An Interview with

LONNI J. WERSAL

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Conducted by Thomas J. Misa

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Abstract

Lonni Wersal graduated from Highland Park High School in 1975, then took an entry-level clerical position at Sperry in Eagan, Minnesota, in 1977. With her manager's encouragement, she took programming classes at St. Paul Vo-Tech. She subsequently worked in a variety of positions, as administrator for software engineering for UYK-20 (1981-89), as technical and programmatic support for several Navy projects including Aegis (1989-94), and as product manager for the Q-70 program (1994-2002), one of the Navy's first Commercial Off The Shelf (COTS) projects. She describes reporting requirements to the Navy during the several corporate transitions (Unisys to Lockheed Martin) as well as her move to Dahlgren, Virginia, in 2002 to work at a Navy Aegis program office. She discusses informal networks of women at Lockheed Martin.

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Misa: My name is Tom Misa. It's the 14th of January 2016, and I'm talking this evening with Lonni Wersal. We're doing a set of interviews with women who have had experience working in the industry from the 1960s through the 1990s. I know, Lonni, that your work continues today. I wonder if you could take us back to your childhood years or your high school years. Were there any activities, or hobbies, or things that you did or your family did, or even school subjects that might have paved the way toward your later pursuit of a career in technology?

Wersal: My father was a logistics engineer at Univac, Sperry, Sperry Unisys when the changes went through at the time. But he started there. I really didn't have any interest in understanding or knowing what my father was doing at the time. In high school, I enjoyed algebra, math courses, science. I guess I always thought I'd go into business law, or that was what I thought at the time when I was in high school. Then after I graduated with honors, I was planning to go to the University of Minnesota, actually.

Misa: Which high school were you at? You were here in the Twin Cities?

Wersal: Yes, Highland Park Senior High School.

Misa: Okay, sure.

Wersal: I graduated in 1975. Then I met my husband the year I graduated, or my future husband, and we got married in 1978, and started when he was an over-the-road truck

driver, two years older than I was. And he wanted to own his own business and tried to figure out a way to make that work for him. So I kept college on the back burner, and I ended up knowing that I needed to get a job that would pay benefits for both of us, since he was going to be an independent trucker at the time. So I ended up taking an entry position in 1977 at Sperry in Eagan, Minnesota, working for the software engineering group supporting Navy contracts. The director that I worked for got me interested in programming classes and started taking some classes at St. Paul Vo-Tech. I worked with some of the people, or they mentored me, I guess, in kind of an informal setting but I started working more with the Navy contracts and the software engineering group.

Misa: Lonni, in terms of high school, it would not have been common, but did you have any contact with computing or computers at the time?

Wersal: Not really. Even when I first started at Sperry, I started out in an entry level, like a secretarial position, and we didn't even really have desktop computers when I started. We just didn't. But I started taking classes at St. Paul Vo-Tech, that's when I started getting into some programming classes at my manager's [urging]. He guided me on some places to start, so that's what I did.

Misa: So the programming classes would be basic programming languages?

Wersal: Yes. It seems like a long time ago, now. But I ended up getting more involved in administrative work and kind of veering away from the programming side of things. I

think initially. Working with people in the organization I went from secretary to administrator, and they moved me around through the various [groups]. There was the hardware engineering group, the software engineering group, the drafting organizations; I ended up being an administrator for the director of the Navy programs at Sperry, at the time. I started working with the various directors and got exposed to the hardware engineering director who gave me some guidelines, and I started seeing how everything fit together. My first several years were with the software engineering group, and so I had contacts with the Navy people associated with that. And then I started working with the actual engineering group that built what ended up being the Q-70 program, is what I ended up on. I worked on UYK-7, UYK-20, USQ-69 as an administrator and an analyst working with program managers. We'd do program planning, charting, bookings, and got familiar with the marketing side of things.

Misa: So the work that you'd be doing, how close to — I'm just trying to understand — when you're saying the administrative side, would you be like trying to do contract administration? Or how close to the Navy and the contracting was this? Or was this more like project management? I'd just like to understand a bit more about the character of [your] work.

