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EAST CAROLINA MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER ABOARD U. S. S. NORTH CAROLINA

I graduated from the Naval Academy in the Class of 1925. From there I went to my first battleship as an officer on the WEST VIRGINIA. I had made three midshipman cruises on board battleships during summers at the Naval Academy--the first summer on the NORTH DAKOTA, the second summer on the DELAWARE, and the third summer on the WYOMING. So after I had finished my first year on board the WEST VIRGINIA, I had never served on any ship but a battleship. I then went to the China Station and served on board the flagship, the old armored cruiser PITTSBURGH, and later went to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet.

[Were you in the Asiatic squadron when Admiral Mark Bristol was in command?]

I didn't know him too well. When I went to the staff of Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, they had a little admiral called "Swinging" Billy Williams; and he was relieved by Admiral Mark Bristol. I went on board in the gunnery department but soon got interested in cryptographic or code work. It was done on a more or less voluntary basis to assist the one officer on the staff who was responsible for it. When Chaing Kai-shek started north, traffic got so high that I volunteered to help and soon found myself on the staff doing nothing but code work. I stayed on board there for a while and then went to a destroyer and made the southern cruise. Then I was ordered to the Yangtze patrol up the Yangtze River on board the PENGUIN, an old gunboat. I stayed about a year and a half and ended up by taking the PENGUIN down through Hong Kong and to Manila, where she was used in an expedition that had something to do with the study of the sun, dealing with sun spots or an eclipse of the sun. I never got in on that.

I went from her to the cruiser TRENTON and came back to the States via Japan. I went from there to submarine school and after submarine school went to Pearl Harbor for two years in R and S type submarines. This was in 1930 and 1932. In 1932 I was ordered back to the United States to post graduate school at Annapolis for one year in a general line course and one year in what they called flag communications. From there I went back to Pearl Harbor as communications officer for Submarine Squadron Four and stayed there until 1938. I was ordered back to the Chemical Warfare School at Edgewood Arsenal and then to the Naval Academy, where I was a duty officer and worked on the discipline problems and training of midshipmen for two years. I left the Naval Academy to take command of a new minesweeper. While I was at the Naval Academy, I was passed over for lieutenant commander. It turned out to be a typographical error in one of my fitness reports. When I dug that out and got it corrected, the next year I was selected for lieutenant commander. But because I had been passed over once, I was put in a new category, which I believe originated that year. The people who had never been passed over were classified as "Best Fitted," and I was classified as "Fitted and Retained." Some people were classified as "Fitted and Not Retained," meaning they let them out. By being "Fitted and Retained," it meant that I was not allowed to serve on board a combatant ship of the Navy. So I scrounged around and got a very fine command, I thought, in what we considered the auxiliary part of the Navy, the mine force.

It turned out to be very fortunate for me, because shortly after I put the RAVEN, the first of this class, in commission, I was ordered to escort the NORTH CAROLINA up and down the east coast. It was a strange operation, because I could not make over eighteen knots. When I would escort the NORTH CAROLINA from Norfolk to New York for instance, supposedly as protection against German submarines in the area, the captain of the NORTH CAROLINA, who at that

time was Oscar Badger, would give me a course to steam on at full speed. Then he would maneuver all around me at a higher speed so I could keep somewhat close to him. They had no destroyers to escort these ships, because we had given most of them to Great Britain. Any that had not been given to Great Britain were out depth charging every poor fish, whale, and sonar echo in the Atlantic Ocean.

When I was not escorting the NORTH CAROLINA, I was making runs up the Hudson River to Iona Island, a mine depot near West Point, bringing down mines to the destroyers as fast as we could. These were as I remember two hundred pound mines. We carried two 500-pound mines. If we ever found a submarine when we were with the NORTH CAROLINA, we were scared to death that we would have to drop one of these depth charges; because with the shallow depths off the Continental limit, it probably would have blown us right out of the water.

I worked with the NORTH CAROLINA for several months and worked up a very good rapport with Captain Badger. I sort of anticipated what he wanted me to do. The night before Christmas in 1941 right after Pearl Harbor, we were both coming into Norfolk. He was leading me up the channel, and the fog set in. He had to anchor. He asked the navigator where he was, and the navigator had to ask a quartermaster. The quartermaster pointed to a buoy on the chart and said that they were at that buoy and gave the number. When the fog rose, the captain saw that they were not at that buoy. They were farther up the channel. In the meantime I had sneaked around them and had gone home. I got home and got ready to go out and do my Christmas shopping, because I hadn't had a chance. My wife was in tears. She said, "A marine came here just before you got home and said that if you were in fifty miles of Norfolk he was supposed to find you, because he has a message for you." He had left this note. It was from the executive officer of the NORTH CAROLINA, Commander

Shepard. It said, "Stand by for a rapid transfer. This is a boost, not a kick." I waited for a while and I got a telephone call from the ship saying that the captain had fired his navigator when he got into port. He had had trouble with him for months. He had called Washington and told them that he wanted me for his relief. Washington had told Captain Badger that I was only a "Fitted" officer, that I could not serve on board a combatant ship. Captain Badger said, "Well you bastards up there get him on board my ship tomorrow on Christmas Day, or we're going to sea the next day without a navigator." So at midnight I got my orders to report on board. I call that a fluke because I ended up with a fine job, and I relieved a man four years senior to me on a combatant ship when by law I should have still been on board a tug boat or something else.

I immediately found out that Captain Badger was one of the finest men I'd ever seen. He had been the chief of staff for Admiral King and he was a hard task master. But if you stood up to him when you were right and you did your job, he was always your friend. Incidentally I had never navigated, never taken a sight since I had left the Naval Academy. When I was in China, I took my promotion examinations for JG; and they let us take them at an officer's club in Chefoo. I had a couple of extra drinks for lunch, and I failed my navigation examination. So when I got on board, I had to keep struggling and working hard to become a proficient navigator.

I would like to say right here that we had a young officer on board named Bunny Monell, who was the assistant navigator; and he pulled me through until I got on my feet. Bunny Monell's father incidently invented Monel metal, so he never had to worry about money for the rest of his life. He has contributed the finest collection of jade that I have ever heard of to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington.

Shortly after I reported on board as navigator, we were ordered up to Casco Bay near Portland, Maine. I will never forget that trip and the captain never will, because when we got underway from Norfolk, there were no buoys, there were no radar beacons, there were no light houses lighted. There was nothing on the east coast of the United States to help us with navigation, because we were afraid that we would be helping German submarines off the coast. All we had was a sextant and our depth finders. We knew how fast we were going, and we knew fairly well what our course was. We left Norfolk in a heavy overcast, and I was never able to get a sun sight or a star sight on the entire trip. So I had to make that entire trip entirely on soundings. I knew that if I headed up the coast off Martha's Vineyard in that area, if I was lucky, I would hit a place called Hydrographer's Canyon. If I did get to it, I would get eighty fathoms soundings. Nothing anywhere near there was over thirty fathoms. This place was only about two miles wide, and from my chart it was only about six miles long. As you can imagine, I stayed over that fathometer most of the way out. I had a wonderful man on board who later became a lieutenant commander and communications officer of the ship, Byron Phillips, who was a radio electrician at that time; and he kept the fathometer going. We finally got to my eighty fathom spot. I called the captain in and I said, "We can turn north and we'll go between two islands; but that's our course for Portland, Maine."

