

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Reserves Project

Naval Reserve Experiences

O. H. 821

EARL SHARKEY

Interviewed

by

David Arms

on

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YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: EARL SHARKEY

INTERVIEWER: David Arms

SUBJECT: active duty experiences, reserve experiences

DATE: May 19, 1975

A: This is an interview with Earl Sharkey for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by David Arms, at the Naval Reserve Center, 315 East LaClede, Youngstown, Ohio, May 19, 1975, at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Sharkey, could you give me some of your background, your family, education?

S: I was born and educated in Youngstown. I went to grade school and South High School. I completed four years of high school.

A: You're married?

S: Yes.

A: Children?

S: No children.

A: How long have you been married?

S: Since 1948. It has been twenty-seven years.

A: When did you join the Navy reserve?

S: I applied in January of 1947 at the Union National Bank.

A: Were you in World War II at all?

S: I was.

A: Could you tell me about that a little bit?

S: I entered the service in July of 1942 and went through two service schools.

A: What kind of duty did you see? Where did you go?

S: I shipped out of San Francisco with a club outfit. Rather than have the ships come all the way back for repairs, we would take the repair shops right to the ships. They set up the complete repair outfits, the foundries, and torpedo shops.

A: Where did you take these shops?

S: New Guinea.

A: What was your rank?

S: Motor machinist mate, first class. I was in charge with the torpedo men and my job was to supply the air for them.

A: What did they do with the air?

S: They used it for the charge of torpedoes.

A: They were compressed air-driven?

S: Yes.

A: Did you see any action?

S: We were having straggler attacks; they weren't anything to do with land, just planes.

A: What happened when the war was over? What did you do?

S: I immediately went back to U. S. Steel and finished my apprenticeship, my machinist's apprenticeship. I had about a year to go.

A: When were you released from active duty?

S: December of 1945.

A: You went back to U. S. Steel?

S: Yes.

A: What do you do for U. S. Steel?

S: I'm a machinist.

A: You worked there how many years?

S: Since September of 1939.

- A: You said you joined the reserves in 1947. Could you just give me an idea of how you went about joining, who you talked to and who did you see?
- S: In the machine shop at the time there was another gentleman there who was a chief machinist mate during the war. He had to join around November 1946. He told me about it and I said I never even knew they had a reserve program here. He told me a few of the particulars and the advantages; I looked into it. I went down to that bank building and Commander Standsberry signed me up.
- A: Who was this gentleman at U. S. Steel you referred to?
- S: William Johns, he was the chief machinist mate.
- A: Was he an older gentleman at the time?
- S: No, he is probably only five or six years older than myself.
- A: You went and signed up down there. Was there any special procedure you had to go through at the time? Being a Navy man I'm sure you remember some of the procedures.
- S: I had to bring my separation papers, discharge papers. It was just a matter of swearing in.
- A: Did you have to take any more tests?
- S: No more tests.
- A: What were you assigned to? How did they determine what you were assigned to?
- S: They only had one division. You attended meetings at South High School and they had between 400 and 500 men in this division. They just separated us as best as they could with those small classrooms. Engineering would be one classroom.
- A: What were you assigned to in the division? What did you do?
- S: There wasn't much you could do at South High. They knew about a training center that was going to be built, and it was just a matter of waiting. Really there was nothing you could do up there.
- A: Did you have organized classroom training, or did you just sit around and drink coffee?
- S: That's just about what it amounted to, yes. So many people were coming in then that it was impossible to break it down to any training.

A: Why did you join up? What really made up your mind?

S: A four letter word, Navy. I always figured I was in the Navy and the Navy was in me. I liked the water too. I wouldn't want to be any other place.

A: Did you get paid at this time for going to these meetings?

S: Yes.

A: Do you remember how you were paid? Did you get a check every time you went?

S: We were paid by the quarter. I have no idea where the checks came from at that time.

A: Do you remember approximately how much you got paid?

S: I believe I started at roughly \$47.

A: A quarter?

S: Yes.

