

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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NO. 348

LCDR FRED A. STEVENSON USNR (RET.)

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NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND  
WORLD WAR II VETERANS

INTERVIEWEE: LCDR FRED A. STEVENSON, USN (RET.)

INTERVIEWER: DR. EVELYN M. CHERPAK

SUBJECT: WORLD WAR II VETERANS

DATE: MARCH 17, 2005

EMC: This is an oral history interview with LCDR Fred A. Stevenson. Today's date is March 17th, 2005. The interview is taking place in my office at the Naval War College, Naval Historical Collection. Lieutenant Commander Stevenson, I'm very pleased that you could come in today to be interviewed on your career in the Navy, and I'd like to begin by asking you where you were born and when you were born.

FAS: I was born in the Bronx, New York City on 20 May, 1921.

EMC: And what did your father do for a living?

FAS: My father was an undertaker.

EMC: And your mother?

FAS: She was a housewife.

EMC: Did you have any siblings?

FAS: Yes, I had a sister some four years older than myself and a brother who was quite a bit older, and he was a missionary in India. I didn't see much of him.

EMC: Oh, how interesting. What order was he with?

FAS: Well, he was with the Missouri Synod Lutheran.

EMC: Oh, great. Did you go to school in the Bronx?

FAS: Yes, I went to school. I went to public school in the Bronx for three years, and they kept promoting me, and my mother said I wasn't that smart, and she put me in St. Stephen's Lutheran School until the eighth grade and then I went to high school, Theodore Roosevelt High School, also in the Bronx.

EMC: When did you graduate from high school?

FAS: 1938.

EMC: In the Depression?

FAS: Yes, ma'am.

EMC: What was life like for you in the Bronx during the Depression?

FAS: Well --

EMC: Was it tough sledding for your family?

FAS: Well, being an undertaker he always had some business, and we got by, and he also took a position, again, due to finances, as a sexton of a church in the Bronx; that was Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in the Bronx, and that was the last few years of my schooling -- one to eight and then in high school.

EMC: Did you work during high school at all?

FAS: I shined shoes, a nickel a shine, and so I had spending money.

EMC: What was your neighborhood like? Was it an ethnic neighborhood?

FAS: No, it wasn't. It was kind of a nice neighborhood then. We lived in a two-story house with a couple of trees in the front and a backyard -- had an apartment there. Some six-story apartment houses but most of them were two-story buildings. This was on Hoe Avenue in the Bronx. Now, it also is the

precinct that the book and the movie "Fort Apache the Bronx" was set in, and that was written sometime after I got out of there, and I think the neighborhood went downhill. In fact, I went back there once and a friend of mine, who's a childhood friend, he said, you don't want to go back there, but I did anyway, and it was quite a change. But when I was there, it wasn't bad.

EMC: Oh, good. What did you decide to do after you graduated from high school?

FAS: Well, before I graduated I decided I would join the Navy and see the world.

EMC: Was that your reason, travel?

FAS: Travel, see the world, and a couple of my high school teachers were appalled, and I said, well, I can't afford to go to college, and he said, well, you could go to City College and City College was not in very high esteem then, though it's probably a good school. As it worked out I did end up going to college, but I hadn't thought of it at the time.

EMC: So you wanted to see the world. And when and where did you enlist?

FAS: Right. This was downtown at 90 Church Street. Well, actually, I enlisted originally in Brooklyn in the Navy Yard.

And I went down to sign up the day I graduated from high school.

EMC: You didn't waste any time.

FAS: No, and I got called down by the first class signalman because I was late. And I said, I just graduated from high school, and he said, no excuses.

EMC: So you enlisted and filled out the paperwork, I assume?

FAS: Took an exam, and modestly, I aced it, and that's when the signalman said, "Are you interested in going to the Naval Academy, because if you are, I'll move up your enlistment, so you can make the next class of the prep school." I had no idea what was going on, but he said the magic words, I could get in early, so I said, "Yes, I'm interested," so he put on my papers, Naval Academy Candidate, and I came up here to Newport.

EMC: Well, that was kind of postponed for a while then, right, your Naval Academy candidacy?

FAS: Well, it was mostly enlisted people that went to it. Now, they have a different schedule.

EMC: Oh, yes.

FAS: -- of people.

EMC: So were you sent immediately up to the Newport Naval Training Station?

FAS: No, I still had to wait. This was June and then I got my orders to report on the 21st of September, the day of the hurricane.

EMC: Oh, boy. What did you do in the interim during that summer?

FAS: Not much. I just worked at a shoe repair parlor and ran errands for people in the neighborhood. There were businesses in that area, too, stores, like, shoe stores. I used to go downtown and for a dime I'd pick up a half dozen pairs of shoes and bring them back on the subway.

EMC: Oh, I see. Good. Well, did you actually arrive in Newport on the day of the hurricane?

FAS: Got as far as New Haven, and got stranded there because the tracks were washed out. And we ended up here the next day by bus and saw the condition things were in. Of course, we didn't know at the time it was a hurricane, a lot of people didn't.

EMC: That's right. It wasn't reported. What was the base like



after the hurricane? What did it look like?

FAS: Not bad, but you know, trees were down, but the base itself was operating, and in fact, there is still one building, Barracks B, that's over there. I think the Marines are using it now, right behind the War College here. It wasn't that bad. We went right back to work.

EMC: Were you barracked when you came?

FAS: They were right in the vicinity of the War College here.

EMC: Oh.

FAS: I'd say there's one red brick building, I think, that's still standing that the Marines use for something.

EMC: Oh, so that's where you were put?

FAS: That's where I was.

EMC: And did you have to sleep in a hammock?

FAS: I didn't here. Yeah, I slept in a hammock here and slept in a hammock on my first ship, the Arkansas, the first few months I was there 'til I managed to get a bunk.

EMC: I want to ask you about the training here at the Newport Naval Training Station. How long were you here?

FAS: I was here from September to December, three months.

EMC: And what kind of classes did you take during that time frame?

FAS: Well, we had gunnery, shooting a rifle, and we rowed and we drilled and marched and paraded here in front of the old War College. It was very grand and we had mess cook duty for a week. There's a story on that. They used to give you a reward for something good that the company did. And I was in the 12th Company. And we were called, Shane's Dirty Dozen, Shane was our CPO and it was his last class, and he was going back to sea, and we were going to be good. So we took the wooden stock of rifles. We had the Springfield rifles and sanded them down and varnished them and, we had one day extra leave at the graduation for boot training, but we also broke more dishes than anybody else, so we lost a day and we ended up even.

EMC: You ended up even. You weren't very good in the mess hall then.

FAS: I guess, I don't know why we broke so many dishes, but we did.

EMC: So now that was your routine basically. That's what you did.

