

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Naval Reserve History in Youngstown, Ohio

Active Duty and Reserve Experience

O.H. 75

ROGER L. MANSELL

Interviewed

by

David S. Arms

on

May 7, 1975

ROGER L. MANSELL

Roger L. Mansell was born in Warren, Ohio, but spent most of his younger years in Niles, graduating from Niles McKinley High School in 1948. He then went on to further his education at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he enrolled in the NROTC contract program, and majored in Naval Science and Business Administration.

Upon graduation from Miami University in 1952, Mansell was handed orders for two years of active duty in the United States Navy. Serving in various supervisory positions, Mansell was released from active duty in June of 1954.

Returning home from duty, Mansell entered the fire, casualty, and life insurance business in an agency which had been started by his father, and succeeded ownership of that agency upon his father's death in 1963.

Mansell also joined the U. S. Naval Reserve almost immediately after his release from active duty, having been told about the Reserve during his out processing at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. After 23 successful and active years of service in the U.S. Navy and Naval Reserve, Robert Mansell was promoted to the rank of Captain.

Asked why he continues to serve in the Naval Reserve, Mansell replies, "I like to feel I'm patriotic enough to want to continue in the Reserve, that I'm doing something for my country. . . I think it's important enough to the welfare of the country that there be a Naval Reserve and that I be in it, to keep it going."

ELIZABETH A. REITZEL  
June 2, 1978

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Youngstown Naval Reserve History

INTERVIEWEE: ROGER MANSELL

INTERVIEWER: DAVID S. ARMS

SUBJECT: Active duty experience, Naval Reserve history  
in Warren and Youngstown, Ohio.

DATE: May 7, 1975

ARMS: This is an interview with Roger Mansell for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project, by David Arms at the Naval Reserve Center, 315 East LaCledde, Youngstown, Ohio. The date is May 7, 1975, and it is approximately 6:15 p.m.

Roger, could you give me some of your family and educational background?

MANSELL: In my earlier years? I was born in Warren, but lived most of my life in Niles. I went to grade school at Washington Elementary and then to junior high at Washington Junior High School. I graduated from Niles McKinley High School in 1948. I was tenth in my class. I went on to Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, where I majored in Business Administration. Marketing and merchandising was my major field as was Naval Science, because I enrolled in the contract program of the NROTC there.

I received my commission upon graduation in 1952 and was handed orders for two years of active duty. I then reported to San Francisco for duty aboard MSTs (Military Sea Transportation Service) transports in the Pacific. My first ship was the USS General Butler, a navy manned transport. We hauled 1500 troops and 350 cabin passengers who were mostly officers and dependents. My first assignment was as junior deck

officer in the First Division. I was then transferred into the Transportation Department and became the "T" division officer. As "T" division officer, I supervised 50 steward mates who were charged with the responsibility of maintaining the cabin passenger area and serving meals in the cabin passenger dining room. It was also my job to load and unload the embarked troops and work with the troop staff, conducting daily inspections of troop spaces. I served in that capacity for a total of a year aboard the USS General Butner. From there I went to the USNS General Heintzelman, a civilian manned MSTS transport. I was the division officer. As such, I loaded and unloaded troops. The ship was what we call an austere trooper, and did not carry women and children as cabin passengers, as the General Butner did. I was aboard the General Heintzelman for six months, and was then subsequently ordered to the USNS Private Jose Valdez, which was a very small civilian manned motor driven transport. It could carry 20 cabin passengers, including women and children, and 100 troops. We made a milk run to St. John's Harmon air force base, and Argentia naval station in Newfoundland, on a monthly basis. I served for six months on that ship as commanding officer of the military department, doing much the same work I've done on the other two ships. I was released from active duty in June of 1954. Upon returning home, I entered the fire, casualty, and life insurance business in an agency which had been started by my father in 1945. I succeeded the ownership of that agency upon his death in 1963.

- A: You mentioned that you were aboard all these different ships for just a short period of time. Was that common in the USNS business at that time, just to order you aboard for six months or so?
- M: Right, they would shuffle especially junior officers around quite indiscriminately as the need required. MSTS did it's own personnel assignment. Once an officer was ordered in, they took care of interdepartmental assignments.
- A: Is there any special reason why there are such short tours on these ships?
- M: Not to my knowledge.
- A: It just worked out that way?
- M: Personnel turnover was a way of life in MSTS.

A: So you came back to Ohio, settled down, and went into the insurance business. When did you join the Reserve program?

