REMINISCENCES

OF

CAPTAIN MARCUS WHITFORD, USN (RET.)

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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Oral History Program

Interviewee: Captain Marcus Whitford, USN (Ret.)

Interviewer: Dr. Evelyn M. Cherpak

Subject: Naval Career

Date: February 8, 1989

C: This is the first oral history interview with Captain Marcus Whitford of Richmond, Rhode Island. Today's date is February 8th, 1989, and we are at his home on Tug Hollow Road. Captain Whitford where were you born?

W: Richmond, Rhode Island.

C: In what year were you born?

W: 1900 - on April the fifth 1900..

C: What did your parents do?

W: My father was a farmer and my mother, she was a

housekeeper.

C: Were your parents native Rhode Islanders?

W: Yes. Well, my mother was of French descent, Canadian, and her mother was born in Three Rivers, Canada.

C: What were your father's people? Were they native Rhode Islanders?

W: Yes, they were native, English background. Lucy (Rawlings Tootell) has all that information going back when the Pilgrims landed.

C: How did they happen to settle in Richmond, Rhode Island?

W: That I wouldn't know. I think the main reason was, because his father owned this house. The old home that was here, burned down after World War I, and I think they settled here because his father owned this house and I know the house down below, so that's why they settled here.

C: What schools did you attend here in Richmond?

W: I attended Bell School which is only about a half a mile up the road here.

C: Was that an elementary school?

W: It was, yes.

C: Did you graduate from high school?

W: No.

C: Did you attend any high school?

W: I attended Hope Valley high school.

C: What impelled you to enlist in the Navy in 1916?

W: Well, one of the residents of Hope Valley came home on leave and I was interested in his uniform, and knowing that Newport was only a short distance away, I thought maybe that would be a good place for me to go, so there I went.

C: I assume that there was no navy background in your family?

W: Not that I know of, no.

C: You said you went to Newport, and that would have been around 1916.

W: 1916, yes.

C: Where did you train?

W: Naval Training Station, Newport.

C: Did you train to be an apprentice seaman?

W: I was an apprentice seaman, yes.

C: What did the training consist of?

W: In those days it was on the drill ground and it all depended on what you wanted to be.

C: Were you on the ships at all?

W: Not at that time, only the CONSTELLATION.

C: The old CONSTELLATION was there.

W: Yes, the old CONSTELLATION was there.

C: Did you train on the ship?

W: I trained on the ship.

C: Did you live on the ship at that time?

W: No, I lived on the USS BOXER which was a signal school.

C: So, the BOXER was there, too.

W: The BOXER was there, yes.

C: How long did the training last?

W: It was six months.

C: Six months of training in the signal school then on the BOXER.

W: Yes, mostly on the BOXER, but before I went to the BOXER let me bring you back a little bit.

C: Captain Whitford, we were talking about your training on the CONSTELLATION and on the BOXER, and this was for the signal school. You mentioned that the training lasted six months. Can you tell me what life was like for an ordinary recruit?

W: It was rough. Now I am going to tell you what

happened, now I got down to the BOXER. I was in Barracks A, and my first night watch, I was on Watch, I had the 12 to 4 watch. And about 12 o'clock the chief petty officer Boatswain Chief Mate came in and he said, "Who are you?" I said, "I am the man on watch". He says, "I got news for you, you see all those flags up there? Those are the international flags of the world. And do you see those dot-and-dash codes? That's the international Morse code. And do you see the other set of flags on the other side of the building? That's the semaphore flag which you gotta learn. I want you to know every one of them before you come off your watch at 12 o'clock." I didn't know whether to cry, or run away, or what to do. But I knew them, though, by the time it was time to get off watch, and that was the beginning. After that I was transferred, I was on the drill ground.

C: So you were on the land after that.

W: On land, drilling.

C: What did your drilling consist of? What did you do and what was your schedule?

W: We had to drill every day with squads right, squads left, and all the ritual of the drill. And I remember a time when - in those days, you know, they hit you across the rear-end with a sabre, if you didn't do the right thing...

C: Really? They were pretty cruel then.

W: And the chief said to me one day, he says, "You are no damn good, you are just a hay-shaker," and he says, "If I were you, I would run away, because I'll get you before you get your cards right." That's when I didn't know what I was going to do.

C: Did you ever contemplate leaving? Did you want to leave?

W: I wanted to leave more than once. So, just about that time when he got through talking, I heard the band coming up over the hill. He called everybody to attention, he said, "You hear that band? Those are sailors, they just finished the course here. The are on their way home, you will never go home, squads right.

C: How many recruits were there in Newport in 1916? Do you remember?

W: There were probably around 1500 to 1600.

C: It was a big base then.

W: Yes, it was a big base then.

C: Did the sailors go to town for liberty? Did you have any time off?

W: Well, let me go on with the other. I went from - they transferred me from Barracks A when I finished there, and I went to Barracks C, and that was tough too. They said, "We want you to get dressed in all your best clothes, that's when we wore the collars and the sleeves with the stripes on, in those days, you know? We are going to have a parade over in Newport, we want you to look your best. So we got all dressed up, and they marched us over the causeway into the swamp - there was a swamp there - there had been a fire, and we had to get down on our hands and knees to fight.

C: So then that was a kind of mock battle then that you were involved in.

W: Yes, it was a phony.

C: What was the attitude of the town folk towards the recruits?

W: As far as I am concerned, it was very good.

C: There were good town and gown relations then. We talked about the ships that were connected with the training

station, we mentioned the BOXER, you mentioned the CONSTELLATION.

W: We'll get to that in a minute.

C: Were there any other ships that were there?

W: The whole United States Atlantic Fleet was in the bay.

C: Were they domiciled there? Were they stationed there full time?

W: They were stationed there, yes. Not full time, no.

C: Just in the summer?

W: Yes, in the summer. In the winter they went to Guantanamo, Cuba.

C: In the winter. Can you tell me anything else about the Atlantic Fleet being there?

W: Not yet, no. Wait until I get back to sea. That was rough. I got out there and went to Barracks B, and there we had a coal ship - they had coal ships in those days - we had to lug coal in, and I was assigned to a certain division there. And one day we were all called out on the floor, the

drill hall floor, to attention, and the old chief by the name of Carlisle, officer of the chief quarter mast, he was up on the platform addressing the division. He said, "Any man in this division who wants to take the examination for the signal school, let them step out one pace out in front," so everybody stepped out. I figured I don't know what it is, but it cannot get any worse than what I am in now. So I stepped out, too, and of course, I was glad to get out of that, and out of all of the examinations. I think seven passed; I happened to be the lucky one of them. So the next morning they gave me my ditty box, my bag, and hammock, and boots - I weighed 117 lbs. - and I had to march all the way down to the BOXER. That was the signal school.

