

HISTORY
OF THE NAVY:
THE CAREER OF ADMIRAL H. KENT HEWITT

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
1990

Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island
Oral History Program

The History of the Navy:
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Interviewee: Floride Taylor, daughter of ADM H. Kent Hewitt
Interviewer: Dr. Evelyn M. Cherpak
Subject: ADM H.K. Hewitt
Date: 26 February 1990

C: I am going to interview you today on your father's career and also on your life as a navy wife. Where and when your father was born?

T: He was born the 11th of February 1887 in the old Kent family homestead. His mother was a Kent and it was called the Kent Place on Polifly Road in Hackensack, New Jersey; it was on the southern outskirts of Hackensack.

C: Isn't there a Kent Place school?

T: Yes, there is, but that's in Summit, New Jersey.

C: Was that named for the family?

T: I don't think so. Could be, but I am not sure.

C: It's an interesting coincidence. What were his growing-up years like in Hackensack? Was he a good student in school?

T: Oh, he was always a good student. There were always older relatives around, but their home was farther removed from the town, so he didn't have too many playmates his own age. He rode a bicycle and he could be with friends sometimes, but he always commented on how much he had been alone.

C: Was he an only child?

T: He was an only child.

C: Where did he go to high school?

T: Well, he went to the Hackensack High School and he did very well there. And I know his father was a member and vestryman of Christ Church, an Episcopal church in Hackensack, and my father was a choir boy. Then when his voice changed I think he became an acolyte. He was very much involved in the church.

C: Yes, even as a child. Did he participate in athletics at all during his growing-up years in the local high school?

T: He wasn't particularly athletic, but he liked tennis. He liked bicycling; he liked walking, but he didn't participate in any heavier sports.

C: Team sports. Did any of his family ever serve in the navy? Was there a naval tradition there?

T: No, they didn't, and there was no naval tradition to follow.

C: What prompted him to apply to the Naval Academy?

T: He saw in the paper one day a little notice that exams were being given for entrance to the Naval Academy and it was to be competitive exams for appointments by the Congressmen of New Jersey. And he thought, "Well, it would be fun to try it." So he told his father about it and his father said, "Now, if you are going to do this, you've got to take this seriously. You can't just do this for fun." So the two of them went to the principal of the high school and the principal was all for it. He decided to help him, but he had to study like mad and every afternoon after school he went into the principal's office. Actually, he was given a weeks' leave from school while he studied. He didn't have

very much time because the exams were going to happen very shortly, so he studied like mad and then he went to the principal's office and the latter quizzed him very severely. So he went and took these exams after all this effort. He had no idea if he would be able to pass and he won and got the appointment.

C: That's wonderful. Did he graduate from high school?

T: No, he didn't.

C: That was par for the course then, because many Annapolis candidates didn't in those days.

T: It was his third year of high school, but he got the appointment to the Academy so off he went.

C: Did he prep for the Academy exams in Annapolis?

T: I don't know. He went and he had to take the Academy exams, but he passed those. I gather that he didn't do all that famously, but he did all right. He got in.

C: He got in and entered then. He would have been a senior in high school, I assume, when he entered?

T: Yes, he was. He was quite young, one of the youngest

members of the class.

C: Did he enjoy his Academy years?

T: He loved it. Loved it, every bit of it.

C: Did he ever mention what he loved about it? Was it the academics and the environment? The discipline?

T: I think it was the environment, the cruises that he took and the working with the boats and so on, and he was always pretty good at mathematics, things like that. English and history were all right, but he was better at the others.

C: He had more of a scientific bent and that would help him at the Academy.

T: Yes.

C: When did he graduate from the Academy?

T: Well, he was in the Class of 1907, but they divided that class into three sections, so the first graduated in September of 1906 and the second in February of 1907 and the third in June 1907 and my father graduated in the first section, September 1906. Apparently they did this because they needed junior officers in the fleet which Teddy

Roosevelt was building up with new battleships.

C: He was in the September segment as you said. Were they the highest ranking in the Academy?

T: Yes, they were.

C: What ship did he serve in on the around the world cruise that followed rather quickly after his graduation from the Academy?

T: He was in the MISSOURI.

C: Do you know where they went on this cruise?

T: Yes, I can remember that. They went down the coast of South America. Do you want me to give you the names of all the places?

C: Sure.

T: They went down the coast of South America; they went around through the straits of Magellan and I can remember his always commenting on what a very hazardous trip that was and the weather was wild, but they made it though with all these fleet ships. And he said he realized afterwards how much of a responsibility Admiral Evans had getting them all through

safely.

C: That is a bad area for weather and wind and storms.

T: The weather and the wind and the narrow straits and so on.

C: Well, that was quite a baptism by fire for a young passed midshipman.

T: Then they went up the coast of South America and they were entertained all over the place: Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and so on and then they went on north. They had some maneuvers off the coast of southern California and then they got to the west coast, where they were feted even more.

C: Yes, I can imagine. What was his job on the cruise?

T: I think he had various jobs. That would be in his memoirs. I think he did enjoy the signaling experience for one thing and the navigating, and I think he really had a chance to do quite a bit of everything.

C: What was important for him about his stop in San Francisco during that cruise?

T: Well, he had to go to a ball at the Hotel Delmonte on the

Monterey peninsula. He hadn't particularly wanted to go, because he had been to so many. He was exhausted. But he got detailed to this and there he met my mother.

C: Was she a native Californian?

T: Well, they were in San Francisco, yes. Her father, my mother's father was an engineer, a graduate of Yale, and he had gone west with the railroad, with the Union Pacific Railroad, and he had been out there in San Francisco. They had been there for some time, but he died when my mother was thirteen. So her mother had my mother and her younger sister to bring up and so she took her two girls down to the Hotel Delmonte for the ball.

C: Oh, how nice.

T: They had a lot of good friends in San Francisco, so they were well connected.

C: Wonderful. Did their courtship begin at this time, at this meeting?

T: Yes, it did because when the ship went on up to San Francisco, he was invited to go to a house party with mother and they had a very good time together. That's before he left and went on out to the Pacific, but they wrote

to each other.

C: They would have had to correspond. That's a long time not to see each other; that must have been difficult. When and where were they married? We're getting ahead in our story...

T: Well, yes, it is ahead of the story, but he made my mother promise that if she ever came to the east coast to let him know, and she did go to the east coast eventually. She visited her uncle; he was her father's favorite brother in Washington. He was a Federal Judge then. She went to visit him and then she had a aunt, who was her father's sister, in New Jersey. She was married to a doctor in Paterson and mother was visiting her, but she had written my father that she was coming east. His ship came in to New York at the time she was in Paterson, New Jersey. So he went out to see her in Paterson and before she took the train back to San Francisco they were engaged. She went back out with her uncle and she got a telegram at every stop from my father. My uncle would say, "Who is this young man telegraphing my niece". To make a long story short, it wasn't too long before my father went out to San Francisco and they were married in my mother's home. Bishop Nichols officiated at the wedding. It was a lovely wedding.

C: How nice. This was what year now?

T: 1913.

C: Admiral Hewitt was in the USS CONNECTICUT in Europe. This was before World War I and it was when he heard Admiral Sims' famous Guild Hall speech. Did he ever comment on the circumstances surrounding these events?

T: Yes, he did. He realized that what Admiral Sims said was a very inflammatory statement and he felt that there would be diplomatic repercussions, but he did agree with what he had to say and succeeding events proved it to be very true. So he always thought that was an interesting part of history for him to have been present there.

C: And there was something else unique besides the speech itself, more the personal circumstances surrounding his going to the Guild Hall speech. I believe it was something to do with a coat that he was wearing.

T: Oh, yes. He apparently didn't realize he was supposed to wear a frock coat in the parade, so he had to change with a classmate quickly because the classmate apparently was not marching in the parade and my father was. The classmate was somewhat heavier than my father, so he had to go along in a rather ill-fitting coat with sleeves too long, but there he was. And he also said that after this speech, the Fleet had

to be sent to Kiel, Germany, to soothe ruffled German feelings.

C: That's an interesting tale. He goes into it in the memoirs and I found the incident about the coat very amusing. In 1911 he was serving in the USS FLUSSER, which was a destroyer under then Commander Halsey who would earn great fame in World War II. Did he ever express any opinion of Halsey?

T: Yes, he was very fond of Admiral Halsey. He thought he was a fine officer who had implicit trust in his officers and the inner security to be able to let them carry out the ship-handling by themselves. He would go down and sit in his own cabin and, for instance, let my father bring the ship in to the pier. My father was always very impressed with that.

