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Recommended Citation

Ward, Philip W. Interview by Megan DeFries. December 20, 2016, in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania. Transcript. Duquesne University Oral History Initiative, Pittsburgh, PA. <https://dsc.duq.edu/vohp/1/> (accessed Month Day, Year).

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Oral Memoirs
of
Philip W. Ward

An Interview
Conducted by
Megan DeFries
December 20, 2016

Collection: Oral History Initiative
Project: Duquesne Veterans'

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Interview History

The recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) were processed in the offices of the Oral History Initiative (OHI) and University Archives, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Interviewer: Megan DeFries

Transcriber: Lauren Eisenhart-Purvis

Editor(s): Megan DeFries
Stephanie Walrath

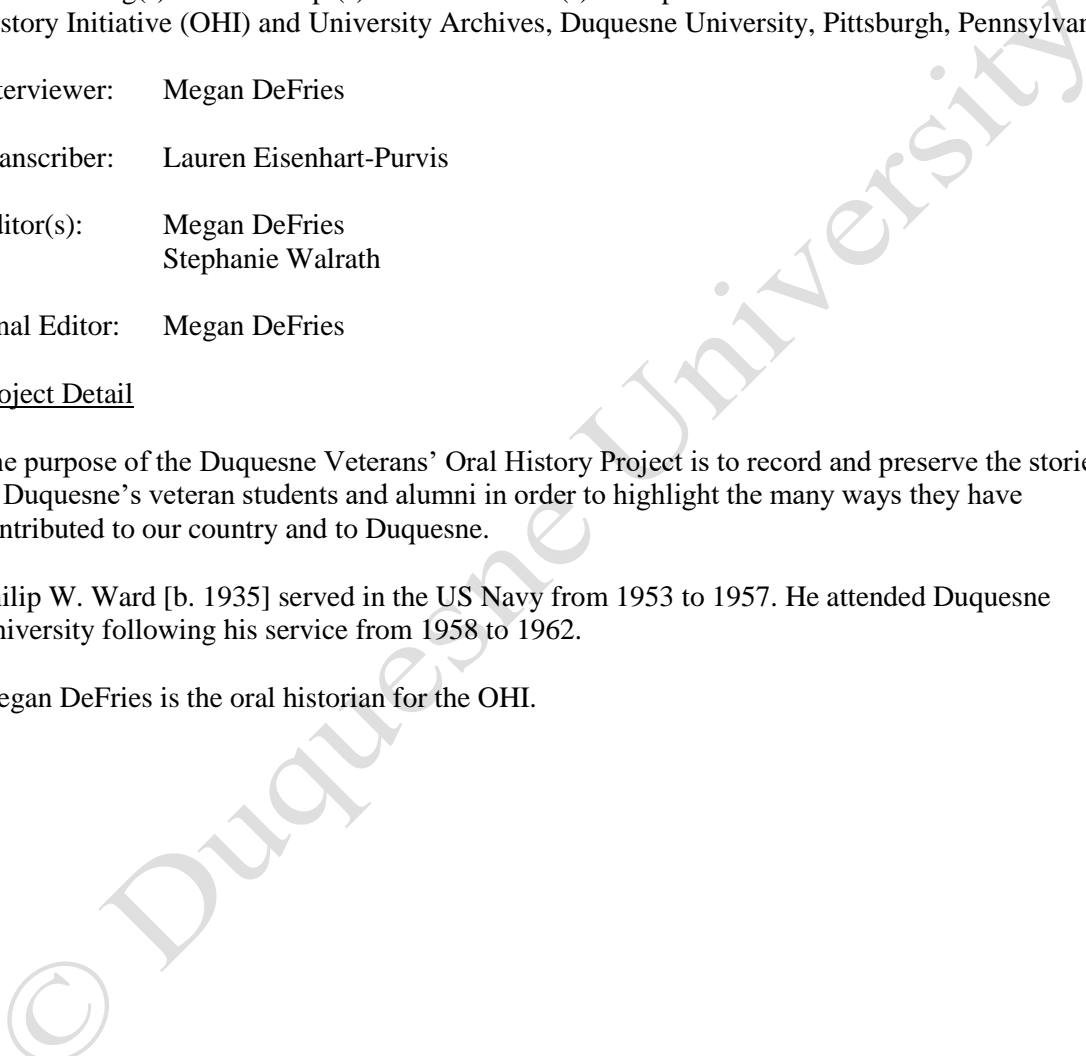
Final Editor: Megan DeFries

Project Detail

The purpose of the Duquesne Veterans' Oral History Project is to record and preserve the stories of Duquesne's veteran students and alumni in order to highlight the many ways they have contributed to our country and to Duquesne.

Philip W. Ward [b. 1935] served in the US Navy from 1953 to 1957. He attended Duquesne University following his service from 1958 to 1962.

Megan DeFries is the oral historian for the OHI.



Philip W. Ward

Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Megan DeFries
December 20, 2016
Home of Mr. Ward
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

Collection: Oral History Initiative
Project: Duquesne Veterans'

DeFries: This is Megan DeFries interviewing Philip Ward, a veteran of the United States Navy, for the Duquesne Veterans' Oral History Project. It is Tuesday, December 20, 2016 and we are at his home in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania. Hi Phil, how are you?

Ward: Good, good.

DeFries: Thank you for having me today.

Ward: You're welcome.

DeFries: I just thought we'd start with just a brief background of your family, when you were born, where you grew up—things like that.

[00:00:25]

Ward: I'm originally from Clairton [Pennsylvania], which is up on the Mon [Monongahela] River. My dad worked in the steel mills. I worked in the coke works [Clairton Coke Works] before I went into the navy. And I got—I was 1-A [ed. note: eligible for military service] for the draft, so I joined the navy. I didn't want to sleep in a foxhole, so I slept on canvas, so—(laughs) and I applied to Duquesne [University] when I graduated from high school in 1953 and I was accepted, but my dad was laid off and we didn't have the money, so—it was eight dollars a credit hour at the time and we couldn't afford that. So I went in the navy on December 14, 1953.

DeFries: And you said you were drafted?

Ward: I could've been drafted.

DeFries: (speaking at the same time) Could've been.

Ward: There was a draft and I was 1-A. If you're really eligible, physically and everything, you're 1-A. If you're not eligible, you're 4-F, and then they had dispensations, like some guys with families or stuff.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: So I was 1-A, so I joined the navy. I came home and I told my mother, I said, "Mom, I'm leaving for the navy on December fourteenth." She says, "Why don't you call them and tell them you want to go after Christmas?" I said, "Mom, you don't tell the military that." (both laugh) So I went on December fourteenth. I was in boot camp from December fourteenth till March 14, 1954 in Bainbridge, Maryland.

DeFries: Can you tell me about boot camp, about your training? What the experience was like arriving at boot camp?

[00:01:48]

Ward: Well, (laughs) you come in there and the first thing they do—I didn't even have my leather jacket off yet and they had all my hair gone. They just run the clippers over and then they took us to lunch and we had—my first meal was a spare rib with a great big purple stamp, US Government Inspected. (DeFries laughs) I thought—yeah. (laughs) And then we went in, they gave us a big box and you put everything in the big box and mailed your clothes and everything home. You had nothing; you stand there naked and you go through the line and they give you all your underwear, socks, and uniforms and hats and all that, and you get a big bundle. We go into a big barracks and on the floor they had stuff laid out and you have to stencil all your clothes with your name and serial number. So everybody (taps on table) was stamping and somebody would always put it in the wrong spot. We had like a second-class boatswain's mate—they're the deck gangs—(coughs) you'd say, "You dumb idiot, you're stenciling in the wrong place." So he'd kick it and your clothes would go flying. (coughs)

So we got all our uniforms, then we went into our barracks. It was about eighty guys in a company in a boot camp (coughs) and we were assigned bunks and we did field days, just scrub and everything like that. These were all World War II barracks, which were very cold, (coughs) and it's in the winter time. And health—we had about four guys drop with pneumonia in about twenty-four hours. So a medical officer came in and he said, "Well, every other window has to be open ten inches from the top. Every other one." This is in the winter time. So we tried to do it, but the ropes were all rotten and they just dropped all the way. (laughs) We'd wake up in the morning, we'd have snow on the floor. So, we survived. (DeFries laughs)

[00:03:36]

And we did a lot of marching on the grinder. The grinder was a big asphalt paved field. Did a lot of marching and we had classes. I pulled a week of mess cooking and that was a joy. I was helping a cook—they were grilling streaks with great big coal fired stoves—and they were on, like, enameled trays before we put them on, and a tray tipped over and fell on the floor. This cook says to me, "You saw the wax paper underneath that, didn't you?" I said, "Yes, sir." We picked them up, put them on the grill and—(laughs)

DeFries: Didn't want to waste food, I guess. (laughs)

Ward: Yeah, yeah. So I did a week mess cooking there and then I came out of boot camp. I was on the drill team and we met at six o'clock every morning and got "Reveille" at five. I had to go to drill team practice from six until seven every morning, five days—six days a week—five days a week. And then we'd perform every Saturday morning at graduation from different companies and we would lead the—in a big drill hall—and we would be here and then we'd come down and make two left turns and then come in front of the reviewing stand. They'd halt us and we'd back up and stand right across from the reviewing stand. And we had chrome bayonets on our rifles and stand there, present arms as each company come by with their flag. It was a thrill.