M: I remember going to the Reserve Center almost immediately after returning home, within the next thirty days. I believe I had been told about the Naval Reserve during my out processing personnel at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I went to Warren, interviewed then Lieutenant James Ronian, who was commanding officer of the Naval Reserve division, and decided to sign on. He assigned me as, what they called then, a Platoon officer. I was a Lieutenant Junior Grade at the time.

A: Were you required to report in? Was joining the Reserve part of your obligation, or was it done on your own free will?

M: It was strictly voluntary. I really can't say what my prime motivation was, although I remember that at the time it just seemed like a good thing to do. In entering the insurance business, I was starting on a drawing account for one thing, and the extra money was attractive.

A: Do you remember how much you used to get paid in those days?

M: It wasn't a whole lot. I think a quarterly check used to run about \$80. That would have been thirteen drills, so it was \$5 or \$6 a drill, as a Lieutenant Junior Grade.

A: Can you remember what you used to do with this money?

M: I used it to improve my standard of living at that time, because I was using up my savings and on a drawing account. A drawing account has to be paid back, so I tried to keep it to a minimum. I used it to live on.

A: Were you married at that time?

M: I was married and also had a son.

A: Were you married when you were in the service?

M: Yes. As a matter of fact, I married five days after I graduated and my wife went with me when I reported into San Francisco. But after transferring ships, my wife went back home and lived there for the balance of my two-year tour.

- A: When you went on this active duty, it was during the Korean War. In trying to relate to the Vietnam era, can you remember any reluctance on the part of men entering active duty at the time? What was the general attitude of your classmates towards going on active duty?
- M: The Korean War started in 1950. I was about half way through college at that time. It became evident within the first year that the war was underway that we would probably be ordered to active duty upon receiving our commissions at graduation. By the time we were seniors, it was a foregone conclusion. I do recall that there were not the student demonstrations against the war which we experienced during the Vietnam era. The people whom I associated with at college were very much interested in going on active duty. They were interested in accepting their orders, going on active duty, and doing their bit. It did not cause panic in the minds of these young men. As a matter of fact, I think most of them really looked forward to it rather eagerly.
- A: What do you attribute this attitude to? Why would someone look forward to going?
- M: By the time I graduated, of course, the war had been underway for two years. Many of our men had been drafted. I think there was a sense of sitting on the sidelines among the men for two years while other people were fighting the war and getting killed and wounded. They had the attitude that, "By golly, that's where the action is, and that's where we ought to be!" I recall this being more or less my attitude. Ironically enough, I never saw a shot fired in anger. I was ordered to a ship in San Francisco. It was home ported there. Almost immediately after I reported aboard, the home port was changed to New York. I went through the Panama Canal, and after that there never was a chance of coming anywhere near the war zone. A lot of my fellow students did, of course, see action in Korea.
- A: How did you feel about this? Were you upset or were you relieved?
- M: I don't recall being upset, and no, I don't recall being relieved either. I just recall it as being the type of thing that happens in the management of the military. They needed the ship at the Atlantic instead of the Pacific. Also, the war was winding down at that time. It ended in 1953, shortly before I got out, which was in 1954.

A: When you were released, you say you were released in New York. Do you remember any of your out processing? Was it done in a building at one time, or was it a gradual process?

M: I was released from the ship ten days before I was to be released from active duty. I believe I got most of my information on a piece meal basis over that ten-day period. I recall getting information on insurance, for example. One of the first things I did was to elect to keep my GI insurance. I found out subsequently that I must have been one of the very few people who realized what good advice he was getting, because so many of the Korean veterans didn't keep their GI insurance.

A: So you came back and you joined the Reserve program. Could you just give me an idea of what your first impressions upon joining the Reserve program were?

M: I don't remember back that far, really.

A: What were some of the early meetings like? When you first went to meetings, do you recall anything that happened there? Could you describe what actually took place at a meeting?

M: Well, the meeting started off with first muster. We were called variously rating group supervisors, platoon officers, group supervisory officers. I can't remember which name we started out with. Each platoon officer had a group of people that he was responsible for. As a rating group supervisor, I was in charge of the engineering rates. I had machinery repairmen and a couple of other engineering rates. Machine repairmen were my biggest group.

After first muster, we'd all go to the machine shop, and/or a classroom, depending on our schedule for the night. The men would do practical work on the machines or have a lecture. My job was to supervise the training, assign instructors, assign replacements if the instructor was absent, make sure the training schedules were adhered to, and to make sure that attendance on the part of the people in my group was monitored. Things stayed like that pretty much for fifteen years.

A: I understand that you were signed up in Warren, Ohio, under a Lieutenant Ronian, and that the training center is closed

now. What was that center like, facilities-wise?

M: The training center had a one story frame head house, which consisted mainly of the administrative offices. The head house was joined by three side by side quonset huts. The center hut was an open affair which was used as a drill hall. We held our musters there. It runs in my mind that there was a gun mount and perhaps a stable element, a gun control computer, and a loading machine there also. It was a five inch loading machine on the drill deck. There was a bridge in the drill deck, so we made an outline of a ship on the deck area. We used to simulate docking drills, firing the gun, and general quarters. The two other quonset huts, one on either side of the center one, were the classroom areas and shops.

A: Were these on two floors or one?

M: One floor.

A: Was this located in Warren?

M: Yes, it was located on Elm Road, right near Harding High School, which was in front of the then Trumbull County fairgrounds.

A: You mentioned also that you did docking drills and simulated firing the gun. Could you give a basic explanation of how an exercise like this might be done from that bridge?

M: We'd make up a watch quarter station bill for all hands in the division. A division ran variously from 80 people to 135 or 140. Every man would have a battle station. When general quarters would sound, the gun crew would man the gun mount, the engineers would go to the mock-up engine room, and the repair party would go to the repair locker. The officers on the bridge would simulate getting underway, being underway, fighting the ship, fighting fires, and simulating hits. We would do a battle problem and have simulated injuries. Hospital corpsmen would take the injured people to sick bay and treat them. We tried to give the exercise as much realism as is possible on a stationary platform. We had some very skilled craftsmen, who made up things like cleets and bollards, which were devices on a pier, deck, or ship deck used to tie mooring lines to. These were portable and they



would be arranged on the simulated dock, which was also outlined on the drill floor as well as next to the ship outline. We'd actually have line handling drills for the seamen. For a while we were in the business of giving sailors basic training, and we used to run them through those line handling drills. They would be taught how to splice line and do knots, and things of that nature. But as far as the general quarter drills were concerned, we tried to keep them as much like a ship would be as possible.

A: Could you just give me an idea of the basic administrative organization of the training center? How many units were assigned to this and when did you drill?

M: There was one unit, a Medium Surface Division. It was headed at that time by a lieutenant, and the executive officer was also a lieutenant. He had five, six, or maybe seven enlisted men who were station keepers. Drill night was Thursday night in the early years. It stayed that way for a long, long time. It was then changed to Monday night toward the later part of the history of the Warren Reserve Training Center. The only other use of the building was by civic groups who met there, and for a while there was a Sea Explorer scout troop which met there. The Coast Guard auxiliary met there regularly. A Civil Air Patrol unit also met there.

A: Do you recall any of the active duty people who were there? How often were they there and did they rotate around?

M: I can remember a Lieutenant Ostovich. I understand he's now a captain. There was a Lieutenant Commander Price, and Lieutenant Commander Yonkovich, who subsequently retired and moved back to Warren and settled there. We had Lieutenant Werner Stefan, who was in charge the time the training center closed, and subsequently became Commanding Officer of the Naval Reserve Training Center in Youngstown. Those are the only ones that I can remember by name.

I remember one station keeper, a yeoman by the name of Guy Chamberlain, who finished up his obligated service, took his discharge, stayed in Warren, and went to work as a public relations man with the American Welding Company. He did such a fine job that he came to the attention of an advertising man, who lured him away from American Welding and formed an advertising agency. Now

they are president and vice-president of the Ted Berndt and Associates Advertising Agency. This is the agency which handles the Kenley Players account. There were other regular Navy station keepers, whose names I remember; one of the chiefs, Walter Burden, became a customer of mine. I also remember Bob Kritz, and a number of others.

A: When you came into the center or joined the Reserves up there in Warren, did you become involved in any activities in the center, outside the center, or involved with the center?

M: Yes, as a matter of fact, we used to have a little social hour at the Rancho Villa following drill. I remember very well one storekeeper first-class, by the name of Earlston. He threw my wife under a table one night. They were dancing at the time, and he twirled her, and she slipped. This social hour got to be quite a tradition. A number of the wives would deliver their husbands to drill, and then pick them up, and we'd go out and have a few drinks afterwards for an hour or so.

One of the things that I became personally involved in for many years was the drill team. We would have a drill team of 21 or more volunteers. Some of the members are still active in the Naval Reserve now. I remember Chief Bob Cross was very active. We used to go to all the parades and show the blue suit to the people on Memorial Day and Labor Day. We used to go to homecomings, it runs in my mind, and maybe go to ten or twelve of those in a spring, summer, and fall season. It was a lot of fun. It was an extra activity which the men enjoyed attending.

A: For all these outside activities, did any of you receive drill pay?

M: We only received drill pay for the Memorial Day Parade. It became a tradition; the City of Warren had a Memorial Day parade and we'd turn out the division in force for that. All the other activities were extra curricular. There were a couple of places where we used to go traditionally every year, because they'd donate \$25 or \$30 to us and we'd use that money to buy equipment.

A: What kind of equipment would you buy with \$25 or \$35?

- M: White web belts, helmet liners, white paint to paint them with and leggings.
- A: The government has always been famous for the control of funds. Can you recall if funds were hard to get in order to support the reserve unit in Warren?
- M: They were, off and on! I remember when, as rating group supervisor for the machinery repair people, we sat down and very carefully made out a shopping list of what would be needed to turn that machine shop into a real first class training facility. For example, it didn't have a milling machine or a turret lathe. Much of the list was the work of the first class machine repairman, by the name of Bob Elwell. We sent the list in and waited. We didn't hear anything. We wrote a follow-up and still didn't hear anything. So, we wrote another follow-up letter. The district representative came and said, "If you need anything, just holler and we'll try to get it for you." So we told him that we'd written an original order and two follow-ups, and asked him to look into the matter. We finally got one broken horizontal lathe out of the whole list. That group of people eventually made an engraving machine, so we had that to train on.
- A: Is this the type of project you became involved in as a unit? Overall, is there any other kind of a project that the unit did?
- M: One of the chiefs owned a restaurant downtown, and we used to have an annual affair in his party room. We also used to have a picnic every once in a while, but not too many of those. I recall the parties! We had a Monte Carlo at one time, with gambling wheels. This was done at this chief's restaurant, because he would always give us a deal. We also used to have ordinary ceremonies such as change of command ceremonies, or award ceremonies, that we usually have in connection with the military organization. As far as the civic action type of projects, the drill team is what I remember most vividly. The sponsorship of the Sea Scout unit had several of our people involved as leaders.
- A: During your training in the unit, did you ever take any field trips or anything like that?
- M: Yes, we used to take the men out to the police firing range and fire familiarization with M-1's, .45 caliber automatics,

.22 rifles, and target pistols. The men used to enjoy that. We tried to do that once a quarter, both for weapon familiarization and for morale. During the time I was commanding officer of the Surface Division, which was a three-year tenure, we also did five or six weekends on the PCE, Patrol Craft Escort, which was a World War I vintage submarine chaser, up in Cleveland. During that time, I think it was five times that we went aboard the PCE. We were underway for four of the weekends. We visited places like Put-In-Bay and Port Stanley in Canada. During the time that I was in the lower ranks, I can remember going up to the ship on a number of occasions. But, because of difficulties the ship couldn't get underway. This made us very discouraged. It was found that when the ship did not get underway, the men weren't interested in going aboard. So, these attitudes would sort of run hot and cold. I feel I was real lucky because on the first trip I arranged after becoming CO, the ship got underway, and we had a real good training weekend and liberty in a foreign port.

I had no trouble crewing up for weekend cruises. My goal was two weekends per summer for the operating seasons. I would take a special trip to Cleveland ahead of these things in the spring to schedule our weekends and work with the ship's crew on training schedules, and get the organizational details taken care of. We used to send an advance party up on Friday night to draw bedding, and would have everything ready for the rest of the people on Saturday.

- A: Could you be a little more explicit on what you did during your trips to the ship? What kind of training did you go through? Where did you go, and did your men fit in with the crew or did they stand separately?
- M: The men did fit in with the crew. They became watch standers. When the crew would recognize a particularly well qualified man of the division, this man would be on a regular watch bill and stand watches alone. I remember that we had some very good enginemen who would stand all the watches on the engine, because the ship's company was a skeleton crew. It was necessary that this happened because when the men weren't particularly well qualified, the ship's crew would have to stand six and eight hour watches to supervise the Reservists. I feel we had a pretty well qualified bunch because as I said, we had several enginemen who would stand all the watches.

We had quartermasters that didn't need any help on the bridge. We had some qualified deck officers who didn't need any help standing watches. Most of all, the attitude of the ship's crew seemed to be such that they were happy to see us come aboard.

A: Throughout your relationship with the Naval Reserve, have you always been readily accepted by the regular active duty forces?

M: There've been a couple of cases where I felt that we weren't. As a matter of fact, ironically enough, there were a couple of cases on Reserve destroyers, which should have been really positively inclined towards the Naval Reserve. I didn't think that they had a good sense of mission or the right mental attitude, as far as accepting Reservists into the crew and doing the training they were supposed to do.

In most of my active duty experiences, the regular Navy people have been more than courteous. They've been more than willing to take our suggestions and use our talents. The one I just came back from was an outstanding example of this. I was attached to Amphibious Group Two, and the attitude of that group was that they couldn't run their exercises unless they got Reserve augmentation. This was their ordinary course of doing business. Whenever they had exercises scheduled, they put in for Reserve augmentation.

A: Do you think that the Reserves have changed in their relationships with the regular Navy in the last year or so?

M: No, and that sort of troubles me, too. Overall, I feel the regular Navy sort of tolerates the existence of the Naval Reserve rather than welcomes it. I say that as a person who has really had some good experiences concerning cooperation from active duty people. Then sometimes, the cooperation you get is directly proportional to the cooperation you give. I know some Reservists who would go aboard ship and immediately start complaining. They didn't pick the laundry up soon enough, the underwear was lost, the ship's store was never opened, you couldn't get a haircut, water hours, no liberty, and that kind of thing. Naturally, this turns the active duty people off. I really have felt over the years that the

regular Navy did not treat it's Naval Reserve people as a tool to be used. That is, until my experience with Amphibious Group Two. I think this is an outstanding example of what a Naval Reserve can be to a regular navy.

A: Do you think you could explain what they did which touched you this much? You must have really accomplished a lot.

M: Well, it wasn't that I accomplished so much. They really didn't need me. They needed lieutenants, lieutenant commanders, and commanders as watch standers. They needed them as tactical communicators. They needed them as staff watch officers of the flag bridge and as staff watch officers in the flag command space. They needed the enlisted people to round out the ranks of the NTDS, Naval Tactical Data System, operators and communications people, radio men; they just had everybody working. I think they were sort of lucky because they had a group of 28 Reservists, including the tactical air control group of six people. The Reservists were a bunch of people who went right to work, did the job, and got good marks at the end of the exercise. The attitude of the staff was such that they really needed Reservists to help carry the work load because they were so short-handed themselves.

A: While we're speaking of your active duty experiences in your two-week training programs, is there any other active duty period that really stands out in your mind, for one reason or another, when you did something extra exciting or amusing? Did you get a big kick out of going on these two weeks? How did that affect you?

M: Well, my very first active duty for training was on a landing ship dock. We visited Bermuda as a liberty port. I suppose that in itself sold me on the whole idea of continuing. During this period of time I participated in seven destroyer cruises. One destroyer cruise stands out particularly vividly because I was on one of the first two destroyers to visit the Port Santo Domingo after the assassination of the dictator, Trujillo. We were very welcome there and were able to see the city. That occurred in October, and by April of the following year the Marines were landing and taking out the American Nationals because the political situation had deteriorated so badly. That particular cruise also

stands out from the standpoint of the fact that the skipper of the ship was just outstanding. He had a good and positive attitude toward Reservists and training them. He allowed the other junior officers and me to do more ship handling than I'd ever done before.

There was one school that I attended that was an outstanding school also. It was an officer of the deck underway school in Philadelphia. We spent the whole weekend and two other half days aboard a wooden hulled mine sweeper in the river. We coned it up and down the river learning ship handling. As a matter of fact, there were so many officers and no unlisted people that the officers were handling lines for each other. It was fun and it was educational, because we felt we were really getting our hands on the hardware and learning to do the job. Also, it was really a twelve day grind because we used the weekend for the training on the river.

A: So, would you say your two week stints have been mostly educational or fun?

M: I remember one that was sort of a waste of time. We got aboard a destroyer that was in an upkeep period. The first week was fine when they found a couple of short schools on the base in Newport that I could go to, but the second week was dead.

A: I'm not asking you to put yourself in a precarious position of any kind, but what do you do in your off time when you're on these cruises?

M: I sight-see on liberty. I take 35mm color slides and I have a bundle of them from these cruises. This is one of the reasons I particularly enjoyed Santo Domingo. It was a beautiful place and I took many good pictures. Because of its turbulence in recent history, it was made more interesting. They had graffiti on the walls, mutilated statues of the previous dictator, and things of that nature. At sea I do a lot of reading that I don't have time for at home.

A: Why do you continue at the present time in the Reserve?

M: There are two reasons. One; it's a good hobby and I've enjoyed it. It's a hobby which produces a little bit of income, whereas other hobbies wouldn't.

Two; I like to feel I'm patriotic enough to want to continue in the Reserve, that I'm doing something for my country. I think if I couldn't feel that way, even the money wouldn't be worth it. In other words, I think it's important enough to the welfare of the country that there be a Naval Reserve and that I be in it, to keep it going.

- A: Getting back to the history a little bit, do you belong to any organization other than the Naval Reserve which is related to the Navy in any way?
- M: I belong to the Navy League, The Reserve Officers Association, and the Naval Reserve Association.
- A: Do you participate in any of the functions of these organizations?
- M: I really haven't been active within the last year and a half, two-year time period. But at other times, I held offices, such as vice-president and secretary of the Navy League, and past president of the Trumbull County Reserve Officers Association. I haven't held office in the Naval Reserve Association, because it's been sort of inactive in this area.
- A: Can you give me any idea of some of the projects which they've done to help the Navy in any way, in the Mahoning and Trumbull County area?
- M: Yes, the Navy League sponsors a Sea Cadet Unit, which has it's ups and it's downs, as has any youth-type program. I think you could almost relate it's success to it's leaders and the consistency of leadership. Finding leaders for a youth group of that nature is pretty tough sometimes.

The Reserve Officers Association is very active in Memorial Day observance. In Warren, it participates very heavily in that. It also gives out medals to the outstanding ROTC graduates for the colleges around the area. It keeps its members up to date by issuing a very good monthly magazine, called "The Officer". As a matter of fact, I consider the membership in these three organizations to be important because combining their publications together gives me a good source of all around information and keeps me current on what's going on.



- A: Are you interested in that part of the Navy, the Naval Reserve, or anything in publications, or do you strictly use them as a benefit?
- M: I use them to gain knowledge. I thought about trying to write for publication in them, but I have just never taken the time to do that.
- A: Going back to the Warren Reserve Center, which is no longer active, could you give me some idea about its closing, and the move from there to the Youngstown Reserve Center?
- M: Sure. We started hearing rumors in advance during a meeting. It really became sort of evident that a one unit Reserve Center was not cost efficient.

I do recall having a farewell dinner for one of the Youngstown Reserve Training Center CO's. There was a representative from the fourth Naval district there. We decided to check out the rumor and asked the representative about it. He looked us right in the eye and said, "The Warren Training Center will be with us for another five years at least." Well, within a year we got the word that the center was going to be closed. As I mentioned before, Lieutenant Commander Werner Stefan was training center CO. He immediately set about to package up all the equipment, tools, and organize the transfer of people to the Youngstown Reserve Center. I'd been Commanding Officer of the unit at that time for about two years. I remember we moved the people here to Youngstown about a month and a half before the final closing of the training center. After we were gone, the station keepers then spent the rest of the time stripping all evidence of the Navy out, crating things up, and shipping them back. The building was put up for sale, and I believe the United Steel Workers of America paid the sum of \$18,000 for the building, which was on land that was leased from the city of Warren or the Warren school board. As far as I know, that arrangement still exists. The union owns the building and the school board or the city owns the land. I think they got a real bargain when they bought that building for \$18,000. It was in fairly good shape at the time.

- A: Then everybody that was attached there drilled in Youngstown. You came down as CO?

M: Yes, I was a CO. During final year here, we drilled on a different night than the other medium surface division which was attached to the Youngstown Training Center. About the same time, Youngstown had two medium surface divisions which were merged into one division.

A: Just as you came down from the Warren Reserve Center, what was the number of that unit in Warren?

M: The number of people, I recall about that time, was between sixty and eighty.

A: In any unit?

M: Yes.

A: How many officers were there?

M: Four or five.

A: Was there any problem when you moved down here? Did people drop out of the unit, because of the move?

M: Yes, we lost people. Some of the people that we lost weren't any great loss because they weren't good attenders and weren't contributing. The bulk of the "hard core" stayed. It didn't really make too much difference to them how far they had to drive because they wanted to stay. As far as problems were concerned, I think the biggest problem was to integrate with the organization that was already here. We were treated somewhat as outsiders for as long as two years, as "that Warren bunch".

This persisted even after men started to transfer back and forth between the two units. The combined Youngstown unit changed to weekend drills, so that there would be a choice between Tuesday night weekly drill, and a one weekend a month arrangement. Well, some of the people from Youngstown decided a weekend would be better. We switched and swapped them, and still the Tuesday night unit was referred to as "the Warren unit". Many of our people believed they were being given short shrift on service from the station keepers. They believed that there was a "hard core" from Warren, and I remember that one group in particular, the chief petty officers, were organized into a social club. They called it the "Chief's Club". They sort of maintained their identity even to this very day.

- A: You mentioned that the unit which came down from Warren originally stayed on a Tuesday night, and the Youngstown unit went to weekends. How was this controlled as a group? Who did they report to?
- M: There was a group commander who used to be known as a Battalion Commander, and he had a staff that varied from three to eight people. He was charged with the administration of the Reserve units under his command. This duty included not only the two medium service divisions, but it also included the MSTS division and the Sea Bees. I believe that was all of the units. This Battalion Commander would provide guidance, coordination, and inspection services to the organizations under his command.
- A: To whom was he responsible?
- M: He was then responsible directly to the Fourth Naval District and to the training center commanding officer.
- A: Could you recall the names of some of the individuals who were group commanders?
- M: I can't put them in any particular order. There was Captain Russell Heltzel. There was also Jim Linton, who by that time had been promoted to the rank of Commander. There was Neil Smith, by the way, who is a Captain now too. He made his Captaincy after he left the area. There were several others also, whose names I don't remember.
- A: I understand that the group commanders are now defunct.
- M: Yes. I was the last group commander.
- A: How did you come to this position?
- M: The policy of the Naval district was that the people in commanding officers' positions or group commander positions were allowed a total of three years' service. They were given a one year appointment subject to renewal for two more years. The position became open because someone reached the end of his three year tour. I then applied for the job and was appointed Group Commander within four months. When the restructuring of the Naval Reserve was announced, one of the first drawdowns was the abolishment of many of the smaller group commands. We were given the word that we would be one of the first

groups to be abolished. So, I served out the one year as group commander, and then deactivated the staff.

- A: Do you recall anything about the deactivation that might be important?
- M: Not really. We sort of faded away. The year was not particularly noteworthy, because we didn't want to start any particular big projects. We had one project going at the request of Captain Stusnick of the Third Naval District. That was the construction of the "damage control trainer" in the rear of the building. I felt that keeping this project going and conducting personnel inspections for the units, checking their training schedules and doing things like that was sufficient without getting into any really aggressive programs. If we had done that, we wouldn't have been able to follow through after the deactivation of the group command.
- A: On your staff, was everybody being paid for their duties? How were you paid, on a 48 drill basis?
- M: Yes, we were paid on a 48 drill basis, except for the Chief of Staff, who was Commander Kahl. I believe at the time that he was non-pay. He was not in the right grade to be on the staff. I had a Lieutenant Commander Ed Murphy who was being paid. I had Chief Yeoman Summers, a Wave and a couple of other yeomen who did not last very long during that year for one reason or another. I think I was allowed six people.
- A: After the deactivation of the group command staff, what did you go into?
- M: Well, prior to becoming a group commander I had served as the public affairs officer for the Youngstown training Center, for five years. I was interested in the public affairs business, but I did not want to become the public affairs officer for the training center at Youngstown, mainly because I'd done that for five years. So, I went out looking for another type of situation and became acquainted with the commanding officer of the public affairs company in Columbus. I signed on with him as a member of his group with the idea that I would be his Northeastern Ohio representative, since he was endeavoring to build a statewide type of public affairs net of officers. This network was at various times more or less successful. During that period of time I under-

took a project to educate division commanding officers and assigned public affairs people in the public affairs business. I held a seminar for one day here at the Youngstown Training Center, in which we invited radio and television people and advertising people to participate, give speeches, and conduct training sessions.

A: How do you feel the Reserves, specifically the Naval Reserves, have been accepted in Warren and Youngstown, since your last experience? Are they accepted now in the community?

M: My experience has been that the Naval Reserve has always enjoyed tremendous public acceptance. Perhaps it's the pride present in the outfit. I feel we have more public acceptance than maybe even the National Guard or the Army Reserve.

A: To what do you attribute this acceptance?

M: I don't know what it's attributable to. I couldn't put my finger on it.

A: In your relationships, through your experience in these centers, how do you feel that the reserve centers in both Warren and Youngstown have been accepted with other centers? Have they fit into the norm, or are they exceptional?

M: Do you mean in terms of standard of performance, or in terms of acceptability, such as between the Air Force and the Army Reserve?

Most of the time, you just don't have any need to traffic with the other services. I remember two particular instances where we really have enjoyed outstanding relationships with other services. As executive officer of the surface division in Warren, I ran a platoon competition on a quarterly basis. I dealt with the Air Force Reserve Unit at the Youngstown Air Base for weekend trips aboard their cargo craft for the winning platoon. This went on for a couple of years, and every quarter when a platoon would win the competition, I'd arrange for a trip. We had groups go to Newport. We also had a group go to New Orleans. Once as a morale factor for the Chiefs' Club, I sent them over water to Puerto Rico. We really enjoyed good rapport with the Air Force.

The other occasion was when I was assisting the colonel in charge of the National Security Seminar held at the Youngstown Playhouse. This seminar got tremendous cooperation going between the Army Reserve Center and the Navy Reserve Center. There were security problems, as we had college student demonstrations to handle as well as administrative jobs to do. There was a lot of paper work involved. The cooperation between the Army and the Navy was just outstanding, as well as the Air Force support.

- A: You've just been recently assigned to a unit that was attached to the Naval Reserve Center in Pittsburgh. Realizing Pittsburgh is a much larger center than Youngstown and a much larger city, could you run a comparison or contrast between the two centers concerning the operations and the manning?
- M: You feel more like a little fish in a big pond in a training center like that. They drill every weekend. One weekend is Marine weekend and the other three weekends are taken up by various Naval Reserve units totalling 25 units in all. As one of the senior commanding officers there, I felt that I fit in as far as that goes. But, because of the size of the operation, you get the distinct impression that nothing is going to fall through the cracks on the floor if you don't do your job. You're not the only key to the success of the whole operation. You don't have the constant attention of the station keepers like you do in a smaller training center, where there are fewer groups and less to distract them, less for them to cope with. My experience down there has been real great, though, as far as cooperation with the Reserve Center people in the other units. I was the senior man on my weekend and as such, acted like a mini group commander. We didn't have any big problems. Since we didn't have a lot of people, we got along real well. We completed our training program and had a good thing going. I hope to pick it up in good shape and drop it down here in Youngstown.
- A: Is there anything that you might have on the tip of your tongue or in the front of your mind that you'd like to mention at this time? Perhaps, in regards to the history or the chronological events in Youngstown or Warren, is there anything that we've overlooked in that area?
- M: I recall we'd schedule the drill every Thursday night. The week of the Trumbull County Fair at the Fairgrounds

was usually an exercise in futility, because we'd turn the drill hall over to the 4-H Club, so we couldn't have a formal first muster or do exercises there. We would put the men in their classrooms to do their training and their work, and they'd spend the time looking out the windows at the young ladies passing by. Some would sneak out the back door to take in the rides, cotton candy, and exhibits at the fair. Nothing happened that night because there was so much confusion. That was one thing that always used to tickle me about the situation there.

A: I like to end up my interviews with a request for a sea story. I've run into quite a few officers that have a favorite sea story, a story of their adventures, or somebody's adventures that they like to relate. Can you recall one in particular at this time?

M: I can recall two, because I was directly involved in them. We had Lieutenant Commander Price, who was a training center CO. He was a very prim individual who had been an aide to an admiral. He rose up from the ranks from yeoman, and was just as prim and proper as he could be. He never went anyplace that he didn't have his gloves in his hand, and his suit immaculate and creased. He was conducting a personnel inspection, and I brought my group to attention. Very seriously I said, "Sir, I report the machinery repairmen ready for inspection," and saluted. At this time my top button popped off my uniform. It hit the deck and because these buttons are hollow, went plump, plump, plump. This very prim, proper individual could hardly keep from breaking up. The situation was just outlandish!

The other story was when I was an executive officer of the division and wanted the color ceremony to be very nice at first muster. We would train the men at hoisting the colors smartly. At muster, I would come out to the drill hall, and would stand right underneath the bridge. Right above me was the hallyard where we would fly the colors. Right under the hallyard was a large clock. When the color guard would come forward, they would take the hallyard off, put the colors on, and hoist it up smartly. Well, if they stood back far enough, there was no particular problem. But this one night, the fellow who did it was a little close in, and when he yanked that hallyard and took those colors up, he hit the clock

on the wall and it came right down and stopped, about six inches over my head. It hung by it's cord. You should have heard the men break up on that one. Honest to God, it was funny!

A: It was lucky for you that the cord was there.

M: Lucky it was plugged in. The clock just came down and stopped.

A: Well, thank you, Roger, I appreciate the information. I'm sure the University will also.

M: You're welcome. I'm anxious to see this interview in print.

End of Interview