

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CARL O. E. BOSENBERG

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

APRIL 21, 2002

TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Carl O. E. Bosenberg on April 23, 2002 in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Shaun Illingworth and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

Sandra Holyoak: We'd like to thank you, Mr. Bosenberg, for coming this morning to sit for the interview. We'd also like to begin the interview by asking you to tell us how did you come to Rutgers?

Carl Bosenberg: Well, it's a rather long story. As both of you know, that during the late '20s and early '30s we were in a very serious depression, and if I had to go to a school or I had to pay tuition, or not only tuition, but also room and board, and all of that, I never would have gotten to college. Since we lived close by, I could live at home, I could even have lunch at home, and the tuition was very reasonable. It was not much over two hundred and X number of dollars per semester. So, that made it very possible for me to come here. My father had a contract with the University to maintain the campus, and we did that for fifty-one years, so, Rutgers was a part of us ... And another thing, I liked the idea that they had a 150 pound football team, because I was only a little guy. I'd never make the varsity, but I did make the 150 pound, and I think we had a better schedule than the varsity ever had. I played football, 150 pound football for four years, and I wrestled for four years, and, I think, all that helped me to come here. Of course, the primary idea was to get an education. I left that out. I feel in talking to others, other men who have gone to other schools, we could stand up to anyone of them.

SH: What was your major when you came to Rutgers?

CB: Horticulture ... ornamental horticulture, and landscaping. I was third generation. My grandfather was in the business, my father and his two brothers, and a cousin of mine got out, in the Class of '39 ... he was in horticulture. So, there wasn't anything else I could do. I just had to follow along, and I enjoyed it. I had, well, my father worked very hard and he developed a very good business, and I enlarged on it after he was gone. It was good to me. I had to put in many hours. An eighty hour week was not unusual, but it paid off.

SH: A lot of your courses were over on what is now Cook Campus?

CB: Surprisingly enough, everybody thinks, because you're an Aggie, you had all your courses or many of your courses over on the Ag campus, but that's not true.

SH: Well, good, set us straight.

CB: That's not true at all. In fact, in our freshman and sophomore years, yes, we had courses over there, but we had more courses here, at the Rutgers Campus. In our junior and senior year we did have a good many, but not many more than over here, which was also good. It kept us in touch with this part of the school.

SH: Some have talked about how dissociated they felt with this part of the campus, because they lived and ate and did all their, you know, class work over there, so ... like the poultry building and things like that.

CB: Well, yes, but they only took the courses. There were only certain groups that lived over there. I think it was well divided between the Ag farm and here. In the freshman and sophomore years, we had more courses here than we had over there.

SH: As an incoming freshman did you have an initiation?

CB: What do you mean by initiation?

SH: Well, in 1938, when you came on campus, were the sophomores, the upperclassmen, did they make you wear dinks?

CB: Oh, yes. We had dinks, and ties, and everything that went with it. I think that was a lot of fun. It was a good tradition. Do you still do that?

SI: No. That went away when the GI Bill people came back. I think it would be difficult to make a veteran wear a dink, and all that.

CB: Yeah, I think that made a difference there. They were a little older, and they didn't go for that foolishness.

SH: Well, tell us what campus was like in 1938 when you came, I mean, you had already worked here.

CB: Well, we had total of student enrollment of about 1700, four classes. Now they have more than that in the freshman classes. Of course, the size influences what you can do, what you can't do. There wasn't very much you could do, unless you actually went out for sports, football, baseball, basketball, and swimming. Swimming was really big back in those days. We had a coach, Riley, I think his name was, and he had a terrific swimming team. He could beat all the colleges around. I think that if we had been larger, we could have taken all these schools.

SH: Tell us about what it was like to be on the wrestling team. Then we'll talk about 150 pound football.

CB: Well, the wrestling team, we had a coach who came from the Midwest, but his profession was a lawyer. He ... was in the Newark area. He would come every afternoon over to the gym, and he was very good. He had wrestled in the Olympic team, and even though he was considerably older than we were, he was strong. He could still handle us, except maybe a 175 pounders or 200. They were too big for him, but it was good. He got us into some meets, that if it weren't for him, we wouldn't have gotten into them.

SH: How did you do when you got to these meets?

CB: Well, I lost two bouts in four years, so I did pretty well.

SH: I should think so.

CB: That, I hate to admit, one was to a Princeton man, and the other was from Army, and I attribute them to the fact that I was short. These guys, even though they only weighed 155 pounds, they were six foot, and all they could do was push me away and I couldn't get their legs and knock them down, and they just beat me. But it was good.

SH: Where did you travel for the meets that you wrestled in?

CB: Well, Yale was, I think, the farthest point we went ... Lehigh, Princeton, and some of the other schools. I think Westchester Teachers were in there. I really don't recall.

SH: I just wondered how far a field you would have to go.

CB: Yale was, I guess the farthest, but it was real fun to go up there.

SH: If you wrestled Army, did you go to West Point?

CB: No, we never went to West Point.

SH: Was that in a meet then?

CB: Yeah, or they came down here.

SH: Did you have someone from Rutgers that you trained with most of the time, like a wrestling partner?

CB: What we usually did, we liked to train with the person who is in the class, or two, above us. In other words, I was 155, they were 165 or [1]75, and you got a good workout. Well, of course, a wrestling team, the group in itself is small, so you just don't get a lot of different people. I trained with, Art Gotlieb, [he] was a football player, varsity football player. He weighed about 200 pounds, and he would come out wrestling with us, and I'd throw him all over the place. He just couldn't wrestle. He was much stronger than I was. God bless me if he ever got hold of me. He could just hold me, but when I could get away from him, I'd throw him all over ... he taught gym at New Brunswick High School and he'd tell his classes, "That little guy, Bosey, he was a toughie." Well, I had started to work when I was ten years old, and we worked a ten hour day, from seven o'clock in the morning till 5:30 in the afternoon. I got ten cents an hour. So, for a five and a half day work week, I got \$5.50 ... But all that helped me to make me strong. I was probably stronger than a lot of kids my size. That's the reason for it.

SH: What about the 150 Pound Football? What position did you play?

CB: Well, I played a running guard. We played a Pop Warner system, which is an unbalanced line. Now you're saying 'yes,' I don't know if you know what I mean. Do you? Okay. We played unbalanced line, either left or right, and the first varsity game that I played in, we played against Yale. They beat us forty something, that's about six, or whatever. Our coach, Tom Kenneally, was a Notre Dame graduate. He was an understudy for (Corridio?) out there. He was good. Believe me ... the week after we were beaten so badly by Yale, I wouldn't want to live it

again. He worked us, and rightfully so, but we had a winning season, we won more than we lost. Of course, if we beat Princeton, no matter what the rest of the season was, that was a successful season. It was very, I think it was very good. I liked it.

SH: Did you attend the varsity games then?

CB: Yes. We went to the varsity games. They played Saturday afternoons, as usual, and we played some of our games on Saturday afternoons, some of them were played after school. We didn't have the notoriety that the varsity had. I think we had a better team.

SI: Did you play on Nielson Field?

CB: Yes, we played on Nielson Field. We already had the stadium, and we played some of the games in the stadium. The stadium was initiated in 1938, so, I was a freshman that year, so we used the stadium also.

SI: Since you mentioned that, in your freshman year, did you see the Princeton-Rutgers game?

CB: After that game, I couldn't talk. Art Gotlieb was the guy. He threw the winning pass to another fellow ...

SI: Moon Mullins?

CB: Mullins. Now, this is off the record. Moon liked to imbibe, and, I think, he did something ... he just played like a professional that day. Well, all the guys did. That was ... well, we only beat them by two points. I still have the folder at home.

SH: Do you?

CB: Yes. I kept it. I think we paid a dollar and a half, or something, for it. That was a lot of money in those days, so, I wasn't gonna just throw it away. I still have it. But, I really enjoyed the 150 pound ball. Then we played Cornell, they came here, we went up there. It was a very interesting experience.

SI: Yesterday I was reading an interview with one of your classmates, who was on the team, Lyman Avery.

DB: Oh, Lyman was one of the best we had.

SI: Oh, yeah, is that true?

CB: He was a halfback, and this guy could run, man, he could run. You had an interview with Lyman?

SI: Well, he was interviewed in '97, but I was just reading it. He talked about the trip to Cornell, and, I think, he said, they were rolling down the hill in a car and cops stopped them, and there was something like that.

CB: I missed that part, either that, or he made it up. Lyman is a real nice guy.

SH: Who was the captain of your team?

CB: I don't know, we didn't ...

SH: Did it change every year?

CB: We didn't consider a captain. We were all ball players, ... the first day I went out as a freshman, there was a fellow who had been a varsity player and he was our coach, and he said, "All you guys that have played football line up over here. Those of you who never played line up on this side." I lined up on this side, but I had never played. He said to me, "What did you play?" I said, "Fullback," and he says, "Okay, we'll check you out." So, they gave me a ball and put a couple of guys out there and told me to run through them, and I did. He said, "You'll be all right." But that was fun.

SH: Had you played football or wrestled in high school at all?

CB: No. I'll tell you why. New Brunswick High School had pretty big kids. We had a lot, not that it makes any difference, but there is a section of New Brunswick here, that you may be aware of, that's strictly Hungarian. They had some really big kids. Then we had three fellows, who were experts. (Bino, Benhardt?) and Brock. (Bino?) made varsity in three sports three years in a row, football, baseball, basketball. Brock was a basketball player, he came to Rutgers and played basketball here. (Benhardt?), he didn't get to college, but a pretty good football player. So, that kind of started the ball rolling. In fact, Miami (Edison?), from Florida, came up there and played a game and New Brunswick High School beat them fourteen to nothing. The following year, New Brunswick High School went down there. I don't recall if we won or we lost. That was just the two games.

SH: Did you have a chance to participate in any dancing?

CB: No, I was not that talented. If it's brute strength I could do it, but, you know, something like dancing, no.

SH: Did you date any of the girls over at NJC?

CB: No. In the four years, I never dated an NJC girl. No. I stuck to New Brunswick.

SH: Tell us about what it was like to be involved with the ROTC. It was mandatory for two years.

