

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Naval Reserve Project

Reservist Experience

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MICHAEL VUKSTA

Interviewed

by

David S. Arms

on

June 3, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: MICHAEL VUKSTA

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SUBJECT: reserve history, active duty experience

DATE: June 3, 1975

A: This is an interview with Dr. Michael Vuksta for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the Naval Reserves, by David Arms, at his office on Belmont Avenue, June 3, 1975, at 2:30 p.m.

Dr. Vuksta, could you give us some of your family background and your own?

V: I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1926 and lived there approximately nine years. At that time we moved to Youngstown, Ohio by virtue of my father's occupation. He was a cantor in the church and we moved to the west side of Youngstown, Ohio. I attended the public school system at Washington School, completed there and attended Chaney High School. Upon completion of Chaney High School in 1944, my desire was to join the Navy, and this was during the course of World War II.

You might ask why I would particularly like the Navy, being from the midwest. I had had one uncle who had worked on the shipping lines at Great Lakes and during the course of the summers, tried to talk me into getting a job on the shipping lines. I was always interested in sort of traveling on water and Navy life.

Although not permitted to do so, when the opportunity came in 1944, I volunteered to join the Navy. At that time I had to wait, because of the eighteenth birthday for the draft. I was then drafted and after passing the physical examination, I selected the Navy as the draftee. Without any difficulty, we were given our assignments. I was given the Navy and was

very happy about it.

My first real encounter with the Navy, however, was during high school when they had the B-12 program, B-5 program, which I was not too interested from the standpoint of becoming a pilot. I was more involved and interested in becoming a member or a part of a ship, in that regard.

So when I first entered the Navy I went to Greak Lakes as a receiving recruit. I was stationed in the Green Bay area at Camp McDonough. It was later moved to Camp Downs when they had scarlet fever epidemic. I was also interested in premed and at the time I finished high school with the desire to become a doctor.

So in the Navy, I had the opportunity to become a corpsman. While in Green Bay and boot camp, I was given the opportunity to work at the dispensary every evening. At the time, as I mentioned, we had the scarlet fever epidemic. We worked the dispensary every evening on our off hours as well as doing our regular tasks in the barracks. We worked for approximately four to five hours in the evening. This only relinquished the fact that we did not have to stand guard duty from midnight till 8:00 in the morning, but did have to stand our own guard duty positions in rotation during the day.

I enjoyed it very well and after the interview, following boot camp, I was assigned to corps school at San Diego. While at corps school, we lived in the tent area at Balboa Park, which is now probably reconverted again back to Balboa Park, just south of the naval hospital at San Diego. We lived in the tent area there--somewhat different as one would expect for Navy life being in tents and outdoors, although it was something different. It was very good; they had very good corps. On completion of corps school we also had some amphibian training. It was thought that most boys from corps school would either end up in the Fleet Marines or back at the hospital, depending on your grade average.

Finishing pretty high in the class, I had a selection and choice of my own hospital and I selected to come back to the east coast at Philadelphia Naval Hospital. While at Philadelphia Naval Hospital, again, I could not really complain. I thought the Navy was very good to me, although they did not give me one opportunity I wanted. I kept volunteering for Fleet Marine Force and I felt that I wanted to get out of the naval hospital and into the Fleet Marines. You could volunteer, but the personnel officer had to accept your volunteer assignment.

While I was there, I played football, baseball, basketball on the sport program there representing the base. I was also

involved in their boxing program and to do that assignment I was sent and worked in the operating room; I worked on cancer floors; I worked in storerooms; I worked in various positions, finally completing it as an operating room technician.

On completion of the war , we were discharged. Then I again returned to Great Lakes for separation. At that time we spoke to a reservist who was trying to get people to join the Navy reserve. I felt that my time in the Navy, I received good treatment; I enjoyed it. I had good experience, met a lot of good people and I saw no reason why I shouldn't join the reserve program. I wasn't sorry at that time for joining the reserve program.

On completion of separation, I came to Youngstown and they tried to establish in 1946 an active reserve unit, which had nine officers and three or four enlisted men. I think I was the second corpsman to join. A fellow by the name of Campbell was the first. He was second class; I was third class. And I joined the active reserve which met at the bank building.

