

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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NO. 328

CAPTAIN EDWARD F. HAYES, USN (RET.)

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INTERVIEWEE: CAPTAIN EDWARD F. HAYES, USN (RET.)

INTERVIEWER: DR. EVELYN M. CHERPAK

SUBJECT: WORLD WAR II VETERANS

DATE: JULY 29, 2004

C: This is an oral history interview with Captain Edward Hayes, USN, Retired. The interview is taking place at his home on 77 Sunrise Drive in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Today's date is July 29th, 2004. Captain Hayes, I'm very pleased that you were able to give us some time this morning to discuss your naval career, and I'd like to begin the interview by asking you where and when you were born.

H: I was born in St. Louis, Missouri on 26 June, 1918.

C: Were you from a navy family?

H: No, my father was a railroad man all his life.

C: What railroad did he work for?

H: Wabash.

C: Wabash, Ohio. Was your mother a homemaker?

H: She was. She had four children. I had an older brother. He was a retired army major general, who recently died, and I have an older sister and a younger brother, who died some years ago; that leaves two of us, my sister and me.

C: One brother you said was a retired army general. Did the other brother go into the service?

H: He came in the navy during World War II, but then he got out again. He didn't like it.

C: And was your sister in the military at all?

H: No, not at all.

C: She didn't join the WAVES. Did you spend your growing up years in high school in St. Louis?

H: Yes, all the way through, and one year of college also at St. Louis University.

C: Oh, you went to St. Louis U.

H: Yes, I did.

C: Why did you choose the Naval Academy?

H: I saw the old movie called Navy Blue and Gold when I was a kid, and I was so impressed with it that I told my dad, "I have to go there. I just have to go there." And I finally managed to go there. That's the story.

C: Now, you had to get an appointment --

H: Yes, of course.

C: -- from your senator?

H: Well, it worked out differently.

C: How did that happen?

H: A very dear friend of mine, God rest him, I think he's dead too now (inaudible.) His name was -- let's see, Bill Lamb, William lamb. He was from St. Louis University High School. I went to Christian Brothers High School. We took a competitive examination given by our representative, whose name I'll try to recall for you. And I stood second and Bill stood first, so he

got the primary, and I got the alternate and then we were notified -- my dad was notified in -- that was in 1935. We were notified in late 1935 that an error had been made in the Navy Department, and there was actually another appointment available for Representative Henning. His name was Tom Henning. So he gave me a primary and then about two weeks later we were notified, "Sorry, there was another error made. There is no such thing." My dad was terribly, terribly disappointed, and through quite a fluky accident he happened to know very well personally a wonderful man, of whose name I have no recollection at all, who happened to be the chairman of the board of the TJ Moss and Timber Company. At that time that company owned about 90 percent of the standing timber in the whole Pacific Northwest. And he had a lot of clout. Well, when Champ Clark, the senator, was visiting St. Louis that fall, this gentleman went to him, and I understand from the story I heard through few years that they had a yelling, knockdown dragged out fight in the hotel in St. Louis, and finally, Champ Clark agreed, that because he had one spare appointment left, he would give it to me. So I went to the academy on a senatorial appointment through a fluke.

C: Oh, isn't that amazing. That's quite a story. But you made it. And after your freshman year at St. Louis University did you start off as a second year student at the academy?

H: No, I was started as a plebe.

C: You were plebe?

H: Yes, from the word go.

C: Oh, okay, from the word go. Did the academy meet your expectations, your boyhood expectations?

H: Oh, boy, it shocked the heck out of me. I kept telling people that when I joined the navy, I didn't even know what an oar looked like.

C: You found out though?

H: I found out. I found out the hard way, mostly on my backside during that first year.

C: Now, how did you find the curriculum there?

H: Demanding, very demanding.

C: Did you have a bent for, let's say, engineering or math?

H: No, no, I just worked hard and got through all of it. I've been a sort of an English lover all my life. My dad insisted that we learn well to use the beautiful language to which we were born, and I think all three of us boys worked hard at that,

so I liked English, but I didn't do outstanding work the other technical subjects.

C: You were exposed to life at sea on the summer cruises?

H: Yes.

C: Do you recall any of those and your billets there?

H: Yes, I was aboard the Old Wyoming for our first major cruise, and I think I was aboard the USS Fairfax, a "four pipe" destroyer, for our midshipman second class cruise. We didn't have a senior cruise, a first class cruise, because at that time there was too much tension before World War II broke out, so we didn't need a big cruise, but our youngster cruiser was a great cruise. We went through Kiel and down to Funchal, Madeira, and several places in the Mediterranean, which frankly, I'm sorry, I can't recall, but we had a wonderful cruise, a marvelous time.

C: And that was your exposure to the Navy?

H: Yes, it was.

C: -- life at sea and working as a young midshipman on the cruise. Did you participate in any athletics at Annapolis?

H: Yes, I took up track for a while, but didn't keep at it. I



played lacrosse for a while, but I didn't keep at that either. I was what we call a member of the 'radiator squad." We sat on the radiator and stayed warm.

C: Can you give us any insight into what Annapolis was like before the war?

H: Annapolis was just a small town, a little tiny town and we could walk through the whole town in about ten minutes.

C: You didn't get much time off.

H: No, we didn't. We got Wednesday afternoon off, and you were not able to leave the yard; it was called. What do you call it? The compound for the academy was called the yard, and we simply were not permitted to go outside the gate. So it wasn't until first class year that we were permitted to go outside the gate on Wednesday afternoons.

C: You were pretty confined then.

H: It was pretty much like being in a prison.

C: Now, how did you react to that?

H: We didn't like it, none of us liked it.

C: Yes.

H: But we got along with it. We learned to grit our teeth and lived with it.

C: Now, you were exposed to a lot of discipline, too.

H: Oh, yes, the upper classmen were gods when we were lower classmen.

C: Was there any hazing?

H: Oh, yes, we had a terrible time with hazing during my days. Assume the position was the only order you ever got, and that meant bend over and stick your fanny up in the air where they could whack it.

C: Boy!

H: And I was just Irish enough to be smart. I had too much Irish in me, so I would make a smart reply to anything that they asked and then I'd have to bend over and get my fanny paddled.

C: Oh, boy!

H: So I spent most of the freshman year, most of the plebe year with sort of a sore back end, but I had a wonderful time.

C: Oh good, good. When did you graduate?

H: 1940.

C: And, of course, war was kind of looming, at least.

H: Well, we graduated right into the teeth of World War II.

C: What was your first assignment?

H: USS Maryland, the old battleship, BB46 I think it was or 36.  
I don't remember which.

C: Now, where was the Maryland docked?

H: In Pearl. She was in Pearl Harbor. In fact, all of the heavies were. In those days we had a rule, I say the navy had a rule; that newly commissioned ensigns were required to serve two years in what were called 'the heavies.' The heavies at that time were either battleships or heavy cruisers, so you can bet all the heavies were in Pearl at the time of the bombing.

C: And what was your billet on the ship?

H: I was the assistant turret officer and division officer in Division 4 and Turret 4 and then became turret officer, and I

happened to be turret officer at the time of the bombing.

C: Oh.

H: Because my boss, who was then a lieutenant, had been transferred, so I got the turret.

C: That was December 7<sup>th</sup>.

H: Yes, December 7th.

C: 1941. Can you recall that terrible incident?

H: Well, it's strange. I lucked out. I'm blind lucky. God took care of me, because it so happened that a very good friend of mine from the class of '39, Benny Benedict was aboard the USS Tennessee, which of course was immediately astern of us. We had the California up forward and then Oklahoma and Maryland side by side and then West Virginia and Tennessee side by side and then Arizona and then Nevada. And Benny asked me -- of course, we always had big dances on Friday nights.

C: Oh, really.

H: Yeah, we had huge dances at the officers club. So Benny asked me, he said, "Look, have you got weekend liberty?" and I said, "Yeah." By the way, also everybody who could afford it in

those days had rented what were called snake ranches.  
Apartments up on Wilhelmina Rise in Pearl Harbor.

C: Oh.

H: Yes, it's way up the hills toward the Pali. Benny had a nice little apartment, so he said, "Have you got liberty?" and I said, "Yes, I do." He said, "Well, why don't we go out and spend the night in my house and then we'll bust around on Sunday, go to Mass and then bust around and have a good time. We don't have to be back until 8:00 on Monday, do we?" And I said, "No, not at all." So we went, out and we were sound asleep in single beds at Benny's apartment on Sunday morning. We had the radio sort of playing softly, and suddenly this rather sepulchral voice broke in and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the island of Oahu is under attack by a foreign power, but the attack is being repelled and all is well." Well, Benny looked at me, and I looked at Benny, and of course, we remembered all too well the famous radio program called, "Men from Mars." You remember that, "Men from Mars?"

C: Well, Orson Wells, wasn't it?