C: Do you know if your father did many different jobs on this ship during this assignment? Did he get a lot of experience in the FLUSSER?

T: I am sure he did do a lot, but I think that you have to check with the memoirs.

C: Your father had an academic bent, more or less. One of his assignments following the FLUSSER was teaching at the U.S. Naval Academy, an assignment he went to after the

FLORIDA, not the FLUSSER. What did he teach at the Academy during his first assignment?

T: He was in the mathematics department and he really thoroughly enjoyed helping midshipmen work their way through difficult problems. I can personally attest to that because when I had difficult problems he would work with me at them and he would say, "I'm not going to give you the answer because what you've got to do is to see how you solve the problem." And so when I went to college and he wanted me to take calculus I said, "Without you to come talk to? No, I won't do it. I would have to wire you questions." He said, "I would wire back: use your bean."

C: Did you take calculus?

T: I did not.

C: I don't blame you.

T: But he was a wonderful teacher. He would go through problems very slowly, very carefully...

C: So you would understand the basic principle.

T: Yes.

C: So he enjoyed academics.

T: He enjoyed it very much.

C: Where was your father when war broke out in Europe in 1914?

T: Well, he was in Naples at the time of the assassination at Sarajevo, and then while on the practice cruise his ship, the IDAHO, was turned over to the Greek government in Villefranche and those aboard sailed home in the MAINE. While he was in Villefranche the French declared war and he was very much touched by the whole thing, with people leaving to go to the front and the mobilization of the reserves and so on. And they had tried to help with the American citizens who were there. They left apparently some gold and cash with the U.S. Consul to help American citizens get their passage home. Of course there were no flights then; they had to get out by ship.

C: So the men on the ship did this?

T: Well, yes. Apparently the ship had enough money to leave with the American Consul to help these people in this emergency situation, which it really was. They needed to get home.

C: That was an interesting charitable gesture. Where and when were you born?

T: Well, I was born in August of 1915 in quarters on Upshur Road at the Naval Academy.

C: Where was your father at that point in time?

T: At home on Upshur Road. When he was over in the Mediterranean, when war was declared, he was on a midshipmen's cruise, a practice cruise.

C: But he was coming back to the assignment at the Academy.

T: Yes.

C: Do you remember anything about your life at the Academy in those years, or did your mother tell you anything about it?

T: Well, not in those years, because I was really too young to remember. Later on we went back and I remember watching the parades and I can remember that the Prince of Wales came, but this was in the 1920s.

C: We'll come to that as we go on. Did you feel that your growing-up years were disrupted by constant moves, or did you

have an opportunity to live a more settled existence?

T: No, I moved with my family, but the interesting part for me was that I had grandparents. My father's parents were in Hackensack, New Jersey, so that was on the east coast. Whenever we were there, of course, we went to visit them and when we were on the west coast, my grandmother was in San Francisco, and we always would go up there. The fleet would go up at various times in that area and we would be with my grandmother, so I felt as though I had an anchor on each coast. And then, of course, where my family was was home. And the navy was very small in those days so that you really had a group of people that were sort of family wherever you went. If you just met someone you hadn't met before, but still you had heard other friends speak of those people, it was just as though you were meeting an old friend, really.

C: Yes, the navy was much smaller then. It was more familial. Did you enjoy navy life as a child and as a teenager?

T: Oh, very much.

C: Where did you receive your early education, primary schooling?

T: Well, let's see. I started out at the pre-school in

Annapolis and then we were in Long Beach when I was in my first and second years of school and then we went back to Washington, DC. We were there three years and I remember that school very well; it was in Georgetown. -It's still there; it's right across the street from the lovely park on R Street in Georgetown. I think the school is closed now. I have been by the park and it's still there and it's lovely. So I went there. Then we were out in Long Beach. I went to Jefferson Junior High School and back to Newport and went to this little school, Miss Wilke's School - it was a private school here in Newport - for one year and then I went to Roger's High School for two years. Then the last year was in Coronado High School in California and I graduated from there, so I did go back and forth. That was a little confusing because different schools would have different curriculums.

C: Oh, sure. You would be ahead or behind, whatever the case might be. So your mother, obviously, and other navy wives in that period followed their husbands.

T: Oh, yes. Always.

C: Did you attend college?

T: Yes, I went to Vassar from Coronado High School, and I had to be tutored in various subjects in order to pass the

exams for college. Coronado High School simply was not up to par academically for all that I needed. The head of the math department there tutored me in trigonometry and solid geometry. A French scholar tutored me in French after school hours. And so I got into Vassar. My family picked me up there at the end of my freshman year and took me to Annapolis, where my father had been ordered.

C: Did you enjoy your experience there?

T: At Vassar? I loved Vassar, but I had a personal problem then because I was losing my hearing, so it made it very, very difficult. And at the end of two years I did not go back because it was so hard. They didn't have the hearing aids they do now. It was just too difficult emotionally, as well as everything else.

C: What did you do at that point in time in your life?

T: Well, my father was then stationed at the Naval Academy so that wasn't too difficult because of meeting all the midshipmen.

C: We'll pick up with that again. Getting back to your father's career, we're going back and forth in the time line. He was assigned to the USS EAGLE. This was about 1916-1917. Why did he consider the USS EAGLE an important command?

T: Well, that was a fascinating time, because it was a very difficult ship to handle and he learned really how to cope with all sorts of conditions, the sea and the wind and everything else with the ship. He learned how to handle that and then he had diplomatic problems because there was a revolution in Cuba at that time and he was the lone officer, who acted as the representative of the United States in some of these ports where they were having problems. The revolutionaries were trying to take over the sugar mills and so on. He was having to represent the United States and take care of the property and all of this. And he handled it with great finesse and intelligence and diplomacy. He kept things on an even keel with the revolutionaries and the people he protected; he did what he had to do. He protected the property and I still remember that some of the people who owned that sugar mill, later in life, were still writing to my father, still doing things for him. They were great friends up till the end of all of their lives.

C: Isn't that wonderful. Because that was a dangerous situation.

T: It was a dangerous situation and it could have had tremendous repercussions if he hadn't handled it properly. It was an experience in diplomacy and with citizens of other countries.

C: He was a young naval officer...

T: He was a very young man then.

C: And to have that kind of responsibility thrust upon him. Naval officers had to act as diplomats as well as naval officers.

T: Indeed they did.

C: As CO of the USS CUMMINGS, the next ship, he had convoy and escort duties during WWI. Was there anything outstanding about this tour of duty on this ship?

T: Well, I can remember at the end of the war. Of course, we didn't get in until 1917 and it took him awhile to get that ship, and to get over there, but at the end after he had done a certain amount of it, convoy duty, the war's armistice was declared, and his ship was sent out to meet the WASHINGTON which President Wilson was coming over on to the armistice.

C: Did he have a chance to see Wilson at all?

T: I don't think he did. He was a very junior officer really.

C: So he was just escorting.

T: Yes.

C: Did he see action at all?

T: In World War I?

C: Yes.

T: Other than convoy, that was the main thing.

C: And that was a dangerous business.

T: Well, yes it was, with the German submarine war.

C: During the 1920s, your father had assignments as a gunnery officer. That was one of his specialties. He was assigned to the USS PENNSYLVANIA, flagship of the Atlantic Fleet.

T: The Pacific Fleet.

C: Of the Pacific Fleet. How did he improve gunnery performance on the PENNSYLVANIA?

T: Well, apparently it had been unsat on gunnery and he raised their standing so they won the battle efficiency pennant and within one year came within an ace of the gunnery trophy for the fleet.

C: Well, that was quite an achievement. So gunnery was one of his specialties.

T: Yes, he loved that. He loved the precision and that had to do with his mathematical ability.

C: And again that does tie in. Did he ever mention anything about his position as aide and gunnery and tactical officer on Admiral De Steiguer's staff?

T: You know before he went to Admiral De Steiguer's staff he was ordered to the Head of the Gunnery Section in the Naval Operations Division of Fleet Training. This was in Washington, so he had all of that experience first. Then when he went out to be aide to Admiral De Steiguer, well, he wasn't actually his aide, he was his gunnery and tactical officer on the staff and he ran the tactical handling of the battleship division because Admiral De Steiguer had immediate command of the battleship. He was very fond of Admiral De Steiguer, but Admiral De Steiguer had a very bad reputation because he was very quick to criticize. He was rather difficult in that respect, but my father always felt that if

you stood up to him it was all right. One time he said that he had an argument with Admiral De Steiguer and Admiral De Steiguer said, "Damn it, Hewitt, I am right." And he said, "Sir, I feel I am right." And that's when Admiral De Steiguer said, "All right, go ahead and make a damn fool of yourself." And it turned out to be all right.

