

RUTGERS THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROL KAIN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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WASHINGTON, NEW JERSEY

APRIL 16, 2021

TRANSCRIPT BY

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Donald Koger: Okay, so we are recording and today is Friday, April 16, 2021. This begins an oral history interview with Carol Kain.

Carol Kain: Part two.

DK: Yes, part two. My name is Donald Koger and I am located in Piscataway, New Jersey. Carol, if you do not mind just saying hello again and where you are?

CK: Hi, I am Carol Musselman Kain. I am in Washington, Warren County, New Jersey.

DK: One of many Washingtons in New Jersey, right? [Editor's Note: There are a total of five municipalities in New Jersey with the name of Washington.]

CK: Yes, that's why I have learned to specify which one because people, you go up to horse farm and you're in Washington Township in, I think that's Morris County, isn't it? Yes. Because you're getting near Morristown, yes. Okay, are we ready to rock and roll then?

DK: Yes, we are ready.

CK: Okay, well, we'll go back to my archives of being, of working with punch cards. Actually, when I was actually at my first duty station I was in CINCPAC [Commander-in-Chief Pacific] in Hawaii and we had data processors, we didn't have computer technicians and we used the punch cards which were mostly used there for document control and they could make print outs from the punch cards. Then, when I went to Pentagon after that, my next station, I was in the DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency said oxymoron here. ... We also, we would make up punch cards to use for document control. One was kept by the office, who originated the document with the signature on it from whoever signed for the document because we were dealing with classified information all the time and then the other one stayed with the document. [Editor's Note: From 1941 to 2002, the commander of the United States Pacific Fleet was known as Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT). CINCPAC is above CINCPACFLT. It is a joint service command at Camp H.M Smith, Hawaii.]

Then I went, well actually when I was overseas and I went, my fourth duty station I was at Naval Station Keflavik, Iceland, and we brought online computers in our payroll. They put payroll on computer while I was up there, so that was the first actual office I ever worked that had active, that kind of computer stuff going on. It crossed the pond to go from the United States to Iceland. Then after Iceland, I came back to Groton, Connecticut to the submarine base. ... In 1985 then, early on is when we got the computers on our desks, which was the hard drive, the keyboard, and the monitor were all one unit and you worked from a green screen and with the little C prompt, you had to type in everything you wanted that thing to do. You had about, there might have been about five or six sequential things to get to where you wanted to be to work on documents using floppy disks. We did have floppys but while I was there, we also, with our eight detachments, we actually started doing chat room type things with them. [Editor's Note: Naval Air Station Keflavik was an American Navy base in southwest Iceland that was in operation from 1942 to 2006. The United States no longer has stationed military personnel in Iceland. Naval Submarine

Base New London is a Navy base in Groton, Connecticut that was established in 1868. It is the primary submarine base on the east coast.]

You could type in something and they can type in something. Of course, everybody had to be online at the same time. So, to test it out, I was on the phone with the officer in charge in Argentina, New Foundland Canada. We're talking back and forth to walk ourselves through it initially and I type something and it took forever to get through to him, to get to his screen but then he'd answer me back. So, we were actually doing chatrooms in 1985. Long before all this texting and all this stuff, it came to be. So, that was pretty cool when you think about it. We didn't even have personal computers at home yet. That didn't happen until the '90s. Well, the military was way ahead of all of that stuff because actually, even in The Pentagon, the Army had a huge room in the basement of The Pentagon that was just, it was all computers. It was like looking at, I don't know how big the room was. It had to been like, it's almost as big as a grocery store inside, some of these, the amount of equipment that was in there. I got to go in there because I was taking a class in data processing. Oh, a college class, so that we kind of got to take a tour of it which was, that was pretty cool. It looked like something you would see for maybe NASA or something like that, it was huge. So, what else do you want to know"? [Editor's Note: The Pentagon is the headquarters of the Department of Defense. It is located in Alexandria, Virginia. It was completed in 1943. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is a the federal space agency of the United States that was established in 1958.]

DK: I am curious because the ability to message each other, that must have been something. But I am curious, were you able to send files at that point or was it a lot of physically handing someone a floppy to transfer documents around?

CK: I don't recall that we sent documents on it. Now, like I said when we were doing, I didn't do the payroll stuff in Iceland, but they were able to send information back and forth because Norfolk was the home base for the personnel office in Keflavik. So, I don't know what really transpired with their stuff but I just know instead of having to put things in the mail, or send it out as an actual message because we could do communications center kind of messages but I'm thinking that with the computer, I think that was more, I want to say it was more to keep updates on the personnel files for the payroll but I can't be certain because like I said, I cannot get into that part. That was on the other side with the actual personnel records and admin but yes, you think about it, it's a pretty amazing amount that what we were doing long before society was using any of this stuff because we were, and not because I was in the Navy but the Navy was frontrunners of a lot of this kind of stuff just as they were with HR and Equal Opportunity stuff. The Navy were the first ones to do a lot of this stuff. [Editor's Note: Naval Station Norfolk is a navy base in Norfolk, Virginia that was established in 1917. It is Headquarters of the Navy's Fleet Forces Command.]

... Actually, when it comes down to it, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was a senator at the time, was a big advocate for the EEO stuff for women in general. But the military started it first because when I first went in there, I actually had friends who were engineman, machinist mates, electricians, and these were new jobs opened up to women when before it had been admin, yeoman, personnelman, storekeepers, hospital corpsman, cooks. They were limited to what

women were able to do for jobs and all of this. This was in, I went in in '76, so this was all new stuff going on post-Vietnam. I think Vietnam might have changed a lot of things because there was a lot more women in Vietnam than people realize, I think, especially because of the nurses. That was the biggie but things were starting to open up. I was in the first company of women, in Navy boot camp, to be issued pants with my dress blues. Up until then, skirts and heels and I'm glad they changed it because when I got to Hawaii, I lived in pants because Hawaii temperatures and nylons, don't mix. [laughter] They cause heat rash. It wasn't comfortable. A couple times I had to wear skirts. [Editor's Note: Ruth Bader Ginsburg was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court from 1993 to 2020. From 1980 to 1993, Ginsburg had been a Judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Throughout her career as a lawyer and judge, Ginsburg supported and advocated for women's rights. Ginsburg lived from 1933 to 2020. The United States committed combat soldiers to South Vietnam from 1965 to 1973, however, military advisors were in the country many years prior. During the Vietnam War, about 11,000 women served in South Vietnam. Majority of them served as nurses.]

