

Compliance Today – May 2018 Meet Lynda S. Hilliard

An interview by Gabriel Imperato

This interview with Lynda Hilliard (lshilliard1980@gmail.com) was conducted by Gabriel Imperato, Esq., CHC, Managing Partner (gimperato@broadandcassel.com), Broad and Cassel, and member of the SCCE/HCCA Board of Directors.

GI: Please tell our readers about your background and how you became a compliance professional.

LH: Thank you, Gabe, for this opportunity to discuss my perceptions about the Compliance and Ethics industry from the viewpoint of a clinician. To understand my background, you need to know I was educated in Catholic schools, attended a religious nursing school, joined the United States Army Nurse Corps, and finally completed my graduate degree from a Catholic university. I have been in uniform and abiding by regulations almost all of my life!

I worked as a clinician for several years, before moving into the community health and promotion area. During that period, I started graduate business school and was hired into an agency senior management position within a health system. In that position, I was introduced to the concept of compliance with federal rules and regulations.

After moving home to California, I was hired into hospital administration and home health agency administration before moving directly into the compliance arena at a large health system. From there I was recruited to a large consulting firm in their national health care regulatory practice. My consulting time provided me with myriad compliance-related experience in healthcare and other industries, from developing to evaluating compliance programs, as well as working in the fast-paced healthcare merger and acquisition division. Rounding out my career as the System-wide Deputy Compliance Officer at the University of California was a great honor; I felt I was assisting my home state's university program in establishing a comprehensive ethics and compliance program framework. I retired from UC in 2014 and now am working part-time as a consultant. Since the late 1990s, when I was introduced to the HCCA, I was privileged to become involved in its mission of networking, educating, and mentoring new compliance professionals. I started speaking at regional and national conferences and ultimately joined the Basic Academy as a faculty member where I remain today.

GI: You voluntarily enlisted for duty in the Army twice. What were your motivations for doing so, where did your service take you, and what kinds of things did you do?

LH: I was a high school student during the height of the Vietnam conflict and even though the war did not touch me personally, I always felt guilty about how young men were drafted, while women were not. I was planning on a career in political science and journalism, but during my senior year in high school I read a Life magazine article that completely changed my mind. It listed, through pictures, the military men who had died that week in Vietnam, and it broke my heart. The wounded were also counted, and then it detailed the poor patient care they received once they returned to a United States Veteran's Hospital. I was angry, sad, and my mind was made up. I immediately researched and applied to a nursing school with the intent to join the Army and become an Army nurse.

I was on active duty for three years and served briefly at Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio for basic training and the medical facility at Ft. Polk, Louisiana as a staff nurse. As the war ended, I finished my term and went home to further my education. I remained a United States Army Reserve nurse for the next 25 years, spending most of my duty weekends and annual trainings working with enlisted medical staff to maintain their clinical skills and prepare for the next conflict. I only deployed once during those years — to Ft. Carson, Colorado for six months in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm as the clinical head nurse of the ICU. I was the Assistant Chief Nurse of a rehabilitation hospital (921st) and I retired in 2002 as a lieutenant colonel (LTC). My last official duty prior to retirement was swearing in my oldest son, Jeffrey, to the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant, when he completed his ROTC at UC Berkeley.

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