

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

YSU Reserve Project

Naval Reserve

O. H. 315

MILTON KOCHERT

Interviewed

by

David Arms

on

May 5, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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A: This is an interview with Mr. Milton Kochert for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program by David Arms, at 6210 Montridge Avenue in Canfield, Ohio, May 5, 1975, at 3:00 in the afternoon.

Milton, could you give me an idea of your family, your background, education, or something? Just tell me something about yourself.

K: All right. I was born in Wheeling, West Virginia. I lived there approximately nine years. When my father was offered a job in Akron, Ohio, we moved there for a period of two years. And then we moved to Canfield, Ohio and lived there ever since. We moved to Canfield in approximately 1937 or 1938.

I was educated in the Canfield School System and I graduated from Youngstown State University. While I was in high school, I joined a Naval Reserve Program. On April 7, 1947, I became affiliated with the Organized Surface Division 4-155 at the South High School building, which was our original facility for the Naval Reserve Program.

A: You say that you went to Youngstown State University. Is that what it was called at that time?

K: At that time it was called the Youngstown College.

A: Why did you join the reserve? You say you were still in high school. Did you just join the reserve?

- K: Well, my brother was in World War II in the Navy program. He was affiliated with the Navy Reserve Program between the periods of 1945 and 1950. During that period of time, he sort of inspired me to get into the Reserve Program. Having the desire to travel and become knowledgeable about the outside world affairs, I felt the Navy provided me with an outstanding opportunity. So I joined the reserves while I was a junior in high school.
- A: Did you have any intentions for the future at that time?
- K: Well, my intention was merely to get a job, but not necessarily at that point to make any career of the Navy, because I didn't have a really full exposure of the Navy at that point.
- A: What did you major in in college?
- K: I majored in physical education and social studies?
- A: And you graduated from Youngstown State?
- K: I graduated from Youngstown State in 1953.
- A: Could you just give me an idea of what happened between 1947 and 1953?
- K: In my Navy career?
- A: Well, in your life.
- K: Upon graduation from high school, I decided that I really didn't want to go into college at that particular point. So I had an opportunity for a job. It didn't materialize. I realized the fact that I felt I was college material. Through the inspiration of some of my friends, Captain Roy Averill being one of them, and of course my parents, I was encouraged to go on to college. I did enroll originally at Akron University. Then having spent only a year over there, I transferred to Youngstown College. While I was in the college, of course, I was actively affiliated with the Naval Reserve Program, and I was also a Reserve Officer Candidate appointee at that time. So my activities at the reserve center were mainly centered around yeomanship or call it a yeoman stricker.
- A: Could you just give me an idea of what it was like when you went down and joined? How did you do that? How did you join the Navy Reserve?

- K: Well, during that period we went down to the Post Office, the old post office building, which is still, I reckon, being utilized. I believe there were approximately twelve Naval Reservists, young people who signed up at the same time I did. We had what was known as a buddy system. We went in as a buddy. My buddy, so to speak, was a very close friend of mine, Harry Faucet, who went through the Reserve Program for eight years with me. Of course, then we went to South High School for our reserve training sections, which were totally unstructured, almost. We didn't have any viable training programs or projects. It was merely book learning and lecturing. Unfortunately, I never had a recruit training program. I never went through recruit training. The only recruit training that I did have was a chief petty officer, who revealed everything he knew about the Navy to us in a period of something like six weeks. So our sessions at South Field House were certainly, in many aspects, very much unorganized. It did, although, have the responsibility of trying to keep people motivated, getting them on shifts, and getting them out to active duty for training.
- A: You mentioned active duty for training. Could you explain that a little bit?
- K: Yes. Since I didn't have boot camp, my first active duty for training was on board an amphibious personnel carrier. We went down to Little Creek for about two or three days of amphibious indoctrination. They put us all aboard the U.S.S. Monaque, which was the name of the ship. They put us all aboard this ship and, we headed for Bermuda for our two week training cruise after completing the three days in Little Creek, Virginia.
- A: What did you do during these three days?
- K: Well, we had ship-to-shore maneuvers by hitting the beach, exercises establishing amphibious beachheads in the area of Little Creek, putting the personnel in small crafts and hitting the beaches with them, and having the reservists go into the water and swim their way ashore. It's quite interesting and certainly fascinating to see and experience.
- A: Like you say you had no previous indoctrination, no boot camp or anything like that. This might have been quite a shock to a young fellow like this. Can you recall anything that stands out in your mind? Were you shocked?