DK: Now, do you remember.

CK: That's probably a bit.

DK: Oh sorry, I did not mean to cut you off, sorry.

CK: I was going to say, that's a little bit too much information there probably. [laughter] Do I remember what?

DK: So, the transition, I know you mentioned this last time. So, I apologize if you already touched on this. But do you remember what the reception was to being issued pants? Did you have a chance to see anybody react? Was there anybody who was against it or were people pretty much in favor of it?

CK: I know the women were all in favor of it because the thing was, I came out of high school and everybody, your jeans were skin tight, and the only way that those dress pants, they fit around your waist and they hem them the length. So, they were a little bit loose. ... I didn't like it because they were not as fitted as I liked. But like I said, once you hit the heat, you didn't mind because they were a cotton and wool blend, fabric, like our dress jackets and skirts were. So, you didn't want something that was clinging against you when it was a little warmer outside but no, I don't recall there being a whole lot of flack over that. It was more like it's about time. When I went in, women were still, they did not have maternity uniforms, so it's girls, and women had to ask permission to stay in the service if they got pregnant. A few years later, by 1980, there was maternity uniforms and the girls then, if they wanted to get out, they had to ask permission to get out. They were let, they were able to stay in on active duty if they were pregnant. So, things started changing pretty quickly along those lines because also, our summer uniforms for the girls changed. They took out our summer blues which the Army girls had their summer greens. It was a two-piece uniform. It was the same uniform, just a different color fabric. We went from that to wearing summer whites very quickly. They did a whole uniform change across the board at least for the Navy women to modernize it a little bit. We went, when they changed the style of the pants and the shirts, which was great, because then you didn't have

to wear the funky black ties in the middle of summer, that we were wearing with our previous summer uniform which we call the salt and peppers, the white shirt and black pants. All you did was take off the dress jacket and you had your salt and peppers. Then, when they got the new style of pants and shirts, there were no ties which was wonderful because then you could breathe. ... They just modernized things a little bit. It was long overdue.

... Then, there was something else that happened. Oh, well, when I went in, women were not aboard ship. 1978, two ships, one on the west coast, one on the east coast, both submarine tenders, had women go on board but those women went through some hell. The first women on board ships went through hell because the guys didn't want them there. That was where the conflict was, the guys didn't want the girls invading their spaces. One of the stories was that an ensign who came to work one day, she had, well her laundry had been returned to her state room, well the next morning she found her skivvies flying from the flagpole. Then, it was just guys not wanting to, old school, didn't want the changes to occur. Now, those women though, because they did go to sea first, they got promoted faster when it came time, especially to go up for E-7, for chief, because they had sea time. They opened up those two ships. Then they went to opening up a couple of the VP squadrons which were, obviously aviation. They flew the P-3 Orion observation planes that would go out, look for submarines from the Soviet Union, and that sort of thing. So, they opened up a couple of those squadrons for the women which I really wanted to go to one of them but I got kind of laughed at from that one, from the detailers. The detailers are the Navy people who cut the orders. That used to be in Washington D.C. Now, they're in Millington, Tennessee. But they would, like I said, they cut the orders, so I had worked upstairs from them and went to my detailer and said, that's where I wanted to go and she laughed because there were too many people that wanted to go. There was no place for me to be able to go. So, that's when they ended up going to Iceland because they didn't have, there was no room at the inn, so. [Editor's Note: A submarine tender provides supplies and aid to submarines pier-side. VP in the Navy refers to a Patrol Squadron. The Lockheed P-3 Orion is a four-engine turboprop surveillance aircraft utilized by the United States Navy since 1962. Naval Support Activity Mid-South is a Navy base in Millington, Tennessee which is home to the United States Navy Human Resources Center of Excellence, Navy Personnel Command, Navy Recruiting Command, and other departments.]

DK: I do not know if animosity is the right word or what but the men who did not want the women doing sea duty, did that exist on the land at all? Did you ever get a sense that there were men, or in the Navy in general, who did not want women around in the military?

CK: Once in a while, yes, you would run across somebody but their whole attitude about the girls, like I said, this is major transition, you had guys who had been around since Moby Dick was a minnow and they just did not want the women invading their service. Their attitude was, women are good for one thing pretty much. But yes, there were some, there was definitely some, that were a little bit more assertive in their views of what women's job in the world was and they didn't belong in their Navy. On the other hand, I mean, I went to Hawaii. I was nineteen years old, lived in the barracks and there was a mix of everybody in the barracks and frankly, the girls that were there, well, the guys who lived in the barracks, took care of us. They made sure. They were like big brothers to us and when the harbor was full of ships, the guys, I mean, unless someone came that was welcomed by the girls, the guys would run off, pretty much run the other

guys out of there to protect us. I mean, we had a whole crew of us, my particular building, it was three stories high and it's kind of was like a hotel. You had a walkway across the front, the lanai, and then every two rooms then would share a bathroom inside, so the whole top floor was women and I think that was the only floor that was, we didn't have a whole lot of women in that set of barracks because there was another set elsewhere that had more women in it. Of course, we didn't have as many women in the service to begin with but the guys that were there, looked out for us.

I was there in '78, there is a Navy exercise called RIMPAC, and this was RIMPAC '78 and it stands for the Rim of the Pacific. That meant the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, anybody who was in that operating area, all of our allies that they did a combined exercise. Playing war games and stuff. After this was all over, they all pulled into Pearl Harbor. We're talking ships that are stacked three out from the pier. At least one aircraft carrier, the Japanese had their training ship which was like the old, kind of like the *Constitution*, the old rigging and everything and those guys, in their PT in the morning, would run up and down the rigging on the ship. They were there, but everybody pulled into Pearl Harbor all at the same time, submarines stacked three out from the pier, the whole bit. The guys in the barracks made sure, it's like, they told us, it's like, "If you go anywhere and then you're going to be gone overnight, you let somebody know where you're going and that you're not coming home so that nobody starts worrying about you." So, they became very protective of us, in that kind of a situation because it could be very scary because you get a bunch of drunk sailors and guess what they're looking for. They've been out to sea for a while and they were, they're like a family. [Editor's Note: The Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) is a biennial international naval exercise carried out from Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The first RIMPAC occurred in 1971. The USS *Constitution*, nicknamed "Old Ironsides" is the oldest ship in service to the United States Navy. Its maiden voyage occurred in 1798. The ship is stationed in Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston, Massachusetts.]