A: You were a chief petty officer at the time?

S: Yes.

A: What did you do with the money at that time? Did you have any special thing that you used that money for?

S: Yes, that was one advantage I found in the naval reserve. The checks would immediately go to pay my civilian insurance, real estate taxes, and car insurance. It was used for nothing else but that.

A: You also got married about this time too, is that correct?

S: 1948.

A: What does your family think about sharing you with the Navy on the weekends?

S: There is no problem at all because my wife isn't afraid of very much--only the Navy. It's much too big for her. She can't fight it.

A: Could you give me an idea of what happened when the unit first moved into the naval reserve center?

S: We tried to continue as we set up the unit. We didn't form divisions out of the units, but we were known as a larger division. They would allow 400 men in that division. We did mostly all

classroom work--instructing and refreshing on engineering; what the men had performed during the war. More hit and miss, we didn't really have curriculums or anything. Instead we had to devise our own methods of instruction. We utilized some of the equipment after we got built. The equipment was put in the midsummer of 1948. We were getting off the ground. It was like starting all over new when we got here. We just forgot everything at South High.

A: Did you help put any of the equipment in up here?

S: Yes, I spent a two week training period here in the last weeks of September, and at that time Chief Johns was also here performing two weeks. He and I set up all those lathes and routed them in.

A: Do you remember any of the people who came up here with you?

S: I can only recall one officer other than Officer Standsberry. He was one lieutenant named Jay David Carr.

A: What was his job?

S: He was in charge of engineering.

A: Who was the enlisted in charge of? How was it broken down? Was it just in engineering? Did they have the machinist mates in one area and the engineering men in another?

S: We did separate them, yes. The machinist mates would have their own classroom and electricians would have their own.

A: You went with the motor macks at that time?

S: There were a lot of them; the Navy was full of them.

A: Do you remember how many were here?

S: We must have had at least twenty to twenty-five of them.

A: Were they all in one division or did they have them in different service divisions?

S: I believe at that time we were one, large division.

A: What did all these motor macks do? When did you drill?

S: I believe Tuesday nights.

A: What did you do? You said you had a lot of classroom work. Did you discuss or did you lecture or read out of books?

S: We used training manuals. We had a lot of training aids;

we had to improvise a lot at that time because there wasn't such a thing as somebody sending them out to you. We improvised training aids, planned lessons. It was the only thing you could do to occupy time until the Navy set up their own program.

A: Is there any particular happening at this time that you remember? Before the tape started you were talking about the Truman Act.

S: Truman's Armed Forces Act came out in 1947 when we were still at South High.

A: How did that affect you?

S: That is when he established the sixty year old retirement. That was frightening to a lot of people.

A: Why do you say that?

S: There were young people and they couldn't visualize themselves being sixty years old.

A: That's a long way down the pipe, is that it?

S: I did that.

A: Was there a different attitude when all these people came back from World War II and set up down here?

S: They all had a good attitude. They all wanted to be here, until the Korean War came.

A: It was all volunteer?

S: Yes. I don't recall anybody who wasn't a highly rated man. They rated so fast that everybody was second class and up.

A: How did you make a second class? Did you have to take a test or anything?

S: In service school.

A: You had to go to school?

S: I went to a machinist mate school in the Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan. At that time machinist mates didn't have a third class; they had a fireman's rank. You either went to fireman's rank to second class. They only rated so high on the 250 people that would get second class. At that time I finished fifth out of 250 and I got rated second class.

A: You really didn't have to take a test or anything to get promoted?

S: Out of the school.

A: Yes, out of the school. You took the test at the school, but they weren't Navy-wide exams such as they have today?

S: No, we had second class yeoman in that school and we had storekeepers, but they needed machinist mates badly. Then they selected fifty of the top out of the machinist mate school and said, "Now you're going to be a motor mack." Everybody was gung ho and wanted to go to sea which meant staying another eight weeks. They had a bunch of grumpy sailors on their hands after three months.

A: Was there a Navy barracks or anything?