- K: Well, naturally at the first opportunity to go aboard ship, I was quite excited and at the same time quite scared because I didn't know what to expect, having never experienced any ship training and never having received a total indoctrination of the recruit program. Therefore, certain nomenclature and certain problems emerged that were difficult for me to understand or grasp because of the lack of background and training that I'd had under the previous situations. Naturally, being on board ship three or four days you were able to pick up and acclimate yourself into that new type of environment.
- A: Were there other people that were brand new that were with you on this crew?
- K: Yes, probably most of the people of that crew were seamen recruits. At that time, we had very few cadre personnel. We seemed to be heavily loaded with recruit personnel, people who were in for maybe about one or two years.
- A: Did you notice at the time any difficulty with these people assimilating to the military?
- K: No, I think the people were very dedicated towards the Naval Reserves. They took a very strong interest in the Reserve Program. Of course, the promotion is mainly on the part of the individual himself. There wasn't too much direction coming from any officers or petty officers. If you wanted to get promoted, you had to go out and get the books and materials and read them and then seek somebody to examine you or give you the practical factors or do them yourself, making sure that there was evidence that you had accomplished these with some people around you.
- A: So after you left Little Creek, you said that you went to Bermuda. Could you just tell me a little bit what that was like, if you can recall at all?
- K: Well, I think the greatest enjoyment we had was going to the USO facility in Hamilton, Bermuda, where we experienced riding bicycles in a foreign all. Also, the same opportunity to talk with Englishmen who apparently were very strong believers that the United States did not necessarily play a very important part in World War II in helping England to win the war. This is probably one of the most memorable things. I had also talked to a popcorn stand operator who felt that the United States was not necessarily needed to help

England win that war (World War II) before the big push came about. That was probably the only experience I can remember, plus driving on different sides of the streets and talking to various people.

A: So after your cruise you came back and lived somewhat a normal life again. Is that it?

K: When I came back from the cruise, I finished my senior year in high school. Then from there, I went to work for about a half a year, then to college.

A: When you attended college, did you continue attending the Naval Reserve at the time?

K: Yes. While I was in college, I was a member of the Organized Service Division 4-415. Most of my drills were scheduled after school because of the difficulty in attending drills. I was on the varsity basketball team at Youngstown College at that time. They were also in need of a yeoman to log in all the mail that was coming in. My job was log yeoman in handling all incoming mail and processing all the mail. On certain occasions, I was able to get to the drills, when I wasn't scheduled for basketball games or other things at the university.

A: You say that you are a yeoman. Could you basically explain what the requirements were besides this log thing? What was a yeoman supposed to do in those days?

K: A yeoman's responsibility at that point, I can't give you any specific tasks, assignments that I recall, other than the fact of handling an administrative job, and keeping a record account of all administrative mail going in and out of the training center. It was my specific task to maintain records, personnel records, handling any incoming recruits coming into the program and setting up and establishing their service jackets. That was basically it. It wasn't a very comprehensive job at all at that point.

A: Do you remember who you worked for at that time?

K: I worked for Chief Ferranti, who was most often the fellow that I was under. We also had a gentleman by the name of Lieutenant Robert Fields, who was an Inspector Instructor. I might add that my two week training in 1948, besides being at the reserve center

for two weeks, I helped install much of the equipment and materials at the reserve center on one of my two week training duties. Then the following one, in 1950, I was working at the finance center in the Philadelphia navy yard, which was pay records. That was part of the job. At that time, I don't believe they had a . . . I can't recall whether the dispersing clerk and the yeoman were two separate rate structures.

A: So, you are a commissioned officer now. How did you receive your commission?