We go, there was a crew of us on the barracks, on a weekend or something. One of the guys had a little, it was a Chevy LUV pickup truck. It was one of these little babies, kind of like a Subaru brat size, or maybe a little bit bigger. We'd load up the family. We'd go to the stock car races together via the McDonald's, go get supper and go to the stock car races. Or, we'd go to the drive-in movie or whatever, as a group and it was just a lot of fun. A lot of them were from all over the place, I mean, there was Texas and my roommate was from Nebraska. Jackie worked with me. I was supposed to be her relief and she extended for nine months and I still got put in the same office with her. She taught me how to be. She led me astray. We, everybody, a lot of Midwest and cowboys, the one guy's nickname was Cowboy and we would just connect. I don't know if the Army, I don't know what the Army does, if they do that kind of stuff or not but the guys looking out for the girls and all that because when did you go into the service Don? [Editor's Note: Chevrolet produced the LUV light pickup truck from 1972 to 2012.]

DK: I was in 2009 to 2014. So, when I was in it was very mixed by then.

CK: Yes, when I went to basic, we had one company of women every week, was all, except for every five weeks there would be two companies because one became the drill company. So, I had a sister company. I was not in the drill company because I was too short. They took

everybody who was, between 5'6" and 5'8", I think it was or 5'4" to 5'8" and they all went in one company because they would drill. Then, the rest of us were either above or below that so, I mean, my company, the tallest was six feet tall and then the shortest was 4'10" and they put the tallest in front for marching. So, those of us in the back had to really stretch to keep up. So, I mean, there was a lot of that. We didn't have mixed companies. We didn't have guys being company commanders for girls and all that which they came soon enough because a guy I knew later on, he was a company commander at one point. He was pushing girl companies. So, yes, there was a lot of changes and I think so many changes happen during peace time because somebody had nothing else to do. They change the acronyms. They change the names of things. I mean, that's to keep somebody employed in Washington. What else did we have?

DK: I am curious, when you went for your, I do not know if sea duty is the right word.

CK: Yes, yes.

DK: That was in the late, that was after you were stationed in Connecticut or was that before?

CK: After.

DK: Okay.

CK: I left Connecticut and then I went onto an oiler, yes.

DK: Now, when you went there, this was after women have been allowed on boats, so did you find the attitude to be a little more welcoming by then? Or, did you still face any of those?

CK: It was definitely different. Now see, there's two different kinds of ships. There are two different areas of ships that Navy people go on. We have detachments on board what they call military sealift command ships which, like when they have the hospital ship go to New York, the USNS *Comfort*. If it's USNS, it's Military Sealift Command. So, the crew is predominantly civilian maritime, Merchant Marines, with a Navy detachment on board. I was part of a detachment on board an oiler which is a floating gas station. So, we had twenty-four military. We had one lieutenant which is your captain. We had, my chief was an E-7 and then I was the only admin on there. As a yeoman, I was a first-class, an E-6. So, although I normally would not do personnel records, I was doing personnel records then admin because they didn't have the capacity for two different kind of admin people. It wasn't, there was no need for two. We had electronics technicians. We had radiomen. We had signalmen. The Navy, we nicknamed them skivvy wavers, and unfortunately, I think they've pretty much gone away from that. They were the ones with the flags and the semaphores and then we had operations systems technicians which their job was up on. I'm not quite sure what their real job was in life. They were up on the bridge doing something with operations because that was our whole function. We took on the operations abilities on the ship. [Editor's Note: USNS *Comfort* (T-AH-20) is a hospital ship of the United States Navy that entered service in 1987. It was launched in 1976 as an oil tanker but later converted to a hospital ship. From March 30th to April 30th, 2020, it was stationed in New York City to assist in the Coronavirus pandemic. Ships designated as United States Naval Ships (USNS) are unarmed support vessels owned by the U.S. Navy, non-commissioned, and

operated by the Military Sealift Command with a civilian crew. The United States Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC) oversees sealift and military transport operations. Ships in the MSC are given the designation of USNS.]

The civilians did the underway replenishments. They did the cooking. They did all the other stuff. We did that little component of Navy stuff. There was twenty-four of us on there. So, it was a good transition for me going on the ship as an E-6 because I never set foot on one before that really, because then I went from that ship, when I went to Charleston, South Carolina to a submarine tender. It had a crew of fourteen-hundred people on it. So, I needed to have that step. It helped me a lot because otherwise I would've probably crashed and burned. There was a whole, I mean, going on the tender was a whole different can of worms. It was all different because it was all Navy then and we went from our captain who was, that's a full bird, that's a colonel. ... We had, oh, I forget how many departments but I started out in what's called Captain's Admin, which is the chain of command went from us to our executive officer to the captain pretty much and I ended up getting moved later onto our Repair Department. Well, the repair department had six hundred people in it. So, that was a major step for me because I was like the leading petty officer in the admin office for the repair department. ... That was a good, that was fun. It was a lot of work but that it was fun, and my chief, also a woman, she backed me totally, a hundred percent. She was great. Went, a whole bunch of us, we went to Guam. When we took the ship to Guam and everything. The office with the exception of the youngest one in that office, the whole office was women and this poor guy. She would send some of the other ones off to go get supplies or do something and they, "Take your brother with you and go." And he'd tag along with the girls, just to go whatever needed to get done. You just, I mean, we all had our bonding moments just like any other service does. You work with a bunch of people directly and you either get along or you don't and if you get along, it's great. If you don't, it can be really miserable for everybody, you know. But we had a good crew. So, now what? [Editor's Note: Naval Support Activity Charleston, formerly known as Naval Weapons Station Charleston, is a Navy base near Charleston, South Carolina that was established in 1941. In 2010, it merged with Charleston Air Force Base to form Joint Base Charleston.]