C: Oh, the signal school was on the BOXER then.

W: The signal school was on the BOXER.

C: Did you live on land at that time, or did you live on the BOXER?

W: I lived on the BOXER.

C: Do you know who the commanding officer of the BOXER was then?

W: The officer in charge was chief quarter master

C: Was the discipline strict?

W: Very strict.

C: Did you ever see or know who the commanding officer of the Training Station was? Did you ever have any contact with him?

W: I believe it was Captain Evans.

C: Oh, Frank Evans was the CO then.

W: The Executive Officer was Commander Sadler.

C: At the signal school on the BOXER what exactly did you learn? What were you tasked with learning?

W: At the signal school I had to take up radio and signal semaphore, and of course, we had initiation there. We all had signal books with numbers on them, and some wise guy would say, "Who does signal book number ten belong to? That belongs to apprentice seaman Marcus Whitford. Where is it? It is in the book room, so you go in the book room, all the lights will go out and all the books will come down on you, and that was the beginning of the initiation. When you

survived all that, then you went on from there. And then we had our regular classes on radio and semaphore. Every morning we had to get on the dock and the chief quartermaster used to say, "See, that's the CONSTELLATION, the foremast, the mainmast, the mizzenmast, every morning we go up and over. You look up, they looked too high, but as you got up there, you feel like letting go and just fall down. So we had that for the exercise every morning. I was very small, I wasn't very big, so after awhile I got wise to myself. I figured going over the gangway, if I stooped I could get by the storage hammocks and they wouldn't see me, so I could go in and take a shower. So one morning I came out ahead of time, and the chief quartermaster was on the deck, he said, "Did you go up and over?" I said, "Yes Sir, I did." "Let me see your hands". I showed him my hands. He said, "No tar. Go ahead, I'll watch you, four or five times". So I had to go up four or five times.

C: So that was part of your every day drill, going up and over the three masts on the ship. Did you have a test at the end of this course?

W: We sure had a test, almost every week. We had to take the radio news at night, Associated Press, that came over the air, whoever was on watch.

C: While you were at the Training Station did you ever

meet the Naval War College President, Austin Knight?

W: Not while I was in training. I met him afterwards. I was transferred to the War College, the four of us from the signal school, because I was one of the top graduates. There were four of us, Brown, Shaw, Whitford, and Murphy, and we went to the War College, because we were top people.

C: What was your assignment at the War College? What were you supposed to do there?

W: We went over to ships for the people having battle practice on the shots and so forth.

C: How long were you at the college, do you remember?

W: About two months, I think.

C: Can you give a picture of what the institution was like at that time? Do you remember anything significant about it?

W: Other than it was very formal, and at that particular time the aide to the Admiral was Lieutenant Puleston. Do you remember that name?

C: Yes, I certainly do. They wrote the book, Puleston

and Knight, on the War College. After your two-month period at the War College, and after your graduation from the signal school, where did you go from there with the navy?

W: The four of us, we were transferred to the USS PENNSYLVANIA, flagship of the United States Fleet, and it was at Guantanamo, Cuba.

C: Who was the CO of the Ship then? Of the PENNSYLVANIA?

W: It will take me time to think.

C: If you cannot remember, that's quite all right.

W: But let me tell you how we got down there. We were transferred to the Receiving Station in New York, to await transportation to Guantanamo and went aboard the CELTIC. The CELTIC is no more. The CELTIC was lost, I think, when the cyclone hit around that time, and was never heard of since. I remember on the way, we ran into a bad storm off Hatteras, and I was so sick, I was throwing up, and I said to myself, never again. I am going to come back by train, but we finally made Guantanamo. I reported aboard the PENNSYLVANIA.

C: What was your position there? What was your job in the PENNSYLVANIA?

W: I was a signal man, first class.

C: Where did the PENNSYLVANIA go on it's cruise?

W: We were already in Guantanamo Bay, and soon after that war was declared. We were still in Guantanamo in Guacanayabo Bay having torpedo practice, and from there we came back to Yorktown, Virginia, up the York river, to get away from the submarines.

C: So you went to Norfolk on the PENNSYLVANIA, and was that where you stayed? Did you see any other action in the war?

W: I was on the PENNSYLVANIA, and I was one of their top signal men, and they kept me aboard in signal drills, you know competition in the fleet, all the time.

C: Did you win the competition?

W: We always won.

C: PENNSYLVANIA always won, that's great. That's a famous ship. Were you on the PENNSYLVANIA when the armistice was declared in November 1918?

W: No, I was at the receiving station in New York, and I

was stationed quartermaster in Bayridge, Brooklyn.

C: I think I remember reading in Driftways to the Past that your squadron was involved in the North Sea Mine Barrage, is that correct?

W: That's a mine sweeping force.

C: That must have been 1918, is that correct, before the end of the war.

W: It was, before the end of the war.

C: Did that leave Newport? Was that out of Newport?

W: No, the ORIOLE was mine sweeping out of Staten Island.

C: So that was after, when you came to the receiving station, you went on the ORIOLE as part of the mine sweeping squadron, and sailed out from New York. What exactly were you tasked with doing?

W: We were sweeping mines. We swept mines on the East Coast. I have some pictures in my album, if you want to see them later on.

C: You swept mines on this coast, on the East Coast.

W: Yes, on the Atlantic coast.

C: What were the hazards of the job?

W: It was called the Suicide Fleet.

C: Why was it called that?

W: Because it was so dangerous.

C: Was your mine sweeping expedition a success?

W: Yes, we swept 250,000 mines out of the North Sea.

C: That's wonderful. It is amazing, it made quite a difference in the defeat of Germany at that time.

W: It sure did.

C: After the war's end 1918, where did you return to after the armistice was declared?

W: After the armistice was declared?

C: November in 1918, do you remember?

W: November 1918, I think.

C: Right, that's when the armistice was declared. But I assumed you were finished mine-sweeping by that time.

W: I think I was still back at the receiving station. When they didn't want you anywhere else, you went to the receiving station.

C: Now, what was the receiving station?

W: Where they received all the people who were going to other places.

C: The people who were transferred, I guess, within the navy. You were commissioned, I think, shortly after that, were you not?

