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DeHoogh, Ted

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Northwestern College - Orange City

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Narrator's name: Ted DeHoogh

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Interviewer's name: Sarah Bartz

For: Northwestern College, History 351: America and the Vietnam War

SB: Ted, if you could start off by telling me where you grew up.

TD: I grew up in Sheldon, Iowa, and attended Sheldon public schools, graduated from Sheldon High School, and went on to Northwestern College after high school. Used to work part-time jobs as a kid growing up in Sheldon at Neil Chase Lumber Yard with my dad and then went on to Northwestern and spent several years there and was a little bit uncertain as to what direction God's plan was for me. I just wasn't real sure. And then the Vietnam War was becoming more imminent all the time, and I had a friend from Sheldon who was a teacher at Sheldon, Nick Bower, and he was also taking courses of Northwestern, and he was in the Naval Reserve out of Sioux Falls. And so I went along with him one weekend and we visited with a recruiter, toured the facility, and he laid out the whole scheme for me, and it really looked pretty attractive. So I enlisted in the Navy – the Naval Reserve, in October 22 of 1963, and that was the start.

As a kid growing up in Sheldon, I would listen to uncles who had served in World War II and other relatives who'd served in World War II and in Korea. And a couple had been in the Navy, one had been in the Army, and just listening to them – one of the relatives who's a Navy veteran said the Navy was the closest thing he could find to home. He had the warm, dry bed to sleep in at night and three meals a day and so you weigh all the factors and their experiences. So the Navy seemed like a good fit for me. So I enlisted in the Naval Reserve Sioux Falls. It was a six-year obligation – two years active duty. Boot camp was only two weeks for reservists, out of Chicago, Great Lakes. So I did that in early 1964 and then in February of '65 at like Washington's birthday time, I reported for duty in Philadelphia Naval Station. And it was a receiving station where you get your sea bag filled out for active duty and you just made the rounds and did what you had to do and you kind of hung out in the barracks and waited for your assignment. And that particular assignment – you had a little bit of a dream sheep, we used to call it – you could kind of state your preferences for duty, and I'd heard stories from the army guys how, you know, they could drive a truck, they could do this, they could do that, and they ended up driving a wheelbarrow or something. And so the Navy really did a good job, I think.

I didn't want a small ship like the destroyer, I didn't really want an aircraft carrier - it was way too large a complex for my liking. And so I ended up on a heavy cruiser

out of Norfolk, Virginia - USS Newport News, CA-148¹. And that particular ship was flagship² second fleet. We had a three-star vice admiral on board, who was commander of NATO Forces – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Forces. And that ship would make an annual North Atlantic cruise to England and also all the way up to Bergen, Norway, and ports in between. The year I was on, we were in the shipyard, [laughs] so I didn't travel. But I started out in the deck force just doing basic seamanship: cleaning, swabbing decks, polishing brass, painting, things like that. I did that for maybe a month, and then I ran into a fellow who was getting out of the Navy, and he had a nice job in a sales office – air-conditioned sales office – ordering ship store merchandise, managing inventory cards, running a calculator – a desk job. Kind of appealed to me. So between the two division officers, the deck division and S-3³ ship store division, I managed to get a transfer into S-3 division. And I started out just working doing paperwork, that kind of thing. And occasionally I would be plugged into the ship's store and operated that for like three months at a time. And it was a nice job, retail sales. That particular division on a ship that size handled a lot of different things. It was service to the crew, and we handled simple things like ship's laundry – did all the laundry for everybody on board ship. We had a dry cleaning plant, we had a tailor shop, we had officer enlisted barber shops, we had a soda fountain, we had two retail stores, we had a clothing store - CNS clothing and small stores. It was uniform items. We operated all of the vending machines on board ship because we had a crew of 1000 people, roughly. So there were a lot of different things that made up S-3 division in that aspect of supply. And of course there were other supply divisions within the supply department, but that was the one I was particularly involved with – it's now the S-3 ship store operation.

Along with that we also had military duties. We were assigned to a duty damage control party, for example. And each day on a duty day - you're in a duty rotation schedule, you know, maybe you were on duty every 3rd or every 4th day depending on how many people you had to work with – and then you would, usually in the evenings, like about 7 or so, they'd call away duty damage control party, muster, so you'd show up and you'd go through all your damage control training, in the event of an accident or whatever. So we would do that and then we would also have general quarter stations. And that was like for a battle. And I worked in a gun turret⁴. This heavy cruiser was an all-gun cruiser, and it had three turrets of eight-inch guns and I think we had six turrets of five-inch, and we had three-inch and aircraft besides. And so it had a lot of firepower. And I worked in the gun turret a couple of decks below, shuttling powder cases into a scuttle that went up another level where it would meet the projectile, and then from there, it would go on up into the gun turret into the barrels for firing. And that particular ship had pretty good firepower. It could fire shells 22, 23 miles in distance. For example, we could sit

¹ The last all-gun heavy cruiser in commission in US naval history, launched in 1948 and decommissioned in 1975 (“USS Newport”).

² A ship carrying the flag officer or the commander of a fleet, and displaying the officer's flag.

³ Sales and Services Division, dedicated to customer service (“USS O’Kane”).

⁴ A self-contained weapons platform housing guns that is capable of rotation.

here in Sioux Center and lob shells into downtown Sheldon. And this is World War II technology, and these were semi-automatic weapons, these eight inchers. And if they put all nine barrels of the three turrets total on a given target, set them at maximum range, they could fire automatically – they could get 90 rounds out before the very first one fired would get to the target area. And that’s pretty impressive for that time frame.

SB: Yeah.