The unit was small at that time, under the direction of Mr. Standsbury and a Lieutenant Fields, a chief Ferranti, who were the most active people. Dr. Renner, who was a captain at that time, or a commander and made captain later, was the physician. We were responsible for the histories and physicals and also recruiting personnel.

I think this, again, showed the interest because many of the men that joined were recruited by ourselves. I know I had my friend join and several other Navy people that lived on the west side. And it seemed to be sort of a chain type reaction because they in turn talked to other Navy people and joined. My brother joined the Navy as a result of my electing the Navy and became a radio man. Several of the neighbors. . . In fact, there are a group of seven or eight boys that were together; only one was in the Army and the rest were all Navy, from that entire group of kids that hung around together.

Following the joining of the reserve, the unit began to meet more frequently and became larger and met at South High. At that time, I was involved with schoolwork and I was not a marked or active participant in the reserve program, although I did two weeks active duty for training in which we went to Bermuda on a transport, on an AK. I enjoyed the training.

Some might say that there was not much for the reserves to do. I worked in sick bay and was responsible for the sick bay area on my watch. Again, I met some fine people. In fact, the first class on that carrier, on that AK, was the

first class that I ran into as a personnel officer when I was recalled back to the Korean War at Philadelphia Naval Hospital. He was, at that time, working in the personnel office. Whether it be fortunate or not, through him I became involved in, again, operating room. Then later due to the athletic program there again, which I was involved in, I was transferred to the laundry and storeroom and I ran the storeroom. This was done as temporary duty because I had applied for the officer's program.

A: Had you finished school? Where were you going to school at that time?

V: In the interim, before going back on active duty, I had gone to Youngstown College in premed and I completed my program in Youngstown but was not. . . I had applied for medical school, and in the year I applied for medical school I had one more year to go for a degree. I completed the degree work early, however. Just at the time I had applied for medical school, I was then recalled. So I went to the University of Pittsburgh, starting out at the University of Pittsburgh, and to complete that year I went into bacteriology. Then I was recalled into the service during the Korean conflict.

A: You were still third class petty officer?

V: Third class. While at Philadelphia I was third class and I applied for the officer's training program in the Department of Intelligence Underwater Demolition.

Now a conflict might come up here. I had been interviewed by my base captain. I was interviewed by the admiral of the 4th Naval District. I was interviewed by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, who later became the chief of medicine and surgery in Washington, and they accepted me into the program. There was, however, a hitch: being a first generation American I could not get into the intelligence department.

One might say that you might become disenchanted with the Navy on the fact that you're an American and not accepted into their program and say, "Well, they are being discriminatory." I didn't feel this way. This was their rules and I felt my first goal was that of becoming a doctor and primarily entering surgery, specializing in surgery.

I had gotten into the Department of Intelligence and Underwater Demolition, which I liked; I probably would have not continued the desire to enter medical school.

Dropping from that program--because I did not wish to go into another department--they sent me to Maryland. At that

point I became second class and I worked in the neuropsychiatric unit there as a chauffeur for the CO of that unit. He took an interest in me and wanted me to go to medical school at Hahnemann where he graduated from. I told him no, I intended to go back to Ohio State and that's where I had applied.

During the Korean conflict I again applied for Fleet Marine Force and I never got it. Somehow, every time I applied for Fleet Marine Force, I was not one to be chosen. On the other hand, maybe this was fortunate. The boy that I was a very good friend with and played baseball and basketball with at Philadelphia Naval Hospital was selected in the Fleet Marine Force. He was second class and they went every alternate name down the list. As second class I was a V and his name began with U; he was sent in the Fleet Marine Force. They made the landing at Inch'on in which he lost a leg. I was a V and sent to Maryland. As fortune would put it, again, those boys that were in the Fleet Marines, they got a landing in which we lost quite a few friends.

From there, the Korean War came to an end and I was discharged from the service. I maintained my reserve status and I applied to school at Ohio State and was accepted at Ohio State. I tried to maintain reserve status, or my reserve time, but was discharged by virtue of the fact that I didn't affiliate with a reserve center. Although they had a reserve center in Columbus, the meeting time and the correlation with school, it did not fit in the requirement. So I was told by a captain in the Navy Medical Corps that on completion of my time, due to the fact that I was not anticipating going on Navy duty, to join the reserve unit, that I would intern in that town. I returned back to Youngstown in 1957 following graduation from Ohio State Medical School and entered internship at Saint Elizabeth Hospital.