DeFries: Were you chosen to do color guard?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) You had volunteers and I enjoyed it.

DeFries: Yeah.

Ward: And I was in the drill team when I went to school in Memphis [Tennessee] too. I enjoyed that and then I ended up in the honor guard, so, you know. (both laugh)

DeFries: It's continued.

Ward: Yeah. (DeFries laughs) So—

[00:05:25]

DeFries: So why did you choose—you chose the navy because you didn't want to be in the army—

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Yeah.

DeFries: —and be in a foxhole? Okay.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Okay. (laughs)

Ward: I always liked the navy, so—

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: So—

DeFries: What—you mentioned going to Tennessee or Memphis you said—

Ward: Yeah, yeah.

DeFries: —Tennessee for AT A School.

Ward: (speaking at the same time) AT A School. It's Aviation Electronics A School.

[00:05:45]

DeFries: And that was for your—that was your rating?

Ward: Yeah, aviation electronics technician.

DeFries: Okay. Was this immediately following boot camp that you went?

Ward: No, no. I went to Norman, Oklahoma for A&P School, Aviation Preparatory School. It was only eight weeks, but we fired fifty caliber machine guns, did stuff with parachutes just dropping in the water and all kinds of physics and math, a lot of schooling. And was there for eight weeks and then they had what they called dream sheets. You'd tell what rate you wanted to study under, and they had air controlman, parachute rigger, aviation electronics, aviation electrician, ADs [aviation machinist's mate], mechanical, all different things—tin benders. We had different names for them. The ADs were the—worked on the engines; they called them nosepickers, (both laugh) but they had all the—and then you put what your dream sheet was. And I had really high scores, so they were short of electronics people, so I got my first choice.

DeFries: Oh, that's good.

Ward: And I got to Memphis and we—once again, we had a boatswain's mate. I don't want to knock boatswain's mates, but they're not the smartest people in the world. The ones I came into contact—

DeFries: And it's a boatswain's mate you— [ed. note: misunderstands pronunciation]

Ward: Boatswain's mate, yeah.

DeFries: Okay, what does that—

Ward: It's a rating, they're double anchor.

DeFries: Oh, okay, okay.

[00:07:08]

Ward: It was their rating. So he was picking out people for mess cooking. I did eight weeks of mess cooking in July and August in Memphis. We had to be at the galley at 4:00 a.m. in the morning. We just wore white trousers and t-shirts and wore white Dixie Cup hats. They put me in the scullery, running a scullery machine. In about four days, my skin was coming off my hands from that real strong soap. So they sent me to sick bay and they guy gave me a little jar of lanolin and said, "Put it on twice a day and take him out of the scullery." So where'd they put me? On the line serving bacon. I got skin dropping off my hand. (laughs) (DeFries gasps) I did other things too. They put me in the food preparation—spud locker—and I found out—I only lasted one day there because I learned if you put the potatoes in and let them grind

longer, you didn't have to de-eye them, but they were coming out like marbles, so—
(both laugh)

DeFries: They took you out of there.

Ward: Yeah. So then I was helping prep with the cooks. They had to make tons of potato salad and I just—I wouldn't eat potato salad for a long time. We had—there was two of us, we had, like, oars and we were stirring it and this cook comes and says, “No, no, no. You're not doing it right.” He went in there with his arms and he's going like this [imitates churning potatoes with arms]. He goes like this and takes the mayonnaise off [slides hand down his forearm]. I didn't eat potato salad for a long time. (both laugh) So then I was on the drill team there and we went around county fairs around Millington, Tennessee and over across the river in Arkansas. Just little short trips, you know.

DeFries: Yeah.

Ward: And then I went to AT A School and that was twenty-eight weeks.

[00:08:58]

DeFries: And this was in?

Ward: Millington, Tennessee.

DeFries: That's in Tennessee, okay.

Ward: Just north of Memphis, yeah.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: We'd go into Memphis for liberty [shore leave]. And our twenty-eight weeks, it was really technical, a lot of technical, and we had—I had to do eight words a minute in code, copy, and send. Which I haven't done since then, so—but one of our final classes was we'd take off at night, they had special planes, and we had designated targets, and this was our final exam. And we'd fly north along the Mississippi River and cut across, I guess, the Ohio River because one of my targets was the railroad bridge at Paducah, Kentucky and my second was the dam on Kentucky Lake, and you had to hit your targets and they'd score you on it.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: And that was nice, you know.

DeFries: Yeah.

[00:09:58]

Ward: And when you graduate from AT A school—we were about—it's about thirty-four, thirty-six guys graduate. They take us in a room, and you draw a letter and that was going to be your billet [ed. note: US Navy term for personnel assignment or duty]

station], if you wanted it. If you got something you didn't want, you could stand up and say, "I have this, I'll trade for whatever." We had one guy got Kwajalein [Atoll], which is a little island in the Pacific. He says, "I got Kwajalein, I'll take anything." I got the [USS] *Bennington* and I said, "I'll take it." I was in—well, USS *Bennington*, FFT—for Further Fleet Transfer—Brooklyn Navy Yard [New York], and I got on the ship at Brooklyn Navy Yard. And—

[00:10:40]

DeFries: How did you feel—how did you feel about being on the aircraft carrier?

Ward: Well, when we first got on there, (DeFries clears throat) we had temporary quarters. It was up in the anchor locker, up in the front of the ship. They had temporary bunks. We're sitting around there, and we didn't have nothing to do. I said to the guys, "When do we have supper around here?" He said, "Oh, they piped it down a half an hour ago." I said, "What do you mean they piped it down?" "Well, they don't announce it to the boatswain's mate with the whistles, they pipe it," so (both laugh) you learn that real quick.

DeFries: Yeah. So did you miss supper that day?

Ward: No, we got it.

DeFries: Oh, okay. (laughs)

Ward: But then it's down one deck below the hangar deck. Now I got assigned—my quarters was all the way at the end of the ship, right—well, my first bunk was on the bottom of a stack four high. I was on the bottom right by the door. Every time the door opened, the cold air got me. So when somebody left, I got up on the fourth bunk. I only had about this much room [holds fingers approximately six inches apart] and that was the bottom of the flight deck. And back where my head was, was the back of the ship. So nobody slept in our quarters during night ops [operations] (coughs) because planes did come in low. We had one [accident] happen with the [USS] *John Hancock* off Korea. (coughs) We were supposed to be going into Yokosuka, Japan and one of their pilots came in low and it crashed. They were—we were about a mile, two miles apart, but at night we'd see green fire and red fire, orange, yellow—the ready ammunition of tractor fuel and all that. He crashed. So they went into Yokosuka and we stayed out. So we got canned ham and boiled rice, seven out of nine meals. (both laugh) My wife knows, do not serve me rice.

DeFries: (laughs) You had your fill?

[00:12:29]

Ward: Yeah. So I got on at Brooklyn Navy Yard and since the ship had just come out of dry dock because we had that explosion, that—

DeFries: So you weren't there for the explosion?

Ward: No, I wasn't. I'm part of the replacement crew. [ed. note: An explosion occurred on the USS *Bennington* on May 26, 1954 off of Narragansett Bay killing 103 men]

DeFries: Okay.

[00:12:43]

Ward: I had—the day it was exploded, I was just leaving Norman, Oklahoma to go on to Memphis and there was, like I said, 103 guys killed. So we left, went over to Bayonne, New Jersey. And then from there we went to Guantanamo, Cuba. We spent three months there on a shakedown cruise. This was before [Fidel] Castro. [Fulgencio] Batista was the dictator then and we spent three months there and we had—I had one day of liberty in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and that's the filthiest place in the world you'd ever want to see. I would never—I wouldn't want anybody to go there. It was hot—it was in August—hot. [A] guy had a little push cart with slices of ham on it—no refrigeration, flies all over it. Woman come up and he went like this, [makes a motion as if slicing meat] picked up the meat and handed it to her. Didn't wrap it up or anything and she bought it, you know. It was the filthiest place I ever saw.

DeFries: Bit of a culture shock?

Ward: Well, yeah. (laughs)

DeFries: Were you able to get off ship in Cuba? Did you—

Ward: Oh yeah, we went—we got one day. Well we went to the base; we had a party. They had an enlisted men's club and then they had a swimming area and we had a—our division had a picnic and Lieutenant Commander Hope was our commander. He arranged it and we went over there. We were all swimming in—they had a long pier out into the water, into the Caribbean, you know, beautiful, clear water. I said to the guy, "Why does that guy in the motorboat keep riding back and forth there?" "Well, he's the shark guard." He had an M-1 rifle and he was keeping the sharks away from us, I guess.

DeFries: Oh wow. (laughs)

Ward: (laughs) We all swam anyway.

DeFries: Right.

[00:14:32]

Ward: So we had three months there and then we come back to the States and went into Brooklyn Navy Yard and got some more repairs. And then we weren't here very long, and we left. We stopped at [Naval Station] Norfolk [Virginia] to unload our "special weapons." That's what they were called then, we weren't supposed to know what they were.