CB: Yes, the ROTC was mandatory, and we had a Colonel Stutesman, who was head of the department. I don't know if you heard of that name before, but he was like a father to us. He also had a German shepherd, not German shepherd, German pointer, dog that he brought to class. Everyday, that dog would just walk behind him, come up to the class, lie down at the desk, that was it. Then, of course, he had to feed him a little snack now and then. Oh, the dog liked that. I didn't object to the ROTC, but it taught me one thing. Get as far away from the army as you can. I couldn't see myself being in a foxhole, half full of water in this mud. That wasn't for me. So, that's why I went aboard ship.

SH: Had you thought of going into the advanced ROTC, but the two years was all you needed?

CB: No. I wanted to stay clear of it.

SH: What about mandatory chapel? Did you have to attend that, even though you lived off campus?

CB: No. I didn't.

SH: What about some of the administration at Rutgers then, like Dr. Clothier and Dean Metzger? Did you have any interaction with them?

CB: Yes. Dr. Clothier, especially his wife, she was a gardener ... not Dr. Clothier, but she. Of course, I grew up with them. By the time I got to college I knew a little bit, and she realized that and she would ask me to come over and help her. She paid me, you know. In those days we got about fifty cents an hour, but she would ask me if I could come over, do certain little things, but Dr. Clothier never came out. He never even picked up a pair of hand shears. But he was a regular guy. He really was.

SH: Did they live in the same house that the current President lives?

CB: Yes. The University bought that property ... I'm not sure, I think they already had it, had bought it, when I started as a freshman. So, I don't really remember when it was bought ... But we did a lot of work over there. Mrs. Clothier was quite a gardener, and it was fun. Oh, they had a daughter. That was the only child they had, and she had a pet goat. She'd ride in the car with the girl, and she'd drive all over with the goat. Wherever she went, the goat went.

SH: Following along behind the car?

CB: No. She was in the car. She was in the car. She was more of a tomboy than anything else, anyhow. At least, I thought so. The rest of them, Mrs. Clothier was the gardener, so that's where I had the association with them.

SH: What about Dean Metzger?

CB: He was a real nice guy, if you got to know him. Everybody was afraid of him.

SH: That is what we have heard.

CB: He was tough, but, again, he would come to my father, and to me, and ask me questions, that's how I got to know him.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: We're talking about Dean Metzger and you said that he would talk to you and your father

CB: Oh, yeah. For the average student, he was tough to talk to, but he had a good heart and his son was a nice person.

SH: Was he?

CB: Very nice. I had deferment in my senior year so that I could finish my senior year, and that's when we got bombed, the seventh of December '41. I'll never forget. I was sitting up in my room, at home, and I was studying for a history test for Monday morning. They broke in and they said, "Pearl Harbor was just bombed by the Japanese." I thought, "Oh, boy, there goes my deferment." So, come Monday morning, I came down, and Dean Metzger lived over here.

SH: Up here in College Avenue?

CB: Yeah, next to this campus, and I went up to his office and he says, "I know why you're here." He said, "There were a couple here before you already."

SH: Really.

CB: He said, "I can't guarantee you anything, but we have one letter, I'll write you another one." I mean he would talk to you. He wrote the second letter, and I took it down to draft board in South River, at that time, and they said, "We're not gonna call you. We don't need you and you only have a little more than one semester to go. So, come back and see us when you're deferment is up." Well, I never went back because I didn't want to go in the army. So, I went a different direction.

SH: When had you gotten your draft notice? In the beginning of your senior year?

CB: No, at the end of my junior year.

SH: When you turned eighteen.

CB: It wasn't something that you had to go that particular year, as long as you got your time in. My cousin, the one I mentioned before, he was two years ahead of me. He was drafted, and he was in the army.

SH: What do you remember about graduation, then? Did campus change after Pearl Harbor?

CB: Well, I'd say for the first couple of days, the only conversation around here was, "When are we going?" They couldn't have taken us if they had wanted to, because we weren't ready, they weren't ready, nothing was ready. I mean, that was such a surprise attack. That caught us with our pants down. I was at home, and the sons of these neighbors that were around us, the mothers would look at me, "Who do you know, that you don't have to go in the army?"

SH: Really?

CB: Oh, yes. I mean, all my playmates, you know ... [since] we're that big, we grew up [together]. We went and played together and then the war came. So, it got to the point, I just didn't want to go out in the street anymore. If there was a mother out there, if she was here, I'd walk down here, and go around her. So, one day I got tired of that. I said, "I'm going down to Washington." I had graduated, so I got on the train, went down to Washington, the Senate office building, to see Senator Barber, who was senior senator from New Jersey. So, there I was, a kid just out of college, I strutted up to that building, and the secretary said to me, "Can I help you?" I said, "Yes, I'd like to see Senator Barber." "Well, he's not here, he's away for two weeks." Boy, my heart dropped. She said, "Would you like to talk to his assistant?" I said, "I'll talk to anybody." I told her, "I came all the way down from New Brunswick, so I'm not gonna go home without talking to someone." She said, "Would you like to talk to Mr. Herman?" Herman was mayor of North Brunswick, his brother, so, I said, "Yes, I would like to talk to him," but I was[n't sure it was him], but I was pretty sure. She said, "Well, sit down, he'll be out in a little bit." So, he came out. He said, "You're Carl Bosenberg." "Yes, sir." He said, "I know your uncle very well. He just did a landscape job on my house." I thought, "Boy, I'm in." I went in his office, he asked me to come in, sit down. "Why are you down here?" So I told him. He says, "Okay." He picked up the phone and talked about five minutes. He says, "Okay, go home, you'll have your orders in the mail tomorrow morning." I thought, "No, this can't be true. It can't be possible." So, I went home and, sure enough, the following morning, the orders were in the office, "Go to 80 Lafayette Street for your physical." I went there. I had no problem physically. Next thing I knew, I was up at the Coast Guard Academy. How did that happen?

SH: Now, had you asked for the Coast Guard, or just something in the Navy?

CB: Well, as I say, all I wanted was not to get into the army. We had an employee, also a young fellow, he had gone into the Coast Guard ... and he came home. He lived in Franklin Township, and he came to see us. He says, "Carl, why don't you go in the Coast Guard?" I said, "Ah, that's some rag tag outfit." He said, "No, it's not." He said, "Talk to them." I talked, and the first thing I knew, I was in. That's how I got in the Coast Guard. It turned out very well for me.

SH: Before going to Washington, had you thought of trying any of the Navy V-12 programs, or anything like that?

CB: Well, yes, I thought about it, but after I went down there, and Mr. Herman ... well, he got me in and I got my commission.

SH: So, you went to Washington all by yourself?

CB: Yes.

SH: What did your parents think?

CB: Well, my mother died when I was seven, and my father said, "Do what you have to do. I'm not gonna tell you what to do or how to do it, but do what you have to do." So, that's what I did. That's the way it turned out.

SH: So, when your orders came to go to the Coast Guard Academy in New London ...

CB: Yes.

SH: Did you have to report right away, or did you have a certain window?

CB: I didn't have to report until the later part of September. Those mothers still talked. "How come you're still home?" I did report. I'll never forget the morning I left. My father took me down to the train station, and in the back of my mind, I said, "Well, when I go up there, I'll deposit my suitcase and I'll go out and look at the town of New London," because I had never been there. So, I got up there and I walked in the gate. I went in the building, they told me where to put my suitcase and stuff. I started to walk out, and one of the guys who was a Petty Officer, "Hey, boy, where are you going?" "I want to see New London." "Like hell you are, you're in the military now. You're not going anywhere." So, I said, "Well ..." He said, "Don't well me. Do what I tell you." I figured, "Well, I was in."

SH: You were in.

CB: I didn't get out of there the first six weeks. I didn't get off the campus, except in the morning at six o'clock when we were out running. Of course, the whole class did that ... but I didn't even see New London until about six weeks later.

SH: Where was your class made up from? Were they from all over the country?

CB: All over. Surprisingly, we had quite a few from the Midwest, from Chicago, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, and then we had quite a few from New England. That was home to them. The first months we were at Groton, which is right across the river from New London. The second month we were at the Academy, the third month we were back at Groton. The last month we spent, we were divided by that time, our group spent on the *Danmark* ship. We lived on it, we were on it. That was great, and the *Danmark* is a three-master, it had three masts. So, they said, "Can any of you guys climb? Put your hands up." So, I put my hand up. "What did you climb?" "My job, as a civilian, I did a lot of tree pruning." "Terrific, you're captain of the main mast." There were two other kids held up their hands, one was from Texas. He was a good athlete. He said, "I can't climb, but I enjoy it." He said, "Okay, you take the after-mast." Then the other kid was a Public Service person, so, he said he can climb telephone poles. He said, "Okay, you take the forward mast." So, that's where we were and that was our job. So, that paid off. To think that someday, while I was climbing trees, that would stand me in good stead, but it worked, because I had no fear of climbing. In fact, are you familiar with the Rutgers campus downtown, Olde Queens?

Well, there are large elm trees down there, and they were planted, they aren't there anymore, they've taken them down. They were planted close to the road but the branches grew across the road into Queens Building. So, one day I was pruning one of them, of course, I was roped in, so I walked out on a branch, walked over to the window, knocked on the window. There was a lady in there typing, she just about died. "Where did you come from?" I said, "Well, I thought I'd have some fun." She said, "At my expense!" Well, after a while she laughed, but she didn't think it was funny.

SH: What was your training like? What were you studying while you were at Groton?

CB: Well, we had a lot of physical exercise, trying to get us in shape, which was no problem for me, because I was in shape. But we had seamanship, communications, and working on and around the boats. They had mostly chiefs, who were in charge, and they had a group of maybe five, or six, or seven people, and that was your group, and they'd teach you. Then, of course, your communications classes, and stuff, you had in the classroom, where you learned semaphore and the light, and transcribing with the light. We were up and out by six in the morning, and the first thing we did was this three-mile-run, just to get in shape. At the end of the first month, we lost about twenty-five percent of our class.

SH: They washed out?

