

[What else do you remember about the period. Firing those sixteen inch guns for the first time must have been an awesome experience.]

These were called structural firing test of course. We had fired several rounds one and two gun singles and so forth to operate the turrets and so forth and all I can tell you it was a tremendous blast. It popped several hundred light bulbs; it broke some lenses in the thirty-six inch search lights; we had a couple of boats aboard and it opened the strakes of these boats, peeling them back. Certain rivets and bolts that were over tightened and so forth, from shock, let go. This was what we wanted to learn in structural firing test, what can she take, what in future design do we have to improve on. We had what we called the angled roller bearing in the turrets instead of the old flat like on the old battleships so that the shock was transmitted in a tangent into your barbette instead of a direct broadside, and I can't say that there was any tremendous shift about the ship when she fired these dead to port. When the sixteens, nine sixteens and ten five inch thirty-eights, were all fired at one time. There was a slight roll, there was quite a shock. Structural-wise she certainly did pass the tests.

The ship was a hundred and eighty-six inches give or take one or two inches. She scraped a little paint going through. The very singular thing that I remember is that we had blocked out every identification mark, the "55" numbers and the letters U. S. S. North Carolina on the stern and we even covered up the numbers on the aircraft. And as we got through, everybody said how you people doing on the North Carolina? Security there I don't think fitted for the simple reason that there was nothing else that looked like her on the seas.

[Perhaps it would be a good idea to make some comment about aviation aboard the ship.]

Yes. I was talking to Captain Louie E. DeCamp just last Wednesday this past week confirming some things. The U. S. S. North Carolina's aviation unit consisted of three OS2U King Fishers, five aviators, and twenty-

one enlisted men to maintain these