TD: So that’s a little bit about the ship and the division I was in and my responsibilities. Life was really good on that ship when we had the flag, or the admiral, of the staff on board. The food was outstanding. We always had crates of fresh fruit in the after mess decks, phenomenal. We had the second fleet band on board – we had musicians! And every time we pulled into port, and because we were a large vessel, smaller vessels would be moved away from the pier, so our flagship could come in in big birth at a pier so I wouldn’t have to run more whaleboats back and forth. And every time we came into a port, the second fleet band was up on the O2 level – O1 or O2 level – and they’d be playing whatever, you know. Something in very good spirits, something exciting and fun. So, that was cool.

When we finished the yard period, which is about five months, in Virginia, we went to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba⁵, for six weeks of refresher training – ref tray, it was called. And that was over Christmas of ’65. And we did a lot of shelling, a little island of Culebra⁶, and it was populated by rabbits and whatever else. No one lived there, obviously, but we would fire three-inch, five-inch, eight-inch guns. A lot of noise. We were not allowed to be on the open weather decks when the five-inch and eight-inch guns were being fired because of the noise and the repercussion of air, the explosion. It could blow you over the side. So we stayed indoors. When we finished refresher training in Cuba – and that’s another adventure – we’d be in the base in Cuba and you could look out of the perimeter of the base, and under big camouflage nets, you’d see US tanks positioned, guarding the border. We had Cubans working on the base, and they would go back and forth, kind of in the morning and leave at the afternoon. And, of course, Castro⁷ was the supreme dictator in Cuba at that time.

When we finished up we went to Bermuda⁸. We had a little leave time in Bermuda and at that point a number of us got orders, radiograms⁹ that was as soon as we got back into port at Norfolk, we were being transferred to another ship, and that was

⁵ Home to the oldest overseas US naval base

⁶ A small island-municipality of Puerto Rico, home to about 1000 people. It is located 17 miles east of the Puerto Rican mainland (“Culebra, Puerto Rico”).

⁷ Fidel Castro transformed Cuba into the first communist state in the Western Hemisphere after leading a group of revolutionaries to overthrow the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He was Cuba’s president from 1959-2008 (History.com).

⁸ A group of 20 islands in the North Atlantic (Selesky).

⁹ A telegram sent by radio.

the USS Long Beach.¹⁰ And that was the world's first - and the navy's first - nuclear-powered surface ship. And that was similar in size to the Newport News; the cruise size was similar. Being nuclear powered, it was much cleaner; we didn't burn oil. It was nuclear-powered; we had two reactors on board. It was very clean, very, very clean. It was very, very modern. It was commissioned and put into service in 1963, and I was on it in 1966, so it was three years old. When I was on it, it was spanking new. And so it was a little more interesting. On a heavy cruiser we have water hours because of the evaporators couldn't take sea water in, convert it to fresh water fast enough, so we'd have water hours. We would have very limited times for showers and for fresh water usage. It's kind of like living in Sioux County in the summertime with a drought. [Laughs] Water hours... But on the Long Beach, because of the nuclear capabilities - there'd be systems on board - we could produce fresh water faster than we could consume it, and it would be discharged overboard periodically. Strange thing.

Once we were transferred to the Long Beach - I think I was probably only on the Long Beach about 5 days before we left port and headed down toward the Panama Canal¹¹. This was like February of '66. We went through the Panama Canal, and it was so blooming warm, it was t-shirts and dungarees, trousers of course, and officers could have shorts and short-sleeved shirts and summer dress, you know. Tremendous experience of going through the Panama Canal, just unbelievable, and going through the locks, and taking pictures of everything. Just amazing. And it still is - we were through there a few years ago on a trip, and still an amazing thing. And we came up to Long Beach, California. The ship was being sent to its namesake city, the city it was named for, and a California congressman put pressure on the Navy - the Secretary of the Navy - to have the home port changed from Norfolk to Long Beach, California. So that took place. We were greatly, enthusiastically welcomed to Long Beach, California. It was quite an event. Before we left Norfolk - I'll back up here a minute - working in the sales office one evening, I was typing up ship store order forms on my old Royal manual typewriter - sounds prehistoric, doesn't it?

SB: [Laughs.]

TD: And the office doors were like Dutch doors, you know, they're split in the middle and the top half they would swing to the inside of the space, rather than out into the passageways. So they'd swing to the inside. The bottom half was latched shut, top half was latched open and hooked, and there was a little flip-up stainless steel writing space, a little deal at the bottom half of the door. And I'm facing the door and I'm like from here to that window away, and all of a sudden I'm aware of somebody standing in that doorway, looking in. And being brand spanking new on the ship I had no clue who this was. Not a real tall man, old shoulder boards. And

¹⁰ The first nuclear-powered surface warship in the world, commissioned in 1961 and decommissioned in 1995. The crew consisted of 79 officers and 1081 sailors.

¹¹ The Panama Canal is 51 miles long with six pairs of locks made to allow ships to cross between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (Conniff).

so, I, being a third class petty officer, an E-4¹², so I just stood up immediately and said, “May I help you sir?”

He said, “No, that’s all right sailor, just go about your work,” and went down the passageway. Wonder who that was? Well, the next morning, I found out that it was none other than Admiral Hyman Rickover, father of the nuclear navy. And he made a surprise visit to the ship, unannounced, after hours. The guys on the quarter deck about went ballistic. The staff car comes up the pier, [laughs] and this admiral gets out. But he had to make a final visit to one of his nuclear power ships before we changed the whole force line to the west coast. So he was responsible for the whole nuclear sub fleet, and when I go way back in history to 1955, there was a navy nuclear submarine by the name of the USS Nautilus¹³ that made history. It went under the polar ice cap of the North Pole, submerged, then came back out again, and the captain of the Nautilus was the first commanding officer captain of the USS Long Beach. So that was a pretty significant thing. It really was.

SB: Yeah.