FAS: You got up, you marched, you ate, you marched, then you had seamanship classes where you learned knotting and rowing and they had ten-man life boats that we rowed, and they competed against the other companies. And I was too small to be of use in the rowing business end, so the chief would take us out, and we'd row but we weren't in the racing. It was down where the War College is -- I mean, where the Officer's Club is now.

EMC: Oh, yes. That would be the piers there. So you learned very practical things.

FAS: Yeah.

EMC: Practical seamanship.

FAS: Practical seamanship and then learned to shoot a rifle and a 45. And I'd say basic seamanship. I don't know what they teach them now.

EMC: Did you go out on a ship?

FAS: No, we didn't go on any ships. We'd go row out in the harbor here.

EMC: So it was just done on land. How did you react to military discipline?

FAS: Oh, that didn't bother me. In fact, it came in handy later.

EMC: So did other people react poorly to military discipline? Were people weeded out?

FAS: I remember one young man from New Jersey who didn't make it through there for some reason, but you know, growing up in New York, you face a lot of difficulties as a kid.

EMC: Oh, yes.

FAS: And that background served me.

EMC: Yes, tough town. Well, after you had this three months of training, which was quite a long time, where were you ordered next?

FAS: Well, then I went to the USS *Arkansas*. The reason for that I found out was that my papers were stamped, Naval Academy candidate, and they used to send the seaman that were considered to be for the Naval Academy to battleships where they had the junior officer mess and the junior officer's would tutor you for your exam for prep school or the Academy, whichever it might be,

and that's interesting because one of the gents I had there was G.L. Street III, who was a famous submariner in World War II, and what happened on there was what took me so long to get to the academy. I was four years enlisted before I went to the Academy. I just made it age-wise.

EMC: What did they tutor you in, what subjects?

FAS: Well, math, English, chemistry, which I never had in high school, and physics. And they had books aboard the battleships and the destroyers had them, too, but the battleships were considered to be a good route for you to take. In fact, I had a friend on there that made it to the academy that year. My downfall at the time was that the physical exam, the dentist took a look at me, and he said, you'll never make it. He said you've got a marked overbite, and he considered it disqualifying, so that's that.

EMC: Did you give up studying after that?

FAS: Yes, I didn't study because I wasn't going to take the exam.

EMC: Yes, right.

FAS: I have a little write-up of this that I've saved for my grandchildren.

EMC: How long were you in the Arkansas and where was the Arkansas?

FAS: The Arkansas was in Norfolk. And we went down to Guantanamo for training, and we took midshipman on a cruise that summer of '39, and interestingly enough, when I became midshipman, I took a midshipman cruise on the Arkansas later.

EMC: You changed roles.

FAS: Yup.

EMC: What was your rate on the Arkansas?

FAS: I was a seaman.

EMC: And your job, what was your job there?

FAS: I was just a deck seaman. But I also ran the Number 2 motor boat. The officer's motor boat was my responsibility to keep up, and I was a coxswain of the officer's motor boat, Number 2. They had several of them on there, the Captain's gig and a few officers' motor boats. They had battle stations -- the Arkansas was only half-manned at that time. Instead of having 1,200 crew, they had about 600, so everybody had more than one battle station. I had an anti-aircraft battle station.

I had a five-inch gun battle station, and I occasionally was up in the mast as a fire control striker.

EMC: Wow, you had to climb up there?

FAS: It depended on what they were doing, yes. It was really rudimentary considering what we have today. It had a cage mast, a little cage mast. I had given up sort of -- the academy, and I had a friend in the personnel office who got a hold of me one day. He said, "We've got a quota for a seamen with no marks against him, clean slate seaman to put a new destroyer in formation. Are you interested." I said, "Yes."

EMC: Did you want to get off the Arkansas?

FAS: Well, it was just an old ship, and I was looking for something newer and better, and I got it and the Buck. And that led me to be a fire control striker in the commissioning detail.

EMC: Where was the Buck located?

FAS: Well, it was being built in Brooklyn.

EMC: Oh, so you had to go back to Brooklyn?

FAS: Well, I went to a couple of schools first. They had fire control school -- well, actually range finders school. We

didn't have radar in those days. And I went to that and was in a precommissioning detail while they finished it, and I've got that picture of it when it was commissioned. And everything's going fine, I made third class fire control man on schedule, and one day the exec. sent for me. I thought, what have I done wrong? And he said there is an AL NAV out asking for naval academy candidates to take an exam. And he said, "Why haven't you taken it?" And I said, "Well, I -- told him the sad story of my teeth." And he did the same thing; he showed me his teeth, and he said, "They said that to me 20 years ago." He said, "That's a foolish regulation. That's there so that you could eat hard tack if you were shipwrecked," so he said. We were in Pearl Harbor at the time. We had gone out to the West Coast to Hawaii with the rest of the fleet. He sent for the dentist on the tender, which was in the Whitney, came over for dinner and told him the story, and he told me again, he said, "Now, you've got an appointment the next day with the dentist." So I went over and got my teeth checked, and he put on it, slight overbite, not considered disqualifying. So he said, "Get some books. See Ensign Irwin and get some books."

EMC: Oh, that's great.

FAS: So I've loved the man ever since. Eventually, I took the exam. I took the exam for the Academy at the prep school, passed that, and so I was sent to the Naval Academy.



EMC: Now, how long were you on the Buck?

FAS: About 18 months, two years, something like that.

EMC: Oh, that is a long time.

FAS: Yes, well, I was there for the precommissioning, and when, I don't know, I don't have all the dates but --

EMC: Were you in Hawaii for a good long time?

FAS: About a year. We went out there with the division of destroyers. We were all brand new. There were four of us and we rode out there when the whole fleet was there in Pearl, but we left before --

EMC: Pearl Harbor was bombed.

FAS: And that's one date I'd like to check on is when we took the Marines up to Iceland.

EMC: Oh, you did, Iceland?

FAS: We had destroyers escorting transports, and that I was told was the first task force of World War II, though we weren't in there yet; I'm interested in finding that day out specifically.

EMC: Oh, that must have been interesting. Well, what were you doing in Hawaii? Were you going out on maneuvers when you were there?

FAS: Yes, but mainly we were harbor patrol. We patrolled offshore, the entrance to Pearl Harbor, and we'd be out there. There were four of us, and we were the junior division of destroyers, so we got the patrol duty, and we'd go out for a week and then the other ones would go out for a week and that was part of the -- so they were checking the entrance to Pearl Harbor long before Pearl Harbor happened.

EMC: Interesting. Now, did you take well to life at sea?

FAS: Yes, I liked it.

EMC: You didn't mind it?

FAS: I didn't get seasick, and that's why I think I always ended up on destroyers because they must have said, this guy doesn't get seasick, so put him in destroyers.

EMC: Well, you said at one point you took the exam for the naval academy prep school.

FAS: That's right.

EMC: And where was that located?

FAS: That was located in Norfolk, Virginia.