Wersal: When I first started out — I don't know, I have a bit of a timeline here — so it was clerical from 1977 to 1981, and then 1981 through 1989 I was an administrator supporting UYK-20 software engineering organization, preparing budgets, coordination of program management organization, planning initiatives associated with the

development of UYK-20 software products including Aegis deliverables. [I'm] currently still working with the Aegis program office, now today. Organization included responsibility for UYK-20 software used by the fire control system and/or its customer, and internal organization meetings, database reports, scheduling tools, tracking or problem reports, action items in progress, and strategy meetings. That was from 1981 through 1989. In 1989-94, I started working technical and programmatic support for UYK-7, UYK-20, USQ-69, MMSP, and USQ-69B equipment being procured by the Navy from Unisys at the time, including Aegis shipbuilding. Perform analysis of Sperry requirements, forecasting parts, system production requirements, utilized open plan scheduling tools, modeled process flows, and all that. I don't know how much information you want.

Misa: We know that these technical projects are massively complicated and understanding your piece in this very large organization is actually really helpful. So that description of your jobs, it's perfect. Thank you. [Laughs.]

Wersal: Okay, in this timeframe, 1989-94, responsibilities included developing processes, control standards, participation in all parts of equipment development process, including engineering, change control, quality assurance, program management, logistic support. I sat in on change control review boards, technical interchange meetings, as part of an ongoing responsibility. So from 1994 to 2002, I had different activities going on. I was a product manager for the Q-70 program in Eagan [Minnesota] at the time it started transitioning to Lockheed Martin. I performed within a set of IPTs for the technical and

programmatic functions of the Q-70 family of equipment and I received an Excellence Award during that timeframe. [I] served as the Aegis customer interface, point of contact for Aegis Baseline 6 Phase 1, 6 Phase 3, and 7 Phase 1. Participated in change evaluation board, representing Eagan production interests; worked on the ordering data sheets, change forms, advance change notices, engineering change proposals, ensuring proper correlation of equipment software and operating environment compatibility. Served as the Navy customer interface for the C2P program Mark 160, Mark 46, programs for Q-70 products. Coordinated a tech refresh upgrade for Baseline 6 Phase 1 Aegis equipment to 6 Phase 3, working with PMS 440 and PMS 400 personnel. So we brought baseline 6-1 up to 6 Phase 3 level of equipment. Additionally, assisted in coordination of production requirements for Aegis International programs, including Spain, Norway, Japan, Netherlands, and Germany. Provided technical assistance and coordination for Aegis Virginia sites equipment, including forecasting requirements, tracking actual status, and providing recommendations. I was the Q-70 Product Assurance Team Lead, and had oversight responsibility for Q-70 IP teams receiving several Mission Success Awards. Coordinated end of life procurement for Q-70 management; program management organizations assure accurate forecast and appropriate procurements; enabling efficient forward fit and back fit Aegis applications; provided technical and programmatic input to establish Q-70 features for placement of contract ordering options, particular in response to diminishing supply considerations. I still sit in, today, on Aegis DMS in my current job.

Misa: Lonni, at one point in time we were talking about product assurance — that sounds like quality assurance?

Wersal: We had a PAT team that represented the customers for a link to Q-70 products. We had to, whenever there was a change to a product because Q-70 was the first Navy COTS program that became ruggedized COTS or modified COTS that were used in [pause]

Misa: That's Commercial Off The Shelf . . .

Wersal: Correct.

Misa: . . .that was the first big shift that Sperry had to navigate because of course, they'd been doing all these proprietary computers for decades.

Wersal: Right, militarized. And we still have some in the Aegis fleet, like UYK-43s, UYK-44s, Q-70 was the spinoff from UYK-43 and 44 equipment types. Because for so long all those ships had mostly very expensive computers and they went to Q-70 that ended up being maybe $100,000-200,000 for computing equipment that could be produced in six-month timeframes.

Misa: Right.