W: Well, having joined the Reserve Officer Candidate Program back in 1950, in the summer of 1950, I was ordered to Reserve Officer School. We were at Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, in the summer of 1950. Upon completion, at that time, it was a six week tour, at the ROC program; I returned back to the reserve center and continued my college education. In the summer of 1952, I was ordered to Long Beach Naval Base where we had our ROC I session. Upon completion of that in June of 1953, I graduated from Youngstown State University. I was commissioned in October of 1953 in the Naval Reserve.

A: And with this commission, what did you do then?

K Upon my commission, I was ordered to the USS Coolbaugh. DE-217 in Norfolk, Virginia, is the home port. Arriving there in November, we were stationed for a period of two months. In the latter part of January, we were reassigned to ASW work in Key West, Florida. Our ship went down to Key West, Florida at the time I was in ASW. We were on the ASW exercises for a period of about four months. My commanding officer recommended me for NBC, Nuclear and Biological Chemical Warfare School, in Philadelphia. I was removed from the ship and sent to NBC School for a month in Philadelphia. However, while I was in Philadelphia, I had a reoccurrence of a pilonidal cyst. Therefore, I was not sent back on the ship, but directed to the U.S. Naval Hospital in Philadelphia for an operation on the pilonidal cyst. At which time, I spent about approximately six months at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital in recuperation procedures. Upon that six month period, having been away from the ship that long, I was relieved of my shipboard assignment and reassigned to U.S. Naval Academy Prep School in Bainbridge, Maryland, which was in November of 1954. I assumed that job, and I was assigned the job of English instructor and basketball and track coach at the Naval Academy Prep School in

Bainbridge, up until my termination and release from active duty which was in July of 1956.

A: You never saw any action anywhere in the service?

K: No, no combat action whatsoever.

A: During the Korean conflict, did you become involved in this at all?

K: Our reserve unit was activating most of the personnel who had previous service and the cadre who had background and who certainly had wartime experiences, or people with either normally third, second, or first class or chief petty officer being activated on to the active duty forces. Most of the people who were in the obligated areas were not all activated in the program. Naturally, I had a deferment because I was in the ROC program, so I wasn't activated into the active forces. There were quite a few people left, but these were mainly people who probably only had three or four years in the reserve program.

A: You say you had a deferment. Was this common at that time for personnel that were going to school or anything?

K: The only deferment you could have during the Korean crisis was if those people were going to ministerial school, those people who were in organized surface divisions or organized units, reserve units, people who were in officer candidate programs. I was in an officer candidate program at that point.

A: Could you recall the overall attitude of these people? I'm sure some of the people you knew went to the Korean conflict. Could you give me an idea of their overall idea of their attitude in regards to what they were having to do? Were they happy to go or did they part with their duty? Was this a flag waving thing or what?

K: It wasn't so much a flag waving thing. I think that they realized that they did have this responsibility, and they realized the commitment the United States had in the Korean situation. I feel there was a degree of reluctance on the part of many of the cadre to go because most of the cadre who were going at that point were World War II veterans who had previously seen warime combat and had established themselves in good jobs, established their homes

and their families, and they were just being rooted up to go back to war again. It wasn't a flag waving atmosphere whatsoever, it was one in which people realized that we had something to do and we better go and get it over with. It wasn't a very positive attitude nor was it a negative attitude. It was sort of a mediocre feeling that they had towards serving the country period.

A: Upon completion of your active duty, when you were released from Naval Academy Prep School, that happened then? Could you give me an idea?

K: I didn't reaffiliate with the reserve program immediately because I wanted to establish myself in the civilian community. My background was education, and I wanted to get myself a job in education. I wanted to make sure I was well-established and satisfied with my job before I decided to reaffiliate, so seven months after release I reaffiliated with the reserve program in Youngstown.

A: Why did you reaffiliate?

K: I think the love of the Navy and realizing the opportunities that the Navy presents to young people, the leadership opportunities, managerial opportunities, the opportunity to travel and meet with people. I just had it in my blood. No one told me to do it. It was something that was intrinsic. I went down and reaffiliated very shortly thereafter.

A: Can you remember some of the people that were around at that time when you reaffiliated, some names of the more prominent ones?