C: Your father was a very...

T: Well, when he felt he was right he stood up to it.

C: Well, that's very good, a very admirable quality. In 1928, he was assigned to the Naval War College where he was a student and staff member for a couple of years. Where did you live in Newport? What street?

T: 22 Old Beach Road, which is practically on the corner of Cottage Street and Old Beach Road.

C: Did you rent?

T: We rented, yes.

C: Was the naval presence fairly visible in Newport in those days?

T: Yes, indeed it was.

C: And how was it visible? In what way?

T: Well, of course, the summer colony was here, but then in the winter they left and the navy were really a big part of Newport then. My father had a car pool to the War College with Admiral Milo Draemel who was, of course, not an admiral then, but he was out in Pearl Harbor, on Nimitz' staff later, during the war. And Walter Kruger who became a General. He was one of the big army commanders over in the Pacific later on. The three of them had a car pool together and then another very good friend was Captain Fred Rodgers who was our Naval Attache to Japan, just before World War II. And there was Captain George Wright who was a brilliant, brilliant man who, unfortunately, had a heart attack and had to resign from the navy before World War II, but he was one of the most brilliant men in the navy. Admiral Taussig was Chief of Staff at the War College then. So there were many leading lights here.

C: What was social life like among naval officers? Was there much socializing?

T: They had dinner parties, cocktail parties and receptions; I remember many dinner parties. And for the children, they did very well by us. Of course, I was in high school then, but my sister who was younger - went to a nice private school

called Mrs. Mallory's where a lot of the younger children all went. They enjoyed it. And for the older ones, our mothers all got together and they had a series of dances for us at Christmas time over at the Torpedo Station. There was a large recreation area there with bowling alleys where the dances were held. Then there were other dances at Swanhurst, which belonged to the Art Association then. We had a very happy time.

C: Oh, good. And you were at Rogers then?

T: I was at Rogers. I was at a little private school, Miss Wilkes' first, and then at Rogers for two years.

C: Did you like Rogers?

T: Yes, I did. There were some good teachers there. Of course, Rogers was then where Thompson Junior High is now and we used to walk down there. They had two Miss Franklins I remember. Miss Ruth Franklin was a wonderful teacher of English plus being Dean of girls, and Miss Susan Franklin taught Latin. Susan Franklin had a very sad end, but I won't go into that. And then Miss Margaret Carr was there; I can remember her teaching English. They had some very fine teachers there, so I enjoyed that.

C: Good. So you felt you got a fairly decent education

then?

T: Yes.

C: Rogers must have been much smaller then?

T: Well, yes. We all got into what is Thompson Junior High now and it was then Rogers with four grades and we all seemed to fit in.

C: It seems there were several small preparatory schools, private schools, in Newport then.

T: Well, there was St. George's, but that was for the boys and a lot of the boys did go out there. For instance, Admiral Wadleigh went out there as a boy and Captain Wright's son Bill was there and also his younger son Toddy and Tommy Johnson. Captain Thomas Johnson was the head of the Training Station then, and his son went to St. George's. His son is now living in Providence and his daughter Henrietta Johnson Dane comes down here and has a house right on Bridge Street, by the Rhumblin. She lives there and also in Belmont, Massachusetts.

C: How nice.

T: So, a lot of people who were here then came back.

C: But you did mention Mrs. Mallory's school, I believe it was.

T: Yes, that was for the younger ones, elementary...

C: It was a private elementary school that was here. Other people have mentioned names of private elementary schools.

T: Mrs. Mallory's - some of the others came later - the Miss Collin's and St. Michael's and so on. The latter our son went to, but that was much later. You see, this is before World War II. This is way back in the 1920s that I am talking about, the end of the 1920s.

C: Right. It is interesting socially to see how things have evolved and changed and education, I guess, is one way you can measure it. Did you ever have a chance to go on Base when you were in Newport during high school? Did you ever come up to the War College?

T: We came over here and played tennis on the tennis courts.

C: Oh, the ones just below the Museum?

T: Yes. We played tennis on those very courts. And we had friends over here whose families were in quarters.

C: So you were familiar with the Naval Base. Did your father ever comment on the Naval War College course that he was taking? How did he feel about it?

T: Yes, he felt that the courses were invaluable and he felt that at least one year at the War College should be an absolute prerequisite for advancement to a higher naval command because he felt they had a chance to study and reflect on the art of estimating situations, making decisions and then they had to write the plans to put them into effect and played war games to see whether their plans were right. He just felt that it was tremendous training and that this certainly served him in good stead later on. I know Admiral Spruance felt the same way.

C: So, it was an asset to his career at that time.

T: Yes, indeed it was.

C: He stayed on as a member of the College staff after that very fruitful year at the War College.

T: Yes.

C: Do you remember what position he held there?

T: I am not sure, but I'm sure it's in his memoirs, what he did. But I think he was in planning, naval planning.

C: That would have been helpful considering what he did in World War II. He went on to serve in the Battle Fleet under Admiral Luke McNamee in 1932 after the War College. Do you have any recollections of this time?

T: Before that he went to command a destroyer division based in Coronado, which he had for a year and he had a wonderful time with them. When they came into the harbor, he'd get them all in line and the ships would come up and anchor in the bay very smartly. He had a very good time with that. Then I went off to college and the family went up to Long Beach where he was on Admiral McNamee's staff, so I don't really have too much memory of that at all.

C: Did you correspond with your father during your college days?

T: Oh, yes, of course we did. They were there just one year, it was my freshman year at college. I do remember that one day at college I got a note on my door and it said, "You have a message, a telegram at the message center." So I went over and got a telegram from my father which said, "All safe and well, minor damage to the house." I thought this was peculiar. At lunch I said to one of my friends, "I've got

the craziest telegram from my father," and she looked at me and said, "Where does your father live?" I said, "Long Beach, California." She said, "Don't you know there was an earthquake out there?" They had had quite a time; my sister was there and my mother's mother was down from San Francisco visiting them and she was not too well at the time. And my mother's sister and her family were down there too, for a while. My mother and father had been up to dinner in Pasadena the night of the earthquake and they heard this report of the earthquake down in Long Beach. Pasadena had not been hit. They had a terrible time getting back down. The police weren't letting people back to Long Beach. My father didn't have his uniform on; he was in his civilian clothes, so he had to fight his way back in and they managed to get hold of my sister and grandmother and my mother's sister with them too which was good. But the house was sort of a mess, no electricity, no gas, no nothing. My father got them out and they spent the night in a vacant lot. Then he got them up to Pasadena the next day and reported back to his ship. And, of course, many families were out on the ships. He said there were diapers up and down the corridors and so on. So it was quite a time, but it was typical of my father in the middle of all that to have sent me the telegram that everything was all right. It was typical of his thoughtfulness.

C: This is a personal insight into his character as well as

an interesting circumstance. Now he went after this back to the Academy as Head of the Mathematics Department.

T: Yes.

C: What was life like in Annapolis for a professor's family during the 1930s?

T: Well, that was a wonderful time, especially for me because I had just finished my first two years at Vassar. Of course, there were dances with midshipmen and my mother always said it was a mother's dream because the midshipmen then were not allowed cars; they had their Saturday nights free but they had to be in at a certain time. There would be hops or you could go to a movie in town or you could go to plays or athletic events. But the midshipmen had to be back in Bancroft Hall by 11:00, so this was lovely for mothers and for the girls there it was great fun. I met my husband-to-be at the very first hop I went to.

C: You did?

T: Yes.

C: Oh, how interesting. Did you hit it off at that time?

T: Yes, we did. He sat me out and we sat and talked for a

long time and then he asked to take me out the next week, so we had a fine time.

C: Oh, that was great. Did you live on the Academy grounds?

T: Yes we did, right in quarters on Porter Road which is right down from the commandant's house, just in back of the superintendent's house and right around the corner from the chapel, facing Mahan Hall.

C: Wonderful. You have been asked about socializing but you mentioned that already. Did your father enjoy his years there?

T: He loved it. He enjoyed it very much.

C: Was there anything unique about his teaching methods?

