

This interview is being conducted on Friday, June 14, 2024 at the home of Charlotte Zinsky, the veteran's mother-in-law. My name is Fran Prokop and I am speaking with Michael Nagle, who served in the United States Navy and is a veteran of the Beirut Conflict – the time between Viet Nam and Desert Storm, which is from 1978 to 1984. Mike learned of the Veteran's History Project through his mother-in-law, a friend of mine, and he has kindly consented to participate in the National Archives Veterans' History Project. Here is his story:

**Mike, when and where were you born?**

I was born in Evergreen Park, Illinois, June 18, 1960.

**What were your parents' occupations?**

My Dad was a treasurer of a company and my Mom was a banking administrator.

**How many brothers and sisters did you have?**

I had one brother and one sister.

**Were either of your siblings in the service?**

No.

**Any other family members serving in the military?**

My father was in the National Guard.

**What did you do before entering the service?**

I was in high school and then worked at a Chevrolet Dealer in Illinois.

**How old were you when you went into the service.**

I was 18.

**How did you enter – were you drafted or did you enlist?**

I enlisted.

**And what made you choose that specific branch of service?**

Just the opportunities that the recruiter told me at that time.

**Where did you enlist – in downtown Chicago?**

Downtown Chicago, yes.

**Where did they send you for boot camp?**

Boot Camp at Great Lakes in Illinois.

**How did you get to Great Lakes from downtown Chicago?**

A bus.

**They took you by bus?**

By bus.

**How long was your boot camp?**

Boot camp was three months long.

**And that was in 1978.**

Correct.

**What month?**

I went in in September.

**So three months, that brings us up to Christmas almost.**

Right.

**Can you talk about a typical day in boot camp – how your early days of training were?**

Uh, they were early -- and late – a lot of marching, a lot of learning, and some cold and windy days.

**What did the learning consist of?**

Learning about the Navy itself, the Rules and Regulations.

**How about – as a Navy person did you have any gunnery training?**

We had small arms training; that was it.

**And marching – you learned to march?**

Learned how to march and obey.

**You did have classroom teaching?**

We did.

**How did you adapt to military life – the physical regimen, the barracks, the food and the social life – how did you adapt?**

I adapted pretty good. I didn't have any issues or anything like that. The food wasn't always the best, but we got along good in the barracks. We had a great boot camp crew, and actually sort of enjoyed it towards the end.

**Were you on any liberty while you were at boot camp?**

No. I got liberty the day after – we graduated I think, the day after Thanksgiving. So we got to take another guy home that was not local. They gave us a day off.

**Yes, but seeing that you were local, were you able to call your family and friends while you were in boot camp?**

I was able to call them two or three times throughout that three months – not much.

**Boot camp is over; what were your orders? What happened right after that?**

I left – I was transferred to Orlando, Florida, the Nuclear Power School.

**Did you first have a leave at home before that?**

I had a short – one week – if I remember, at home and then on to Orlando.

**What did you do there?**

I was schooling – 8 hours a day –

**That would be specialized training?**

Specialized, yes, for nuclear power.

**Can you describe it? How long did school last?**

School lasted six months; it was all brand ne. Band new school; brand new barracks at the time, which was great.

**What was the name of the base you were on?**

Nuclear Power School – I don't remember a base name at that time.

**So after six months of school we're into June of 1979 –**

Right.

**So what happened then – after six months of school.**

After six months of school I ended up being deployed to a ship in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

**What was the name of the ship?**

The ship was the U.S.S. Morton.

**And what were your duties on the Morton?**

I was Engine Room Supervisor on board the Morton.

**How did you get to be Supervisor?**

I worked my tail off to get that.

**I mean you were young; you were only 19.**

Right. I qualified really quickly and wanted to move up as fast as I could. Within a month or so I was Engine Room Supervisor.

**What was your rank at that time?**

I was an E-4 when I went to school. I actually -- we were E-4s going into school.