K: At that point, there was Captain Jack Stansberry, who was still in the program. There was Commander Bissell of the New Castle area, then of course, people like Lieutenant Commander Jack Raver, who is a very vital part of the reserve program. We also had Jack Dinger, and Lieutenant Joe Ostovich, who were very active in the reserve forces. I'll always remember Dr. Mike Luksta, who was a very vital part of the reserve program,

A: When you first came back, do you remember some of the activities that the reserves were involved in and possibly yourself became involved in that had a relationship with the reserves?

K: One of the fallacies often times in the reserve program is not having enough structured programs, practical projects, and shipboard training for the reserves. The reserves have to keep busy; they have to use their hands, and they have to be on water in order to keep them motivated for the program. It was always an arduous and never-ending task for the training officers and the reserve officers to create programs which keep the interests and the spirits high. Some of the things which I recall we've done--which to me were fantastic experiments and certainly I think kept a high retention factor--were to take out all of the people in the reserve units to a firing range near the New Castle area. We would bring out all the marine officers and have them give us instructions on small arm firing and safety procedures. Any opportunity we had, we would organize weekend training cruises aboard the U.S.S. Whitehall and the U.S.S. Holidaysburg, which were stationed in Cleveland, and they reserved ships up there. One of the important things about the Navy Reserve Training Center in Youngstown was that we organized and set up the first weekend training program, later an established training concept within the entire United States.

It was one, big program. We went around to community resources and asked for donations. We also built a diving tank. The diving tank was extremely large, and it had to be hauled by a lowboy clear out to the Canfield Fair. We always had a big display at the Canfield Fair with people diving in tanks, hard hat equipment, and everything such as this. Those are some of the things that we involved ourselves in. At one time, I think we also scheduled a weekend training duty at Lake Erie, at the Navy Reserve Training Center in Erie, Pennsylvania, where our commadore had a forty foot yawl. We had a mike boat up there and so we took the entire unit, which was at that point something like 150 people, in about two buses and a couple of large marine personnel carriers. We spent the entire weekend up there going on board the mike boats and the sailing boats. We were trying to get ship-to-shore communication and instruction and just keep the people motivated and active in the reserves.

I think the greatest accomplishment we've made here at the reserve center was when the U.S. Navy League purchased a 38 foot yacht and converted it into

a Navy League training vessel to be used only for the Naval reservists. We sort of commissioned the boat at Lake Milton and this was probably one of the most important things for the reservists because we kept them busy for about three years rebuilding and restructuring the entire yacht to make it comparable to that of the training vessel or a destroyer. With the great amount of community resources poured into this, the reservists spent long hours in very, very cold weather conditions rebuilding the ship. We had a very fine service commissioning exercise at Lake Milton that drew a lot of notable people from the comfour area. This kept us active, kept the interest of the reserves very, very high and very motivated.

A: You mentioned the Marines, you speak of the Marines that were assigned to the Naval and Marine Corps reserve center in Youngstown. Could you give me an idea of the relationship between the Navy and the Marines?

K: I'd certainly say the relationship was a very, very positive one between the Marines and the Naval Reserve personnel. We worked side by side on various projects. Some of our Seabees would work with the Marines on their projects. The Seabees and the Marine Corps helped us especially with the boat out here. The Seabees were a very vital part of our entire project. Charles G. Watson was the name of the boat. I would say that the relationship has always been a very close one between these two branches of the service in Youngstown. They've had some outstanding Inspector Instructors assigned to the Youngstown area in the Marine Corps engineering department; the attitudes of the Marines and Navy have been very close, a brother-sister relationship.

A: You mentioned the Charles G. Watson again. Do you recall what happened to it? It no longer exists, so could you tell me the story on that one?

K: Back in 1966, we procured that boat for \$800 and then we worked on it for about three years. We then put it in the water, some time around 1968, and we decided to call it the Charles G. Watson, in honor of the former Charles G. Watson, the local leader of the Navy League Charter in Youngstown. He was a philanthropist, humanitarian, and a great supporter of the Navy. We had operated that boat for three summers. Due to some problems that

prevailed, we were required by the Naval Reserves to disband the project. Immediately, I was given the job of disposing of the Charles G. Watson. We did not want to destroy it in any way because there were a lot of close feelings with that boat. Our only thoughts were to sell it to anybody who could accept the bid. Bids were submitted and we did sell it to Mrs. Smith out of Akron, Ohio. Some of the reservists and the Seabees helped her move the boat down to the Ohio River, at which point it was put in at some yacht club--and that's the last I heard of it.