W: In December I got commissioned out there. I don't know what day it was.

C: But it was after World War I.

W: Yes, because after that I was still in New York. I had gone to Long Island Business College to take a special course. And then, while I was there, I joined the New York police force. Wanamaker was commissioner of the police force. I was made a lieutenant in the aviation division,

later transferred to the marine division.

C: Right, the USS MADDOX...

T (Lucy Tootell): Was that before...

W: No, that was before.

T: You were honorably discharged as a quatermaster.

W: That was after the ORIOLE.

C: I had a question about the MADDOX, because I have that down.

W: The MADDOX was on the transatlantic trip of the NC4.

C: What was the NC4?

W: That was the first ship that made the transatlantic trip, the naval airship.

C: Oh, a naval airship that made the first transatlantic flight.

W: And they had ships stationed all across the Atlantic, so many miles apart, in case the plane went down, we could

pick him up. We were stationed off the Azores, off Portugal.

C: In the MADDOX, watching the plane.

T: ... safety... in case they were in trouble...

C: So you were there on the MADDOX to kind of watch out and support this flight. What does a quartermaster do?

W: Well, there are two different kinds of quartermasters, one is a signal quartermaster that handles all the communication, the visual communication, and the other type is a quartermaster, who steers the ship. I was a signal quartermaster, because I remember my commander telling me when I was in signal school, if you want to get anywhere in the navy, be a quartermaster - never mind this radio business. But I took them both, I qualified with 24 words a minute in radio. I don't know what the limit is in semaphore, as fast as you can send it.

C: So, you were on the MADDOX for a little while and then you went back, I assume, to the receiving station, is that correct, in Brooklyn?

W: Well, I think I went back and I was at the receiving station when I was discharged from the navy.

C: Right, and you were discharged about 1920?

T: March 20th, 1920, quartermaster, first class.

W: The reason I was commissioned is, because I went to navigation school in New York.

T: What ship were you on when you went to the mine sweeper up there in the North Sea?

W: That was the ORIOLE, mine sweeper number seven.

T: Did you come in there at Inverness at different times?

W: Inverness and Invergordon, Scotland, is where they were based.

T; Your experience with mine sweeping was important because later on you were in command of a mine sweeper.

W: That's some time since, but I want to get back to before I was commissioned, before I was commissioned ensign in the navy. I went to the Seaman's Church Institute and took a course in navigation and seamanship. I have the diploma hanging out there.

T: No one knew very much about mine sweeping at that

time.

C: You did go to the Seaman's Church Institute and then you said something about the navigation - marine engineering school.

W: I graduated with a Chief Mate's license, but I wasn't old enough. I was just 19 then, so they gave me a Third Mate's license. And they said, when you get to be 21, come back, and we'll give you your regular license.

C: Why did you decide to leave the navy in 1920? You weren't interested, I assume, in making a career out of it.

W: No, because it was a rough organization in those days.

C: What do you mean? What was there about the navy that did not attract you to stay in?

W: Well, it was long hard hours, and I didn't see any chance in getting any more promotions.

C: So, those two aspects made you leave.

W: When I first joined, I said to myself, if I can serve four years and get an honorable discharge, I'll be satisfied.

C: When you left in 1920 and were honorably discharged, you joined the South Pacific Steamship Company.

W: Yes, after I got my license as a mate.

C: What was that company, what was it's business and where did you go?

W: We sailed from New York to New Orleans; they carried passengers going to California, mostly theatrical people. I was a second mate on that ship.

C: What does a second mate do?

W: Navigate, he is a navigator and also he stands the twelve to four watch, that's what they call the midnight watch, the dead watch.

T: Tell her how passengers on that ship thought you were second in command, though you were still in diapers.

W: They questioned the captain about me being on board ship. I was too young. The captain said he has a second mate's license, go look at it if you want to.

C: Did you ever have any unusual experiences on that ship?

W: Yes, one time we went to rescue an Italian ship off the coast of Florida.

C: What was wrong with the Italian ship?

W: They had broken down, or something, but I had already received my life boat man's license for which you had to go and take an examination. I took that in Algiers, New Orleans, outside New Orleans. You had to be a certified life boat man and those were - even when I was at Newport, I'd go out on those cutters, they always weighed more that I did. When I went forward, I hit the guy behind me in the back. He turned around and said, "All right you little bastard, wait until I get ashore, we'll take care of you".

C: Did you have a successful rescue of the Italian ship?

W: We did, and we got them going again.

C: Did you meet any interesting people, any theatrical people, any outstanding individuals of the theater of that time?

W: Well, the only thing I can say is, we had one passenger aboard who was taking pictures of everybody, of all the actors and actresses, and I said to him one day, "How can

you afford to have all these developed?" He said, "I don't have any film in my camera at all," but he wanted to get their name and address, so he could write to them.

C: During this time when you were with the South Pacific Steamship Company, did you maintain your status as a naval reservist?

W: I did, yes.

C: What did that consist of in those days?

W: That consisted of going to drills, just like it does now. A drill at least once a week and active duty for two weeks at a time.

C: When did you leave the South Pacific Steamship Company?

W: I was with South Pacific, I think, about three years.

C: Where did you settle after that?

W: Brooklyn, New York. Bayridge, Brooklyn. I lived in Brooklyn.

C: What business or occupation did you go into?

W: After I got ashore, I went into the automobile business. I was manager of one of the largest automobile salesrooms in New York.

C: What kind of cars did you sell then?

W: At first I sold Wyllis Knight, they don't make them anymore. I received a silver star for the most number of sales three times in succession. I was top.

C: I have something down here that you also entered police work at that time.

W: I was in the police department; my diploma is up there signed by the police commissioner.

C: Of the police department, I assume, of New York City?

W: Oh New York, yes.

C: Was this full-time work?

W: No, this was just part-time work. It was more beneficial for me - I had my gold shield, I could ride on the subways, I could go to the theater, and it didn't cost me anything. As a matter fact, my outfit saved the life of Lieutenant Logatelli, when he came to this country. The

communists were going to cut him up. I received a commendation from the Secretary of State of Italy, Baron Sardi. I was made an honorary member of facisti's. I used to walk around the streets of New York, and a manhole cover would come up, and some Italian would come up and say, "I salute an Americano!" because they all recognized me.

C: What kind of position did you have with the police force? Were you an actual patrolman on foot?

W: No, I was an instructor. I taught navigation at New York University for the police department, for the marine division.