DK: I would like to hear more about, so this is when you're on the submarine tender out of Charleston.

CK: Yes.

DK: If I can just hear a little more about what your duties were and what that kind of ship does. I am not personally familiar with the tender, so I am sure others will want to hear as well.

CK: Okay, well, a submarine tender is basically, it's a repair ship. Submarines come up alongside. They do weapons loads. They do ship repairs. ... Everything from one end to the other, they can get, repair work done on the subs by people who are working on the submarine tenders. I learned a lot about that kind of stuff from my husband because he was on another submarine tender, but he had also spent twelve years on submarines. Okay, my duties on board. Okay, our particular tender, I don't know about others. Every six days was a duty day. On your duty day, that meant you stayed on the ship overnight. You stayed all day and went all night. When we were getting ready to go to Guam, this also entailed as being in the shipyard where we



were not in the water. The ship was in a drydock to get repairs and what they called a refit, to reconfigure things because we were going to be all of a sudden working on other vessels besides submarines when we got to Guam because we would've been the only submarine tender in the area. So, we had to take on other jobs. While on board, especially then, I was, for my duty section, I was the section leader. Usually, the duty section is led by a chief, maybe an E-7 or maybe an E-8, depending on who it was, because my chief also happened to be the Weapons Duty Officer on duty day. So, nine times out of ten, he was having to do weapons loads onto things like the submarine. I was got, I was given the walkie talkie for the duty section. So, as an E-6, I was actually running the duty section of about two hundred people. Not everybody who had duty that particular night was on my watch bill. Radio had their own thing going on. Other spaces had their things going on for their particular tasks but I had about two hundred people in my section.

That meant, I was also writing, every six days, I had to put out a watch bill of people to fill, we had our quarter deck. We had every four hours, we had to have a person up there to stand watch, and it would be the chiefs, then the officer of the day. Well, the officers took care of their own watch stuff, for that but yes, the officer's deck. You had the Quarter Deck Chief. You had the Junior Officer of the Deck which would've been the E-6's. We were there and we stood that watch. We had to be qualified with the .45, so we stood that watch with a pistol on. ... We had a duty a runner, someone who did, there was like, there would be like a messenger runner if it was necessary. You also had another crew that did shipboard. They had the, I'm trying to think what they called it anymore. This is a long time ago. They had to go and do patrols through the trip. Just look, patrol, just to check on things to make sure everything was okay and no fires, no this, nothing going wrong.

When we got into the shipyard, we had people transferring off the ship because they were not going to be going to Guam. You had new people coming on board ship who had not been qualified in these jobs yet. I got to one point where one of my section billets that I had to fill, that basically, they were port and starboard watch that meant, four hours on, four hours off, back and forth for a twenty-four-hour period, you had the same two people alternating. So, what'd we do was take a newbie who would go on the watch with them and have them go out patrol a couple times to learn the watch and basically get qualified for that watch in one day. So, that I had people because I was running out of people to stand watches and it had gotten a little bit hairy for a while because when you're running out of people, what do you do? It was everything except me standing the watches to help out and I still had to stand watches too. I had my own watch. I was the Junior Officer of the Deck. I had to stand watches as well because I was qualified and we just, I don't know how we did it. Really, looking back at it, it really makes me stop and think, "How did we really survive all that?" But we did it because we had to and we left for Guam, a six-week trip, to go to Guam. ... A lot of us who were only going to be part of the crew for the transition. Like I went to Guam and I was on the island for three and a half months and then flew back to Charleston for my shore duty. So, I had, we went, a bunch of us took bicycles with us. We couldn't ship cars but we wanted some kind of transportation. So, in one of the Weapons Department spaces, the hold, it was like a huge cargo net in, basically it was like a missile hold but we didn't have any missile in there but they had a cargo net in there and all these bicycles stacked in there so that when we got to Guam, we had transportation. ... Then, when I was ready to come back to Charleston, I was putting up to advertise to sell my bicycle

and I had three people charging at me to buy that bicycle and I'm like, "First one to show me some money, cash, gets the bicycle," and that was instant. It was easy to sell the bike when I was done. It was just a mountain bike.

We had, for on board, because it was a six-week trip to go, like an exercise room setup on the ship. Of course there was always the onboard ship television which is basically watching movies. We didn't have actual television. ... On the way, because we went down and cut through across the Gulf of Mexico, stopped at Cartagena, Colombia on the way and after we were out, we felt we really shouldn't have been there. It's not a really pretty place either and we went through the Panama Canal. We went to Hawaii. We dipped below the Equator to do our Shellback initiation, that's a Navy thing. Until you cross the Equator, you're considered a Pollywog. Then you, it all has to do with Davy Jones's locker, nautical stuff. After we did that, that was like a full day adventure. [Editor's Note: The Panama Canal was constructed by the United States from 1904 to 1914, which then controlled the Panama Canal Zone until 1999. The man-made canal cuts through the isthmus of Panama to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. American sailors who have previously crossed the equator while at sea are known as Shellbacks while those who have not are known as Pollywogs. When a ship crosses the equator while at sea, a line-crossing ceremony takes place. In the past, it involved hazing activities but has since been toned down. It was more than just a ceremony, it was also initiation.]

... We crossed the International Dateline and one of my friends lost his birthday except for two hours and he was really pissed off about that one, and then we got to Guam and I learned how to snorkel in a huge tidal pool. It was so big, it had like a boulder in the middle of it that was like about a foot under the water, so that was kind of like what we used as the launching spot to learn how to snorkel in there and it was great. It made life a little bit more fun while I was off and about and we had, there was a bunch of us. We'd hang together. I think what we would do too, there was a bunch of us who were married and spouses were either not coming over or they were coming over later or whatever but we kind of hung together to kind of keep ourselves out of trouble. So, I mean, what we also, the bunch of us, especially the E-6's, we kind of bonded really close together. There's a lot of us that are still in touch with each other because of that particular trip of going to Guam. I think it probably had to do, similar to when these guys and gals going over to the Middle East because you got to connect and keep, just to keep together because for one, it helps your sanity a bit. Even though there's a lot who are really struggling. I know that. So, what next?