TD: So anyway, that’s a little claim to fame. I had words with Admiral Rickover. He was a nuclear physicist [laughs] – wow. We got to California, got settled in at Long Beach, and then that summer we did a midshipman cruise to Pearl Harbor. We went in convoy with four or five other ships, and we had midshipmen on board from the naval academy. And so it was a training thing for them. It took us a whole week to get to Pearl Harbor from California. You go as fast as the slowest ship. And we spent a little time in Pearl Harbor and saw the sights and toured the island and so on. And then we headed back to California again, back to Long Beach. And it was really kind of interesting.

I was lucky I had relatives in California, originally from Hospers. I had cousins – uncle, aunt, cousins. They’d moved out there earlier, and if I didn’t have duty, I’d give them a call and yep, sure, we’re around, ok. So I’d take my five dollar bill and get on the Greyhound and run down the coast to Huntington Beach, and we would do special things on the weekends.

And here’s a little Northwestern College thing I have to share with you, Sarah. One Sunday, Uncle and Aunt decided we should go to Robert Schuller’s church in Garden Grove. So then we had to go down to see the Swallows of Capistrano – this is before the Crystal Cathedral – but Schuller’s church, it was a step up from the drive-in church. But we got into the sanctuary and here, being ushered in, here down the center aisle sat a man in a wheelchair – Dr. Scorza. He was at UCLA that summer, working on one of his PhDs. And I’d had him as an instructor at Northwestern – biblical archaeology, Dead Sea Scrolls – several years before. And

¹² The Navy uses pay grades for enlisted personnel from E-1 to E-9 (the highest), and each pay grade corresponds to a rate. A Petty Officer Third Class rate corresponds to the E-4 pay grade.

¹³ The world’s first nuclear submarine, constructed under Captain Rickover. In August 1958, it made the first voyage under the geographic North Pole (History.com).

here after the sermon I couldn't even tell you what it was all about because I kept thinking about Syl Scorza, I got to talk to him [laughs]. So that was a highlight, it really was. So I talked to him after the service and he was just a phenomenal person – I trust you've maybe met him at some point or you're aware of him.

SB: Yes.

TD: So that was a real highlight, you know, running into Dr. Scorza. And even after that, over the years occasionally here and there, I run into him and we reminisce about that summer of '66 back in Garden Grove. So, that's cool. Anyway, then the fall of '66, we were making preparations to do a deployment to the South China Sea. Vietnam War was going on and it was just a standard thing you did, rotation for six months, a west back cruise. So we went there by way of Hawaii and then on to Okinawa¹⁴, and interestingly enough, when we went to Pearl from Long Beach by ourselves, not in convoy, being nuclear-powered and our top speed was classified, we made it in three days.

SB: Wow.

TD: Yeah, it was impressive. We were supposed to go to – I think it was Sasebo, Japan¹⁵ and we were supposed to pick up an admiral and his staff from another cruiser that was being relieved from the west back. But the people in Sasebo were made aware that a nuclear powered and likely nuclear armed ship was coming into port. And there was a big uproar, a furor, as it were. There was picketing and demonstrations at the main gate, as I recall. So the Navy decided to not do the flag exchange at that base. So we were directed to go to Okinawa, and then I think it was the Chicago cruiser. And we spent Thanksgiving in Okinawa.

That took place, and after two or three days there, we went on to Subic Bay¹⁶, Republic of the Philippines. And in the meantime, we had an option of getting an early out to go back to school, and so I had put in for that, I requested that, and it was honored. So we got to Subic, we got into port, and I spent a few days in a receiving station there. Oh, I had duty one night – you had to be shore patrol. They gave you a night billy club and an armband that said MP¹⁷ – in fact, I think I still have it. And they put two of us on a motor whaleboat, where we went from fleet landing to Grande Island. And Grande Island was an R&R¹⁸ spot, much as Hawaii was for the Vietnam servicemen. They'd get flown out of Nam and off to the PI¹⁹ or off to Pearl or, in some cases, they could meet family, meet a spouse, you know,

¹⁴ A Japanese island that is home to one of the largest US Marine Corps military bases. It was also the site of a battle between the Allies and the Japanese forces in World War II (“Okinawa”).

¹⁵ A city on Kyushu Island, Japan (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

¹⁶ A bay on the island of Luzon in the Philippines and name of a US naval base. The Vietnam War was the time of most activity, and now the base has been turned into an industrial and commercial area (“Subic Bay”).

¹⁷ Short for military police.

¹⁸ Slang for rest and recuperation.

¹⁹ Slang for the Philippine Islands.

and have a few days or a week together, whatever, and then – whoosh – back to reality. And so we did shore patrol and on this motor whaleboat, and it wasn't too bad when you start at 6 in the evening, but by the time you're running the later shifts, and a lot of the guys have had too much...alcohol [laughs] and their behavior was less than desirable. So there was some tense moments there, but anyway, did that one night, and after a couple days, got flown back to the states through Manila²⁰ to Japan to Anchorage, Alaska, to Travis Airforce Base near San Francisco. I spent another week or so at Treasure Island²¹ being processed for separation of active duty and got back early December in '66. And started back at school, second semester at Northwestern. And February 10 of that year, '67, Noreen and I were married – and the rest is history.

But that was basically my active duty time, shortly 22 months, and then I still had some reserve time obligations in Sioux Falls, and so I finished that out in the late '60s. And then I got out – that's enough of this stuff. You know, I was busy in a teaching position, had a teaching job in Rock Valley for years, and then there was an opening here in Sioux Center, so I was teaching over here, and then our son Nathan was born in '72. And just to supplement some income, I thought, you know, that Naval Reserve wasn't such a bad deal, so I went back into the Naval Reserve, Sioux Falls. [Loud buzzer noise.] I bet that sounds good on the recording [laughs]. I would have been advanced a pay grade from E-4 to E-5 on active duty if I had extended for another five or six or eight months, I forgot what it was.... But when I got back to the reserve center in Sioux Falls, it was an automatic upgrade, promotion to E-5, second class petty officer. And so I accepted that. Then I stayed in for a number of years and then I got a little disenchanted with the place and what they were having me do and what they were expecting of me, and I said, eh I don't think so. See you. But by that time I'd made first class petty officer E-6, and the pay wasn't too bad.