DeFries: So you didn't know what you were carrying, what kind of—

Ward: Well, they were atomic weapons.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: But they were “special.” We pulled up in a number two elevator by the dock, they put up a big canvas thing, and they had marines with M-1s and a crane putting them on and off. I mean regular ammunition, it wasn’t.

DeFries: Right.

Ward: (coughs) One of the things, when we come out of Brooklyn we spent, I think, three days at Sheepshead Bay in New York, loading ammunition. We would work—I think, it was eight hours on, eight hours off, and I had a wrench, a ratchet wrench, and a table and I was putting tail fins on three and a half inch rockets. And we’d load them on racks and then they’d take them down into the hold and they would just keep them. That’s all we did.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: We had a lot of ammunition.

[00:15:45]

DeFries: Were [sic, was] that part of your main duties on the ship? What were your duties on the ship, generally?

Ward: Well, my first job, I was running the starboard—the generator on the starboard catapult, to start the first jet off the catapult.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: The jets take a lot of juice to get that motor started. So I would start it and then I’d—I was on the catwalk, with just a little wire. I had to stay there for the whole launch. And they’d turn into the wind and we’d be going like thirty-five knots and come into the wind and it was exhilarating. Now, I took care of the helicopter’s radio, I took care of the sonobuoys, [ed. note: Sonobuoys are portable sonar systems dropped from aircraft or ships that detect submarines or conduct underwater research] and I took—helped any of the squadrons with any of their electronic problems.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: And sonobuoys, we would load three of—well, we would load actually nine in this one plane we had with cells.

DeFries: What are sonobuoys? What are those?

Ward: They’re about this long and about this big around.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: And when they would fire them out back of the engine, they put a pattern of three, they’d hit. And when they come down, they had fins that would open up and it would generate, like, sounds. And if there was a submarine or a thing around, they would have the triangle (taps on table) they could plot where the enemy submarine was.

DeFries: Oh, okay.

Ward: So I was in charge of all of the sonobuoys for about eight, ten months, so—we used a lot of them too, over across Korea. They—North Korea didn't have much of a navy, but China did, but they weren't involved in the navy that much. We had—they had put a few mines out, we had a couple tin cans [ed. note: destroyer ships] hit the mines, but nothing major. So then, like I said, I took care of the helicopter's radio. I'm going back now sixty-some years, I still remember my call signs.

DeFries: What were they?

Ward: The *Bennington's* call sign was Junkman.

DeFries: Junkman?

Ward: And when I would call for a radio check from the helicopter, say, "Junkman Tower, this is Junkman Angel for a radio check." The helicopter was called Angel. It picked the pilots up out of the water.

DeFries: Oh wow.

Ward: And when we'd lose our pilot, the tin cans would pick them up. We had to pay ransom to get them back—ten gallons of ice cream, (DeFries laughs) and I'm going to tell you, the ice cream was lousy because it was made with powdered milk, so— (both laugh) so—

DeFries: Wow. That is interesting.

Ward: So, it was, you know—then I got assigned to the landing party—we had a division of marines on our ship, fleet marines, and every division had to send so many guys and I got picked from my division and I was assigned to the landing party, which it meant if we ever had to go ashore with weapons, we'd be there. Marine Captain Tumey was six-four, big shoulders, real gentleman—I said, "Sir, what is my job?" and he says, "Ward. You're assistant BAR," it's a Browning Automatic Rifle which is real heavy, he said, "You carry two boxes of ammunition, no weapon." (DeFries laughs) So (laughs) I was just carrying—and we fired off the flight deck at sea, you know. We never did make a landing, but if we had to, we would've.

DeFries: Yeah. Now the—this is when you were in Korea that this—

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Okay, okay. So while you were doing maneuvers up and down the coast of the United States—and then you left—

Ward: We left Jacksonville, Florida—Mayport, Florida—was it, I guess August and we stopped at Port of Spain, Trinidad for around just two days, I think. Only one day of liberty and then we took off from there and they stopped us on the equator and initiated us.

[00:19:41]

DeFries: The line-crossing ceremony.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Can you tell me about that?

Ward: Well, you have to pay respect to King Neptune. So they generally had an old chief and they put a crown on him and robes and had him sit on a chair on a pedestal on the flight deck and he had his baby, the royal baby. They picked a real fat chief, they put a diaper on him, and a bonnet and they rubbed his belly with like, Crisco or Spry, and then they had a rind of bacon and they rubbed that on there and you had to crawl and kiss his belly. And about the time you kissed his belly, they had hit you with a paddle and your face would go into his belly. (both laugh) But you had to pay your respect to the king and his baby and then you start the initiation.

We crawled all over that flight deck and they were spanking you with—they had, like, canvas paddles. First thing they did was cut your hair and they'd either just ran it back this way or that way and then you had to get it all cut off anyway. Then you had to go to the royal pharmacist. They had oil cans with gentian violet and some quinine, and they'd spray it in your mouth, and you'd have to swallow it and then your teeth and everything was purple. Then you had to crawl through the garbage chute. They had saved the garbage for a couple days and you had to crawl through this and remember, we had old clothes on now, too. Come out of there and then they had a coffin, a couple coffins—plywood—and you'd crawl in there and they'd close the lid and they had a hole at the head. They put a two-and-a-half-inch salt water hose on you and then you'd come out of there. They put up a four-foot-deep swimming pool on the flight deck and you had to crawl up—climb up the steps and you'd sit there backwards. And they'd say, "What are you?" "I'm a slimy pollywog." They'd flip you over backwards and you'd go in the water and the guys would grab you and [ask] "What are you now?" "I'm a shellback." If you said, "I'm a slimy pollywog," they'd dunk you again. (laughs) And then we got all our hair cut off and all that.

[00:21:49]

We went into Montevideo, Uruguay. We were supposed to go into Buenos Aires, Argentina, where [Juan] Perón was just thrown out of office and there was all kinds of—so we couldn't go into Argentina, so we went into Montevideo, Uruguay, which is right across the river from there. So we had a couple days there. And then, we were leaving Montevideo and the boatswain's mates were putting lines up around the island. I said, "What are these for?" He says, "You'll see," and I saw. Our flight deck was like a hundred feet off the water. We had waves up to the flight deck.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: This is where the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean meet, Cape Horn.

DeFries: Cape Horn.

Ward: So now I'm a Horn Shellback. So—

DeFries: Is that a rare distinction?

Ward: Not too many ships go around there, no. We were an aircraft carrier. Small ships couldn't make it, I don't think, but we were pretty big. But we couldn't fit through the Panama Canal with the angled deck, so we had to go around the Horn.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: So there's not too many ships go around there, but I am a Horn Shellback. This is part of some of the initiation pictures here. (papers rustling) [shows DeFries initiation pictures] This is the day before, we had to wear the uniform of the day—this is me (papers rustling) with Gary—Gary Booth, from Thayer, Iowa. We had to wear our thirteen button trousers on backwards with the flap down, white jumpers, our dress jumpers on backwards and our flat hats. (DeFries laughs) This is me and—oh, that's the same one.

DeFries: Did you know what to expect when they—

Ward: No, we didn't.

DeFries: No. (laughs)

[00:23:28]

Ward: And then I went to—came back from Korea, I got sent to this school in Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. I think it was only six or eight weeks on the Cadillac Three Radar System and they formed a new squadron in [Naval Air Station] Barbers Point, Hawaii, VW-14, and I was assigned to that. So that sounds great, we're in Barbers—in Hawaii, but that was our home base. We were in Midway Island or Adak [Alaska], at the end of the Aleutians [Islands] most of the time. And the Aleutians—the Adak—if they were going to give the world an enema, that's where they'd put it.

DeFries: Oh no.

Ward: Everything's underground because the weather's so bad there. First time we flew in there, we landed, they come out and said, "Get this plane gassed and off the ground as soon as you can. We just had an earthquake and we're waiting for the after toll." So we got up and we flew from Kodiak Island to Adak. Landed and took off and flew all the way back to Barbers Point, Hawaii.

DeFries: Long flight.

Ward: Yeah. We were dragging.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: But you do what you had to do. And every three months, we had to fly from Barbers Point, Hawaii, to Whidbey Island in Washington State—our emergency fields—and then from—we went to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska, Kodiak Island, and then we were supposed to make touch and go's at these little air strips along the Aleutians. Our pilot says, "I'm not putting my wheels down. I'll make a low pass, I don't want to be stuck here." So we'd make low passes at King[s] Bay

and Cold Salmon, little bases. We got to Adak and a couple times we stayed overnight. Everything that they had, you could go on the subway. Come out of your temporary barracks, go down the steps, go three stops, that's the chow hall. You go up the steps, go to the beer hall, you go three stops, and go up the steps. Everything was underground.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: Because the weather's so bad there.

DeFries: And you were—while you were doing these flights, you were looking for evidence of Russian bombers, potential Russian bombers?

Ward: Yeah. That's what the DEW [Distant Early Warning] Line was. We were—they had us about two hundred miles apart—planes. And then they had ships on the surface, they were looking for the high fliers and we were looking for the low fliers and of course, they never came. But it was very monotonous duty because every now and then we'd get a nonscheduled airliner or a fishing trawler. We were in constant contact with SAC in Omaha [Nebraska], Strategic Air Command, (coughs) and we were—if anything came, they'd launch the missiles or whatever. So—

DeFries: So you were one of the first early warning squadrons—

Ward: Mm-hm.