The money that was used for the sale of the boat went into repaying the Navy League for its initial investment; we also used the remaining part of that money, which was \$1,000, for the organizing of a Naval Sea Cadet Corps, which we called the Western Reserve Naval Sea Cadet Corps here in Youngstown. We do have a Sea Cadet program that was supported by the funds from the sale of the Charles G. Watson.

- A: The Sea Cadets aren't part of the Navy officially. Could you explain how the Sea Cadets fit into the picture?
- K: The Sea Cadets are a division of the Navy League of the United States, the Navy League being a civilian branch of the Navy which has certain divisions. One of the divisions is a Sea Cadet Corps. The United States Navy provides organizational and physical support of the Cadet program. Our officers are Naval Reservists who assume the various officer positions. We have approximately 22 or 23 Sea Cadets assigned to our unit in Youngstown.
- A: What does it require to be a Sea Cadet?
- K: You have to be at least 14 years of age, have a certain academic proficiency, have a good ability to follow directions, and certainly we hope that the young person has a love for the sea.
- A: What is trying to be developed out of these individuals and young people?
- K: I think, certainly, to make them responsible citizens and to make them responsible to the needs of a strong and viable defense program, to educate them on seamanship, and the opportunities that they would have if they went on board ship. Not every Sea Cadet joins the Navy. I might say, incidentally, that we do have two former Sea Cadets who are now midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy.

We try to instill in them a strong degree of responsibility, a good positive attitude toward working, toward the military service, and toward the overall government structure.

- A: You mentioned that two Sea Cadets are at the Naval Academy. Did the Naval Reserve participate at any Naval Academy actions, or recruit for the Naval Academy?
- K: Yes. Back in 1964 or 1965 the Naval Academy instituted a Naval Academy Information Officer Program, which was normally referred to as Blue Gold Officers. I, being one of the earlier members of the Naval Academy Information Program, was responsible for recruiting prospective candidates from the local area for the Naval Academy and interviewing these people, going over their records, and then recommending to them the procedure for applying to the U.S. Naval Academy.
- A: This is a personal thing not necessarily associated with the Naval Reserve?
- K: It's a collateral duty that's offered to anybody who is interested in working with the Naval Academy.
- A: Did you get any credit for this?
- K: No, you received no credit for it other than the fact that it is reflected in your fitness report. You did not get any credit for drills. You got no promotion point credit, no retirement point credit.
- A: Can you recall any outside activities that you might have become involved in, or organizations that you joined in direct support of the Naval Reserve?
- K: The only one I became closely affiliated with was the U.S. Navy League. I served as the president for two years in the Navy League's Western Reserve Council. I believe there are other opportunities. You can associate yourself with a local Navy Reserve Association, which was organized here about three or four years ago. Of course, being affiliated with the reserves you have the opportunity to join, if you desire to, VFW organizations, and American Legion Veteran groups.
- A: You basically have stayed with just the Navy League?

- K: I mainly have been a very solid, very strong supporter of the Navy League and Navy League activities.
- A: I understand that you are a recipient of the Charles G. Watson Award. Could you tell me something about that?
- K: It was a feeling after the death and the parting of our close friend, Charles G. Watson, that we should honor him in some capacity as in a Charles G. Watson Navy League Award. The purpose of that was to organize an award for a person who had contributed to community activities, who had maintained a close affiliation with navy activities in the community or who had perpetuated the navy program throughout the community area. This was the main purpose of the medal, the award. It was to be given to a civilian person or military person not on active duty. I was very honored to be the first recipient of the award.
- A: You said you worked at the Naval Reserve Training Center when it was just being built, in 1948. Is there anything that you recall about that? What specifically were you doing when you were there?
- K: I mainly recall hauling in all the equipment, desks, chairs, and filing cabinets. I hooked up some of the electrical facilities, put together some of the business equipment, the typewriters, did a little painting, and scrubbed a few decks, things like that.
- A: Was this all new equipment?
- K: No, mainly most of the equipment was surplus; very little was new equipment at that time.
- A: How about the building materials? Do you recall any of those being surplus or new?
- K: Not so much the building equipment, but most of the navy equipment which was being utilized, your guns in your training, your 5 inch 38 trainers, 40 millimeters in radar installation things. This was old surplus material that was brought back from probably World War II.
- A: Do you remember when this building was being built? Was there any feeling of the neighborhood about having the reserve center placed there or anything?