Then in the early 80s I kind of got out again for a second time. And then in the 80s we were dealing with a farm crisis, and the whole economy in the Midwest in this area particularly was very, very poor²². And I remember getting just a several hundred dollar pay raise one year at school, and about that time a recruiter from Sioux Falls called and said, "Say, Ted, here's a deal for you." And I would say, "Yeah, like what?" Well, you know, if you come back by a certain time, you can keep your pay grade, and you can make so much a weekend and I can make almost as much on a weekend as I did in my pay raise for the next year in school. So, no brainer – I'm going back. So I went back and basically had a shipboard assignment – shipboard billet. In the Navy they called billets, you know, you're paid, you're slot. Other branches call it other things; the Navy calls it a paid billet. So I was assigned to a cruiser platform ship – USS Halsey CG-23 out of California. So I was

²⁰ The capital of the Philippines.

²¹ A former US Navy facility operated on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay from 1942 to 1997 ("Naval Station").

²² The farm crisis of the 1980s was the worst since the Great Depression, especially in the Midwest, and many farmers faced financial ruin.

on various cruiser type platforms for several years and then there was a little change – some of us in supply had a billet change from the shipboard platform to a supply depot situation. And so then a number of us were rolled over into a Naval Supply Depot Republic of the Philippines – Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. NSD Subic, RP. So then in the 80s, about '86 and '88, I spent two weeks of the summer in the Philippines. You know, my friends in school were painting houses and fishing, and I was out in the Philippines working in supply warehouses, working with Philippine nationals. And so I thought, I have the much, much greater adventure I think, than staying home.

You miss your family, there's no question. And my wife, bless her heart, she's a trooper. You know, there's an old saying that the toughest job in the Navy is that of the Navy wife, and I have to give my wife Noreen all the credit for putting up with me being gone for two weeks in the summer, having two boys at home – school-aged kids. There were a lot of phone calls back home – touch base, how are things going? How is your weather? Is everything working good? Because we didn't have all that stuff, so, anyway, I have to give my wife Noreen a lot of credit. Without that, I wouldn't have a naval career. It's pure and simple.

So anyway, I got involved in this thing in Subic. That's a whole other adventure being in the Philippines and being around Philippine nationals. You didn't talk politics – Corazon Aquino²³ had just been elected president, and Ferdinand Marcos and his wife Imelda were exiled to Hawaii and spent their last years there²⁴. Imelda was the shoe lady – she had more shoes than most chain stores had back then. But just to be around that culture was a remarkable thing, just a remarkable experience. It's steamy, it's hot, sticky out there, and it's a way different culture. Quite a change.

So that's summer of '86 and summer of '88, and in between times I was going to schools in New Orleans, maybe training schools for two weeks at a time. Several times over, I went up for Chief Petty Officer, and that's a once a year exam that you take, and you're given about a couple hours to do this whole thing. And it's a fleet-wide thing, well, as far as the reserve program is concerned. And you take the exam – and I was very fortunate, I had another friend who was a chief yeoman²⁵. And he helped me put a package together. You basically scrutinize your whole service record and make sure all your i's are dotted and your t's are crossed, and everything you've done is properly documented. And a cover letter and everything, all your training evolutions since square one, and whatever responsibilities you've had, whatever accomplishments, and so on and so forth. And that goes to the bureau in Washington, D.C., and they meet once a year. Anyway, I went through that cycle I think two, three times maybe, and didn't make the selection board.

²³ Corazon Aquino served as the first female president of the Philippines from 1986-1992 and restored democratic rule after the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

²⁴ The authoritarian Marcos regime ended in 1986 when Ferdinand and Imelda fled to Hawaii, where Ferdinand remained until his death. Imelda is still alive (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

²⁵ A petty officer in the US Navy performing clerical duties on board ship.

And then one year I said, ok. I redid my coursework, I did my own package. Noreen helped me type that, the whole thing. Put my whole package together, sent it all off to the bureau, and that was in '89, and in July of '89 we were getting ready to go camping up at the lakes and I'd gone uptown to get gas and came back with the vehicle, hooking up the trailer. And my son who was – I don't know if he was ten years old at the time, Derek – yeah, that's about right, April of '79, so he was ten years old. He came running out of the house out on the driveway and he said, "Dad! Dad! I've got news for you!" And I said, "What's that?" And he said, "A man called from Washington, D.C. and said you made chief!" And I said, "What?!" [Laughs] Well, it turns out that in '89 I was selected for ship serviceman chief, and I was quite thrilled. And I found out later on through *Navy Times* that they publish those results – the selection board meets and they say, ok, we need so many E-7s, we need so many E-8s and E-9s, and E-9 is the top drawer. And they start at the top and they work down to see how many slots were vacated by promotions to E-8s, so then they could fill E-7s. Well, two of us in the United States were selected for ship servicemen chief that round; one man from out in Montana, I think, and myself. And so I felt special...I still do [laughs].

SB: As you should.