DeFries: —to be developed.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: VW-14 you said, right?

Ward: There was two, VW-12 and VW-14 at Barbers Point and it was VW-13 and [VW] fifteen in Patuxent River, Maryland, and they flew out of Argentia, Newfoundland to the Canary Islands and back.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: And if I would have reenlisted, I'd have been sent to Argentia, Newfoundland, I said— [shakes head no] (laughs)

DeFries: No way. (laughs)

Ward: No. This picture on Midway, they have a seagull there, they called them gooney birds. They're some type of an albatross—they are stupid, they're awkward. They said, The first six months you watch the gooney birds, the last six months they watch you. (both laugh) So—

DeFries: So did you find your duty boring most of the time while flying the line?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) After I got off the carrier, when I was in the flights, yeah. It was monotonous.

DeFries: Yeah.

Ward: I'd fire off—I had the search radar, the high-flying radar, and LORAN [Long Range Navigation], I'd fire them off and then every half an hour or forty-five minutes, I'd check to make sure everything's good. And we had what they called scope dopes, the air controlmen. They had about five on duty at all times with an officer. They'd be plotting all the targets and all that and I would just sit around and do my job, you know.

DeFries: Those were your main duties on the flight?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Yeah.

[00:27:26]

DeFries: What was your home base like in Hawaii, in Barbers Point, Hawaii?

Ward: Barbers Point was nice. We—we had a—our squadron building was right by the air strip and the commander of Barbers Point, which wasn't—our commander was the squadron—they didn't like us—we'd wear our flight suits down past the administration building and he thought we should be in the uniform of the day and our captain, who was a full captain in the navy which is the same as a colonel, he was a mustang [ed. note: someone who began their career as an enlisted person, then becomes an officer]. (coughs) He went in World War II as an enlisted man and became a pilot and then he was a full captain and he flew these Willy Victor-tvos [ed. note: US Naval aircraft PO-2W Constellation, redesignated WV-2 in 1954, based on the Lockheed L-1049 Super Constellation] and he was a nice guy, Captain Scarpino. And every month he had to do a captain's inspection. We had—when I left, we had fourteen or sixteen flight crews. He said, "I'll inspect two flight crews and if they're okay, we go to Nimitz Beach [Hawaii]," which was a party for us. He'd inspect them two and then we'd head there. And I made second class when I was there. Anybody who made rate got thrown in the ocean. I got thrown in the ocean. (DeFries laughs) Well, I mean, I could swim anyway. So we had an officer who went from JG [junior grade] to full lieutenant. We were going to throw him in the water. He said, "I'm giving you men a direct order. You do not throw me in the ocean." Captain Scarpino was sitting up on top of a bench with his feet on the bench part, drinking a beer. We says, Captain, he doesn't want to be thrown in the water. He said, "Lieutenant, can you swim?" We threw him in the water. (both laugh) Well, it's just, you know—

DeFries: Yeah.

[00:29:04]

Ward: You know, flight crews, their life depended on me and my life depended on them. And we had two ensigns; Ensign Bilstrom was a good buddy of mine. We'd come back from like a—we had practice barriers. When we'd leave Barbers Point, we'd fly out to what they call *Lightship November*. It's halfway to the US. Cross over to *Lightship* and come back, practice barriers. We'd come back—we'd be up in the air maybe ten hours—we'd be coming back, it'd be about seven o'clock in the evening or something, he'd say, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I don't know." He said,

“Well, take a shower and I’ll pick you up in about an hour. We’ll go to town.” He was an officer and I was an enlisted man, we went out drinking together. We got along—

DeFries: You worked so closely together.

Ward: Oh, we worked real close. He couldn’t do anything unless I turned the radar on, so— (both laugh) but—

[00:29:51]

DeFries: So what other things—what else was life like in Hawaii and in Midway, while you were—

Ward: Well, Midway was all temporary barracks. We really—we’d only go out there for only ten or twelve days then go back to Barbers Point. We’d fly maybe five or six barriers, days, and then go back. Then we’d do practice barriers there while we were out there. They’d rotate us.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: Because it was so monotonous, the duty, you know.

DeFries: You said it’s about fifteen hours, the flights—the time?

Ward: Sixteen, eighteen hours flight.

DeFries: (speaking at the same time) Oh.

Ward: We could stay up twenty-four to twenty-six hours. This plane had tip tanks on both wings. We could stay up twenty-four, twenty-six hours.

[00:30:27]

DeFries: How long were you staying in Adak when you were there? How long?

Ward: The longest we were there was two and a half, three days, maybe.

DeFries: Oh okay.

Ward: The first time, we didn’t stay at all. (laughs) We just took off and landed and took off right away. But the part I liked best was Kodiak Island, that was beautiful. And it was a ramp, a sea ramp, right there. And I had a picture, I don’t know where it is now, of us. It was a picture of Old Woman’s Mountain reflecting off the lake. Oh, it was beautiful. So—

DeFries: Did you see any of the wildlife that is up there? I’ve seen some pictures from the DEW Line.

Ward: (speaking at the same time) I’ve seen—well, we went salmon fishing one day. A buddy of mine—well, we were in Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage and we

were going to stay a couple days—we stayed one night, but he took us salmon fishing. And I never—I'm not much of a fisherman. I'd say, "Oh, look at that one." He'd said, "Oh, that's too small. Get that one over there." And we had grilled fresh salmon. Oh, was that good.

[00:31:31]

DeFries: What was it like coming from Pittsburgh [Pennsylvania], Clairton, living here your whole life and then seeing these new places? What was that like for you?

Ward: What do you mean?

DeFries: Just seeing Hawaii and being able to see the world.

Ward: Well, I was in Cuba, I was in Trinidad, I was in Uruguay, I was in Chile, I was in Okinawa [Japan], I was in the Philippines, I was in Hong Kong, I was in Japan, I was in the Aleutians. I joined the navy and saw the world. My wife—we were on a trip a number of years ago, after I retired, to Alaska. (coughs) We were in—oh, I'm trying to think of the name—one of the further north cities that we went to. And they had plane flights up over the Arctic Circle and she wanted me to do it because I was under the Antarctic Circle. But I didn't want to go, just fly up there, you know, so I didn't do it. (DeFries laughs) So we went mining—gold. They have this stuff, you know, the, petered—

DeFries: The panning for gold.

Ward: Yeah, they put gold in there just so you get a little bit, you know. So we did that instead, so— (coughs)

[00:32:40]

DeFries: How did you—well actually, if you don't mind, can we back up just a little bit to when you were in Korea and Japan and doing maneuvers around there? What kind of operations was your aircraft carrying out because the armistice had been signed in Korea in 1953, so what kind of things were you doing in and around Korea?

Ward: Well, they had patrols. And we were in the Sea of Japan, the [South] China Sea, and the Yellow Sea, the peninsula. So we never knew where we were going to be, you know. And we'd send the jets in—and just on patrol and the Skyraiders [ed. note: Douglas A-1 Skyraider] was our work horse. It was a single prop [propeller] ship—it was a work horse and it carried a lot of weapons. And we didn't know where we were, I don't know what they were doing, but we sent them.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: But the cease-fire was in July of 1953. We never had a treaty. We're still at war, basically. We just have a ceasefire and—

DeFries: It's true.

Ward: One of the pictures I had here— (papers rustling) these are Korean naval officers.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: And one was a pilot and I was—we were talking to him and he said, “Kim Jong-un,” he’s the one in there now, his dad, Kim Jong-il or something—

DeFries: Yes.

Ward: —he said, “When he goes, they’re going to have an idiot,” for their thing, and it was Kim Jong-un, so— (DeFries laughs) but that’s what he told me, that’s what they told us, a long time ago. So— (coughs)

[00:34:15]

DeFries: How did you feel about the Korean War or about your duty about the Cold War? How did you feel about it then, when you were doing it?

Ward: I felt I had a duty to do and—when you joined the military, they tell you where to go and what to do and you do it. I did it for four years, I was proud of my service. You know, just—

DeFries: Yeah.

[00:34:42]

Ward: That’s one of the reasons I was in the honor guard doing the military funerals. I think every veteran deserves a military funeral. And we’ve had some stories about that, too. We were doing one that was over in a big cemetery near—it wasn’t Allegheny—I forget where it was. It was hot and I was rolling my flag up, we were done. A woman come up and she says, “Can I ask you a question?” I said, “Yeah.” She said, “Why did he play ‘Taps’ twice?” I said, “Oh no, he didn’t.” She said, “Oh yes he did, I heard him.” I said, “No. You hear ‘Taps’ and ‘Echo’.” She said, “Well, what’s the ‘Echo’?” I said, “That’s his buddies calling his spirit home.” She said, “Oh, I wish you hadn’t of told me that.” (laughs) That’s what they say.

DeFries: Yeah. Wow.

Ward: You didn’t know that, did you?

DeFries: I didn’t know that, no. I never heard that before.

[00:35:35]

Ward: I think the best thing that came out of the Korean War was me and plastic IV [intravenous] bags. (DeFries laughs) Really. That’s where plastic IV bags come from.

DeFries: Really?

Ward: The medics had to carry glass IV bottles.

DeFries: I didn’t even think of that, yeah. That’s—

Ward: So—

DeFries: —interesting, wow.