H: Yes, everybody who's a little old can remember that. Of course, I looked at Benny, and he looked at me, and I said, "Mars, all over again or some smart remark like that, and we rolled back over, and by golly, the voice came right back on and

said, "This is no joke ladies and gentlemen. Listen to those guns!" Well, both of us jumped out of bed and ran over to his Lanai, which is sort of a porch. They called it a Lanai in those days, and we could look down the hill toward the harbor. The place was a wreck. It was a mess. The first attack had already come in, and they dropped lots of bombs. By the way, I found out later what the Japs had done. They had bought a refused lot of 15 inch armor piercing projectiles, which were supposedly built for the British, but the British had turned them down. So the Japs bought them and called them scrap iron, but what they did, they just took the rotating band off the base of the shell and welded some jury-jiggered fins onto it, and that's what they dropped on us as bombs as far as I know. We thought we had good heavy turrets, but those bombs went right through the top, just like a pencil through paper. Anyway, Benny and I were shocked, and we jumped into our gear and drove like mad. He had a little car, and I'm surprised we are alive. I'm surprised the marines didn't machine gun us when we went through the gate, because we didn't even slow down. We just drove madly through the gate at about 35 miles an hour, which, of course, in those days was fast.

C: Where did you head for?

H: We went to the officers club in those days had a long winding sidewalk that went down the hill to a boat landing, which was used pretty much by everyone as the boat landing that

used to go to the big ships. So everybody was running for the officer's club. When we got there, well, it was kind of a humorous thing. It makes me feel that the American service man will make light of almost anything. No matter how bad the situation, he can always make a joke out of it, and it's a wonderful thing to see it happen, but anyway, Benny and I were running down this sidewalk like mad, and there was a sharp turn just before the boat landing and lying right beside the boat landing was a wild torpedo, which had gone crazy. It was up on the beach, and, of course, as you came around the curb, you saw that thing staring you right in the eyeballs, and the immediate reaction was full brakes and back around the curb the other way and dive and then stand there and laugh at the next one who ran around. We thought it was a big joke, but the fish was a dud. It didn't go off. Anyway, we got a boat. Boats were coming in and picking up anyone going to any ship, and Benny and I got into a boat. It stopped at the Tennessee. Well, actually, it stopped alongside the Tennessee but on Ford Island, so we both jumped out. The ships were moored with big eight inch lines to the island beside these huge concrete docking piers. Anyway, the ships were along side the concrete piers and the lines went over to the beach, so we had to shimmy across the lines. Made a mess out of our uniforms, but we got aboard -- I got aboard the Maryland, and he got aboard the Tennessee. That's the last I think I've ever seen of Benny. He died during the war, I think.

C: Oh.

H: But anyway, I got aboard the Maryland, and I was in Turret 4 when the second attack came through. We took two big bombs. Fortunately for me, both forward. One hit the ridge rope. You probably don't know what a ridge rope is, but a ridge rope is what we called the heavy cable from the bridge to the very bow of the ship, right over the forward end, so that you could rig awnings across there and have dances and things without the sun bothering you. Well, one of those bombs hit the ridge rope and blew everything right straight down, blew a great big hole through about two decks. Another one came in between the Oklahoma and the Maryland and actually penetrated just below the water line and blew a big hole in the side, so we just sank at the bow. We were in the mud in the bow, but the Tennessee, on the other hand, and the West Virginia, you could see the outboard ships, the Oklahoma and the West Virginia, took all the tin fish. Oklahoma I understand got six fish in about a minute and a half. She rolled over in less than ten minutes, rolled completely over. People were getting out of that ship, maybe three days later from underneath, but she rolled totally over. You could see the bottom of her hull. See, the bottom of Pearl Harbor has been silted up so long for so many thousands of years that it's about ten or twenty feet thick in muck, and the tops of the Oklahoma just went down and kept on going until they hit something hard, so her bottom was just perfectly visible above the water line, and they were cutting holes in the hull trying to get people out. Well, anyway, things went on that way for



about a week, I think. And at night they had -- well --

C: So your ship was upright, and it had been bombed in two places?

H: Yes, we were upright, but down by the bow. We were stuck in the mud in the bow. But the tragedy was that that very night after dark, while there were still lights on (people didn't have enough smarts to turn their lights off.) The American planes from the Lexington were trying to find their way back to land at Ford Island, and they started a big long swinging circle, which by one of those weird coincidences just turned out to be almost the same kind of a track that the Jap torpedo planes had made that morning, so every ship in the place blossomed, and they shot down three of them, three of our own pilots, but it was a terribly unfortunate but an understandable error.

C: "Friendly fire?"

H: Friendly fire. It happens in war time.

C: Oh, sure.

H: But anyway, then for night after night after night you could hear and you could feel the tension growing during the mid watch from 12:00 to 4:00. By about 3:00 in the morning some poor kid, some enlisted kid, on a machine gun on some ship somewhere would

come to the conclusion, "I've got to be sure this thing will work," so he'd just pull a quick trigger and get a little blip and right away the entire harbor would break loose with automatic fire. I'm surprised a lot more people weren't killed there.

C: Right.

H: But that went on for night after night. It got to be a big joke, "Who's going to shoot first?" you know, sort of.

C: Oh, my heavens.

H: Then by about the, I guess it was about the 16th or 17th, the salvage crews came up, and they rigged a series of wires. First they poured 76 tons of hydraulic concrete in our bow and then --

C: Were they trying to sink it?

H: No, no, they were trying to float us.

C: Oh, under the bow?

H: No, they poured it into the bow to fill up the holes, so water wouldn't come in.

C: Oh, I see.

H: We ended up with 76 tons of concrete in the bow. Then they pumped us out, and we floated. We were sitting there floating, and they rigged wires all the way across the entire harbor and pulled us out from behind the Oklahoma until we could get free. Then we came home.

C: With all that concrete in you?

H: Oh, yes.

C: In the ship?

H: Sure.

C: Oh, my heavens.

H: Well, good Lord, the ship weighs about 30 thousand tons.

C: I guess.

H: 76 tons was just a drop in the bucket.

C: Oh, I see. Okay. It sounds like a lot.

H: But the skipper, he was a nervous wreck on the way home.

C: I'm sure. Where were you headed for? What port?

H: We came back to Bremerton, the big navy yard. The big navy yard in Seattle. The skipper would come running out and ask, "How's the Bay of Fundy?" and --

C: Well, you weren't near the Bay of Fundy?

H: He called the water in the bow, see, the water kept --

C: Oh.

H: -- we were making about eight or nine knots. We couldn't make more than that because the pressure would force more water in.

C: Oh, okay.

H: And we kept making reports on how much water there was in the bilge, up forward, and once it got to about nine or ten feet, it settled down. It didn't get any higher. The pumps were able to keep it out of there, but for about the first day or two, the skipper was really a wreck. Do you remember hearing about the "Flat 50's" cigarettes during World War II? Lucky Strike came out with them in green tins. First, the thing they did, they said, they were, you know, "Lucky Strike Green went to

war," because they were using, what was it -- they were using nickel to make green dye, and nickel was an important metal in war time, so Lucky Strike gave up all of its metal and claimed that they were very, very patriotic.

C: I guess conservation minded?

H: Well, everybody was trying to save everything, but the poor skipper. He must have smoked two whole trays of flat 50s each day. Sometimes he had three cigarettes going at the same time.

C: Oh, good Lord.

H: He'd light a cigarette and put it down and light another one right away. The poor man's name was D.C. Godwin.

C: That was quite a --

H: I think subsequently he died in World War II. I'm not sure.

C: Oh, boy.

H: But he's dead now, I'm sure.

C: Are you a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivor's Association?

H: No. PHSA?

C: Okay.

H: No, I refused to have anything to do with PHSA.

C: Oh, why?

H: They kept circularizing me, and I kept saying, I'm too busy. I can't bother with you folks. I didn't want to have any -- all I wanted to do was forget that place.

C: Oh, I see. Okay. Now, what happened?

H: See, I lost too many of my good friends that day.

C: Sure.

H: All the ensigns were aboard the heavies, and we were all ensigns. I lost seven classmates aboard the Arizona, all damn good friends.

C: That's a tragedy. That's a terrible tragedy.

H: I'll never forget that -- never in my life will I ever forget that blast. The entire bow of that ship just went up in a huge explosion. You could probably still pick pieces of iron up out of the hills around there. They figured out later that

what happened was one torpedo went in below the water line just between Turrets 1 and 2, and then through one of those one in a million coincidences another torpedo went right straight in the hole and blew up in between the lower handling rooms for Turrets 1 and 2. Well, that lower handling room is where all the powder was, so all the powder in both Turrets 1 and 2 went up in one fireball, and it just tore the entire bow out of that ship. Everything from the bridge forward just disappeared and down she went.

C: I've been to Pearl Harbor near the Arizona, and it was something.

H: It breaks my heart to go there.

C: You don't want to. When your ship got to Bremerton, what happened to the Maryland there? Was it repaired?

H: Oh, yes. We had a major overhaul for the first time in 23 years. They rebuilt us completely, and it wasn't very long before Maryland went back to war. In fact, we claimed proudly that they were shooting at the Japs in short order. The only ships that never fired again at the Japs were the Utah, the Arizona, and the Oklahoma. The rest of them before the war was getting on, were firing at the Japs and did a job. They did a fine job.

C: Now, were you detached from the Maryland?

H: Well, I immediately requested flight training.

C: Oh.

H: I said to myself, "Battleship duty is for the birds, not the bird men," and I requested flight training. I figured getting into aviation was a quicker way of getting back at the Japs, so I requested flight training.

C: Oh, fantastic.

H: It so happened that earlier on, my parents had visited the ship, and the assistant gunnery officer had, in my opinion, insulted my mother, so I had a grudge against him, and of course, he didn't like me much, because he knew how I felt about him, so my understanding is that he convinced the skipper that he just simply couldn't do without me as the turret officer for Turret 4 until the ship got to Pearl Harbor again. When we went back, let me think, it must have been some time in May.