CB: They washed out. I'll never forget the scene ... we were standing on the street in formation, the officers were up on the steps, and he says, "Some of you guys are smiling. Maybe you'll be in the next group to get out. So wipe that smile off your face."

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CB: Out of the 300 and some of us that started, there were about 180, or so, that made it.

SH: Quite an attrition rate.

CB: It was a tough four months, no doubt about it.

SH: If they washed out of the Academy, did they have the option to become enlisted men in the Coast Guard, or did they have to go back to the draft board ?

CB: Well, usually what happens, was the guys that washed up were so mad, so angry, with the Coast Guard they didn't want any part of it ... because they had high hopes of being commissioned, but after they got washed out, they no use for it. So, it was tough, but there was one officer up there, ... we had to go over a high wall, that was part of our routine, and when I came down, I threw my knee out, and he said, "How bad is it?" I said, "Well, I can't tell, but it hurts." So, he sent me to the infirmary, and they said, "You can't take any physical exercise." I thought, "Oh, boy, I'll be thrown out for that," but this officer saw that I could do exercise and called me and talked to me, and he said, "You went to Rutgers?" I said, "Yes." "Did you know Coach So and So?" I forget his name now, but anyway he was then a lacrosse coach down there.

He said, "Did you play lacrosse?" I said, "No, I played 150 pound ball, I wrestled." He said, "So, you played 150 pound for Tom Kenneally, right?" That was our coach. I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, anybody who played for Tom Kenneally for four years is good enough for me. Go to the gym, and do what you can do, but you don't have to take phys-ed anymore." So, I lucked out on that one.

SH: How did he know the lacrosse coach and Tom Kenneally?

CB: He was his brother-in-law. The lacrosse coach was his brother-in-law and Tom Kenneally was a friend. So, he said, "You'll do." I had no problems, physically. Even now, I'm still, physically, in good shape.

SH: Do you remember when you finished and graduated?

CB: Yes. We graduated ... we were in what they called October class, and we got our commissions in February. That was a happy day. We all looked forward to that.

SH: We should back up a little bit. You said you didn't get to go see New London for six weeks, how was it when you finally get to go?

CB: Well, I'll tell you. It wasn't funny. The reason we couldn't go out was because we didn't have dress uniforms, and they weren't going to let their cadets go out in just overalls. So, we finally got our uniforms. They came in almost immediately after we got there. They measured us, and everything, but it took awhile to sew them and make them. So, four or five of us went out on a Saturday afternoon, we were free for the weekend. We had Saturday afternoon and Sunday off. We didn't know where to go, so we bought a newspaper ... to see what movies were playing. So, while we were standing there, as I said, we all had new uniforms on, blues, a pigeon flew over and crapped right on my hat. After that I was known as Pigeon Shit Bosenberg. But we all took it in stride. I mean, I laughed, they laughed. It's no use getting angry, but I'll never forget my brand new hat, and this pigeon flew over. So, we were there, and it was a tough course, but we worked. The second month, the first month we lost quite a few, second month we lost about another twenty, and by the time we got to the third month, they had about everyone out that they wanted out, but we still, on the very last day, I'll never forgive them for that, they threw one kid out.

SH: Why?

CB: They just didn't like the way he could do his physical part of the job, and they threw him out. Well, I would have felt the same. I never saw anyone so dejected. But you had to stay on the ball, otherwise they think nothing of throwing him out.

SH: You talked about being on the *Danmark* and that it's a three masted ship. Had you ever sailed at all here in New Brunswick or ever been on any kind of a craft?

CB: No. I was in a rowboat, and a canoe.

SH: Well, what were some of your experiences being on the *Danmark*?

CB: First of all, it's a good thing we had auxiliary engines. To be out on Long Island Sound aboard a ship that was going just by wind was an experience. I mean, just the feel of the ship and the movement of the ship. It was very interesting, you know. They had another group that they had on sub chasers, and those of us who were on the *Danmark* were in the largest group. Then they had another group, which I really don't know what they specialized in ... but they had divided us into our abilities and he said to me, he said, "I could see you have handled ropes before." Because I knew all the knots, and I knew all the tree climbing, and stuff you needed to know. He said, "I don't think you'll have any problems here." So, I liked that, and I didn't have any problems, but it was basic. My sail station was on the main mast, top station. When we were out at sea, we had to be up there sometime. Of course, the ship would keel over in the wind and I'll look down, the water was 120 feet below me. So, I was holding on. We were on the *Danmark* in January. That part, the cold itself wasn't so bad, but the lines that we had to climb on had ice on them. Whether they had ice or no ice, we went up, otherwise you get kicked out. Fortunately, nobody fell.

SH: Did anybody ever fall overboard?

CB: No. On thing we did do, crazy kids, we had ... one man fall in our class, who was really small, and he was up on the cross mast with us. A couple of us grabbed him, and we put him up on the cross mast and wrapped the sail around him. The captain was standing down on the deck, and he saw this sail with the big bulge in it, and he said, "What have you got in there?" He was Swedish. We told him, oh, man ... it's a wonder they didn't throw us out. If he had ever fallen, he could have been dead. He was above the deck, and the only thing that stopped him was the deck itself. It's not that we were angels, by any manner.

SH: Did this young man forgive you for tying him on the mast?

CB: No, I don't think he really did, but we were still friends. Some of the fellows would gripe about the food, and we slept in hammocks. We hung our hammocks on the deck, from the (topsail), and, you know, with a guy laying in the hammock, it's pretty stiff. So, we'd get boards and we'd run along, bang, bang, bang ... you know, we all got our share, because we were all in bed ... I think our curfew was ten o'clock, and we had to be up and out on deck by six. So, we had to get up pretty early, and we also had to stand watches, just to learn that we had to stand watches aboard ship.

SH: Now did you live on the *Danmark* during this period?

CB: Oh, yeah.

SH: You weren't coming onboard every morning?

CB: Oh, no, no, no. We slept and ate, that was our home.

SH: Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

CB: The good part about it was, we were on the *Danmark* over Christmas and New Year's and boy, did we have food. We had great food. Well, I liked that, and I worked at it.

SH: Did they have any kind of celebration for Christmas and New Year's? Religious services or anything?

CB: Yes, they had. It was free. You could go if you wanted. You didn't have to go if you didn't want to go. But, I figured, heck, I'm part of it, so I'm gonna go.

SH: Were you at sea or were you tied alongside ...

CB: No, we were tied up. For the holiday, we were tied up, and we ... didn't have a regular workday or anything. That day was a day off.

SH: They commissioned you then in January, I think you said, right?

CB: Yes.

SH: How long did it take before you got your orders or did you already know where you were going?

CB: You mean after we got commissioned?

SH: Yes.

CB: No. They did ask us if we had any preference, and I, and a few others of us, said, "We want to go to Alaska." Why? Don't ask me. Don't ask me.

SH: You had just been on this beautiful ship, but in January.

CB: We said Alaska, so they took all of our names, and there was a fellow named, Borne, and mine was Bosenberg ... we were always in the same [bunk], either top or bottom, except he was about as big as you.

SH: Like six foot?

CB: Six foot something ... and I wanted the bottom bunk. He says, "Like hell." He'd picked me up, throw me up on the top bunk.

SH: So much for ABC order, right?

CB: We all decided we wanted to go to Alaska. When we got out there, Seattle, to the district office, there were about ten of us. They took Borne and myself off the group, so eight of them went aboard ship. There were four on one ship and four on the other. Borne and I were kept at the office. Both ships were sunk and they were all lost.

SH: No.

CB: I don't know how we had that kind of luck. After we were there, my job was OD at night, from midnight till four in the morning. An order came in requesting people, so many ensigns, so many JGs, so many something. So, I said "Okay, here I go." So, after getting out there and being there about three weeks ... out there they had those living quarters. I lived in a private home.

SH: Really?

CB: The people had one son, and he had gone in the army, so they rented me his room. They were very nice, because on Sunday afternoon, they'd take me out for a ride, and stuff, but that didn't last long, either. I was one of the ensigns that they chose, so they gave us five days to get from Seattle to Curtis Bay, Maryland.

SH: Back here.

CB: So, my father said, "I just sent you out to Seattle, now you're home again. How come?"

SH: Did you travel by train both times, back and forth?

CB: No, I flew.

SH: Oh, did you? You flew out to Seattle, and then flew back.

CB: I flew back.

SH: You win a prize.

CB: So, I had three days at home, and then he drove me down to Curtis Bay. That's when I got assigned to the crew that I was on the LST with. We all thought, when the orders came out, they said they want these people for LSTs and we thought, oh boy, we hit the bottom of the barrel, because you know, they were not a battleship. They were ships that floated, that's about all, and moved. But we were lucky.

SH: The men who were lost in Alaska, going to Alaska, what were they on that sank?

CB: I don't know.

SH: Do you know if it was weather that sunk them?

CB: No, a Russian ship got them.

SH: Really? Collision type of thing?

CB: No. No. Bombs. There was a battle between our ships and the Russian ships, and two of our ships were sunk. So, we were lucky. Borne and I were both lucky. We didn't get to go out there.

SH: I'm sorry, now, we can come back to Maryland. When you were assigned to the LST, did you have to go to more training? Were you sent to more schools?

CB: Well, at Curtis Bay, we were under the command of a Navy outfit for training, and we went out on the Atlantic, on the LSTs, and we were taught how to handle it. Then, when we finally got a ship, it was in Pittsburgh. So, we brought it down the ... well, we didn't, it was a regular transportation crew. They took it down, we were aboard, and we took it down the Ohio and down the Mississippi, which was a very interesting ride.

SH: What do you remember about it?

CB: What do I remember about it? Some of the most strange things I remember. It was a very rainy season, and we'd go riding down the river, way out, 300, 400 feet, there'd be a ship right in the middle of a cornfield. They got off the course and there they were, LSTs. That's why they had regular crews. We never ran at night. We tied up. We were always under training, you know, different parts of the ship, and it was a lot of work. There wasn't much time to train. It took, from Pittsburgh down to New Orleans, it took about five days.

SH: How big a crew did you have? Did you have your full crew?

CB: We had a full crew.