EMC: How long was that course?

FAS: Well, I went there in about September, and it went on through to April. And we took the exam in the middle of April, the following year, so it took six months.

EMC: And you had to study college subjects there, I presume.

FAS: Well, we studied the same things, physics, chemistry, math, no calculus, but we studied math and history. And it's a little different than what they're doing now, from what I have gathered, but basically, it's the same. It was to prep you for taking the entrance exam for the Naval Academy.

EMC: Do you remember if the entrance exam was difficult?

FAS: I thought it was difficult, yes. I managed to pass it, but we studied hard, and we didn't have liberty, sort of, we had it, but we didn't have it. We had an ID card, and you could go out, but there wasn't anything much to do in Norfolk at the time. Sailors and dogs keep off the grass down there.

EMC: They used to say that in Newport, too. You were notified that you passed and when did you actually enter the Academy?

FAS: It was July of 1942.

EMC: Oh, so this was after the war began?

FAS: It started, yes. We were in prep school at Pearl Harbor. In December we were down in the Norfolk at the prep school.

EMC: How did you react to the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

FAS: Well, everybody was pretty upset and some of them actually left the prep school and went back to the fleet. If you didn't pass, you went back to the fleet, and I know several people that just went back to their ship. Now, I was tempted to do that, too, but I thought this is my chance to get an education. And I had realized the difference between an officer and an enlisted man was an education. So I said, I'm going to have to stick this out. It will be a long war, which it was, but I ended up getting out there just at the end of it. When they finally dropped the bomb, I was out in another destroyer.

EMC: So you entered in '42.

FAS: I graduated in '45.

EMC: Yes, three years. They must have accelerated the curriculum.

FAS: They did.

EMC: Well, you went to the Naval Academy, spent three years there. What did you think of the education and the courses there?

FAS: I didn't have too much trouble with it. I had a little trouble with calculus, but I finally passed that. They were a little lenient then, too, because you were there, and you were going to be an officer, and they were putting a lot of money in you and so I had a trial period, and I did pass the calculus finally. Other than that, I didn't have any problems.

EMC: Oh, good. Did you live in Bancroft Hall?

FAS: Yes, 4213.

EMC: Now, your first year there you were just a plebe?

FAS: Yup.

EMC: And did you encounter any hazing there?

FAS: Yes.

EMC: And how did you react to that?

FAS: Not very well. But I did not allow anyone to physically belt me with a shower (inaudible) or a broom handle. If they want to do that, we could go over to the gym, and I was never challenged to go over to the gym, so nobody physically. I would do knee-bends and push-ups, run errands, and whatever else and find answers to questions, but I didn't want anybody laying a hand on me, and they seemed to get the word after a while. They didn't bother me.

EMC: How long did that last?

FAS: Well, that's a year.

EMC: Oh, it's a whole year?

FAS: Yes.

EMC: Oh, my heavens.

FAS: Well, I was fortunate too. I got on a training table. The big thing was to get on a training table, of course, then nobody bothered you.

EMC: What's a training table?

FAS: In the dining room, the athletic squads ate at a special set of tables. They got more milk. There were shortages in the war during -- meat and butter. We ate a little better than the rest of them did.

EMC: What athletic group were you with?

FAS: I was in the crew. I was small, then I became the coxswain of the plebe crew. The coach liked me, Buck Walsh, and one of the things is we raced against Columbia in New York, and he thought coming from New York, New York did not awe me, which it didn't. As a matter of fact, that race, the plebe crew, we were the only ones that won. The varsity and junior varsity lost the race up there, but the plebes, we won.

EMC: Oh, isn't that something.

FAS: And I think he liked me from then on. Now, other than the crew season you just sat at the training table during the season that you'd row, which was spring. And so the rest of the time you were at the mercy of the upper classmen.

EMC: Did you have any famous people in your class that you remember?

FAS: Well, Wally Schirra is an astronaut. He was in the class.

EMC: Oh, was he?

FAS: And Allen Shepard was a year ahead of us, but he was in the crew. That's how I knew him. There was a guy who went into nuclear submarines, who was in the design end of it. Wertham is his name. I think it is, but this was an average bunch of people there.

EMC: Well, you had some famous astronauts that you knew. That's something. Well, did you have any time off? Did you have any leave at all?

FAS: Christmas. And that was it. And summer, you got -- I don't know how they --

EMC: You had training cruises, didn't you, in the summer?

FAS: Yes, we went on a training cruise. They were short. And we didn't go overseas to Europe or anything like that, but we went to Chesapeake Bay. I think we went up to Nova Scotia on one cruise, and as I mentioned, I went back on the Arkansas for one of my cruises and caused a little discontent with some of the upper classmen because my young youngster year was on the Arkansas. And people who I had known had risen. One of them was the chief baker. So I got invited to have some meals in the bakeshop, which the upper classmen didn't know how to handle.



And the Arkansas was not a very good feeder. It wasn't a very good feeder when I was on it, when I was there as a midshipman, but that was (inaudible) and then the next time I went on the New York for the second cruise.

EMC: And where did you go on this cruise in New York?

FAS: We went to Quebec which was our big liberty port. We went to the Worlds Fair in New York and just stayed coastal and went up to Quebec. We couldn't get to Montreal because the ship drew too much water, if we'd ended up that far.

EMC: You went up the St. Lawrence Seaway or down the St. Lawrence Seaway I should say.

FAS: -- East.

EMC: Well, that sounds kind of interesting. Did you ever get a chance when you were an upper classman to go out to Annapolis, the town? You're right there.

FAS: Yes, weekends. I had a good friend, classmate who lived five miles from the Academy in Round Bay and his lady friend and my lady friend from New York would come down on weekends, and we stayed at his house, which was nice. It was tough traveling then. You'd take the train from New York to Baltimore and than the trolley down from Baltimore to Annapolis.

EMC: It's not easy.

FAS: And when you went back, all the people that had gotten on in Washington -- and she used to sometimes sit on a suitcase because the trains were so crowded then.

EMC: Oh, yes. They certainly were. Well, you had three long years.

FAS: Three, yes.

EMC: At the Academy. And I presume you graduated in June of '45.

FAS: That's right, 6-6-45.

EMC: And where were you sent after that because the war was still on?

FAS: Yes, I went out to a destroyer, the Burns DD588.

EMC: Burns, how do you spell that?

FAS: B-u-r-n-s.

EMC: Okay.

FAS: And it was out in the Pacific, and I went by transport, and we finally located it. It's amazing the logistics that went on during the war. You would wonder how they could get people from San Francisco and out to the ships in the Pacific, but it was done.

EMC: And where was your ship tied up? Where was the Burns tied up? What island?

FAS: We were at sea. You weren't tied up any place.

EMC: Oh, you encountered it at sea and you had to be --

FAS: Yes, well, they were in port, and I think it was at Ulithi where we met them and then we'd go out with the task force and then the war ended.