DK: Well, I would like to ask a little more about your trip to Guam because six weeks is a long time on a boat.

CK: Yes.

DK: So.

CK: How did we survive?

DK: Yes, I mean, did people play a lot of cards or were the movies on board really popular? What did most people do to stay sane during that time?

CK: Well, I mean, it was a pretty big ship to begin with but every Sunday, we had what we called steel beach picnic. We had a helicopter pad on the back of the ship. So, they'd pull out the, we had the fifty-five-gallon drums cut in half to make barbeque grills and all that. So, we picnicked our way across. A bunch of the guys on board the ship had formed a band. So, we had music. When we went through the Panama Canal, there was another, there was like regular civilian cruise ship going through it at the same time because they put two through it. There are two locks, so they would both go through together and they're watching us out there with our steel beach picnic and the only thing that. ... They're up there with their little fruity drinks with the umbrellas and all that ... and we're all thinking, "We're missing a sign that says, 'Your tax dollars at work.'" [laughter] Because you can't do a whole lot else besides that. [Editor's Note: The Panama Canal utilizes a lock system which enables ships to ascend and descend steps. They were installed during construction of the canal because of the mountainous terrain of the land the canal was built through.]

What did we do to keep fun? Yes, we played a lot of cards but during the day we still had work to do and sometimes you kept working because, just because. There was, you couldn't go anywhere, so you might as well. You could keep working if you wanted to. When we were out for probably. I don't know, we weren't out very long when a bunch of us First Classes, we got together with the Master Chief, the E-9 in charge of the galley, of the food, and we didn't tell anybody but him but we were going to take over the galley for supper one night, all the first classes and we were given all the mess cranks that were down there, all the young ones, we let them takeover the First-Class Mess with a movie, everything, for the night. We switched places with them, just as a morale kind of thing. ... As it got closer to dinner time, the Command Master Chief, the E-9, who basically is the go between the CO and XO, and the rest of the crew. He's like, "Why? What are you doing? What are you guys up to?" YN was for Yeoman First-Class. And I'm like, "I don't know what you're talking about Master Chief? We're just doing." We weren't letting on what we were doing. We just went ahead and did it, and it was a blast. It really was. There's picture evidence of it. One of the kids that we were relieving, he had a couple of t-shirts at the mess cranks wore. He gave me one. When I say a mess crank, when you first get on board ship, if you're an E-3 and below, you have to go spend six months working in the galley before you get into your real job. By going to sea as an E-6, I didn't have to do that. I lucked out on that. So, we even had, but when we were doing the thing for the swapping, one of the guys took on the ice cream bar. We had an ice cream thing where they can make sundaes, he can make them or whatever and they started singing. Well, somebody, one of the younger ones on the crew, they put up a bucket, or maybe he did, like a tip bucket, but they would, they started paying him to not sing. It wasn't pretty I guess, but. [laughter]

DK: That is brilliant.

CK: But then when we were all done, that night, I mean, we stayed around to clean the galley, and the master chief was so thrilled because he knew that we senior ones were going to clean it better than the junior ones did, so he lucked out because the junior ones don't always move equipment out of the way to clean behind it and steps sort of thing, so. That was a big morale booster and then periodically, we would do what's called First-Class Chili Night like at nine o'clock at night, we had a couple of the cooks in the galley who were E-6's, and we had a big pot

of chili and it was for the first-classes. ... The CO, the XO, and the Command Master Chief, standing outside the first-class mess hoping to get invited in because you don't cross into a, it's like enlisted don't go into the officer's mess. If you're not a chief, you don't go in the chief's mess. If you're not a first-class, you don't go in the first-class mess. So, they had to wait to be invited in to get some of our chili and of course, it was followed up by a five-gallon bucket of chocolate ice cream. ... You went in self-defense. Even if you really didn't want chili, you went and had chili because the next day it would be hell to pay if you didn't, share with the chili.

DK: So, what kind of. I am sorry.

CK: What's that? Well, I said, you got what I meant by, "You're eating the chili in self-defense?"

DK: Yes. [laughter]

CK: Okay.

DK: Because everybody has to participate to protect rituals like that and morale.

CK: Yes, absolutely.

DK: Yes, it brings to mind, I am curious as to what kind of deals you guys had to make in order to get, either for your barbecue or your chili, because it is not like you can just leave the ship and go to the grocery store. So, what kind of deals would you have to cut with, I guess the mess hall or people, to get the food to make that stuff.

CK: Well, the steel beach picnics. That came out of the galley. That was our regular. That would've been part of our meals. That was already on-board ship. I mean, before going anywhere, believe me, the store rooms all get stocked up really well. ... When supplies are coming on, if it's on a duty night, it's pretty much all hands-on deck to help move food onto the ship because it ain't going to walk up there by itself to get it into, they can lift it onto the ship with like a crane but to get it inside where it needed to go for storage, they needed people to do it. I mean, I really don't, I didn't have to participate in it that much, one because I was doing my section leader stuff so I was out of that loop but I had to make sure people went to help to do their share because you want to eat, you better participate. The chili, I mean, I think that was probably also a pre-planned kind of, that may have already been a preplanned kind of thing because the master chief knew it was coming. ... He used to be on submarines. I didn't know him until he came on board the ship but I knew someone that he, the ship he had, the submarine he had come off of, a friend of mine had relieved him on board that same submarine. So, when I mentioned the guy's name, he goes, "Oh yes, I know him." I still have been in contact with that same, not the one on the *Holland* but the one that was on the submarine. I've been in touch with him even a couple years ago. See, that's one thing too. I mean, I've got friends all over the place that I haven't seen in years. I think, thankfully, Facebook has been a saving grace with a lot of that because we have a chance to remain in contact with people from the past. I mean, or even finding people that we knew from years ago. Well, we could go way back. I have my first friend yet, from when I was a baby but my first Navy Friends, I have friends I went to boot camp

with. I have friends from when I was in Hawaii. I have friends from when I was in Washington D.C. I could go through my whole military career and I have friends probably from every place I've been. That means if I want to travel places, I have connections. I have an open invitation to go to Jacksonville, Florida because one of my friends off the *Holland*, she's down there and it's like, "When are you coming?" Those kinds of friends, you don't see them forever but then when you reconnect, it's like you never left them. I don't know if you have friends like that or not but. [Editor's Note: The USS *Holland* (AS-32) was a submarine tender that was in service from 1963 to 1996. The ship was scrapped in 2013.]