Now influence, here again, were by means of good, quality Navy people. I met Dr. Clifford, who was the physician with the Navy reserve unit. I met Dr. Conti, who had formerly been a physician with the reserve unit. I met Dr. Meikle, who was the dentist with the reserve unit and also I met Dr. Renner, who had been one of the previous physicians with the reserve unit. Each and every one of these people spoke highly of the Navy and it did not take very much to stimulate me to join the Navy reserve.

Now the problem again was I was a resident in surgery and to join the reserve unit I probably could have, but at that time it was not feasible due to our work schedule. Later on this changed and we were able to take residence and I could see the change that we had made and I waited until I completed

my residency. Then I went into the unit as an active officer and continued.

Dr. Clifford worked diligently and I must give him very much credit for the number of people that he truly got involved in to the Navy reserve program, and either that and/or those people that later, through that very plan, went Navy and went on active duty. I think this was the biggest thing in that direction.

I joined the Navy unit here and the first CO that I worked under was Captain Dinger. Also involved in that unit was Tom Pessinger, Salatine, Milt Kochert, and Tom Akin from Pittsburgh. I would have to say, again, that through meeting these people--and they were fine people, good, quality people--it only substantiated the fact that you met good people in the reserve program and I had no qualms. Now I've heard many descending remarks and uncomplimentary. I've heard criticisms. They may be valid to the individual's making, but I could say that through my endeavors and work with these people that I had met in the service, I could not go along with that.

The program permitted me, at that time, to start a corps school program which I had always had interest in. We started a corps school program and we took boys with good GCT scores; we put through class A school a large number of corpsmen. Now the number I cannot truly give, but we had corpsmen that went in the class A school and did well and scored well in class A school. Not one corpsman was ever dropped out of class A school under that program.

Now as you know, the government changes the program quite frequently. The reserve program then was altered from the class A type program, which we had corpsmen. It went back to the usual routine of taking corpsmen coming back from active duty. Many of our corpsmen that had gone to class A school had to return to our unit, some we lost. But throughout, I think that the corps, the hospital corpsmen, and the hospital night program here, did turn out some fine people. To our feeling they were not ones that became disenchanted with the Navy program.

During this time, also, we picked up men that were residents in both Youngstown and Saint Elizabeth's Hospital which joined active duty in the Navy program. They acted as reserve officers and received their commissions in the reserve program here and then further went on to active duty as Navy officers. Again, the number exceeds, I'm sure, about fifteen to twenty officers through that time. We also had men that had gone

back and stayed on active duty permanently as Navy medical officers. I would have to be very happy with the accomplishments that we've made. There were also a number of boys that enlisted into the Navy program and stayed as hospital corpsmen.

The reserve program was not a program that contained or was told that it had "dead wood" and did not serve a purpose. I think that it becomes an individual basis as to what you want to get out of it. The opportunities are there and I can readily say that as I speak of opportunities, when I joined I was a lieutenant and through the course of my time in the reserve program, I reached the rank of captain. Every year I have gone on active duty as an officer for two weeks. I received deck officer privileges as a watch officer, which was not a requirement of my position, but only through my own interest. I feel that if you have the interest and desire the opportunity, as I said, is there and certainly one can advance himself by virtue of his willingness and desire to learn more.

Throughout the time that I went through naval hospitals I've had the opportunity in a fortunate situation where I was able to do my time at Bethesda Naval Hospital at Bethesda Naval Medical Center, working under good people, top quality individuals. Many times, just to regress, some say that service medicine is not good or it lacks quality. This is not true. I found that through the opportunities they have given me I was able to bring back to our own community hospital many new things that were being done, which I think would have taken time to bring them into the institution. But through my opportunity and being able to work with these people, I was able to utilize many of the new and current concepts, such as burn therapy, treatment of pulmonary embolism, shock treatments. There isn't, I don't think, a better shock unit than the one at the Bethesda. The work and the research that went into that certainly served a good purpose to the community here in Youngstown that I was able to bring back and put in to good use. True, these are expensive items and we had to cut corners to make them function but it certainly served an excellent purpose. So through the reserve program and meeting people that I have met, I cannot say that it has not been of useful purpose to me.