TD: Sure, sure. So that was a really big deal, and it was so important in the events – my mother just passed away in June, and a month later I found out I made chief. So there was a lot going on. After I made chief then my pay billet changed again, and I went from this Naval Supply Depot, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. Well that was being closed down after the volcano eruption there, they closed off Cubi Point Naval Air Station and that whole supply area there was eventually turned over to international shipping, and I think the Russians had something – I don't know what's all going on with that, but...Anyway, that whole supply unit was being transferred to Yokosuka, Japan. And so I never did train in Yokosuka, Japan, in the supply area, but I got rolled into a 500-bed fleet hospital. And that was like in 1990 that happened. I would still train with the supply depot people, but my pay billet was with Fleet Hospital 23. And so I did a little bit of stuff in both places. And my title was personnel services supply chief for Fleet Hospital 23. And that was a steep learning curve. It was an E-8 position, and I was an E-7, so it was big stuff.

In January of '91 – well, actually the fall of '90 already – because of that billet change, I was put on notice that because of the Gulf War²⁶ – we were under Desert Shield at that time, and then turned into Desert Storm when we invaded Iraq. So personnel in Fleet Hospital 23 were put on notice that you could be selected by individuals to fill in and supplement a fleet hospital. You could end up going to Saudi Arabia; we called it the Sandbox. What would happen is message traffic would come in to the Air National Guard Sioux Falls, and then messages would be shuttled on to the naval reserve center a few blocks away, and those messages

²⁶ The Persian Gulf War lasted from 1990 to 1991 and was codenamed Operation Desert Shield during the military buildup and later Operation Desert Storm during the combat phase when the US and its western European NATO allies attacked Iraq (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

would come in on Mondays. And if you didn't hear anything by Wednesday, you were good for the rest of that week; you didn't have anything to be concerned about.

So I went by for a few weeks like that, and then one day, I was sitting in my classroom in Sioux Center High School, and I didn't have a class at that time – I had two boys in a study hall working on stuff. This is 21 years ago [laughs]. My phone rang, so I rolled back from my desk and answered the phone, "Hello, art room," and there was a reply on the other end: "Chief DeHoogh?"

"Yes, ma'am." And it was Lieutenant Barker from the reserve center in Sioux Falls, and she said she had orders for me: active duty for training.

"Where am I going?"

"Camp Pendleton, California."

"How long?"

"One week. One way round trip." So I had a shocking moment there, and then a short time later had a call from the supply petty officer to verify my uniform sizes because I had to go into organizational uniform, in other words, for the fleet hospital that was all camouflage, combat boots, and all that stuff. I was used to wearing khakis [laughs], you know, different world. That was like on a Wednesday, he called. And by Friday, I had to go to Sioux Falls and pick up a whole big box of uniform stuff that got shipped out of New Orleans. It came from New Orleans to Sioux Falls in two days...priority stuff. So I went down, picked it all up, and got it all together. I had my orders and I had a departure date out of Sioux City. I went to Sioux City, to the airport, and showed them my orders, and they cut my ticket right there at the counter. And so I packed stuff up, and off to San Diego, ocean side, and Camp Pendleton. Winter time, January.

And the neat thing was I had to help the school find a substitute for me for that week while I was gone, and the person I got to help me was my former high school art teacher, Hal Tuttle, from Sheldon schools. He was retired after 42 years or so. And he came up and observed me for a day and he said, "Yeah, Ted, I can see what you're doing. I got to go help my son-in-law with his hogs." [Laughs] So he came in on a Monday and did the five days for me, and I left on a Sunday and I came back on a Saturday.

At Pendleton, the chief's hut was full; they didn't have room for me, and I ended up in the officer's hut. One cot left in a corner. And I was in there with the commanding officer, the executive officer, entire medical staff – all officers. And I was the one lowly chief in the corner [laughs]. We listened to the radio, you know, we'd listen to [coughs] reports from Baghdad because Desert Storm was in place. By the time I got home, I was determined, you know, just in a few days – I think I

was back home maybe a week or two – and it was determined that they had 5500 hospital beds in the region, they didn't need Fleet Hospital 23. So by the skin of my teeth, 72 hours and one more shot in the arm, I would have been gone to the Sandbox. So life can change in a hurry.

So I was blessed, really, Sarah, in so many ways, but the big thing was that I was spared from going overseas, I've never seen combat, and I'm not disappointed. I think I've served my country well, and, yeah, I did it. You stand about right at 28 years total time. My last two weeks training that I did was in Pendleton – in '91, I was in Pendleton, in '92 I was in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. I worked in the naval hospital for two weeks – that was kind of a supervisor thing. And in '93, did my last two weeks at Pendleton, and January 1 of '94 I was discharged – retirement date. And then that June, there were four of us navy chiefs had a joint retirement ceremony, Sioux Falls. We even made the six and ten o'clock news that night [laughs] – TV crews were out and everything, it was all done outside in the parking lot on a Saturday. It was neat, it was cool, a really big deal. [Coughs] Excuse me.

Trying to think if there was something else I was going to share with you... Must not have been too important. So in kind of a nutshell – Oh! I know what it was! The summer of '93, Noreen and the youngest son Derek and I, the three of us went out a week ahead of time, a week before my two weeks training had to start, and we spent a week together in San Diego, down in National City, and we got to see all the sights. You know, we just had a blast, but we flew out of Sioux City on a Sunday morning, we got to San Diego, got a rental car, and by that time it was like noon and we were hungry people, so I'd been to the naval station there a number of times and I knew there was a McDonald's there, so we drove onto the base and went to Mickey D's and went in to get lunch. And here there were sailors all over the place in their working dungarees and ball caps – USS Long Beach CG-M9. Talked to one of the guys, I said, "You guys are important."

"Yeah, we're over at pier so-and-so."

I said, "Really?"

"Yes."