DK: Yes, that makes sense.

CK: I hang onto my friends because we all went through stuff together. ... I think that's probably the same for most military people. You hang onto what you grew close to, you know.

DK: So, what was the food like on a trip like that? I mean, every day is not going to be a barbecue and chili. What was the normal thing?

CK: There were good meals and bad meals. The best thing, we had really good bakers on board too. The best thing was the buttered dinner rolls. Oh my, get them hot, because they were kept in a warming drawer, the butter-topped dinner biscuits. You could eat salad but you better grab two or three biscuits to go along with it. I didn't eat off the line as much as a lot of people. I tried to do the salad thing just because but I mean, it's food. I mean, I can compare it to Army food because I lived in the barracks in Fort Myer, Virginia for like a year and a half, I guess. ... The best meal there was to go to midrats [midnight rations]. Go get eggs, go in and get an omelet till they started making us wear uniforms to go in it for midrats [midnight rations], so then they stopped doing that. But usually, eggs are safe. It's hard for them to ruin eggs. I don't really remember what I used to eat a lot of on board the ship. I always think about the dinner rolls. Now, when I was on the *Pawcatuck*, the oiler, that we had civilian cooks on there that used to be Navy cooks, I think. But one thing I remember that was really good on there, it was like chicken adobo and that stuff, I don't know why, but that sticks out in my mind. ... They always had at lunch, for dessert was mostly like sherbet kind of stuff and at supper they had the real ice cream, the big five-gallon things of ice cream, always, that's my downfall. [Editor's Note: Fort Myer is an Army installation adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. In 2005, it merged with the Marine Corps Henderson Hall to form Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall. Midrats are midnight rations, or late-night meals in the Navy. The USS *Pawcatuck* (AO-108) was an oiler tanker ship that was commissioned from 1946 to 1975. After being decommissioned, it continued to operate under Military Sealift Command but with a civilian crew as the USNS *Pawcatuck* (T-AO-108) from 1975 to 1991. The ship was scrapped in 2005. In addition to the civilian maritimers, there was a Navy component of about 24 sailors, mostly for radio communications.]

DK: Yes, those drums, I don't know, I think everybody gets excited when they see those big drums of ice cream. [laughter]

CK: Well, I grew up, well, when I was even in high school, where I worked at in the summer time, that's how our ice cream came there too was in the five-gallon things, so I got spoiled by it but it's real ice cream, so it's like. Pure fat.

DK: Now, do you remember. Oh sorry.

CK: I said, if I don't want to worry about gaining any ice cream weight, I can't bring it in the house at all. [laughter] I have to leave it in the store.

DK: It is easier when you are splitting it with everybody on a ship I guess. It is less of a chance of eating it all yourself. [laughter]

CK: Well, that is true, yes, I don't buy five-gallon things to come home with anyway. So, but what were you saying?

DK: I would like to ask about whether or not there was any food that stands out, or anything that stands out as being bad while you were on the ship? Was the coffee any good or is there anything that stands out that was not good?

CK: The coffee was a bottomless pot. Now, there was one pot in the first-class mess that you stayed away from because that was what we called it Watch Standard Coffee and it was mostly the guys that worked in engineering and that was the kind of coffee that would curl your hair because it would melt a spoon because it was so strong. ... Actually, on the *Pawcatuck*, the same thing. If you didn't touch the watch standard, the nighttime coffee but on the *Holland* we had two or three, we had like the big urns, the kind that if you go into like, into a deli or something and they have these big urns where you can buy, or a gas station where there's about six kinds of coffee. Those great big things like that, we just, you just stayed away from, you knew which one was the engineer's coffee and you just didn't touch that one if you wanted to survive unless you were really desperate and having a really bad day and needed to be kept awake or something. I don't remember there being food that was really bad. I mean, if any, I'll tell you what, the best chow the Navy puts out really is on submarines. When I was in Hawaii, we used to go have brunch on the weekends at the submarine base because that was the best food that there was on the base. For brunch, you can get eggs. You can get lunch. You can get whatever you wanted. ... But yes, eggs is the one thing that I think they have the hardest time of ruining. I don't remember, nothing is really standing out as having been really bad. The older cooks that had been around a while, if they were putting out bad chow, they probably wouldn't have been in the service much longer but no, a lot of, we ate pretty well. I got to say we ate pretty well.

Now, when it was in, let's see, Washington D.C. other than the galley at Fort Myer, that was okay but because our work schedules being different, a lot of times we didn't go to the galley there we'd go eat somewhere else. Eat on the run kind of thing because we got paid separate rations to go eat elsewhere. We didn't have a chow pass because I was at work at six o'clock in the morning, from the beginning of it all and then I would get off at two, that was the day shift in the Pentagon. Then when I worked nights, I worked from two to eleven or whatever it was, two to ten. ... Then I worked mids for two years in the Pentagon. So, there was no galley to go to.

So, you ate, there's cafeterias in the Pentagon, so there's places to go and get food and we didn't necessarily sit down and eat a full meal. I think we would sit down and have a full meal at Ihop when we've been up until 2 o'clock in the morning out partying somewhere. Everybody did that kind of stuff, didn't they?

DK: I think so.

CK: You know what I'm talking about, you know, that's what they want at Ihop at two o'clock in the morning there's a bunch of people out drinking.

DK: Do the ships do, where I was stationed on land bases, they had midnight chow for the people who were on alternate shifts who were not able to grab meals at normal times. Did they have a midnight chow on the boats?