SH: Full crew at that point, oh, okay.

CB: We had a full crew, the officers and enlisted, everything, everything, and the crew that ran the ship. They were Navy. We went without any weight on the ship. They didn't have guns. We didn't have guns. We didn't have anything. They didn't put them on till we got to New Orleans.

SH: Now was the ship already commissioned at that point?

CB: Oh, yes.

SH: It was commissioned in Pittsburgh then, out of the shipyard there?

CB: Yes.

SH: Okay.

CB: All these things are interesting.

SH: Right, I know. Were you there for the commissioning of the ship?

CB: Oh, sure.

SH: So, you were on it when they were still in the yards with it?

CB: Yes.

SH: Oh, okay. Can you tell us about that? What it was like to be, literally, seeing your ship being built.

CB: Well, we didn't actually, the ship was complete, and all we did was go aboard, and it was in the water. It had been launched, and I guess maybe overnight we stayed on it. Until the next day, when we actually started down the Ohio. But the water table in the river was so high, we just rode right over the wicket dams.

SH: Really?

CB: We just rode right over them.

SH: With no extra weight, you could just go right over the top?

CB: That's right, until we got to New Orleans and they put all these guns, and ammunition, and any extraneous material aboard.

SH: Did they outfit your ship in any other special way?

CB: No, the same as the other 2,000 LSTs.

SH: How long did it take to do that?

CB: To go from Pittsburgh to New Orleans? I guess it took us about a little better than a week.

SH: And how long did it take then to outfit it when you were in New Orleans?

CB: About ten weeks.

SH: When you were coming down the rivers, how close behind you were coming the next, could you see any other craft?

CB: Lots of riverboats, that's all.

SH: But there were no other LSTs coming through?

CB: No. They didn't build them that fast.

SH: I was just wondering if there was a backlog coming down.

CB: It was good. We learned a lot, even on that transportation.

SI: When did you begin to develop a specialty as an officer? Was it in training or when you met your LST crew?

CB: That was all at the Academy. We were commissioned officers and when we went aboard ...

SI: Or when do they designate you like a communications officer or navigation officer?

CB: Well, that was after we got the ship as our own. All the people who did the training were off, and it was completely our own. I was supply officer, I was gunnery officer, and then, my last job was navigation officer. That's the one I like best.

SH: Really. Now how long a period of time did you serve as the supply officer?

CB: I guess, pretty close to four, five, six months.

SH: ... So this is like almost a progression in training to serve in these capacities?

CB: Not necessarily, no. As we got new people, new officers, and, as I said at the beginning, the skipper would be called back to bring another LST out, so that meant the officers we had would move up. Some of the people would also go to different ships and we'd get replacements for them. We had one kid that came aboard, he had three ships sunk under him and survived. Then he was on the LST for the rest of the time. There were funny things. In that letter, the skipper mentioned an officer by the name of Wilson, his father was a minister, and when we'd go to general quarters, that is attack or whatever, he had a regular station where he was supposed to go like the rest of us. I mean, I had the whole fantail, was under my jurisdiction, which meant I had three guns and the people who man the guns, and then some others did other jobs. We got under one attack and we couldn't find Wilson. His station was in the engine room, because he was the engineer. Do you know where we found him? We found him in his room on his hands and knees, praying. What were you gonna do with the guy? As I say, he grew up in the home of a minister. Crazy things happen.

SH: When you got down to New Orleans and they were outfitting your ship, how long a shakedown did you have to go through? Or did you just do your shakedown crew as you went to [New Orleans]?

CB: Well, yes. We went ... to Panama City, Florida, and there and back was about eight days. We went through all the maneuvers, and then we stayed in New Orleans for a couple more days, and then we took off for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. There were about fourteen of us that took off, escorts, and that's where we lost the two ships, on our way from Guantanamo Bay to Panama Canal.

SH: What happened to the two ships?

CB: Sunk.

SH: Unknown reason?

CB: Yes, the German submarines got them.

SH: Okay, well, you left that part out.

CB: Yes. The German submarines ... we couldn't even attempt to save anybody. All we got from the Admiral that was in command of the convoy was "Full speed ahead." That's all. The one ship that sunk had an officer on it that taught us navigation at the Academy.

SH: How far away were you from these two ships? How quickly were they hit? Where they hit within just a few minutes of each other?

CB: Well, it was so much confusion, I don't really remember. I mean, they called "general quarters," and we all went to our stations. I'm not sure whether they were ahead of us or were in back of us. That I don't even know.

SH: I didn't know whether from your vantage point on the fantail if you saw it.

CB: When you're on a convoy like that, yes you do travel in closer quarters, but still, it's a couple of hundred yards apart. You don't really see the details, especially at night, and that's when they got them. It was our second night out. They knew there were submarines in the area, and the patrol boats, well, tried their best, I'm sure. That's the one thing that I was afraid of, I was frightened of the submarines. Airplanes, yes. If I said I wasn't scared, I'd be lying, but submarines, you can't see them. All you can see is a torpedo coming at you.

SH: Did you ever see that? Did you ever experience that?

CB: No. Fortunately, LSTs, the draft was relatively low. Fully loaded, we could only draw about twelve feet of water aft and about six foot forward. It would have been possible for torpedoes to go right under us and not explode, and it might have gone a little back farther and hit the fantail or ... and that was it.

SH: How many escorts did you have in a convoy like that, from Guantanamo to Panama?

CB: We had about four. There were two on the front end of the convoy, and one on each side, and two on the back.

SH: What were you doing in Guantanamo? Were you loading on supplies?

CB: We were just staying over for a week. I guess they didn't have room for us in the Panama Canal.

SH: That's what I wondered if they were stalling.

CB: There were ships going through there, not like peacetime, they were just running them through as quickly as possible.

SH: How was that going through the Panama Canal? What was that experience like? What did you have to do, you know, just describe it for us?

CB: To go through the Canal? Nothing. Just keep out of the way.

SH: Really? What did you see?

CB: Oh, what did you see? Well, there are parts of it, it's just a big lake, the Canal. So, that's all you see, is a big lake. Then there were some parts where there was some mountainous territory, and you just looked at it. It was beautiful. We drove, we got to Panama City, and we were there over a weekend, and this one officer and I, we got a train from one end of Panama to the other. It took about, only took about two hours, and then we got a ride back and then the following day, we went through with the ship, which, it was a good experience.

SH: Right, oh, yes.

CB: It was fun. When we got out on the Pacific side we ran into a slight hurricane.

SH: How high were the waves?

CB: Well, they weren't too bad, maybe six, eight foot, and we were underway three weeks before we hit the first island, Bora Bora. I assume you've heard of it.

SH: We have.

CB: It was quite natural. There wasn't too much building around that had gone on. They left it quite natural. We had trip around the island in jeeps. Then we went to American Samoa. That was interesting.

SH: What did you see there? Any of the natives?

CB: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, as you come in to the harbors, these kids would be out there in boats, and they're selling everything.

SH: Did this happen in Bora Bora also?

CB: No.

SH: I thought that was pretty emptied. Do you remember when you got through the canal, the date?

CB: Yes, you mean the day and the month?

SH: Yes, the year?

CB: Let's see. We left New Orleans, that is, we left the United States from New Orleans, and, I believe, it was in July.

SH: Of '43?

CB: Yes.

SH: When you were in New Orleans, was there interaction between the Coast Guard, the Navy, and any of the other military forces that were there?

CB: Had lots of fights with the English.

SH: Really?

CB: Oh, man.

SH: Tell us about that.

CB: The Americans and the English had no love for one another.

SH: In New Orleans?

CB: In New Orleans.

SH: History repeats itself.

CB: That's right. I think most of the fights were for places on buses. We'd ride from the base to the city on busses, and at the time to go back, everybody was there ... everybody, Americans, the English, and anybody, was there to go back to, and that's when we all wanted seats. So, before long we'd all be in the battle. But that didn't happen too much.

SH: Do you know what the British were doing in New Orleans? What ships were there or what reason?

CB: Well, there was one, that was a battleship, that had been hit by enemy fire and that was there for repairs, and that sort of thing. The others were much smaller ships. New Orleans is just a good port. It's off the Gulf, it's about ninety miles off the Gulf, so it's a safe port, and it was a good place to be.

SH: Is there good camaraderie between the Navy and the Coast Guard?

CB: Oh, yeah. We all used to kid one another. The Navy, we always told the Navy, if they couldn't do it, we would do it for them. That kind of stuff.

SH: What did you call Navy men, what nickname did you have for them?

CB: I don't recall that we had any nicknames for them, not really.

SH: Really?

CB: We got along pretty good.

SH: I thought maybe you had something you couldn't put on tape.

CB: I was pretty good.

SH: So in the summer then of '43, you arrived at Bora Bora and then you go to American Samoa. What were you to do at that point?

CB: Well, they detached one other LST, and us, from the ones that went through the canal, and we ... our job was to take supplies to the forward areas, to the Gilbert Islands. That was the hot area. They didn't want to send the big ships down to the islands that far south. Why? I don't know. There were some technical reason. We would bring all their supplies up, food, gasoline, bombs, ammunition, and all kinds, anything ... clothing, and anything they needed, we would transport it. We were on milk run for almost six months.

SH: Really?

CB: Back and forth to these different islands.

SH: Did you have any incidents that stand out in your mind on these milk runs?

CB: Well, yes. One day, there was a Marine colonel who was in charge of one of the islands. There were three islands in this group. There was Funafuti, and that was a beautiful harbor. Boy, we could have 300 to 400 ships, it was so big. Then there was another island, (Niutao?), that wasn't much of an island, and the smaller one still, Nanumea. We would take all the supplies up to those islands. They didn't want the big ships coming down, so we did that. Then we were in on the invasion of Guam.

SH: What about the Marine colonel who was in charge?

CB: Oh, his name was B.I. (Ligett?). We'd be a hundred miles from the island, "Beach immediately." B.I. (Ligett?), he was something else, but, you know, you have all these characters out there. One night, (Niutao?) yeah, just one officer and I went to the island. Oh, I guess, about two o'clock or three o'clock in the afternoon, they took a whole boatload to the island. They could have their liberty, or whatever, and we were not, he and I, were not exactly on the pier when they came to get us. They saw us, but they went off and left us. We spent the

whole night on the island, the two of us, and there was an area there that was very shallow water, and on the other side of that was another little island, and they had their cows and their animals over there. So, we went over and we slept with the pigs.