K: I think the reaction at that point was very favorable. The people in the Navy Reserve community respected the local landowner; they didn't harass them; they didn't destroy any of their property. I think they have always been very polite to them. Of all my affiliation with the Reserve Program, I can recall no problems that resulted in Navy Reserve people offending anybody in the local area.

A: As a whole, the acceptance of the Naval Reserve in Youngstown, do you think it has been favorably accepted or unfavorably accepted?

K: I would say it has been very favorably accepted. I think the result of many of the reserve officers and the reserve enlisted personnel who are very active in the community certainly reflect a very fine image in the community. If they were leaders within the reserves, I think you also find many of these people were also leaders within the community. Our reserve commanding officers, the active duty types, these people have been very active in community affairs--involving themselves in the research programs, presenting materials, projects, and programs about the Navy to various organizations in their meetings.

Mayor Hunter, who incidentally joined the Navy Reserves the same time I did but had a change of venue, decided to go to the Marine Corps. He had been very much an active part of the organized reserve units and very active for a period of time with the Navy League Program.

I say that the exposure we have received and the publicity we have received is very, very strong from the medias throughout the Youngstown area.

A: As time passed on through the Reserve Program, can you recall how the program has changed? In other words, could you start at the beginning and give me an idea as you run through your mind what units were there when you started and what units would be there at the present time?

K: When they started, we had the two organized surface divisions, 4-115 and 4-114. I had served in both of those programs as an enlisted man and an officer. When they decommissioned and deactivated the Navy Reserve Center in Warren, Ohio, they brought in 4-113. I was the commanding officer of 4-113. The only surface left is 4-115, now. There

are very few old-timers left in the program with the exception of the readiness units. The new readiness concept has considerably changed the structuring of the Reserve Program. There have been some problems in the restructuring process. I think the concept is very fine and outstanding, but I think that my strong feeling is that we're dealing with human beings and men who are a very vital part of the Reserve Program. I think sometimes that we offend these people by the method and the way in which we try to get this program organized.

A: You just went through that. Can you give me an idea of when this could have happened time-wise? When would the 4-113 have come down to Warren?

K: I'd have to say that was probably about seven or eight years ago.

A: I understand that the Marine Corps is no longer there. Is that correct?

K: The Marine Corps left approximately three or four years ago.

A: Do you recall any of the circumstances surrounding that?

K: No, I think that the extinction of the Navy Reserve units 4-113, 4-114, 4-115 and the fact that the Marine Corps did not have enough facilities, along with the reserve being in same building . . . it was decided that there was space available in the area of Warren and in the area of New Castle for the establishment of the Marine Corps Reserve facility. It was strongly encouraged because it would provide more facilities for the Navy Reserves than in the present building which we have now.

A: Was this strongly supported from Washington or was this a local idea?

K: I couldn't tell you anything on that because I have no idea.

A: Some of these changes that went by, do you remember what preempted them, such as was there any of the local level activity that changed 4-114 disappearing? What caused that to go?

K: I think mainly the problem for this was the cutting back of funds in the Navy Reserve Program, realizing

the fact that maybe it would be better to consolidate. Approximately five or six years ago, there was a very, very strong movement on consolidation of units and also disestablishment of Navy Reserve facilities and training centers, part of the austerity program that we always face in the Navy Reserves.

A: How many people were attached to this center at that time?

K: I'd have to say probably about 300, somewhere between 275 and 300 personnel.

A: You mentioned quite a while ago about the Seabee program. Do you have any information concerning how that got started in Youngstown or how it has developed?