Ward: My knee gets locked up on me.

DeFries: Would you like to take a break for a moment?

Ward: No, no, I'm good.

[00:35:55]

DeFries: Okay. Can you tell me about communications from home while you were in the military? How often did you hear from home or were you able to write home?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Well, my mother was a worrywart. All mothers are, I guess, but my mother was super worried. When we stopped at Pearl Harbor [Hawaii] on our way out, (coughs) I bought about a dozen and a half post cards. As far as I know, she never knew I was in Korea. My mailing address was FPO, Fleet Post Office, so she wouldn't know.

DeFries: You didn't mention it to her?

Ward: No. I'd send a card every two or three weeks, "Things are wonderful in Waikiki [Hawaii]." (DeFries laughs) I think she knew, but— (laughs)

DeFries: She thought you were at the beach? (laughs)

Ward: (speaking at the same time) I think where—I think where I really screwed up—I sent her a ninety-seven piece of bone china from Japan. (laughs) I think that was one of the tips. And another thing—our mail we sent, we didn't have to pay postage, it was marked free. My mother wanted to give the postman money because I couldn't afford the stamps. (DeFries laughs) He said, "No," he said, "When they're in Korea or the war is on, they get free postage." I think that's why she knew, but you know.

DeFries: She never let on that she knew?

Ward: No, no.

DeFries: So you were able to actually land at Japan (phone sound) and get off ship for a while?

Ward: Oh yeah. Yokosuka, Japan was our home base.

DeFries: (speaking at the same time) Yokosuka, okay.

Ward: Now I was in Kobe, Japan one time. I don't know why, but our captain went over—it was on other—it was on the western side of Japan, but Yokosuka was on the eastern side. That was our home base.

DeFries: Oh, okay.

Ward: And—

DeFries: How many months were you in Japan?

Ward: Oh, we were there, I want to say from August to May.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: That's what—about eight, nine months.

DeFries: What did you think of Japan and being stationed there?

Ward: Well, the cab drivers I thought were leftover kamikaze pilots. They just drove like a bat out of hell, but one of the things they told us—they had what they call Thieves Alley in Yokosuka, all the merchants and all that—they told us, don't eat any food, you know, because they use human fertilizer. So I saw a peach and I bought this peach, and it was the best peach I ever had, and I still remember it, but—

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: —we got all kind of shots, injections. They gave us some kind of Japanese bee shot that we had on the ship, you know. I don't know what it was for, but we had an enlisted man's club there. You could go there and get a steak dinner with a baked potato and a salad for a dollar and a quarter. Beer was ten cents a can. We were only making about a hundred dollars a month anyway, you know. (DeFries laughs) Cigarettes were eight cents a pack on the ship. You couldn't buy a pack, you had to buy the whole carton for eighty cents.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: So what we would do is, on our ship, we had about eight or ten guys in our shop and we had a couple what they called strikers [ed. note: Sailors receiving training for their rate]. They're trying to—they're not petty officers, they're below petty officers. They're called strikers. We'd—I'd give them two dollars and forty cents, and he'd go down to the gedunk [ed. note: canteen] and stand in line and get me three cartons of cigarettes (DeFries laughs) and I'd be good for a month then.

DeFries: Wow. (laughs)

Ward: So—

[00:39:12]

DeFries: Who were some of your friends while you were in the military?

Ward: Well, my leading petty officer, Al Van Kerkhove from Rochester, New York, and I still email him every now and then. I was best man for him when we came back in San Diego [California]. His girlfriend Joanie from Rochester flew out and I was the only other Catholic in our division—or squadron, so I was his best man at his wedding.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: So that's been—it's almost sixty years now.

DeFries: Still friends, still in touch.

Ward: Yeah, yeah. A couple years ago, we were on our way to—I think—Newport—no Bennington, Vermont. We stopped up in Rochester and we had lunch with Al and—he couldn't make the reunion because he had fallen off a ladder and screwed up his back, but then Gary Booth from Thayer, Iowa—I was getting together with him for about three years, so I tried to find Thayer Iowa. We went out—we were going out to Sacramento, on a reunion, couldn't find Thayer, Iowa anywhere, so— (both laugh) so, you know, I've never contacted him. Hugh Hadden, from Michigan, we were all good buddies, but you go your separate way.

DeFries: Yeah.

Ward: But—

[00:40:26]

DeFries: Well it sounds like you really enjoyed your time in the navy.

Ward: (speaking at the same time) You remember the good times, you forget the bad times.

DeFries: Do you remember any of the bad times—or what—

Ward: I can—

DeFries: —or share a few memories?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Well, in boot camp, New Year's Eve 1953, colder than oh—really cold. I got my pea coat and my watch cap on. I'm standing guard on an empty dumpster, garbage dump, with a 03 Springfield [M1903 Springfield bolt-action service repeating rifle], with no firing pin and no ammunition and I'm guarding the garbage dumper. Ensign comes out of headquarters; I come to a salute, you know, present arms. He says, "Happy New Year's, sailor," I said, "Same to you, sir." I knew he was going to the officers' club and going to have a nice martini or something, but I was going back to the barracks after I got off. You just, you know— Thanksgiving Day in fifty—must have been '55—yeah, we were off Korea. One of our F9F Cougar jets had a refueling boom on the front, broke loose in hangar bay three and went and punctured another jet and we had jet fuel all over hangar bay three. So we had to move everything out of hangar bay three into hangar bay two and one. We had to hose everything down and we had to scrape it with a real heavy metal—we called them mules, little trackers—and then we put graphite down and we spent all day doing that.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: But, you remember—then I used to pull petty officer fire watch. I'd have the front half of the ship, I stood from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., was walking with a flashlight

and making sure there was no fire and there was another petty officer in the rear. And around five o'clock, 5:30, I'd have to check the bakery to see if they had a fire. That's about the time the bear claws would be coming out of the ovens. I would make sure they weren't burnt, you know. (DeFries laughs) I had a couple good friends who were cooks.

[00:42:33]

In fact, I pulled shore patrol—I didn't tell you this. Come off the line in Korea and I got sent on two weeks temporary duty in the Philippines. The squadron's plane came there and I was helping their electronics people get all their electronics to go back to Korea, you know. So we were living on a houseboat in Sangley Point Naval Air Station, right across the bay from Manila [Luzon, Philippines], for two weeks. (coughs) And right—I'd sit there in the evening and they'd have P-5Ms—which are sea planes—they'd bring them down on a tractor and get them in the water and then they'd detach the wheels and then they'd fly away and when they'd come back, they'd put the wheels back on and then I pulled shore patrol there twice.

DeFries: What do you do for shore patrol? What does that mean?

Ward: Well, I wore my white jumper with my shore patrol SP band, and I had a billy club and a belt and a whistle, and I was paired up with one other guy and we had, like, two blocks right outside the base with bars and stuff. And we just walk around and make sure there's no fights and all that, and we had some fights. And first time I had was with a third-class corpsman and this bar had one step, guy come out, fell, and landed on his back. He's got a bottle and a brown paper bag. This corpsman said, "Oh my God, he's drinking fermented coconut juice," which was real cheap there. "He's going to go blind," he said. "We got to make him throw up." I said, "You're the corpsman, I ain't doing that." (both laugh) So he had him on his knees, putting his—I mean, this is the sort of—we got a call at this bar, it was a fight, a sailor and his girlfriend. We go in the front door, they go out the side door, they were in a taxi, going away. They were all hugging and kissing. (both laugh) Oh yeah.

DeFries: So keeping them out of trouble, basically. (laughs)

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Yeah. So the second time I pulled shore patrol, I was with a cook that I had known from Memphis. I worked with him in Memphis. So him and I were buddies on the shore patrol. So we're about two, 2:30 in the morning, we're off duty. We go back, he said, "Hey, could you use a steak?" I said, "Hell yeah." I hadn't had a steak in months. He said, "You want some eggs with that?" I said, "Yeah." So about three o'clock in the morning, we're sitting there eating steak and eggs. When you know a cook, you eat good.

DeFries: (laughs) So you got extra food sometimes or special—

Ward: Well, that was special there, that was the only time. (both laugh) But, you know, two weeks in the Philippines.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: So—

[00:45:07]

DeFries: What else were the flights like when you're going back and forth on the DEW Line? Were the planes cold, was it—what was the environment—

Ward: No, it's—

DeFries: Oh, okay.

Ward: We had heat.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: We had bunks in the back. We were up so long, some of the scope dopes or any of the pilots or navigators or something, they'd go back and take a nap. And our electrician, Quinn, he was a real card. He was the cook (laughs) and he got to the point where we'd have, like, steak and sweet potatoes. That's what they seemed to push all the time and he finally says to the commissary people, he says, "Give us something else besides sweet potatoes. These guys," he says, "I put marshmallows, I put brown sugar, nobody will eat them." He said, "I just keep throwing them away." So he said to me, he says, "You go talk to the commissary people and see what you can get." So I went up and I said, "Is it possible that we could get cold cuts?" He said, "You're crazy. You're getting steak and you want cold cuts." I said, "We eat steak twice a day for, you know—all the time." I said, "We're sick of steak." And so we finally got cold cuts (DeFries laughs) and then they'd give us cans of soup, just like—they weren't condensed, just poured it in a cup and heat it, you know, and guys would just eat soup and a sandwich.