Somewhat in this area you can say that greed enters into it by virtue of the fact that you got out of it, but what did you put into it? I think that through the reserve program, I have probably gotten more out of it. I put in some by virtue of my time, work with the unit. There are many more officers that have worked active duty-wise in the line that have put more time than I have, and I hope, and would certainly



hope again by reinforcing that, that they have gotten the same things out of it that I have. I have been fortunate.

One might ask, "Does patriotism require a reserve unit? Do we need reserve units? Do we need to have our armed forces relegated to a point where a reserve unit serves any useful purpose?" I think this is what a country wants to do, or what an individual wants to do. I don't think it's necessary to have a unit as a reserve unit and feel that it is a military unit which will propagate or go out and seek war. I don't think this is the purpose of a reserve unit. I think it has other interests and it should have a manpower situation which is available to the government in time of need and emergency crisis. Certainly, this is not asking too much to defend one's country and ask of one's self to serve. It's a voluntary situation, and under a voluntary means certainly one should realize what he's entering, and one should realize what he's going to get out of it, and what one is going to put into it so that this truly serves some purpose in this regard.

As to the type of people you'll meet, I don't think that one should ever think secondary or belittle the fact that we are meeting people in the military that they are second rate. This is not true. You are meeting people of top quality, people that are sacrificing not only virtue of monetary value, but also sacrificing from the standpoint of defense of your nation. It's not a game of waving the flag in the direction that one might think today is corny; it's not corny at all. But, in time of need, one becomes totally happy when the results are in favor of a peaceful nation or in regards to a point where one can rest in a situation in saying, "Well, I don't have to worry that we're going to be invaded and/or be militarized." It serves a purpose in this direction.

- A: How do you feel as a corpsman especially, that the Naval Reserve has been accepted here in the city of Youngstown?
- V: I think the Navy Reserve here in Youngstown is pretty fortunate. I'm speaking from Youngstown alone. I never compared it with another unit in another town. I think we're pretty well accepted here.

I think that the number of Navy people that have come into this community as leaders, as yourself, in the units, have done a very excellent job in public relations. I think that this is well shown by the number of men that join the Navy from this area, the number of men that are retained in the Navy, the number of people that return to the unit and serve.

I think we should well realize that it is going to be an

attrition rate. We're going to find a number of people that don't want it, a number of people that aren't involved in it, but again, that percentage is to be accepted. We can't accept 100 percent, but certainly the number of people involved have always turned out and done a good job.

I think the reserve unit has always done an acceptable job in the community. It's not one that is ever reflected in the community's eyes as being not cooperative and not functional. Any time it has been asked to promote or to do a job in the community it has done a good job. It has done an effective job and an acceptable one.

A: How about in the medical field, are any of these people accepted to work in the medical field here in town?

V: I find that the boys have had good training in the Navy. Of course, those boys that worked as paramedics in the lab, X-ray, and operating room and ward work have probably found it difficult because community hospitals are oriented toward nursing personnel, toward trained personnel of their own program. Of course, now, the Navy has certified its technicians in both radiology and laboratory so that the job is going to be easier.

I find too, that the men who were in the Navy did the job and did it well. They were conscientious; they were sincere. I can't say as a corpsman, the responsibility that I was given as a Navy corpsman, that I didn't have pride because every job we did we had pride. With that pride you carried out the fact that you were taking care of a fellow Navy man, in regard to either an officer or an enlisted man. You did the job to the best of your ability, because you had that opportunity and you gave your best efforts to see that they got well and were able to return to active duty.

This in itself was part of that team effort that many speak about today in medicine. I don't find this to be new. I think this is what the Navy had years and years ago. It had it in World War II; it was a team effort. It was a team of corpsmen, nurses, doctors working together to provide good medical care for its people. They're only utilizing what was done many, many years ago in a different type of verbiage and a different sense.