C: Of '42.

H: Yes, of '42. Before we got back to Pearl Harbor. It was later than that. It was June or July.



C: So you were still with the ship then?

H: I was still with the ship at that time, but I was transferred away in Pearl Harbor about the 1st of August. Now, had I been able to get transferred from the ship before she left Bremerton, I would have had about three months leave to spend at home, but as it was, I was transferred in Pearl about the 1st or the 15th of August, and I was barely able to get home and spend about a day or two before I had to report for flight training in New Orleans on the 1st of September.

C: Why was the training in New Orleans?

H: Well, we had all of our -- what was it called, basic training at various bases, and Lake Ponchartrain was one of them.

C: Oh.

H: We were flying bi planes. Do you know what a -- what do they call them, a crop duster is?

C: Yes.

H: Do you know what the old crop dusting airplanes looked like?

C: Yes.

H: That's what I flew first in basic training. They had yellow, we called them, "yellow perils." They had yellow fabric covered wings, bi-planes. The Stearman, the N2S called a Stearman, S-t-e-a-r-m-a-n. We had three different types of planes, the N2S, the N3N, and the NP. Then P was a Spartan. The N3N was a navy built, and the N2S was Stearman built, but the N2S was the best of all of them. It was probably the most marvelously aerobatic plane ever built. We could do amazing things with those airplanes and get away with it.

C: Well, you probably had classroom training first, didn't you?

H: Oh, yes. We had to go through ground school along with flight school, and ground school has all kinds of technical aviation information, which probably we forgot. All we were interested in doing was flying an airplane as quick as we could get west. That's all we wanted to do. But a lot of us didn't make it, a whole lot of us didn't make it.

C: Why didn't some people make it?

H: Well, we had what was the saying: "the tiger habit." As soon as you had somewhere near 300 hours in the air, you were convinced that you were totally immortal, and you could get away with anything. In fact, everybody felt that way, and 300 hours was always considered to be a very dangerous weak spot in any

pilot's training, because he began to do things he thought he could get away with but he couldn't do it, and --

C: Like what?

H: Well, flying under bridges, things like that.

C: Turning upside down maybe.

H: Yes, well, we had to do inverted spins. You'd roll an airplane over and stuff the nose up until it stalls and then she spins upside down and then after about three turns, you roll it back over and come out, I was doing inverted spins with a very bad cold. To this day I have a nice high pitched little whistle in both ears. It's very high pitched, but what I did, I almost blew both my eardrums out. See, the Eustachian tube wouldn't take the pressure change fast enough and the eardrums almost burst. I had a terrible pain in my head, and I went to see the doctor right away, and he said, "Young man, you almost blew both your eardrums," He said, "You're going to have trouble with that." Well, I have had. For the next 65 years I've had -- right now talking to you, I can sit here and listen to myself whistle, both eardrums whistle constantly.

C: That's annoying.

H: No, you learn to live with it. You learn to live with

anything.

C: I guess so. How long was your flight training?

H: I started flight training on the 1st of September 1942, and I got my wings, as I recall, in March -- February or March or April of 1943. See, they needed aviators so badly that as soon as you got enough experience to be considered fairly safe, they'd send you out.

C: And where did they send you out?

H: Well, I went through basic at Lake Ponchartrain in New Orleans and then I went to Saufley Field in Pensacola and then I went to -- oh, what's the place in Florida -- Lake City, Lake City in Florida. I wanted to bomb the Japs just like they bombed us, so I put in for heavies, for multi-engine instead of fighters or dive bombers. As a result, I was sent to Lake City, because they had twin engine advanced training in Lake City. We operated from Lake City down to a big base in Boca Chica, which is the second last island in the island chain down in the Florida Keys. Boca Chica and then Key West are the last two keys, and we had a big base on Boca Chica -- it turns out that if you flew almost due south from Lake City, you went over the water, all the way down past Fort Myers, and straight into Boca Chica. We operated out of Boca Chica, and after we had accumulated about 350 or so hours, they sent us out. I went out

as the executive officer of VPB136 Patrol Bombing Squadron 136, which was twin engine, medium land based bombers. VPB were patrol bombers, and we were flying Vega Ventura twin engine planes.

C: What ship were you assigned to?

H: See, the heavier aircrafts were not shipboard. We had the entire squadron trained at Lake Union, outside Seattle, and then we were sent to Attu.

C: Oh, okay. That's near Alaska.

H: Yes, it's only about 2500 miles west of Alaska. That's all. That's pretty near. If you start out the Aleutian Chain and you keep going until you run out of chain, that's Attu. It's the last one in the chain. There's nothing west of there except the Bering Sea.

C: Okay, so you were assigned to Attu, that was your base?

H: Yes, and we were put on what was called the Orient Express. The Northern Kurile Islands had been taken over by the Japs. And the two most Northern Kurile Islands are Paramishu and Shimushu. Now, they've changed their names, I understand, by now, but in our day it was Paramishu and Shimushu. Now, the distance from Attu to Shimushu is 764 nautical miles one way, so

we had to take off from Attu, fly four and a half hours to Shimushu, bomb, and fly four and a half hours back to get back to Attu. It was in the world's worst weather, by the way.

C: Oh, I can imagine, stormy.

H: Icing.

C: Icing, and you had a navigator aboard, didn't you?

H: And we also had a --

C: A bomber?

H: A radioman. Yes, we had twin engines. Two great big R2800 Pratt & Whitney engines, but with our load, with the load of fuel to make the trip and back, all we could carry was three, 500 pound bombs. That is a pitiful way to go bombing for 750 miles, drop three bombs and go back home.

C: Well, and you had your targets obviously.

H: Well, all we had to do was get over there, because anything you found, you dropped a bomb on. Anything at all.

C: Okay.

H: The theory was we were supposed to be mosquitoes. We kept irritating the Japs up in the Northern Kuriles, which meant they had to keep a whole lot of aviation up there, which, of course, saved all of our friends down in the Southwest Pacific, so they could move faster. We were just an irritant. That's all.

C: Now, did you go out as a team, in groups?

H: No, we would go out singularly, individually. Sometimes we went two and three at a time but then you'd break up and try to sneak in. The trick was to get down about 20 or 30 feet off the water, about maybe 50 miles out, so you'd fly under their radar and then when you were just about a mile or two from the beach -- of course, we had our early type radar in the nose of the airplane, and we could tell when we were getting near the beach, so as soon as you were about a mile from the beach, pull up sharply to about 3000 feet, and dive at them, and we had three, 500 pound bombs and our airplanes were also fitted with what were called HVARs, high velocity aircraft rockets. They were five-inch shells on rockets, hooked onto the airplane wings with zero length launcher. You'd light them off, and they'd just fly off by themselves. It was a pitiful way to figure on killing people, because it was pretty inaccurate. It was the best you could do though. You'd just aim at things and then pull the trigger and watch those things flare out. We carried three on each wing, so you had six, five-inch shells, plus three, 500 pound bombs. That was the best we could do.

C: And how many people were in your aircraft?

H: Seven, a crew of seven.

C: Crew of seven.

H: A pilot, co-pilot, and we always had a chief mechanic, navigator, turret gunner, tail gunner, and side gunner. Side gunner, because we had only one, 50 caliber in the side.

C: Were you ever shot back at by the Japanese?

H: Oh, yes, yes. I brought home junk every once in a while.

C: Oh, you brought home holes in the airplane?

H: Yeah. For years I carried a piece of a 37 millimeter shell that went right straight through our radar, ruined the radar, tore it all to shreds. My crew chief, when we landed finally at home, was cleaning up the airplane, and he came to me, and said, "Hey, skipper, you want this?" I said, "What the hell is it?" He said it's a piece of a shell. So I said, well, cover it with plastic, and I'll carry it with me, and I had that thing in my pocket for years, but --

C: Why did you do that?



H: I figured that's the one that was going to kill me. But if I had it in my pocket, it couldn't do it. I'm not superstitious, but I had fun with that.

C: Oh, boy. How many raids did you make in the Northern Kuriles?

H: Oh, I don't know. I never counted them but could get my flight log out, my book, and check it for you. I think it was probably about 12 or 14 in a year. The weather was so bad that there were months when we couldn't even fly.

C: Oh, really.

H: Couldn't even take off, the weather was so bad. We had williwaws up there, 125 knot winds. The winds are called Williwaw, W-i-l-l-i-w-a-w, Williwaw. And one of them was so violent that it tore six PVs right loose. We had everything tripled tied down, but it tore them right off their tiedowns flipped them over upside down. Just ruined six airplanes.

C: Good heavens.

H: We had -- would you believe in the winter of 1944, it would be the winter of 1944, we had 20 feet of snow. Feet, not inches. We used to kid about it. "We measure our snow in feet,

not inches." It was grim.

C: Oh, it must have been terrible.

H: Hell of a place to fly. Worst place in the world to fly, and I'm glad I'm not doing that anymore.

C: And how long were you in Attu?

H: A year. A full year.

C: That's long enough. It must have been very boring.

H: Too damn long.

C: Must have been very boring.

H: No, it was very chilling.

C: I mean, what did you do in your spare time?