CK: I don't remember if they had midrats on the ship or not because I was not up, so I don't know. They probably wouldn't. They might have had other, maybe sandwiches available or something like that. Like I said, when I worked, when I was in D.C., the galley in Fort Myer had mid-rations. I don't know specifically and when I was on the first ship, on the oiler, we kept food in our gear anywhere. So, we always had nibbles and stuff to eat and if we stopped, when was it. We pulled in at Saint Thomas the one time and they had like an open market, so we got all kinds of fruits and everything there but when we were coming back to Norfolk, we had to make it disappear because we had to claim stuff and you couldn't bring agricultural products into the port. So, the chief was like, "Either eat it or throw it over the side," because we couldn't have it to come back for customs. But I remember that. We used to pull into Puerto Rico and into Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. At Guantanamo, we would go out, we would go to the club to eat dinner once in a while there. Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is not my favorite place. I mean, it's just, it's too humid, I don't like it so much. Cuba was not as humid as Puerto Rico but Saint Thomas was fun because that was a true liberty port for us there. So, yes, we'd go and exit to the market, the open market, especially to get like mangos or papayas because those are easy to bring on and easy to cut up and make them disappear. [Editor's Note: Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Puerto Rico was in operation from 1943 to 2004. Guantanamo Bay Naval Base is located in southeast Cuba. It has been in operation since 1903.]

DK: Now, were there any prohibitions about having any food or anything in your quarters?

CK: On the *Pawcatuck*, we didn't have as much. We had more room because the ship was the old ship in the Navy. That was the one with the Navy detachment on it and we were actually living in what had been the officer's quarters at one point. So, we had, we were in state rooms. No, there was no, we didn't have any rules about that. On the *Holland*, I don't think you didn't want to keep stuff in your lockers and stuff because we were more inclined to keep stuff stashed in our office, in the desk drawers in the office and hope somebody else didn't find it there. But no, on the *Holland*, we didn't keep stuff in our lockers but on the *Pawcatuck*, we would keep some, kind of like emergency nibbles. Because all of a sudden, if you either slept through supper or you needed something to get you through the night, you had something in reserve but that was a pretty good setup though, I mean, the fact that we were in state rooms. I had the top bunk in an officer's stateroom. I remember, we had an actual closet in the room and I remember there was

hot water pipes that ran through the closet and I had put something, like left like a cough drop or something in a jacket pocket and it melted into the jacket and I could not. I don't think I was able to keep the jacket when I finally figured out what had happened because we were home ported out of Norfolk but we operated in the Caribbean. So, by the time I would've found out something like that, it would've been really blended into the jacket really bad. But we spent over, on that one, we spent over eighty percent of the year away from home port. So, we were pulled into other ports in the Caribbean but we were not coming into Norfolk. We'd come up every quarter so that they could do like, kind of refit stuff on the ship, just to make repairs because it was a very old ship. Yes, on that one, the longest we went without hitting dry land was twenty-eight days. There is such a thing called cabin fever and the song that's on the one *Muppet* movie. We started singing that on board because it really, after a while, you can start getting squirrely from not being able to be in dry land for a while. [Editor's Note: The Muppets are a cast of puppets created by Jim Henson. They include Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy.]

DK: Now, at this point, were you able to communicate from the ship while the ship was out at sea, back to land? Did they have the radio tied into a phone somehow or anything like that?

CK: Okay, we did not have, there was no email. The ship radio on the *Pawcatuck*, they would do, we were able to once in a while, they had, I don't know what kind of radio set up that we were able to put calls through, which was rare. We did not do that very much but we did have, they could send out messages, radio messages, because one, because I did that. See, when I was on the *Pawcatuck*, my husband, who was not yet my husband was in Connecticut. ... We were trying to, I went on the *Pawcatuck* in November of 1989. In January of '90, when we went back to Norfolk, I went and flew to Connecticut and we got engaged. I came back to Norfolk and the end of February, we started trying to figure out, he wanted to come to, down to Norfolk and we were trying to figure out to arrange to get married. ... Because in order for us to be stationed back together again, we had to be married. So, end of February, he came down and but we were sending messages back and forth to let him know, without actually saying when we were going to be in port. ... So, we had messages back. We actually got married March 2nd of 1990. The irony of all of this is all of these messages back and forth, he was on the USS *Fulton* which was a submarine tender in Groton, Connecticut at the time. All of these messages that we were getting back and forth ended up on the ship board message board. So, the whole crew, all the chiefs and officers are seeing all of this banter back and forth to arrange for him to come down to Norfolk so we can get married. ... Then, we were going to be gone. We got married and then the ship went out for like three days and came back in for like an overnight and then left for the next month. So, that was the extent of my honeymoon which was basically those couple days while we were in port because the day after we got married, I was getting underway again, for three days or whatever. But the whole time, everybody that he worked with knew what was going on because of these messages back and forth. So, it was kind of, and it took him a while to figure out what was happening. That was kind of a joke on him more than me because I wasn't there to repeat the brunt of responses from his crew members because sailors would do those kinds of things. You there? [Editor's Note: The USS *Fulton* (AS-11) was a submarine tender that was in service from 1941 to 1991, with only one break in service from 1947 to 1951. It was scrapped in 1995.]

DK: So, do you remember the awards you got while you were in service?



CK: As a matter of fact, my shadow box is here in the living room. If we had the Zoom, I would've been able to show you. I had three Navy Achievement Medals. My National Defense, Humanitarian, four Good Conduct Ribbons. A Meritorious Unit Commendation, an Overseas Service Ribbon. A Coast Guard Ribbon and I forget what that one was actually for and then my pistol. So, that's eight medals and ribbons. Well, four medals and four ribbons is what it was.

DK: So, you were.

CK: It's not.

DK: Sorry.

CK: It's not like now when they come home clanging like a coin-op machine with everybody coming back, because of their combat ribbons and everything else because Navy, you don't necessarily get, depending on what your job is, you don't necessarily get those kinds of medals and all. That was, yes, when I got out, I was an E-6.

DK: So, the abbreviation is YN1, the Yeoman First Class?

CK: Yes.

DK: I am slowly learning Navy rank. I am a little behind this, so.