C: What would they need navigation for?

W: They had the marine division.

C: On the rivers?

W: Yes, and on the bay too.

C: That's interesting, you put your navy and your navigational work to work for the police department.

T: Tell them all about international law. You were a graduate of the international law course at the Naval War College.

W: Well, that was the Newport War College, that was a correspondence course. That diploma is hanging up there.

C: You took a course in ... international law?

T: I just mentioned that because it is an other tie-in with the Newport area.

C: Good, it is another tie-in with the Newport situation.

T: Back in 1924 you graduated from the international law course, and in the meantime, you belonged to the marines.

W: That's right. I served in the Marine Corps. I was a lieutenant, first lieutenant for sixteen years.

C: Was that part of your reserve duty?

W: Yes, and then I transferred back to the navy war began.

C: Why did you choose the marines?

W: I just happened to do that because they needed an officer in New York.

C: That was when you were still in New York then.

W: Yes, they were going to take me down to Camp Lejeune and bring me back a captain, but that never happened.

C: So you drilled and you did reserve work with them. How long did you stay in New York before you returned to Rhode Island?

W: I was in New York maybe ten, twelve years.

C: Why did you decide to return to your home state?

W: Because I had all this property and everything, and all my people were here.

C: What kind of work did you pursue when you came back?

W: When I came back, I went to the automobile business too.

C: You returned again to the navy when World War II broke out. That was in 1941.

W: I was in the reserves and Admiral Nelson was head of the reserves up in Boston. And they called me on the phone

and asked me did I want to come back now, ir did I want to wait until they sent for me? I said, "No, I'd rather come now, then wait until you send for me."

C: So, is that in 1942, early in 1942?

W: Yes, just prior to the war.

T: You had to resign from the Rhode Island First Light Infantry.

W: Yes, I was a Captain in the Rhode Island First Light Infantry.

W: I served in dual capacity.

T: That was an honorary group with a long history. They had entertained Lafayette and he wasn't allowed to continue in that.

W: I couldn't belong to both, the infantry and the navy. We'll go back to the navy, that's what you are interested in.

C: Exactly.

T: There is a picture of him in the First Light Infantry.

of World War II in 1941.

W: That's right.

C: Who did you report to in the navy? And where did you report to?

W: I reported to Boston, local defense force group.

C: And what was the local defense force to do?

W: They trained all of the officers for sea duty. I went back there and ...

T: You applied for a commission as a lieutenant.

W: I was commissioned a lieutenant then.

C: A lieutenant in the navy in 1940.

W: My granddaughter says that I am a retarded captain, not retired but retarded.

C: So you did that and you were stationed in Boston, this is July 1940. Do you remember the events surrounding December 7th, 1941? Do you remember what the reaction was on the Navy base in Boston, and your own particular reaction?

W: I wasn't on a Navy Base in Boston then. I had already graduated from the local defense school.

C: Where were you then in December 1941?

W: Let me get up to that. But anyhow, after I graduated ...

T: April of 1941, you graduated from the local defense force school and you were ordered to the Naval Mine Warfare School in Yorktown, Virginia.

W: That's because I was formerly connected with the mine forces.

T: ...and then also in April 1941 he was ordered to the USS BULLFINCH at Yorktown, Virginia.

C: The BULLFINCH, what kind of ship was the BULLFINCH?

W: It was converted fishing vessel; it was a mine sweeper.

C: Oh, it was a mine sweeper again...

T: They ordered him again, they ordered you to do this

because you had a knowledge of mine sweeping; they had a dearth of people who had knowledge of mine sweeping.

W: They didn't have anybody...

T: Then they asked you, if I remember correctly, because as a little boy you had been up there in the North Sea.

W: What happened, you know...

C: Can you tell me anything about your service on the BULLFINCH?

W: Well, it wasn't very long. I was what you call, Officer in Charge there.

C: So you were just readying for any...

W: I was getting ready, yes. They didn't have anybody else to throw in there.

C: Where did you go from the BULLFINCH?

W: When I finished there, I was a...

T: You were ordered to Greenport, Long Island.

W: That was from the school, the mine school.

T: Right, you graduated from the mine force school, then you became the commanding officer temporarily.

W: I was ordered to the ship building yard at Greenport, Long Island, for the building of the USS ACME, and take command upon completion.

T: And that's why you have that nice picture.

C: We do have you down as the CO of the USS ACME, Mine Division 27.

W: It was a flagship then and it was Mine Force 27.

C: Where were you supposed to patrol with your ship?

W: The whole Atlantic coast, all the way up to Iceland and Greenland, all along the Atlantic coast.

C: As far down as where, Florida or Texas?

W: All the way down, yes.

C: All the way down to the Gulf. Now we know that there

were lot of German subs in this area, attacking our merchant shipping and they were very successful in destroying a lot of our merchant shipping at that time. Did you ever encounter any of the German subs?

W: Not the submarines, no, but we swept a lot of their mines.

C: And they were busy planting the mines as you said, to torpedo our ships.

T: Is this the ship that was top-heavy?

W: No, that was the EXCEL.

C: Did you do any escorting of subs with this ship?

W: No, not with the ACME.

C: How long were you with the ACME? Do you remember?

W: No, next would be the EXCEL.

C: Do you have any - are there any other interesting experiences that you want to tell me about the ACME? Is there anything that was unusual or different that you can conjure up?

W: Yes, maybe the condition I am in now, might have something to do with it. We were at Newport, not Newport but New London, and they had to have somebody to tow a ship to Boston, and I was the only one available and I had just been operated on. You know when I was up in the North Sea and I used to throw up all the time, I used to get seasick all the time, that's why they later on put me on larger ships.

C: From there you...

T: Is that where they took you on a stretcher through the Cape Cod Canal.

W: That's why they ... I towed the ship through the canal, and the ambulance was waiting for me on the other side in Boston, to take me to Chelsea and I went back to the hospital.

C: So, you had a problem with seasickness, I guess.

W: I did, yes.

T: Well, he was still bedridden, he'd just recovered from the operation and they had no one else to - and he was still bedridden - and going back again.

C: You did mention that you were involved with the

building of the USS EXCEL. What kind of a ship was it and where was it built?

W: It was built at Oyster Bay, Long Island. It was one of the largest and newest up-to-date mine sweepers that we had in the navy. It was christened by Theodore Roosevelt's daughter.

C: Was that Alice Longworth?

W: No, do you see that thing hanging, I can't remember all the things I have hanging up there.