DeFries: So you were able to cook these meals on the plane?

Ward: Oh yeah.

DeFries: Okay. Did you have a little—

Recording 1 ends; recording 2 begins

DeFries: Okay. So again, this is Megan DeFries interviewing Philip Ward, a veteran of the United States Navy. We had a minor— (both laugh) minor technical malfunction, but we seem to be okay now. So we had left off discussing your time on the airplane and how you were cooking meals.

Ward: Yeah.

[00:00:19]

DeFries: I wanted to also go back, just a little bit, and talk about your training that you had prior to starting to fly the DEW Line at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. How did that training differ from your other trainings in Oklahoma and Tennessee?

Ward: Well, it was very intense. We went to school about six to eight hours a day, five days a week. It was about six or eight weeks and we went every circuit of the APS 20E

Radar or the APS 45 High-Flying Radar. We went through every circuit and how to fix it and all that. So when we come out of there, we knew what we were doing. And that was a picture—there's a picture of our class [hands photo to DeFries].

DeFries: Okay. A bunch of handsome young men. (laughs) One serious and one happy picture I see.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: So you were specifically trained to fix the radars and know how they all—

Ward: Operated and fix it.

[00:01:13]

I might've been the only in-flight transfer of a magnetron, which is a major part of the search radar. We—about a third of the way on our flight headed to Adak, our magnetron quit. So we carried a spare, but no one ever had to change one. But I had to change it and I changed it and we finished off our mission.

DeFries: Wow. Did you have to do this while in-flight?

Ward: Oh yeah.

DeFries: Oh my goodness.

Ward: Just, you know, when we did that, we weren't allowed to wear dog tags or watches. It was a heavy magnet and with the dog tags making electricity—we wore dog tags all the time, you know.

DeFries: Mm-hm.

Ward: Do you what the notches on the dog tag?

DeFries: I believe so. I believe—isn't it to place in the bite of—

Ward: Into your mouth and kick the jaw shut and then they'd identify the body.

DeFries: Right. Yeah.

Ward: So, it was very boring, but it was something we had to do.

DeFries: Was there ever a time you detected anything on your radar?

Ward: We'd get non-scheduled airliners, fishing trawlers. We'd turn our non-scheduled airliners into SAC [Strategic Air Command] and, you know, it wasn't the Russians, so— (both laugh)

DeFries: Okay. So once you were—after flying the DEW Line, that was your final—that was your final duty—

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: —correct, doing that? And then—so when did you find out you were going to be discharged?

[00:02:49]

Ward: I got—we come back at the end of August or beginning of September from trip out to Midway. And our—Henderson, he was our first-class yeoman, feather merchant, like human resources.

DeFries: Mm-hm.

Ward: He said, “Ward, you’re going to be discharged in October.” There was some kind of a budget cut. I was getting out a month early. So I had to go to the reenlistment team, which was two officers and a chief in the squadron and be interviewed and try to talk [me] into reenlisting. So—

DeFries: How did that go? (laughs)

Ward: Well, they started off, they said, “You took the rating exam in August for first class petty officer,” which is E-6, which is next highest at the time. He said, “We got word you’re going to be a first class petty officer November fifteenth.” I said, “Yeah, but I’m getting discharged in October.” (laughs) They said, “Well, what are your plans?” I said, “Well, I hope to go to college.” So then I had to see Captain Scarpino and he said, “Phil, next time you come in, come in as an officer. It’s better as an officer.” (both laugh) So, he was a nice guy. I mean, I flew with him and all that, you know. He liked his beer and his car—he had an old jalopy. A tin bender’s head, his body all fixed up, our parachute riggers had his convertible roof all—everything was taken care of. His car was pristine. (both laugh)

DeFries: So then you said he was your good friend while you were—

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: —because you worked so closely—

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: —together. So when—so you flew from— (Ward coughs) you went from Midway back to Hawaii, were you discharged in Hawaii or where were you discharged at?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) No, no. I was sent to [Naval Station] Treasure Island in San Francisco [California]. That was a navy—I got a picture here I’ll show you.

DeFries: Sure.

Ward: My discharge picture, I’ve been carrying this for sixty-some years. (clears throat) (papers rustling)

DeFries: Wow. So serious in your picture. (laughs)

Ward: Well, they tell you not to smile, so—
DeFries: Wow. Why did you decide to keep the card all these years?

Ward: I've always had it. I just—keepsake, you know. (laughs)

DeFries: Yeah. (laughs)

Ward: I think I earned it, so—

DeFries: Oh definitely.

Ward: So—but I had a—I spent about eight or ten days at Treasure Island. As a second-class petty officer, I didn't have any duties. The first class and the second class, they'd say, "Third class take the working parties and first and second class be back at one o'clock for muster," and we'd go to the library or slop-chute [ed note: military slang for a tavern], you know, drink coffee and just, you know—

DeFries: Yeah, kind of hang out for ten days.

Ward: Yeah. I pulled one duty, I had the chief's quarters. I was the master of arms one evening from like six o'clock until ten o'clock. Just answer the phone if it—and it never rang, so— (coughs) and the chiefs weren't there, they were all in town, so— (coughs) so, but it, you know—

[00:05:52]

DeFries: How did your parents feel when they found out you were being discharged and coming home?

Ward: Well, they didn't—well, they didn't find out until I was on my way home already. I got discharged in San Francisco. My dad's cousin was a doctor down in Los Angeles, [California] so I flew down there and I spent two days there. And then I flew from Los Angeles into Pittsburgh and I told—my brother was going to pick me up. I said, "Paul, bring me a jacket, I don't have a—" I had sent—my sea bag I shipped home, so I had a sweater and that was it. (coughs) And this was in October, it was chilly. So he brought me a jacket and he met me out at Greater Pittsburgh Airport.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: So, we go home and my brother said, "Oh, our football team is playing Ambridge [Pennsylvania] tonight in Ambridge." He said, "You want to go?" and I said, "Oh, yeah." So I went—we went to Ambridge and we stopped at a bar about a block from the stadium. A guy was saying, "Oh, Ambridge is going to kill Clairton tonight so bad." I said, "How much money do you want to put on it?" He said, "Name your poison." I said, "How about twenty bucks?" So we each put a twenty-dollar bill in a cigar box and put it behind the bar. We went down there at halftime, it was thirty-one to seven, Clairton. The bartender handed me the— (both laugh) I made twenty bucks on him.

DeFries: Nice. (laughs)

Ward: So that was my first night back.

DeFries: Now is this your first time home in all your time in the service or had you been home in between?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) No, I got home—I got home for like a week after boot camp and then I had to go back to Bainbridge. Then they flew us from Baltimore [Maryland] to Chicago [Illinois] to Oklahoma City [Oklahoma]. Then I took the train to Memphis and I come home one time from Memphis. I missed three out of four Christmases. So—

[00:07:39]

DeFries: It had been a while.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: I had—the first Christmas was in boot camp, the second Christmas I came home from Memphis—I was in school—the third one I was in Hong Kong Harbor, and the fourth one I was in Midway or Barbers Point, Hawaii. Here's something, (papers rustling) you might find that interesting [hands paper to DeFries].

DeFries: [begins reading paper] “Thanks for that great memory from 1950.” (papers rustling)

Ward: Especially when they came up with the Santa Claus suit. (papers rustling)

DeFries: So it says, [reads paper] “There were nearly a hundred children, they were brought out to us by motor whale boats. They were served cookies and hot cocoa on the mess decks and then taken up the hangar deck where Santa, a first-class machinist, handed out toy gifts. Santa's red costume was made from a set of navy pajamas from sick bay that had been dyed red from gram stain that was used in the lab to diagnose certain unmentionable problems sailors get from time to time—”

Ward: VD [venereal disease]. (both laugh)

DeFries: “—and the white—the white fur trim was cotton also from sick bay. JO2 [Journalist Petty Officer 2nd Class] Paul Lazarro was one of the guys that did the work on the ship's lounge. Someone told me they had been syndicating comic strips there.” So (papers rustling) “The Night Before Christmas”—

Ward: That was a poem they wrote.

DeFries: This is a poem that—

Ward: One of the sailors wrote.

DeFries: Paul Lazarro wrote, okay. This is amazing. So, (papers rustling) were you the Santa Claus?

Ward: No.

DeFries: No, okay. (laughs)

Ward: But I went to—they had Midnight Mass in Hong Kong Harbor, hangar bay one. The bomb elevator was the back of the altar. Henderson, our yeoman, he could play the piano. Anytime, any port we went to, he'd find a bar with a piano, he'd play. He loved to play. And people would say, Hey, play the "Notre Dame Victory March." He'd play it and they'd send him over a drink. Play a song—he never bought a drink and he got loaded every time. (DeFries laughs) He was supposed to play the piano for the priest, but he got drunk and didn't show up. You want to talk about a priest that was really mad? Father Handerman was an Irish priest from Boston [Massachusetts]. Oh, was he ticked. (both laugh)

DeFries: I bet he said a few words that you maybe didn't hear from a priest before. (both laugh) Oh my goodness, this is great. So this is one of your Christmases away, in Hong Kong Harbor.