When you really come down to it, that's what it really was. These boys weren't trained in schools, they weren't trained in colleges to become Navy lab techs or Navy corpsmen or Navy X-ray techs. They were trained by the Navy in a course that took a period of eight weeks to indoctrinate you as a corpsman. When you went to OR tech school, it took you three months.

But that three months you worked and you did the job. Certainly those people deserve a lot of credit for setting up a program in that direction. This is just exactly what we're going through today in our community hospitals in the paramedic program. My feeling is if we really need good paramedics, there would be no doubt in my mind where I would go, in what direction I would head to find those people.

A: Going back to the reserve type things, could you just give me an idea what you did at those first meetings when you came back in the 1940's?

V: Well, I'll tell you, we sat and we listened and we never thought it would get off the ground too well. You can imagine meeting in a lawyer's office in the Union National Bank Building. We were officer heavy--nine officers and approximately four enlisted men. As we sat there, week in and week out, you would find another man trickle in. Then, as I said, the meetings were changed later to South High. The conversation was always in the direction of what efforts had to be taken to increase the numbers, what efforts had to be made to eventually put the unit into a successful function, a successful situation.

The officers, I can only remember a few of them. One of them was Mr. Anderson who was a coach of football at South High. The other was Mr. Standsbury and then two attorneys of which slip my mind. These people worked hard. I would have to say, too, Lieutenant Field, who was the active duty officer, and Chief Ferranti, who I'll never forget because he was a pretty good influence and a very good stimulus to the Navy program here through his public relations as an enlisted man, did a marvelous job in promoting the Navy program.

It didn't seem to take too long to get started. The early meetings were just purely verbal sessions of trying to get people to join the unit and recruiting. There was no formal type of training for anybody. As a corpsman I received no formal training and neither did Campbell, who was the second class. The primary purpose was recruitment and we were primarily recruiters at the time. Once the program was established and the numbers increased, then we went into formal sessions in our units as corpsmen, doing the responsible work of corpsmen. The doctors were doing the physicals; primarily that's all that was a requirement. Then the educational facility came about by virtue of us going for two weeks active duty and returning to hospitals or whatever choice we had made for our active duty program.

A: How did you actually become an officer?

V: I became an officer through the captain, who again was from Youngstown. He had talked me into joining the Navy when I was in medical school. When I returned I went to Pittsburgh to the Navy recruitment office and applied for the medical corps commission and went through the formality which was required.

I would have to say the influencing fact here was that captain, who now works as a retired physician in one of the hospitals here in the clinic. I would have to say that he did a very good job. He would go from Ohio State to the other medical schools in this area and try to recruit people to join active duty. I had had active duty already in the Navy, so it was not necessary for me to go back.

Actually, the new chief of surgery at Bethesda Naval Hospital was a classmate of mine who operated on Mrs. Ford for cancer of the breast. He was a classmate of mine at Ohio State, he joined the Navy. If I remember correctly, out of our class, four or five men went into the Navy as active duty officers. He was one of them, and he made a career of the Navy and he's now chief of surgery and captain at the Navy Medical Center at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

A: Was he on active duty or was he a reservist?

V: He was a reservist who at that time had the rank of captain and would go around from school to school. I don't know whether he was on active duty as an officer. I remember him being from Youngstown and practicing medicine in Youngstown. I think he was a reservist and he volunteered his time and did this as part of his obligation.

A: After you became an officer and joined the unit under Commander Dinger, what was your assignment at that time?

V: I was assigned as the medical officer to the unit. Dr. Clifford was the senior medical officer. Also, I was the physical fitness officer. That was a chore because as physical fitness officer I was responsible for all the physical fitness of all the enlisted and officer personnel. Of course, at that time everyone was gung ho on how many push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, how far you could run, how far you could jump, and so forth, and I kept these records. We had to do them quarterly.

As a medical officer, although I'm interested in physical fitness I don't know how I became involved in this area. I had to go around and I could say that I received more notes--one is not able to do this, and be excused; one we had to find

out how many personnel could do it, the number of over thirty-eight. We were worried about coronaries in the officer ranks. It was an interesting job, but truly I was not happy in doing that job. I was more interested in starting that corps school in the class A school unit.