T: Well, that I don't really know because actually he had the administrative part of it and there were professors who taught, but I do know that midshipmen would tell me he would appear in the classroom and watch. The midshipmen had to get up and man the boards and write the answers to the problems and he often came in to watch. Apparently he upset some of them, but he was very good. If he saw they were having trouble, he tried to help them work it out.

C: Oh, that's good, a little class participation on his part. When you left Vassar did you return to Annapolis after your sophomore year?

T: Yes, well, I had my sophomore year there and I came home on holidays, of course, all the time, and my father was still there. So that when I left Vassar after two years because of hearing problems I was at the Naval Academy with lots of midshipman friends and it wasn't so bad. I did go up to Washington to take lipreading lessons from a very fine person and went to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to see various doctors who were trying to help. That part was difficult.

C: In the 1930s, the next rather interesting career move that he made was as CO of the INDIANAPOLIS and there was a famous cruise in which he took FDR to Buenos Aires in 1936. Did he ever mention the cruise to you or to the family and what it was like having FDR aboard?

T: Well, it was very fine. FDR had a wonderful sense of humor and was easy to get along with; it was a very interesting trip. And I know my father, one of the things he prided himself on was getting into each one of the harbors at the exact minute that they were scheduled to, which was apparently impressive because the President wrote him a very fine fitness report after that. And, of course, they had a wonderful reception in all these various places. We, by that

time, were out at Long Beach, because that's where the ship was stationed and my father was due to go there, but he was held back to make this cruise with the president. The Argentine government gave him a telephone call to Long Beach and at that time that was a very exiting occasion to hear his voice from so faraway. It was just as though he were in the room there with us. He spoke to my mother and my sister and myself; it was very pleasant.

C: That was wonderful.

T: And then when they put the president ashore, the president made sure that they were issued an extra ration of fuel so that they could make all speed to get out to Long Beach. On entering the harbor they hoisted their Christmas tree on the mast on Christmas Eve and came ashore to spend Christmas with their families.

C: That was considerate of him. Did FDR participate in the sailing of the ship? Was he interested in the nautical information?

T: He was very much interested in everything that was going on and all they did. They crossed the line, of course, the equator, when he was onboard and he had his son, James Roosevelt with him as an aide, and, of course, they were going to make it little easier for him but he said, "None of

that." They always gave a rough time to men on board when they first crossed the line. King Neptune came aboard, and James was just a lowly polly wog, so he got the works. President Roosevelt, of course, couldn't get into any of that, but they made him fish, and he caught two fish one labelled Vermont and the other Maine, then he had to say why he had not gotten their votes in the recent election, so he gave a very clever, humorous speech.

C: That's kind of cute. Do you think this assignment had any effect on his naval career?

T: I'm sure it did. I am sure President Roosevelt realized that he had a very capable officer in my father.

C: Admiral Hewitt was aide and then Chief of Staff to Admiral Taussig, another famous naval officer.

T: He wasn't his aide. He was Chief of Staff.

C: Chief of Staff to Admiral Taussig who was CO of the Cruiser Scouting Force in 1937. What did this position entail and what was Admiral Taussig like to work for?

T: It was a Cruiser Scouting Force and they were out in the Pacific. My father loved Admiral Taussig as all his staff did. He was just the most wonderful man.

C: Why?

T: Well, he gave them freedom to do their jobs, and when they did them well he gave them all the credit and that was very nice. I know he gave - when the division was divided into two groups of cruisers - my father in command of one, while he took command of the other - he let my father work out the operations and when they did well and Admiral King commended him, he gave all the credit to my father. So that's why people loved him. He really was a generous, self-effacing, a brilliant man and a very fine naval officer.

C: We have his papers here.

T: I am sure you do.

C: It is a very fine collection. When did your husband, Captain Taylor, graduate from the Academy?

T: Well, Captain Taylor graduated in 1935. Actually he was ordered out to the fleet in the Pacific while we were still in the Academy.

C: Where was he stationed?

T: He was on the LOUISVILLE and he was there for a couple of

years and then he went to Admiral Taussig's staff in the CHICAGO. He was there for just one year.

C: Your father's next assignment in the mid-late 1930s was as CO at the U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot in Puget Sound, Washington, and you were, of course, out there with him at the time. Do you know what conditions at the depot were like?

T: Well, they were pretty bad, because the depot was supposed to take care of most of the ammunition for the Pacific Fleet and there was no underground storage and he didn't feel it was particularly well guarded or - you know by that time - it was 1938 - war clouds were beginning to gather and he didn't feel that there was too much protection if somebody should come in, especially air raids, and so he needed more help. He was supposed to have an army unit come in and help him. Lieutenant General Mark Clark was in charge of the army and the anti-aircraft unit assigned for this. My father worked with him and apparently the best plan the army had, in case anybody tried to raid the depot, was for the National Guard battalion from the Midwest somewhere to arrive, M-day plus 20. So, he kept writing the Navy Department to ask for help on this. He did have his marine guards there in the depot; there weren't too many of them, but they would go around on horseback and check all the ammunition several times a day, because if they had any fire

it would have been disastrous. That was the big problem they had to deal with. And finally, I think, by the time war was declared the Navy Department said they better do a little bit more about defending their ammunition depot out there. He worked hard on that.

C: How long was he there?

T: He was there, I think, about two years.

C: By that time you were engaged.

T: Oh, I was married by then.

C: Well, you were going to be married on the grounds of the CO's house, isn't that correct?

T: That's right, but my family had just moved there when we got married.

C: Oh, I see.

T: I take my hat off to my mother. She made a beautiful wedding for me; she had just about a few weeks to move in before we were married.

C: Well, let's get back and talk about that a little bit.

When were you engaged?

T: When we were engaged, it was a long time after LeRoy graduated. As a matter of fact, it was three-years, but we were engaged in Long Beach and - he was out there then - and then he was being transferred from the staff on the CHICAGO to a Bath destroyer, at least the destroyer was being built in Bath, so we were going to get married before he had to leave and go across the continent together. We planned to get married when he was detached in July. His ship, the CHICAGO, was up the coast in Portland and Seattle. That made it very nice, because some of his staff members and friends could come and be ushers in the wedding. We were married in the Ammunition Depot.

C: Right on the grounds of the CO's house and it was a beautiful day, wasn't it?

T: Yes, it was a beautiful day and my mother who was a real artist had made - we had asked the chaplain if we could have an altar where we were to be married, and he said, "Yes, you can have an altar if you promise not to receive in front of it." So we said, "All right." There was a lovely grove of trees at the end of the lawn. There was a pathway out of the woods and my mother had a lovely arch made for the back of the altar. She had it made of evergreens to blend in with the scenery that was there. And then the altar that was made

was painted with a soft shade of green that blended in with the darker green of the arch. The chaplain lent us his cross and candle sticks and we had flowers too, so it was a real altar. And we knelt - we had a little bench - we knelt on the cushions that my mother and father had knelt on when they were married. They were made by a friend of mother's in San Francisco and the initials were embroidered on there of all the various people of the family when they were married. (Our daughter was lent the same cushions to kneel on when she was married.) Then where we went up to stand for the ceremony they planted little trees to make a sort of round nave for the altar. And we had a navy band that played on the tennis court just below the house. My sister was my maid of honor and my bridesmaid was an old, old friend. And then after the wedding we had a reception under the rose arbor which was one of the loveliest places, and we danced on the tennis court. It was lovely.

C: That sounds lovely. And when it's beautiful in Seattle...

T: And it was a beautiful day, just a beautiful day. It could have rained and that was risky. Well, we would have had to have been in the house then.

C: Did your father's promotion to rear admiral come while he was at the depot?

T: Yes, it did. I can remember we were in Galveston at the time. My husband was in the neutrality patrol in the Gulf of Mexico. By that time war had been declared in Europe - not in the U.S, but I can remember calling up my father and he was so excited. He said, "Raymond Spruance and Ike Kidd are out here. They are celebrating with me. They have walked out." Their ships were in the Bremerton Navy Yard and they walked out the five miles to the ammunition depot and they all celebrated together.

C: Isn't that great. Your father left there after two years and had a brief assignment with the Special Service Squadron. It was kind of an interesting assignment because it took him to South America. Where was the home base of the squadron?

T: That was in Panama.

C: And how did he get to Panama?

T: Well, first they went to the east coast and they visited my father's mother in Hackensack and then they took a ship from New York down to Panama.

C: So they had a nice Caribbean cruise along the way.

T: Yes, they did.

C: This turned out to be a rather short assignment, about three months, but he did do something interesting on it. He made an interesting trip.