H: We had a lot of fun with things, like, we set up a -- what do you call it, a skeet range, and if you fired against the wind, the bird would come up and stop against the wind. It just couldn't get any further, and you could just sit there and shoot it, and we would get them all upwind, but downwind, they'd go by so fast downwind, you couldn't shoot them, but we had a lot of

fun firing skeet. That's one of the few things that we had to do, and of course --

C: Keep the airplanes in shape.

H: Yes, and then we did have one great big elephant hut, which had workouts. It was a gym and most of us went over there and kept sweating every once in awhile. We had to sweat enough in the airplanes, might as well sweat on the ground.

C: That was quite an assignment. How many planes were based there?

H: At one time we had three squadrons, and my squadron alone had 18 planes.

C: Wow.

H: So we had a bunch of airplanes on that base, a whole bunch of airplanes.

C: You did. You had a lot. After that duty was over and you had about 14 flights, almost a little more than one a month.

H: That's about all you could do, all you could expect.

C: Given the weather. Where were you assigned next?

H: I came back to the states in '45. It would be in early '45, I had been introduced to my bride by letter. See, a classmate of mine and I reported to the Maryland together. We were shipmates together, and he happened to be a Roman Catholic, as I am, and I think we were the only Roman Catholics among 14 of us who were aboard that ship, and as soon as the bombs dropped, the navy changed the rule, and said, "All bets are off. Anybody who wants to get married now may do so." Of course, in those days we were forbidden to be married for two years also. You know the old idea of "no horse, no wife, no moustache?" That was the army, but you did two years single and two years in the heavies and -- but anyway, John Barrymutty, God bless him, he's dead, too, now. Everybody who's anybody is dead, but he immediately asked me -- he had been sparking his girlfriend, a girl by the name of Clare Hartnett, and he asked her to come out and get married and so he asked me if I'd be his best man. And well, Clare Hartnett was so enamored with married life that she thought everybody ought to be married. And she probably started insisting that she had all kind of girls I should marry. Well, one of them was her first cousin, Clare Dowd. And I said, oh, sure, get her out. I'll marry her. I was a snake in those days. I thought all girls were -- worth dating, anyway, if you date them once, then don't date them twice, because they wanted to marry you, but I thought I was smart, and so I wrote her a really smart-ass letter introducing myself and that began something and that went on for the entire remainder of the war.

C: Well, did you meet her?

H: I didn't not until the war was almost over.

C: You didn't meet her?

H: Not until much later.

C: Oh, just by correspondence?

H: Yes, we never sent pictures or anything else either. But you know, you start writing silly things, and after a while it begins to get serious, and by the time three years had gone by, we were down to where we were talking about serious things, and I had convinced myself that was the woman I wanted to spend my life with.

C: Whom you had never seen, never met. Oh, isn't that amazing.

H: Well, you know, see, I am probably one of the world's worst correspondents. I just hate to put things on paper, so I would get a response from her, and I would sit down and maybe a month would go by and then I'd write off another letter, and she would immediately respond. She was a marvelous correspondent, and that went on, and my time got -- from a month or six weeks, it went back to a month, then it got to be about three weeks, then

it got to be a week and a half, then we got down where I was writing practically almost every day.

C: Wow. That's amazing. That changed your style.

H: Well, when I came back from the Aleutians. See, that all started in 1941 -- in December of 1941, and it went all the way through 1944, so by the time I got back to the states in early '45, I had determined there was nobody else. I was going to get that girl before somebody else did, so I went into the -- what do they call it? The Washington Athletic Club. Anyway, it was a club, a big old club in Seattle, Washington. I got on the phone, and in those days in the telephones, you know, you got an operator, and they were lovely. I've loved operators ever since, because I told the gal, I said, "Look, what I'm trying to do -- I'm trying to find a girl by the name of Clare Dowd, and I know she works for American Airlines, and she's somewhere in Washington D.C. and you just have to find her for me. And I'm going to sit by this phone until you do. And when you get her, you call me back."

C: Oh, wow.

H: And so about an hour, hour and a half went by, and sure enough the gal found her, and she called back. Well, the way I found her though was I called her home first, and her mother gave me a phone number that she thought was Clare's phone in

Washington, and that's what I had the operator try. Of course, in those days the airlines were all full of mashers, you know. Everybody was trying to make the airlines stewardesses, so they were not permitted to give out their names, but this operator convinced somebody in American Airlines that I was a decent guy and not a meany, not a masher, and she got Clare on the line. Well, I made a date to see Clare, so I promptly went back home, and then, how did that work out?

C: Did you meet in Washington?

H: Yeah, yeah, but this didn't happen. No, I got back, and was immediately sent to -- I don't know how that worked out. That's another one of the holes in my memory bank.

C: Oh, okay. That's okay.

H: I found her anyway from Washington Athletic Club, is what it was.

C: And you must have met then?

H: Well, I didn't meet her until 1945. Oh, I know. I know. I went home, and we went to Washington D.C. with my mother and father, and I met her at my sister's home in Washington. My sister was married to a newspaper man in Washington, and my sister had a breakfast for us and invited Clare so I met her. We

became engaged within a day and a half or so.

C: Wow.

H: I was adamant.

C: Yes, you certainly were.

H: And I went to her - oh, I know. She was able to go dead-head on the airlines, so she said, well, if you want to fly with me, we'll go home, because her brothers were both in service in the army. Well, one of her brothers was in the army and the other brother was in the navy and they were going to be home and were having a big get-together, so I went with her to her home and met her mother and father, and I'll never forget it. Her dad was -- we had a whole huge bunch of people in the living room, and her dad was in the dining room shaking a cocktail shaker, making some cocktails for the crowd, and I walked in there and said, "Mr. Dowd, I would like to have your permission to notify everybody of my engagement to your daughter, if it's all right." Well, it shook him up, and he slowed down and very carefully put the shaker down and said, "Well, we have to talk this over with mother," so we went in the kitchen and Mrs. Dowd was in there, and we all had a big hugging session in there. Her brother John came in and yelled, "Is this what I think it is?" and we told him, "Yes, it was," so he gave me -- he gave her one of the best comments that any brother



could ever give a sister, I think. He grabbed me by the hand and yelled, "Boy! Have you got good taste!" I promptly went back to St. Louis and was ordered to Hawaii again to take training as a prospective air officer on a carrier, so I got to Hawaii, and there immediately my string was cut again. They said, "We need somebody to go to Fleet Airwing 1 in Okinawa as assistant operations officer. So I went to Okinawa.

C: And this was in?

H: This was in '45 by now.

C: Was it after the battle in April?

H: Which battle?

C: The battle of Okinawa was in April, '45.

H: Oh, I was there during the time they were still shooting.

C: Oh, okay.

H: That went on for a month.

C: Yes, yes, it did.

H: We were operating sea planes. Fleet Airwing 1 was operating

sea planes. See, we were getting ready to invade the homeland.

C: Right.

H: Our job was air sea rescue, so we were operating twin engine and four engine sea planes out of Buckner Bay, which was then Nakaguguko Wan, the big bay on the south end of Okinawa, but they named it after Simon Bolivar Buckner, General Buckner, later on. At that point they dropped the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and we would fly up over Honshu and look at that terrible, terrible devastation. God, what a mess that place was and then they transferred. The navy in its aghast wisdom transferred the entire fleet airwing to Shanghai and put us on what they called Chinese coastal patrol, which in fact was nothing more or less than sort of a NATS, a naval air transport service business. We had an office on Bubbling Well Road in Shanghai, and anybody who wanted to, Chinese or otherwise, it would make no difference, could go down to that office and request a flight to any place on the Chinese coastal area. If there was water and we could land, we'd have to take them, and we made landing in some of the darndest places you could ever imagine. I always wanted to go to Chung-King and Kunming, but they're too far inland, and we couldn't land, so I never did see Chung-King or Kunming, either one, but we did see every single coastal place there was water to land in. We used to go to Tsingtao all the time. That was one of the places everybody wanted to go.

C: Oh, so these were Chinese that you were transporting?

H: Oh, we would have taken anybody. One of our pilots even had one Chinese woman produce a baby in flight. We had crazy things. We had six multi-engine sea planes anchored in the Whangpoo River by Kiangwan Airport in Shanghai, and anybody who would get a ticket to fly with us would come down to the landing in Kiangwan and we had to send a boat over and we'd bring them back. A very funny story, I'll tell you. The admiral who was in charge of Fleet Airwing 1 was Black John Perry. He was a wonderful man. Everybody called him Black John, and he called me one day and he said, "Hayes." I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "We've got a Chinese lieutenant general coming aboard for a flight tomorrow morning." He said, "You go meet him." I said, "Aye, sir!" Well, we were scheduled to take off at about 4:00 A.M. See, you had to take off early because as soon as first light came, the Sampans would start and the Whangpoo River was just solid with Sampans, so you couldn't take off. There was no room. You'd kill people. So we would take off early before any Sampans started moving. Well, here we were going to pick this general up at the landing at Kiangwan at about 3:30 in the morning, and the admiral said, "You get him." I said, "Aye, aye, sir!" Well, I took the boat over there, and here was this tall, thin, general in a full uniform. Tall for a Chinaman, because usually they're pretty small. But he was a far northern Chinese, and the northern Chinese are a little bit taller than