S: We had a regular barracks camp right across from the Ford plant.

A: Did you have liberty or anything like that or was it strictly all work?

S: It was the most horrible liberty that a person in this country can have.

A: Why is that?

S: Five hours a week.

A: Five hours a week!

S: From 5:00 to 10:00 at night, that's all.

A: When was this, on Saturday?

S: In the middle of the week.

A: What did you do on the weekends?

S: You got one weekend off in two weeks. In other words, the weekend that you got off you didn't get that five hours. If you had five hours on a Wednesday of one week you didn't get any liberty until the second weekend coming up.

A: Do you think today the sailors would go for something like that?

S: No, and we didn't either, but there was nothing you could do about it.

A: What did you do? Any guys go over the fence or anything?

S: No, nothing like that. Everybody wanted to get rated and studied to get out to sea.

- A: You said you wanted to get to sea, but ended up in a repair facility type of thing. How did you feel about that? You really couldn't get in to their shooting down the Kamikazes.
- S: It was an important job. I saw those ships come in all beat up and shot up and had to get them ready, resupply them with torpedoes.
- A: What did you do for relaxation over there? Did they have 3.2% beer or any of that kind of stuff over there?
- S: I worked in the torpedo shop; we had a still.
- A: They had that good, old torpedo juice.
- S: We distilled it from 180 down to 100.
- A: It really didn't make you blind?
- S: We mixed it with pineapple juice.
- A: You really diluted it down pretty much?
- S: If you drank a canteen of that you would die. It's so powerful; it is 100 proof.
- A: I guess it gave a pretty good buzz just diluted down with pineapple juice, didn't it?
- S: Yes. Then we used to make raisin jug. We would get raisins and sugar and bury the jugs in the ground and let it ferment.
- A: Did you ever run into anybody from Youngstown when you were overseas?
- S: I was with a lot of them.
- A: Were they all in the same unit with you?
- S: They were in my first unit. Now I left this unit and then I went on PT's for awhile. The fleets were moving so fast; they had no use for PT's. Then I went with an underwater sound invasion and whenever the fleet would move then this sound station would have to move and drop their sonar buoy in the water. They had about ten of them to drop out there to protect the fleet.
- A: You listened for submarines?
- S: Not me.
- A: No, I mean the people.

- S: The people would. I was in charge of the base maintenance.
- A: What was your rate at that time?
- S: First class.
- A: When did you make chief?
- S: April 1945. At that time everything was cut in half. It was cut from three years to eighteen months.
- A: You said everybody was a volunteer until Korea came along. Could you tell me what happened then?
- S: Surprisingly enough, they wanted critical aides, electricians, radio men, and quartermasters. In engineering, they weren't too hot for in the higher rates, only second class. There were a lot of motor machinist mates promoted to macks, second class, and some first. I imagine during the regular Navy they were overstocked with each set. Those were the ones who could afford to stay; they weren't going to give up the hat. Of the clearly critical rates, they did take the chiefs. They had a lottery; they went by the last two digits in your serial number.
- A: For your rate?
- S: No, whatever, it didn't make any difference.
- A: In other words, if you were in a critical rate they took you no matter what your lottery number was?
- S: Yes.
- A: If you were in a noncritical rate?
- S: You went by the lottery. The ones who were critical rate, I recall, had special treatment, probably the card flopped out on them right away. The majority of them went by these last digits, the serial number.
- A: Do you remember any of the people who left from here? What kind of duty did they go on? You didn't get called up by your serial number?
- S: Not at all. I recall one person, I think it was a second class machinist mate, he ended up much better. He got an ice break.
- A: What did you do during this period? What happened at the centers? Did training continue as normal?
- S: It depleted the ranks quite a bit. We just carried on like we were. There was a lot of confusion. By the way, we never did

see any of those people again.

A: They weren't too interested in coming back, is that it?

S: The only one I recall coming back was a chief machinist.

A: Their attitude changed?

S: As a matter of fact, I still see some of them at work and they still talk about it.

A: What do they say when they talk about it?