He said, "Jesus, do you really know where we are?"

I said, "We're right there." I said, "Look around and see if you can find another sounding of eighty fathoms anywhere near here."

"So he turned to the executive officer and said, "What would you do?"

The executive officer said, "I would get out of this fog, head south and wait until the weather cleared; and then I would go on up."

Captain Badger took a chance on me and said, "All right, head her north."

We got there. The next morning we sighted Portland, Maine; without having seen anything since we left Norfolk. The reason I bring this up is because at that time we had no radar. We had a radar--a big bed spring up there. It would show you that there was land somewhere ahead of you perhaps; but you couldn't tell how far; and you couldn't tell where the limits of it were. We couldn't use that at all.

We operated in and out of Casco Bay for a few weeks and came back to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Captain Badger said, "I want you to go ashore with me, and we are going to fight a battle to get more anti-aircraft guns on this ship." We went in to see the superintendent of the navy yard, and he said, "Well what can we do for you?"

Captain Badger said, "I want one hundred more twenty-millimeter guns on that ship."

The admiral said, "For God's sake, we designed this ship with the number of guns that you have on board now. You can't carry anymore. The experts did that."

Captain Badger let loose with a little salty language and said, "I'll tell you where to put them on board. I want this many up on the forecastle. I want this many on top of the pilot house. I want this many here and there."

They said that that couldn't be done, that if you had men up on the forecastle firing twenty-millimeter anti-aircraft guns and you fired your main battery, you would blow everybody off the forecastle.

The captain said, "I don't know why they have people running these naval yards who don't know a damn thing about going to sea. How many times do you think we're going to be using our main battery over the bow when we're shooting at airplanes?" He said, "I want those goddamn guns, and I want them fast."

I don't know how many we got. I tried to count them today, but I saw an awful lot of them that we put on board then. The only mistake was putting the four on top of the pilothouse. The first time we got in real enemy action and we were firing everything we had in the anti-aircraft business, I was trying to conn that ship from the pilot house. Those four guns were going off overhead just above me so none of us could hear. That was why I had to devise a method of steering by using hand signals. The quartermaster didn't know when we started out except when I would wave to the right a certain way, he would go right rudder. I would put one finger up and that meant five degrees, two meant ten, three meant fifteen. I got that over to him in a lull. Then when I would make a fist he would stop; and another wave fore and aft meant steady as you go, keep her going in this direction. By using these signals we were able to keep our position on the ENTERPRISE which was maneuvering violently without any signals, of course. We were able to keep close and keep with her well enough so that we covered her and shot down several planes right over her.

My first captain after Captain Badger was George Fort. George Fort had been the navigator on the PENNSYLVANIA for Captain Anderson, and he had told Captain Fort that he wanted the navigator to take that ship in and out of port for him and to give the orders to the wheel, to give the course and everything. The captain wanted to just be able to look around and see the whole picture. On every other ship on which I have ever operated, the navigator cut in the position with the help of his assistants and his charts, and he told the captain which course to take and where to go. But Captain Fort said, "You're going to do that. You're going to take this ship in and out of every port we go into as long as I am the captain." That was a tremendous experience for me because I learned more how to handle that ship. It gave me a certain sense of responsibility that when we got out into the Pacific and we

got into enemy action, he appreciated what I could do with the ship well enough; and that was when he told me he wanted me to handle it in action every time. He wanted the same freedom in action that we had when the ship was going into a harbor. I operated as navigator until 19 February 1943, the date when I became executive officer. I still handled the ship as before.

But it was really a unique experience because when we first got out there, our charts were so inefficient and so out of date that we would be ordered to go to a certain place and have a hard time finding it on a chart. The first one that I can remember was when we were making our approach on Guadalcanal. I broke out our charts and I couldn't find anything listed as Guadalcanal. But I could find an island called Guadalcanal which was the name when the Spanish charts had been made. We soon found out that nobody knew where different places were because there were Navy names, Spanish names, names from older charts, and names from newer charts. Finally the powers that be put out a table which used code names. When we were going to a place you would see the name of the place, the latitude and longitude, and all the other variations of the name; and then they would call it "Buster" or something like that. We would know where "Buster" was, but we didn't know where some of these other places were. Finally they came around to a good name that was on all charts. But for a year or two we would break out a chart, and if you didn't have your files up to date, and they told you to go somewhere, you weren't quite sure where you were going. Also the charts were very inaccurate. After the NEW ORLEANS was torpedoed by enemy cruisers and was beached in there at Tulagi one time, a friend of mine who was navigator over there went out and took a round of sun sights and found that according to the charts that they had been using, he was in the middle of the lake about fifty miles up a mountain away from there. Going into Tongatabu the first time, that was to Nukulofa in Tongatabu,

my chart read that there were no buoys or landmarks in that area but that there were several sunken ships. You could take your bearings on the sunken ships. That was the notice to mariners to get into this harbor. You hoped you had the right sunken ship. This was where the SOUTH DAKOTA later went aground, and I could easily see how she did it.

Navigation was a fairly easy job after a while, because we got so we were practically always in formation. The navigator of any individual ship had to navigate all the time and know where the ship was at all times, but the fleet commander or group commander always told you what course and what speed to take so you weren't worried about making landfall or getting into harbors all the time.

Just when it got easy and I got use to it, the executive officer (who was the second executive officer since I had been on board) was detached. As I had been on board for so long, the powers that be decided to let me fleet up and relieve him although he was four years senior to me. So I spent the rest of my time on board the ship as the executive officer. As I said in my little talk yesterday, I worked mainly on keeping the morale of that ship up. We had an excellent crew; and it wasn't too hard to keep a well-trained crew in war time because you didn't get very many replacements. So when you got a man trained, it wasn't like peacetime, he didn't shove off and leave you so you had to train somebody again.

When we were in the West Pacific, we had to go to general quarters every morning and every night for at least an hour. I decided that we would have all of our drills during those periods while people were there, and the rest of the time we could take off. My idea was that whenever we got into a war zone, we should never have a man do anything that wasn't absolutely necessary. We had to keep the ship up. We had to paint. We had to do a few

things, but we did not have time or I would not allow on that ship what I called "horse shit" drills. Those were things just to kill time. For instance I would never have quarters every morning like every ship in the Navy has. My heads of departments would come up to me and say, "We haven't had quarters for a week." I would say, "Do you think you have lost somebody over the side?"