Wersal: We had a six-month build schedule that we had to maintain. But as it being COTS, you know there were custom OEM changes that we had to track and Aegis ships are known for many years to build a baseline, and they want that baseline to have the same parts, for the entire baseline. So they would buy the baseline, and would buy 12 ships' worth, and 6 sites worth of equipment. We would coordinate lifetime buys and the product assurance team that we sat on would make sure we would notify the customer of any OEM-driven changes that could affect their computing programs aboard the Navy ships.

Misa: You mentioned [that] during this time there was the transition to ownership by Lockheed Martin. Would you have any observations about the changes that might've accompanied that, in terms of your work, or the work environment, or corporate culture, things like that?

Wersal: I'm not sure I followed that question. Could you explain it?

Misa: Sure, let me try again. It happened over a number of years, Sperry ended up being reorganized and became part of Unisys, and then bought by I think two other [companies] before Lockheed Martin ended up being the parent.

Wersal: We have Burroughs, and Loral, and [pause]

Misa: Right. I'm just wondering if you experienced any of those changes in the corporate organization to have an impact on your work.

Wersal: Well the impact it had, depending on who we were reporting to — especially when we had this Q-70 program evolving — and once we got Aegis under contract to take Q-70, I mean, that wasn't a given when I first started. Everybody that took over — Sperry, Burroughs, or Loral, to Lockheed — we had to report out any booking information, any quantities, by ship, site, by program, proposed international, and U.S. Navy at any given moment. We had to be able to produce all these reports that said what was coming in and from that standpoint, and plus you know we were working different. We were trying to save money and have DRS was one of the companies that took over the build from the engineering design at Lockheed, to put together the Q-70 equipment for the consoles. And so we had to provide any information we were getting from the Navy for the builds, and the production requirements to DRS contract. They'd walk into our offices and want — it was sometimes a challenge to try and keep everyone happy with everything happening. And on a six-month production build, you know, things were changing. We had to stage units by ship, by customer, multiple customers each. I had the surface groups that were Aegis. C2P, SSDS, Land Based Test Sites [LBTS], so we had to stack everyone's requirements on a timeline in six-month window, and try and meet each program's requirements. We had to report out financially so other people could figure out their [schedule] to buy the products they needed to make these builds happen in six months. We had to work with the procurement office for the COTS parts and so there

was, to me, it was challenging to try and get everything done on a quick turn program plus the changes in the management structure.

Misa: Sounded like you had an element of continuity though, which is the relationships to the Navy.

Wersal: Yes, I always worked Navy programs. I guess from 1994 forward, I've been supporting primarily surface ships. I did some subsurface, initially, but got too involved with the surface so they had to hire more people to help. I did some foreign military sales.

Misa: Did you have direct personal contact with Navy personnel or the Navy officers who might've been monitoring contracts, or been involved with doing the interface with either Sperry or later with Lockheed Martin?

Wersal: Yes, as the production manager in our Q-70 programs for Aegis, we had to present to the Navsea Program Office (PMS400**)** personnel, plus Navy. We had people from the Aegis training center that came in for the production reviews, we'd have those quarterly. Now, in my current job, we deal directly with the ships and configuration of equipment aboard the ships. Now we work with Port Hueneme Division [PHD], the ISEAs, and the Navy branch here in Dahlgren is what I'm currently supporting.

Misa: And it's Dahlgren in Virginia?

Wersal: Yes.

Misa: Got it.

Wersal: But we would go to the Washington office, and we had meetings in the Washington Navy Yard. Toward the end of my career with Lockheed they moved their offices to the Washington Navy Yard, and Lockheed moved an office on M Street, and I was supporting that office from Eagan. We'd come out to D.C. for reviews.

Misa: It sounds like you were in the Twin Cities, in Eagan, for the first part of your career, then you moved to Virginia. Is that correct?

Wersal: Yes, I worked for Lockheed in Eagan, Minnesota for 25 years. Then I moved to Dahlgren in 2002.

Misa: 2002, okay.

Wersal: I've been here since.

Misa: Lonni, did you have any experience bringing together — I'm thinking prior to 2002 — bringing together teams to do this highly technical and demanding work, both in terms of the corporate context, also in terms of the Navy. Were you involved in bringing teams together, hiring people, or recruiting teams to do this work?