Ward: Yeah, and then the other one I was in Midway or Barbers Point, Hawaii. I think I was in Barbers Point, Hawaii because we went swimming and they had a big outdoor pool there. And I went swimming and a picture of me was taken of me with my bathing suit and a Hawaiian shirt on by a big fern bush, you know.

DeFries: Mm-hm.

Ward: And I sent it home to my parents, I don't know where it is now.

DeFries: Oh nice. (laughs)

Ward: So three out of four Christmases, I was away from home.

DeFries: So a long time.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: So your first night at home was a good one—

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: —spending it with your brother.

Ward: Yeah, we went down to Ambridge for a football game.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: I'm a big football fan, so—

DeFries: Okay. Were you a Duquesne football fan back then?

Ward: They didn't have football then.

DeFries: They did not have football at that time, okay.

Ward: They didn't even have club football then.

DeFries: Oh no. By then yeah, they had—I forget that—

[00:10:54]

Ward: The big thing then—the big thing at Duquesne was basketball.

DeFries: Mm-hm.

Ward: Willy Somerset, he was in pharmacy school, he was a big basketball star. And there was twin brothers, can't remember their name, [ed. note: Richard and David Ricketts] but I went to the first game in my freshman year and the last game of my senior year. That was the only two because I generally worked. I would go to class from like nine to six [a.m. to p.m.], with four days a week we'd have labs from two to six [p.m.]. I worked in a drug store out in Homestead Park, [Pennsylvania] six until eleven [p.m.] and then I'd—(laughs)

DeFries: Go back to class the next day.

Ward: Yeah.

[00:11:33]

DeFries: You were busy. So you came home—what was your adjustment like [at] home when you returned home?

Ward: Well, I—my parents had a two story house and I had—my brother and I slept in the same room. I had a desk there. I went to—I was home about a week and I went back to work at the mill, US Steel Clairton Works. Got something I'll show you. I never turned it in. I was supposed to, but they said if I didn't turn it in, I'd have to pay fifty cents. (DeFries laughs) This is my tag to get in the mill. I guess I'm a saver, you know. [hands mill tag to DeFries]

DeFries: Yeah, you kept your mill tag all these years. (laughs)

Ward: And then the thought that I've been carrying it so long that the writing on the back is worn off.

DeFries: Wow, that's amazing.

Ward: So I went to work there, it was near the end of October and the mill was cut down. They were only working four days a week. So I worked New Year's Eve, four to twelve [p.m. to a.m.], and they come around and said, Can you double out from the guys that called out? I said, "I'm—my uncle's picking me up. We're going to a party, I can't." I went back for my last day of the four-day week. On January fourth, I got a pink slip. I was laid off. Never worked again there. I went and got a four year leave of absence. They said, Well, what are you studying? I said, "Chemistry." They said, Oh, we can always use chemists. I didn't tell them it was pharmacy. (DeFries laughs) They gave me a four year leave of absence, I never went back.

DeFries: Wow. You had to ask for a leave of absence, just to hold your place in case—

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: —they were able to bring you back?

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: But—

DeFries: So what did you decide to do once you were laid off? (Ward laughs) What was your next step?

[00:13:28]

Ward: I didn't—well, I took—the VA [Veterans Administration Hospital] had counseling service and I think it had to be in April or May—I loafed around for a few months—I went to the VA and they had counseling. It took three days. They had mechanical, (taps on table) they'd put blocks in different sheds and writing, you know, math and science and all that. So Doctor Warner, who was president of Carnegie Tech [ed. note: now Carnegie Mellon University] at the time, he was my counselor. So he said, "We recommend you medicine, dentistry, or pharmacy." I said, "Well, medicine will be about seven or eight years," dentistry was six years, pharmacy was four years. He said, "Well, there's two schools of pharmacy in Western Pennsylvania, Pitt [University of Pittsburgh] and Duquesne." I said, "Well, I applied to Duquesne when I come out of high school, but I couldn't afford it." He said, "Let me call Doctor Adams, he's dean of the school of pharmacy," and we were downtown at the VA building. He come back to me, he says, "Doctor Adams says if you can come up there now, he'd like to talk to you." So he told me how to get to Canevin Hall and I walked from downtown all the way up there and Doctor Adams says, "You know, my class has been filled since March or April, but I always make an exception for a vet." He was a vet himself, W-W-II. He said, "I'm going to put you in my class starting in September." So I started in September.

DeFries: How did you feel being able to get in?

[00:14:56]

Ward: Well, I felt a little old. (laughs) They gave me a beanie and you couldn't use the senior door in the front of Canevin Hall. I didn't wear my beanie and I went (DeFries laughs) and nobody said anything to me. We had an organization at Duquesne called DUVA, Duquesne University Veterans' Association and the Canevin caf [cafeteria] was in the basement of Canevin. I don't know if it's still there or not.

DeFries: Not anymore.

Ward: We had a table in the corner where we'd always have coffee in the morning when we got there and the four-year nurses at the next table, they always mingled together. So

my buddy, George Scripko, he was on Pork Chop Hill in Korea. He had a big red beard. So this one nurse says to me, "Why does George wear that big red beard?" I said, "Well, you can't see it, but he was bayoneted all down the side of his jaw and it's a big blue scar." So—but he didn't have that. So I told George what I told her, and she come up and she got a look and he'd turn away. (both laugh) We just played a joke on her. So we got our check. We got one hundred and ten dollars a month. We had to pay our tuition, books, living, and everything.

DeFries: This is the GI Bill [ed. note: Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944]?

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: It wasn't as good as the W-W-II, but it got me by. So we get the third—the third or fourth Friday of the month, around the twentieth we'd get our check. We'd be out at the Airways Tavern, it was out by Bettis Plant over there [ed. note: West Mifflin Township]. It was Airways Tavern, it's not there anymore. We'd meet there on—and have a few brews. A lot of the four-year nurses would come out there and (DeFries laughs) Tom Bricker [ed. note: sic, Tom Mullaly], he was one of the vets, he had a '47 Plymouth Coupe. (coughs) He went to pick up his girlfriend, she was a nurse, and he got stopped for speeding on—by the Allegheny County Airport and the guy said, "You know, you were doing seventy miles an hour in this car," and he says, "Oh." The guy says, "I'm going to give you a break. I'm going to put you down as fifty-five, speeding just five or ten miles over the—" Tom said, "No, put it at seventy because my buddies wouldn't believe this car could do seventy." (both laugh)

DeFries: That's funny.

Ward: So he ended up—Rege Cordic was on the radio here and—a morning disc jockey—and he had [a] "Mr. Brick Throw" contest every year. Tom Bricker [ed. note: sic, Tom Mullaly] was picked as Mr. Brick Throw and they had a picture of him standing by Old Main with a brick, like, "I'm going to throw it over the hill," (DeFries laughs) but that was—

DeFries: That's neat. So your—the Duquesne University Veterans' Association, DUVA, that—your main meetings were at a tavern in—

Ward: Yeah. Well, we also had a little show in the fall. The, you know—the shows they have? [ed. note: Duquesne Carnival]

DeFries: Yeah.

Ward: Each organization puts on a little show.

DeFries: Yes, yeah.

Ward: We had one of them (laughs) and we used to rehearse—we had a beer party more or less and we had— (both laugh) we were good singers. (both laugh) I forget what we did, but we had a—there used to be a club on [Pennsylvania Route] Fifty-one called the May Club, it was an Italian club, and we had a party there in that back room and

they opened the roof, it opened, and two of the guys dressed up like females and sang. We (laughs) had a ball and then we had females there too, but you know.

DeFries: Right. (laughs) Sounds like you had a lot of fun.

[00:18:09]

Ward: Oh yeah. I did a lot of working when I was—I was working in a drug store and, you know, to make ends meet you—my brother said he used to go to bed, I'd be sitting at my desk my head down on the desk sound asleep, trying to study, you know. You go to school from nine to six and then work until eleven [p.m.], you know, it just—

DeFries: Not a lot of time for—

Ward: No.

DeFries: —other things. So what was the program like? What kind of studies were you doing as a pharmacy student? What—

[00:18:42]

Ward: Well our first semester, we had inorganic chemistry, Doctor Feldman—was a five-credit course with labs and it was a tough course. And Doctor Adams taught pharmaceutical Latin and we had to take freshman English and, I think, some math course—was it algebra? I forget what it was. I had—we had eighteen credits and the next semester we had nineteen credits. I said to Doctor Adams, “We’re not supposed to take over eighteen credits unless it was approved by the dean.” He said, “I approved it.” (both laugh) We had a block schedule.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: I'd go from fourth floor Canevin—that was the first year that Rockwell [Hall] was open [ed. note: 1958]—to the third floor in Rockwell and then back up to the fourth floor Canevin, in ten minutes, you know.

DeFries: Wow. What would happen if you were late for class?

Ward: They didn't say much.