normal. I didn't expect him to talk English, so I just saluted smartly, and he saluted back, just nodded, never said a word, never made a sound, and I sort of put my handout like that, sort of, you know, "get in the boat, general," and he nodded, and climbed down and got in the boat, and I got in after him, and we went out to the ship, and I nodded, "get on the ladder, general," and he nodded, still didn't say a word, hadn't made a sound, and he came up, climbed up the ladder, and very smartly saluted the quarter deck, and saluted the officer of the deck. He knew the protocol. He sure did know the protocol, but he never made a sound. Of course, ordinarily when we go aboard ship, we expect to say, permission to come aboard, sir. Well, he never made a sound. He just saluted, and he was saluted right back. So I pointed my arm like that, you know, down the passageway toward the ward room. And he smiled and nodded and walked down. Well, we got him into the ward room, and of course, at 4:00 in the morning everyone wants coffee, so we had lots of coffee in the ward room and the general sat down at one of the tables -- the head of one of the tables, and I sat down at his right, and fortunately, for me another one of the duty officers came in, grabbed a cup of coffee, and sat down over on his left, and this kid got away with it. I was just about to do it myself, but I would have embarrassed the hell out of myself. This kid leaned forward and -- the way you do if you think somebody doesn't speak English, you over -- and this kid very carefully and very loudly says, "General, do you speak English?" The general smiled a soft smile for a while, didn't say a word,

kind of shook his head a little bit -- and then in a beautiful baritone voice, "Well, yes, I'm a graduate of Rensselaer!" From then on we had a lot of fun. We had a hell of a good time talking to the general until about 4:15, 4:30 when I said, "We have to get to the airplane," and he said, "All right," so away we went. He was a wonderful person. I wish I had stayed in contact with him, but I never did.

C: That's quite a story.

H: He got off the airplane, and that's the last I ever saw of him, but he admitted to me, "You know I like to do that. I like people. I sort of suck them in that way. I get a big kick out of it." He had been at Rensselaer for about three and a half years.

C: He certainly had to know English to speak and write.

H: He knew English beautifully. He had a fine baritone voice.

C: That's amazing.

H: Then anyway, we were in Canton, China on the 5th of December 1945, as I remember. And I got my set of orders to report back to the Naval Academy for duty with the engineering department, so I promptly wired Clare, "sep up the wedding." I am headed home. Well, she and mother went out and performed a perfect act

of faith. Here I was in Canton, China on 5 December, and they set the wedding up for the 29th of December. And at that time, you know, everybody was headed home. The war was over, and they had what was -- you remember the old thing they called magic carpet at the end of the war? Everybody was given a free ride home in any ship that was headed east. Well, I figured there were about ninety-eight thousand people ahead of me somewhere, somewhere east of me headed home, so I figured the only way I could get home was by air, and I just literally thumbed my way across the Pacific. I caught an Aussie commodore, I believe he was, with a PB4Y, who was headed for Taipei, and I said, "Can I go with you, general?" He said, "Sure." So I went to Taipei. From there I picked up somebody who was going to Okinawa, and I got to Okinawa, there I knew the guy was in charge of all the aircraft in Okinawa, a wonderful guy, a good friend of mine. So I went to see him, and I said, I have to get home and I'm getting home with one of your airplanes, and he said, "You can't do it, Ed. And I said, "The hell I can't!" He said, "Well, good luck to you. You go ahead. You do anything you want." So I said, "All I want is your permission to go down to the squadron room and talk to those guys." He said, "You got it." So I went down. Well, it turned out that one of the PB4Y2 pilots, the liberator pilots, had been a pilot in VPB139 in Attu, and I knew him, so I walked over to him and said, "Hey, I'm going with you guys." He said, "You going with us?" I said, "Yes." He said, "We have no room." I said, "The hell you haven't!" In a plane this size, I've got one bag, and I'm

going. So he said, all right, you can right side. So I right-sided that four engine plane from Okinawa to Kwajelein from Kwajelein to -- where the heck was it next? Johnston Island and from Johnston to Barber's Point in Hawaii. Well, I had wired my father, too, that I was headed home, and I'd told him that I wanted to get married, so he arranged to have rail transportation out of San Francisco, so -- this all happened later. I got to Pearl, and I found much to my amazement there was something like two years of reserved spaces on aircraft ahead of me, so I said, "The heck with it. I'm going to get home. I don't care how." I went down to the shipping office in Pearl, and it turned out that I found the USS Colorado was headed for home, and well, the Colorado is a sister ship of Maryland, so I knew her inside and out, and I went right down to the Colorado and got aboard and got down to the skipper's office. There was a big old marine standing there, and I said, knock on the skipper's door, and he said, "Sir?" And I said, "Go, ahead just knock on the skipper's door." He knocked on the door, and this loud voice says, "Come!" And I pushed the door open and stepped through it. It so happened that I had checked. The commanding officer of the Colorado in 1945 was a man by the name of Robert Emmett Cronin who had been chief engineer in Maryland in 1941 when we were bombed. Well, we knew each other well. I pushed the door open. I said, "Hi, skipper!" He looked at me and said, "What the hell are you doing here, Ed?" I said, "I'm riding with you." He said, "No, you're not." I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "No, you're not. We're full." I

said, "The hell you are. Battleships are never full. I know." He said, "Well, it's up to you." You got to be in -- he said, "The list is already closed." I said, "Leave it to me skipper." I went back down to the office, and I got ahold of the kid who had the battleship loading list and I said, "Son, what would happen to you if by some weird accident you just somehow or another had typed the wrong name, and you got my name at the end of the list?" He looked at me with a sort of grin, he said, "I don't think anything, sir." I said, "Well, I'll tell you what, son, you get the bottom drawer in your desk open and leave it open, and I'll be right back." He knew what was going to happen. I'm sure he did. I went downtown, bought a big bottle of scotch, stuffed it under my tunic, and got back in and walked up to him, I said, "Son, how's that drawer?" He said, "It's open, sir," and I slipped the bottle out and dropped it in his drawer, and he said, "Your name's on the list, sir." I said, "That's all I need, son."

C: Did he have to cross somebody else's name off?

H: No, he just added me. One more name on a list of a battleship is nothing. Good Lord! There are 3500 people aboard a battleship. One more doesn't matter. There's always room.

C: There's always a bunk.

H: Yeah, you could find a place to sleep somewhere. It doesn't



matter. I figured I'd sleep on the deck if I had to. Then once I knew I was back aboard, I went back down to the Colorado, and I got aboard, and I got back to the big old marine. I said, "Knock on the skipper's door again." This time he smiled and knocked right away, didn't even argue with me. I stuck my head in and said, "Hey, skipper, I'm with you." He said, "How the hell did you do it, Ed?" I said, "Don't ask."

C: Right, you won't want to know.

H: So then I said, "I'll tell you what, I'll make a deal with you." He said, "What?" I said, "I'm qualified, as you well know, for top spot on the battleship, so if you want to, I'll give you a decent night sleep all the way home. You can just sleep in your cabin, and I'll sit the watch in your chair all night long. It will only be five nights." He said, "You're on! Okay." So I sat in his chair and held the top watch all night long, five nights in a row, and he would wander out early in the morning, sort of grin at me, and say, "How was the night?" I'd say, "Not bad old man, not bad." I loved that man. He was a great guy.

C: Oh, that's fabulous.

H: Later on he made rear admiral, and I found out that he got command of the navy shipyard in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, I wrote him a strong letter of congratulations and got a wonderful

letter back. He was a wonderful guy. He's dead, too, now. Almost everybody who's anybody is dead.

C: From that time frame, I guess. Well, that was quite an experience. You got to San Francisco.

H: I got to San Francisco, and again, I told him, I said, "You may be the first off, but I'm going right behind you." So he said, "All right." He saluted. I saluted. And we went right over the side. Well, I ran like mad, got down to the station, the train station. Dad had arranged to have -- what was called in those days a compartment, I think it was called in the trains, reserved for me on several trains that were leaving San Francisco. I told him what our scheduled arrival date was for the Colorado. See, once I knew I was aboard, I called dad on the phone and talked to him from Pearl, so I got in the train, and I had a nice ride all the way east to St. Louis. We spent -- let's see, we left Pearl on the something like the 18th or 19th, and we hit Frisco on the 23rd, and on the evening of Christmas Eve I was at home in St. Louis. We spent Christmas at my home and then promptly jumped on another train, all of us, and went up to Holyoke Massachusetts. We arrived there at 11:00 in the morning on the 28th of December, 1945 and the wedding was scheduled for 10:00 on the 29th.

C: You just made it. Oh, that is amazing. That's quite a story.

H: Well, it worked.

C: It worked right.

H: Best thing that ever happened to me.

C: You were then assigned to teach at the Naval Academy, you said the engineering department?

H: Yes, I took my bride to the Naval Academy, which is a wonderful way to introduce a girl to the navy. Two years at the Naval Academy. We established at that time the first major change in the curriculum in something like 50 years.

C: And what was that?

H: We established the Department of Naval Aviation, and the battleship admirals hated it, but we had a Department of Aviation, and we taught the kids to fly aircraft. Our skipper said, "Tell them all the stories. Tell them all the lies you want, but get them to put in for aviation. We want more aviators," so out of all of this -- they called me Attu-Eddy, because I told them stories about Attu. I still have friends who graduated, students of mine, who are on duty right here, good friends, and they say, hi, Attu.

C: They remember that?

H: After all these years, I'm still Attu-Eddy.