SH: Why did you do that?

CB: Well, we couldn't get back to the ship. So, we weren't allowed to be in the islands with the natives ...

-----END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE-----

SH: Repeat that phrase, 'we weren't allowed to be on the island with the natives'.

CB: We weren't allowed to be on the islands with the natives, so we went across this little creek, or something, whatever it was, and we slept there, out in the open ... summertime, you know, in tropics, it's always summertime. The next morning, we figured they would send somebody to pick us up. They didn't. They left us there, and that afternoon ... what's the name of the minister on this?

SH: Chaplain?

CB: ... Chaplain came out with a seaman and they picked us up and brought us back.

SH: Did they ever tell you why they left you?

CB: They were just being smart.

SH: Really? I'm thinking that something came up.

CB: No, no. They just left us.

SH: What would you have found if you had gone into where the natives were? Did they have a little town?

CB: They were very friendly. They would have put us up, but this was against the rules and regulations to have any contact with the natives.

SH: But you could buy what they were selling, things like that?

CB: Oh, yes. Yes, you could do that ... give them money. The kids used to love the Americans because we had money, and we'd give them fifty cents, or seventy-five cents to climb a banana tree and bring a big stalk of bananas down for us, and they thought that was great.

SH: Did you try any of the native island foods?

CB: Oh, we went to what they called a *Samasama*. They sing, and they dance, and they have food, and then they wanted us to sing and dance. So, we sang *The Yellow Rose of Texas*. Well, the trouble is there weren't enough of us, that's all. The natives outnumbered us so much, they could make a lot of noise.

SH: Now when you got your liberty, you also got two bottles of beer, I read from the letter.

CB: Sometimes. Not always. As you read in the letter, (Sobel?) didn't drink beer, and I didn't drink beer. I still don't drink it. Maybe last summer I might have had one or two bottles, but I don't care for that. I'm a hell of a gentleman.

SH: Did you sell them or did you give it away?

CB: We'd give it away to guys. They were willing to pay for it, but, "Here, take it. I don't want it." The skipper didn't drink any, he didn't like it.

SH: So, you were ferrying supplies from American Samoa up to the Gilberts? Was that your milk run?

CB: Yeah.

SH: To those three islands, then, back and forth, so, after that, is that when you went to the invasion of Guam?

CB: No. On the trips that we took, we went on the beach. The action of the sea pounding the ship up against the beach all the time, we had holes, big as this room, in the bottom of our ship. Instead of ... a ship usually goes with the stern, a little bit up, we'd go like a turtle.

SH: I guess you had a few holes.

CB: We did have holes when they put this thing in dry dock. After we had been out there about six or eight months, they put us in dry dock ...

SH: Where was this? Where did they put you in dry dock?

CB: I forget the name of the island. I shouldn't, because they had a military hospital there, we took the nurses out. We liked it.

SH: It will come to you later.

CB: We liked it there. If you did come to the hospital with a gun, a revolver, you couldn't take any of the nurses out, because the natives would attack you. So, they told us, "If they give you a hard time, shoot them."

SH: Really? So what did you do, I mean, if you needed to have your guns for protection but you wanted to date a nurse?

CB: We had to take it with us to the hospital, and the person who was in charge, she checked it, to see that you had shells and everything in your gun, and she'd let you take her out. Otherwise, you couldn't take her off the grounds of the hospital.

SH: So they wanted you to have a gun?

CB: Oh, yes.

SH: I misunderstood you. I thought you said they didn't want you to have a gun.

CB: No, no. You had to have a gun. There's a sad thing that happened with us. We found that, when we went to this one movie, they made an announcement that we had made an attack in Europe, and it was a successful attack, and everybody, of course, cheered. It turned out that the brother of one of the nurses that we had taken out was killed in it.

SH: Where were the nurses from? All over the country just like your crew?

CB: From the US. They were from everywhere. This particular girl was from Ohio.

SH: Did they have good accommodations for the nurses at the hospital, did you see that?

CB: Yes, they had it very good.

SH: How long were you in the dry dock there?

CB: Oh, when they put us in they said, "Oh, two weeks." It took about a month after they saw how badly we had banged up the bottom. Good thing it was a double bottom. You see, this was all aside from having activity with the enemy.

SH: Well, tell me about that.

CB: We only had one occasion when we had trouble with the enemy, and why? I don't know. I think they should have torpedoed us, but they didn't, and we shot a few shells at them and they left. I don't know.

SH: Was this a submarine, or not?

CB: Yes, a submarine. That's what I was afraid of was submarines. I didn't mind the airplanes, you could see them, we could shoot at them, but the submarines, you wouldn't know it was coming at you till you saw that torpedo come in. It's too late then. But why they didn't give us any trouble, maybe they were just there for observation, or whatever.

SH: Did you ever see any of our Navy submarines in the area at all?

CB: No, we didn't.

SH: Did you supply any of them?

CB: No. These were all surface ships we supplied, and they were mostly cruisers or battleships.

SH: After this milk run between American Samoa and the islands towards the Gilbert Islands, then you went into dry dock.

CH: Yes.

SH: Then please tell us where you went from dry dock.

CB: Then we went to New Guinea ... and we were at the harbor. We were tied up at the pier, and General MacArthur landed his boat, or they did, they landed his boat right next to ours, and he got off. He was a stuffed shirt.

SH: What did you see? What did you have to do?

CB: Well, you know, everybody had to come to attention.

SH: That's what I wondered.

CB: And there's one fellow from our class who was on MacArthur's staff.

SH: Really, who was that?

CB: Oh, I forget his name. I see him every month. He's from Metuchen, and he said MacArthur was a great guy, but we didn't think so. He came, and they had cars waiting at the dock for him, all those big ... who cares whether they're having one car or a dozen, but they had half a dozen cars, and they followed him across New Guinea.

SH: So, New Guinea was secured by that time, or that part of it where you were?

CB: There was Finch Haven and there was New Hollandia. We were at New Hollandia when MacArthur came in. I guess he didn't have to bow or salute anybody.

SH: Who was his counterpart at that point in the military, in the Navy or the forces afloat, we'll call them? Did he meet someone, a counterpart in the Marines, or Navy, or Coast Guard at that point?

CB: I don't know. They took off in their convoy.

SH: You were part of that convoy?

CB: No. But I can honestly say that I saw MacArthur out there. He was there.

SH: You could testify to that. Where did you go from New Hollandia?

CB: Well, I went to Finch Haven, which is another part of the island, and then I got on a ship and came back to San Francisco.

SH: Really?

CB: That was in the fall of '44, yeah, '44, and I ... there was a small ship that we went from Hollandia to Finch Haven on, after I got off the LST, and the navigation officer was not too sure of himself. So, I said, "Well, if you want me to navigate, I'll navigate. I did it for the last year," so he learned a lot of navigation between Hollandia and Finch Haven. He said, "How did you get this?" I said, "Well, I had to do it everyday." You see, these little escort ships, they went with the bigger ones, and they didn't have to do their own navigation. So, they went "In God We Trust." Sometimes, it wasn't so good. So, one time, for the noon day sight, all the ships in the convoy, let's say if there are four, five or six, they'd raise their flags, so that they could compare their position on the chart. So, it was really, really funny, this guy, we were north of the equator, and he had us south of the equator. He didn't live that down, ever. Poor guy, I felt sorry for him. Well, you know logarithms?

SH: I can't tell you much about them.

CB: That's the way these charts look, for navigation. When you're north of the equator, you enter the chart from the top down. When you're south of the equator you enter the chart from the bottom up. So, somehow he made a mistake, and he entered the chart from the bottom up, and he had us, I don't know how many leagues south of the equator. The rest of the ships were north of the equator. When we got to port, he just about died. He wanted to die. Like I say, in spite of all the confusion and the bad things about war, there are parts you have to laugh.

SH: How badly harassed were you by Japanese aircraft? You said that wasn't as frightening as the submarines.

CB: Well, I tell you, they didn't ever attack us individually. The ships were ready to go on an attack, there were 200 ships in the harbor, and the Japs came down and bombed them. This was at (Niutao?). They messed the airport up. They couldn't take off any planes, because they had dropped bombs on the runways, and the airplanes couldn't go up ... and they put out an order, "Do not return fire." So, we couldn't shoot back at them.

SH: Why? Do you know?

CB: They didn't want to disclose our positions. It was the Admiral's decision. He was the boss, so we did not return fire. When I say, "we," I would say there were about 200 ships in there.

SH: Really? Who was the Admiral in charge?

CB: I don't know.

SH: You don't know.

CB: We never got this. We were just ...

SH: He didn't autograph your book.

CB: No, we were just the peons.

SH: How did it come to be that you got orders to come back to the States?

CB: Well, that was these two Admirals that used to come aboard for chow.

SH: You need to tell us that story for the tape. You said you had a wonderful cook on board.

CB: Right, we had a great cook, and these two admirals used to come. When we'd come in to chow, they'd be down at the base waiting for us, and then they'd come. I think, I told you before that he said, "If you go on one more invasion, when you come back, I'll write your orders," and he had them. He wrote them for Wilson and for me, and that's how we happened to get back. We were out with the original crew, and, I guess, the only ones that were left of the original crew was the Skipper, Wilson, and myself, and a guy by the name of Dick Snape. Snape had gotten ... he went in a little before I did. When you approach two years, they kinda sent you back to the States.

SH: Tell us about your activities. You told us about the milk run, but tell us about some of the invasions that you participated in, and what that was like.

CB: Well, the worst one we did was Guam. I have never seen such a display of gunfire and torpedoes, not torpedoes, but bombs bursting. The troops that were aboard our LST had been with us about two weeks, and we took them to Guam. The invasion was about dawn, and they were in a vehicle that could go on land and on sea, on water, and there were three men that manned it. As they came from the water, see, we dropped them off out at about a hundred yards, or so, in the water. As they came to land, this thing went up like that, and a Japanese shell hit the bottom that had no armament, and it exploded inside, and the three of them just, human garbage, that's all. We had gotten to know them. You know, you get to know these guys. But that was a sad sight.