Wersal: For a period of time for about the last four years I was there, I was the production manager and I had four employees reporting to me. I was managing the Aegis programs and had one person managing SSDS, one person managing subsurface Trident, had an administrator managing the ordering process for all programs, and a finance manager, and worked with the procurement office. We had integrated groups we worked with and we would coordinate. Like we had a change review board that we represented Lockheed and the Q-70 program, for example, and we'd come out to Washington and meet with various representatives from the program offices, and the Navy offices, and the OEM suppliers, to coordinate and got involved in the DMS working group, and planning strategies for buys, and bridge buys to maintain a baseline. So worked with people from Lockheed divisions in Moorestown, that was Martin Marietta, initially, and we worked closely with them.

Misa: That was in New Jersey, is that correct?

Wersal: Yes. Moorestown, New Jersey. I worked with them. We had some connections in Manassas, and toward the end, we were working with Lockheed divisions in Keyport. There were other groups that were working — air traffic control — but Q-70 was in E2C and some of that was the airborne products, and I had some initial involvement with those programs.

Misa: My understanding is that the air traffic control was a pretty large group. Someone told me about 180 or something, and they had a pretty tight sense of who they were. In other words, people went and worked in air traffic control for a long time. But it sounds like you had some contact with that group. I didn't understand how Q-70 would fit into air traffic control.

Wersal: There was an air program, E2C, I was initially involved with some of the early parts of that. But we had people in the building working air traffic control programs, and there was some interfaces for commonality, but for the most part I've always been Navy and surface programs. But I know people who worked in air traffic control. There's still a division there and some of the Eagan folks, when Lockheed Eagan shut down in 2012, ended up going to a smaller group. I think there's about 300 people all supporting air traffic programs in Eagan today.

Misa: 300, it's a pretty sizeable group.

Wersal: Yes, I think they're starting to, might be going away slowly, from what I hear. I'm hearing there may be some downsizing.

Misa: Lonni, I wonder if I could circle back to your experience as a manager. Can you tell me if you were trying to assemble or recruit a team, what kinds of people did you look for? Were there any characteristics in terms of their technical skills, of course, but

also team skills, or their communications, were there things that you looked for that made for a particularly effective team?

Wersal: I think it gets back to why I think I moved. Being a woman in that situation. Because, yes, most of my work was direct interface to the customer, the Aegis program office, and making sure all those responsibilities were maintained by me. And because I was successful doing that, when Q-70 spun off into the other branches of the Navy, and the other programs, we tried to recruit people that could build the same relationships with those programs that I had built. But doing that, then once you get these people involved, they don't want — I found, anyhow — that most of the time they didn't want my oversight into their program because they felt that they had their own customer base that they had maintained. Although they had to answer to bring in; into the meetings, we had to coordinate and make sure from a booking and production standpoint, we could stage their needs against all the program needs. So it is hard, especially if you have other women reporting to you. I don't mean to sound negative on it, but I feel it's easier to do the technical research and have the customer interfaces, and work independently is better for me. I enjoy finding out all the details. I like to do the research and make sure everything is accurate. I sometimes, I think, get over the top. You know, I want to be sure everything's ready before I pass it on to the customer and it's a hard thing to do if you're also trying to manage people and they're not necessarily willing to do it the same way you think it should be done.

Misa: Right.

Wersal: In my experience, most of the directors, the program directors, and the people interested in the information we brought to the table - the leads were primarily men, and men don't — in my opinion —want any conflict within the organization, so if you have these production managers, and in my case there were four women running production program for Q-70, for the various Navy programs. The men didn't really necessarily want to hear if there were any issues, they just wanted the work to be done. So a lot of times it seems like they would — not put blinders on — but pretty much only want to hear if there was an issue that was going to be programmatic, they didn't want to hear if there were conflicts or organizational issues.

Misa: Lonni, you mentioned that there were four women, if I understood right that were running production for the Q-70 at one point in time. Was that notable or did that kind of clustering of women happen frequently?