C: One of his other daughters. I didn't realize that there was a ship building facility at Oyster Bay. Was it a large one?

W: They built quite a few mine sweepers there.

C: So it was probably only mine sweepers that they were building there. Where did you go with the ECXEL? I assume you were with the Atlantic Fleet then?

W: I was.

C: Where did the ship patrol again?

W: We used to do a lot of escort-duty too, but when I first got the ship, every time I get underway, I didn't know whether I was coming back. It was top-heavy, and I had made a lot of reports, and they said, "It can't be. We have the blueprints and everything." I said, "OK, this is a point of order. Come on and take a trip with me, I'll show you". So I got them aboard. Admiral Irish's son, Lieutenant Irish, was my executive officer, and the Admiral was the head of the ship building set-up in New York. So we went on and I told them down in the engine room, "Bring every one out of the engine room, except those necessary to maintain the engine, to keep it going". And we get out in the harbor and we are going to make a hard turn to the port and a hard turn to the starboard side, and see if we go over. And we almost went over. So they made certain recommendations that construction be changed. Because before that I had to take on a lot of lead and then we came back and unloaded the lead; we were unloading lead half of the time.

C: You mentioned that it was a mine sweeper, I assume you swept a lot of mines then on the Atlantic?

W: We did all the way down to Barnegat Bay, New Jersey.

C: You mentioned you had escort duty, what kind of escort duty?

W: We escorted transports out.

C: How far out did you escort them, to what point?

W: Well, in New York harbor, we go beyond the ... almost down to Hatteras and down at the other end we would almost...

T: It represented the entire coast.

W: Yes, right. It all depends on where they were going.

C: I see, you were kind of a protective force.

T: Those submarines were pretty much off the east coast, New York and points up north.

W: We were down in Norfolk quite a while.

C: Did you go out of Norfolk to do this too?

W: Yes, we did go out of Hampton Roads.

C: Do you remember how long you stayed with the USS EXCEL? Remember how long that duty was?

T: What ship were you on the night of Pearl Harbor?

W: On the night of Pearl Harbor? No, it was the EXCEL. It was a night of nights, yes. I was enroute from New York to Boston to get some equipment. I didn't have a compass even.

C: Do you remember how you first heard the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

W: I think on our radio on board ship.

C: What was your reaction, and the reaction of the crew?

W: We were ordered into the Sub Base at New London to report to ComSub Atlantic. I think it was Admiral Edwards...

C: This was a deviation, I assume, from the norm. Why were you ordered to New London? What were you going to be tasked to be doing?

W: They wanted us to get in port some place. He just wanted to use us later on for something else I guess.

C: Sure, in case of attack. How did the crew react to the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

W: I don't remember that. I don't think there was much of a reaction. They all had their jobs to do and that's what

of a reaction. They all had their jobs to do and that's what they were doing.

T: It was very stormy night, was it not?

W: It was the worst storm I was ever in, as far as a snow storm. I couldn't see, I couldn't hear, I dropped anchor in the...

T: Coming into the Thames there.

W: Green's Bay. Twenty minutes after I dropped anchor, I was on my way again. The wind was so heavy, dragging anchor, so I had to get underway to come in along side the dock. I'd never been there before. That was really scary.

C: But you made it successfully.

W: We made it.

T: Obviously...

W: I was always lucky.

C: If you don't navigate well, you certainly can be punished for it in the U.S. Navy. After you pulled into New London, were you with... I just wondered, where you went

the EXCEL, or did you transfer to another ship?

W: No, I stayed with the EXCEL. We finally got to Boston.

C: Did you continue your transport and escort work with the EXCEL at that time in mine sweeping?

W: Yes, I did, and as I said I went up there to get a compass, and I couldn't find one. So finally I went to the senior officer and asked for permission. I wanted to leave to go to Washington. He said, "You people go through Hell enough for that, taking leave and getting paid for it. You go up and the store room and look around. You'll find a compass, you grab onto it." So I found one that had been on one of the other ships and it turned out to be my squadron commander, so I got that compass anyhow. A few weeks later I met him at the officers club. He said, "You SOB, you stole my compass." I said, "I didn't steal it, the navy gave it to me." We don't steal in the navy, we just borrow from one an other.

C: Is there anything else interesting you want to tell me about the EXCEL, and your duties with that ship before we go to the BELLE GROVE?

W: Well, the only thing about the EXCEL I want to say is

W: Well, the only thing about the EXCEL I want to say is that we had very fine cooperation in the yard at Oyster Bay, and that the people were very nice. They entertained my crew at least once a week with clam bakes.

T: How did the methods that you used for mine sweeping at that time compare to what they are doing today?

W: I don't know what they are doing today. All I can say is that I made a confidential moving picture for the navy on mine sweeping. That was at Yorktown.

T: Isn't that how you hurt your back or something? Experimenting how close you could be to the mine before...

W: I didn't really hurt my back. I have the moving pictures if anyone wants to see them.

C: Your next duty was with the USS BELLE GROVE. What kind of a ship was that?

W: A landing ship dock, the first time in the history of the world we ever had one.

C: What does that ship do? I am not familiar with that.

W: It was a very large ship and it had a well deck in it

and that would be filled with water and take on boats, and we could repair boats, just like dry-dock.

C: I see, it was kind of a floating dry-dock. What size ships could you take on to repair?

W: We could take on a destroyer, if it was necessary. It was a big ship.

C: Would you be in port with that ship, or would you be out at sea, when you took on an injured vessel or a damaged vessel?

W: We'd usually be at sea where we could get it.

T: Weren't you responsible for seeing that it was built correctly?

W: Well, I went down to help do what I could do.

T: It seems he was always sent to the building. This was something that was entirely new, and did you give her the reason why they needed this kind of ship with the shallow draft?

W: So that we could get into lagoons and near shore to unload. We'll come to that with the BELLE GROVE.

C: That was the BELLE GROVE we are talking about? Where were you homeported in the BELLE GROVE?

W: California.

T: It was launched February 17th, 1943.

C: So, that was out in California. We talked about this floating dry-dock a little bit before, but this was the height of the war, the campaigns in the Pacific, and all. Did you ever participate in, or was your ship ordered to go to the central or southern Pacific where all the campaigns were?

W: I was in all of the battles in the Pacific. You got the history of the LENOIR?

T: I don't have it right here ... but she is talking about the BELLE GROVE.

C: The BELLE GROVE, now did that go down to the South Pacific?

