

Name: Bonnie Reed

Position: Administrative Services Manager

Fire Department: Riverside County Fire Department/CDF, California

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- 1) What branch and unit were you in? *Army, Ft. Bragg 18th Airborne Corps HQ, (went in as WAC but eliminated program in '76). Handled casualties as an NCO, burial detail, handling POW/MIA records.*
- 2) What was your highest rank? *Buck Sgt*
- 3) Are you still enlisted as a reservist or National Guard? *Reserves till 1984.*
- 4) Why did you join the service? *Went in because husband went in (buddy system), husband ended up in Ft. Ord.*
- 5) What did you like the most about being in? *Camaraderie, patriotism, defending our country, Dad was in the military, so we lived in Ft. Leavenworth, Morocco, lots of places. Gives you a good perspective on how great it is living in the U.S.*
- 6) What did you like the least? *Pay and food weren't greatest, but being in was one of the best times of my life, set me up for life and what I do today.*
- 7) What moment most defined your military experience? *Commendation letter from General Werner I received being promoted to Specialist 5. When they abolished the WACs and changed to "one man's army", no more segregation between the genders, uniforms became unisex. Another moment was being involved in an motorcycle accident while riding a motorcycle by the base and the guy who hit me seeing all my long hair when my helmet was removed, saying "You're a girl!", something he hadn't expected when he looked at the Army uniform. My picture ended up on the front of Army Times as a result! Changing the perception of people at that time that a woman could serve with the guys even with all the slang was an uphill battle, but worth it. Definitely a good experience.*
- 8) What made you choose firefighting as a career? *Went to work in hospitals down in San Diego when I processed out. Went from admin in the emergency rooms to doing disaster preparedness. Hired by Kaiser full-time as a disaster planner. When County OES had an opening 10 years ago, I applied for it.*
- 9) What do you like the most about firefighting? *Helping people plan for a major event (like a forest fire or other disaster), helping the system so that it can help the people. Working with people from officials to power company workers who are passionate about the job they do. You hear too much about the incompetence and wastage in agencies handling disasters, but there are really lots of great people helping behind the scenes to restore normalcy to people's lives after a disaster.*
- 10) What do you like least about firefighting? *The lack of preparedness funding to support our Fire and Emergency Management agency, the federal funding that is lacking to build hardened facilities, especially with the switchover to a terrorism focus after 9/11, but it's finally switching slowly back to natural disasters since Katrina.*