Wersal: We were in the production side, the product managers for the various different U.S. Navy programs, for the most part. But we interfaced with the program finance group, and a lot of the people in the program finance group were women, and the contract managers, a lot of them were women. So I don't know if you could call it a cluster or whatever, but I think some of the leads, there were a lot of program leads that were women in the various [areas] — you know, the financial side, the marketing side. Seemed like there were mostly guys that were in the procurement group that we worked with.

There were a few women program managers I worked with, not many, though. Most of them were men that were program mangers or directors.

Misa: And program managers would be up reasonably high in terms of level of supervision, is that correct? There's project managers, but would program managers be one step above a project manager?

Wersal: Yes, that's the way it was, anyhow, in our organization. I was a product manager and so I was managing primarily in the last several years at Lockheed, the Q-70 program. You know, the Aegis baseline was fairly large. You have 12 ships per baseline and anywhere from 30-40 Q-70 equipment types on each ship, and Aegis has five or six land-based test sites that also get a baseline lab installed, and has to be maintained. So it's almost easier to work independently as a product manager, making sure all those baselines are being maintained and their equipment is planned and managed and updated. They went through tech refreshes and we had to coordinate all the elements that would go into the tech refresh, and we had to work like with the training organization for installing those kits on the ships once they were upgraded. We had to work with production floor to make sure our COTS parts were all getting ordered. We had to direct the procurement organization to order the parts from the various OEM suppliers, to make sure they were received to support a six-month build. There was a lot of activity going on so it was much easier to be an individual than be managing people in addition to that.

Misa: You mentioned that there were different women in finance and marketing; guys were in procurement. I'm wondering if there were any informal networks of the women at the Eagan plant, so not the formal relationships with the people that you were interacting with, but some kind of a networking or support group that might have been present? Anything like that?

Wersal: There were kind of informal networks or groups that would get together and, I mean, we all had kids at the same time. There was a group of us that had our daughters in dance, you know, so we were involved in things that were going on in their lives. Just this past year, a dear friend that I worked with at Lockheed passed away from breast cancer, but we went in May and did the Mother's Day Walk and I was there with several of the women from Lockheed. My friend was still alive during the walk, but some of my friends from the product assurance team were there. A contract manager that we worked with was there. One of the people from the marketing group that had marketed the projects to the Aegis program was there. These were all women that got together and were walking together. We developed an informal network and still stay in touch today. I worked with the CM group, the data management group or the Configuration Management group, and there were people that were part of the part marking plan, and the logistics group. So not only did we end up working together on the Q-70 project, but then we'd be on like bowling teams after work. You know, nothing formal, but [pause]

Misa: So you'd have social time with colleagues.

Wersal: Over beers, and yes.

Misa: I'm just wondering if the social time ever lead to insights about your working experience. You get to know people but people talk about this is going really well, or may have had a good meeting, or a frustrating meeting. Did you end up talking about work things or was it really more just peer social networking and enjoyment?

Wersal: Always work would come into it. We'd have golf outings or different things, and you'd say you weren't going to talk about work, but then you always end up talking about it. You did get some insights from some of the people that I worked with in the finance group, and the contract group. They dealt with some of the same people, some of them that were reporting to me at the time or they also had dealings with. We'd kind of informally talk about what worked for them when dealing with them on other tasks, related tasks but not one that I had accountability over.

Misa: Right.

Wersal: So, yes, I think I got insights from typically, it was other women working in the organization working on the same program but a little different capacity.

Misa: So you could share insights or share some tips and help each other out, really.

Wersal: Yes. I remember before Lockheed took over, all the secretaries reported in to the program manager, or the director, or whoever they directly reported and supported. When Lockheed took over at one point in time, they decided that the secretaries would report to women managers, and that didn't last. [Laughs.]

Misa: All of the secretaries would just be reorganized somehow?

Wersal: Yes, and they would be ranked and their financial gains or losses would not reside with the person they supported, or worked with directly, as far as like if you were working, usually, you'd be supporting a program/project area. When I was a secretary they didn't have this secretarial group that was managed by four women, I think, at the time; later, that was in like the 1990s, maybe. But it was just a nightmare because the secretaries felt, for the most part, that they should be graded and their performance should be monitored by the person that they were working for, and the program/project they were supporting.