SH: Were they Marines or Army?

CB: No, they were Marines. That was at Guam.

SH: Where had you transported them from, to Guam?

CB: We picked them up in so many places, I forget which. I don't know exactly where we picked them up. They were from New Guinea. We picked them up in New Guinea.

SH: You said it was two weeks ...

CB: They were with us about two weeks. That was a sad day, I tell you.

SH: When you transport troops like that, do their officers eat in your officers' mess?

CB: Yes. We didn't hold that against them. There was a funny thing, you know. It's a big world, but it's a small world. Skipper went ashore, and I was the senior officer onboard, and this boat pulled up alongside of us and said to the OD, "We have a contingent of men with *LST 24*." We had no word of this, otherwise the skipper probably wouldn't have gone ashore. But anyway, he went ashore and I was in my stateroom, and a fellow came, our officer, and says, "Carl, what are we gonna do?" I say, "You don't have any choice. You got to take them. They are here under orders." He said, "Where am I gonna put them?" Well, we had quarters for about, well, not more than about six or eight passenger officers, that we could put in staterooms. The rest had to go into the crew's cabin. So, I heard this talking out in the hallway, not hallway, aboard a ship it's not a hallway.

SH: You're going to get in trouble. [Laughter]

CB: So, anyway, I heard this talking and I said, "No, it can't be." I walked out there, and, sure enough, it was a guy who was from Rutgers, landscape class. He was part of this crew that came aboard. He was an Army personnel, he was a first lieutenant. I said, "Take those bars off. I'm gonna give you lieutenant commander bars," and he could stay in my cabin, my stateroom with me. Sure enough, I worked it so that we could stay. I told the Skipper, "I don't know anything about it," and he stayed in the stateroom with me. He was with us three or four days.

SH: Who was it?

CB: I know his name, I can't think of it.

SH: We'll edit it in later.

CB: There we were out in ...

SH: Oh, I mean, in the middle.

CB: Middle of nowhere, this guy comes, and he had been a landscape major. Another similar situation, we were at the movies, at one of these islands, and I forget which one, and there were a bunch of guys in back of us. They were making all kinds of remarks, making noise, and this, and that. They were enlisted personnel. So, I say, "Hey, look, guys." I say, "Ease it off. I'd like to hear this, and the rest of us would like to hear it, so just tone it down a little bit." This guy, no, it can't be. After the movie was over, he came over to me, and he said, "Do you remember me?" I said, "I think so. You were my homeroom teacher in ninth grade, in junior high, in New Brunswick." He says, "You're right." So, I said, "Well, what the hell are you doing here as an enlisted man?" He said, "Oh, I didn't want to be an officer. I just got demoted this morning." He was drunk, or something, and I said, "Where are you stationed?" So, he told me, but that didn't mean anything. I said, "Well, look, when have you seen the *Home News* last?" The daily

paper. He said, "Oh, a couple of months ago." I said, "Well, I'll tell you. My father sent me a whole stack that I got this morning." I said, "You come to the ship with me and I'll give it to you." So, he came to the ship. Well, we had a lot ... he was my homeroom teacher in junior high school. So many things are unbelievable. And I says, "Too bad you didn't make an officer." He says, "I didn't want to be an officer. I want to be an enlisted man." I said, "Well." He was the kind of a guy that could get into trouble. He was a nice guy. I never had any trouble with him in school. I was in ninth grade at that time.

SH: He had to have been very ... had to be over thirty, I would think.

CB: Oh, he was probably closer to forty. Then after I got back home, I met his niece, and I said, "I met your uncle out in the Pacific." She said, "I'm not surprised."

SH: What other invasions did you participate in?

CB: Saipan, and then we were sort of auxiliary in a couple of others that we really didn't go ashore. We played around the edges. I was glad we didn't, because that's when you get in trouble. When the ship is on the shore and you can't move, you can't maneuver. You just take what they give you. It was funny when I, well, Wilson and I came back on the same ship, and they had something close to 6,000 aboard, on the ship, and it was the ship's maiden voyage. The skipper wanted blues in the stateroom for meals, out in the South Pacific. We all thought, you know, "He's a little bit nuts." The heat is tough. You don't wear blues, you know.

SH: Wasn't this in the summer?

CB: In the South Pacific, it's always summer.

SH: I know, but I mean, even if he was going by the calendar, weren't you coming back in the summer? Okay, I just want to make sure, trying to rationalize it.

CB: We had staterooms, those of us who were passengers. On the first day out, going back to the States from New Guinea, I said to Wilson, I said, "I can't take this for three weeks, this little stateroom." Well, it wasn't even a stateroom, it was about a quarter of the size of this room, and there were four of us in it. I said, "I can't take this." So, fortunately, the Exec on the ship got on the PA system and said, "Any officers who would like to stand on watch, come to my office." Man, I was up there, and he said, "What did you do? What was your job?" I said, "I was navigation officer." "Holy crow," he said, "Just what I need." He had a lieutenant ... I was Lieutenant, j.g. and he had a lieutenant commander, who was a navigation officer. He said, "This guy doesn't know how to navigate," and he said, "I'd like you to come up, and I'd like you to navigate." "Well," he says, "I'll make him your junior officer." Here he was two grades ahead of me, so, I started ... I asked him, you know, where all the equipment was. I could tell that he didn't like me, to start with.

SH: Now was this regular Navy?

CB: Regular Navy. So, he said, "Well, the captain told me that you will be in charge of the ship, but I don't like it." I said, "I never blame you." I had to say something. I said, "I don't blame you, but, after all, the captain is the captain." So, all the way across the Pacific, from New Guinea to San Francisco, I navigated. This guy would come stay by my side and look. I think, I taught him reasonably well. We got to San Francisco, near San Francisco, and he said to me, "We're gonna make San Francisco tomorrow morning by six o'clock." That was his chart. I said, "No, we're not." He said, "You telling me I don't know how to do this?" I said, "No." So, I put my chart down, and I put my location down, and I said, "I'll see you," and I left. So, what was I gonna do? I mean, he outranked me, and I didn't want to go to the skipper because I was a passenger. But anyway, he said, "We would get to San Francisco at six o'clock in the morning," and I said, "We're not gonna be anywhere near San Francisco at six in the morning." So, I got up about four o'clock, and went up to the bridge, and looked at the chart and he had put a location down there. I said, "This is not right." "You're telling me that I made a mistake?" I said, "I'm not telling you anything. I'm just telling you we're not gonna be near San Francisco." Well, we kept moving, and the ship was going, we were getting farther away, toward it. So, finally, the captain came up, and he saw what was happening. So, he called for a blimp, from the beach to come and find us, and take us back to the harbor. I'm telling you. I wished I had never been on that ship, because that guy was so angry with me. It wasn't my fault that he didn't know how to do it, but that's the worst I ever saw. How he ever got to be, got the job of navigation officer, I'll never know, because he didn't know how to navigate.

SH: Did the captain ever looked at your chart and say ...

CB: Oh, sure, he looked at mine, he looked at his.

SH: "Mr. Bosenberg, you were right."

CB: Yeah.

SH: What ever happened to this navigational officer?

CB: I don't know. When we got to San Francisco, and I made a statement. I said, "I'm gonna be the first one ashore when the ship docks." So, they said, "How are you gonna do this?" I said, "If I tell you, you guys would beat me. I'm not gonna tell you, but I'm gonna be the first one to hit the beach." They all kinda looked ... Well, we pulled up next to the docks, and the ship stopped, and they started to swing the ladder out, in order to get from the deck to the pier. I jumped, about roughly from here to that cabinet, from the ship onto the ladder, and I rode it ashore. When we go to shore, and they put this thing down, I got down and kissed the ground.

SH: Did you really?

CB: Yup. I made it, the first one to the shore. Then I went back and got my clothes and stuff. I wasn't going to let anybody beat me.

SH: You were ready to be back in America?

CB: Oh, boy. When we passed on, to the Golden Gate Bridge, of course, the guys were all on deck and the people were on the bridge, they were throwing dimes and quarters onto the deck of the ship. I don't think there was a dry eye in the whole group that was onboard. Everybody was so happy to be back.

SH: Coming back onboard the ship beside yourself and Wilson, were there Army, and Marines, and people being sent back?

CB: Yes.

SH: So, were they coming back because they were just being reassigned, or did you have any people who have been wounded?

CB: No. Well, we probably had some wounded people but this ship, that was the whole job for this ship, was to take them.

SH: They were redeploying people. So how long were you in San Francisco?

CB: About a week.

SH: Did you know what your orders were before you got to San Francisco?

CB: No. No. We got to San Francisco ... Wilson and I went to the Coast Guard Headquarters, and they said, "Well, we can't get you out of here today or tomorrow. There's just too many at one time." Then we came back on the train.

SH: You got to come back to New Brunswick?

CB: We had to come back to New Brunswick.

SH: Where was Wilson? He was from Chicago?

CB: No.

SH: That was Sobel who came from Chicago?

CB: Wilson was from New England. He was a heck of a good engineer.

SH: Before you'd gotten to fly back and forth, what were your thoughts as you came across, any memories of your trip across and what you saw coming across by train, across the country?

CB: No, not really. I mean, that train was so crowded that we were practically sitting on one another's lap.

SH: Do you remember what year, month this was?

CB: Yes. I got back to San Francisco the first of November, 1944, and the point was that, having been five or six degrees north or south of the equator, my body and all the others got accustomed to the warmth. We start hitting this cold weather ... so, San Francisco wasn't too bad, but when I got to New Jersey, man, I had my trench coat on, and my long handled underwear, and this, and that, and I was still freezing. So, I called New York, the Third Naval District, and I said, "I just got back from the South Pacific. Where do you plan to send me?" He said, "I haven't gotten to that yet." I said, "Well, I would request that I go to a warmer climate." In the meantime, while I was talking to him on the phone, he looked up my record and he said, "I see you left the States," and he gave me the exact date, "from New Orleans. Would you like to go back there?" I said, "I'd love it." "Okay," he says, "I'll send you back to New Orleans."