"K, thank you very much." So we finished our meal, drove over to that area, found the ship, got through security, got up to the quarter deck on the ship, ID cards. The officer of the deck, OD, I explained to him I would've been a former sailor back 26 years before on that ship, and so he just said, "Stand fast, chief, we'll get a tour guide for you." So a few minutes later, I had a chief gunners mate came up, and we got the tour. We went down to the chief's mess and talked to the command master chief. He's the singer enlisted on board the ship, he had duty. And he's sitting in the chief's mess, which is a – it's not what it sounds like – it's kind of a lounge-dining area for chief petty officers. The master chief was sitting in a big easy chair watching stock car races, NASCAR, and I had noticed that the chief gunners mate,

our tour guide, had a ball cap with a chief's anchor on the front of it. I said to the master chief, "I would really, really like to be able to get one of those."

"Well, you know chief, it's Sunday and the store is closed."

I said, "Yep, I remember store hours – I used to run it." [Laughs]

And they go, "Hours are set by the commanding officer," so he said, "Well, you just go ahead and take your tour, and I'll see what I can do."

"Ok."

So we got into missile houses, you know, into a missile house. When I was on board, we had to have a clearance to get in there, and there was a marine guard with a 45 on his hip keeping you out. And there was a missile house access doorway right by the ship's store that I operated and the photo lab, and so we got in there and they showed us how this all went and how the fins were put on the missiles before they went out to the launcher, and I'd never seen that before. We got up in the bridge – I'd never been in the bridge before. Got to my old ship store, and that was no longer a store – all the display windows were trophy cases for division athletic events. And inside was a video arcade – video machines, video games. And we went back to the AF missile house²⁷, which was no more, and it was converted into a weight room, physical exercise weight room, and a walk in self-serve retail store. I thought, whoa, things have changed here! So we took about a 45-minute tour of the ship and got back down to the chief's mess for refreshments, you know, they have vending machines, you could have coffee, you could have tea, you could have soda, you could have cappuccino – whatever you wanted, it was there. And command master chief Willingham sitting in his chair, watching the races, and he had a ball cap on his knee. He'd come up with a ball cap and, well, it didn't have the chief's anchor on it, but he gave it to me and I said, "Thanks, I'm willing to pay for this," and chief says to me, "Chief doesn't have to take charity. Nope, you're a former crew member, you've earned it. Enjoy it." Ok, fine. So that was in the summer of '93.

Well, about a year later, not quite, we're getting ready for this retirement thing, and the senior chief Christman(?) in Fleet Hospital 23 said, "Well, Ted, is there anything at all that you'd like to have as a memento of your naval service?" So, I thought and thought and thought and thought, but I don't know. I got a five inch shell casing cut down in brass from the Newport News, I got that, and I got some of this and I got some of that... Well I said, "How about a flag? You know, that's been flown from the mast on the USS Long Beach." Because the Newport News was already scrapped [laughs] – it was done for, history. And I've got a piece of teakwood deck from that ship, a former division officer sent that to me a few years ago. So I'd like to have a flag flown on the ship. Ok. So at our retirement, this was a whole – you'd

²⁷ Air Force missile house.

get stacks of things with letters of this and stuff from the governor of Iowa and various congressmen, and it's a whole deal – I've got a box full of those things.

But anyway, in September was chief's initiation, and way back in '89, I was initiated – well actually over the Air Guard in Sioux Falls – several of us who were initiated. That's another story – won't go there [laughs]. Any more'd be harassment [laughs]. So I showed up at that fall in my khaki uniform for drill weekend, just as a guest for chief's initiation. A friend of mine was made chief, being initiated. And here, part of the proceedings, I was called up front. What's going on? So I had totally forgotten about that flag request. Well here they had a box, and they had a flag for me, and the whole documentation that this flag had flown on such-and-such a day over the nation's capital, and then in June, about my retirement date, it had been run up the mast of the USS Long Beach and down and documented. And in that along with it is a little memo note: command master chief, USS Long Beach, master chief Willingham – fair winds and following seas, chief. And he's the master chief that gave me the ball cap the year before on the ship. Like, wow! [Laughs]

So that was a very unique experience, and I guess in just summarizing, the Navy was always very, very good to me. I have no complaints. I am very active in our American Legion Post – I'm a past commander and presently the adjutant or secretary. I help with military funerals, and I still wear my uniform for that purpose. And a couple years ago, I had a really neat experience. A former student of mine and from Sioux Center High School here, Mike Franken, from a little town of Lebanon, wide spot in the road out west a few miles. He graduated from high school in '75 or '6, and went on to – I think he was at Morningside for a while – went on to University of Nebraska, with an engineering degree. And then he got a commission – he was in the Navy. And he's currently an admiral in the Navy. And he was back in the area – Goodwill public relations, PR thing – and he spoke at Morningside, and he was invited up to Sioux Center High School to speak with the student body, the high school students in Te Paske Theatre. So I was tipped off to that – I substitute teach at the high school – been retired 11 years but I still get invited back. It's fun. So here I showed up that morning in my dress blues, it's in February. And standing outside Te Paske Theatre, there comes Admiral Michael T. Franken and his yeoman chief aid through the hallway, so I greeted him, shook hands with him, and he commented about my uniform and I said, "You know, Mike, this uniform was issued to me about the time you graduated from high school." [Laughs] He says, "Good merchandise," and I said, "Yes, it is!" And then later on after his whole event with the high school kids – he spent hour, hour and a half or so, and just tremendous job communicating with these high school students about opportunities, you know, and things that he did. He was part of central command Southeast Asia, and his boss was General Petraeus. He answered to Petraeus. And since then, now he's had another change and now he's assigned to the Pentagon, and it's a public relations, or something-something, I forgot what. But anyway, afterwards, I took a camera along, and when we were all finished, his yeoman chief took a couple pictures of the two of us together, and that was a fine Navy day. Former student, Admiral Franken [coughs].