T: Tell her about the Gilbert Islands, and why you had... this is one of the reasons you have the Rhode Island Star.

W: I was in the invasion of the Gilbert Islands. We took

Makin Island, I carried the army.

C: You carried the army in?

W: The army in, yes. I brought some of them out. And we also carried 18 - I think - medium tanks. I unloaded those tanks in about 20 minutes, we had them ashore fighting. And I brought back three extra tanks, three Japanese tanks.

T: But why was your ship, and I believe one other, made for the purpose of reaching down there? There was a reason for reaching down there.

W: For getting into the lagoons, it was shallow water.

T: With the coral islands and with that shallow draft... when you asked someone in the top echelon how you were going to protect yourself...

C: What did they say?

T: You tell her about this...

W: I don't remember.

T: Yes, you do. Do you remember when you wanted to go - if you were attacked and what you needed on board your ship

to protect yourself... Remember? The officer told you your only job was to get in...

W: I needed anti-aircraft guns and they said we are on strike in the yard. We don't have anybody to put them in for you. I said, "Don't worry, my crew will put them in, if we get the guns."

C: Did you get any anti-aircraft guns?

W: Yes, I did, but they said to me, "You are expendable. You are not coming back."

T: Your job is to get those tanks in, how you get out is your problem, and you brought every tank back, didn't you?

W: And three Japanese tanks...

T: And that must have been very thrilling.

W: When we got back to Pearl Harbor, one of those Japanese tanks had been painted on the side 'Under New Management', and they put a pair of skivvies with a red circle on the seat and said, "This little tank lead all the others to Scofield Barracks."

T: In the paperback booklets on the invasion of the

Gilbert Islands they mentioned the USS BELLE GROVE. I mean it was there, but that was quite something.

C: That was kind of a highpoint...

T: It was, and it was something which was used...

C: Sure, a new innovation...

T: And when they went in, how about the Japanese. How did they - when they went in and tried to get rid of them. It wasn't so easy, was it?

W: No. There was one case where - you know - the Americans are very easy-going especially where women are involved, but there were cases, when some old woman would be leading other Japanese and she would have somebody behind her with a machine gun, and she'd get out of the way and bend over, and they start shooting.

C: It must have been difficult clearing the Japanese from those islands.

W: It was very difficult, yes. A little book in on that little table on the corner, Makin taken.

C: You said you went back to Pearl Harbor after Makin.

W: We went back to Pearl Harbor after every invasion.

C: Do you remember where you went next on the BELLE GROVE? Or was that the end of your assignment with her?

W: I went to the hospital after that for an operation.

C: And your next active duty, I guess, was with the building of the USS LENOIR?

W: That's right.

C: In Wilmington, North Carolina, ship building again.

T: When was it that you took the courses over at the War College on amphibious tactics? Was that after the LENOIR?

C: That's after the LENOIR, that's what I have down.

W: Do you want to get that book I have, that Training and Indoctrination versus Court Martial?

C: I have him involved in the building of the USS LENOIR in Wilmington, North Carolina.

T: They gave him a vacation, supposedly, and sent him to

the War College to teach amphibious tactics, and in his class he had three future presidents.

C: Really, who were they, I wonder?

W: What was that?

T: While you were teaching amphibious tactics, you said that at one time, you had three future presidents.

W: Oh yes, that's when Commodore McGruder was there.

T: Three future presidents...

C: Well, who were the three future presidents?

W: Nixon and ...

C: Kennedy, maybe?

W: Kennedy, yes. They were all lieutenants then.

C: And who else?

T: Ford.

C: Oh, President Ford.

T: That is rather interesting.

W: This is when I was at Newport.

C: The Training and Indoctrination, yes, versus Court Martial.

W: At the Naval School of Justice, they have one of those.

C: 1944, that's when you were at the Justice School teaching, but I believe before then you were with the LENOIR at Wilmington, North Carolina?

W: No, it was after that.

T: The LENOIR was after that... between the BELLE GROVE and then you had your operation. While you were recovering from your operation they thought it would be easier...

W: They sent me to Newport for rehabilitation. When I got there I told Commodore McGruder, I said, "I was a division officer also; I was an instructor; I was President of the Court Martial." I was everything.

T: And you had law at that time, too.

C: Can you tell me anything about the Newport Naval Base during World War II, what was it like? It was really a thriving base, I assume.

W: It was nothing like World War I, though.

C: No, I imagine the contrast would have been great. Do you remember how many people were training there?

W: Not very well, no. I know every ship sent their cruiser there to be trained.

C: How many did you teach? How large were your classes of the Justice School?

W: Probably they had as many as a thousand.

C: In a class?

W: Yes, in a big auditorium.

C: That's quite a large number. How long did the course last?

W: Well, I lasted about two or three months, and then I asked to be transferred. I asked to go to Washington. I

went to Washington to BuPers; I said, "I'd rather go back to sea again, while there is some fighting, so I know what's going on."

C: So from there you went to the USS LENOIR in Wilmington?

W: Yes.

T: How many days would the classes be that you taught.

W: There was never any end to the days; they just kept coming.

T: Didn't you also have something to do with the court?

W: Yes, I did. I was President of the Court Martial Board at Newport. The captain of personnel said to me when I came down, I want to get away from Newport, and I went to Newport for rehabilitation; the Commodore said, "Rehabilitation, God damn, nobody gets rehabilitation here." So I said, "Well, I am getting out of here."

C: So you left...

W: The captain said to me, "We got a new ship for you." And then he told me about it. He said, it's being built now

at Wilmington and the crew is up in Newport. He says, "Do you like it? It doesn't make any difference, whether you like it or not, that's where you are going."

C: What kind of a ship was the USS LENOIR?

W: Attack transport.

C: Attack transport, what did an attack transport do?

W: They carried troops, and we had all kinds of armament - five-inch guns, anti-aircraft guns, for our own protection.

C: Were you able to transport men on this ship? Where did you go with them from Wilmington? Where were you taking them?

W: I went to Pearl Harbor to pick them up. And then with the LENOIR the first invasion I went to was Okinawa. We carried the marines to Okinawa.

C: I see, that was for the invasion there. Then I would assume you just returned to Pearl Harbor?

W: We'd come back for an other invasion.

C: What invasions did you take men for besides Okinawa?

W: I was in Saipan, Tinian, you name it, I was there. Guadalcanal, Tulagi. I spent time with the cannibals in the Solomon Islands; they were my friends.