Misa: Right.

Wersal: Not this group of managers that had a secretarial pool, if you would. That came in and it didn't really last very long. They promoted some of the top secretaries to top management but the secretaries reporting to them never bought into it. It died. But at the same time it started, that's when all the personal computers came in and more of the managers, I mean, a lot of the line managers were doing their own e-mails and reporting

in. They didn't have a secretary doing their day-to-day interfaces, like they did before. And so there weren't as many, there were a few department secretaries but the way it was when I first started, that wasn't going on so much anymore. You had a production organization that did all the presentations. It wasn't a secretary doing it anymore. That was a big change, I think.

Misa: So you participate in a lot of different computing, and one of those is the application of computing to the administrative and information management of the organization itself.

Wersal: Right.

Misa: Interesting to think about that.

Wersal: Yes. It transitioned quite a bit and by the time I left Lockheed, there was pretty much just a handful of secretaries and more individual workers were doing their own projects on their own computers and laptops.

Misa: Lonni, your work environment has been a complicated one and I'm wondering if it might be possible for you to just step back a little and reflect on your experience, and again focusing on prior to 2002. Did you notice any changes and you might say a climate for women doing this professional and technical work? Times when it was maybe a little easier or maybe a little harder. Notice any changes like that?

Wersal: The thing that I thought really bothered me the last maybe five years, I guess, at Lockheed were all the reorganizations and moving people around. They moved the product managers, my group, under the finance group, which made no sense. It wasn't something that we could control, and we still had to maintain our databases with the program managers, but that's when I started to think that something had to change because it wasn't helping our work. I remember I had received awards from my customers, and recognitions from the Aegis program office from different ships and sites, but that didn't have any impact or bearing on the program finance manager that I reported to, and who would judge my performance. So he just ended up doing it on a bell shaped curve where there would be this many people who are at one level and this many people at the next. So you'd be rated this way and that could adversely or might improve your financial gain. But as finances got tighter it didn't matter how well you performed on your program or what your customer thought, it was just where you fit in the bell shaped curve. It didn't reward performance, really.

Misa: You'd think that external award would count for something because after all, that's the customer. If you're being recognized by the customer, that would be good for the organization to also recognize you for that external recognition, if that makes sense.

Wersal: Yes, but that's not the way it worked for me, and I know of other people that felt that same way. I mean, in 2001, my husband [died] and that made me realize — I had lived most of my life in Minnesota. When I was young I lived in other places, but

between that and the way I saw the work going at Lockheed and the management style that was being forced on us, was when I made the decision [to leave]. I got the offer from an Aegis program office here in Dahlgren. They had attended some of the program reviews I did while working at Lockheed, and they picked me up and brought me out here.

Misa: Okay. I'm sure that must have been a difficult time for you.

Wersal: Yes. Well, the job changed. I think it changed for the better because I was working directly now with the Navy and the customer. You know it's basically the same job but not having to go through Lockheed to work directly with the [customer]. Since taking this job I've actually been on every baseline ship in Aegis, and at every port that we have ships at.

Misa: Each one of these 12 ships, is that right?

Wersal: There's 12 ships for any given Aegis Baseline. Well, some baselines have fewer ships, but Aegis does a baseline for a ship/class, right now we're at baseline 9, and there's 12 ships in this baseline. Yes, so I've been on at least one of every Aegis baseline ship. Some are in Norfolk, San Diego, Bath, Maine, Mayport, Florida, Pearl Harbor, Pascagoula, Everett, Washington. Working in the computer rooms, and with the sailors, taking equipment apart to verify it's compliant and performing. To me, that's been more interesting, working with, and seeing how the equipment is used on a ship, keeping it

working for fleet support. Lot of what I do right now is managing fleet support requisitions and compliant parts, I sit in on the DMS working group, and the hardware engineering review boards, and work with Port Hueneme - Navy Division, the Lockheed Divisions in Moorestown, and the OEM suppliers. I evolved into my own little niche, I guess, for support. Primarily fleet support, with everything they need.