So that was just a highlight. In fact, just a couple years before that, Michael Franken's father passed away – Joe Franken, and he ran a machine shop in Lebanon – metalworker, feet steel fabricator, metal – he could do it. He was a World War II veteran and served in the Pacific and there's more stories about Joe, but anyway, he had two sons. He had eight children – the oldest was a son, the youngest was a son, girls in between, a set of twins, and I had most all of those kids in school at some point except for the oldest brother Dan. And he was a naval aviator, and at one time he was commanding officer, Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia. Largest naval air station in the country. And he was commanding officer, and at their dad's funeral, they had requested guys from Rock Valley and Sioux Center for military rights. I don't know what we had, 16 of us out there, it was a bunch. But another retired chief from Rock Valley, he and I had drilled together – we went to boot camp together back in '64. He was a machinist made ship serviceman, and another 3rd class sailor. The three of us did the flag folding and I presented the flag to oldest son Dan, and then at that time, Mike apologized he was not in uniform, but he got in his suit pocket and pulled out a little medallion, his personal medallion for his command, and presented that to our legion post. I'm the custodian of it – I have it [Laughs].

So anyway that was a pretty special thing, and then I reminded him at school that day in February that a couple years ago that – I said I remember we connected way back at your dad's funeral when we did the flag presentation. So there were really a lot of neat moments, I think, some neat Navy connections sometimes that you have... Most veterans you would speak with, they wouldn't trade their military experience for anything. Whether it was Air Force, Marine Corps, Army, Navy, whatever. It was really a privilege to serve, I think, and I was very honored. I still feel honored – it feels special, you know, when I put my uniform on and do military rights, or if it's Memorial Day, or whatever.

This last Memorial Day I was struggling to find a speaker, and we thought we had arrangements made with 185th Air Guard refueling wing in Sioux City, and that didn't pan out, so I was here like three weeks before and I didn't have a speaker, and one day I just so wit's end, I just said, Lord, I'm between a rock and a hard place. I do not have a clue who I have to talk to, who I have to contact, who I have to think of. I need help. So he came through. I had a friend – another teacher out of Sioux Center High School, history and government teacher – who is former Air Force, and his wife has been in the Air Force, and their three kids have been in the Air Force or are in, and his son-in-law. So, talked to him several times, and he actually agreed to be the speaker if nothing else came together. I'd been in school Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday that week and talked to Todd each of those days. And on Saturday, I had a call from a former student, active duty Marine, gunnery sergeant Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, whose folks live a couple blocks away, and he was coming home on leave. Talked to his sister – it was a secret; mom and dad don't know he's coming home. He wanted to know if there's something he could do to help out or participate in Memorial Day, and his sister said, "Well, call Ted DeHoogh." "Oh, ok!" "Here's his number." "Ok". So he called on Saturday

night – well, he called Saturday afternoon and I was gone – but he called again that night. We talked for quite a long time, and he agreed to be our speaker! So the Lord is good. Just a phenomenal thing. And what was so really neat – had him as a student way back – and here he is an E-7 gunnery sergeant, he’s been drill instructor at Paris Island, he’s served in Iraq, he’s served here and there. He’s been on board ships, he’s been involved with helicopter engines...can’t begin, you know. He sent me his old resume and I had to sift and sort through that to come up with an introduction for him at Memorial Day. I’ve had a lot of people tell me afterwards that was the best we’ve ever had.

But what was really interesting is we were reminiscing last year - he comes home on leave every summer, for a while, and we always have to talk. We had compared notes on Camp Lejeune and I said, you know, Noreen and Derek and I were there. I said, we’d finish up my work day at the hospital and come back to base housing where we stayed – it’s kind of like a motel. We had a full kitchen, silverware, drip dishes, pots and pans, appliances, whole thing. But we’d have something to eat and we’d head to Onslow Beach for some R&R. Just go out and watch the Marines do their practice beach landings and their rafts and everything. Driving through the countryside and “caution” or “warning: tank crossing” [laughs]. But we talked about Onslow Beach, and this is Jim Bruinsma, and Jim says, “My favorite place.”

I said, “Really?”

“Yep, I was baptized there on Easter Sunday.” Wow! So, very much, I think, a born-again Christian, and just a remarkable guy. He’s going through some family struggles right now with his spouse, and he had three grown adult sons, and he got grandchildren, but that’s off the record, you know. But anyway, we just had a blast, and he did such a remarkable job, and I was introducing him out here at the cemetery Monday, and we were standing in ranks with some other people and I finished my introduction, I looked over at him, and he stood there looking at me, and I said, “Gunner sergeant Bruinsma, front and center!” [Laugh] So, there he came! And I was just going to give him a handshake, you know, as he went up to the podium – I got a handshake and a hug from him. It was so cool, so neat. So, anyway...Have I forgotten anything essential in your...?

SB: Oh, gosh. Quite the story! [Laughs, flipping through papers] I wanted to ask you a few questions about Vietnam Era specifics. Do you remember ever having access to or hearing about how the war was going?

TD: Oh, sure.

SB: Yes? And what was your reaction and then how was the attitude on board of what was going on?

TD: You don’t have much immediate coverage, of course, when we were on board ship, you’re out at sea – but occasionally we’d get stuff transferred on by helicopter, and

we'd get *Stars and Stripes*²⁸, you know, a newspaper's been published since at least World War II. And it's still in publication. Yeah, you didn't have really television – we'd get movies but that wasn't current stuff. I mean, it *was*, but it wasn't news type things. Yeah, you would find out about things, but when you're in the service, you have a mission. And you do whatever you have to do to fulfill and complete the mission. And you don't get into the politics side of things, you really don't.

SB: Sure.