T: Yes, he went to the Galapagos Islands, and then I believe he went to the inauguration of the President of Peru. He was down there for that. So it was an interesting time.

C: But short-lived because war was looming. It was on the horizon.

T: And I can remember he sent us letters that he mailed at the post office at the Galapagos Islands, just a special barrel for mail to be picked up by the next visiting ship homeward bound, and we got them.

C: Oh, good. The mail must go through even in the Galapagos. Well, we mentioned that World War II was looming, and your father held several key positions even before the war began. One of them was CO, Cruiser Division 8 in Hawaii and then he went to the Atlantic fleet as CO of the cruisers there. Did he ever comment on these two positions?

T: Well, it was interesting. Actually, his flagship was the same ship and he left Hawaii under sealed orders. He had told my mother, who was out there, "If I ever leave and I

don't come back in a given amount of time, when I am supposed to come back, you get back to the mainland." Because he knew even then that things were not good. My husband at that point was in the motor torpedo boats in Brooklyn. They were fitting out the first squadron of the torpedo boats, so mother came back to us and was in a hotel there in Brooklyn Heights. My sister was at Connecticut College at that time; my mother didn't know where Daddy was. She just didn't hear from him and we had no idea where he was. Finally, one day the telephone rang and I answered and there was my father. He said, "Floride, where is everybody?" And I said, "We are right here." He was in Boston at that time. It's just amazing but he had orders to come around through the Canal and they were supposed to get through secretly. I can remember somebody turned the lights on in the middle of their transit and that was very bad for their supposedly secret passage. They got through all right and he had come on up the Atlantic coast. And he had been ordered, apparently all the admirals available were ordered, to watch marine amphibious landings under General Holland Smith. In order to see them better, he went up in a helicopter from one of the ships and watched the amphibious landings. He had no idea how heavily involved he was going to be in that later. But then he went on up to Boston and he was in and out of Boston in the neutrality patrol in the north Atlantic.

C: Did he ever see any action there?

T: No, he didn't, but his force was convoying these ships back and forth, east and westbound convoys and some to Murmansk, too. They would meet the convoys in Iceland.

C: And then they'd take them the rest of the way as a midpoint for convoying. That's very interesting because the German submarines were off our coast then, attacking merchant ships and other ships, too. Where was he when World War II was declared or when Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7th, 1941?

T: He was in Boston. He had been out with my mother who was up there from New York, having left her apartment in Brooklyn. She had gone up there and taken an apartment in the Miles Standish Hotel to be near him because he came in and out of Boston with his convoy. So she was there and they had gone out to have mid-day dinner with old friends, as a matter of fact, the people in the United Fruit Company that he had been friendly with way back in Cuban days. But he had to leave word with his ship where he was every time he went out, and he said when they got back to the friends' house, here were a police car, a telephone emergency repair truck (sent to see why the telephone hadn't been answered) and an official navy car waiting for him. That's when he heard about Pearl Harbor.

C: Oh, my heavens. What was his reaction? Did he document that at all?

T: Well, yes. He realized this was really something terrible.

C: Did he ever comment on Husband Kimmel?

T: He was very fond of Admiral Kimmel and I can remember his saying when he left Pearl Harbor - of course Admiral Kimmel was out there then - he said, "Good luck," to him and Kimmel looked at him and said, "Hewitt, I am going to need it."

C: Yes, I think they probably foresaw it.

T: Oh, they foresaw it. That was exactly why he told my mother to get back to the mainland.

C: Something was going to happen there. I don't think that the rest of the American public realized it.

T: Oh no, I don't think they did.

C: But certainly people in the navy did and Admiral Taussig was one person who got himself in some trouble because of it.

T: He and Roosevelt didn't, unfortunately, get along too

well; it goes way back to World War I, which was too bad because Admiral Taussig was a brilliant man. He could have done so much.

C: Where were you on December 7th, 1941?

T: I was alone, as my husband had just been ordered from his motor torpedo boat squadron to a destroyer, which was then in Portland, Maine. He had been ordered to the RUSSELL and so he was gone and I was sitting there wondering just what I should do next, whether to stay in Brooklyn or what. And I was seven months pregnant. We had a cocker spaniel dog and I went out walking the dog on a Sunday afternoon. I came back in to put the philharmonic symphony on the radio and there was no philharmonic. Of course, it was all the word on Pearl Harbor. My husband couldn't call me up that night because there was such fog in Portland harbor that he couldn't get ashore, but the next night he called and said, "Can you meet me at Mary Lou's?" Well, Mary Lou was the wife of one of the ushers in our wedding and she was in Norfolk and I knew what that meant. I knew that this meant that he was on his way out to the Pacific and I thought I have got to get down there; I don't know how, but I've got to. Well, in the meantime, my parents called me from Boston and I told them the situation. They said, "The best thing for you to do is to come up here and stay with your mother." Mother had found that nice little apartment hotel in Boston. She checked in

to obstetricians and found a very fine one who had just been put in the navy. He was going to be at the naval hospital in Chelsea. So the thing for me was to get up there, but I thought I've got to go down to Norfolk first and I've got the dog. What am I going to do? Well, fortunately, my father's driver was down visiting his family in Delaware. They got hold of him and Rucker came by, helped me to get packed, picked up our car, put our cocker spaniel in the car, and baggage and stuff to take up to Boston, put me on the train down to Norfolk. I had called the railroads and asked about transportation. They said, "Well, the only thing we have going straight through is an upper berth," I couldn't see myself climbing to an upper berth at that point, so I booked a day train where I had to change at Wilmington. I thought somebody is going to take pity on me in my condition and help me with my bags changing trains. And they did. When we got to Cape Charles where we had to take the ferry across, the Cape Charles ferry, to Norfolk it was so rough that night, I thought the baby was going to be born in the black-out, right there on the boat. But I made it and Mary Lou met me. It was the first black-out in Norfolk that they had had and we drove home in the dark. LeRoy came in the next night. I saw him for the next two nights and then I didn't see him until Kent was ten months old. He was out in the Pacific in the Battles of the Coral Sea, Midway, and Santa Cruz Islands. You name it, he was in it.

C: Many of the big battles were in 1942. Well, we know where he was during that year. He certainly saw alot of action. Where was your son born?

T: He was born in the Chelsea Naval Hospital on the 9th of February 1942, and it was very fortunate because my father was in at that time, one of his few times in. At least he was in Portland and he got down to see his grandson who was named for my father.

C: Did you stay in Boston for the next ten months?

T: Well, yes, I stayed there. Mother went off when my father was ordered to the Amphibious Forces. She was at Old Point Comfort; they stayed in the Chamberlain Hotel there. I stayed in Boston until about May and then I was invited to stay with this very old friend whom we had met when we were in Bath, Maine, when LeRoy went there for his first destroyer when we were bride and groom. So I went up there with my son and stayed there until my husband came back the following December.

C: Right, in December of 1942 then he returned. Where did you spend the rest of the war? Where did he go and where did you go?

T: LeRoy came back in December of 1942 and we went down to

Newport. He was ordered to a motor torpedo boat squadron in Newport, so we were there for awhile. Then we went down to Brooklyn where they were being outfitted. From there he went out to the west coast in command of MTB Squadron 11. He was gone 16 months fighting the Japanese in the Solomons.

C: That was dangerous.

T: Eventually my mother and I, when my father went overseas, got a house in Newport and we stayed here on Greenough Place.

C: So that's where you spent the remainder of the war, 1944 and 1945.

T: Well, yes, we were right there on Greenough Place.

C: What problems did you encounter raising a family and living as you did, moving about for a bit in WWII?

T: Well, actually, I didn't move too much. I did get down to Key West when LeRoy came back and he was going to get on a destroyer. We went down to Key West because he had to go to Destroyer School there and I left my son with my mother. I know some people had to manage with children going back and forth across the continent, but I never did have that because every time LeRoy came back, he came back to the east coast. I always wondered what I would do with bottles and formulas

and what not going on a train, but I never did have that problem. He did have shore duty for three months, and we had quarters on the Norfolk Naval Base. Later we were down in New York; we had a nice hotel apartment there-when he first joined his destroyer. This was after his motor torpedo boat duty. His destroyer, the PARKER, of which he had command went over to the Mediterranean for the last days of the war there and came back. Then he was sent out to the Pacific and by the time he had gotten out to Hawaii, VJ-day was declared out there. I promised to myself that I would never have another child until their father could be with them, so my daughter wasn't born until after World War II when he came back. So I had one child before and one after the war.