They said, "No, but how do we get to talk to them or get word to them?"

I said, "There isn't any new word. Its just the same war."

They said, "Well what do I do if I want to find a man? We don't have enough quarters. Where do we locate people?"

I said, "A man should either be at his working station, his battle station, or in his bunk, or eating. I want those people to be in their bunks as much as they can, because we don't know when we may have to go to general quarters for two days straight, and I don't want a man worn out because we had him up all night doing a lot of foolish drills that are not necessary."

That was appreciated by the crew, and I think that helped our morale factor about as much as anything.

(Did the captain go along with this?)

The captain never knew what the hell was going on. I never allowed the captains to know too much. When I got a new captain on that ship, I would go up and talk to him in his cabin; and with a twinkle in my eye I would say, "Now captain, we've got a pretty good ship going. If you will kind of let us alone and let us run this ship the way we have been, I will guarantee in six months that I will graduate you number one in your class for flag rank. Any change you want to make, you tell me and I'll make it; but we don't need too many."

That was exactly what we did. They would send them on board the battleship for six months and then make admirals out of them; and we would get a new one. I'm sorry I missed one guy, but I got stars for all the rest of them.

(They left you alone. You ran the ship without any interference at all.)

Yes. The captain didn't have any reason to make any changes. A few of them wanted to make a few changes, and we made them. I always assumed that he was there to look over the higher strategy of the operations and to look forward to the next operation and see where we were going to be. He was responsible. He had the weight on his shoulders, but I could do it.

I had a lot of spare time, too. For instance I had an accordion on board. I had never been able to take lessons. I was playing it one day, and a marine orderly knocked on the door and said, "There is a man from the band who wants to see you."

The man came in and said, "My name is Frace. I'm in the band up here, and I teach accordion to blind people when I'm not in the Navy. I've been listening to you play, and you don't play very well. I wonder if I can give you lessons?"

I said, "Oh God, that would be wonderful. What can I do for you in return?"

He said, "Well, I'll give you lessons if you will send to the states and get some books. I'll go right through like you were a pupil; but if you let me have your accordion when we have band concerts and when we play for the destroyers that are fueling alongside, that will be my recompense, because I just love to play an accordion and I haven't had a chance."

When we would refuel a destroyer, I had a little refueling station outside of the bridge. I would stay up there most of the time, and he would be up on the bow with the band. Whenever he would play his solo, he would bow to me up on the bridge, and I would bow to him from up on the bridge. That

meant that everything was all set, everything was all right. Then when I would get ready to have a lesson, I would call up a marine orderly and say, "Will you get Frace? Tell him I think I would like a lesson. I think I'm ready."

Incidentally, I always let my marine orderlies go one deck down when I was playing, because I didn't want to bother them with the way I was playing that thing. The orderlies would say, "Well the machine gun repair party down there thinks you are doing very well with your triplets; but Dillingham, who has been sitting down there drinking coffee, thinks you have to work on that march some more."

The whole crew got to like my accordion, because they knew that as long as I was in there playing that thing, I wasn't roaming around the ship bothering them.

One of the problems with every new commanding officer of one of those big ships, and I imagine it was the same on the carriers, was about the same thing that happened to me the first day I was on board. It was just so damned big I didn't quite know what to do. From the bridge of that ship to the bow was the length of my last command. Most commanding officers when they came on board had never seen anything like it, and it was overwhelming. That was why it was nice that I was on board as sort of a stopgap to get them over this. They immediately became proficient. They were one hundred percent capable just as soon as they got over what damned near was fright when you saw it. For instance when I was telling you about the relief of the navigator in Norfolk, I got on board after dark on Christmas Day because I was damned if I was not going to have Christmas Day with my wife and two kids. The navigator was waiting in his cabin for me to come on board. He said, "The ship is darkened so we can't go up on the bridge and turn on any

lights, but I'll take you up and walk around the bridge there and point out a few things as well as I can. I don't know how you're going to make it, because you have to get underway before daylight in the morning. You will have to come up and fumble around a little bit more then."

He left his cabin with an awful lot of papers on the deck. He said, "A boy will come in and clean this up."

Well I thought I would look at some of them; and I found out that either in his unhappiness with the captain or through inadvertence, he had thrown away all the confidential notices to navigators that he had collected for that period of time. I would have been in bad shape without those, because they indicated mine fields and different confidential navigational matters. He told me that before I got underway, I would have to write an operational review for the captain to tell him every thing I was going to do when we started out of the channel. I don't know what had happened between this man and the captain, but I never wrote any operational review and we got in and out of the channel.

When we went to Casco Bay shortly after I reported on board, I was ordered ashore as shore patrol officer. I found out that Portland, Maine, was one of the crummiest liberty ports for the number of men we had on board that I had ever seen. There was nothing for them to do but go into sleazy bars that had a bunch of sleazy women in the backrooms. They would get drunk, and we had trouble all the way through. So the captain and I leased an island in the middle of Casco Bay. I believe it was called Little Chebeague. It had a group of summer houses on one end of the island and about four miles away another group of summer houses. Every day we would take one fourth of the crew or about five or six hundred men over to that island. We got an official clambake master to come over and put on a clambake for these four or five

hundred people. For each man we had about a two pound boiled lobster. I'll always remember that we would take the butter in great big milk cans for the clams and the lobsters and the potatoes and whatever else we had. This fascinated me. I had never seen that much butter in my life. We had no beer and nothing for them to do but just get them over there where they could play football, baseball, run, walk, or do anything they wanted to. They couldn't get off the island, but everyone of them enjoyed that tremendously. I had the time of my life. For the first several times, I would get them all together in a circle and I would take a lobster and show them how to eat it. I would take the tail off and shake the draining tomalley in my hand and lap it up. That stopped quite a few of them, but most of them would take their lobster and try it. The boys from the middle west once in a while would take the claw, and I told them how to take the meat out of the after-body. They would take a claw, and then they would throw the rest of it on a pile. I would eat my lobster, and I would go over and pick up a half a dozen if I wanted to and eat what was left of theirs. So I never failed for lobsters.

When my wife, who had visited me for a few days up there one month, went to Norfolk, I rode in the boat with the bake master one time. I told him I didn't have much to do--that I was getting tired of going ashore and walking around. We used to go to a men's club there and sing hymns. We would have enough to drink and sing. There was nothing to do. He said, "Why don't you go ashore on Saturday and walk up and down the beach and when you see a lobster man repairing his pots ask him if he'll give you one that is too broken up to repair. You take it back to the ship and have them make you half a dozen like that, and then you get out in a boat and plant your own lobster pots."

He said that I had to get a license. You did that by picking out your own part of Casco Bay and delineating it a certain amount and leave two dollars at a fish market. Then they would send me a license. So I got a very nice letter in a few days saying, "I don't know how you did it, but you picked the best lobster area in Casco Bay. Here' s your two dollars back, because you picked it right in the restricted Navy area where I can't even come in to look at you."