S: They are a little bitter about it. I believe they were looking forward to this reserve, attending the meetings with their shipmates and looking forward to getting their twenty in and never dreaming they would be called again; they thought they did their job.

A: Why do you think they really joined the reserves? They didn't really want to go back. Was this more of a social type thing?

S: I imagine in years to come perhaps they could have been oriented to it, but it hit too fast. There was only five years difference. Now, if there was ten. They were all building houses or trying to do this. Their jobs were getting good; they had a variety of jobs; they had their own shops and it all went down the drain.

A: How did you feel about not going?

S: Strange, I felt that . . . We did get some word that they were stopped in rates. It got so in the Navy that I thought every other person was his motor mack. If you went anywhere where there was a receiving ship every other person was a motor mack. There were thousands, and they were rated fast.

A: What did a motor mack really do at this time?

S: During the war?

A: Yes. I mean in this period between the war. You said there were thousands of motor macks. How come there were so many?

S: That's the rate they needed so much with those amphibians, the landing barges.

A: What did you guys do? What was the requirement of their rate?

S: That part of the crew on the landing barge would operate, maintain, and keep that engine in running condition under all emergencies. You had your amphib ships, 1st's, all these were diesel powered. I imagine they outnumbered the steam driven ships by five to one.

A: Would you say that the motor mack was anybody who worked on an internal combustion engine of some kind?

S: Diesel or gasoline driven.

A: How did you end up providing air to the torpedoes?

S: I spent a week in south Norwalk, Connecticut in a factory that made air compressors. I learned about them. They gave me and another motor mack from Asbury Park, New Jersey the blueprints and told us where this air compressor unit goes. As soon as they packaged it, we had to go with it. We followed it all over the pacific.

A: Did you ever see Art Smith ever again?

S: No. I was down along the Garden State Expressway last summer and I stopped at one of those rest stops and I looked in the phone book. I saw about fifteen Smith's that started with "A", and I wasn't going to call them. I left service school with him and stayed all the way through with him. We were in groups of two. We left the motor mack school in the Ford plant to go to sub chasing in Philadelphia. There were fifty of us. I suppose they found out there were too many. New orders came and broke us up and sent us to the air compressor factories.

A: You started out for a lot of places in the Navy and never got there.

S: Yes. I was with twenty-five torpedo men. I had to do their washing and scrub their clothes--two left arm rates and twenty-five right arm rates. That didn't work out too well.

A: After Korea, everybody got deactivated. What happened here at the center? Did you lose a lot of people after the Korean War?

S: Everybody that went we lost.

A: You were down about half the size you were before?

S: Yes, about half. They broke it down to two divisions. They called us the median divisions, 114 and 115.

A: Which one unit did you go to?

S: I believe I started out in 114.

A: Do you happen to remember the CO at that time?

S: Yes, Mr. Prelin.

A: That's Jim Prelin?

- S: Yes. Then we had a Lieutenant Holloway. Mr. Petzinger came after the Korean War.
- A: He joined the unit. He wasn't the commanding officer though?
- S: He got to be.
- A: After a while?
- S: He was exacted and then got to be.
- A: Do you remember any other units that were attached here at that time?
- S: The Marines were here. They were here when they built the new building. That's why it was called the Navy-Marine Corps.
- A: How was the surface division organized at that time? Did you have a bunch of departments or was it divisions? How was it made up? Was there an engineering department that you belonged to?
- S: Yes, but our primary job then was to train recruits. We didn't train rate or cadre; they were all used to train recruits.
- A: You recruited right off the street?
- S: Yes, right off the street. We started from the BMR.
- A: That's basic military requirements?
- S: Yes. Then out of the first six months of training they would progress and either go into a seaman branch or engineering.
- A: The recruiting was strictly for the naval reserve? In other words, there was a Navy recruiting and a naval reserve recruiting? Were these people brought right into the reserve program?
- S: Yes, they were brought right into the Navy hair. At that time, you have to remember, we had this ten year deal where you didn't have to go on active duty if you signed up for ten years.
- A: You didn't have to go on active duty at all? How about your two weeks?
- S: You had to go on your two weeks, but not go right into the fleet. We had a lot of that.
- A: These people were probably trying to get away from the draft or the two year active duty requirement?
- S: That was eight year. I imagine that would be there.
- A: That's what the program is designed for, wasn't it?