K: I have very little knowledge of it. The only knowledge I have is a very close friend of mine, Captain Roy Averill, who is now retired, was the founder of the Seabee battalion in Youngstown and who was very, very active in the Seabee battalion all the way up until his retirement time. I would strongly recommend you contact him for a very strong overview of that group commander as part of the group commander's division. He was the overseer of the activities of the Seabees until they established their own battalion structure down in Columbus. Then, of course, they maintain their offices and their facilities in Youngstown, and they are now controlled under the battalion structure in the Columbus area.

A: You mentioned a group commander. How did this fit into the overall picture?

K: It was extremely difficult for the commanding officer of the reserve center to handle all the activities with the total number of people we had, maintain all the records, and try to keep the training programs.

A: We were talking about the group command staff and its organization, how it's going, what it's concerned with, what it was for.

K: The group commanding staff was mainly concerned with the training mission. The commanding officer's responsibilities in the Naval Reserve Center are mainly that of providing the facilities and providing the support of such training programs. The full responsibility of the group commander was to ensure

that the all-surface units were receiving very strong and qualified training programs, making sure that these were being implemented, and evaluating them periodically in inspection procedures. The group commander was a very essential part of our program because he was fortunately not the high ranking officer that in most cases were CO's of the reserve center. Therefore, his responsibilities were very strongly directed towards achieving the goals of training.

A: Can you recall some of these people?

K: Yes, Captain Russ Helpful was one of them. We also had Commander Jim Ronian, who later on decided to go into the TAR program from Youngstown, Commander Neale Smith, Captain Tom Petsinger, Commander Roger Mansell, and Commander Jim Liton from the Pittsburgh area for our group commanders.

A: Do you recall any specific instances where the reserve programs participated in a direct community effort, some parades, drives, things like that?

K: The reserves have always mainly participated in two parades in the Youngstown area. I might also add that back in 1950 we had a very severe snowstorm at which time emergency statuses were established. We did activate reserve personnel to go out and assist in the handling of the snow problem, providing ambulances, trucks, and facilities for getting people to the hospital. That was the main type of activity we had been providing. Right now we are assisting the North Side and South Side Hospitals in the blood bank program. We utilize our hospital corpsmen in helping to keep the blood bank program going so they don't have to utilize their people.

A: Is there any time that you could relate to any social activities that were directly involved with the Naval Reserve? Are there any that you can recall?

K: I can recall very vividly the fact that one of our first Naval Reserve balls I attended was down at Stambaugh Auditorium. It was a huge and fine success. Everybody was dressed up in their finest naval attire and the ladies were in their formals with their corsages. We did have continuous Naval Reserve balls and then we sort of dropped it for a period of time. We have had several of them

at the reserve training center and then outside the reserve training center.

The officers have been a very cohesive and close-knit group of people. We've stayed in very close contact with one another through various social activities and Naval Reserve activities. The Navy League has provided some social activities for both the wives and the officers too. Most of our officers are members of the Navy League Program.

A: As I mentioned before, you said that the Navy changes a lot. Do you see a change in attitudes at all of the Navy reservists here in Youngstown?

K: I would say the attitude is not as strong as it used to be at one time. This may be a feeling that prevails throughout the entire United States, how strong our people are dedicated toward the military service; I think this is something that is very prevalent throughout our country. I think we're going through a period of change, a period of redirection, a period of evaluating one's self and one's own mission, and also people evaluating our present foreign policy. Is the Naval Reserve . . . is the military a needed requirement in order to maintain a viable defense program? I think that the dedication is not as strong as it used to be. I think it's a different form of dedication.

A: We were talking about active duty for training earlier. Could you relate some of the places you've been and some of the things you've done on your two weeks training?

K: I probably had some of the most fantastic experiences in active duty for training. I had a cruise down to the Panama Canal when I was an enlisted man. I spent time in New Orleans before we went to the Panama Canal and then came back. At that time, we took trains to our ships or to the navy bases. We never flew at that period of time. Of course, now it has changed where everybody flies or drives their own vehicle. I've had cruises on Lake Erie, the Great Lakes on a PCER--which was a very unbelievable experience having witnessed some collisions with freighters with our own naval vessel. I spent my active duty for training, of course, at the Philadelphia Navy Base on many occasions, attending group supervisory sessions, damage control

sessions, and instruction training duty. I spent two-week training duty at the Naval Academy Information Program at the Naval Academy. I have also had quite a bit of shipboard training duty on various size ships.