C: Oh, isn't that amazing. Were you involved in this Naval Aviation Department to a great extent?

H: We were busy garnering students, building up their interest in aviation. That was the object of the exercise.

C: Okay.

H: Of course, we were teaching the aviation subjects, which was serious enough, because they had to be learned on that. After all, they were students, you know.

C: Sure. Well, this must have been a good two years then.

H: Yeah, I was there until '47, I guess. Clare would remember. Her memory is good. Mine is no good at all.

C: probably through '47.

H: Then I was transferred. I got orders to proceed and report to VX-4, which was at that time an Aircraft Development Squadron. Now, the navy had been developing some very high powered radar called the APS20. It was so big and so heavy that

they needed a four engine aircraft to carry it. So the navy bought eighteen, B17Gs from the air force, and we were flying B17Gs.

C: And where was this?

H: Well, the squadron was based -- at the time I received my orders, it was based in Massachusetts, but by the time I was ordered, the squadron had been transferred and moved to the Nas Patuxent River, the big naval air station in --

C: Maryland.

H: Yes. Chesapeake Bay. Well, I reported to VX4 as operation -- I think maintenance officer first, then I became operations officer, and I stayed there for two years, a little over two years, and then I was ordered to --

C: What were you doing there? Were you just flying these airplanes with the radar?

H: We were testing the radar, but here's the interesting feature to it, Evelyn. The weather central people, the governmental weather people discovered that our radar had marvelous weather return, so they went all the way up to the government and back down through the navy, and the first thing you know, VX4 was ordered to have two B17s standing by on alert

status all during the hurricane season from then on, so as soon as a hurricane was reported in the South Atlantic, we had to have two airplanes down in Master Field in Miami, and we were puncturing holes in the hurricanes. We were hurricane hunters.

C: Flying into them?

H: Of course! See, in those days we didn't have satellites. Nobody had satellites. And the only way to track a hurricane was fly directly into the eye, take a navigational fix, then go out, and wait a couple of hours, and fly back again. Thus you could track the eye, and how it was moving. Then you could sort of prognosticate where it might go in the future.

C: Was that dangerous? It sounds very dangerous.

H: Yeah, it was dangerous. But we went in at 10 to 15 thousand feet. See, because we had such good return from radar, the powers that be ordered that the navy would fly it with B24s at minimum altitude 500 feet and above. All day and from first light until noon. From noon until dark, the air force flew it with B29s at what was then called maximum altitude about 36 to 38 thousand feet, and then as soon as dark came, poor old VX4 had to go in at 10 to 15 thousand all night long, in and out, all night long in the dark, because we had such good return from radar. Well, that's what we did. In two years with that squadron I punctured nine of those things, and I will admit that

it kept the adrenaline level fairly high in the blood.

C: I guess. Because airplanes don't like to fly when there's thunder storms and lightning now.

H: Well, the funny thing is you get hit by lightning in the air like that, it goes right through the airplane. It goes all the way through, because you're not grounded. You see, you're not grounded. All it leaves is a whole bunch of little pin prick holes in the skin. When you land, you can see them, hundreds of little pin prick holes. It just burns through the skin.

C: And then what happens to the plane?

H: Nothing.

C: Well, I mean, does it have to be repaired?

H: Well, sure, they patch up the holes, but the one thing you don't want is to have it hit a tank, a gas tank.

C: Oh, right, right.

H: Sometimes it burned out the radios. Once it burned out our radar.

C: So you got hit by lightning then?

H: Yes, yes, more often than once. It's terribly blinding. You're flying along in the pitch black, and all of a sudden, this violent blinding scream, and you're dead blind for about 15 or 20 seconds. You can't see a thing. It's scary. It scares the hell out of you the first time, but eventually you get accustomed to it. "Oh, well, once more, and you have two people hanging like mad onto the yoke on the airplane to keep it level. You fly into those things at 10 thousand or 15 thousand feet, and all of a sudden, you hit a downdraft, and you can drop 3 or 400 feet just like an elevator with no warning, so that's why we had to go in with enough altitude, so that we wouldn't be dropped out in the middle of the night. But it was mad flying. Anyway, we did that for about two years and then I was ordered to go to Electronics Test at NAS Patuxent.

C: Electronics?

H: Electronics Test, because we had been connected with electronics for so long in the hurricane work. There I got interested in helicopters. I had the instructor who was helicopter pilot number six for the US Navy. He was then an enlisted man, a chief petty officer. Later on he was given a field commission, and he finally retired as a lieutenant commander. Wonderful man, but he was crazy. He could make a helicopter talk to you. If there was anything that a helicopter could do, he knew how to do it.



C: You don't fly very high in a helicopter.

H: Well -- I think, I could claim with some pardonable pride at one point in my life I probably had more time above 20 thousand feet than any other living helicopter pilot.

C: Oh, really. They go that high, because you know when you see them around here, they're not --

H: 20 thousand feet is damn high for --

C: Oh, I know it. I know it, because the planes are --

H: You're on oxygen. You strap on an oxygen mask. See, at that time, in electronics test, they had a project that was called a battery gassing project. You have an engine with a generator on it that's keeping the battery charged. If the engine is pulling too much power, the generator tends to overload the battery, and it begins to generate hydrogen gas, which can explode. They wanted to know just how dangerous it was to fly helicopters at high altitude, and so we had to go up there. They said, "Get as high as you can." Just jam that thing against the stops, and get as high as can you get, and then stay there as long as you could stay there. We would drive around with instruments indicating how much gas was being generated in the battery, and when it reached a certain level,

the only alternative was to chop the power and autorotate 20 thousand feet or so to the deck. That's a lot of fun. Sit there perfectly dead quiet with those rotors just going swish, swish for 20 thousand feet, and you've got plenty of time to sit there and think about what's going on.

C: I guess.

H: And I was connected with those things the better part of two years in Electronics Test. In fact, during that time, well, no, later on, I was transferred from ET. I was given orders to proceed and report as commanding officer of Helicopter Squadron 1, which was one of only two helicopter squadrons the navy had at that time.

C: What year was this, do you remember?

H: That was in 1952, the middle of the Korean fracas.

C: Right.

H: So what we were doing. We were ordered to get over there to Korea and pick these poor aviators, who were shot down, pick them up out of the woods and off the water, and we were saving people right and left out there. But you had to be totally crazy to be a helicopter pilot.

C: Why?

H: We used to say, "You don't have to be crazy to be a helo pilot, but it sure does help."

C: Why do you say that?

H: Well, because they were crazy machines, and the blades were fabric covered in those days, and any kind of a shot and you were down.

C: Oh, it would just blow it down.

H: It would blow it away. Our maximum speed was about 90 knots. That's as fast as we could make the darn things go.

C: What's that in miles?

H: It's about 100 miles an hour. That's all.

C: Okay.

H: You could drive an automobile faster than that. And we had crazy men. Everyone was mad. I had 72 pilots in the squadron. We had two LSTs berthed in Wonsan Harbor while the big fight was going on, and anybody who got shot down would yell, May Day, and then they'd warn one of the two helos, "Go get him," and usually

they had radios, you know, and we'd pick up the radios. Well, the trouble was that the gooks, as we called them, the gooks were shooting at us all the time, and we had one pilot, Don Good, Big Don Good we called him. Don was about 6'4", and he was a great big heavy-set man. He had absolutely no nerves at all, none, absolutely none. He had figured up a favorite theory as to how he could get away with flying in and rescuing people, and he said the only way to be safe is fly as low and as fast as you can possibly go. He said, "That way you're going by so fast, they don't have time to aim at you." Well, that was a good theory. He got away with it time after time after time.

C: Were you ever shot down?

H: Not in a helo. In fact, I've never been shot down. Thank God.

C: Or shot at?

H: I got shot at enough.

C: During the Korean fracas.

H: Well, anyway, Don, reputedly had a chief petty officer as his hoistman. We had a pilot in those planes of two seats, one after another. It was tandem seats, and the after seat had a hook, a hoist hook outside the airplane, and the after seat man,

instead of being the co-pilot, was called the hoist man. He operated the hoist. What we'd do is we'd go in, hover, lower a hook, and pick the guy up out of the trees, haul him into the airplane, and take him home. Well, Don would do that, and he kept saying he flew as fast as he could go and as low as he could go, and he would consistently come home from trips he'd make, but with greenery in his landing gear. He had hit trees. He'd take branches off the tops of the trees. One day his chief got sick, and they sent in a brand new nugget, some nice new kid who had just been qualified in helicopters. He probably never heard a shot fired in his life. I think he had not been aboard the Wonsan LST more than a couple of hours before they got a May Day, and Don grabbed this kid and said, "Come on, son, we're going!" and off they went. Well, the story goes that they were charging along at about 90 knots right above the treetops, and all of a sudden, the kid started screaming, "Mr. Good! Mr. Good! They're shooting at us!" According to the story, Don very calmly says, "That's their prerogative son" and kept right on going. Well, it became sort of a catch phrase in the squadron. Any time anything happened from then on, somebody would smile and say, "Ah, that's their prerogative." It got to be a catch phrase. That was Don's phrase. "That's their prerogative."

C: Right.

H: But they were all crazy. The whole gang of them were just crazy. They were all nuts, but we got away with it.

C: And survived.

H: And survived.

C: Which is good.

H: We claimed we were damn good, but we knew we were also damned lucky.