So I would go out and take the old garbage from the ship, the old fish heads and anything I could find, and bait these traps every afternoon after we had finished our days work underway. I would get other people to go with me; but I soon found that a lot of the sailors liked it better than the officers did, because it was quite a little bit of work pulling them in. We would go out and get all the lobsters we wanted.

Nobody had ever told me about the limit on them, so I took everything that was in every trap. I thought some of them were a little small. I used to wear a baseball cap; and when we would come back on board the ship, I would take these small ones and I would put them in between my fingers as I was coming up over the side. The next week the ships' paper came out with me coming up over the side with my baseball cap and my lobsters in my fingers, with the title, "Kind of big for shrimp, aren't they, sir?" So I quit taking small ones, but I did get enough in two days to feed the entire ward room mess, which was about a hundred men. Then I decided to take fifteen or twenty of them back to my wife when we were headed for Norfolk. So I put them in the bottom of the shower that Tom Hill, the gunnery officer, and I used on the level where our cabins were. I ran salt water in them.

I tried to tell Tom I had them in there. We got underway and we darkened ship before I could tell him; and Tom went in to take a shower. He stepped into these things, and he stepped

out in a hurry. I didn't know what he did in the short time he was there, but they were all dead the next morning.

The crew enjoyed that an awful lot. They told me that they just hadn't had a chance to get out on a piece of real estate and just run like a bunch of wild horses. So we tried to do that where ever we went, to get a place for them where we could get them ashore. They allowed us to finally send one or two cans of beer ashore with them. I wrote the little story up of how we kept the beer in the brig, and how we used it.

Just to tell you the different types of men we had on board and how you had to work with them, I had one man who the division officers came to me and said that they could do nothing with that man. He just refused to work, to carry out their orders, or to do anything. I got him up in my cabin one day, and I said, "I want to hear your story. I want you to tell me everything you have done since the beginning of time."

He said, "Well my mother was an American and my father was French. He was with velvet merchants in Lyon, France. When we came to America, he immediately ran away from my mother; and she had to raise me. We went to Texas, and she couldn't make much money. I was in school and I would run away from school. So I got with a gang of people who were not really the proper type. They were older than I was, but they taught me how to do it. I soon learned how to steal cattle--to rustle cattle. I rustled cattle until I got my own herd. I had about fifty cattle. One day they shot me right through my chest, so I had to quit the rustling. They also put me in jail for a while; but I was only fourteen years old, so they didn't know quite how much time I could put in. Then I was just a bum, and they got me in the Navy. I don't know anybody. I don't have one friend in the world. Nobody writes to me. I am not going to do a damned thing you people do, because I want you to kick me out so I can be a civilian again."

I said, "Well brother, let me tell you we're not going to kick you out, and we're going to get you working with us some way."

So I got my sister who was working in an aircraft plant in California to get a lot of the women there to write to this guy. I would ask him if he got the letters, and I finally got him to answer a couple of them. One day I said, "You tell me that you don't get enough exercise on this ship and you can't do what you want, so the captain and I and the chaplain and the head medical officer are going over on this island. It was Efate. We're going to walk across the island and go swimming on the outboard side. I'm going to take you and just let you run around over there and see what you do."

He was very pleased with that, and we got him over there. I told the captain about him--why I was taking him. He saw that water, and he started swimming. The reef was out about three miles, and I believe he swam damn near to the reef. I thought that that was the end of him. He came back, and he ran up and down that beach and he was whooping and yelling. He climbed two or three coconut trees, and we had to practically handcuff him to get him back to the ship. But he decided that he was going to work from then on because we would let him do a couple of things that he wanted to that way. One thing he would never go up for an advancement in rating. He would never take an examination. He was smart, but he just wouldn't do it. He would say that he didn't want to be a petty officer, that he wanted to be what he was.

When we got to Bremerton, I let him go on a couple of weeks leave; and I never saw the man again. I found out later that he had gone over to Seattle and had bought a chief petty officer's uniform and made himself a chief gunner's mate and gone and gotten a nice room in a hotel. He just stayed there until he spent all of his money, and the shore patrol finally

caught him. We had gone by that time, and I never did hear from him. He was one of the very few men that we couldn't do anything with.

I was telling some of the officers today that I only saw one man who physically was not able to go through the war, and he happened to be my talker up in battle two. The first time we ever were up there together and the guns were going off very hot and heavy, his eyes closed and he came to me and said, "I can't open my eyes. That noise has done something so I can't open my eyes." A man who is supposed to be talking and writing can't do much there. I tried him once again and sent him to the doctor who said "I don't think he can open his eyes." We had to send him back. We couldn't find anyplace on the ship for him. It was just gunfire that did it, nothing else.

The men were in excellent physical shape. Towards the end just before I left, we got a draft. I was glad the war was getting towards the end because there was a man sent to us, who I believe was about forty-two years old. He only had one tooth, and he had a double hernia. That was the only man I got on board I thought we would have to work on to get much out of. Otherwise the men were capable of doing their job; they did it; they did it well. I have always said that that was the best crew I have ever seen, and I will say that to my dying day.

We soon found an anchorage called Havannah Harbor in the island of Efate, which I believe is in the New Hebrides Islands. It was a great island and it had been inhabited by French coconut planters before it had been taken over during the war. We had a nice little club that they had that we had turned into an officers' club. The hunting was great for me. I loved to shoot doves, and I soon established a routine where I would take officers, take the captains from other ships; take enlisted men who wanted to do it. I was more or less the white hunter of Efate for dove shooting. The jungle was so

thick that we had to keep to the paths that were in the mountains. The road went up to a French planter's home, and we could never go off this main path very far because the jungle was just so deep and so thick that you couldn't see your way, and you could get lost. It was rather unsporting the way you shot there, because I only shot one bird on the wing I think in the whole time I was there. The jungle was so dense that if they flew in there you couldn't see them to shoot. So what you would do, you would wait until a bird roosted on top of a tree. You would shoot him, and he would fall down so somebody could catch him. I had one tree that was about fifty or sixty feet higher than any others; and we would go under that one; and I would let the people lie down under it; just lie on their backs, and shoot the birds as they landed.

We had one real hazard on that island, and that was wild cattle. These were domesticated animals that had been turned loose there years before, and there were hundreds of them on the island. They were as mean and as wild if you irritated them or crossed them as any animal I have ever seen. I never saw it happen but once. The natives would come up to you and try to get you to shoot them all the time, because they wanted the meat. Eight or ten of those cows would come charging through that bush with a couple of bulls after them, and we would get in my big banyan tree. We could crawl in under the outlying shoots or branches that grew into the ground. We could get in there, and the cattle couldn't get in. We would wait until they got through and then shoot our doves, and then wait for another group of cattle to come in.