- S: If you wanted to advance, you had to do it on your own. We didn't hold classes for regular people; we didn't have that many. All chiefs were instructors.
- A: Was there an engineering department or was it all training?
- S: No, we had one, huge fireman class and one, huge seaman class.
- A: The instructors were either firemen or seamen?
- S: I had the fireman side. All of these people went through.
- A: When did this type of program end?
- S: I would say that lasted until around 1966. After that they still kept the recruits, but the stationkeepers took them over. They taught them on a Thursday night. They took them off of us.
- A: They made a MTD, military training division?
- S: Right. When they took them away from us we started our own rate training.
- A: Do you recall if 4-115 was also in the business of training recruits during the 1950's, or did they have their own training?
- S: They had their own recruits.
- A: In other words, you almost competed against one another?
- S: We definitely did, for strength.
- A: Did you have any competition between one another?
- S: Just for district.
- A: District competition?
- S: I found it a very successful program.
- A: In what way? Why was it successful?
- S: As far as my division was concerned, we had excellent instructors like Chief Pelliot, Chief Buttile, and Chief Slagee. They could bring the Navy right in the classroom. They would square them away just by holding their attention. I found that later on, when they got to this MTD, they had to use a lot of threats and discipline to keep them because they didn't utilize chiefs. I had many a fellow come back and tell me how much they learned here that was helpful. We made firemen out of them before they went. Very few went that weren't firemen or seamen.
- A: Do you think this training was just as good as boot camp or was

it a different type of training?

S: They got boot camp.

A: Did it prepare them as well?

S: For when they went on active duty?

A: Yes.

S: They were far ahead than anybody that joined four years. They were rated fast.

A: Were there any other units attached to the center besides 4-114, 4-115 and the Marines? Was there a group command staff at that time?

S: Yes, we had a group command.

A: He was the overseer of everybody?

S: Yes.

A: Were the Seabees here at that time?

S: Yes, they were here.

A: Do you remember doing anything with the Seabees or were they a part by themselves?

S: Definitely they were.

A: They drilled their own time?

S: When we first started to drill with them is when we shifted the weekend.

A: When they left this recruit training thing and went to recruiting only cadre and training cadre, how was the unit set up at that time?

S: We had to have the engineering, the deck, the military. We didn't have an operation; that didn't come until later. There was supply.

A: In the engineering department, did they have that broken down into the R division and the N division?

S: No, just by rates?

A: Strictly by rates?

S: MM's, EN's, DM's were returnees from active duty. The

primary job would be to advance them.

A: What kind of training did you take on at this time? Was it classroom training with your own lesson plan?

S: Classroom training and practical training on shops, anything that could be devised, equipment that was in the shop. The usual projectors, we made a lot of use of them. It seemed that we had overhead projectors in every classroom. The chiefs all had been at instructor's training school, and it would have been a cardinal sin to teach without an overhead projector or a movie projector.

A: Did you have a lot of movies at that time?

S: We had a movie just about at every class.

A: Did you order your films from someplace?

S: We ordered our own films.

A: From Comp Four?

S: Yes, in advance.

A: You were still meeting once a week?

S: Yes, once a week.

A: What happened to 4-114?

S: 4-114, one of them went to weekend first, 4-115, and then we went to weekend with them. This was not too long ago.

A: How long ago was it?

S: Since we went on weekends?

A: Yes.

S: 1968, 1969 or before that. In 1967 and 1968, Mr. Murphy was the division CO.

A: Do you remember when the center from Warren closed?

S: They closed around the same time.

A: Did those people drill on their own night?

S: Monday night was their original night to drill here.

A: The unit remained intact.