**And you maintained that rank after you got out of school?**

Yes. Yes.

**What were the details of your job? What did you do?**

We maintained all the engine room equipment; the water evaporators, to make fresh water and the entire engineering and propulsion system.

**This was a ship, not a submarine.**

It was a ship; it was a Destroyer – Bulwark -- DB 948.

**Where did this ship go after you got on it?**

We went to the West Pacific – to Korea, Japan and the Philippines.

**How long was the ship gone?**

It was gone about seven months.

**That was your first voyage?**

First one, right. And that took place a few months after we got to Hawaii. We had a whole bunch of training and qualifications – for the ship.

**So you were in Hawaii for awhile.**

I was in Hawaii for three years – stationed there. The ship was there.

**In Pearl Harbor?**

Correct.

**And that was your base.**

Yes, Pearl Harbor.

**On your first trip out – how was your trip – did you encounter any storms?**

It was a learning experience that showed me a lot of different stuff that I'd never seen before – for being a 19-year-old kid at the time –

**What do you mean by that? Ship wise or human nature wise?**

Well, I grew up south of Chicago and I'd never been basically out of the Midwest; and Hawaii was a new experience in itself, plus going to foreign countries, because I couldn't speak the language and uh, learning their ways, how they did stuff was –

**Did you spend time in each country – Korea and Japan?**

We did. We spent several weeks in each country, on and off, throughout the six, seven months.

**And were you able to sightsee during those times?**

Yes, that's one thing I lucked out in my career in the Navy was I had a lot of sightseeing; we were able to go to where the A-bomb was dropped in Nagasaki. We did a lot of trips to Manila, in the Philippines, which a lot of people at that time didn't; they just stayed on the base.

**When you went to Nagasaki, that was 1979 – what did it look like – rehabilitated already?**

Yes, it was; it was pretty much rebuilt. There's museums there and landmarks that show where the bombs were actually dropped – we were at Hiroshima and Nagasaki both.

**How did you feel personally about that? How did it make you feel?**

You know, I was sort of numb to the fact because it was a war I wasn't – I didn't participate in. I knew about it so it was interesting to learn the history and to see exactly where it happened, and it wasn't as big as life that, you know, seeing it. Seeing it in the history books and reading about it in school, you expected this huge, huge decimation and, you know, which took years to rebuild and when we got there it looked like a city like Chicago.

**So it was totally, in your estimation, well, you don't know what it looked like before –**

Right, other than pictures, that's about it. Yeah.

**Did it affect you thinking about all the lives that were lost?**

Well, you know, if you think about, it still stings war and war takes a lot of lives, both sides, all sides, and whether people are directly involved or indirectly involved, it happens that way.

**I think it gives you, as a young boy going there, you sort or get a bigger picture of everything.**

Right. Right. Yeah.

**Okay, so that was Japan. How about Korea? Anything interesting there?**

Korea was just – Korea was a lot of jungle area, some cities in Korea but, can't remember the towns, but we were basically on the bases in Korea.

**And how about the Philippines?**

Philippines was – again it was a big U.S. Navy base – with a lot of ships and a lot of people; people in town were very poor; they would beg for everything and I remember bartering for food; food would be 3 pesos, which at that time I think a peso was 7 or 9 cents and we would say no, how about one peso. And you didn't realize – 7 cents to the peso – but it was just a lot of difference with the people living there.

**Any emotions relating to witnessing destruction and stuff?**

It wasn't so much the destruction; the worst was we ended up off of North Viet Nam – I think I got Humanitarian Awards for that – we picked up 72 boat people floating in the middle of the ocean. And the Viet Cong patrol boats came -- come out and actually shoot at us. And again, that was after Viet Nam and they actually came and shot at us and we had to take cover and – I remember – rumors saying that we called back to Washington to be able to shoot back at them – and Washington said no, pick up the people and go – and we pulled up two boats with a total of 72 people. I remember there was a couple of dead people in them. There was a dead baby in a lady's arms – still think about that.