EMC: So you didn't see any action during that summer?

FAS: No.

EMC: Oh, that's good, but you were out of Ulithi.

FAS: And we did some escorting of forces out there but then we got the job of the mail ship. You'd go to Shanghai and pick up mail and then delivered it to various places, Northern China to

Korea, and back and forth on the mail ship for a couple of months. We were a mail ship for a couple of months.

EMC: Oh, okay.

FAS: And everybody eventually got scheduled back to the States, and I guess we came back in January of 1946 to San Francisco.

EMC: Now, do you remember VJ Day? How did you react to the victory over Japan and the dropping of the bomb?

FAS: Well, we were escorting a carrier at the time, and I remember counting the bottles of whiskey that were floating from the carrier back to us. That's how we celebrated that particular day.

EMC: Was everybody glad that the war was over?

FAS: I think so, yeah. The ship that I had joined had been out there for two and a half years, and they talk about six-months cruises now. It was there, and you'd go in for repairs once in a while but not back to the States, and they were mostly people that were in for the war, and they were ready to get back out and get on with their civilian life.

EMC: Oh, I know.

FAS: Have the points, count the points at the time and then we just operated locally out there until our turn to come back to the States and get decommissioned.

EMC: So when did you come back to the States?

FAS: That was January, February of '46.

EMC: And where were you stationed?

FAS: We went to Hunter's Point shipyard for decommissioning just south of San Francisco.

EMC: Oh, I see.

FAS: And the Navy in its wisdom sent me to Material Preservation School -- how to preserve a ship, and that was down in San Diego, so I went there for a couple of weeks, and I got back in and then about two weeks later I got ordered off the ship, to another ship that was out in the Pacific that hadn't returned yet.

EMC: So you went back out to the Pacific again?

FAS: Yes, on the Charles P. Cecil, I went out.

EMC: Oh, is that the name of your ship, the Charles --

FAS: Charles P. Cecil, C-e-c-i-l, and that was a radar picket destroyer DDR 835. And from there the interesting experience of we were in Operation Crossroads, which was the atomic bomb test at Eniwetok

EMC: Oh, yes.

FAS: I witnessed that and saw those two.

EMC: That must have been something. How far out were you?

FAS: I think we were out about ten miles.

EMC: Could you see anything?

FAS: Yes, you'd see the mushroom cloud.

EMC: Oh, I bet.

FAS: We weren't supposed to look at it without dark glasses on. In fact, they didn't want us to look at it at all, but you know, some of us looked anyway with the dark glasses on. The air burst was impressive, but the underwater burst was even more impressive. There was this solid wall of water that came up and then spread out over the horizon a couple of miles.

EMC: Was it anywhere near your ship?

FAS: Not close enough to be hurt by it, but we could see it. And I saw the old Arkansas go belly up and vertical and sink. It was one that was lost and didn't survive the test.

EMC: Was anybody on it?

FAS: Oh, no, no. They had some animals on some of them, and some of the ships were buttoned up pretty tight, and some of them were left somewhat open to see what the effects of an atomic explosion would be on a ship, and they had the Prinz Eugen, which was a German cruiser. That survived pretty well, and some of ours that were not buttoned up quite so well sank.

EMC: Oh, heavens. I didn't know they had ships out there that they were going to test?

FAS: There was a carrier out there that flew radar control planes -- fighter planes that flew into the cloud to test how much radium was in the clouds and this sort of thing, and so they'd have destroyers who escorted the carriers, and being an ensign then, I wasn't in on any much of the planning of why we were there, but we were there.

EMC: Wow, that was quite something, quite an historic event. Now, have you had any effects from radiation fallout?

FAS: No, as a matter of fact, I fell into the lagoon there, and I was going to see a friend, on a mine sweep, and some of the interesting things that they did. He was fishing. He was sent there to fish. He had an expert fisherman aboard. They caught the fish, froze them, and were bringing them back to the States to analyze them. And the ship, being a mine sweeper, was small. They shipped their load to a cargo carrier, and they'd freeze it and that thing went aground off San Francisco and lost all the fish.

EMC: That was futile. But how did you fall in the sea?

FAS: Well, I was going to visit him and the mine sweep has a very wide wooden railing, and the whale boat I was traveling in was low down in the water because there were a lot of people moving around and I leaped for the railing and my hands didn't quite get the grip on it, so I went in. Everybody knew I fell in. Word spread fast. And Ernie Litty, the skipper of the mine sweep, a classmate, he took me, put me right in the shower, stripped my clothes off, handed me a beer, and did my laundry for me. Well, the Captain I had was a great guy. And he said, "I'll give you 30 days, and you're going to be dead," so he marked the calendar, and everyday he'd twirl his mustache and cross off another day. Well, obviously I didn't die, and I didn't become impotent because shortly after I got back my daughter was conceived, when I got back to San Diego. I didn't



expect anything to happen.

EMC: Well, you're lucky because you never know.

FAS: You never know.

EMC: And they didn't know.

FAS: No, they didn't know then, too. He was joking pretty much, I think.

EMC: Well, that's good.

FAS: I don't think he was any expert anymore than the rest of us were.

EMC: Right, of the effects of that. Well, that was quite an experience. You were out there again, and where did you go after the explosion, Operation Crossroads?

FAS: We went back to San Diego, which was our home port, and we just did local operations there.

EMC: Were people leaving the Navy in droves after the war?

FAS: Oh, yes. Yes. Everybody was with their points. And if you got -- I forget how it worked, a point a day or a point a

month or something like that, and everybody was counting their points. Well, I had enough points to get out if I wanted to get out, but they weren't letting me out anyway.

EMC: Right.

FAS: But people were very anxious to get out. We had a mixed bag of people, like, we had on the Burns, we had an ex-LA cop, I mean, he was a cop but went and joined the Navy, and he was ready to go back to LA police force. The chief engineer had worked in the Charleston shipyard, and he was anxious to get back. His father was the leading supervisor in Charleston ships, so they had careers that the Navy was not part of.

EMC: Right. Right. They wanted to get back. Well, how long were you on the Cecil before you transferred?

FAS: I was there '46 and '47.

EMC: And then --

FAS: That was Crossroads.

EMC: And did you get married during this time?

FAS: I got married three days after graduation. I was married the 9th of June, but I didn't get married at the Academy. I was

in a couple of wedding parties there. Well, traveling was difficult in those days, and my father was kind of a cripple. He was in a wheelchair. He had a problem with one leg. And to come down to Annapolis was a little too much, and my wife's mother was elderly too, so we got married in New York, Mount Vernon, three days after graduation, and that was a little more convenient, if you will. I think my wife would have liked to have been married in the chapel, but we did the best we could.

EMC: Right, so did she stay in New York while you were on the ship?

FAS: She stayed in New York. She came out to San Francisco in '46 when I came back from the Burns and we had quarters, in half a Quonset hut. Then we'd go down to San Diego for a couple of weeks and came back and then I got orders and so she went back east again and stayed with her mother and her sister and then came back out again when the Cecil came back from Operation Crossroad. At that time we had a room in the barracks over at Coronado for a dollar a day. It was worth every penny.

EMC: It's hard to believe the prices then; they were so different.

FAS: Somebody living in there, a woman was smoking, and she set the toilet paper on fire and had a fire in the barracks there that we stayed at. It didn't do much damage, but it was a

little scary.

EMC: Oh, boy. Well, after you got off the Cecil where were you assigned?

FAS: Then I went to flight training for a while.

EMC: Oh, you did. Did you want to be a pilot?

FAS: Yeah, I had put in for it months ago. I spent about a year flight training.

EMC: In Pensacola?

FAS: Well, first at Dallas and then Corpus Christi and then Pensacola. And I was going through carrier qualifications when I crashed two planes. And they said I was too expensive. They sent me back to destroyers.

EMC: So where did you crash the planes?

FAS: It was at field carrier landings -- what they called field carrier landings, where just before you went for your final check to get your wings, you did landings at a short field simulating the carrier.

EMC: Sure.

FAS: And I happened to -- it's a long story, but I kind of wrecked a couple of their planes on landings. They didn't like it, and I didn't get hurt at all.

EMC: Thank God, yes.

FAS: But they were more interested in the plane that I wrecked than me, I thought, at the time, and I said a few choice words to them, which came back to haunt me, and they sent me back to the destroyers.

EMC: Oh.

FAS: That was a year.

EMC: What kind of planes were they?

FAS: Believe it or not, I flew a yellow peril, which is a biplane, the old Stearman biplane. Nice little plane to fly, easy to fly. That was no problem and then they had the SNG, which was a low wing mono-plane that they flew. It was fun, too. Just to carrier at low and slow didn't appeal to me, I guess, and it's probably all for the best because I'm still alive. I have some friends that did not quite make it. But I have a lot of friends that did make it, so it wasn't for me, I guess.

EMC: So they sent you back to destroyers.

FAS: So I went back to destroyers, and I went to the Hyman.

EMC: How do you spell that?

FAS: H-y-m-a-n, and that's Destroyer 732. That was here in Newport.

EMC: Oh, really.

FAS: I came back. They sent me to one here on the East Coast.

EMC: And it was stationed here?

FAS: Yeah.

EMC: What was your billet on that destroyer?

FAS: I was sonar officer, CIC officer, operations officer. I've also been engineering officer on one ship. What happened -- you asked if people were anxious to get out. Well, they were anxious all right because I went to the Charles B. Cecil. They had had a fair complement of officers, as they got their points were leaving, so at the end of that particular trip I was the chief engineer, the operations officer, and a mess treasurer. I

know about six officers qualified on that ship, and three of them were qualified as officer of the deck. Now, when the captain said, "You're the chief engineer, Stevenson." I said, "Okay," and I said, "That means I don't have to stand deck watches, because the chief engineer normally did not because he was on call." And he said, "Oh, yes, I only got three, and you're one of them."

EMC: Oh.

FAS: So we had an interesting trip there. We fueled from a carrier. And I won't give the name of it, and they sent us some water instead of oil, and we were dumb because we didn't have the tanks isolated that were getting fuel, otherwise, that wouldn't have happened, but the boilers went dead. I mean, they got water instead of oil. And it's hot out in the Pacific, and so we were dead in the water, and we had to start from scratch to light it off. And I happened to have a deck at the time, and I made a point of it, but I still stood the watches. If you start a ship from cold dead, you have to pump the oil by hand, and you have to use an inspection point to check when you stop getting water and start getting the oil, then you light it off, and you don't have power from the blowers to blow it, and it's about 120 degrees down there. Eventually we got the thing fired up again and going, but that was an education.

EMC: Oh, boy, what a mistake. Why didn't the other ship know

they were supposed to give you oil?

FAS: Well, yes, they did, but you had a thing called the Engineering E, and it was how much oil you spent and how many miles you steamed. And I think the carrier was looking for an E and was palming off water instead of oil and made their records look good.

EMC: That's awful.

FAS: And I've accused them of it, half jesting, that they did that. And they just kept going because they were going back to the States, so they just kept going.

EMC: Left you there.

FAS: We got started up again and we eventually caught up to them.

EMC: Oh, my heavens, what a story. That was one experience. How long were you on this ship?

FAS: Well, this was the Charles P. Cecil that I was in.

EMC: No, this is the Hyman you're talking about.

FAS: No, I'm going back to the Charles P. Cecil.



EMC: Oh, okay. That was it. Oh, all right. That's where that happened.

FAS: Hyman, I did Mediterranean cruises, four month cruises, a standard four month cruise to the Med.

EMC: Oh, that must have been great.

FAS: Yeah, except if you're married and you've got a new daughter; it's not so great. But the good thing, my wife did not complain about it. She was not one that complained and she reminds me now that if I hadn't gotten out, I probably would have been higher than lieutenant commander probably. But she was a good sport about it, and I was the one that got tired of being gone all the time. If we weren't in the Med, we were down on the refresher training, and in the 13 months that I was in the Hyman here, I was home about three weeks.

EMC: In a year?

FAS: In a year.

EMC: Oh, yeah, that's a long time to be away.

FAS: So that's when I resigned. I knew there was going to be a war soon, but I had figured it would be five years. I was

wrong. I knew I'd be back in, so I was just going to enjoy a couple of years of life at home, and I missed it by three, because a year and a half later Korea started, and I got recalled.

EMC: So you resigned in 1949?

FAS: I came back in -- that was June of '49, and I came back in January of '51.

EMC: Right, so you didn't have too much time, just about a year and a half, and where did you settle when you resigned?

FAS: I got a place in Staten Island, public housing. The only thing you could get. It wasn't bad. It overlooked the water, if you know Staten Island.

EMC: No, I don't. What did you do? You had to get a job obviously.

FAS: I had friends, and I got a job. I was a fire protection engineer for the Royal Liverpool Group of Insurance Companies, and we inspected everything from steel mills to chicken coops to see about safety, fire safety. We did all the schools in Baltimore County for one thing and found some strange things there. That was interesting. The office was in downtown New York. We traveled a bit doing these things.

EMC: But your life was a little more stable.

FAS: Oh, yeah, it was much more stable.

EMC: Did you miss the Navy?

FAS: Well, I was still in the reserves, so I went to drills one night a week, except that I wasn't getting paid for it. I had to go to the drills, but when they let me out, it was contingent on taking a reserve commission. I could not just get out and go home. They wanted a hook on me, and they had, so when the Korean War and I would have been disappointed --

EMC: Lieutenant Commander Stevenson was talking about his job as a fire protection engineer in fire safety before he was recalled into the Navy during the Korean War. Now, you said you knew war was coming. How did you figure that?

FAS: I'd have to go back to my days in China when the military had little respect, the Chinese Army had little respect for us there. While moored off Shanghai in the Wang Poo River, a Chinese male body got tangled up in the accommodation ladder and as (inaudible) I had the task of taking him ashore, so we used a whale boat and brought him into the sea wall and brought him up on the ground, and I talked to a couple of Chinese officers or military men, I don't know what they were, and said, here's one

of your people. The guy nods his head, yes, yes, so I got back in the whale boat to go back out to the stream where the ship was moored, and I happened to turn around, and he was just kicking this Chinese back in the river. So they had very little respect for human life to me, and they didn't seem to like us too much, and I just figured that there would be a war in about five years, and we'd be over there fighting. And I say, I missed it by three years.

EMC: Right. But Korea did break out and they needed you apparently. You were called to active duty. Were you sent to a ship?

FAS: Back to destroyers. The Irwin, I-r-w-i-n.

EMC: And where was that?

FAS: And that was here in Newport.

EMC: Oh, again, you were lucky.

FAS: Yes, I had four tours of duty here.

EMC: Wow.

FAS: That's why I'm here now I think.

EMC: Right. You got used to Newport.

FAS: My wife liked it. She said she spent more time here than anywhere else we've been, so that was 1951, '52.

EMC: And what were you doing on the Irwin? What was your billet?

FAS: I was operations officer.

EMC: And did you cruise anywhere?

FAS: We went to the Med., our usual Mediterranean cruise, and spent the time in the yard up in Boston and down at Guantanamo, refresher training, and then over to Europe for a four-month cruise and then I got back to the States, and I was ordered as the exec. officer of the Blair, B-l-a-i-r and that's DE 147, and that was here, based here in Newport.

EMC: In Newport, oh, again. So you never saw action in the Korean War?

FAS: No, we stayed on the East Coast. That duty was, we'd spent three months here and three months in Key West as a school ship for sonar courses down there.

EMC: Oh, that must have been nice.

FAS: It was hot down there.

EMC: Yes.

FAS: Then. It wasn't so hot this winter, I understand.

EMC: What years were you on the Blair?

FAS: That was '54 to '56. No, wait a minute, excuse me, '52 to '54 that I was here.

EMC: Right.

FAS: And then I went to the University of Idaho to the NROTC staff.

EMC: Where is the University of Idaho located?

FAS: Moscow, Idaho.

EMC: Oh, for heaven sakes. That's quite a change. Did you take your family?

FAS: Oh, yeah, I had to look that up on the map. I spent two years there teaching ordinance and gunnery.

EMC: To NROTC students?

FAS: Yes, to the navy students.

EMC: Did you like that?

FAS: Yeah, that was interesting. I got to take some law school courses there at the university, and it was okay, except at the end I was supposed to have leave to tour that area, but as usual they needed me yesterday, and I went out to the Pacific to the squadron, Destroyer Squadron 19 as squadron operations officer, and that was from '56 to '58.

EMC: Did you cruise the Pacific then?

FAS: I went on two WestPac cruises that were six months always, two six month tours out there and two six month tours back to Long Beach. We were located in Long Beach then.

EMC: Did you bring your family again?

FAS: Oh, yeah, we lived in Long Beach. That was nice.  
I liked Long Beach.

EMC: Did anything unusual happen on that cruise?

FAS: Well, yes and no. Taiwan had seceded from North Korea.

EMC: Mainland China, you mean?

FAS: Mainland China rather, and there were two islands off the Chinese Mainland. Quemoy and Matsu, which the Chinese used to bombard regularly and then they'd go back and fix it up, and we patrolled off those islands a part of the tour there. And part of it we'd have the usual Hong Kong liberty, which was where you got your suits and shirts and stuff. Well, we had one incident as we were coming back after one of the cruises, that night before we left, we got an urgent call for a submarine contact out off Japan, so we went dashing out there because we were ready. And it turned out that it was a submarine, but it was ours. One of our submarines was out of position, and it was tracked by another submarine which reported it. And I knew the skipper of one of them. I said, hey, this has got to be right because I know who's there. Well, they pulled it off, and in the meantime, now we're out coming back to the States. Do you go back in and refuel or do you just keep going? Well, there were two typhoons reported coming north, and I was navigator, too, as well as operations officer, and I said I think we can go between them. The Commodore was very obliging and so the four of us kept heading east, and we did sail through them and weren't bothered too much by them.

EMC: Oh, that's good.



FAS: And we got back in time.

EMC: Wow.

FAS: They were just routine, you know, you'd operate with carriers or whatever you were doing out there.

EMC: Interesting.

FAS: So after that I got back. That was in Long Beach, California for two years. I got ordered to the staff of Commander Military Sea Transportation, COMSTS in Washington DC, so I had my Washington tour.

EMC: It was in the Pentagon?

FAS: No, we were out of northwest Washington at some sort of World War II building. We didn't have any glamorous bases. It was just out on Wisconsin Avenue in northwest Washington.

EMC: What were you doing and what was the Military Sea Transportation Command all about?

FAS: Well, they had commercial ships all over the world, and we had a plotting center for where they were.

EMC: Oh, for the commercial ships?

FAS: Yes.

EMC: Merchant ships?

FAS: Some Navy ships that were in it, but a lot of commercial ships that they handled. And we kept track of that. And I was sort of the assistant personnel officer and the security officer and nothing very glamorous except the watches you stood could be interesting. They were manned 24 hours a day. Interestingly, the admiral was a very strict admiral. And his grand nephew was from around here or he still is. He has a Ph.D. It was an interesting duty to get some acquaintance with the Pentagon. You had some interface with the Pentagon but strictly taking care of the commercial and navy ships, worldwide military sea command. It was interesting.

EMC: I wonder if it still existed?

FAS: Yes, it does. They've changed its name a little bit. But it's still a military -- if you say MSTs, people know what you mean. I don't know where they're located now. I doubt if they're in this sort of barracks type building out in northwest Washington, probably somewhere else. It would be interesting to find out sometime I'm down there.

EMC: Well, what happened next then?

FAS: Next I was ordered as exec. to the Grand Canyon.

EMC: And what year was this?

FAS: That was 1960. Destroyer tender here in Newport, and they had all this -- this is the time when they had all of the destroyers here, the mike buoys and all that sort of thing. I was exec. of that, as a lieutenant commander. I might modestly say, I was the only lieutenant commander, and as the exec. tender I relieved the guy that made captain in the tender and the people now in Washington when I got the orders and left, they said oh, pre-selection to commander. Wrong, but that's what they thought, because I didn't get promoted in there to commander, but we made an eight-month cruise to the Med.

EMC: That's a long time.

FAS: And we serviced destroyers over there. And we spent a lot of time in Naples but did move around to Thessaloniki in Greece and spent some time there. Destroyers would come to us. And that was an eight-month cruise that we were there. My wife managed to make a trip over there just before Thanksgiving and went back just before Christmas.

EMC: That must have been great though to see all those ports.

FAS: We went around a little bit to Florence. She is an artist, so she's interested in Florence. I got a week's leave. And we were going to go up to see Trieste and Switzerland and come back. We never got out of Florence. She found it so interesting, we just stayed there. She's since been back to Italy a couple of times. She just got back from Venice in October. She was painting Venice, and so she got someplace I didn't get to.

EMC: Oh, that is amazing.

FAS: So that was two years there and then I got command of the P-a-r-l-e de 708, and that was '62 and '63. And I didn't get selected again.

EMC: Was the Parle in Newport?

FAS: It was based in Providence, believe it or not.

EMC: Providence?

FAS: State pier in Providence.

EMC: Oh, for heavens sake.

FAS: We took reserves on cruise. They took their summer cruises or winter cruises. In the winter time we went down

south and in the summer time we went up north to Prince Edward Island and places like that.

EMC: Oh, that must have been great.

FAS: Yes, it was interesting. Now, we had about half a crew on that because the reserves would fill up the slots that we didn't have as people show up. One interesting thing there is we were going to Bermuda, a very nice place and had the right clothes to wear there. And we ran into a severe storm and a lot of people were seasick. We weren't going to have any training, so I pulled into Delaware Bay, and there were other ships there. There were a lot of ships there. Well, our corpsman, we had no doctor aboard, of course, but the first class corpsman said, Captain, I think I have an appendicitis case here. So okay, we called 911, called the Coast Guard. They sent a helicopter down. We were just at the entrance to Delaware Bay. Delaware Bay, and they lifted him off. We had him in a -- what you put people in to lift them up?

EMC: I don't quite know what it is. It's not a stretcher? (Stokes stretcher)

FAS: A caged stretcher that the ship had. Well, it went up to the helicopter. It won't fit in the door, and so back down he came, and they sent their own thing down, put him in, saw him later. We flew him up to the hospital, Philadelphia Hospital, and he came back in a couple of days.

EMC: Thank God.

FAS: He said the worse part was when he had to come back down again to go up. But they caught it and if it had ruptured and it could be fatal but the corpsman, bless him, he recognized it right away, and he got well. You can't just go to a place like Bermuda without clearance, and we were supposed to be there that weekend, and it was too late to get there for the weekend, and they wouldn't accept another -- at a later date, so I said, okay, we're supposed to have a liberty port, and I had several bosses and the district would provide the reservists for me -- Comdeslant and the Flotilla and a Squadron Commander and none of them really knew where I was most of the time. So there is a little thing you say, UNODIR, U-n-o-d-i-r, unless otherwise directed; I'm going to Philadelphia for a liberty for the reservists on cruise. And I never heard anything, so I went. It happened to be the weekend of the Army Navy game. I had a friend that I knew from the staff stationed at the Philadelphia navy yard, and she had tickets and so she gave me a ticket for the Army Navy game, so we got to see that that year.

EMC: That's great.

FAS: It was great having your own command. You could do things, and it went from being in pretty sad shape to winning the "E" for the year.

EMC: Oh, that is good. What does the "E" stand for?

FAS: Excellence.

EMC: Excellence?

FAS: Excellence. They have various Es, engineer "E" and communications "E" and overall "E", and so we got the "E" that year.

EMC: And what kind of "E" did you get?

FAS: We got the operational efficiency "E".

EMC: Okay.

FAS: And then they asked me to retire. The Navy said, you got to go.

EMC: Oh, really.

FAS: You've got 20 years in, and we're letting people go with 19-6, and you have more than 20, so you'll get your pension, but we don't need you anymore or words to that effect.

EMC: Well, how did you feel about that?

FAS: I was mad. I wanted one more year and maybe get selected, but when you're twice passed over, the chances are that you're not going to, so I bit the bullet and said okay.

EMC: And you retired then?

FAS: I retired. Now, we're living here.

EMC: Now, were you bitter about that?

FAS: Yes, yes, I think I did a good job. We put an "E" on the Grand Canyon. I put the "E" on that ship I had, and you get these nice platitudes. You get letters. I got a letter from the flotilla commander, and deslant and various people, what a great job I'm doing, but they can't promote me.

EMC: I wonder why. Numbers?

FAS: Who knows, but the destroyer force they did everything they could to give me the good billets.

EMC: Yes, you had some good billets

FAS: In fact, a captain relieved me when I left the Grand Canyon. So you get the jobs. You do the job, and for some reason I think it was probably the fact that I resigned.



EMC: Oh, could be, yes.

FAS: I wasn't very gracious about resigning, and I advise young officers that I run into -- say all you want to but don't put anything in writing.

EMC: Did you put something in writing?

FAS: Yes, I told them when I resigned, and it was true; the Navy I've been through three downsizings. When I joined the Navy, the ship I went to was half-manned back in 1938. After the war, they dropped everything again.

EMC: Yes.

FAS: And after Korea I thought they'd learn something, but they went back to the same thing.

EMC: Downsizing.

FAS: And I didn't say, oh, I want to go out because I have a little baby girl. I should have. It would have been better to say that. But I say what I think and sometimes that doesn't help you any.

EMC: Oh, so you said the Navy was wrong to downsize?

FAS: So I think that's -- yes. Yet I have a lot of good friends here, Tom Weschler, destroyers. Joe Wadleigh was one I knew, until he passed away.

EMC: Oh, yes, definitely. Well, after you did retire in -- what was it '63?

FAS: Yes.

EMC: You had to get a job. And where did you work after that?

FAS: Well, luck sometimes has a lot to do with it. My daughter was in high school and the other one was in grade school. My wife liked it here, but what do you do for a living here? Well, I took a chance and went over to NUSC as it was called then NUOS, Naval Underwater Ordnance Systems. Now, it's called NUWC. My daughter is the editor of the Newscope over there.

EMC: Oh, yes.

FAS: And I just happen to hit it right. They needed a test director for what they called then the torpedo tube acceptance trials for submarines. Now, I was not in submarines, but the torpedo didn't know the difference. The technical director had a son who was Class of '44 out of the Academy, and I went over there, and they just happened to need a tester. I guess who

they had was not proven too satisfactory, so they hired me as test director for submarine torpedo tube acceptance trials. And I did that for about three and a half years. Actually, they've changed it. We did more than just the torpedo tubes. We did the ship, the sonar system, navigation, speed, everything but the vertical torpedoes, the missiles. We didn't do anything with that, but I did about 30 submarines, new ones. They were building -- 41 For Freedom was the --

EMC: That's a lot.

FAS: And so for about three and a half years I did that, and I liked it. I liked the job. We were on submarines for one thing, so some of the older submarines wanted to do this, but I was looking for a change, and I went to a job fair up in Boston; this was three and a half years later, so that would have been in '67, and they had a recruiter from Control Data in Minneapolis. Control Data made the computer for the boomers, that missile submarine. It was called a DGBC, the Digital Geo Ballistic Computer, and it was as big as from here and then some. Now, they can do it with -- well, I talked with them there. And Minneapolis is not a Navy town, actually. And they needed somebody that knew the Navy, and so they hired me to be a program manager for the computer that they were putting on the submarines, the DGBC.

EMC: So you had move to out there?

FAS: So I moved out there. We moved out there with the young daughter -- heels dug in all the way from Newport to Minneapolis, bribed her with a new typewriter and new television and what have you, but it didn't change. She didn't want to go. But that worked out fine. I was there for about 11 years. I was a program manager for that, plus some computers they built for the Cape, which were -- they were kind of safety systems, double redundant safety systems. If something went off during the launch, they would destruct the missile. And there were four identical computers all churning the data to see that it was okay, and they ran about three quarter of a million dollars a piece, so there was four of them. That was one project I had. Then something happened, Control Data didn't sort of stay up with things, and now, there is no Control Data. I think General Dynamics bought what was left of them, but I left there in the end of '78. I was there through '78, from '67 to '78. And I had a job waiting for me back here.

EMC: Oh, Newport.

FAS: No, it was down in New London, actually. It was another company called Tracor, which they don't do much anymore. I seem to run out of jobs with companies that don't stay up-to-date or something. Now, that was located in New London, and I moved to Madison Connecticut with the idea my wife had to be back up here eventually, so I worked there for ten years and so it was '68.

EMC: No, '78. You said you left Minneapolis in '78.

FAS: I retired in '89.

EMC: You worked there for about 11 years.

FAS: I was 11 years at Control Data in Minneapolis and ten years down at Tracor in New London, and I lived in Madison, which was about a 45-minute drive, which was okay and then I retired from that.

EMC: Then you decided to come back to Newport.

FAS: And here we are in Newport.

EMC: Why did you decide to come back here?

FAS: My wife liked it. My daughter married a young man from here, Dick Tracy, of all names, and so they were here, and as I said, my wife liked the area. I have different ideas sometimes, but we have friends here. And a friend called my wife and said, I know you'll like it here. There is a place for sale on Tuckerman Avenue. Why don't you take a look at it, so I liked it down in Connecticut, frankly. Well, we came up on a foggy afternoon and looked at it, and I said, okay, I'll put in a bid, thinking I wouldn't get it, and went to work that day, and came

home Monday night, and found a big smile. She said, we got the house, so we bought the place up here. It needed work. And the first year we worked all summer making it habitable. It was okay, solid, but a commercial fisherman had rented it, and I think he was cleaning fish down in the basement, but the person who sold it was very nice. We're good friends, and she owned that house. And she just liked my wife, and said okay. She was a school teacher from Massachusetts. Her mother was smart. Her mother bought four plots of land, five plots of land down there, right on the water, and one of them is her summer house, and one is the house we bought, so when I quit Tracor. We just used it for the summer, and at one time my oldest daughter, she had her second child, and she asked if she could rent the house for a while until they found a bigger place. It will only be a few months. Well, it was three years.

EMC: So when did you finally come here?

FAS: So we came up here in '89.

EMC: Oh, I see.

FAS: We had it from '79 through the summers, and what have you. I rented it to some Navy people once in awhile. Carol Hale, I don't know if you know Carol Hale. Her husband is one of the revolutionary war people that parades around with the funny uniform.

EMC: Oh, yes, the artillery company.

FAS: So when we finally left Tracor and came up here and sold the house down there and then had a builder come in and redo the inside of most of it downstairs.

EMC: Well, that's good.

FAS: So here we are.

EMC: Here you are. Well, Newport's a navy town, and there is a lot to do here, and this is a navy community that's active. If you had to sum up your naval career, how would you sum it up?

FAS: Well, I think the Navy and I are even. They took a kid with a high school education and sent him through the Naval Academy, and eventually I got to retire, and they've been paying me nicely for a numbers of years, but I still have a little bad feeling for not having made commander, which I think I should have, but I can put it on the fact that if I hadn't resigned, I'm sure I would have made commander easy and captain. And so I say we're even. They took me, and I served them well. We're even.

EMC: What was your favorite position in the Navy?

FAS: Captain of the ship is the greatest job you can have. I mean, you can do things. People pay attention to what you say, and it changes. You can change a ship. Like I said, this thing was rusted and not well maintained, and they kindly gave it to me to do something with and that was fun.

EMC: That's good. What was the position you liked the least?

FAS: I think this exec. of that DE I had that was here. We went three months in Key West and three months here. And it depends on the personality, too. And the Grand Canyon was a great job. I mean, I had 600 people, 700 people there, and they were great. And I had Warrant Officers there that were just top-notch people. They could do anything, fix anything from a watch to weld a side of steel on this cruiser we had, which we did once. So that was a good time.

EMC: Did you have good captains for the most part?

FAS: Well, the first one would have been, but he wasn't there long and then I got another skipper just before we went on the eight-month cruise, and he was all set. He had been in Korea and really said he was a good boy over there, and he didn't do what some people did, and he didn't get selected. He got plucked. They had a big plucking time when they plucked a lot of captains. They had a lot of captains, more than they needed, and so he turned bitter, and he was going to bring his wife over



for the whole tour and that got canceled because he left in the middle of the cruise, so he was -- and then I'm not going to mention this guy's name because he's well-known. Well, we said, it can't be worse than it is. Well, it was. And I left there at the -- he came in the middle of the Med. cruise, four months of the eight months, and he had good ideas, and he had a good record of performance in the war. He was a class of '44, the year before me, well, maybe it was '43 '42, somewhere in that time, but his way of implementing it was not very good, and there was a lot of stress in my job when he took over.

EMC: Oh, I see.

FAS: But other than that, I tend to work with the people I worked for were great, but there's nothing like having your own command.

EMC: Oh, yes, having your own ship.

FAS: I hear now that some people don't want command. I read the Naval Institute Proceedings and places like that. That they don't want command.

EMC: Maybe it's too much responsibility.

FAS: I don't know, but I don't really know what it can be. It's great.

EMC: Good. Well, if you don't have anymore to add to the oral history.

FAS: I could go on for hours probably with sea stories, but I think you got the gist of it.

EMC: Yes, that's great. Well, thank you very much for coming in today.

FAS: Thank you for asking me.

EMC: We'll have this transcribed and then you can look it over, and I'll look it over, and do some light editing.

FAS: Got to get some of the irs and ers out of there or something.

EMC: Okay. Very good.

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