timelines, it was a nighttime event. So I had the morning off. We're out for a bicycle ride in Sacramento along the American River, beautiful; you're right there in the capitol city of California but a little bit in the woods, down by the river on a bike. My first girlfriend was up further; the other two were back here, and I heard her cry for help. I hear a cry for help. I knew it was my friend because I recognized her voice. So biked up there quick and I saw a man on top of her. The bike had crashed on the bike path and they were just off the bike path and he was straddling her, on top of her. So, I jumped off my bike, tackled him like I had played tackle football in my front yard with the boys earlier in life...tackled him off of her, yelled for the other girl to go get help. She, being a runner, not a biker, dropped her bike, began to run and ran, ran, ran. My friend who had been attacked and I wrestled with him. He decided he just wanted to get away. We decided we didn't want him to get away and so I had unarmed combat at the Air Force Academy and I had had a class with all men in my physical education class and I remember the choke holds they taught us. So I choked him and she basically held his legs and we subdued him and he stopped trying to get

away and, long story short, 45 minutes later, help came and we took him to court. He was convicted, had just been out of jail for seven days for raping a woman that he found by herself and he went back to prison. So, I don't know if it's an award or not, it's a ribbon, but that's one that I was blessed, to have the training and the confidence, that we were able to, one, make sure my friend wasn't hurt, and two, to put someone who needed to be in jail back in jail.

Blanche Touhill: I'd be as proud of that as you are. The others are wonderful stories but that is...well, that's really the small story of what the other ribbons stand for, that you're protecting the nation, as part of a group in the others, but that, you were protecting a citizen and that's very special. Talk about the International Women's Forum and your relationship to it. How did you get to know about them and...

Barb Faulkenberry: Well, that's actually a wonderful organization and a great story. Carol Coxwaite, an International Women's Forum member, had lobbied Congress and got an earmark in the Department of Education grant of \$25,000 for a woman employed in the federal government to be part of the Leadership Development Program that IWF puts on and I was selected as the first DOD selectee for that program in 2006. I didn't quite, again, know what I was getting into. This was kind of a theme of my life, but applied and then found a community of wildly successful women, diverse across careers, continents and perspectives, that were interested in reaching to the next generation of women leaders who had potential and bringing them forward and I was part of that program where they looked out and reached out. So in that program, we had 16 in my class, 8 of them from across the globe, from Israel to Jordan, Hong Kong, Spain, Canada, Mexico, United States, all very diverse in their careers and it was a one-year program of just three individual weeks with reading and collaboration oftentimes, but then, kind of opened an opportunity to connect to this group of women. The second year of this fellowship program is a chance to commit yourself in your first year of thinking, what do you want your legacy to be; create your legacy in the second year, to work on it. My legacy was connecting these wildly successful women with the United States military. They were all very well traveled, very knowledgeable about broad areas, but not exposed as much to the military. So I thought, with this, I could expose them to their military, which we all pay for in our taxes and I could bring women's leadership

very different principles of leadership into the military leadership which is very good but also very insular in its view of leadership. So, I've been out on that journey, quite frankly, ever since and I've done some pretty neat things. When the Thunderbirds went to Southern California, I reached out to the Forum down there, brought five diverse women into a dine-around in Southern California; opened Travis Air Force Base in North California to allow people to come and experience the breadth of the mission set at Travis; had an extension, an open invitation in Germany, where I had that Africa command responsibility and exposed some senior leaders to our U.S. military relationship with the continent of Africa and Europe; in St. Louis, I've opened Scott Air Force Base to allow the women here back in, I believe it was 2008, to come over to Scott and learn a little bit more about Scott Air Force Base, and, of course, we have our plans for the future. So, that's been a neat thing, to be able to play that role.

Blanche Touhill: Just talk about anything you think is important, like, who opened doors for you or who went a little ahead of you or people that you want to say were very instrumental in your development.

Barb Faulkenberry: Well, as I said, I have not been on THE leading edge. I've been right behind that leading edge. For people who have been stalwarts in the military as well as community leadership, locally, I think of Barbara Turkington and Barbara had a full career in the military and yet there were so many doors closed to her. She's only...the difference in our ages is less than 10 years and yet, it was a very different military. I look at the women like yourself and those...Marilyn Mann, Susan Elliot and so many others that have been in roles of global leadership where they've truly expanded the opportunities for women and I have certainly benefited from all those and I hope to have played my role so that those behind me have a better chance at it. It's all about taking down barriers.

Blanche Touhill: Yes, it is, and has it been easy?

Barb Faulkenberry: It may not have been easy but it's been fun and I can't say...I mean, there's been some frustrating times but I've had a phenomenal career of great opportunities. I've done well and I still have a neat future ahead of me.

Blanche Touhill: Anything else you want to talk about?

Barb Faulkenberry: Well, very briefly: Scott Air Force Base, it's just so close to us in St. Louis. The fourth largest employer in St. Louis, the St. Louis region, so it's huge for St. Louis itself. It's the number one employer south of Springfield, in Illinois. So it was a very important location, the hub of joint transportation in the military and the hub of air mobility command and I'll just tell you what we have on our plate today: the president of the United States went down to President Mandela's funeral service in the stadium just yesterday. We did that with no notice when President Mandela passed away last Thursday. Today, we are on the ground in (Ntebi?) in the middle of Africa because the United States is committed to helping the African union support peace keepers to settle unrest in the Central African Republic. So we have crews on the ground ready to bring the Burundian military forces into the Central African Republic. So we have that going. We have crews throughout this globe, flying important air refueling and airlift missions and then every day we're saving lives through the aeronautical evacuation, bringing wounded home from Afghanistan in a literal ICU that we can put in the back of an airplane. So, being associated with those great professionals and the United States military is something I'm very proud to be a small part of.

Blanche Touhill: When you set out on your adventures on your bicycle, carrying your necessities with you and now you talk about all the things that you're doing at Scott Air Force Base, it's been a wonderful journey.

Barb Faulkenberry: It has been a phenomenal journey.

Blanche Touhill: Well, thank you very much.

Barb Faulkenberry: Thank you, Blanche.