TD: You may not necessarily agree with how things are, what's going on. You may not like it, of course, but you do what you have to do, you follow orders. It's your commitment. So, that's a little bit about that...yeah, attitudes toward it? Mixed, mixed. It just seemed like some of the frustrating things [coughs]. And that's true today in military action, you know, there's so many frustrations because your hands are kind of tied, you're fighting with one hand tied behind your back. There's certain things you're allowed to do and some things you're not allowed to do. War is hell, there's no two ways about it, and are we in this to win this, or are we just here to spend money and ruin lives, or...What's the ultimate goal here? How can we best attain that goal in the most expeditious way? But that doesn't always seem to be the path, so that's kind of a frustration I think, that probably a lot of currently serving military people have. You know, like way back in the Gulf War. Was it 100 hours? Good grief, we'd defeated, we'd won. But we stopped short, we should've gone further, you know, but we didn't. Of course, we slipped into the quagmire.

And then again – I don't know if this is part of the answer to your question – but, a lot of the guys coming back from Vietnam were really never appreciated. You know, they put up with absolutely ungodly circumstances – the booby traps, the Agent Orange²⁹, the disrespect from the homeland. To this day we have guys who are Vietnam veterans and they don't want anything to do with the American Legion or VFW³⁰, they're sour on a lot of things. And they didn't have a welcome home, they didn't have a homecoming. A lot of the guys were cursed at and spit upon, and I remember one story of an acquaintance in the community who was part of a unit that – most of the unit got sent to Vietnam when he had not enough time left. I think he was at an airport in Omaha, in uniform, coming back to visit his mother, and some guy mistreated him verbally, spit on him. And this guy had a fuse about this long [spreads hands apart], and he hauled off and decked the guy, just decked him. And so other people called for security. The security guy came up and said, what's going on? Well, here's the deal. This guy did this to him and he did this to him. And the security officer said, "Soldier, be on your way. I have a son serving in the military, and what he did to you is not acceptable. He earned what he got." But that

²⁸ An American military newspaper, first issued in 1861, that focuses on matters concerning the United States Armed Forces.

²⁹ A powerful herbicide containing the deadly chemical dioxin, used by the US military in Vietnam to remove forest cover and crops. It was later found to cause numerous health problems (History.com).

³⁰ Veterans of Foreign Wars – a veterans' organization.

type of thing... And to this day, and we're talking a lot of years already, but there's still servicemen who still have a chip on the shoulder.

And I think too, as I look back, you know the good Lord knew me better than I knew myself, and led me to make the decision to go to the Navy. And having had relatives as a kid, listening to their stories. I had an uncle who was a Navy pilot and flight instructor with an 8th grade education. Got tutored to pass enough math courses to become a commissioned officer. He had been a pilot before, had his own private license and an airplane, did airshows way back, but...he had skills that the government needed for the war effort, and I'd listen to him tell stories about his training experiences. And my other uncle who'd been in the war, he'd been in the Army, and he had been a gunnery sergeant on a half-track³¹, Battle of the Bulge³² under Patton, and he would tell me stories about some of his experiences, and I was just a kid listening to them, and I thought, wow! [Laughs] My father was never in the service in World War II; he was a little older and he did get as far as Camp Dodge – he was being processed in, and then because he was married and because I was around, his classification had changed and he got sent back home. I'm thankful for that. Yeah, I mentioned earlier, I enlisted October 22 of 1963 – do you remember what happened historically 30 days later?

SB: JFK?

TD: JFK was assassinated – 30 days, he was my commander in chief for 30 days. And I served under every president up through Bill Clinton.

SB: Oh, wow.

TD: Was that seven or eight of them? Something like that. That's a long haul.

SB: A very long haul [laughs].

TD: That was a very good experience, and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I made friends – in fact, I have a division officer that I on the Newport News, that first ship was assigned to – and I've actually served on eight different ships: two on active duty and the other ones were just training evolutions, you know. But a fellow from New York by the name of Larry DeLong, and because DeLong and DeHoogh, you know, we have some Dutch ties. He was from New York, and he worked for the New York State legislature and writing bills for protecting and oversight of children and youth. And he never married, but he adopted a couple of kids, and I think one of them he lost in an accident. But we correspond every – I haven't seen him since 1966 – but every Christmas, we get a card – love, Larry. That's all you get, that's it. Then a few years ago I got a package in the mail from him and he had helped his

³¹ A military vehicle with wheels on the front and caterpillar tracks on the back.

³² In December of 1944, the German forces, which had been building up for a month, burst out on the thin US lines in the Ardennes Mountains on the Western Front during WWII. The initial attack was successful, but it ended in an Allie victory ("Bulge, Battle of the").

father write a whole story about his service time, World War II, and so ten years ago – whatever it was – Larry decided to do the same for himself. And it's a little book about this thick, you know? [Motions with fingers] Little plastic binders on the end, and I thought, how smart of him! And he talks about his getting involved and getting into the Navy and getting a commission, and doing this and doing that, and various experiences and shipboard assignments and so on. Partway through, he reminisces about his time on the Newport News, and he picks on several crew members in his division that he had special connections to. And there's a little part of a page with Ted DeHoogh and my picture on it. That's cool. So, yeah, neat stuff.

It was really a great experience, some of the greatest people you could imagine that you have a chance to work with and serve with, and some you remember and some you don't, but just a lot of memorable experiences. And been to enough places in the world that – even after Noreen and I retired we travelled, you know, tour groups, to various countries. And this is still the greatest the greatest country in the world, and there isn't another place on the planet I'd rather live and pay taxes. It's not perfect; it needs improvement all the time. But still, we are so blessed in this country with the freedoms that we have, Sarah, and that's... And you're old enough to understand all that, I don't have to draw you pictures, do I? [Laughs].

SB: Well, thank you so much for sharing your story –

TD: Certainly, certainly.

SB: And for your many, many years of service.

TD: Yeah, well I've flown a flag virtually every day that it works. You know, if it's going to rain, then I keep hoping for rain, happy to take it in, I might even leave it out if it rains! Sure, you bet. And Noreen and I are part of a committee over here in Sioux Center, too...[Abrupt cutoff]

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