C: How did rationing affect your family during the war?

T: Well, we had to be careful, of course, but the navy did have a commissary here; it was down on Long Wharf and we used to go down to that. They took very good care of us. Sugar was rationed, but we were able to use honey in many cases. As far as the doctors were concerned, doctors would even make housecalls then. So that was fine. And we had Laurie Scaife who was the minister at Trinity Church. Later he became Bishop of Western New York. He was a wonderful pastor for all of us wives, an especially good support.

C: What was Newport like in those days, in the war?

T: Of course there were a lot of navy people here at the Torpedo Station, War College and so on, but then there were also a lot of wives whose husbands were out fighting the battles and so we had a good support group among them. And the gas, of course. There was gas rationing but we would get together and pool a trip to Providence or Boston every now and then. We could manage that.

C: Were there many black-outs here?

T: I don't remember. I don't think so, but there may have been at the Torpedo Station, but I don't think that we had to be all that careful. I don't remember having to put curtains over the windows at night.

C: I thought you might have to in a military area.

T: No, I don't remember that at all. Maybe they did do it here at night on the Base.

C: Well, your father had important positions during WWII; he was Head of the Amphibious Forces Atlantic Fleet and he was involved in planning and training for the amphibious operations. How did he come into this job?

T: The admiral (Admiral Bristol) in Argentia had a heart

attack, and the Navy moved the admiral from the amphibious force (Admiral Brainerd) up there and they moved my father from his cruiser command down to take over the amphibious force. So it was a very fast change of command.

C: In this capacity, when he was planning and studying for the amphibious operations during the war, he met Lord Mountbatten. He went to Britain because the British had experience with landings. Did he ever comment on his trip to England and what he did there? What were his impressions of Lord Louis?

T: You know, it's an interesting tale about that because I know that he was called up to Washington to meet Admiral Mountbatten in the first place, and later my husband and I were stationed in Malta in the 1950s under Admiral Mountbatten's command. He had the Mediterranean NATO Command and we were at Naples at that time - my husband was the first American naval officer to be ordered down there, so that we hadn't been there more than about a week when they activated the command. It was very impressive there looking out over Grand Harbor from the bastion of Lascaris in Valletta. Several days later we were invited to Admiralty House for lunch. There weren't too many people there for lunch, and I found myself sitting at Admiral Mountbatten's right at the luncheon table. So, of course, he said he knew my father. We had a conversation about that, and I said, "Yes, I

remember my father arriving in London in civilian clothes which were a little bit too tight, the only ones he had been able to get hold of quickly since he had been wearing his uniforms constantly. Admiral Mountbatten chuckled and said, "When I first met your father I had flown over to Washington to talk to Admiral King, about Operation Torch. Admiral Mountbatten was there in his capacity of Chief of Combined Operations. I told him he was going to let the army take all the credit if he didn't get the navy in there. He'd have to get the navy in command; he couldn't let the army have complete control.

T: "What you need is a brilliant admiral to take over this command. Admiral King looked at him and he said, "Well, come back tomorrow for lunch." And so he came back and in walked this officer in rather disheveled khakis, and Admiral King said to him, "Here is your admiral." My father had been taken off the landing beaches. He had been watching amphibious training on the beaches. They flew him up to Washington to be there to meet Admiral Mountbatten, so that's when they first met. And then when he went over to England, of course, Admiral Mountbatten was just as cordial and friendly as he could be. Of course, my father learned a very great deal over there.

C: Preparatory to the many amphibious operations that he was in. Well, your tale about meeting him at lunch is amusing,

too.

T: I thought that was very interesting.

C: Did you have an opportunity to talk to his wife at all?

T: Oh, yes. Lady Mountbatten was a charmer. You can read all these things about them and wonder.

C: Oh, I have.

T: She could make you feel, at a party where there were 500 people that you were the only person there, that she was so glad that you had come. And I can remember we walked in to their first reception and we were a little bit late because our furniture had just come down from Italy that day. We met them as they were receiving at the head of the stairs in Admiralty House in Valletta. I said, "We apologize," and explained why. At the end of the reception she said to me, "Well, I hope everything is all right with your furniture." You know they just remembered every detail.

C: Yes, very, very astute in that regard. She was quite a humanitarian, too.

T: Yes, indeed she was. But they both never stopped, neither one of them when we were there. They were an incredible pair.

C: Lots of energy and involved in many things.

T: Lots of energy. They were fine for a group of people of different nations because they were not stuffy; they were just open, warm, and they drew everybody together. They were ideal for that position. We had Greeks, Turks, Italians, French and Americans when we were over there.

C: Have you ever visited their home?

T: No, I haven't. My father, of course, was taken out there when he visited England. He found the Mountbattens occupying only one small wing of Broadlands, the rest having been given over to a hospital run by Lady Mountbatten herself.

C: It is open to the public now.

T: Yes, it is. I would like to see it some day.

C: I think I would, too. Let's get back a little bit to Operation Torch. Do you know how long your father had to plan for Torch, the invasion of North Africa?

T: I can't say. He was sent down to the Amphibious Base in Norfolk in the spring of 1942 and he had from then until November when they landed in North Africa, and that was quite

some job.

C: Yes, it was a short time for the first landings. It was a great success, of course. Did he comment, in the aftermath, on the problems associated with the landings, anything that was particularly sticky that he had to make a decision on?

T: Well, I think more of that probably is in some of his memoirs, but I do remember the night before he sailed he was sitting in a chair in their suite in the Chamberlain Hotel and he suddenly just fell out of the chair. My mother, of course, was frantic and got the doctor on the staff right there. The doctor said, "He is all right; he just needs a little sleep." He was just exhausted. I remember his calling me up before he left (I was in Maine) but he didn't mention anything he was doing. He just called me up to talk to me before his departure. I can also remember his saying afterward that he always wondered what he would do if any of the transports were attacked, what ships he could free to stay behind, to help, how he would handle that.

C: On the way over there?

T: Yes. But he said, fortunately, that never happened. Of course you can read afterwards about all the intelligence involvement in "Torch". The intelligence did a wonderful

job. All that fleet sailed from different ports up and down the Atlantic coast and they rendezvoused off Bermuda. Then they sailed south to look as if they were perhaps going to Dakar, and they did all the ruses they possibly could, but it was incredible the tales of some of those ships with all their problems and all of them getting to their respective positions off the African coast. So he had very capable people under him too to get that all together; they were a tremendous group.

C: That is amazing that they got there safely. I believe that there was a problem with the weather though that...

T: That was a problem, but he had great confidence in his naval aerologist. That was my father again - he trusted people and he acted on his aerologist's report. The latter said he thought that the beaches were going to be all right the next day. Whereas all the other reports coming in said, "No, no, it's going to be terrible." And it was fortunate that this was the one time they could have landed. He banked on the aerologist and just went ahead.

C: Because after that it was pretty bad weatherwise, for a month or so. Where did he tell his family he was going? Of course, he couldn't tell them the truth.

T: He didn't. Of course, my mother knew. He didn't say

anything when he called me up. I said, "Oh, I know." And I could see from the other end that he wanted me to shut up in case anybody was listening. So no, he didn't say.

C: Did he know himself?

T: Oh, yes. He knew.

C: But the orders, I think, were read out at sea.

T: Oh, yes, he knew. They had been planning where they were going to. Obviously they had to.

C: But I don't think the men on the ship knew.

T: Oh, no, they didn't know, but he knew.

C: When he returned he was promoted to Vice Admiral. Did you get involved in that celebration at all? What was his reaction? Was there any celebration?

T: No, I was still in Maine when he got that.

C: But that was quite an honor.

T: That was very nice. When he went in to Bermuda on his return from Casablanca his great friend Rear Admiral Jules

James met him and he said, "Hewitt, you are flying the wrong flag." My father said, "What do you mean?" And ADM James told him that he had been made vice admiral. So that's how he heard.

C: That was a wonderful achievement. He next went on to work on more amphibious operations in the Mediterranean area; these were the landings in Italy, first in Sicily in 1943. He worked to prepare for these under General Eisenhower and Admiral Cunningham, a British admiral. Did he mention his work to you in this capacity in the aftermath, or did he comment on these landings?

T: Well, he had a very fine staff. They all worked like dogs. Eisenhower was more removed, not being in Algiers. But he worked under Admiral Cunningham. Admiral Cunningham was a British admiral in charge of the naval forces in the Mediterranean. My father and Admiral Cunningham became great friends and had the highest respect for each other, so that they worked beautifully together.

C: Joint co-operation...

T: Yes, it really was and I can remember a friend of mine at Malta saying that the navies are from different nations - but they see things the same way. I remember one of his staff telling me, my father never said this, but one of his staff

did when they were doing the landings in Sicily, they were coming in and some German bomb hit an ammunition ship which went up with quite a display and one of the staff officers said to one of General Patton's photographers, "That's quite a picture to take." And the photographer said, "I'm told to aim my camera only on Patton." Still, my father felt that General Patton was very capable, very capable.

C: How did they get along?

T: They got along; they had their differences and they had to iron them out. But he had great admiration for General Patton. He knew when General Patton got ashore that everything was going to be all right there as far as the military was concerned.

C: Well, the next invasion was in Salerno in 1943. That followed hard on Sicily. Your father commanded that invasion and then the one in southern France in 1944. Did he ever mention these two invasions to you?

T: He never said too much about Salerno, although it was quite something. I think it was difficult because of the lack of air power. It was so far for planes to fly from Malta that the forces didn't have the air cover that would have been helpful to have had and, of course, the Germans were just sitting there waiting for them. I can remember one

of the staff members saying that they thought somebody who knew German could hear the Germans saying they were trying to aim at the command ship to sink that, but they never did get it. It was nip and tuck there on the beaches for awhile and I think at one point General Clark really wanted them to re-embark, but my father felt that the naval gunfire could take care of it; at any rate they stayed. They hung in and stayed there.

C: And then southern France was one of the largest amphibious invasions of the war, the largest one that he commanded in WWII. Did he ever mention that in any detail?

T: Yes, he felt that that went off very well, because by that time they had had so much experience behind them they were able to perfect almost everything. I do know one of the things that he fought very hard for was to get the French in on that, and to have them very prominent in it, because he could understand their feelings. When he was in Algiers he met so many of the French who were living there. Some of the admirals were for the Cross of Lorraine and there were the other ones who were not, and there was a bitter feeling back and forth. He tried to make friends with all of them and he understood the delicacy of their feelings about having lost to the Germans and everything they had been through, so he was very pushy about having the French take part in the invasion. I can remember when we were in Malta with the

French officers on the staff when I mentioned who my father was, there was immediate recognition and warm acceptance.

C: They knew him and his work very well. With the war over, where was your husband assigned and where were you going to be living?

T: When my husband came back from the Pacific in his destroyer, it was put out of commission in Charleston. So I was down there for awhile and then he was sent to the staff of the General Line School here in Newport. We were here then right after the war.

C: Well, immediately after the war, shortly thereafter, the debacle at Pearl Harbor was investigated and your father was head of the committee investigating preparedness at Pearl Harbor. What was his judgement on Kimmel at that committee investigation?

T: Well, you know, he never really said very much about it, but I do know that he admired Admiral Kimmel greatly. He was very fond of him and he went out to Pearl Harbor to make that report. I always felt it was a rough thing for my father to have to deal with and they sent him, of course, because he hadn't been in the Pacific at all and he was a stickler for honesty. He felt that Admiral Kimmel had done a very great deal but, in all honesty, he felt there were some things that

had been left undone and I guess that was in the report, and that was unfortunate. I just felt it was too bad that my father had to be put in that position, but there it was. But I do know that before Admiral Kimmel died, he and my father became - I think he was bitter at first, Admiral Kimmel, but then I think he realized my father's position. At any rate, they corresponded and they had a reconciliation and so that was very nice. He was very fond of Admiral Kimmel.

C: Your comment about the fact that he hadn't been in the Pacific, I think, is important.

T: And I think that's why he was sent there and, of course, some people felt that they wanted it rigged that way. I don't know. But what they gave my father as evidence he had to put in as he saw it.

C: Well, he did assume command of the 12th Fleet after that, in the post-war period. Where was he stationed then?

T: Well, that was over in Europe, that was really the Naval Forces Europe. He was over in London.

C: That was home base for him. Did he enjoy living there?

T: Oh, he loved that; the family loved it. He had so many friends that he had made with the British that it was just

fine. His job there in the Mediterranean was not only doing the amphibious landings, but it was working with the French and the British and all the services and that took quite a bit of diplomacy. He made friends with all of them. Many of his British and French colleagues were still sending him Christmas cards up to the time he died. They had kept up a correspondence.

C: It took tact and diplomacy to work with a multi-nation force. Where did he cruise with the 12th fleet?

T: Well, he went all around. He went in the Mediterranean; he sailed in the MISSOURI to Turkey where they took the body of the Turkish ambassador to the U.S. back to Turkey and they were met with great honors there. He arrived in Istanbul. From there he took a train to Ankara where he met Ishmet Inonu and had a very fine time there. Then he went to Greece and to France and all around the Mediterranean and also he went by ship up in the Baltic to Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm and had a very fine reception from all those people. This was to show our flag and friendship to those countries who had been through so much; they appreciated our coming.

C: We do have pictures in the archives of his meeting heads of state and the King of Norway and so on.

T: And Holland. He was in Holland and Belgium too.

C: He met all the crowned heads of Europe during that tour.

T: Yes. While in Holland he went to a diplomatic reception and was presented to Queen Wilhelmina.

C: That was a wonderful tour. In the post-war period, after that tour, he was also attached to the Naval War College as a consultant. Do you remember what he was doing?

T: That was very perfunctory while he was being reviewed physically by the naval medical corps, so he and Admiral Spruance had a good time swapping old tales of the war and I am sure he did give lectures on what he had been doing over in the Mediterranean with the amphibious landings. That's mainly what he did.

C: He did have a final position before retirement from the navy as U.S. Naval Representative to the U.N. Military Staff Committee. Do you know what that position entailed?

T: Well, they were supposed to take care of the military requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security and to form the command of forces placed at the disposal of the United Nations, the regulations of the armaments, and, if possible, disarmament. He had a very interesting time with that as I can remember. He felt that

the Russians more or less torpedoed everything they tried to do. He would come home frustrated with the arguments, but, of course, the Russians were just trying to keep that as weak as possible; they weren't in any mood to help at all.

C: Was he located in New York City at the time?

T: Yes, he was in New York.

C: How and when did your father retire? Do you remember the year?

T: Well, I can't remember the year exactly. We were here in Newport at the time when he retired. It was in the late 1940s. 1949.

C: How did he spend his retirement years? And where did he spend them?

T: They had a lovely home in Orwell, Vermont, which had belonged to Captain and Mrs. George Wright. Captain Wright had died and his sons had been killed tragically, so they wanted someone they were really fond of to have the house, Mrs. Wright did. My parents took it over. They had to put in heating and electricity and all of that, but it was a beautiful old house right up on a hillside with the most beautiful views. My father loved it because his boyhood

home, the Kent place in Hackensack, had been up on a hill and this reminded him of that. So he had a wonderful time with his papers and writing to people and doing his memoirs and having a garden. And also they were very near, just about 20 miles from Middlebury and they met many people from Middlebury College. They went up there for lectures and college events. It was a very good place for them to be. In fact, Middlebury College gave my father an honorary degree.

C: So he spent the rest of his days there, I assume?

T: Yes, he did. They would come south during the winters, which were very severe in Middlebury. They went to Annapolis some of the time, but then the last few years they came here to Newport, and they stayed at the La Forge Cottage on Pelham Street during the winter. Then they would go back up to Vermont again in the spring.

C: Were you here at the time?

T: Yes, we were here at the time.

C: Can you describe your father? What kind of man was he? His traits? His character? Personality? You've done a little bit of that already, but I wondered if you could expand a little more.

T: My father was one of the finest human beings I have ever met in my life. I just felt so fortunate to be his daughter. I really did, because he had integrity from the word 'go'. Honesty. He loved the navy. He loved what he was doing. He was a perfectionist in everything that he tried to do in the navy and, at the same time, he was compassionate. He didn't suffer fools gladly. He didn't keep people in if they were incompetent, but he would give them the benefit of the doubt as long as he could in everything. And he just trusted us all. It was a wonderful way to grow up, and he was always dependable. If I ever had a problem, he was there. The telegram to me was one example of his thoughtfulness at the time of the earthquake in Long Beach. He was always there when I needed him.

C: Well, that's a very nice tribute.

T: Well, he was marvelous. And people adored him. They really did and he loved people. He was just friendly with them and enjoyed being with them, so he had many friends in Vermont when he retired and many people that served under him always came to see him and wrote him and the people that he worked with over in Europe, the French and the British...