C: Lucky, yes, right. How long were you in Korea?

H: Well --

C: The war ended in '53.

H: A better part of a year, I guess, off and on. And now a funny story about that. 46 years later, during the late 1990s, the Korean government and the American government decided whenever we had these great big exercises going on there, they called them -- I forget the name of exercise, but anyway, the Korean government said that any American service man who was serving with them had the privilege of having his family all come over, and they would be set up in nice hotels by the Korean government. They had a great big five day blast each time during the exercises. Well, Jack -- my brother, was a major general. He had been the senior military officer in Korea at the time of

the Vietnamese War. He found that the Tiger Division of the Korean government was going to be sent down to join the battle in Vietnam, and Jack discovered that the poor Koreans were outfitted with 1903 Springfield rifles. Now, they're terrible. So Jack got very upset about it. He really got angry. And he caused so much ruckus that the whole US Army finally decided that they would stop manufacturing M1's. M1's for the US forces and send them all to Korea until they were all outfitted. Jack got the entire division outfitted with M1s, and from that day on, the Koreans practically considered my brother St. John. He was absolutely a saint. Well, anyway, years later, 1999 I think it was, they had an exercise going on. Of course, they invited John, and Jack promptly called me, and said, "Hey, would you like to go, too?" He said, "You're relatives. You're part of the family." I said, "Sure, I'd like to go to Korea. I'd like to see it now." So Clare and I went on the airplane with Jack and Mary. Off we went, sixteen solid hours to get to Seoul. It was a hell of a flight via Anchorage, Alaska. Well, Jack had two sons, both of whom were military academy graduates, and they were both coming up -- Jimmy was a lieutenant colonel at the time, and he was on duty with the US armed forces on the DMZ at Panmunjom, right on the DMZ, Jimmy found out that I was coming with Jack, and Jimmy told somebody at the Korean government about it, said that I was coming. Well, when they discovered that St. John was coming and he was going to have his brother Captain Ed, they went ape. They went totally ape. They had a huge blast for the two of us, a big luncheon, and believe it or

not they gave me a medal. Forty-six years later, they gave me a medal. It's called the Ambassador for Peace Medal. People ask me now, "What's that medal?" and I say, "Do you realize that medal means one thing only. It means that if you live long enough, sooner or later somebody's going to give you something, a medal for something you didn't even think about when you did it," and I didn't even think about it when I was there in Korea, but 46 years later they said, "Here's a medal."

C: Oh, isn't that great.

H: Crazy stories like that turn up if you live long enough.

C: Right, I guess.

H: You know the gentleman who wrote Chesapeake, what's his name, the author?

C: Michner.

H: Michner, I was thinking of someone else. Anyway, somebody asked him how do you come to be the (inaudible) of all authors, and he was reputed to have looked at him and said, "Oh, hell, just outlive the rest of them!"

C: Right. Well, after the Korean War, you were back at Pax River again.



H: Yes, I went back again.

C: And what were you assigned to there?

H: I went to flight test.

C: And what does flight test mean?

H: Testing aircraft to see if they'll fly.

C: Well, I hope they would.

H: Well, sometimes they didn't.

C: Oh, really, and it was planes, not helos then?

H: Yeah, planes.

C: Okay.

H: Well, anyhow, I was in flight test.

C: Flight Test Division, you said.

H: Flight Test Division, yes. See, we had a bunch of test divisions. We had Armament Test, Flight Test, Electronics Test,

and Tactical Test, the four test divisions. Right now the place is a dead duck. But it was all test work then.

C: Oh, okay, so all test work that you were doing at Pax River, and this was '53, I guess?

H: No. '55-'57. Then when I left Flight Test, I was ordered to -- I was supposed to go to, what is that -- Midway Island as the executive officer of the air base at Midway. No, no, wait a minute, from Flight Test I as the executive officer of USS Thetis Bay, the world's only helicopter carrier in those days.

C: What was it again, USS?

H: Thetis Bay, T-h-e-t-i-s.

C: Okay.

H: CVHA-1 we called it. Now, the letters CV were for carriers.

C: Right.

H: And the battleship admirals hated to have helicopters called carriers, so they finally got the name changed, and it was changed to HLP, of HLP helicopter landing platform. It was HLP.

C: On the USS Thetis Bay?

H: Yes, Thetis Bay.

C: Thetis Bay.

H: They named most of those -- during the latter part of World War II all the jeep carriers were named after bays and bodies of water and then after when the war was over and they needed things, like, say they wanted a helicopter carrier, they just took the Thetis Bay and converted it into a helicopter carrier.

C: Where was it stationed?

H: West Coast in San Diego, Long Beach actually. And we made, let me see, during my tenure we made two trips from North Island to the Philippines and back again. And we had a wonderful time. It was a lot of fun. That was a real enjoyable tour in the helos. During my tour as XO of Thetis Bay, I was selected for advancement to Captain. I had held a set of orders as XO of the Naval Station Midway, but was then considered to be too senior for that assignment, so instead the orders were changed to Navy Section Chief in Miltag at Djakarta, Indonesia. (The abbreviation meant Military Technical assistance Group) I spent most of '58-'59 in Djakarta, and then was ordered to the Military Assistance Division of the Joint Staff. Reported in January of 1960 and served until 1962.

C: Oh, and that's about 1962 in Washington DC, and what were you doing there?

H: I was the navy section chief for the Navy section of the joint staff in the military assistance business.

C: And what did that entail? What were your duties?

H: That was specializing in military assistance to foreign governments.

C: Does that require travel?

H: Boy, did it. When I got there, they said, "Well, if you're going to be in the military assistance business and you're going to be in the European Section, you got to be find out what Europe is all about." So they gave me a set of orders and believe it or not in one month I had visited 34 different places, as well as many different countries. I was moving so fast I didn't -- it was, like, "If it's Tuesday, this must be Belgium" that kind of thing.

C: Oh, my heavens.

H: I stayed with military assistance groups in something like 28 different countries from Norway all the way down to North Africa. Everything -- if they had a military assistance group,

I went there, and I made them all in one month. Then I went back and helped set up actual military assistance and things like that.

C: What were you doing there though?

H: I was the navy section chief for the military assistance group, which in Indonesia in those days was called Miltag, instead of Maag, wherever they were normally set by government to government pacts and were called a MAAGs, M-A-A-G, Military Assistance and Advisory Group, but because in Indonesia -- Sukarno didn't want any assistance -- he wanted his own show, so he refused to have a MAAG, and he said you can call it anything you want, so we called it Miltag, military technical assistance group, and I was with the Miltag, supposedly helping them serve their navy for about a year, a full year.

C: That must have been an interesting experience.

H: It was fascinating. There were seven of us, all bachelors because our armed forces wouldn't let us go down there with families. They were having an insurrection at the time, and people were getting machine gunned along the road to Bandung.

C: Oh, boy, a dangerous place then.

H: It was no fun. But fortunately, because I was an aviator,

and about the only one they could get ahold of down there, I flew with the naval attaché, who had a little twin engine sea plane serving the ambassador, and every time the ambassador wanted to go anywhere, his pilot and I would fly his airplane, so I went a whole lot of places that nobody ever heard of.

C: Oh, I bet. Now, that's interesting. Yeah, I bet. Well, that sounds like a fascinating assignment in that part of the world. I'd like to get into the War College time as the tape is kind of running out. You went to the war college in about '62 when you were a student there.

H: From the time -- when I finished my tour at the joint staff, they ordered me to the war college, and I was the number three man on the staff at the war college for about the better part of three years, I guess.

C: Were you a student first?

H: I was a student and then they kept me on the staff, yes.

C: What did you think of the course at the war college?

H: Oh, the course was great. In those days it was called a gentlemen's course, but it was demanding, believe me, it was demanding, and during the time we were students, we were also students at the field course from --

C: Was it George Washington?

H: George Washington University, and we all got master's degrees in international affairs, if you were willing to do the work. I got mine. It was hard work. It was real hard work. And it meant you stayed up late. We were kidding about it all the time saying you didn't get any sleep at all, but it was worth it.

C: Good. And you said you stayed on the staff. You had the job as secretary, right?

H: Yes, it was called secretary in those days. The president was the most wonderful gentle kind old gentleman -- Count Austin.

C: He was president?

H: He was the president. He was a vice admiral and then we had a rear admiral by the name of Neussle, N-e-u-s-s-l-e. And he was called Nestle, and we called him chocolate bar behind his back, of course.

C: What were your duties?

H: Well, I was supposed to keep everybody off the admirals.

Most everybody wanted to see the admirals, and all I did was sit there and bounce them out and then I was theoretically in command -- in charge of the entire administration of what was going on. It was a busy day. It kept you busy.

C: And that was about '63 to '65, I guess. Did you like Newport?

H: Oh, I loved it. I kept telling Clare, "Honey, one day I'm going to retire, and we're coming back, and we did."

C: I noticed.

H: From here, from the war college, I was ordered -- well, I wasn't ordered really, I jiggered my way. I kept bugging Bupers to order me to Holy Cross.

C: This is the second tape with Captain Edward Hayes, and he's talking about Newport, Rhode Island, and how much he liked the city. Can you tell us why you liked Newport and why you eventually wanted to retire here?

H: Well, in those days it was a small town, too, you know, and we just enjoyed being here, because it was a comfortable place to be, and the people were nice friends. Anyway, the duty was fun, too.