SH: Is that the Eighth Naval District?

CB: That's the Eighth, yeah. Florida was the Seventh district. It's not that way anymore. It's different now. There is no Third Naval District anymore. But anyway, they sent me down to New Orleans, because we had been there, and when I got to the district office, the officer that I talked to was, the personnel officer, was a full commander. So, he said, "I see from your record that you have been out in the South Pacific." I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, I'd like to send you to Pascagoula," I said, "Pascagoula, I never heard of it, but if it's here in the United States, I'd be glad to go." He said, "Well, I'll tell you. We have twenty-seven districts in the Eighth Naval District, twenty-seven stations." He said, "Pascagoula in the last place. The fellow who is there as commanding officer is a heck of a nice guy, but that's his problem. He has no discipline. I'd like you to go there and straighten them out." Like I said, "If it's in the United States, I'll go." I got to this Pascagoula about a day later, and they took my stuff from the train, I went by train from New Orleans to Pascagoula. It's east of New Orleans. You know where Biloxi is? Okay, well, it's not far from Biloxi, about twenty-some miles. So, I got there and this fellow stayed two weeks till I got oriented, and it was a biological, chemical warfare [testing station] and I was the commanding officer.

-----END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO-----

SH: If you could just say again.

CB: When I got to Pascagoula they picked me up at the train station, and I met the fellow who was in charge, nice guy. That's the trouble, he was too nice. He stayed, I think, it was close to two weeks, that was shortly before Christmas. I could see that there was no discipline, I mean ... and this was a top secret ...

SH: Isn't that scary, to think that?

CB: So, well, he left and I took over. There were a couple of chiefs there, that were worth their weight in anything. So, I said, "Look, this has got to change." I called a fire drill at midnight. They had no officer's quarters there, so I went down at midnight, called a fire drill, and instead of having a 100 percent, because we had a curfew at eleven, I had about sixty percent. The other forty percent were still out at a pub, somewhere. So, the following morning, we had a real heart to heart talk, and I said, "Look, fellows, the vacation's over. From now on, we'll do it the way

the Coast Guard wants it done. I'm gonna see to it that it's done that way." They didn't believe me. So, I transferred six of the chiefs out to the North Atlantic, and in six months, I took them from last place in the district to first.

SH: For the record, tell the tape, in that station, what you were in charge of, I know it was a biological and chemical warfare testing area, but just explain, please, the geography and the equipment that you were using.

CB: Well, I really had nothing to do with the operations of the base. They had highly trained scientists down there. Boy, they had all kinds of guys down there with their PhDs in weather, and all kinds of things, and I had nothing to do with them. I just ... the running of the base. In other words, when I said it was eleven o'clock curfew, it was eleven o'clock, and either they were there, or they were in trouble. So, the district commander liked what I had done, and he had two Admirals come down from Washington, and they had a little ceremony, and it was a very pleasant gathering. They said, "Oh, you got them in first place. Now the problem is to keep them there. That's not so easy." Well, I tell you, I'd gotten to be good friends with the police department in Pascagoula, and I said, "Look, if you see any of my guys after a number of hours, bring them back to the base. Don't put them in the pen, bring them back, because that's where they're supposed to be," and they did. I mean, they cooperated 100 percent, and I cooperated with them. So, we worked things out very nicely.

SH: What kind of quarters were there on base? You said there were no officer's quarters.

CB: I lived in a private house.

SH: Where were your men?

CB: They were on a barge, a housing barge. Again, we had a fellow there who was a terrific baker. He made the best doughnuts I ever ate. I liked it there. There was a group of girls, local girls, that went to the ... I don't know what they called this ... it was some kind of a hall for servicemen, strictly for servicemen.

SH: Like the USO?

CB: Something like that, and there was a professional, plus her husband, running the place, and this lady took a liking to me. She said, "We have one of our big affairs coming up. I'd like you to take the president of the GSO, Girls Service Organization, as your date." "Oh, okay." The time came, and I took somebody else, and that girl was not very happy. Then the day after, that lady asked me, "Why did you do that?" "I don't know. I just did." Well, needless to say, I married the girl that I didn't take.

SH: The one that wasn't happy?

CB: The one that wasn't happy. She was still president of the GSO, and this other lady, she was gonna make a match, and she did. Then Millie and I got married there, and her parents never

saw me until two or three days before the wedding. We had a very nice wedding, and we were married fifty-six and a half years. She died in January.

SH: That's right. I loved talking with her on the phone. I loved that sweet southern accent she had. What did her parents think after they met you?

CB: What could they say?

SH: I assume she was from Pascagoula?

CB: No. No, she was born in McComb, Mississippi, and her father was a civil engineer. He built railroads. He went to these different locations, and at the time that Millie and I met, her parents were in Texas.

SH: So, she was in school, or was she working there?

CB: She was working there. She was working in a bank. That's how it happened. The fellow across the hall from me was a Navy man, and he had a new car. So, he came in on a weekday, and I said, "You know, we haven't been out for awhile. How would you like to go out, down to the Broadwater tonight?" Well, the Broadwater was "the" place to go. Well, he had a steady date. He was taking the police chief's daughter out, and I didn't have any date, so ... I didn't know any girls down there, so I said, "Well, I'll try Millie." So, I said, "Would you like to go out with Jim and his girlfriend?" She knew the girlfriend, and she said, "Well, I don't know, it's a Monday or Tuesday night, I don't think so." I said, "Well, we're going to the Broadwater." "Okay, I'll go." So, we went out, and one thing led to another.

SH: Did you dance? Are you a dancing man?

CB: No. I have two left feet. So, anyway, we went out. We had a very pleasant evening, and we went out after that. Of course, as commanding officer, I had a jeep. I didn't want to set a bad example to the crew, to take my girlfriend out for a date, so we did a lot of walking. She was only nineteen at that time, and I said, "I'm not even gonna take you out till you're twenty." That was around Christmas-time, and her birthday was in March, so I told her, "No, you're not old enough to go out with me." So, then after she turned twenty, we went out together and we decided we wanted to get married. We had, I'd say a very successful marriage, but that's the way it works.

SH: Tell me, in Pascagoula you were in charge of the base. How many men did you have under you?

CB: About 120.

SH: What were their duties? What did they have to do?

CB: Mostly, their big job, and the hardest job, you see ... the operation for the base, and making the chemicals and stuff, was twelve miles out in the Gulf. So, it was their job to go and keep ...

the biggest job we had was to keep the sailors away from the island. Everybody wanted to know what was going on out there, because it was secret. We had more trouble with the fishermen than anybody else, because they wanted to go out there and see. Well, we couldn't let them within twenty miles of this island, because that stuff, one vial of the stuff we were making, would kill half the state of Mississippi. So, we couldn't take a chance.

SH: Did you know that at that time? Were you given knowledge of all of this?

CB: Oh, yeah. I knew all of that, but, in fact, I had an Admiral who came down to visit our base, a nice guy, he came in my office, naturally, and we start talking baseball, football. Suddenly, he asked me a specific question for the base. I said, "Sir, I'm not at liberty to give you an answer." "Oh, okay." So, we went on and we talked some more. He did the same thing. He did that four or five times, and he said, "I don't know who the hell taught you to keep your mouth shut, but you're doing a good job." He said, "If you had answered one question for me, you wouldn't be here tomorrow." He said, "If you had answered one of those questions that I asked, you'd be gone." You know, they told me "it's secret." I had secret clearance, and all the men who were on the base had to have secret clearance.

SH: Did they? Were people sent here to New Brunswick to interview your family and friends? Did your family ever talk about someone coming and asking questions?

CB: You mean, someone come to ask my family?

SH: Yes.

CB: Not that I know of, or maybe they did.

SH: I just wondered how they went about giving you a security clearance back in '44?

CB: The one thing that I felt was against me was the fact that I was German.

SH: Really?

CB: But they said, "You have no bad record."

SH: What did you use to patrol the island, to keep it secure?

CB: Little picket boats.

SH: How many did you have?

CB: Six.

SH: How often were they in the water? Was it around the clock?

CB: They were 'round the clock. They were out there, and then we had three eighty-three footers. That's a pretty good sized ship. They went out daytime. That's when we had the most trouble, in the daytime, because that's when the fishermen came out.

SH: Did you ever think that you picked up someone who was of ill intent?

CB: No. No, we never had any trouble with that, at all.

SH: I mean, you never thought there was any spying?

CB: No. No. Actually, my time in the service was very interesting.

SH: Did you ever go on any of these ships, patrolling around?

CB: Well, I could. As commanding officer, I could go anytime I wanted to. The fellow who was out on the island, he used to say, "Why don't you come out and see us?" I said, "I will, one of these days." But I wasn't too anxious to go out there. One day, I said, "Okay, I'll be out," and they had about a dozen or fifteen sheep out in the pasture. He said, "You picked a good day, because we're gonna let some of our materials out." Of course, nobody can be outside when they let the stuff go. In about five minutes, all fifteen sheep were dead.

SH: How many people were stationed on the island?

CB: I was not supposed to know, and I never did know. I knew we had about seventy or eighty people on the island. I had six picket boats, and three eighty-three footers, and I had one personnel boat. I know from bringing them back and forth on the personnel boat.

SH: I was going to say, were you in charge of transporting them back and forth?

CB: That was one of our duties, to ferry them.

SH: How often did they rotate on and off?

CB: Well, they came in every evening, back in the ship that brings them in.

SH: So that at night there was no ...

CB: Well, there was a certain ...

SH: Security force ...

CB: Security force was out till they, they wouldn't dare leave that.

SH: Right.

CB: No, they wouldn't dare leave the place alone. I didn't want them to leave it alone, and neither did the district, so, they were never left alone.

SH: Were there Mississippians who were working on the island at that time or were they mostly people just specifically military?

CB: Military, all military.

SH: Were they mostly Navy or where they Army and Navy, mixed force?