- S: They took that unit out of Warren and brought it right here. We were on the weekends.
- A: At that time? Both 4-114 and 4-115?
- S: Yes.
- A: Do you remember how long ago that was?
- S: The division that was on Tuesday night went over there, so we couldn't have been there very long. In fact, I think as soon as we came over we were all moved into this one division, the same as they did when they dissolved 113.
- A: That just happened recently.
- S: 113 dissolved.
- A: 4-113 was eliminated this year.
- S: We were very proud of the training program we had in the early 1960's.
- A: What type of a program did you have?
- S: Teaching these recruits. We were very disappointed when the training center took them over on Thursday night. I used to have a classroom. I had so many people I would set up in the machine shop and use a portable blackboard. That was the time when Reagan came aboard; a second class assistant was finally helping me. It was quite a challenge. They were a pretty good bunch of lads and we were proud of them. We made them all good firemen before they went. I'm sure they made good sailors for the Navy because they were here roughly a year. Why they took them off of us, I don't know. The Comp Four deal said to push them in with the stationkeepers.
- A: What do you do as a department head? Are you responsible for your attendance?
- S: Attendance, grooming, discipline, and chasing people, as I found out. All you do is chase people. I found out it is a job of detail. If you don't do the details you won't get the big jobs. I never could find use for a desk. My office is on wheels.
- A: Do you find that your naval reserve experience helps you with your civilian employment? Is there any interrelation at all?
- S: From the people that I associated with in the naval reserve, I find there is not a comparison in industry. I find these people are much more educated and concerned about other people's feelings. They're much more kind, more generous. I find industry a rat race. The companies cannot train people like the Navy can

train them--to be gentlemen, to know their job, and to be leaders.

A: Do you think that the Navy training is a more overall training?

S: There is no comparison, definitely as far as leadership is concerned. Industry has no conception of leadership. They take somebody and say you're going to be a boss. He doesn't know that he had fifty or a hundred individuals working for him. He has 150 to check on. Industry doesn't train leaders like the Navy.

A: Do you partake in any other activities? Are you a member of any organizations here in town?

S: No, I never joined VFW, American Legion, or any veteran's outfit which I should have. I just thought I was content to stay with the Navy.

A: Do you have any hobbies or anything like that? Or is the Navy your hobby?

S: The Navy is my hobby.

A: What type of activities did you become involved in when the center first opened--what kind of activities that don't relate to your training, like the Charles G. Watson? Did you belong to any bowling teams or baseball or anything like that?

S: With the Navy?

A: Yes.

S: No. I had to give up athletics following my high school days due to a back injury. Basketball was my sport and I had to give it up. Even during the service, in the war, I couldn't participate in any basketball. It would go out on me right away.

A: How did you ever make it through the Navy with a bad disc?

S: It doesn't bother me. I've learned to live with it. If I have to run and cut sharply, it will hurt. I don't bowl or anything because of that reason. Normal working and that doesn't bother me.

A: How about any community service projects? Did you ever remember the naval reserve becoming involved in any community service projects?

S: No.

A: I was thinking of things like the Charles G. Watson.