C: Did you ever face attack? Were you ever attacked by the Japanese on your transport cruises?

W: Not on a cruise, really, but while I was there, I was under attack at Okinawa for the last 74 hours, with submarines, aircraft, everything.

C: Was the ship damaged at all?

W: No, we weren't hit. We made smoke.

C: Did you ever get a chance during your days in World War II to meet Nimitz or Spruance or Halsey?

W: See the picture over there? See what he said about me?

T: Nimitz' personal signature on it.

C: Where did you meet Nimitz?

W: Everywhere in the Pacific.

C: And you have your momentos of your career.

W: I got in one tough typhoon, I was empty. I had to flood my compartments to have ballast, and in doing so I destroyed some of the electrical equipment on board ship. BuShips wanted to give me the business.

T: Which officer were you legal adviser to for awhile? That wasn't Nimitz, was it?

W: No. I was legal adviser to everybody wherever I went. The minute they'd find out I was an attorney... There was Kincaid. I was legal officer to the Atlantic Reserve Fleet and the Eastern Sea Frontier, for a year.

T: This was after the LENOIR?

W: This is after the LENOIR. I would go back to the LENOIR.

C: So, you participated in many invasions with the LENOIR and you were attacked once. Were you still on the LENOIR at V.J. day in August 1945?

T: Weren't you crossing the line at that time? Incidently, the history of the LENOIR was written by his Executive.

W: There is one page that should be added to that, because when I left, I carried the first troops and landed them in Hiroshima after the bombing.

C: Right, I wanted to get into that because - I assume - you were finished with your transport duties then, and after V.J. day you were sent to Hiroshima. What was your purpose on the LENOIR going to Japan?

W: To carry troops, they sent the LENOIR out there. I carried, I think, the 27th army division.

C: What were they supposed to do, what were they tasked in doing out there?

W: Occupy. Occupation force.

C: What were your reactions to Hiroshima?

T: You carried the marines too, didn't you?

W: Not to Hiroshima, no. Only the army.

C: What were your reactions to Hiroshima?

W: I thought it was terrible.

C: You toured the island, or the cities, I assume?

W: I did, yes.

C: To deliver your troops. Did you get to Nagasaki at all?

W: That was the second bombing, wasn't it?

C: Yes, that was the second bombing.

W: I don't think so.

C: Is there anything unusual that you want to mention about your trip to Japan?

W: Hiroshima? Yes, I'll tell you what I saw there. One of the first things that bothered me was I saw this young girl, she was probably 24-25; she was sitting on a bench, nursing a baby on her arm and she had a boy sitting up alongside her - he must have been eight or nine - he was nursing on the other side. That's the only way they could get food. And I saw elderly people on their hands and knees, picking up grains of rice for food.

C: Yes, the devastation was terrible, the result of the

ravages of atomic warfare.

W: You can show them my pictures Lucy, in my album, where I am standing right in the middle of Hiroshima.

C: How long were you in Japan? Do you remember, was it weeks?

W: Oh, no, about three or four days.

C: I see, it was a short time. And then where did you go from there with the LENOIR?

W: Well, from Japan I was ordered to return to San Francisco. We were all done, and I got half-way across the Pacific, when they modified my orders and sent me to Portland, Oregon.

C: And what were you supposed to be doing there?

W: Well, I left the ship at Portland, Oregon; I gave up command. It had a new commanding officer come aboard and I flew home.

C: Flew to Rhode island? Did you still serve in the Navy after that? Were you still connected with the Navy?

W: Yes.

C: Active duty or not?

W: Because of my law degree and background, commissioned to the bar, I was ordered to report to the commander of the Seventh Fleet, Atlantic Fleet, which was Admiral Kincaid.

C: Where was his headquarters?

W: 90 Church Street, New York City.

C: Oh, you were back in New York City again and in the capacity of a lawyer for him.

W: I was staff legal officer for the Eastern Frontier, the Atlantic Reserve Fleet.

C: What did you do there? What was your position? What were your responsibilities?

W: I had to review all the court martial cases and give legal advice to the commander; that's one of the courts I sat on up there.

C: Where did you get your law training?

W: Brooklyn Law School.

C: When did you do that?

W: At night, while I was in New York.

C: Oh, after you left the navy, after World War I, I assume?

W: No, some of it was before.

C: How long did you stay with Admiral Kincaid?

W: Between five and seven years.

C: That was a long tour of duty. Was that all in New York?

W: All in New York. Actually it was in the whole United States. I went to every base we had in the United States.

C: Oh you did, sitting on the court martial board.

W: No, just reviewing the cases and going down to get assistance in cases. I'll tell you what kind of cases I had. In New York I got a call from the city department about some guy, he had a child, the girl had his child and he took off

and left. He was in our fleet down in Florida. I went down to Florida to make an inspection. And when I got down there, they said to me, "Captain, are we glad to see you; we found a dead man in the river here this morning. By the way, there is a chief who would like to talk to you." I said, "OK, have him meet me at a certain place, to talk with." I said, "What is your problem?" He said, "I have a letter here from the child department, the Welfare Department, they all want to know, what I am going to do to support my six-year-old child, whatever it is, I don't remember the years. I don't have any child anymore. I am married and my wife is here with me in Florida." So that left me in a tough position, too. So I talked it over with him, and I wanted to talk with her, and finally found out that she was teaching kindergarten or something, and he didn't want me to break the news to her. But I did. We went over the whole thing, she was real nice about it, so we decided they were going to adopt the child. So I came back to New York and we got the adoption papers. And those are some of the cases.

C: Did you retire after that seven-year stint?

W: I think I was in New York, when I retired.

C: Now, that must have been in the fifties.

T: It was after you were with Kincaid. Now, I think

perhaps you should mention what you did to try to bring the vote to the voters.

C: We want to mention that, The Federal Assistance Voting Act program that you were involved in. Was that when you were still in the navy?

W: I was, yes.

T: He was still with this court.