CB: We had Canadians. We had Mexicans. We had the USA, mostly USA, but we had quite a few Canadians that were out there. Since I've been home, in New Jersey, New Brunswick, I have only met one person who knew where Pascagoula was and what we did out there.

SH: Really?

CB: So it was kept secret.

SH: Who did you meet?

CB: I never asked his name. I didn't want to know what his name was.

SH: Was he a Rutgers graduate?

CB: No.

SH: Just somebody you met after you came back.

CB: I felt I kept a secret when I was down there, it will be the same way back home. I don't want to know. I don't want anybody to be able to pressure me into giving a name.

SH: Since 9/11 and the anthrax scare, have you had any memories revived from that?

CB: How do you mean?

SH: All of a sudden, did you start to think about what you had seen and heard within your security clearance, what you'd been told? Did you find comfort in what you had gone through?

CB: Yes. I knew I had to keep my mouth shut, keep my ears open and mouth shut, that's all. That's what I did.

SH: I just wondered if you thought that experience gave you confidence that they would be able to figure out what was happening.

CB: Our enemy?

SH: Like back here in the recent anthrax scare. Remember when all the office buildings were closed and the post offices, and so many people were exposed?

CB: I don't know. We didn't have that problem, but I suppose we could have had. The people would ask us, "What do you do out there?" "Raise cabbage." That's what we tell them, "we raise cabbage." "Yeah, but we see you taking animals out there, sheep, goats. What do you do with them?" "Well, the guys have them for lunch." You never give them a decent answer, just some stupid answer. There is still an operation in Maryland, that's where the headquarters is.

SH: Fort Dietrich.

CB: That's right. How do you know that? You have to learn to do what you have to do.

SI: Were you in charge of receiving the materials from Fort Dietrich, or was that handled by the scientists?

CB: I never knew what they made. I have no idea how they made it. I was never told that. All I had was, "Get the men in and out of the base and down, out to the island and back home."

SH: Did they transport things with them? Were they carrying things, or were there cargo containers that came with them?

CB: We took everything that went out there on our boats. We had one weatherman, and if there is any sign of a wind on shore, the operation will stop. It had to stop, because if anything blew toward the mainland, you'd have all kinds of casualties.

SH: What about hurricane season? How did you secure that facility and your own?

CB: Well, that was not easy, because I went through one hurricane. Well, they shut everything down, all operations. They put a lot of stuff in the security building, which was, I don't know, it was supposed to resist 120 mile an hour wind, or something. I didn't ask questions, because I wasn't supposed to know. They didn't tell me.

SH: Was this building on the island?

CB: On the island.

SH: Did you transfer the personnel off?

CB: Yes.

SH: Because of the hurricane? Did you leave any security forces?

CB: Oh, yeah.

SH: There in the building?

CB: Those crazy fishermen would have gone ashore.

SH: I meant, during the hurricane.

CB: Yeah, well, those crazy fishermen they would have gone in.

SH: Unbelievable.

CB: They were so nosy. Well, as soon as you put secret on something, people will get interested. Just put secret on that door out there, and somebody will want to come in here wanting to see what you got.

SH: You only had the one hurricane then, to get through. Can you tell us about, at that time that you were in Pascagoula, President Roosevelt died, do you remember the reaction to that?

CB: Yeah, let's see, what month did he die?

SH: April of '45?

CB: Yeah, it had to be '45. I don't think that there was much ... well, of course, everybody talked about it, but that's about all. There was no uprising or anything like that.

SH: How was VE day celebrated in Pascagoula?

CB: I wasn't there then.

SH: When did you leave?

CB: Well, I was out in the Pacific, actually, when ... VE day came quite a bit earlier.

SH: I think it was in July. Wouldn't you already be ...

CB: Yeah, I was there ... But people were happy. I think that's about all I can say. They, we're happy that it was over, but there wasn't much of a celebration. There wasn't anything to speak of in New Orleans, either.

SH: What about when the Japanese finally surrendered, after the bombs were dropped? Any other celebrations?

CB: Well, our people were happy that the war would stop and their sons would come home. The district commander called me the day, there was one day that he called, and he said, "Carl, you know, you can go home if you want. You have lots of points." I said, "Well, that would be very nice," and before I could say anymore, he said, "But I don't want you to go home. I don't want to put a new commanding officer down there for a month, or two, or three. Would you be

willing to stay?" I said, "Now that the war is over, I'll stay." He said, "Well, I thank you very much," I stayed.

SH: You're married now ...

CB: That's right. Then I could use my jeep for personal things, and it was nice to have a vehicle that I could drive for other things than business. I liked it. I would have stayed six months if he wanted me to. But they were good to me. I can't complain about it. In the military set-up, I think it's a little unusual for someone to say they were good to them.

SH: I mean, you also have, we'll have to get a photocopy and maybe make an addendum, but Mr. Bosenberg today brought a letter that talked about how good he was to his crew and fellow officers, so, I think, it was reciprocated here.

CB: What time do you have?

SH: Well, it's well past when you told me you would get up and fly, quarter to one.

CB: Quarter to one? Oh, boy. They were renovating my office. They started last Thursday. I don't even want to go look, but there are two people, and sometimes it worked very well and other times it didn't work very well. I think it was primarily the personnel that worked with me. I think, I learned a lot in the military, and that is to have patience. If you expect everything to be done in five minutes, forget it. I also learned that to give compliments goes a long way with personnel that works for you. Praise them. If they did a good job, tell them they did a good job. Of course, if they're not doing a good job, you have to tell them.

SH: You also did that.

CB: That's right, you have to tell them. You do it. But, I think, I learned a lot. I learned to have more patience than I used to have. I used to be a fiery sort of a guy, and, "I want it done, now, now, now," but it doesn't work that way. If you can talk to them quietly and make your order in the form of a request, rather than a straight out order, I think, they like that.

SH: Have you kept in contact with any of the men that you served with or those who served under you over the years?

CB: Funny that you should ask me. I got a letter from a fellow who said he was on the base when I was there ... no, he said he was on the ship with me, but I can't recall him at all. I do, and have kept in touch with some of the officers. There was one fellow, who went to Yale, other than ... see, we had Harvard, Yale, Princeton ... yeah, he was in one of the three. I don't know if he's alive or not, but, there are only two of us that are living that were on the LST and he's in California. I saw him once. Our skipper, who lived in Chicago, he had a reunion at the Shore, here in New Jersey, about seven or eight years ago, and those of us who were officers offered to share the expense. He says, "I wouldn't have you guys do that." He says, "I'm running the show."

SH: What was his name?

CB: Sobel.

SH: He died just a couple of months ago. He paid for that whole day. Boy, he had, I'll bet all told, of course, everybody brought their wives with them, so he was paying for a lot of people, and he had it at one of the country clubs down near the Shore. He didn't take one penny.

SH: Did you all have good stories?

CB: Did we all have good stories? Well, I tell you there were, I guess, there must have been close to a hundred people. Half of them were wives, and neither one of us said very much, except Sobel himself. He was a real nice guy.

SH: Thank you so much for coming today.

CB: Okay, I don't know whether I gave you anything that you want to use in your book. We didn't talk anything about the military.

SH: We didn't?

CB: No, not really.

SH: Well, tell me more then. What do you want to tell me about the military?

CB: I don't.

SH: Well, I asked you questions.

CB: Right, you asked questions.

SH: Can you think of stories that you should tell me that I didn't ask about the military?

CB: No. I could have made an extra promotion, if I had stayed in for another year.

SH: Did you think about it?

CB: I was full commander. I made full commander. I could have made captain, but the reason I didn't, I got a little bit of hassle from home. My two kids and my wife, "You go down to Perth Amboy every Tuesday night and you go here, how about quitting?" So, I quit.

SH: You stayed in the Reserves then?

CB: Oh, yes. I had a total of twenty-seven years, active reserve, and I cried every time I took that check to the bank.

SH: Well, tell me about Korea. Was there any chance that you would have been called up for Korea?

CB: You know, for Korea, I was only home, I had only been home for about two years, and ... yes, I was home longer than that, because when Korea started, I called up one of these two Admirals that I knew out in the Pacific, and he said to me, he remembered me. As soon as I said *LST 24*, he knew who it was. He said, "How old are you now, Carl?" I said, "Thirty-one." He said, "You're too damned old. You have too many aches and pains, we don't want you." So, I said, "Well, thank you. I didn't want to really come either." That was about ... 1950. We were married in '45 and our son was born in 1950, and our daughter was born in '53. He has been with the Corps of Army Engineers. He got his Masters at Rutgers, and he's been with the Corps of Engineers now for twenty-two years. So, I said, "(Bowie?), you gonna quit after you get those twenty years in?" He says, "No." I said, "Why?" He said, "They don't give you enough pension to live on." So, he's going for thirty. Our daughter has a Masters. Bo has two Masters. He has one in biology and one in wildlife biology, and Martha has a Masters in plant pathology.

SH: Does she work in the nursery business with you then?

CB: No, she had three children. Her oldest one is up at Dartmouth, he's a junior up there, and her second one is a freshman this year, and the third one just turned fourteen last week. So, she's got her hands full. But, I don't know what I'd do without her.

SH: Well, that's good.

CB: She's something else. My grandson, I think I mentioned to you, up at Dartmouth, he has been in all kinds of activities. He thinks he wants to be a neuro-surgeon and I said, "Mathew, after you graduate, you'll have twelve more years of college. I don't know if you want that or not." He said, "Well, I don't know, either." But he's just a smart kid, that's all. He was top of his class when he graduated from high school.

SH: Valedictorian?

CB: Valedictorian. He went over to Germany, at the expense of the German government. There was one person from every state that was selected, and he was the one from New Jersey. He went over to Germany last year, and spent a whole semester at the University of Berlin, which Dartmouth paid for. So, he has seen a lot of the world, at no expense to him. He was in Mexico a couple of weeks ago, and Dartmouth paid for it. I don't know how he does it.

SH: He's following in your steps. You got to go to all those exotic places and the government paid for it.

CB: Right. Well, Katie is doing well, too, but she's not up to Matthew's level. So, I have taken up your whole morning.

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Reviewed by David D'Onofrio 4/25/03
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 5/3/03