CK: You know what, I learned pretty much everybody else's before I learned a lot of the, especially the officers for the Navy. I never really straightened out the Admirals very much because I just knew that if you had that much gold on it, you better salute it. [laughter] Unless I knew specifically who that person was, but because I worked at a Joint Service Command in CINPAC, so pretty much everybody else's ranks were close or similar to each other. Like the Army and the Marines were probably closest because Air Force, their staff sergeant is an E-5 where their E-6 is a tech sergeant. So, those are a little more confusing but I learned mostly, the ones I worked around. I mean, my first department head was a brigadier general, Army, because of where I was and then I ran into him again when I was in The Pentagon. I used to deliver pouches, we used to deliver pouches, locked pouches all over The Pentagon and one day, I went up to pick up from his office and he's standing the doorway and here I come down the hall and he's like, "I thought I recognized that walk." Because he was in the same spot like I would've been coming from my office to his office when we were in Hawaii. ... This was a really good twist on this whole thing with him because one of the office aids for his office that was three generals in this suite. But one of the aids happened to be a Marine Gunny and I came in the office one day and I was an E-4 at the time, a Yeoman Third Class, and General Johnson sees me and he walks out of his office starts talking to me, as like, you miss paradise blah, blah, blah, being in Hawaii and you could see the Marine, his jaw just jacked up like, I don't know what, because he was ticked off because what is this E-4 doing talking to this Brigadier General kind of thing, like it was nothing. ... It's like, I've known the man for over two years by this point, so I thought nothing of it, but the Marine was just ticked off. ... I just smiled and said goodbye and

go on my way and everything and the Marine just sat there and he couldn't have anything to do with that because that was disrespectful in his eyes, I guess, so.

DK: Yes, jealousy is everywhere.

CK: Huh?

DK: I said jealousy pops up everywhere.

CK: Probably, you know what, I'm smelling my supper cooking. I'm making barbecue ribs.

DK: All right, if you want to pause here, we can finish up another day?

CK: I didn't mean to do that. I mean, I don't know how much more, well, I can still keep talking, that's no big. I just happened to comment that I'm smelling food but what else do you want to know?

DK: Okay, I think we covered a lot of your military career and we are getting ready to where you retire. So, if there is anything else that we should add or anything else you want to comment on about your military career before we talk a little bit about your post-military career.

CK: Okay, yes, we can, because retire me and get into the next phase of my life next time?

DK: Yes, we can do that.

CK: Or, do you want to keep going? I don't care.

DK: I do not want to ruin your dinner. So, why don't we finish up.

CK: It's in a crock pot.

DK: We can finish up with your military and then talk about your post-military work or life after, or next time, because there is a good bit there I would like to hear about, so yes. So, you retired out of Charleston?

CK: Yes, yes, and my son was born there and yes. Actually, a lot of my disability stuff came out because of Charleston too. Part of it anyway, well yes, a good part of it, but anyway, yes. When are you up at the farm next?

DK: I will be there next Thursday.

CK: Okay, I didn't get up there this week because Monday was iffy. I hope Monday is good because I'm missing out on a week, you know?

DK: Yes, yes. The weather this week was all over the place.

CK: Yes, it was, but the good news is, I have to go looking for a new truck. So, I'm good to go. I'm in a position to start to look for one now because the one I have really needs to be replaced. ... It's rusting out bad and I want something a little bit, with a few more things on it than what I got. So, that's one of my next steps is buying a new to me truck.

DK: Yes, so you have one son or do you have more children?

CK: Nope, just one.

DK: Okay, was he born when you were in the service or was that after you retired?

CK: No, he was ten months old when we retired and he was one of the reasons I went out at nineteen years because my husband, well you had to decide at the eighteen, a year ahead of time, when you're going to retire. My husband had already put his paper request in to retire for like September. He put his request at September of '94, for September of '95. ... September or August of '94, we were closing the base at Charleston. We weren't sure what was going to happen to me and this is at my eighteen-year mark and I was six months pregnant with Patrick. So, that was my reason to retire when I did. We were under what they called the TERA Program, (Temporary Early Retirement Authorization) which was under the Clinton Administration because they wanted to downsize the military. So, instead of going out at fifty percent basic pay, I went with forty-seven and a half percent, plus all my benefits. If I hadn't had the benefits, I wouldn't have done it. I would've stayed around for the next year and probably, we figure because I had, I was a very senior E-6 at this point, that I probably would've been promoted based on time in grade but who knows. Either way, I was, at that point, I was capped at twenty years anyway because of my hire year tenure. So, we just decided to cut our losses and get out, and move back up here. So, we ended up living with my parents for six months till we figured out what we wanted to be when we grew up. Bought a house in Pennsylvania. We were between the two colleges and that's how we ended up there for almost ten years. [Editor's Note: The TERA program was first offered after the Cold War from 1993 to 2001.]

DK: So, what is the process like when you decide you are going to retire? Do you have to apply for it or is it like tendering your resignation? How does that work?

CK: Yes, you have to request it because it is not a right. It is a privilege to retire. They can deny you the retirement. I used to work in that office that did the twenty-year retirements when I was in D.C. as well. After The Pentagon, I went to the Navy Bureau and I processed retirements and yes, they can deny you the getting, going for retirement based on whatever circumstances, I don't know, based on I don't know what specifically. So yes, you have to request it to retire and then it goes through, the application gets put out by personnel to the bureau because then the paperwork goes to the retirement office and has to be then approved by the detailer who's the guy that cuts orders because he needs to be known about it because he then may or may not have to fill a vacancy by you retiring. So, there's several people in the loop that need to know about your retirement and then once you do that, that's a whole other, other things start to happen to get you ready. There is a, I don't remember if it was a one or two week long, basically a retirement seminar to attend. So, they tell you things you need to do or things that might be a good idea to think about as you retire and they try to make it as easy as possible but there's still things they

don't tell you about, so, but that's typical military. I did have somebody, because we were in Charleston when all of this was going on and somebody said something to me and calling me a Damn Yankee because I was from New Jersey now in South Carolina. ... I said, "Oh no honey, I'm no damn Yankee, because this Yankee is going home." A Yankee is a person who goes to the south to visit. A damn Yankee is one who moves south and stays. So, I didn't stay. So, anyway, we can continue this in the next go around, we'll figure out, maybe by then the sun will be shining and we can be, maybe they'll let you do this outside, I don't know.

DK: We will see and hopefully the computers will cooperate a little faster.

CK: Yes, that would be a good thing.

DK: I appreciate you talking with me and we will pause here and we will pick it up.

CK: Okay.

DK: We will set a day and pick it up there. So, let me stop the recording here.

CK: Okay.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

Transcribed by Jesse Braddell 8/10/2021

Reviewed by Carol Kain 1/30/2025