C: Still remembered him.

T: Oh, yes, they were still writing him.

C: Did he ever express an interest in politics?

T: Not really, no. He was not a politician. He never blew his own horn. He cared about getting the job done. He didn't give a darn about making himself known. He just did what he had to do, and he said, "I want that to stand for itself."

C: His record would stand for itself instead.

T: He never tried to get ahead. Never tried to push himself in any position. He simply gave of his best in whatever job was his to do.

C: Did he ever comment on the other military and naval leaders with whom he worked? For example, Raymond A. Spruance.

T: Oh, he loved Admiral Spruance and he said, "He's got a terrific mind." He felt it was fine that Spruance was there at Midway. He admired Halsey, but he felt that Halsey might be a little bit, well, rush into things, so to say. Spruance was more cautious. He'd think it all through first and then act. He thought Nimitz was fine too.

C: Did he ever mention anything about Admiral King?

T: Yes, he liked Admiral King. He said, you know, a tough man, but he was efficient. He was very good. And as a matter of fact when they dedicated King Hall here, my father gave a speech for it. He admired Admiral King. He was a very fine naval officer.

C: Did he know Admiral Conolly?

T: Yes, he knew Admiral Conolly and Admiral Conolly was under him in the Sicilian invasion. He said he had a group task force and that Conolly did an excellent job.

C: Conolly later became President of the Naval War College here. Did he ever comment on Admiral Stark?

T: Admiral Stark. Yes, he knew him and liked him. I don't think he ever knew him that well. I don't know that he ever worked under him.

C: He had been a CNO in that period, too. You've talked a little bit about what your father did, his recreational interests as an adult in retirement. Now back a little bit to you. Did you enjoy your life as a navy wife?

T: Yes, I did. Of course, I was used to it. I might not have known anything else, so it was par for the course for me

to move around, not that it was ever easy at the time, but still it was what I'd grown up with.

C: When did your husband retire from the navy?

T: Well, he retired in the early 1960s, 1961, something like that. That was a physical retirement, because he had had a tragic accident. He was on a horse out here at Paradise Avenue, a Welsh pony that was not used to being ridden by anyone but children. He had started up a lane off Paradise Avenue. The horse hadn't been ridden for a couple of weeks before. It was my daughter's and she had been sick. The pony made a sudden 180 degree turn and shot out into Paradise Avenue. A car was coming along just then and my husband got the pony's face turned away from the car, but the impact was such that he was thrown into the car on his right side and down onto the road on his left side. He had a compound basal fracture of the skull. He was in the hospital here for two months. So eventually, he did have a year or so here at the War College and down in Washington, but he was retired physically. He never did go back to sea again.

C: But you mentioned some interesting assignments you had in the late 1940s or 1950s. I believe you mentioned the Malta one which was great and interesting. Did you have any others that were of that nature?

T: Well, let's see, after being on the staff of the General Line School in Newport, my husband was the commander of a destroyer, the CONE based in Norfolk. Then he was in command of a landing ship dock, LSD which went up to Greenland. They did some of the survey work for setting up a base in Greenland one summer. Then after that he was sent to Naples on the NATO staff. We had a year in Naples.

C: That would have been fun.

T: It was wonderful, just wonderful. I joined the Culture Vultures as they called themselves. We went to Pompeii, Herculaneum, Cuma all these wonderful places around. And we had a lovely apartment up on the Posillipo looking out over the bay of Naples. We had a perfect view of Vesuvius and Capri. Then after we had been there for a year, LeRoy was ordered to Mountbatten's staff in Malta and we didn't want to go at first. The children and I sat in a row in our living room and cried at first. We were about to have a villa right down on the bay that an army officer's family wanted us to have when they left. But Malta turned out to be two of the happiest years of our lives. We had a house out on St. Paul's Bay. We looked out on the island where St. Paul was shipwrecked. We had a sailboat with an Arabian sailing rig and we sailed out to the island. We swam in the little cove right across the road from our house. Altogether it was a wonderful time. LeRoy was under a Turkish admiral on Admiral

Mountbatten's staff. All of the staff, we became very good friends with Turks, Greeks, Italians, French, English and also some Maltese families. We enjoyed that so much.

C: That does sound delightful. You had several years in Europe and an opportunity to travel and to mix with people of other nations which is great.

T: Yes, we did.

C: Do you have any advice to give to young navy wives today?

T: I think it's important for them to try to be cheerful when their husband's duty changes and to remember that their husbands have got a tremendous job with tremendous responsibility so they need to be as supportive as they can be. There are many times when a navy wife is left alone and the children get sick and other crises that happen, but I think one can learn strength that way and there is support from the other navy wives. You find what a wonderful family the navy can be.

C: That's true. That's good advice. Why did you select Newport as your retirement home?

T: Well, my family had been stationed here a fair amount, of course, when my father was at the War College. I had enjoyed

Newport. Then my husband was here at the General Line School after the war and when we came back from Malta he had a destroyer division which was based here. After that he was at the War College, so we had our home here. .

C: You had already purchased a home here?

T: Yes, we already had a home here. He did have two years in Washington before he retired, but the obvious thing was for him to come back here. The children were more used to it than any other place.

C: What career paths did you follow after retirement, both you and he?

T: Well, he went on and took education courses and he became a teacher in the sixth grade in the public school in Middletown. He was always good with children of that age and, so he enjoyed doing that. And I always thought that it would be fun to get a college degree. I never, of course, finished my college. I had had just two years. It seemed to me like a hurdle in life I had not jumped over, so I managed to get my credentials together and they took me at Brown. So I went back to Brown. I did have to take a few more courses for their requirements, but I did that. I got through in two and a half years and then I felt that it would be fun to be a school librarian, so I went on to URI. They were just

starting a graduate library school there and I got my MLS. Then I had a year in the elementary schools here in Portsmouth. One of the librarians there had been in some of my classes at URI. She offered me a position in Portsmouth, which I accepted. Then I was asked to become the librarian at St. George's School, so I was there for 15 years. I enjoyed that very much. My son Kent had graduated from St. George's by that time. It probably was just as well!

C: Well, that's interesting. Did your children follow in their father's footsteps? Were they navy-oriented at all?

T: When we went over to Naples, we took a transport from New York. It was pretty rough, and my son and I had a hard time. My daughter Martha was much better on her sea legs along with her father, but I can remember my son coming up one day and looking at me with a sad expression saying, "Imagine, having to do a job like Daddy does, feeling the way I do." He went to Yale instead of the Naval Academy. He went into the teaching profession and is on the faculty of St. John's College out in Santa Fe. Our daughter, Martha Schantz, is not in the navy herself, but she married a 1968 graduate of the Naval Academy who has been a naval aviator. He is in command of Fighter Wing One down in Oceana, Virginia Beach, a training and maintenance command. But he has been an Air Wing Deputy Commander, a Squadron Commander, and other flight billets on aircraft carriers.

C: Oh, that's interesting. So she now had a navy connection. You said your son went through St. George's. Did your daughter go to school here?

T: No, she couldn't go to St. George's, because they didn't have girls there then. So she went off to Foxhollow School in Lenox, Massachusetts, which is no longer in existence, but was a very fine school. Then she went to Vassar. And Kent went to Yale.

C: And then, I guess, he got advanced degrees too?

T: Yes, he got an MA from the University of Georgia and then a Ph.D. from the University of California at Santa Cruz.

C: How interesting. I wanted to ask you one question about St. John's. Is that connected with St. John's in Annapolis?

T: Yes, it is. It's a branch of the Annapolis St. John's.

C: Oh, that's very interesting. What, in your opinion, to wrap up, were the benefits and the drawbacks of being a navy wife? Do you see any in either direction?

T: Well, I guess the drawbacks, of course, are having to move and having to pick up stakes and get yourself settled in

a strange community and when you've got children they have to transfer schools and you've got to find medical doctors and so on. Sometimes the navy has good medical facilities but sometimes you have to look into civilian ones. On the whole, the navy gives you a very interesting life. You have to meet challenges and you find that you've grown as a person because of them. And you meet interesting people. People in the navy have been all over the world. They've had fascinating experiences. And I think it is just a very exciting life. I loved it.

C: It sounds like you did. I thank you very much for your remarks. This has been very enlightening, regarding both your own life as a navy wife, and, of course, your father's very illustrious career. We'll get this transcribed and you can edit it and comment on it. Thank you.

T: Thank you very much.

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