One time I was working my way along the waterfront with about six or eight enlisted men, and we came to a settlement of sailors. They had shacks built out of old metal and some tents. You could see it was a non regular organization. There were I assumed about two hundred men. So I had a couple of my men go over and scout the place out and find out what it was. It turned out

to be an area that had built up, and it consisted of men whose ships had gone down. They had been put ashore at Efate; and nobody had ever taken them up on the proper rolls; so they were just living there. They would put on their uniforms and go into the camp and get their food, draw stores and do anything they wanted. I didn't squeal on them. I thought, "Hell, let somebody else try to catch them, not me."

The one experience that I have never forgotten was that I took the chief gunner on the ship out on one of our hunts. We started up the trail towards the top of the mountain, as we had done many times before, with strict instructions for everybody in the party not to go too far off the main road or main trail because you could easily get lost. The gunner saw a beautiful native jungle fowl which was the only other sport we had on the island besides shooting the doves. The jungle fowl incidently were the forefathers of all of our domestic chickens. They didn't fly. They ran through the grass. The gunner saw this one and started following him trying to get a shot, and he kept going and going and going. Finally he got a good shot and killed the chicken. By that time we had gone far enough up the trail that we didn't even hear him shoot. We missed him and came back and called but could get no answer from him. I was afraid he had hurt himself, maybe had broken a leg and was out of commission. We could get no action or response, so sorrowfully we headed back towards the ship as it was getting rather dark by then. On the way back to the ship we passed the army search light station. It had million-candle power search lights. We asked them to place their lights on about every hour or half hour and point them up into the hills where we thought this man was so he would know that we hadn't abandoned him. We returned to the ship and reported him missing. The senior officer arranged for flights the next morning to see if they could spot him from the air, but I didn't think it

would do much good over the jungle. Our hunting party went back, because we knew approximately where he was; and we were going up through the area firing our shotguns trying to let him hear us. I went on the farthest up the trail in hopes of working back. After I had gone about a mile beyond our party, I heard five shots in succession which meant that they had found him.

I came back down, and I never saw such a woebegone-looking man in my life. He said that after he had shot this jungle fowl, he went up and got it by the legs and tried to come back to what he thought was the trail to our main road. He found out that he had gotten up on a plateau somehow, and he went around and around it with no possible way to get down. It was sheer cliffs. It was beginning to get a little dark then, and he fired the warning signal, the signal that you are in trouble--of three shots from his shotgun. We were too far away at that time to hear him. When we came back and we were trying to attract his attention by shots, he couldn't communicate with us; because he was yelling as loud as he could, and we couldn't hear him. He said that when it got dark, it started to rain. He said that he had never spent such a cold night in his life as in that rain. All of the time he had this chicken by the legs and was walking around. Something was pulling about the head end of the chicken. He didn't know whether it was an animal or one of the big land crabs that we had there or what, so he decided to get up in a tree. He spend the night in a tree. When it got to be daylight, he found a trail; and he said he had no trouble getting down off the plateau. The first thing he did was run into our group down there searching for him. We had brought some small bottles of medicinal brandy from the ship, and we gave him one or two of these small bottles; but that wasn't enough for him. He finally wanted an old tin cup that he had filled up these things, and he just gulped more brandy than I'd seen a man drink in a long time. Then we took off his

shirt and clothes and started pulling ticks off of him. That man was completely covered with ticks. They were everywhere on the island and had come from the wild cattle that I have mentioned before. The gunner was very unhappy that he, the man who had had more hunting experience than any of the rest of us, had gotten lost. It was a good story and it kept the other hunting expeditions that we put on a little closer to the main road, and we never had this same trouble again.

One recreational trip that I would like to mention as being typical of that time was a Sunday that the captain, the senior medical officer, the chaplain and I got a jeep and drove over across the island. Efate had a very large, high plateau in the middle of it; and you had to go up the side from fleet anchorage in a four-wheel drive vehicle in fifth gear, because the road went up at an angle of about forty-five degrees. After you got up on top of the high plain there was nice driving for seven or eight miles, and then you had to come down to the hospital at a place called Vila in a more gradual descent. We had contacted some nurses at the hospital who said that they would like to show us where to go swimming. We went down to a beach and had a very nice time swimming and suddenly we heard this wonderful music coming out of a great big banyan tree right behind us. The tree must have been seventy-five or a hundred feet high, and we heard youthful voices singing native songs in this tree. We soon found out that there were fifty or sixty young native children up in that tree, and they had been taught to sing by an American unit that was over there, to sing some of our American songs but mostly their native songs. These people had arranged them in the trees so they had the different quality of voices in separate areas so they blended together beautifully. I'll always remember for as long as I live the first song that they sang that I recognized was the one written by the governor of Louisiana called, "You are my Sunshine." It was beautiful.

We finished our swim and started back across the island and saw a truck full of enlisted men. It kept passing us and then we would pass it when they stopped. They were drinking a lot of beer, and we would pass them and they would pass us all the way across the top of the plateau. As we were about to descend at this sharp angle on the Havannah Harbor side, I looked up ahead and I saw a couple of men covered with dust crawling up out of a ditch at the side of the road at the beginning of this very steep hill. I had just got up to them and saw that the truck they were in had turned over two or three times and was jammed across the road so we couldn't get down. There were injured men all over the road. Luckily we had the senior medical officer on board, and we went over with him and started to check these people out to see how badly they were injured. It turned out that one of the men, I believe he was a chief petty officer, was going home the next day; and they were giving him this farewell party, a beer party, and a ride across the island. They had probably been swimming near where we were. I'm afraid that he was the one that was dead. The only way that we could get around the truck was for me to drive this jeep off the road and right down the hill at about forty-five degrees, get around it, and then get back on the road and head for the hospital so they could send an ambulance back. The doctor put me in the jeep and put about five men in around me with their legs and broken arms, their injuries, supported enough.

I would like to explain a little about the problems of liberty in Honolulu during the few times we got back in there. There were so many men from so many ships that Honolulu was completely sunk with sailors. There was practically nothing for them to do at night, so liberty was up at six or seven o'clock in the evening. I imagine there were times when there were twenty thousand men trying to get from Honolulu back to Pearl Harbor. I used to come back at night myself about that time. I'll always remember one experience. I would

borrow a half-ton pickup truck from a friend at the navy yard at the end of working hours. He would let me take it ashore so I could go up and have dinner or visit my father-in-law who lived way up in the Nuuanu Pali. When I would come back either early in the morning or late at night, I had to drive through this area with these thousands of men. The first time I went through, I looked over and saw a bunch of NORTH CAROLINA sailors. So I asked them if they would like to hop on board and have a ride. So fifteen or twenty of them jumped in the back of the pickup truck, a couple of them got in with me, and we started slowly going through the mob of people. We got out on the highway, and I started to speed this thing up and it wanted to cut over into the left hand lane. I turned right on the wheel and nothing happened, so I slowed down. I could turn it a little bit, but as soon as I speeded up nothing would happen. I had no control over it. It soon dawned on me that I had about five tons of men in a half ton truck, and when I speeded up the frontwheels just went off the ground. We didn't know quite what to do until someone suggested that two or three of them sit out on the hood of the thing and hold the bow down, so we got them back. Liberty was very hard. When they got ashore in the afternoon, I'm sorry to say that a great many of them just lined up in front of the prostitutes' hovels and houses. That was their liberty.