A: What do you think you've gotten out of those two weeks overall?

K: I'd say a very fine, practical knowledge of the operation of the U.S. Navy Reserves and the U.S. Navy, a very fine opportunity to evaluate the performance of Navy Reserve people who are dedicated people. When they go on active duty, they put out 100 percent plus towards achievements of their projects and their goals when on active duty. I would say that it was just an area that we find that people are strongly motivated toward performing two weeks of training duty. It's not a vacation--it's on in which we want to do training in order to improve ourselves, improve the reserve program, and make us certainly more qualified to assume a position during periods of augmentation and mobilization in the regular Navy component.

A: Being a sailor myself, I am well aware that being one isn't all work and no play. I'm sure there has been a lot of enjoyment for you. You've gotten fine enjoyment out of them, would that be true?

K: I would have to say that I have met some of the finest people on board ship that were at various installations throughout the Navy. Some of my closest friends are Navy friends. Some of them are still on active duty and some are in civilian capacity. We maintain a very close relationship with them. It's a feeling of great pride and great achievement having been a part of the Navy Reserve Program. I feel I've given a lot to the reserve program, and the reserve program has certainly complimented me by giving me a lot. This feeling will continue to prevail within me for the years to come, that's my personal observation, my personal feeling about the reserve. I think that it is a very strong program. I hope that we get this restructuring over with, and we get everybody down to the organizational working of the reserve program to get it back to where it should be.

A: With all the time that you've devoted to the naval services and the reserves, how does your family

accept this? What do they have to say about it?

K: My family has been very partial to the Navy. I think they realize how it has helped our family; how it has helped me personally in my community, my job as an educator. I have received tremendous background experience in order to help me as an educator in my field. My wife and children have taken training duties with me. We have gone and spent a considerable amount of time with the Navy. They have enjoyed the Navy tremendously and wholeheartedly. There is no ill feeling towards the Navy whatsoever as far as my family is concerned. I think their interest and their attitude towards the Navy has been just as strong as what mine has always been.

A: I usually try to say the best for last. Many sailors and officers have one story about the Navy that kind of stands out in their mind, not necessarily a true story but just a story of the Navy. Do you have any story that stands out in your mind, sometimes referred to as sea stories or any of that?

K: There has always been attacks made against the military and the industrial military complex, things such as this. I think the people in the civilian areas neglect to realize the humanitarian things that have been accomplished by the armed forces. It's not a one-shot deal where continuously you see many humanitarian things or many human things being done.

One particular one I remember is when I was on board a ship in Norfolk. Every year our ship would have a Christmas party. The ship's company would go out and contact all the orphanages or we would contact the mothers with children whose fathers were overseas or someplace, and we would bring all the young children in. We saved up our money or took money out of our recreation fund to go out and buy ice cream, gifts, get Santa Claus all dressed up, decorate the ship from stem to stern with all the finest Christmas decorations we could find, and then bring all the kids aboard the ship. It was amusing and very proud to see big, bulky, husky guys grabbing these young tots and leading them throughout the ship, up and down, through the holes, and in various compartments. They took a very fine and human concern for these people. Of all sea stories, I think, to me that truly reflects the significance and the position of a Navy man who is human. He is not arrogant; he is not

disrespectful; he is not a person who is violent, but he is one who truly maintains a human feeling. That's my own big Navy story.

A: I've asked all kinds of questions, is there anything that you would like to add on your own that I may have forgotten to ask, something about the history of the reserve or center that I haven't brought up?

K: No, I believe I related to you all the programs that I could recall, the people, the aspects, and the training cycles that have been a part of our reserve program. I think we have been very fortunate to have a community that has been responsive to the Naval Reserve, one that gives us the due publicity that we certainly require. I think that we're very fortunate to be in a community where people accept our responsibilities and respect it for what we achieve and what we do. I think that those people who are in the Navy Reserve are very dedicated people. I think they are not only dedicated to their families and jobs, but also to community activities. Most of the people I know in the reserve program are actively involved in community activities. They certainly can't say the Naval Reservists are selfish people.

END OF INTERVIEW