I was also responsible for teaching and giving lectures to the corpsmen. We met once a week on Monday night. I had to give out of the three hour meeting session an hour and a half lecture to the corpsmen. Of course, we had corpsmen of various rates, starting from HN all the way through to HN-1. You had to vary your lecture and teaching assignments. What I would do is lecture approximately forty-five minutes to the third class, HN's. To the second class and first class I would give another lecture session of forty-five minutes. Through this we were giving continuing education to them. It also helped from the standpoint of my own time, because I would have to read and maintain a degree of knowledge in order to promote and keep in view of what they needed so that they could be advanced in rate. This was our primary purpose. I must say that we did advance our boys in rate and we have a pretty good record in that area, in the medical department.

- A: Your corps school, was this a program the Navy thought up or was this something that you, along with the people here, came up with?
- V: No, this was the Navy program at that time. You had to have a facility that could train and start boys for class A school. That was the Navy program at that time. We did have the facilities. We had a Navy nurse with us on hand. We had three physicians and a dentist. We were qualified to start a class A corps school unit. We did that under the Navy's supervision. We complied with their program and, as I say, we turned out a good number of boys in the class A school system. It was the old Navy enlistment program "two by six." You went into the Navy for two years active duty and you maintained six years total with four years reserve program status.
- A: Were all these people pay status, all the nurses and everything at that time?
- V: Everyone was under a pay status. Once you reached the rank of commander, you dropped out of the unit as anyone else. All personnel were under pay status.
- A: Have you in the medical branch had any problem with pay status or nonpay status?
- V: Yes, we were fortunate enough through those men who had been

previously in the Navy, we were bringing them back into the unit as they were discharged. At one time we had more medical officers than we had line officers. We were over-abundant at that time. We, through myself and other personnel in the medical unit, Dr. Meikle, went out and recruited dentists and also medical officers. We had as high as six medical officers and five dental officers under our direction. Actually, we could have gone even higher. We also always had good, active duty corpsmen serving us in the unit.

I can't say enough for the Navy personnel that were sent here. They were either first class and/or chiefs in serving us on active duty. They have done a tremendous job. I can't recollect any time that we ever had an inspection from the Philadelphia area that we did not score well and do well. This is a credit to them. It also reinforces my thinking of the Navy that the men who were involved in the medical program had a lot of pride and did a good job. Certainly, it would be difficult for a man who was on active duty in the Navy and serving twenty years or to retirement to have to come to an area of Youngstown, not that I'm belittling Youngstown, but in his duties of a Naval individual, providing a lot of enthusiasm working with reserves. I must say that these men all did well, and we're proud of every one of them.

To the present day, we have Crittenden, who is a first class, who is about to leave us, who has worked well with us on another program which we tried to get the Navy to promote where corpsmen would work on their duty weekend in a community hospital. We would love to see this program come through. It has tremendous capabilities. I'm sure in due time we could have a large number of corpsmen in the unit from this area rejoin and would be willing to work weekends, as well as in the future if we could possibly have a two week Navy duty program where they would stay at home and work in the hospitals in the community. Certainly this would be an excellent program. As I say, our present corpsman, Crittenden, has done a tremendous job in working out some of the administrative work which shows and gives credit to the Navy for the type of individuals they have.

- A: Just to change the subject slightly, can you recall any social activities or activities with the other officers at the center that you became involved with?
- V: I would have to say our social activities were always of the highest quality. They maintained a flow of good camaraderie. I think that the Russian would have to go a great degree farther in order to surpass our events. This again speaks well of the type of communication one might have because we always had a very good time. I would have to say it was

something to look forward to every year. This was not only involved from the standpoint of wetting down parties for advancement in rank, but just to get together and meet men from different occupations and their families. They always enjoyed themselves. It is the type of individual you meet in the service and you were happy to be associated with them.

I would have to say that the Navy enlisted parties, in which we had events that were held at the unit and outside events like picnics and social events, were always very successful. It showed that the people did have a great deal of respect for one another and enjoyed socializing with one another.

A: How does your family accept your time that you put into the Navy? I realize that a doctor spends a lot of time out anyway, but how do they accept this Navy time out?