W: I was surrogate in a civilian capacity in the navy but I was still in the reserve. I was a captain. I was on a retirement board, and one day I got a call from the judge advocate, "Marc, whatever you are doing, don't do it. I want you to get over to the Department of Defense and talk with General Galvin." I thought I had done something wrong, I don't know, so I went over to the Department of Defense and the general said, "I am Mike, you call me Mike, I'll call you Marc." So we got off to a good start. He said, "Maybe you'd like to know why I sent for you. I'll tell you why: we have tried on two occasion to get the bill through the House, through the Congress, on a voting program. We failed each time. We see the Senate agreeing, he is chairman of that committee, and you are from Rhode Island, we want you to go to work." So I said, OK. I stopped doing what I was doing and started work for them. I figured the best thing I can

do... I knew Eddie Higgins, I knew him since World War I, he was administrative assistant. I went over, and the girl said, "Ed is not here, he is in Florida watching ball games, getting ready for the big practice. I went back and told them at the Pentagon. The Secretary of the Defense said, "We'll send you down wherever he is, don't worry about it." I said, "I don't think he'd appreciate me chasing him up." The girl saw me, as soon as he comes back, he is going to call me. So when he came back, he did call me and I went over to his office. He said, "What can I do for you?" And I told him. "Well," he said, "it sounds reasonable to me. I'll do what I can." So sure enough we got a good start.

T: Who was President then, Eisenhower?

W: Eisenhower, yes, was his last chance. So I gave it before the committee in the Congress. That wasn't easy, either.

T: You had to travel to every state.

C: Right, I remember that. All the way to Alaska, I assume.

W: No, I didn't go to Alaska. But what happened, after the bill was passed, the General and I were up at the house and he was so nervous, he has some notes made up on some

cards he had eaten them all up. He didn't have any notes.

T: Well, they had had difficulties, trying to get that passed.

W: Oh yes, they had failed every time. I helped to re-write public law 296.

C: What was that? The public voting act?

W: The public voting act program. So what happened after that, when I went back to the Pentagon, the Assistant Secretary of Defense had a Bible in his hand. Don't let that fool you, he was a hell to get along with. I guess I am the only one who got along with him.

C: So, you were involved in this federal system voting act program and traveled from state to state to promote it.

W: I am it's grand-daddy, yes.

C: Can you remember in what year you retired from the navy?

W: No, I have to look it up.

C: Probably in the fifties, I assume?

T: Are you retired?

W: I am retired. I was honorably retired, I am an disabled retiree.

C: What did you do in retirement after you left the navy?

T: Before you leave your voting program, I think it would be nice to mention on outstanding individual who is very much interested in that program. You had a letter from him.

W: Oh, Admiral Byrd.

T: Yes.

W: He wanted to recommend me for commendation, in fact he wrote a commendatory letter over there. I have a nice letter from Admiral Byrrd.

T: They sent the ballots to the South Pole, so that those at the South Pole...

W: First time in history of the world that this ever got through, thirteen thousand miles each way.

C: What have you done since your navy days? Did you have

a career after you retired?

W: I practiced law little bit.

C: Can you sum up your own thoughts on your naval career? What is your feeling about the navy and your association with it?

W: I have a very good feeling about it. I have recommended many to the navy, including my grand-daughter, and she did all right.

C: So you have no regrets about your choice of career?

W: I have no regrets, no.

C: Any advice to people now, who are interested in joining the service, especially the navy?

W: Join up!

T: Especially the navy!

C: Especially the navy. Thank you very much...

W: I was sent to the capitals of the different states to help legislatures get laws through, so that the servicemen

could vote. And one of the first places I went was Illinois. I landed there in a snow storm, with no place to stay and the governor had to get a hotel room for me, which he did. And I traveled, covered most of the southern states. Georgia was one of my best. And in Georgia, Herman Tallmedge was a student of mine some time ago, he is United States Senator and former governor of Georgia. And I spent two weeks as a guest of the governor at the governor's mansion in Atlanta. When I came before the Senate in Georgia, those old Confederate soldiers looked at me in the uniform, and figured, "What's that Yankee doing down here?" I told them, "I am not here to tell you what to do, I came to ask what I can do to help you, to get the legislation through for the 180 servicemen, your own service people that are serving overseas in the cold war. All you have to do is walk across the street and pull the lever. They are over there fighting and paying taxes, their children are going to school here. I have seen the little white crosses on Iwo Jima, and the islands in the Pacific. I am speaking for those men who can't speak for themselves. When I was through those guys were in tears and we got legislation through just like that. The Senate voted a commendation for me; they made me an Admiral in the Georgia Navy.

T: For some reason he had a rapport with the southern states or the people in the southern states, and possibly they mistook several of the others.

W: I told them in Mississippi, you know the warmth in Mississippi comes from the hearts of it's people and the Secretary of State said, "Captain, you have done wonderful, you have helped us a lot. We appreciate it." I was invited to all their association meetings, even after I was out and done with them. I went to their meetings all over the country.

T: He still receives Christmas cards from some of these people still in Washington.

W: Even down in Alabama, I was in Georgia at the time they were having trouble with the bus riders in Alabama, and I am going the next morning. A colored girl there said, "Captain, you are not going to Alabama?" I have orders to go, I am going. She said, "You better not, they are having trouble down there." I said, "Don't worry, I'll get back all right." So I went to Alabama and they were having a special session of the legislature and I couldn't speak, I couldn't get in contact with whoever I wanted to. Finally I did get a hold of the Speaker of the House. "Captain," he said, "I am living in the same hotel where you are. When I come down tonight, we'll get together and we'll talk this over, we can see what we can do." That night he did just as he'd agreed, we got together and then the first thing I hear there was this other Senator and another member of the house and then

there were more. Then we had a little something to quench our thirst, one after the other, so far things were going good. The Speaker said, "Maybe the Captain is hungry, he might like something to eat?" "Yes," I said, "I would." He said, "What would you like?" I said, "I would like, while I am here, fresh snapper steak from southern waters." He said, "We like it too. So let's go!" So we went and had dinner, and right at the dinner table he said, "Let's take the Captain to a floor show." I said, "I am tired, I have been traveling all day." They said, "What are you worried about?"

T: There was the Mardi Gras going on at that time!

W: They said, "Were you worried about appearing before the Judiciary Committee tomorrow? We are the Judiciary Committee!" So I said, "Let's go then." So I went with them, we saw a floor show, and the next morning I came before the committee, I don't think they even listened to me. They were having a hard time about the colored people in the schools. So as I left, as I finished speaking, I picked up my brief case and I walked out into the corridor and bumped into the House Speaker. He said, "Captain, how did you do?" I said, "I don't think I did very well." He said, "You did fine, the Speaker is writing up the bill already, the president of the Senate. So I got good results everywhere I went.

C: You did get good results. Well, that was an interesting aspect of your career.

W: When I went to Oklahoma they made me a Colonel of the Governor's staff. I did well in Oklahoma, too.