C: You enjoyed the work?

H: Anyway, I was saying that I bamboozled the Bureau for Naval Personnel (Bupers) into giving me orders. I finally convinced them to send me up to Holy Cross as a CO, because my son was a student at Holy Cross, and I got there, and the first day he came charging into my office, "Hey, dad," and I yelled at him, "Get out!" and he got out, and then I said to him, "From now on you want to see the CO, you talk to the XO first. Now, go." Well, he obeyed me.

C: Was he ROTC?

H: Oh, yes.

C: Oh, he was in ROTC, too.

H: He's a retired commander now.

C: Oh, interesting. And what were your duties? You were CO of --

H: Of the ROTC, and of course, anything anybody wanted done, they'd always ask us to do it, and we would call out the troops and get it done. The idea is tell a navy man to get something done, and you'll get it done, and you'll get it done right.

C: Did you have many students in ROTC there?

H: We must have had about 120 at one time and then it kept diminishing and diminishing, because the Vietnamese war ruined it. Those crazy kids, they tried to burn down the air force building twice, but they were such stupid kids, they couldn't even keep a good fire going. The fire went out.

C: Oh, so you had trouble at --

H: We used to kid about it. We used to kid about it. We wanted extra hazardous duty pay.

C: You had protests there?

H: Yes, we did.

C: How long were you at Holy Cross?

H: Well, I ended five solid years.

C: Oh, really. That's quite a while.

H: I kept bamboozling the navy to leave me alone. In those days three years was the normal term. And of course, as soon as I could see three years staring me in the face, I started talking -- calling Bupers and telling them, "Look, it's going to

cost you too much to transfer me and my whole family, so just leave me alone. I'll retire when the time comes," and so promising I would retire on the 30 years is what gave me the chance, so I ended up with 30 full years of active duty as a commissioned officer or a total of 35, if you count it all.

C: Right. When did you retire then, what year?

H: 1970, June the 30th, 1970, and I have now been retired within a year or two almost as long as I've been active.

C: And where did you have your retirement ceremony?

H: Right there on the campus at Holy Cross.

C: And where did you decide to move after that?

H: Right here.

C: Had you purchased your home?

H: No, no, I started working with Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance as, believe it or not, an insurance agent. Mostly because Clare's father had been an insurance man all his life, and I thought it would be a pretty good idea. Well, it didn't work out too well, and I was working away at it steadily, and I heard a good friend of mine say, "Hey, you ought to look into

this Junior ROTC. The Tiverton High School needs a CO," So I went over there, and I was interviewed, and they bought me, and I got orders to go there, and I spent seven years there as a CO of the ROTC. It was a lot of fun, a lot of crazy work, but eventually even there the kids got to where they would practically defy you to teach them.

C: Oh, yeah.

H: Oh, they were too smart, too damn smart for the own britches. So after about seven years of it, I said, "This is like beating yourself on the head with a hammer; it just feels good when you stop!" So I quit, and that was when I started taking Clare all over the world Space A.

C: Oh, so you traveled all over the world?

H: Oh, yeah, we've gone everywhere.

C: That's very --

H: Once I found out you could go Space A.

C: Out of Quonset?

H: We could go out of any base. We went out of Quonset, out of Dover, out of Pease, out of what is it -- Andrews. All you had

to do was go to an air base and say, what do you have going  
someplace, and they'd say such and such an airplane. Well, do  
you have any space left in that one? Yeah, we got space left.  
Can I go? Yeah, you can go, and off you go.

C: So off you went to wherever they were going. You didn't  
really have --

H: But you could --

C: -- something in mind.

H: -- to a certain extent, you could pick your way. If you  
found out where they were going, you could choose it, and so we  
made wonderful trips. Of course, you have to have kind of a  
happy-go-lucky, what the hell attitude, anyway, because you get  
stuck in some weird places.

C: Oh, I'm sure.

H: You'd get to an airplane, to a place, and then there  
wouldn't be another airplane coming through for a week or ten  
days.

C: You have to take your chances.

H: So you sleep on a floor. We've slept in some real weird

places, benches, floors, etc.

C: Very adventuresome.

H: Oh, yeah.

C: Very adventuresome. Well, I'd like to ask you what your favorite assignment was, if you have one?

H: Favorite assignment? Let's see. I don't know. I think I'd call HU1 my favorite.

C: HU1 was helicopters?

H: Helicopter squadron, Korean War.

C: Okay.

H: I think that was the most fun. Although maybe electronics test would be second, because that was also helicopter. Once I got into the helicopters, I was happy. You see, I also have the privilege of flying and I think the credit of flying the only two ram jet helicopters ever built. McDonald-Douglas built one and called it "Little Henry," after Mr. Henry McDonald and then this crazy Ajax Hiller built one and called it the Hiller Hornet, and they had a two bladed rotor and a little can on the tip of each blade, and you had to grind the thing up and get it

going about 300 RPM, and by that time the blade tip was going very close to Mach one, and you'd light off those ram jets, and they would take over, and you would be sitting there for a while until it was going fast enough. You could get up to about 450 RPM, but meanwhile, it was throwing burning fuel out, and you were sort of under an umbrella of burning fuel drops, and once you got going it was fun, but the little bird was not much bigger than this table, I guess, and you sat on a seat underneath which was a tank of 66 gallons of aviation fuel, and you had eleven minutes from light-off to burn-out. That's how fast they burned off fuel in those rams. We had an awful lot of fun with those birds. You could do anything. With all the thrust on the blade tips, you had no torque on the fuselage whatever. None. See, all modern helicopters have a tail rotor, and the tail rotor overcomes the torque on the fuselage, so it keeps the fuselage essentially straight. Well, with a ram jet, on the tips you get no torque, so you can fly it forward, sideways, backward. It makes no difference. The darn old thing would fly any way. And we used to really scare the hell out of fighter pilots.

C: You kind of found your niche in the helicopters.

H: I did. I really enjoyed them.

C: You've had quite a career.

H: I've always said, when you're in a hurry, get a jet, but if you really want to travel the way you ought to, get a helicopter.

C: What was the significance of your naval career for you in your life? Can you sum it up in any way?

H: Well, I feel like, sort of feel like a priest, maybe that's the closest I can come to it. It's sort of a dedication. I'm doing something I like to do, and it's worthwhile because somebody says it's worthwhile.

C: That's good. That's good. You mentioned some of your post retirement activities. Do you have any connection with the naval community here in Newport in any formal way?

H: Not nearly enough, not nearly enough. I have sort of become a loner. I'm not a joiner by heart. I never have been, and as a result, I'm not even a member of the Naval Academy League here.

C: Alumni Association.

H: Yes, the Alumni Association, which I should be, and I'm probably going to have to be.

C: You're a member of the Naval War College Foundation though.



H: Oh, yes, yes. Once I knew Joe was there, I said, "I have to do that!"

C: How did you know Joe Strasser?

H: I met him, and you just loved the man. I just loved him. He's wonderful. They don't make people like him often. They make them and then they break up the mold.

C: I'm glad you're a member of the Foundation. They support the college, and all its activity, which is great.

H: I do what I can. I'm not a rich man, but I can spare a buck here and there.

C: Can you tell me when you were promoted to captain, do you remember what year?

H: 1959.

C: Oh, okay.

H: See, I made captain when I was almost 42 years of age, I think, 1959 maybe.

C: Oh, good. Is there anything else that you want to comment?

H: A humorous thing.

C: Oh, okay.

H: I have achieved bad cataracts in both eyes, and we met this wonderful retired navy captain doctor, Charlie Collins, who just replaced my right eye. I keep saying he gave me a brand new right eyeball. Well, it turns out that he's a navy captain, and I said when I went there as a client of his, I was sitting in the chair and in barges this guy and stuck his head out and yelled, I'm Charlie Collins. You're a boat school man, aren't you?

C: You're a what school man?

H: Boat school. We call the Academy, the boat school.

C: Oh, a boat school. Okay.

H: Yes, it's called the boat school. You never heard that? God almighty, so I said, yes, I am. He said, what class were you? I thought a minute, I said, well, now, I go back a ways Charlie. I was 40, and he said, oh, God, and I said, well, what class were you? And he said '74. And I said, oh, God. So we kidded. I like the guy, plus he's a damn good doctor.

C: That's good. Is there anything else you want to say?

H: But I told him, I said, Charlie, I retired as a captain four years before you were first commissioned! And he's retired as a captain now. See, I've been retired since 1970.

C: Yes, for 34 years.

H: Give me one more year and I'll be retired as long as I was active. I enlisted with the navy reserve unit in St. Louis in 1935 and then I spent four years at school, the boat school, and then I spent 30 years commissioned, so I did 35 years straight through without a break.

C: That's quite a length of a service.

H: Yes, better part of half a lifetime.

C: Half of a lifetime.

H: Yes, I beat them though. I beat them. I've had a longer lifetime.

C: That's great.

H: I keep telling people all you have to do is choose your parents with extreme care.

C: Right. Good genes. Well, I want to thank you for your memories.

H: I keep telling people all you have to do is be real mean. Just be real mean, and you'll live long.

C: I don't know about that.

H: I'm too mean to die. I won't give up.

C: I want to thank you, Captain Hayes, for your memories of your naval career. We'll have this transcribed and then I'll do some editing, and you can take a look at it after that, too.

H: Well, thank you dear.

C: You're welcome.

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