- S: Yes, we did manage to get a hold of a boat. An old, 1924, thirty-eight footer was bought for us by the Navy League for \$800. It was rusted out and termites were eating it. We had it behind the training center for about three years and worked on it on the weekends. We worked on it on our own; we stayed late at night and worked on it. It took us two years to get it ready to float. We took it out to Milton Dam. The city gave us a dock area. We had quite a fun day when it was launched. We had the Warren Military Junior Band there. It was thirty-eight feet long. We used it for training. We would take as high as fourteen or sixteen people on it. We would run ship-to-shore communications, flag signals, light signals. We would run drills like man overboard, and docking drills. We would have high speed runs and emergency casualties. We took the craft, broke it down, and remodeled it. Everything had to be reinserted by the engineering department. Everything had to be all spell signals. Everything had to be reanswered by either bells or power telecoms. There were no visual signals. The engineering department was completely sealed off. You had to use headphones or answer bells.
- A: Where did the money and the materials come from for the renovation?
- S: The materials were scrounged from the different industries in town. They would give us piping, paint. We begged, borrowed, and stole. We didn't have a penny of our own.
- A: Do you remember whose idea this was?
- S: I would say right now, Captain Kloakin. Men were tremendously impressed. The entire station would spend the weekend there. They would eat there, set up tables. Two divisions would go and spend the entire day there. They were very pleased with the whole setup. Everybody would get out on the boat. You could swim or fish if you wanted, anything to get away from the training center for a whole day. Other divisions used it. Akron divisions would run it during some weekends.
- A: How would you say the naval reserve has been accepted in the community of Youngstown?
- S: To tell you the truth, I still run into a lot of people who don't know where it is. I don't think people pay too much attention. Forty-five out of fifty people wouldn't know where the Army Reserves Center is or the Navy Reserves Center.
- A: They probably don't even know one exists in town, is that it?
- S: A lot of people don't know.
- A: I would like to get onto the subject of the two week training. What did you get out of it?

- S: I doubt whether I would have stayed with the reserves if I couldn't have taken it. It gave me a chance to break up the monotony of work. The vacations were small, and this gave me a chance to get two more weeks out of them. Also, it gave me a chance to travel, especially on the east coast where I had never had a chance to go; I was on the west coast during the war. As far as the reserves itself, without the two weeks I doubt if I would have stayed.
- A: Do you learn a lot too? Is it an educational experience?
- S: I learn a lot about the Navy overall.
- A: Not necessarily your rate?
- S: Not necessarily my rate. Sometimes when you have been instructing forty-six drills out of the year, you don't want the last two weeks on a cruise liner.
- A: What kind of things have you done on your cruises?
- S: The first one I ever took was 1949 when I went to a Chicago instructor's training school. That was my first two weeks away from Youngstown.
- S: What did they teach you at that school?
- A: It was an education in itself to go to a Navy instructor's training school. It's too bad that industry can't send every one of their so-called supervisors to a Navy instructor's training school.
- A: What do they cover?
- S: They teach you how to stand up in front of people and give an instruction on any given unit in forty-five minutes: Covering a nine point lesson plan, introduction, objectives, presentation, summary and testing.
- A: They really get their full time out of forty-five minutes, is that it?
- S: Especially for anybody that has never been up in front of people. These people in the instructor's training school were not recruits. A lot of them were schoolteachers, college teachers, and high ranking officers. You gave your lesson as if you were talking with recruits. It's rather embarrassing the first time for anybody.
- A: I'm sure you would stammer and stutter.
- S: You said a lot of funny things. You saw them just collapse and leave and walk away. It was a tremendous education.
- A: What kind of actual duty have you seen on your two weeks?

Have you been aboard ship quite a bit?

S: I used to try to go aboard ship every other year. I followed that for years, and then they did away with the service schools. That left me with one choice: Going back to instructor's training school. There was no way I would do that. Once was enough. It got so that every year I would go to sea. I have made trips down to Miami and taken ships out of Boston.

A: Did you go to one port in particular?

S: Norfolk was the most recent. At one time I used to request New England, but after the mid-1960's . . .

A: When do you usually go?

S: In March. That way I won't have to wear the summer dress blues. Of course, now you wear civilian clothes all the time, but that wasn't the concept before.

A: Can you give me a couple of examples of ships and places you've been?

S: I did get on the guided missile cruiser in Boston during the Bay of Pigs.

A: You were there for that?

S: No, we were leaving Boston on the cruiser down to Norfolk for a missile ship. Foreign admirals and our admirals and MacNamara and everybody was coming aboard. We got halfway down and they had the Bay of Pigs fiasco. They dumped us off at Newport, and took all the reserves back, and continued on down. We didn't get in on the missile shoot or anything.

A: What was your biggest kick on those two weeks?

S: Meeting other people. Strangely enough, I have never seen a chief that I met two years back. There was only one chief I continued to see all the time. It was strange. Somebody you met ten years ago, you would never see again. Once you saw a chief for those two weeks, you would never see them again.

A: I've had that experience myself. I've been in this outfit ten years and very seldom have I ever seen somebody I know.

S: At Norfolk I would always run into one chief electrician from Scranton. He found out I used to go in March so he would go then too. I think he got attached to me because when he first went aboard in 1959 it was his first cruise as a chief. I squared him away a little bit. I ran into him this past March. He was on an LST and I was on an LST.

A: How did the Navy regulars accept you?

S: I never once had one problem because I keep my mouth shut. I don't make waves.

A: Have you ever seen any problems take place? How are they normally accepted?

S: I think that if I was in these other people's shoes, I would accept people the same way. As sailors get older, they don't fraternize too much. There were people who came aboard the ship's company and they were there three or four weeks before they were accepted. They don't talk to people, especially if they were at shore most of the time. It seemed that they were on their eight-to-four job and then they left. If they didn't come into contact, they didn't know each other. The older the man got the less friends he made.

A: How does your family accept these two weeks? Was it just your choice in the Navy and they had to accept it?

S: I've always told my wife, "I was in the Navy before I met you. I was married to the Navy before I met you."

A: No family problems?

S: No, none whatsoever.

A: Have you ever run across any problems with your job?

S: Never with my job. They have always gone along with me. The U. S. Steel has been good with that. I have to say that.

A: Have you ever gone with a group from here?

S: On weekends. We have gone on weekends either flying down on a civilian plane or a Navy plane that was flown out of Little Grove, Pennsylvania to pick us up at the air base and take us down for the weekend and bring us back. We have done that several times. We have gone to Philadelphia to firefighter's school by using Greyhound buses. We would go on a Friday night and return on a Sunday. I went on, supposedly, one group cruise. I never liked going on group cruises.

A: What seems to be the big problem with that?

S: The same thing. If I had been giving instructions for forty-six weeks I don't want to continue to do it going on board a ship. I preferred to get away from it.

A: On your two weeks, did the reserve really look forward to this weekend cruise?

- S: I haven't found one who has any criticisms towards it. The only persons who would have criticisms would be the wives. A lot of men had to get out because of their wives.
- A: How about the weekends? Any problems there?
- S: Yes, many people have had problems with their work.
- A: More than with his wife?
- S: If he could go on a weekday he could go on a weekend. It wouldn't make any difference there. There were some families that took the kids and went to visit somebody out of town over the weekend. I believe those people were being a little narrow about it. If they would look at the benefits that they get out of belonging with the Navy, it would outweigh the other. It would be just like a person having two jobs.
- A: What do they do on the weekend business? Do you just fit right in with the ship's company?
- S: We would be assigned to the part of the ship that my rate calls for. If I was an engine man, I would be with the auxiliary diesels. On some ships you would go right into the boat pool. It all depends on the type of ship. You would fit right in with them. You really wouldn't be working with your hands or anything like that. They have their own men to do their own equipment. You were there to give advice.
- A: Do they look up to your advice or is it kind of a thing you have to sneak in?
- S: You have to sneak it in. They won't question your word. They accept you and I doubt if they want you to stick your nose in their business so you learn not to make waves.
- A: Do you stand watches?
- S: Yes, quarter depth watches would be what we got, unless we were underwater. Then we would stand engine room watches. If you were in for upkeep, you would stand quarter depth watches.
- A: How was the liberty on these, pretty good?
- S: Liberties in the Navy have changed. It's only one out of six now. That's a far cry from the five hours they used to give. I always held it against the Navy because we were full-grown men. I think they made bigger drunks in five hours than if they let them out every night. The liberty commences at 1600 hours and expires at 0730 in the morning.
- A: Is there anything you can think of that I have not asked you or that you would like to bring up?

S: I think we have to remember that this training center is only meant for naval training. No matter how you do it, you're here to train people. There hasn't really been any change since the time it was built. All I've ever seen done in the Navy center is training, training, training.

END OF INTERVIEW