I do want to tell one little story about one of the men who came up to me one time while we were in Pearl Harbor, and he said, "Sir, my buddy is up on the signal bridge, and he wants to get married. The girl he is going to marry is a prostitute in Honolulu. I don't think he should do it."

I said, "Well, I'll talk to him if you want me to."

He said, "OK, I'll have him come up to talk to you."

At that time, a man had to get permission from his commanding officer, and he had to get permission from somebody in Honolulu to get married. So this man came up, and I said, "I understand that you want to marry a girl over here."

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Do you know that she is a prostitute?"

He said, "Yes, that's the way I met her."

I said, "Do you think that's going to make a very suitable wife for you when you come back from the war?"

He said, "Yes. She's making five or six hundred dollars a week, and she's banking it and we're going to buy a nice little chicken ranch in California after the war."

I said, "Well, I'm sorry that we are not going to be here long enough for us to give you permission to marry this girl, to get your papers through, and for you to get permission from the civilian authorities. But keep her in mind, and if she is still here when you get back, come back and see me again."

I never did hear from him again, but I wonder if they are still raising chickens.

We had some fantastic officers on board. The man that comes to my mind first of all was a Lutheran chaplain named Everett Wuebbens. He was a man who got along with everybody on the ship. He didn't force his religion on you except at chapel on Sunday, and you didn't have to go there unless you wanted to. I happened to like him so much. I don't believe I ever missed a service. But he was the type that I could talk over anything with. I would take him to cocktail parties with me. He would have a good time. I would have a hangover, and I'd say, "Chaplain, let's go and climb on Mt. Tantalus tomorrow," when we were in Honolulu.

One day we did that and he said, "Why did you want to come up here so early on Sunday morning?"

I said, "Well I want to work off a hangover. I have an awful hangover."

By that time we had gotten to the top of this mountain, and he was panting and way out of breath. I foolishly remembered at that time that he had a history of heart trouble. I was a fool to ever take him up that high. I thought that he should have said that he didn't want to. But when he was detached from the ship, I liked him so much and thought he was so good that I wrote to the chief of chaplains and suggested him as the chaplain for the Naval Academy, because I thought he would get along with young midshipmen better than any preacher or priest that I had ever seen in the Navy. When I was there, we had a High Church Episcopal minister who wore skirts and acted like an old woman. None of us had any respect for him. This man everybody would like, and he was ordered to the Naval Academy for duty and he was there for about a year. He shuttled back and forth between there and Washington, and he became a great friend of Admiral Nimitz. I'm sorry to say that one day he was preaching a service in the chapel; he was in the pulpit. It was too much for that old heart that I probably hadn't helped any, and he dropped dead.

My commanding officers were without exception fine, excellent men. I only got to know them for about six months, because at that time they were always detached and went on up to flag rank with the exception of one man who didn't make it. I don't know why he didn't. But everyone of them went ahead and had distinguished careers during World War II as flag officers. None of them were outstandingly idiosyncratic greatly beyond the norm, but all commanded the respect of the crew. I was always very happy to be with any of them.

I remember one or two experiences where I was awfully glad I had a real good captain there on board that ship with me. The first one I remember was a few days after we had landed at Guadalcanal. We were operating with carriers just south of Guadalcanal. The captain was handed a dispatch up on the bridge. He read it and didn't say a word. He handed it to me. That was the report of the Battle of Savo Island where we lost so many cruisers. He just looked at me, and I looked at him. We figured out that when we had come from Pearl Harbor to join up with the attack on Guadalcanal, we left with a task force of three cruisers, one aircraft carrier, the NORTH CAROLINA and ten destroyers, as I remember. With the results of that battle, of those ships that had left Pearl together, we and two destroyers were all that was left. When we looked at each other we had several thoughts in the back of our minds.

Another time when this same captain, that was George Fort, when he and I sweated a lot was when the NORTH CAROLINA was ordered to go up on a shore bombardment up in the vicinity of Bougainville. From the chart we had, we were going to have to go through a pass where the enemy was not over three or four hundred yards on either side of us. When we got up there after our bombardment, we were going to have to turn around in an area that I didn't think we would ever make it. Well we made all of our plans. We had orders to go; but thank God somebody in the higher echelons found out that it was not feasible; and they called the whole thing off.

Another incident that was of interest to me was the night before the carrier air attack on the two islands of Roi and Namur which were the northern islands of the Kwajalein group. We got a dispatch about four o'clock in the afternoon from Spruance's flagship, telling the NORTH CAROLINA to proceed independently to the north of these two islands. We were to leave the

carrier group completely. We were to spend the night just lobbing shells in on these two islands to keep the Japs from getting a good night's sleep before we hit them in the morning. We got in there about dark and saw a small ship anchored to a pier in the lagoon. We opened up on her with, I think, just one turret and hit her with about the first salvo; and she sank. We could see that she was still above water. She had sunk in some mud there. I found out later that the next day they went on board that ship, and they found Japanese charts of depths and channels of every lagoon in the Pacific, which saved us months and months of surveying and hydrographic work. I heard later that Admiral Spruance had planned this and ordered this in the operation order months before. He said that he wanted the NORTH CAROLINA to go there and bombard those people the night before we landed. To his horror the day before, he read the order and he said, "Where's that order for the NORTH CAROLINA to go up there." Nobody had heard of it, so he sat down and wrote the dispatch. We went on his good memory that night; and I think we did an awful lot of good, because we blew up a lot of ammunition dumps and kept them off balance for the night.

When we first got to the Pacific and started our supplying of ships, resupply underway and refueling, taking stores from supply ships, doing everything underway, it was of great interest to a commander from the Royal Navy named Errol Hopkins, I believe. He had been on duty with the British Fleet in the Mediterranean and had undergone many air bombardments from both the Italians and the Germans. He was the liaison officer with us to sort of see how we did things and tell us how they did things in combat. When the war was over in the Atlantic, the British offered a lot of their ships to us in the Pacific. Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Spruance did not want them, because they were not rigged and prepared to replenish at sea the way

we were. They had enough ports so they could get into a port and do this. We didn't have any ports out there. So the first time we were refueling a destroyer alongside, I glanced over at Commander Hopkins, and he had a big pad of paper, and he was drawing lines. He was trying to get it all down as to what we were doing. I said, "Commander, take it easy. I can give you a finished detail of this thing that we used in training."

He said, "But how do you train? This is the most fantastic thing I've ever seen. That destroyer came up alongside. You're in charge of this thing and you didn't give him any orders. You didn't tell any man to fire a line throwing gun. You didn't tell them to do anything. Things just happen to happen automatically."

I said, "Well that's the way they should. Who knows better when to fire the line-throwing gun than the man who is shooting it. He knows when he can get that line over there; I don't know. So they just come up alongside and we shoot that over, and they pass a line here. We know how to do it."

He said, "That crew of yours and that crew on that destroyer, they know that so well, they can do it backwards."

I said, "Commander, the next time we refuel a destroyer, for you, I'll do it backwards."

We did have one little catch in refueling destroyers that I've never forgotten. Whenever we were doing this, we were usually somewhere near submarine areas. We had one place we called "Torpedo Junction." It seemed like every time we fueled, someone would sight a submarine and a torpedo. We wanted to get it done fast and get the hell out of there, because we had to stay on a steady course at a steady speed while we were fueling. The fueling operation was called for by flag hoist from the flagship. There would be a million hoists go up--"Battleship Fifty-Five fuel destroyers such

and such, such and such." Then they would execute the signal. Then we would all start rigging for fueling. The signal for a destroyer to come alongside was a hoist affirmative to the starboard yardarm if he was supposed to come on the starboard side, and the port yardarm if he was coming to port. I saw that there was a lot of wasted time. All the ships were cruising there, and the destroyers were sitting back waiting for that damned affirmative. So I started talking it over with some of the enlisted men in charge of the fueling. I said, "How can you cut this time down? We ought to get that destroyer right there the minute that signal is executed."

They said, "If you'll let us cheat just a little bit and keep a few lines rigged all the time and a little fueling gear rigged, when they execute that signal for you to fuel this destroyer, you can run your affirmative right up so the destroyer will be able to come right then and not wait five, ten or twenty minutes."

We never missed once. I asked them how long it would take them to get ready and to get the destroyer in there, if they could be ready by the time she was up alongside. They said that they didn't care when she got there; they would keep them busy as soon as they got alongside, and they could have oil going in no time. I know we were congratulated several times by finishing our fueling so much faster than the other ships; and it was all that suggestion I got from the enlisted men.

That happened so many times that I would have a problem, and I did not go to the captain with my problems; and unfortunately, I didn't go to the officers of the ship, because there was no officer who had a general knowledge of nearly everything that was going on on the deck. They were all specialists. I had a bunch of chief petty officers that knew everything that was going on anywhere on that ship, and they helped me solve my problems more than

anybody else. I think for that reason that when they knew that they had originated some of these things, they took great pride in being able to do it better than anybody else could. I just heard last night from one of the chief petty officers that was with us, a chief boatswain's mate. This man Dillingham that we talked so much about used to take just atrandom a senior non commissioned officer, a petty officer in each division, and he would say, "All right, let's take a little walk. If the executive officer wasn't busy on the bridge, he would probably be doing this today; but I'm going to go down and look through your division. Then I'm going back and tell him what it looks like. It had better be in goddamn good shape."

So I got a lot of work done from people who didn't have the stripes or the pay that they should have had for doing the work; but they wanted to do it, because they wanted to keep that ship top flight in every way.

(Do you recall any problems about uniforms? Were you strict about uniforms?)

There was no problem on that because we all wore a uniform at sea that-- we didn't ever wear whites because that would show you up and the enemy might see you and not the ship which was camouflaged. The only thing about a uniform that I remember is that one day I went back to inspect the boiler division on the fantail. Although they didn't heave coal anymore, every boiler man seemed to be about six feet tall. I don't know whether it was to try to get my goat or not; but the night before, every man in that division had pierced his left ear and put a copper wire ring in it. I went back and saw them. Some of them were still bleeding. I didn't even mention it. I didn't say a damned thing. I let them wear them. We went ashore, I believe in Fiji, shortly after that and sailors from other ships would see this guy

with a ring in his ear and make some crack about it. These guys were big enough that they could knock them right off the street.

(Were they allowed to wear beards?)

No. I never saw a beard during the whole war. I don't believe that that phase had come in, long hair and beards. Everybody wore a GI haircut. I was in the barber shop yesterday and I was reminded that I used to see a lot of men in line waiting for hair cuts, so I told all the barbers on board that I never wanted to see them shave a man's cheek or neck, because I thought it was a bunch of damned foolishness. If you shaved it, it would grow out in two days and it didn't make a bit of difference and it would save them ten or five minutes on every man. They started out with me to try it out. I haven't had my neck shaved since then and they never did it again on the ship.

(Did that British officer ever give you any information about the way they used the anti-aircraft in the Mediterranean that was of any benefit or use?)

I didn't learn anything from him. We were glad to have his company on board the first few times we were being hit, because it didn't seem to phase him too much. We figured that was the way we should take it too. He was an excellent man. He later went up to Admiral Nimitz's staff, and I've heard of him many times since. He is retired from the Royal Navy. But he did not have any tactics or any specific ideas. He did say one thing which I have never forgotten. You know in our Navy, they would never let a line officer command a carrier. During the war there was a lot of contention, because some of the task forces that had carriers in them were commanded by line officers. Spruance at Midway was the big example. They always said that a line officer couldn't be the exec of a carrier or the captain of a carrier because

he didn't know what they were doing or what these planes were doing. I found out one day that Commander Hopkins had been a line officer, and he had gone to a carrier as an executive officer. So one day I said to him, "Commander, how long did it take you as a line officer to learn everything you had to know to be a good, efficient executive officer of a British aircraft carrier?"

He thought for a couple of minutes, and he said, "Oh, I'd say about a half an hour."

So I've never worried too much about who the exec or the skipper of our carriers are.

(Was there any resentment over the fact that you had to guard the carriers? I'm very familiar with the brown shoe versus black shoe controversy in the Navy, and I wondered if any of that seeped over into the war in the Pacific?)

No. They were god-darned glad to have us there, and we were glad to be there. We knew that they were the guys who were going up and taking that pounding and pounding the enemy. I think the closest I ever came to death in the war was caused by a bunch of aircraft carrier sailors. We were in, I believe, Majuro. We had gone ashore to go to the club and had plenty of drinks. All you could do was go in and drink drinks for ten cents or twenty-five cents apiece. When time came to leave I had nearly a boat full of officers, and it was just a motor launch. I got back there and found out it was half full of officers from the carrier that was near us, so I started to throw them out; but they didn't have a boat. So I jammed everybody in there. I saw that we could carry them. Getting out of these harbors at night was rather tricky because there were quite a few small boats, and it was restricted right off the landing. As we started out these guys from the carrier wouldn't sit down. They were all standing up along the side. The

cockswain said that he couldn't see up ahead and that he might run into somebody. So I tried to get their attention to tell them to get down in the boat. They were all drunk as hell. They wouldn't do it. So I went up and took my fist and hit a couple of them right over the head and knocked them down. That made them mad, so these flyboys came after me. They got me and lifted me up clear of the deck of this boat, and I thought they were going to throw me over the side. But we had enough good NORTH CAROLINA sailors that they came to my assistance, and they beat the hell out of them and put them down in the bottom of the boat. We went up alongside of their carrier and practically threw them out. That was just because they were drunk, and they resented my taking physical action when I couldn't get their attention.