V: I think they accept it very well. They have been brought up in it and, of course, see Navy articles around the house and see armed forces magazines coming home. I think that they're proud of it. I think that every step in rank that I've advanced, they also showed the same deal of pride and happiness that one would have in achieving that rank. During the Vietnam War, one might say that they had differences that America should not be involved and here, my being an officer in the Navy reserve, what my thoughts were. I didn't hear dissenting remarks.

I think there was a great pride brought about, and they too have a great pride in their nation. Every holiday that is national, the flag is put out of the house. Oddly enough, it is not put out by myself or my wife, it's put out by the children. They, too, respected my desire and my service with the United States in the Navy reserve program. They too have the same feeling that I have. They're not discontent by the amount of time that I put in. In fact, when I come home from two weeks Navy duty, they want to know what went on, who I met, what happened, and whether I enjoyed myself. Truly, I think that they have accepted it. In fact, my boy is now going to Ohio State, as a graduate from Ursuline High School, and he's thinking of joining the ROTC. I don't know which branch he'll join, but this indicates that he, too, has the same respect in regard to the armed forces that I have.

A: Doctor, on any of your two week cruises, or any of that, can you remember any of the stories that went along with them? Can you relate any specific story?

V: Well, one that comes to my mind very clearly. . . I had gone for two weeks on the U. S. S. Barton, which was a destroyer. There was destroyer activity going on in the

Puerto Rico area. While we were en route to Puerto Rico, we were in a storm for approximately five days and five nights. During the course of this time, the water was so rough that we had lost plating or shielding off our gun mounds and also had torn off plates all around the ship.

During the course of this time, one of the chiefs had fractured a leg, and in breaking his leg we were going to reduce the fracture. The sick bay area in a destroyer is very small. So at midship, which is an opening between one side--the right side to the left side--we had set up a table. Giving him morphine, we reduced the fracture, put on a cast without the benefit of X-ray, and took him back down below deck, carrying him down while the cast was drying.

The next day we came into the Puerto Rico area. A tugboat picked us up in a storm. You have to realize how rough water can be, with this tugboat bouncing around. We lowered him into a tugboat, and I, myself, got into the tugboat. We went into Puerto Rico, which was no better at that time because the Navy dispensary was closed; a storm was in Puerto Rico. We were then transferred to an Army hospital, Rodriguez Hospital, which is now closed, and lightning struck the place--the power plant--and their power was out. We arrived there at night, approximately about 10:00.

The power unit in their X-ray department was run by one of the field units, by a hand unit, and the orthopedic on duty was a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and he had done his orthopedic residency at Pittsburgh; it was like old home week. With no power, the girl sitting at the power unit turning it, a Puerto Rican girl pumping this power unit, we were able to take an X-ray. The orthopedic said, "How did you reduce this?" I had gone through the sequences I had just finished. He looked and he said, "Mike, hell, you have a perfect reduction; we don't have to do anything." He said, "Take him back tomorrow morning or if you want to, take him back tonight, back over to San Juan, the Navy base, and put him up over there." I said, "Fine, it's all right with me. Tomorrow, I'll get an X-ray at the Navy dispensary."

That night, we came back and put the chief up in the chief's quarters. I, myself, tried to get bedding or quarters. I went over to the bachelor officer quarters which was entirely filled. Fortunately, at that time, a Navy admiral was making an investigation at the Puerto Rican base at San Juan. I was standing at the desk trying to get quarters; he gave me quarters with his personnel in the BOQ. You have to sort of reflect back, but this is the type of people, as I have said throughout, you meet in the Navy.



The next morning we went over to the dispensary and got the X-ray taken of the chief's foot. It was perfect. We had to do no refracture, no re-reduction. The cast was on in good shape. We then waited for the ship to make port from maneuvers. When the ship came in, I must recollect that the Barton was the last one to get in. We were back on; the chief was put back on ship. After a weekend in Puerto Rico, we came back to Philadelphia. I think this probably stands out as one of the vivid memories.

I always liked rough water. In fact, when I received junior deck officer privileges on the bridge, I was through a storm in the Georgian Bay area on a destroyer escort. In fact, I believe your brother was the CO of the U. S. S. Whitehall, which was out of Cleveland. Again, as I say, there were many interesting and good times with the Navy, but that was one I'll never forget.

A: Thank you, doctor, for the interview. I appreciate it.

V: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW