

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Navy Reserve

Reserve Experience

O. H. 258

CLARENCE BOOTH

Interviewed

by

David Arms

on

May 21, 1975

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Navy Reserve Project

INTERVIEWEE: CLARENCE J. BOOTH
INTERVIEWER: David Arms
SUBJECT: Navy Reserve life, changes in reserve center
DATE: May 21, 1975

A: This is an interview with Clarence Booth for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program on the Navy Reserves by David Arms, at the Naval Reserve Center in Youngstown, Ohio, at 315 East LaClede, May 21, 1975, at 6:00 p.m.

Clarence, I'd like to ask you about your background. Where were you brought up and all that?

B: I was brought up in Youngstown, on the south side of Youngstown. I lived down there for thirty-five years. I signed up in the reserves, I mean in the Navy, in 1942. I went up to the Great Lakes and then from the Great Lakes to Chicago, and had schooling to be a cook. Then from Chicago, I went to Norfolk on a repair ship. I was on a repair ship for four months. Then I went on a destroyer and I was on that for about a year and a half. I went on board a APD for about a year.

A: So you joined the Navy originally in 1942?

B: Yes, 1942.

A: What prompted you to join the Navy at that time?

B: We were going to go when Pearl Harbor was hit and we got into Cleveland a few times and one guy couldn't pass. There was, like I said, four of us altogether. Two guys had to get their teeth fixed and we waited around. We went up there the next time and one of the guys had something else wrong with him so there were two of us that signed up. I think it was in October of 1942 when we finally got signed up. Two of us left and we were together for six months. We both cooked.

- A: Did you look at any other services? Did you think about joining the Marine Corps or . . .
- B: No, I was in the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] and I said, no, that wasn't for me, digging ditches in the hot sun. I figured if I go back someplace else I'd probably be a cook. I had heard about times with the Navy. I heard a lot of people talk about it. One of our buddies was in there. He went in in 1939 and he was in Pearl. He came home right after the Pearl Harbor attack. He told about his boddy that was lost there. He said one thing about it, as long as the ship is afloat, you're going to live good and eat good. That prompted the five of us to run up there and sign up right away.
- A: Did the Navy guarantee you anything, that you would be a cook or anything of that kind?
- B: No, they didn't guarantee us. The way we became cooks was this other fellow and I were in boot camp up there and we had to put two weeks in in the galley. This one rated cook was giving all kinds of orders and he was running around there. I told that guy, "You know, that's a good job, you're always busy. You don't have time to worry about anything. What do you say we try for that." He said, "Well, we can make that. I know we can make that. All we have to do is pass that test." We passed the test and the two of us were together for almost six months. We went to Norfolk, and then he went aboard a tanker and I went aboard that repair ship.
- A: Did you ever see any action during World War II?
- B: World War II, in 1942 we took the new outfit out of Newport News, Virginia. In 1943 and 1944 we went up through the straights. I think we had about twenty-four or thirty-six missions. We were under submarine attacks, torpedo planes, and that new glider bomb they had out, the Germans. Like I say, when you get hit coming through the straits going into North Africa you were hit underneath and on top. The DE's didn't have enough fighting power on them. We didn't have enough guns. We had the three inch 50's, which weren't too much power against those planes. We had 20's and we had what they call one point one, which wasn't anything. Like I say, those planes come so low our hand grenade would have done us more good. We had the cans on for the submarines which I was setting detonators in the lower hold. I'd set the detonators in them before . . . I put the detonators in, put them on safe, and brought them up through the holds. We had to hand them up through with the line.

When I went aboard that APD, I was an ammunition hammer again. I used to run the forward magazine hold, which we had the elevator then, one protector, one powder. Like I say, the APD was good. We went up through . . . We went to Oceanside, California to pick up our demolition team, which was the 109th demolition team. We had one hundred and twenty some men. Our ship was staff over there, we were under staff command. We were running all the reconnaissance charts on every island. We were just ready to go into Japan and we did take . . . go into Korea in 1945 as an assault. Like I say, the demolition team went aboard, went on the beach first, you know, all the time like they always do. That was the easiest one that we ever had. The big New Orleans was standing alongside and once you see one of those big outfits standing alongside of you, you don't have to worry because there was a lot of fighting power there.

- A: After the war was over, then what happened to you?
- B: After the war was over I came back home in the end of 1945. I went down to the mill to work and I no sooner got into the mill about a week or two and they went on strike. I figured well, I'll collect my compensation. I went down there and being I had worked a week I wasn't entitled to any compensation because we were on strike. I got myself another job for fifty cents an hour as a mechanic. That gave me twenty dollars a week, which I'd have made just loafing around, but I figured well, I'm going to keep busy and I like to work on cars and trucks anyway. I figured that would be a good job. I started working down there and the guy I worked for gave me an extra job, loading trucks and stuff, and I'd make a dollar an hour for that. I started to make a little bit more money and some of the fellows that worked there I got to know. Earl Sharkey, Danny, and those guys I knew. They always told me to go up to the reserves. I said, "Well, I'll put my name in." I put my name in there in 1946, I think it was in December or January they called me that there was an opening. At that time there were a lot of cooks up there. They were on associate pay, I think.
- A: What is associate pay?
- B: Associate pay is if there's a billet open they can pay us, and if there's not an opening then there's no money appropriated for that. You just don't get paid. There was some fellow that had to go to Michigan because there was no billets open here. Some of the cooks were going to South High School at the time. Then they were working on this down at the reserve center down on LaClede Avenue. As soon as they got it built we moved down here, we didn't

have the garages in the back or anything. The door was in the back. At that time there was no smoking inside the reserve center when we first built it.

A: Why was that?

B: Well, we had a pretty strict skipper and there was no smoking. If you wanted to smoke, the garages weren't in the back and there were two big doors, you'd walk out there. They had a parking lot out there. They had the butt cans out there and they'd give you a ten minute break. You know you had the classes and they'd give you the ten minute break. You could go out there and have a smoke and come back in. We had two breaks in the two hours, two ten minute breaks in two hours. It wasn't a coffee break or anything, well, there was no coffee here. We just had a smoke break because everybody was smoking. They had the break and then came back in and us cooks were putting lockers in.

Our logs were way back, our books were way back and we had to catch them up to date for almost from, maybe, 1945 until 1948. We moved in here in 1949. We used to have a locker up there for every man that was assigned a locker. At six o'clock at night when you came in you could have your uniform right there, which was no excuse for not having a uniform on. Some guys say, well it's dirty or this, they left it at home . . . Well, that way you came in and put your uniform on and you were in uniform. This was a good idea.

I think just before the Korean War, us cooks, there were eleven or twelve of us, had a lot of first class, one chief or two chiefs. When the Korean War broke out they took all of them. I think a first class and myself was left down there. There was Earl Sharkey, and Danny Slage was left. There were four of us left out of the eleven or twelve, and some sea men. The rest, they took. I have been in it ever since.

They always said they would do away with the cooks and something would come up. We were here in the middle of 1960, and we decided to go on weekends. First, we didn't have any facilities for cooking, we started catering in. We were getting two sandwiches and an orange and a half a pint of milk. We got that for dinner. Captain Shaw was here at the time and he said, "Do you think you could do better than that?" "Well," I said, "We probably could if we had some facilities and we got a couple of grills set up back there." We cut a fifty

gallon drum in half and we started steaks. They were small steaks, six ounce steaks. We were going with the budget. We had corn and anything that we could cook there. We used this small stove we had in the ship's company there. Us cooks got together--Falaser was here at the time--and we got together and he said, "Will you get the material Booth and haul it in? We will see that it is set up." We drew a diagram and the mixer and that. We got up the mixer and the table we got from Michigan. Gallie got that for us. I had a guy from Pittsburgh Plate and Glass come up and he donated the glass and he installed it for us for nothing. The hang wiring was donated by Servins over there. Most of it was donated and I had to give him \$45. I told the guys there and they said . . . Well, they used to take me out and give me dinners and stuff. Like I say, I didn't mind it because we were throwing more than that away every week. Every month or so we'd throw that away. We were making pretty good money in the 1960's. We got the galley built and Rhodes came down with the compressor and they donated the paint from Steel Door. They donated all the primer paint, that's what is on there now is just primer paint. We put a week in, we took a week off, and we came down here and sprayed it for the weekend duty in here. We sprayed it.

Before we got that galley going we had about sixty-nine men down there, forty-nine to fifty-nine, maybe sixty men down there, or less. After that galley started going the word started getting around about the chow, how good the chow was and this and that. We used to use five dozen donuts on the weekend, five on Saturday, five dozen on Sunday. From five dozen we're up to twenty-three and twenty-four dozen right now. Within seven years, plus we got the other division in, but within seven years, you figure the reserves have tripled down here. We contribute it to this good food that we cook. Of course, naturally we would, right?

A: Right.

B: I mean, we have amazing increases, you go back there and see the records from the 1960's, 1964, 1965, and 1966. When we started down here on the weekends with catering and all that, the weekend reserve has really come up. The people enjoy coming down here, I think. They're all busy. I mean, that's one thing, everyone keeps busy. You always have a few goof-offs now and then, but as long as you keep after them, keep up the morale of the men, you've got a good crew. You don't have to worry about anything. The cooks, back there, I try to keep their morale up. If they need anything, see me, don't see anybody else, see me. Then I'll go

to somebody else and if I don't get anything there then I'll go to somebody else. They always come up to me and they always know that I try to do my best for them. I never holler. If I have something to say to somebody, I'll take them in the back room and I'll tell them. If he's doing something wrong or just even if . . . I have two mess cooks back there and once in a while they get out of line and I have to bring them on the side. I have to tell them what I expect of them; if they don't want to do it there's other work for them to do around there. They don't have to come down there because . . . three or four guys can do his work for him. He's got to pitch in and do his own because he's getting paid the same or more than the rest of those guys.

A: When you first moved over here, what were the meetings like when you moved into the naval reserve center? What did you do, do you remember?

B: Well, when we first moved in here, there was a lot of work to do. Everybody had their own work. Well, us cooks didn't have anything, but we would sit and we would more or less assemble the lockers and different things. Different rooms, we'd go in there and assemble this and assemble that. A few of the guys, the storekeepers worked on the books. There were only three or four station keepers down there at the time, I think Franie and a few other ones. The storekeepers and the yeomen used to help out in here. We used to do our own active duty for training instead of having the ship's company do it. Every division did their own. That's where I went after, we didn't have much to do after the books and everything was set up, and there wasn't too much to do.

I went on recruiting out here for a few years. Then I went on inactive pay for a while. There was a Captain Halloway and we couldn't make our aid so I went on inactive for about six months. The yeomen were over here, there were two yeomen and a storekeeper. They came up and saw me a couple of times and they told me to come on down, come back in the office on non-pay. I didn't even think about non-pay. I came back down here and I was on non-pay in the office here, for maybe, about a year. I think Tony Baleste was here at the time and he said, "Let's go on two weeks active duty, Booth." I said, "Alright. I might not need it, but I have two weeks vacation coming, I'll go with you." From that time on the Taber put me on two weeks active duty and I started getting paid again. I fell right back into line.

Lieutenant Halloway left here and another officer came in. He put me on training duty order, filling out the blanks, and then Tony Baleste would type them up. This worked out pretty good. Then, we got the galley going and I came out of here.

- A: Did you actually do any training in the classrooms or that type of thing?
- B: Oh, we have had training. We have had classroom training. We had a chief up here and myself, we had lesson programs drawn up. When we were catering back in the 1960's here, why, we had classrooms. We had a regular program set up.
- A: How about before, let's say when the place first started?
- B: No, we didn't have anything for the cooks, no classrooms for the cooks. Like I say, for the first three years we were really busy, just assembling stuff and getting the outfit functioning right. If we had a ceremony to give or something, we used to go out to the reserve center and everybody lined up in their white and they had the chairs there for the dignitaries to sit down on. Instead of using the drill hall all the time, we'd go out in the front. On drilling we would be in the back yard, drilling out there.
- A: About the time that the Korean conflict came along, what happened about then?
- B: The Korean conflict, they took everybody from here. I think almost everybody left. There were about two storekeepers from Hubbard, I can recall they stayed here. One mate's chief stayed here, I think he was recruiting. I stayed here recruiting. Sharkey and Slagle were here. I don't know what those two were doing. Oh, that's right, just around that time I think they got that eight-year obligator going. Then we got busy in the recruiting and Slagle had indoctrinations that the Navy gives the recruits out there marching and all this. Sharkey had a machine shop.
- A: Now, when you went out and recruited these people did you actually do the recruiting?
- B: I did the recruiting myself. I would get a few names here and there, then I'd make up a card on them and their address. Then I'd go out and I'd see them, talk to them. I'd give them the advantages of the reserve. I'd say, "It's not much to start with, but after you get into the program and put a little something into it you'll get something out of it. If you don't put anything into it you won't get anything out of it."

The guys that got out, the reserves that did get out in the four years and six years, I'd go up and talk to them about the insurance they had. I'd say to them, "You've got the benefits after you get out, twenty years down there." I said, "You're not losing anything. You've got everything to gain and nothing to lose. You pay for that retirement until you're sixty; you'll be paying thirteen dollars a month. At the end of twenty years you might get sixty-five dollars a month." "This way here," I said, "You put in four days a month and at the end, when you're sixty, you'll get one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars a month, that's the advantage of the reserves." I think it was a good selling point, at that time.

A: Was recruiting fairly easy? Did you get a lot of recruits?

B: We didn't get too much. Oh, we figured if we could get two a week we were doing pretty good. We were averaging one, maybe two, sometimes we'd get four. Now, when the eight-year obligator started we didn't even have to go out. We could just keep up with the paper work. We had ten in there every Tuesday night ready to sign up.

A: What do you contribute this to? In other words, why do you think this happened?

B: There were a lot of fellows that didn't want to go to the service and they figured they'll put eight years in here, which we got . . . The fellows that had been here were Hines, second class storekeeper, Keovy, second class storekeeper, and Flo; second class. Ed Sepagy is a chief, Dahman is a chief, and Dietz is a first class. They're all increased in the rate and everything else.

A: When they joined back then, they didn't have to go on duty?

B: They didn't have to go on any active duty. Like I say, they might have ten weeks, and that's about it out of the twenty years, if they have that there. These are all first class and chiefs, that's the advantage they had.

I had my nephews in here and then I got one that signed up for four years, he was on an AD down in Norfolk. My other nephew is on a Thomas Edison, he's in Hawaii right now. He signed up for six. The other nephew was an eight year obligator and after eight years he got out. He was a second class storekeeper. I did a pretty good recruiting job for the Navy.

A: Sounds like you're busy. What about any community activities? Did you ever become involved in any activities yourself or did the unit?

B: Well, the unit, they used to like to have the different fairs around town. They used to have the Navy recruiters in there. You know, to show that the Navy was around. There were the four of us, it was three chiefs and myself. They always asked for me to go with them. We've always had good times on recruiting duty. We signed up a lot of men, we got a lot of names out of it. I got Canfield Fair, Lisbon Fair, New Castle, we were down in New Castle. The Columbiana Street Fair, we made that three or four times. We got a lot of prospects, a lot of names and addresses. It would give us something to go on to use as a future date when we didn't have anything coming in. We'd go down there, call up somebody, make an appointment, and we did pretty good down through there.

A: Did you usually find that you were pretty well received?

B: Well, every place we went, we didn't just go up and knock. We'd try to call them first to set up an appointment. You don't know if somebody might get home from work at 6:00 or 7:00.

The recruiters used to go out, it was two of us. Bob Allen, he was with me at the time. We would get down here a little bit early so we could make a few phone calls. Then we would go out and leave a note where we were going to be and tell the officer where we were going to be and what time we expected to come back in here. If we had a recruit to bring back in here we'd show him the reserve place and then take them back home. We had brought the parents in here with them. Like I say, you've got to sell the reserves.

A: Now was the reserve fairly selective at that time, or was it anybody, just a warm body that kind of walked in?

B: No, it was what they called a two by six, two years in and four. They were coming along pretty good. The high school and that were coming along pretty good. When the guys would get eighteen years old they would go in for two years, come out and stay in here for four. Before, they used to let you come in here and if you were going to school you would almost be ready for a rate before you went on board a ship, which was a good idea. They had quite a few of them, though. It was a good idea for that.

A: Did they have to take a test for that?

B: Well, they were giving them the test and then they would give them the physical. They found out that didn't work. They started giving physicals first and then the test.

A: More people were flunking the physicals than the test?

B: Yes, and we had to turn that about.

A: How about the test, was it pretty hard?

B: No, the test was just a regular test. Sixteen and seventeen-year-old kids used to take it.

A: Do you remember a lot of people flunking the test or a lot of people passing it?

B: The test was general aptitude, and some different abbreviations of words. The thing was that these tests, when you make them, if you make a high score, you had to have the math and something else together; I forget what it was. You could come up with, a figure of speech, say one hundred and thirty-five and then they would look on this book. They had a book that they would give you, it tells you one hundred and thirty-five is electrician or something like this. You add three together and get this. The higher the score, the more you could take. You could take electronics or anything you wanted. Then if you get a lower score the only thing opened to you was a boats mate. They would tell you what your score was and then you would sign the rest of the papers. That way was pretty good.

A: Did you get any help from the active duty staff or did you do this all by yourself?

B: It was done by our own reserves. The active duty staff, they didn't come in on the tests. They would come in and we had our own paper grading done and the active duty staff would just do the regular office work. We had to take care of all the testing ourselves. That was our own doing, but they would see that the papers were all filled out and everything. That's what they helped us with more or less, the paper work. The test and everything was administered to us. We would say the tests were going to start at . . . If it's a three hour test we'd start the test, maybe, at a quarter to seven or seven o'clock on the nose. They would get out by ten. We would try to get in by six-thirty, we'd ask them, but they were in there at seven. They wouldn't get out until ten o'clock because it is a three hour test. We couldn't grade them right then, we'd have to wait until

the next Tuesday to grade them. We'd lock them up and grade them then.

A: Do you remember, was there a large active duty staff? Has it changed in size at all?

B: The staff has changed. We have, definitely have, more men down there. What we used to have down there before was the yeoman, a rated yeoman, and a chief yeoman. We had an officer's mate, and there was a chief there. There were a couple of yeomen. A couple of gunner's mates were there. It must have been about six, I'd say. They all worked together and got their work done. The reserves helped back and forth, you know, if they needed something during the week. Like the guy that was working in the mill, if he needed something they would call the men up and the guys would be more than happy to come down and help you, but that's just the way that they treated each other. Well, the other guys, when they were here, everybody worked together and this is our place. Let's make it our place.

A: How about, like, the people you've met here. Do you see them at times other than here at the reserve?

B: Oh, yes, I see them. I was out to their house and I met a lot of people and I've moved a lot of them with North American. I've taken them, a lot of the reserves, to Boston, Chicago, and different ships where they left for Philadelphia, and Norfolk. When I go on training duty every once in a while, I meet them down in, like, this last January we were down in Norfolk. I was eating at a restaurant and I'm looking at this guy, and I knew him. Finally it hit me who he was, William. He used to be down there. He said, yes, he was aboard a carrier down there. He said, yes, he missed this place was a storekeeper. That's what he was, a storekeeper, a first class storekeeper. He went aboard and he made chief or something. He was just about ready to retire he said. He's the one that set up the catering for the catering to come in. he asked me would I take charge and tell them how to set it up and everything and enough to feed. We would start feeding at eleven o'clock when the caterer would come in. He set it up with the caterer to bring all the food in.

A: Do you have many parties or social get-togethers as members of the reserve?

B: Well, we have a big picnic. We used to have a big family picnic and the guys stopped it for some reason. I don't know what it is, but they stopped it. We have a yearly dance and we have a yearly picnic, but the dance

is for the family. The picnic is just for the reserves. When we started the reserves up, we had a good thing going where you pay fifty cents a month or a dollar. Every pay day you paid so much. We got paid every three months at that time, I think it was. We would get paid cash. Then, there would be a man over to give you a card and you would give the man so much. The officers this much and the first class that much, you know, all the way up and down. If you wanted to have a party, you would have maybe a six man force there and say, "Well, this is what we're going to do." We'd suggest it to the men, a committee. We'd rent this hall or we'd rent that hall. We didn't have to ask them for ten dollars a couple or five dollars a couple. Bring your own bottle, that's the only thing that was necessary, bring your own bottle and go. Everything else, the dance, everything was paid for. The food and all was paid for, which was good. You would tell your family to come on down there with you and your brothers and you've got to pay ten or fifteen dollars. What kind of Navy does that?

Now, these dances, we've had good turnouts at all of our dances. We can't complain about it. The reason we have to charge money is the band runs two hundred and fifty dollars. You've got to charge fifteen dollars for the band, that's all. You get more food than what you could eat because we cook it ourselves or we cater it in. It was, maybe, under six dollars a plate. This way here, we would cook it ourselves. We had to do a little extra work, but that's what us cooks are for, to do the work. Then, we still enjoyed ourselves too. We would sit at the bar. There were a few other guys too that would come in and the would handle the bar. Of course, after the food is gone then the band starts again and everything is cleared out and that's it. We have some good get-togethers. We should have more get-togethers.

A: Do you have any get-togethers here at the center?

B: No, we used to have dances here at the center. I don't know why, but they stopped them for some reason or other and I don't know what it was. We had weddings in here.

A: Did you ever have any alcohol aboard the center?

B: Well, they used to have a bottle in the back, if you wanted a bottle, you couldn't have a bottle on your table. Either you would go out and mix yourself a drink, bring it back in, put it on your table, or if . . . but now it wouldn't make any difference. You would probably have it sitting anyplace now because they have it in the barracks. The first time I had ever seen whiskey in the barracks was in the submarine. We were aboard a submarine, got over in the barracks and at

four-thirty at night the guys got the beer cooler set up. They were selling beer for twenty-five cents a can. They had everything up there. It was just like going into a bar. They had sandwiches, you could buy sandwiches. That was the only galley I'd seen, I think there were eighty-seven men and we cooked two hundred and fifty some pound of steak. The guy said, "Give them all they want, don't renege on anything." I said, "Well, I think it was sixty-five pounds for those guys?" They broke out two cases and still had to get the third one out, but he said, "Don't renege."

A: Did anybody ever get into any trouble over any of these parties?

B: No, we never had any arguments, nothing was up there. We had weddings up there and we never had any trouble. We've always had good times, but there were no arguments or fights. We always told them, "Now if there are any arguments or fights, whoever starts it is thrown out. He's not ever allowed back in. If you start getting loaded don't stand around, just go ahead, move out, and mind your own business."

A: How about any of the reservists here in the Youngstown area, do you remember any of them getting into any trouble?

B: Well, was it down at South High School or was it down here one night? One of the white hats went out to Idora Park. He stood up on the Wild Cat and he got killed that night. It was on a Monday or Tuesday night we were down here. There weren't too many reservists, that I can think of, getting in any trouble around here because they used to go down here to a bar after. Well, they used to go up to Evergreen, they used to go down here to Pidley's. There was never much trouble. There was only one gunner's mate, that was a first class gunner's mate, he came up here from Texas. He met a woman down there at Pidley's. He married her and he left her. He went back to Texas and he was AWOL [absent without leave] for three days. He came to town, she wrote the congressman and they ruled us that that bar was out of bounds. That was about the only bar that was ruled off limits since we have been here.

A: In all the city of Youngstown?

B: Because of that one woman and that woman was . . . I never knew the woman, but the way Lee and these guys talked about her, I guess she wasn't too much good

either because Captain Shaw was here at the time, and he had his going away party down there. We were all in civilian clothes. A whole bunch of us were down there. Then, once in a while he'd have another little party and he'd call us and we'd go down there. He lived out there in Applewood Acres. We'd all go down there and some guy would set up a keg of beer. Like I say, the man treated us good down there. He never gave us anything extra. Cheese and crackers he'd set up for us every Tuesday night. We'd go down there at ten o'clock and everybody would leave at about eleven. When Franie was here we used to go down to Cactus, that's where all the guys used to go.

- A: Did you ever get any other services provided for you, such as medical or legal services?
- B: Well, no. I got legal services, I have an attorney. Commander Reuben, that's my attorney. Captain Meikle, that's my dentist, and Dr. Huckstead, he's my surgeon. He did an operation on my son. I figure the Navy has got the best so I stick with the Navy.
- A: Really the main reason that you went with them was because you knew them?
- B: Yes, I knew them. I knew them from here and I knew how good they were. Like I say, I've got all my legal, my doctor, and my dentist are all Navy men.
- A: Also, by being in the moving business you get to help out a lot of people, too.
- B: I get to help a lot of people, like I've helped a lot of people down here move and pack their things. They weren't getting transferred or something, they only had a little bit to go and they couldn't get a truck to get it out of here. They are going to leave, say they have three days to leave, and they're waiting and there's no truck coming in. I call my company up and I say, "Hey, how about getting these things aboard that truck there?" Even though with no authorization, we can pick it up?" He says, "Well, if he wants to get it out of there, we'll pick it up for him." He says, "You can go down there and load it in the truck and then, maybe, that truck will be in tomorrow to pick it up." We've helped out that way a lot. I've moved about fifteen or twenty personnel from here. I've taken about six myself, personally, to Chicago, Norfolk, Philadelphia, and Boston.
- A: Did you find that, possibly, the friendships could be a lot closer in this than it would be in a regular job?

- B: Oh yes, this is closer than a regular job. Everybody comes out with their . . . you stand back, it's the galley, being a cook. Back at that galley down there, I think I know everybody's troubles because they all tell me their troubles. I tell them, I say, if you stick around long enough it will work out. Like some of the guys want to get out, but they have another year or two to put in. I say, don't goof up. Make sure you have all your meetings in and everything. I had a few guys up here, I bent over backwards for those guys and I told them to make the meetings up and make sure they get up there. I said, "Come up there and do a little bit of extra work some night and make up a meeting," but they wouldn't do it. When their time was up they left and then they had to come back and do six months more. I said, "Make sure all your papers are done and everything before you leave here. Make sure your paper work is all done and signed before you leave." You get a note that says your obligation is fulfilled before you leave.
- A: Back in 1968 or 1969, somewhere around in there, the center up in Warren closed. Do you remember having any relationship with the center in Warren before it closed or anything like that? Did you even know it was there?
- B: I knew it was there. The skipper from here, I forgot what his name was, I think Shaw was here at that time. Lee was a storekeeper and they used to commute back and forth. He was running both centers and the storekeeper here was running both centers. We have one man here, Wittenaur, he was up there and I don't know how long he was up there, but he was on active duty up there for three or four years.
- A: Now, when that center closed up there and those people came down here, did you notice any difference? Did you have any contact with them when they came down?
- B: Yes, like I said, Monday and Tuesday nights I think they came down. I think they went on Monday nights, most of them went on Monday nights, at this time. It wasn't too much difference. I mean, we mingle together, like I said, we got along really well.
- A: What units have you been in since you've been here?
- B: I've been in 115 since I started. All the time, even on the weekend, we thought we were going to change. Then I went into the new AD7105, now I'm back in 4115. It didn't make any difference, you still have to do

the work. No matter what unit you're in, when those guys get into trouble they call me anyway, no matter what unit or what outfit. They would call me and give me, they're not coming in, they're not going to do this and they can't do this. If they're short of chow or something, I think I missed one day, one Saturday or something like that. I was on training duty and I told some guy to pick the donuts up for me. I didn't get back until Saturday afternoon and they said, "Boy, Booth, we're glad to see you back, we didn't have any donuts this morning." I said, "All you had to do was go down and pick them up." "Nobody ordered them, they wouldn't give them to us." That's right too, I had forgot to order them myself. "I should have called from training duty," I said, "but I figured somebody would order them, one of the cooks." They didn't order them, but wherever I'm at, I usually call up and tell them if I'm not there by seven o'clock in the morning, have somebody deliver them down here at seven o'clock. When I come in Sunday morning, I'll pay for them. He usually takes pretty good care of me and I tell those guys that's where to go, because they go out and they pay \$1.69 or \$1.79 a dozen. I said, "There's nobody that's going to give you forty cents for two donuts." Right?

A: No way.

B: That's right. I said, "We've got to go up there and try to get them for that \$1.10 a dozen, that's all." That way you get thirteen cents or ten cents a piece. You get a little for the kitty and then we get filters for the coffee. Then if we need a little bit of something . . .

A: How about your two week training duty?

B: One thing about the Navy Reserves is you usually get your choice, when you're free two weeks you can go on those two weeks, unless you can get the two weeks off to go with the group, good. If you can't, you can go anytime during the fiscal year. This time here, we went aboard DE down in Baltimore, Maryland, which I have to say is an exceptionally clean ship, beautiful ship. The people treated us good. I didn't ask for the weekend off because I was told years ago that just because you're reserves you're not entitled to a weekend. When I went aboard there were two first class cooks aboard. I met a third class on the Sunday afternoon I got aboard. He invited me up to the galley and showed me what he had up there. He gave me a sandwich. He said, "I'll see you tomorrow morning at quarters." I went up to quarters, two first class cooks I met on Monday morning and I had Paul Larsick with me, second class cook. We went down to the mess hall and we had coffee and we started talking.

He said, "What would you like to do Booth?" I said, "Well, I'll put it this way, what do you want me to do? Anything you want me to do, that's what I'll do." We started talking and he said, "Well we've got four cooks up there, we've got quite a bit of cooks up there." I said, "Well, what we'll do, how about us taking over the night baker?" He said, "You know, I'm glad you said that." He said, "I didn't want to ask you to go on night turn." I said, "Night turn doesn't bother me, we'll work from anytime you say, right after chow until we get finished. Just tell me what you want." He said, "Cakes, noodles, rolls in the morning, donuts, anything you want." The first night it took us a good nine hours. The ovens weren't working right, we burnt a few. We had to throw them away. One, the top oven was too hot and the bottom was too low. The second night, I told Paul, "Let's try donuts, we've got the deep fat fryer, we'll try the donuts out." He said, "No, we'll try pecan rolls again." I said, "Okay." We tried pecan rolls that night. The oven just wasn't getting hot enough to make that brown sugar frost like it should, but they came out pretty good. What didn't come out, why, we put jam and that over it, which made them pretty good the next day. The guys appreciated them Monday and Tuesday morning, they were good. Wednesday morning, the guys said outstanding. Thursday, we made them donuts, sugared donuts, glazed donuts. We made a big chocolate cake, a pineapple upside down cake. Then everybody came down and said what a good job we had done. Thursday night we baked, we had a chocolate cake for Friday and we made about ten or fifteen dozen donuts. The first class came up to us and the officer came up to us and said, "Being that you guys work so hard and long hours for the five nights, I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do." He said, "You guys take off Friday, Saturday . . ." I said, "Well, we'll be back Sunday night." "You take off Sunday night," he said, "You don't come back until Monday night so you can put out the donuts, pastries for Tuesday morning." He said, "Forget about Monday morning because there isn't anybody aboard here on the weekends. There might only be fifteen, and they haven't had any pastries here for two years so one day won't hurt them. You guys have done such an outstanding job and you didn't gripe about going on night turn, take four days off." I thought that was really good of him. They could have said work straight through the weekend. Like I said, we'd be back Sunday night because I figured, well, we get Friday and Saturday off. "Sunday," I said, "that's good." He said, "No, take Sunday off and don't come back until Monday." That's what we did. We came back Sunday night, though, went to sleep aboard the ship and the next weekend we put

the same hours in. The crew and us could have lived aboard. You could mingle right in there with that crew. Nobody said "reservists" or anything else.

A: Have you had any problems, in the past, of being called a reservist?

B: In the cooks line, I'd say no. When you're cooking, you very seldom get any words like that. Nobody says anything to you as long as you're in that galley, you're doing your work. They figure you must know your job. When you're out at sea and you're riding the ship as somebody else, they say, "We know this guy knows what he's doing." If you would go to sea and you get sick and you go to lay down right away, they would say what kind of a sailor is he. He can't even stand a ride from here to Miami.

A: What do you like most about this two weeks?

B: You get away from all the traffic and you go out to sea. You meet a lot of new friends. You learn more and like I said, you meet a lot of new friends. You get acquainted and hear other people's problems. When you think you have problems and you listen to somebody's else's problem, you don't have any. It does you a world of good. When we come back from those two weeks, I'm a new man, when I come back and go on that job. I listen to their problems.

A: What did your family think about it?

B: My sons and them always liked the Navy. I've taken them down to Norfolk, Philadelphia, and I take them around to different bases. I've taken them on a few ships. My wife doesn't like to go aboard a ship, but I took a son aboard, not a Navy ship, but another that will go out for, maybe, six or seven hours. That was pretty nice. That's why I was saying, one of these days when that ship was up we should have had a weekend. We should have had, like they have over there, a family weekend. You go out for three hours, have dinner aboard ship, and come back. Those guys get a big response to that up there in Philadelphia and other places, I guess, the way they tell me. They get a big response, they have that family come aboard for a few hours, I guess, just to see what the men go through.

A: Why do you stay in the Naval Reserves?

B: Well, I like it. I don't belong to any fraternities or any clubs. I don't go out golfing. I used to like to play baseball and football. That's my favorite, when football is on. Outside of that, I mean, you can come

here and you meet some good friends and you get invited different places, you know, here and there. Somebody has got a big swimming pool here, you go out there. You meet a lot of good friends, they're not . . . like if you meet them at work and all they talk about is shop. You come here and you meet them, you go out swimming or you go out to a park somewhere and you have a good time.

A: Did you ever think about staying on active duty when you were . . .

B: Well, at first, I was going to stay in and my dad passed away. I came home in 1945, December, and my dad passed away January 2. We had four of us boys and I was the last one to get home. He was just waiting for us all to get home. He was only sixty-six; he said he was going to retire, but on January 2, he dropped dead and everybody had given up hope. My mother was there. She was in her late fifties or sixties. I said, "Well, I'd better start finding myself a job and take care of my mother." She had that home down there and everything, and that's just what I did. Then, like the guy said, "Come up to the reserves, Booth, you'll get a little bit of time anyway, in case they ever do call you in." He said, "You'll see a lot of guys up there you know," and I did too. I met a lot of the old friends of mine. I'll tell you, it was really wonderful to go up there. It has been all these years. I've gained a lot more by coming up here and some of the guys . . . You see, a lot of the old guys hanging around street corners, hanging here, hanging there. You just spend a couple days up here and I'm still doing some good up here with the cooking and everything. A few of the guys depend on me up here. I don't know, I'd probably be lost too if I left up here now after twenty-five years, once a month.

A: Do you think the naval reserve has become less personal lately? You're kind of more of a number?

B: No, I've seen the last few skippers that came in here and they can pick out a guy by name. I mean, they can look at a guy and call him by name, by the first name some of the skippers used to. The Navy is getting a lot better, guys are shaping up, haircuts, getting groomed. I'd say they're getting back in the good graces with the Navy, but that last ship that I was on was a clean ship, all haircuts, all trimmed nice and neat. There were no shabby guys aboard that ship. Those guys were all for each other too. If one guy would get

into trouble the whole division was up there with him. He wouldn't get in trouble by himself, that whole division would be right with him sticking up for him. That was a really good ship. All you had to do was ask somebody to do something for you and they would say, "Sure." They would run right away and do it for you. They wouldn't wait around and say, "Well, you're not my boss," or something, they would do it.

- A: Is there anything you can think of that I haven't asked you?
- B: I think that's all I can say, but it has been a wonderful time. I spend a lot of time up here. I still tend to come up, as long as I can. My enlistment is up in July and I'll re-enlist again.
- A: How many years do you have in?
- B: I have thirty right now, I think. I've got about twenty-two or twenty-three good years. Well, in fact, I have thirty all together right now. I've had a good time and everybody up here has treated me wonderful. I said I only had one bad skipper up here, and when you get older you can't make a rate. You can't read a book and take the test and make it. You've got to know by experience. That's what I say. A lot of those guys can take that test and . . . I know there's one cook up here, he read that book, passed the test, and he didn't even know how to cook. We finally got rid of him, too. He didn't show up a few times. Every time he did show up he'd foul everything up. Our records would be fouled up and everything. He couldn't make gravy back there, so we let him go, not us, but a skipper of 115 let him go up here. That was the only bad cook. Like I say, reading that book and taking that test isn't the only thing. When you get aboard a ship and you have to do the actual work, that's when you know your rate or you don't know your rate.

When you're on a ship at sea you sleep good out there, you don't have to worry about anything. You feel wide awake. When you're up to Philadelphia, up in Boston up there, the ships don't go anywhere in January and February up there. Two inches of ice on the deck, you couldn't do anything. I mean, no maneuvering or anything. I thought that was a waste of time up there. You were aboard a ship, but you weren't out. The men can't go anyplace. They have to be back aboard ship at 9:30. They're all up in the morning at 4:00 and they're out on their way, say for maybe three or four hours and come back in. The last time I was down there

we were up at 4:00 and got back in at 8:30. You might get over to the beach and get a beer and you might not. It all depends. Then on the weekend we stayed in and the old man threw a beer party for us. That paid up for it. We were putting in, maybe, twelve, fifteen, or sixteen hours a day. Then we put in a sixteen or seventeen day cruise we had there. We had to be there Saturday morning. We took off at seven o'clock on a Saturday morning. We got there two weeks later on a Sunday night about eight-thirty or nine o'clock and came back in. That's bad because he's got to go to work Monday morning at seven, and you've got six hours of driving back home. Like I say, I enjoyed that down there. It was nice and warm. You could stand out on the deck out there, why, then you're firing the guns and everything. It's nice down there.

A: Do you enjoy travelling?

B: I enjoy that travelling on the sea. When I get sixty I'll take that round the world cruise that I'm entitled to. Right?

A: Right!

END OF INTERVIEW