**Wow! Definitely – that affects you.**

Yeah.

**So what did you do with these people?**

We took them on board and brought them back to, I believe, the Philippines.

**Where were you when you picked them up?**

In the middle of the ocean off of North Viet Nam.

**So your ship was patrolling?**

Right, right.

**And then you saw these two boatloads of people?**

Right.

**And the Viet Nam was going on?**

That was done; it was over; it was just people trying to escape Viet Nam – and get out of there – refugees.

**That was interesting. Any other experiences like that?**

That was the biggest I can remember over there in the West Pacific.

**What other places did you go to?**

We made several trips; we went to Guam and spent a couple of weeks in Guam.

**What was the purpose of your trips?**

Just to go there and we were either delivering something or refueling sometimes – with the destroyer. We had some that were like – when we went to Manila in the Philippines – that was a humanitarian trip that we went to the Bay –

**What do you mean humanitarian trips?**

Well, just a good will tour, you could say, good will – fly the flags, make it look colorful; go into their harbor because their Fourth of July is the same as ours, if I remember right. We did that.

Then – we made a lot of small – up towards Adak, Alaska –

**What was up there?**

You know what, we never know but I was able to see a Russian aircraft carrier up close.

**Oh, you're right; it's right there.**

It was accidental; in the middle of the water; the fog cleared and there was a big huge greenish-looking aircraft carrier, the K-I-E-V.

**Wow! Did you see the men on the ship?**

Oh, we could see the men on there; it was that close. That was another one of those trips we made; we didn't know why they sent one of the oldest destroyers to meet up with one of the newest aircraft carriers the Russians had.

**Did your ship accompany an aircraft carrier?**

We did. We were in at the Carl Vinson;

**At different times you had different aircraft carriers?**

Right.

**Was that your ship's main purpose – accompanying aircraft carriers all along?**

Part of the battle task force.

**Oh, so you were with several other ships –**

Several – there could be a dozen ships total.

**And you all went to the same location.**

We all went to the same location, for the most part, right.

**So Carl Vinson was one of the aircraft carriers –**

Right. Carl Vinson, I think the Constellation, and another one – we were with the U.S.S. New Jersey Battleship at one point, when they recommissioned that. That was it, and then we went to Fleet Week in San Francisco -- right towards the end before they decommissioned the ship.

**So all the time we've been talking about right now was the first three years that you were in the Navy?**

Right, except for boot camp and Orlando, which was close to a year. So After Pearl Harbor I was in four years.

**But you were in six years.**

Right, then I got transferred to New Jersey.

**So you eventually got off of the destroyer Morton and you were transferred to New Jersey.**

To New Jersey, yes.

**Was that on another ship?**

It was on another ship – the U.S.S. Suribachi – the AE-21 – Ammunition Escort.

They decommissioned the USS Morton and we were allowed to pick Duty Stations and since I had already been on the west coast, I wanted to go on the east coast, and I lucked out and got the Suribachi – the only thing bad about the Suribachi was the Captain liked to sail. Ha, ha.

**Ha, ha, what does that mean?**

I was there two days before we left and it was another four months before we got back and then about two days home and then out – and then – we would go out and then –

**What were your duties on this ship?**

I was the Engine Room Supervisor – same thing.

**So they were the same duties you performed on the other ship?**

Yes.

**And how about your rank at that point?**

My rank went up to E-5 – Petty Officer 2nd Class.

**So where did the Suribachi go?**

The Suribachi – we went out to refuel and load ammunition and take ammunition off ships coming back from the Mediterranean and other places that way on the east coast. And then we went over to the Mediterranean, two and a half Med cruises – so I was gone for –

**Did you stop and see the cities along the way?**



We did. I got to see almost every country except for France.

**Wow! Weren't you lucky!**

Yeah. That was a great time. We were in Italy; it was sort of like our home base.

**Nice weather too.**

It was beautiful; we loved Italy and I still love Italy.

**Which part of Italy?**

We were in, it's actually called Agusta Bay, in the big island there – Sicily. So we spent a lot of time in Sicily.

**Is there a base in Sicily?**

No. We were just in – since we carried ammunition – at that time it was one of those things that ammunition could mean nuclear ammunition, so we weren't allowed to go into a lot of the smaller bases. So we stayed off Agusta Bay quite a bit.

**So Agusta Bay was Sicily –**

Yes, small, little, tiny, tiny town.

**So you didn't go into Rome or places like that.**

We did; we ended up going – we were able to go into Naples and things like that; went into Rome and toured there. I was actually on -- I think I got there the day after Easter one year – just missed the Pope by a day. So we took a tour there.

**So you toured Naples and you toured Rome too?**

Right. Rome, Naples, we did Tuscany –

**Oh, that's nice. When you were near Naples did you go to Pompeii?**

No, never went to Pompeii. We saw it but didn't go to it. Yeah.

**Was that your first four months –**

We were gone six months on that cruise.

**And then you went back to you – what was the base at that time?**

It was called Earle Naval Weapons Station.

**Where?**

In Earle, New Jersey. It's an hour south of New York. It was a three-mile long pier that went on the Hudson River.

**And that was your home base?**

Yes.

**Okay, that was your first trip and you were gone about six months. What about afterwards?**

Then I came back, I went on –

**Wait a minute – when you came back from these trips did you get leave at all?**

I did. I got leave then. I came home, back to Illinois, and that's where I met my wife.

**Oh, Okay. You were almost done then; you met her after five years.**

I had another year; little over a year left.

**Oh, okay.**

So I met her and I went on another Med Cruise.

**And how long was that?**

That was six months – 5 ½ maybe. And then went to –I forget – back to the Mediterranean –

**Back to the same places you were before?**

Same places, like I said, Tunisia, Africa, we were in –

**Did you get off the ship there too?**

Yes, we did. That was beautiful; lot of good seafood there.

**Did you ever go on safari?**

No, no, no. Tunisia is more like a little town; you're not quite into Africa –

**Morocco – yeah, that's almost like Morocco – at the very northern end –**

Right, yeah, So we were able to go there. We went to Spain, where else did we go –

Just about everywhere –

**You didn't go further east like toward Israel?**

Yeah, we did. We went towards there; we were there –

**Did you ever stop there?**

No. We never stopped in Israel or anything like that.

**Did you stop anywhere east like in Greece –**

Greece – we were in Greece -- several times in Greece.

**Which part of Greece – do you remember?**

No – right near – we had to be close to Athens there – I can't remember – because we were in a Turkish Naval Shipyard. I can't remember the name of the shipyard that we were at.

**And those were just like good will tours too?**

Right, yeah. We went in and they would come on board the ship and do minor repairs. And I would have to meet with them every morning for a meeting and have a little cup of tea with them. Ha, ha -- and go and show our good will type of thing, but yeah, we went to Turkey; went to Ibiza, Spain, which is an island off the coast – where they make Lladro statues and all that stuff. Used to buy them for my Mom.

**Oh, -- so by this time you were 25 years old – by the time you got out.**

Right, almost, yeah.

**So how was your communication from home while you were on ship? How did you stay in touch with family and friends?**

Letters; there were no cell phones at that time.

**I know, but how about telephone calls once you got to land? From Europe?**

But it was – the timing was bad because of the time change –

**Right, right –**

We may be 12 or 14 hours ahead of time – so once in a while I got to talk.

**How about friendships formed and camaraderie of service? Did you meet any guys that you are still buddies with today?**

Yeah, I did – actually from both ships but I'm still good friends with three or four – that, you know, we haven't been able to hook up but I know where they live and I know where they live.

**So you're in communication one way or another.**

Yeah, Facebook and things like that.

**Very nice. Did you write down your medals, honors and awards?**

Yes.

**Why don't you mention them out loud – just read them off –**

Yeah, I got them right here on this (DD-214) -- I received the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, actually twice. Humanitarian Service Medal; Good Conduct Award; Navy Expeditionary Medal; Battle E Award; and Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

**Okay, thank you. While you were working on the ship, in the ocean not on leave, what were your off-duty pursuits? Did you guys play cards, watch movies, what did you do?**

Played cards and we were – when I was on the USS Morton, we worked six hours on, six hours off.

**On guard duty, you mean?**

On engine room duty; so you were down in the engine room for six hours and you got off six hours. That meant by the time you showered and got something to eat, it was peace and quiet and go back. We were really short-handed in those days in the Navy.

**Oh, you were?**

Yeah, it was hard to get –

**Was your ship not fully staffed?**

It was, I would say, almost fully staffed, but not quite; it was just hard; there wasn't – we had a hard time finding tools; there wasn't anything like that.

**Really – and not too much free time?**

And not a lot of free time, no, uh-unh.

**They kept you busy, huh?**

Yeah, yeah, we never – never got to go lay out on the deck, you know, maybe go out and have a – they used to call it “a smoke and a Coke,” you know, and mail – ha, ha.

**Oh, ha, ha; that's new. I never heard that, smoke and a Coke, ha, ha.**

**Where were you when your time came up? Were you back in New Jersey?**

I was actually over in the Mediterranean – just like a three-month deployment. It was actually a six-month deployment but I was overseas and partial way through the deployment. We flew out of Siganelia, (phonetic) Italy, out of that base there – Siganelia, Italy.

**So you mean your time was up and you could leave the ship then?**

Yes.

**And you left from the ship – where did you fly to?**

We flew to Philadelphia –

**Oh, directly?**

Directly to Philadelphia. No, I take that back. We flew from Italy to Spain, and then Spain to Philadelphia. And then I got a flight on Southwest Airlines – they were brand new – and got a flight back to Chicago right away. And I checked out of the Navy in Great Lakes.

**So you had to go back to Great Lakes - to be discharged.**

Right, had to go back to Great Lakes for two weeks or something like that, yeah.

**Two weeks – it took that long?**

Yeah – to do that.

**How did you get home from Great Lakes? Did somebody pick you up?**

My wife, yeah, I was married by then.

**Oh, when did you get married?**

I got married with about a year and a half –

**You were in the Navy?**

I was in the Navy when we were in New Jersey. I just transferred. It wasn't too long after we transferred to New Jersey and we got married.

**Did she come back to Illinois?**

No, she flew out – we packed up my little Toyota and drove everything we owned in the Toyota out to New Jersey, after our honeymoon. We lived there, and I think I got to see her out of the first year maybe three or four months, on and off, and on and off –

**So she was living there – she had an apartment in New Jersey.**

She had an apartment in New Jersey – so then by the time I went over to the Mediterranean from that last cruise, she went ahead and quit her job in New Jersey and got a job in Chicago and moved back in an apartment.

**So that by the time you were totally out of the Navy she was back living here in Illinois.**

Right, she was in Illinois, so when I flew in she picked me up.

**Oh, nice, nice.**

Yeah, I surprised her with a new apartment in New Jersey – somewhere she'd never been, and she surprised me with a new apartment.

**So how was your reception by family and friends when you arrived home?**

It was good; my wife, you know, it was great – so 41 years later –

**Right, right.**

**How was your readjustment to civilian life?**

Uh, you know, it was – it was hard to sleep and I don't know – not making friends – but just getting back to seeing friends and stuff like that – people who hadn't talked me for six years 'cuz when I went in the Navy it was like I went to the moon. Ha, ha

**Well, yeah, you don't see anybody.**

I didn't see anybody; didn't talk; didn't get many – most of my letters were from -- couple family members and grandparents and my wife.

**Did you ever use the G.I. Bill when you got out of the service?**

I did use part of it.

**For what?**

For education.

**Where did you go?**

I used some for college. I used some of it while I was in actually – took college classes while I was on board the ship.

**Oh, I see, on board ship.**

Yeah, yeah and I got a Certificate of Completion from the Navy – Forces Afloat – for a four-year degree.

**No kidding – Forces Afloat –**

Through Texas A&M and University of Central Florida. It was a combination thing –

**What was that degree in?**

Just Business Administration.

**Oh, BA – I thought you were going to say nuclear engineering or something.**

No, no, ha, ha, I wasn't that smart.

**So you said you have been in contact with fellow veterans over the years?**

Yes.

**Are you a member today of any veterans' organizations?**

No, I am not.

**Do you use the VA Benefits?**

I do. I'm a Disabled Vet.

**Oh, you are disabled?**

Yeah.

**Being that you travel around, where is your home base? Where do you go to the VA?**

Phoenix, most of the time.

**You are there most of the time?**

Yeah, yeah. I actually learned about the VA when I was working a job in Grissom Air Force Base in Indiana. One of the Air Force Captains told me about benefits that were there, which I never remembered when I got out, so 30 some years later –

**Really!!**

I went in and they – I met – actually when I went to South Dakota, we went there during COVID and the – like a rep – veteran's rep –

**Oh, a Service Officer?**

Service Officer – I met him there in Mitchell, South Dakota and he asked me my background and looked through my records and everything else and said, you have some major problems when you were in the Navy and you never got anything for it, so –

**You never said anything about that. What happened?**

Well, I ended up – I got burned real bad on my legs on the USS Morton – steam burn.

**Both legs?**

Both legs and feet.

**But you still continued to work afterwards? Of course you were younger then --**

Yeah, I just – you know, it was one of those things – you just grin and bear it and go day by day.

**You continued on. Were you hospitalized for that?**

No, we were on the ship; so there was no hospital at the time. They didn't have a ship's hospital, so basically bandaged up everything, and gave me the treatments, you know, and stuff like that.

**How long did that last? That's a big thing! You didn't mention it.**

Oh, probably lasted a month or so. It wasn't that bad.

**So after a month you just had to go back to work though.**

Oh, yeah, I was working the whole time. They didn't give you a lot of time off. Yeah.

**I suppose you must have been on antibiotics or something?**

Yeah, they gave me antibiotics and a special cream and scrubbed them and all that stuff.

**I'm sure when you're younger they don't bother you but then as you get older –**

Well, now, it's – especially living in Arizona, my skin dries out so bad on my legs and it itches like crazy, so I go through quite a bit of cream.

**When you first came out of the service what did you do? Did you get a job?**

Yeah, I did. It took me about 90 days. I was living in Illinois and it took me about 90 days to get a job.

**Where did you go?**

I got a job as a nuclear power operator at Dresden Nuclear Plant.

**And how long did you remain there?**

I was at Dresden I think for six years, I think.

**And then what happened?**

I got transferred then to the Quad Cities Nuclear Plant in Cordova, Illinois, around the river, on the Mississippi.

**And how long were you there?**

I want to say I was there for another four years. And then transferred back to Morris, Illinois. I did all the Fire fighter training. I was a volunteer Fireman – in New Lenox – that's where we lived – when I first got out. I was a volunteer Fireman there and also out at Cordova, a little town called Colonna – and then when nuclear power – the Nuclear Regulatory Commission required fire brigades for all the nuclear plants, myself and a bunch of us who worked for ComEd and who were also fire fighters, sort of got, I won't say "hired" – but they transferred us to this fire fighting segment of the company and we did all the fire training for the new plants in Illinois.

**So did you say you work for ComEd now?**

Commonwealth Edison, yeah. I ended up retiring from them.

**And what was your job?**

Nuclear operator and then "Instructor" I guess would be – what they considered us when we were doing the fire fighting.

**So you're an operator and an instructor.**

Right.



**What was the highest rank you achieved in the military?**

E-5.

**Now looking back on your military service, how would you say your military experience affected your life?**

It made me a better person, for sure, all the way around. I don't give up much on anything. It gave me opportunities that I probably would have never gotten if I'd gone to school afterwards or hung around at home and would have been an apprentice mechanic somewhere. So it was good.

**So what are some life lessons that you learned in the military?**

Life lessons – uh, I guess life lessons would be enjoy what you have now; don't miss opportunities, you know, they always said NAVY stands for "never again volunteer yourself," but I volunteer for a lot of different things – and got to go to some specialized schools and stuff for short durations, and that people would have never gotten to go but they needed an extra person and I said, "Yeah, I'll do that."

**So you're a big volunteer from the NAVY?**

Yeah, yeah.

**Good – anything else you can think of or any anecdotes that you might have missed – anything that happened while you were on cruises that were either funny or dangerous or noteworthy?**

Well, when we were in New Jersey, I was on the ammunition ship and we were heading down to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This was right at the end of my duration on board that ship. The air conditioning broke down and we had to pull into Norfolk, Virginia. I had never been there before. But a buddy of mine had and he re-enlisted, so he got thousands of dollars for re-enlistment and he had \$5,000 cash with him and we went out that night and celebrated.

He celebrated; we all celebrated a lot. He was the one that got in trouble for celebrating – with the police. So the police took him "for a ride" – ha, ha, to their hotel, ha, ha, and I had to – I went back to the ship with a rental car and told the Officer on deck and he said okay. We were the two senior guys on board the ship at that time with engineering. And he was a really good guy and he said, " I'm gonna get you up in the morning, give you some chits – couple hundred dollars of the ship's money -- you go bail him out and you get back here the ship's leaving at 10 o'clock in the morning."

**Wow!**

Well, I didn't know – I'd never been to Norfolk, so I took the car; at that time we still didn't have cell phones and no GPS, so they told me about how to get there and I got there like about 9:30

in the morning. The ship's leaving at 10, and I got in and I find him; they released him on his own – they just let him go. He knew how to get back to the ship so he jumped in but we didn't get there till after 10 o'clock and the ship left. That Captain on board that ship; he wanted to sail; he sailed on time every time. So they left for Guantanamo Bay without us.

**Oh my God; what happened to you?**

Well, we turned ourselves in to the flag ship there and said we were AWOL – we missed ship's movement. And they said hang on, this officer came back out and said, "No, you didn't."

We did; believe me. We're in civilian clothes, both of us, not in uniform. We had no other clothes with us. He goes – "You're not; I'll be right back." About 10 or 20 minutes later he came back and said, "Here's these chits for a room at the hotel, the Holiday Inn, because the barracks are full here at the base. Here's two tickets for Delta Airlines to fly out tomorrow to Guantanamo Bay.

**Oh, ha, ha.**

So what we did was – we went out that night – we bought couple extra pairs of jeans and underwear and things like that, tee shirts and a double bag – again, we had no uniforms, so we got on the plane, got to Guantanamo Bay, went and checked in with the Captain of the base. He said okay, "You're gonna work for the Master at Arms."

**Your ship didn't get in?**

Our ship wasn't there yet. It was still coming. Well, we were down there 2 or 3 days and all of a sudden there was a radio blackout and they couldn't get hold of our ship – to find out when it was coming in. Well, that was the start of Grenada –

**Oh!**

In fact we had seen local news about Grenada and I called my wife on the phone and I heard a click – "you are on a government line. " You can't talk about that – even though it was on the news. So I didn't talk to her for a few months and we waited and the ship never showed up.

And we were down there for about I want to say 6 or 7 days –

**In Guantanamo Bay?**

In Guantanamo Bay with nothing really to do –

**That is a story, ha, ha.**

Then the Master at Arms who we worked for – this shouldn't go in the record -- at 10 o'clock in the morning he smelled Budweiser and we would be in the club by 10:30. It was one of those –

But then later on we got picked up by another -- turn tape –

Guantanamo Bay – headed down to Grenada and we arrived in Grenada the morning the conflict started down there.

**Really – hmmm!**

They transferred us by small boat over to our ship. I just remember the guys on our crew clapping and screaming and everything that we were coming back on board. And the boiler technician Chief yelling and screaming at us that he wanted to sleep for a week – because he had pretty much taken our duties – since we were two of the only qualified guys on board –

**Oh my God.**

So yea, we went through Grenada –

**Wait a minute! What did the Captain of the ship say to you?**

The Captain of the ship didn't say anything; he goes Welcome back, guys!

**He knew the whole story –**

He had to have known everything, yeah! Somehow by somebody. We had done nothing wrong.

**So, you encountered no problem because of that.**

Me and this other guy hadn't done nothing really wrong Navy-wise and –

**He was re-enlisting!**

Yeah, ha ha, so – in fact he just died about a year ago. Yeah, we went back on board and took over again –

**That was a story –**

The Captain said you don't have to go through training in Guantanamo - you guys did a good job down there. Captain said no, we're coming in. And he sailed into Guantanamo Bay and we went through the training down there for another two weeks and then went back to New Jersey.

**So you never stayed at Grenada?**

WE were there for a week maybe – I can't remember.

**That was not a long – that was a very brief encounter.**

Yeah, right. It was a week at the most.

**It was over and done with before -- didn't the British come in or something too?**

Yeah, I think the British came in and there were some college students there – I remember that we had to helicopter off –

**Yes, yes.**

We had a helicopter pad on board the ship and transfer and stuff like that.

**That was interesting.**

Yeah, it was interesting.

**While you were on the ship, earlier in your years, did you encounter any really severe hurricanes or storms?**

Yeah, we did. The first week in Hawaii, when we got to Hawaii, we had to evacuate Pearl Harbor and go out in a big hurricane. I remember walking on the walls – basically because the ship was tilting that much.

**Really! Wow!**

Yeah, that was the first time; it was the first week –

**And you were fairly new – your first ship.**

I remember not feeling well; going down to the engine room supervisor, the Chief and saying Chief I don't feel well. He said go and get some crackers; you'll be fine. And I'm like – give me 10 minutes back in – where we slept – I said look, I laid down on the floor, and it was ice cold, and got up and never was seasick again.

**Really!**

Yeah, that was it.

**Where did you sleep on the ship. We didn't talk about that – was it hammocks, was it a bed-**

No, they were beds; very thin, cot beds, and your dresser would be underneath it. Your mattress would flip up and all your storage was underneath there.

**Wow ! That's interesting. That was just – you didn't have anybody above you –**

Yeah, you had a person above you and a person below you.

**Really, so it was three high.**

I was rank enough where I could get the middle one, ha, ha.

**You said storage was beneath you; so there was storage above you as well?**

The storage was – the mattress was here (indicating) then you would like lift up the mattress in the middle and then it was underneath here.

**But how about above you then?**

Well, above you – if you were laying on -- this was the bed, you probably had about that much room, and that was the storage for the guy above you.

**So they had three of them like that?**

Right, three like that.

**Three high storage, Wow ! Interesting details.**

Yeah.

**Glad I asked about it. Anything else?**

No, that's it. The first one was the worst storm; we had some others, you know, but nothing – they were big -- ones –

**Well, actually we are finished. I don't know if there's anything else you want to add to the story but I think that's it.**

No, that's good.

**Okay, I want to thank you very much for your service to our country and thank you too for this most interesting interview.**

Thank you.

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