(Did you have any problem with alcohol aboard ship?)

Never a problem. I've heard since that there were a few little centers of liquor that were on board the ship, but I never saw a man under the influence either in port or under way. We had our beer on board. I never did, but I've heard since I've been down here that there were a couple of places where they used to get together once in a while and have a little party. As long as it didn't bother the rest of the ship, and I never heard about it, it didn't bother me. I didn't know about it then.

(What about crime on board the ship, stealing or thievery or things of this sort?)

Practically nothing. I can't remember any of it, because money didn't mean anything. Everybody had his own watch, and that was about all you needed. You didn't want anything then. I was reminded of how far we had gotten away from the commercial life of America when I went back after the war. It was about eight months after the war was over. I got a letter from General Motors Corporation, U. S. Steel and U. S. Tobacco Company. They

had all been sent to the Navy Department, and the letters came to me at one time. They said, "If you are Joe Warren Stryker who owns so many shares of these stocks, if you will certify this, we will be glad to send you the dividends that you have accumulated during the war." I had never thought of those things during the entire war. I wrote back and asked them why they hadn't sent me the dividends that they always had. Each one said that they asked the Navy Department for my address and in each case it had come back, "There is no Joe Warren Stryker, civilian, in the Navy." You see I hadn't bought my stock as a lieutenant commander. That was why they hadn't paid me, but I didn't know the difference.

I did hear two or three allegations as to homosexuality, but nothing was ever proved. The two men that were accused--I don't want to go into their names--except that they had something to do with the chaplain, and I told him that they were suspected of this. He nearly threw me out of his office. He said that they were the finest young men that he had ever been with. But about four years after the war, he came back up to me and said, "You know, I think you were right about that."

(Were there any racial problems?)

The only blacks we had on board were in the ward room. I don't believe we had any other black enlisted men in the other ratings, although there may have been some. We had a chief steward in the ward room who, if he had been white, might have been the commander-in-chief of the Navy, because he was the smartest, the hardest-working man I've ever seen. One day we had some sort of an anniversary coming along, and he baked a cake of that ship about that long. It was the most intricate and finest thing I've ever seen. The only disciplinary problem I ever had came from black stewards and mess attendants. The leading man, this man who was so damned good, he was so good

maybe he caused this, but I don't think he was the one that started it. He came up to me and said that those people were working from long before daylight until long after dark. They were working too long and they didn't think they should be doing it. The next day they weren't going to do it. They weren't going to serve meals, as we had to, around the clock. I went up to the captain, and I said, "Well, I don't know if this thing is going to amount to much, but we can't let it get along."

The captain, who was Frank Thomas, said, "Have you got a copy of the Articles for the Government of the Navy?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Just look up a little paragraph in there, get them all together right now and read that to them."

This is the article that says, "In time of war, if any enlisted man refuses to carry out his orders, he may summarily be shot." I just read it and turned around and left, and we didn't have any strike. I don't know how far they would have gone; but I believe they had a little bit of justification, because some of the junior officers were demanding extra services at times when they were working hard just to keep up the normal routine.

(There were no fights between blacks or whites, as you remember?)

I never heard of it. One memory I have of that ship--I don't drink coffee, I had shifted to tea when I was up the Yangtze River, because we had Chinese mess boys; and they couldn't make coffee. We tried to teach them; but they couldn't do, so we all went to tea. During the war, if I had to stay up all night, I'd drink a cup of coffee and could do it. If I had to stay awake two nights, I'd drink a cup of crew's coffee. One morning I walked into the ward room before morning GQ. We used to get everybody up a couple of hours before daylight; and they would dress and put on red goggles so that when they went in the ward room where the lights were on, they could have

their coffee, and when we went out and went topside their eyes would accommodate. I saw a hundred and fifty officers leaning over a table with these things on, half awake, slurping this coffee, and I thought to myself, "Jesus Christ, I hope the Japs don't come now, because these bastards couldn't get out of here until they finish that coffee." So I swore that I would never get in that condition. I thought of that yesterday when I was in the ward room.

One thing that I have not stressed in any of these papers is the great value of that ship and all the other big battleships in the war. When they fitted them out and stocked them, they had enough hardware, they had enough supplies to take care of two counties around here. So when we got out there, the first time we went in to Noumea, they had mobile hospitals, MOB 3 and MOB 5. I would go out if I was in the vicinity and call on the commanding officer and see how they were getting along. Everytime they would say that they were all settled and that they had all their supplies in but that they didn't have any blankets. How could they run a hospital without blankets? All I had to do was ask them how many they wanted, and they would ask for two hundred of them. I would write an order saying, "Send two hundred blankets to MOB 5." And they had them. Also at Noumea there was a commanding officer of a mobile construction battalion outfit who came on board and asked for me. He said that they had to build a tank farm, that they had the steel plating and everything; but they didn't have any welding rod. He asked if we could help. We gave him enough welding rod to put up the whole tank farm. Somebody over estimated a hell of a lot what they needed on those ships. In nearly every catagory, we were able to help. I remember one time we gave some organization a couple of hundred bales of rags that they needed. One of our main jobs--and I've written an article on this that I think they

called it, "The Battleship as a Supply Ship"--was that we could just do everything for destroyers. They would come alongside with a broken part, and we could send it down to the machine shop and have it fixed before they got underway. One time a classmate of mine came alongside in a destroyer, and he saw all of that nice big plank deck over there. He got me on the phone, and he said, "Hey Joe, I've got a man on board who claims he has got ten days leave coming to him. He took a look at your ship, and he wonders if he can come over and go on leave for ten days." We had a great ice cream capacity, and for a while we would push it off on the destroyers. I'll always remember one time we asked this destroyer if he wanted some ice cream and he said, "No, we've got plenty. Would you care for some?" We carried movies around for movie exchange. We would give a new one to every ship that came up alongside for anything. So when people talk about our main job as protecting carriers, I often used to think that mobile supply was part of our job, and that's what kept us going out there. We could receive things at sea, and we would never have to go back into port. I don't know what our limiting factor was. I guess it was just exhaustion.

(Did your supply officer over requisition on purpose because of that, or was there such a thing as over requisitioning at that time?)

No, because we had an allowance for all of these things, and he just kept filling up to allowance. They told you just how many of everything to have, and it was so high, he didn't have to over order.