Misa: Just so that I might understand your present work a little bit better, if there's a problem then, who do you tell? Who do you report the problem to, if you see an improvement or something?

Wersal: The thing is we all work independently. I was hired basically because I'm self-sufficient, and self-starter, and I know I do my work without a lot of oversight. My boss, when I was hired, he said he wouldn't be looking over my shoulder but I needed to know he wasn't far away if I had any issues. And that's worked really well. But if anything fails or succeeds, it's on my own head as a result.

Misa: I'm just trying to think in concrete terms, if you were talking to somebody in Hawaii or in Maine, and they made a suggestion, how would that suggestion be taken up and who would you report that suggestion to?

Wersal: We have government sponsors here at the Dahlgren Navy base, and if we get a recommendation from the fleet or from one of the land-based test sites, or the waterfront activities that are activating the ships, we take them back to the hardware review board.

It's a group of subject matter experts, if you will, I have something to bring to the table, and then we present it to the government customer and say we found this issue on DDG-52. We work with ship's force to troubleshoot it to find out whether it's hardware or if they have some kind of component that's failing. Then we do trend analysis, is this a recurring issue that we've seen on other ships, same baseline? And we try and reconcile it that way. Right now, we have a new baseline and we're just discovering things where the technical documentation is off from what we're actually seeing, and then the hardware configurations won't work. We just found it on a ship and compared it to the technical documentation for what was supposed to be on those ships, and found it to be different. But then you dig into it, and you look at a drawing, or you look into something else and you find out that the technical documentation needs to be updated. Just yesterday, I sat in a meeting with the program baseline leads representing each of the products that we found issues with, and working towards resolution. So, we have to redline their technical documentation and say this is what we saw on the ship, then this is how they're configuring it, and this is what the sailor says is and isn't working. Then we work toward reconciliation, and there are quarterly review boards that present information up to PEO ships, or the fleet support organization to reconcile. But we do have to report our findings and work with the baseline managers to resolve.

Misa: So it sounds like you've got more direct contact with the Navy than you had before. I mean, you still had contact but now you're interacting with Navy people in a more direct fashion without a large company around you, but you still have that contact.

Wersal: Exactly.

Misa: Okay, just wanted to get a reasonable picture of your work today. Well Lonni, this has really been interesting to hear about your career and your different observations. I wanted to make sure that if you had additional comments, or observations, or stories, that you have a chance to include them in the conversation and the recording. So it might be a good time for that now.

Wersal: It seems like a lot of years, but it goes by faster than you think. I had, I think early on, I had some really supportive people that guided me into discovering what I was really interested in. When I first started I just wanted to have a job and be able to take care of any health needs, and pay bills when we were first married. But then I think my first program manager that I worked for in my first position gave me a lot of insights and just said go try this, or figure out where your interests are. I got a little bit of a free hand to work with the various organizations and I was brought in some of the proposal activity. I thought that was real interesting to be a part of the Q-70 proposal activity. Initially I was on that and you had to work with the procurement teams that were saying we could do this, this, and this; you know, verifying and working with the marketing people. I like the variety, and I think I still have that to a certain degree here in Dahlgren. Now I can see the whole picture. And like I say, going on the ships and talking to the Navy in the ports, and ship's force, getting their concerns and taking them back, or helping them resolve an issue. If they were trying to get a part. I know it sounds kind of petty, but if they had

requisitioned a part and it's been 12 months and they still haven't got it, someone dropped the ball.

Misa: Someone needs to pick it up, right.

Wersal: And so to be able to fix that, and help people, that's really been rewarding in a way, because I like to follow through, make sure everything works the way it's supposed to, and try and help. If I can find a way to help; I make a lot of connections and you say well, I know where they build this so I'll make a phone call. I do better at fleet support levels. I like the research and analyzing details, rather than managing; I'd rather manage a program than manage people, I guess.

Misa: It's always a satisfaction to find work that you do well, and that is respected. Sounds like that's worked out pretty well.

Wersal: Yes, it has.

Misa: Thanks so much for your time this evening; appreciate you taking time to talk to me.

Wersal: Okay, thank you.