DeFries: Okay. (laughs)

[00:19:40]

Ward: I'll tell you a thing, we were in—1960, I was in pharmacognosy lab on the first floor of Canevin Hall, identifying marijuana under a microscope by putting a diluted acid on it and it would—the carbon dioxide would come up. Bill Mazerowski hit his home run, everybody jumped—we had a little transistor radio—everybody jumped up and ran out and Doctor Neville was standing there, “Pharmacognosy anyone?” (both laugh) but we were gone. So— [ed. note: Pittsburgh Pirates second baseman Bill Mazerowski hit the game winning home run in the ninth inning of game seven on

October 13, 1960 in the World Series against the New York Yankees at Forbes Field in Pittsburgh]

DeFries: That's funny.
[00:20:10]

Ward: There used to be a bar down on Forbes [Avenue], Frank and Wally's. Wally was a woman, an old woman. She was—her and her husband—we'd order, like, French fries and she'd say, "Do you want gravy on that?" I'd say, "Yeah, we'll get it with gravy." We'd say, "Hey Wally, can we have a piece of bread to sop up this gravy?" We'd get French fries and gravy and bread, you know. (DeFries laughs) It was like a quarter, you know.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: You could afford it. Joe Madia had a barber shop right off Forbes, fifty cent haircuts.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: You know, when you're working on a slim budget—

DeFries: Those places came in handy.

Ward: Yeah, my parents—I lived at home, you know, free, so—

DeFries: So you were driving back and forth from Clairton?

Ward: No, I wasn't driving. I didn't have a car then.

DeFries: Oh.

Ward: My buddy, George Scripko had a car.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: I would ride in to school with him and I would take the bus home.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: So I had to do that.

[00:21:05]

DeFries: And you were working at Homewood Pharmacy [Ward note: Darling Pharmacy in Homestead Park], you said, after school?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Yeah, I bought a car near the end of my sophomore year, I bought a '54, no six—'50 Mercury and I pushed it more than I drove it. (DeFries laughs) I would get up and when I'd leave school, I carried a two gallon can of oil. I'd pour oil in it—it didn't use gas, just poured oil, and then I'd get home. If I drove it, say out to work, I put more oil in it. I was just buying two-gallon cans of oil and

finally I got rid of that car. I bought a '54 Ford with a standard transmission and I got it—my only ticket I ever got for going through a stop sign. I was doing my internship at Saint Joe's Hospital on the South Side and I was going back over to Duquesne to go across the Tenth Street Bridge. You come down so far and there was a T and you had to make a right and then a quick left. Police pulled me over. I made the right and the quick left, but they said I didn't stop at the stop sign. It was ten dollars, so I paid it, but I had a standard transmission. There was no way I could come to a complete stop and put it in first gear, but I wasn't going to argue with him. (DeFries laughs)

So I did my internship at Saint Joe's Hospital on the South Side. The two nuns in the pharmacy there, I guess they're both dead now, Sister Constantia, she was the chief pharmacist, and Sister Antonia was the other one. And I got along with all the nuns there and Sister Alabrosia or whatever, she was the administrator. I saw her at the cafeteria one day and I said, "You know, Sister, I'm now a graduate pharmacist. I graduated in June and I took two days of state board and I got two more to take in September. I think I deserve a raise." Got my next pay check, I got a raise. Went from a dollar and a quarter an hour to a dollar thirty-five. (DeFries laughs) Ten cents an hour raise. What are you going to do?

[00:23:07]

DeFries: Right. (laughs) What other—well, I wanted to ask you, you said you felt a little old going back as an older student. So what was it like being—in general—being a veteran student on campus?

Ward: Well, I think Doctor Adams—he called me in after the first semester. I had eighteen credits, I had straight A's. I had an A in a five-credit course, you know. He said, "Phil, why don't you talk to these young kids. They're just goofing off. They're not studying," he said, "Why don't you talk to them?" I said, "Doc, I've talked to them, but they don't care." The young kids—Marylou's cousin—I didn't know it was her cousin at the time—he was in my class. He flunked the first semester. So, but, you know.

DeFries: Different perspectives I guess.

[00:23:55]

Ward: Yeah, and then my sophomore year, Doctor—well Doctor Adams left to go to the Pharmaceuticals Manufacturers' Association. Doctor Ruggiero come in as dean and he came from the University of Connecticut and he was a Phi Delta Chi in Connecticut, so he talked a new chapter out of Pitt and we formed a Phi Delta Chi chapter at Duquesne, Beta Gamma. So we were initiated by the Pitt chapter out at South Park, then we had a banquet that night at the Sherwyn Hotel downtown, which is now part of Point Park College [ed note: now Point Park University] or something. And then—my senior year, I was the president of the fraternity and it wasn't called president—worthy chief counselor. So I got involved with that and—

DeFries: What kind of things did the fraternity do?

Ward: We'd have mixers with the four-year nurses or something. Oh, some of the pharmacy sorority—the guys accused the girls of bringing green hot dogs, buying old ones in

their—we'd bring the beer and they'd bring the hot dogs and they said they brought old.

DeFries: Brought old hot dogs? (both laugh) Were there any other campus activities you were involved in as a student?

[00:25:16]

Ward: Not really because I was busy working and I mean—DUVA and the Phi Delta Chi and, oh, I took care of—it wasn't with the college, but the polio vaccine, which had just come out, the oral polio vaccine, and I was—worked at clinics in Clairton. And we had little colored kids coming up there for their second and third sugar cubes. (laughs) We had to shut them off, you know. They were getting their polio, but they wanted more sugar, so—

DeFries: So you would give sugar after the vaccine to kind of—

Ward: We put the vaccine—a droplet on a sugar cube.

DeFries: Oh, okay. On the sugar cube.

Ward: But these kids kept wanting more sugar. So we wouldn't give it to them, but, you know, that's what I was involved with, so—

[00:26:09]

DeFries: How did you feel about your time at Duquesne?

Ward: I liked it. I thought I got a very good education. I felt I was really qualified to work as a pharmacist and yeah—I don't think the kids today coming out—they didn't have to do some of the stuff we had to make. We had to make our own suppositories, powder papers, oil and water emulsions. One of the products we had to make for the state board—the September part, the physical—was Hall's ammoniacal silver nitrate solution. It was for oral—they would put it on—the silver would deposit on the teeth, you know. Nobody flunked it. We made the—everybody had to make a bottle of that. They put it on the train to go to Harrisburg [Pennsylvania] to be analyzed and they put it next to a radiator and all the silver precipitated out of that. (both laugh) But I mean—we had to make carmine red capsules. It's a red powder and you mix it with sucrose or, you know, basic sugar, but if your hands are just a little moist, the capsules came out brilliant red, which meant you failed.

DeFries: Oh wow.

Ward: So you know, it just—

DeFries: Had a lot more mixing going on and—

Ward: Oh yeah, we did a lot more mixing I think, so—

DeFries: Yeah.

[00:27:30]

Ward: I had a girl at school with me, Mary Jo Vajentic from Burgettstown [Pennsylvania]. (coughs) She had her own pharmacy. She finally sold it out to CVS or somebody. She worked next to me, her name was Vajentic, Ward, you know—V, W. So I don't know where she come up with it, we had elixir phenobarbital, which is elixir PB. She'd say, "Phil, we need elixir of lead." I said, "What are you talking about?" She said, "Elixir PB." I said, "Mary Jo, that's phenobarbital. You can't give people oral lead." (both laugh)

DeFries: Oh my gosh. So you really had to know your stuff. (laughs)

Ward: Yeah, and we had—we had a bacteriology—micro bacteriology course at a building down on Forbes. I don't know if it was the Mendelsohn building [ed. note: sic, Gregor Mendel Hall] or—it was a four-story building. We had to work with frogs and all that. So this girl—Mary Jane, I forget what her last name was, she's working next to me and I had the frog open and I had to cut the stomach to take the contents out. So I just took my finger and she went running to the restroom, throwing up. (both laugh) I used to cut all the girls' stomachs for them, (both laugh) so—they didn't want to do that. It was good, you know.

[00:28:48]

DeFries: Did you see a lot of—did you see any changes or a lot of changes going on, on campus at that time? I know Duquesne was doing some redevelopment of the Bluff and putting up new buildings or taking over some of the older homes. Did you see any of that?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Well, one of my buddies was in St. Thomas Aquinas Hall, I think it was. It was a slum. There was like six guys living with one bathroom and little rooms, you know. I always said if St. Thomas Aquinas could see the hall that was named after him, he'd roll over in his grave. (DeFries laughs) They were slums. Now, they got dorms.

DeFries: Mm-hm.

Ward: But there was just a bunch of slums.

DeFries: There was still houses on the Bluff at the time—

Ward: Oh yeah.

DeFries: —correct? Yeah, still a neighborhood.

Ward: And then there was the Dugout Restaurant halfway down. You know where the gym is? [ed. note: Father Hehir's Gym, now Rangos School of Health Sciences]

DeFries: Yes.

Ward: Right across from the gym, but you went down steps, it was called the Dugout. First day I got there, I had coffee there. And then Albert's Restaurant [ed. note: sic,

Albert's Grill] was where Canevin Hall [ed. note: sic, Mellon Hall] is, going up on the right, the next corner was a restaurant, Albert's. And right on the street, right behind, like, Canevin Hall, there was a convent and then the next street was Harold's Market, a grocery store.

DeFries: It's quite a bit different than today.

[00:30:03]

Ward: Yeah. Well, I've only been on campus, oh, probably three times in the last fifteen, twenty years. First of all, I don't walk as much anymore with my knees. And we go to the Veterans Breakfast on Veterans Day, catch the bus over here at hotel on Fort Couch Road. [ed. note: Crowne Plaza Pittsburgh South]

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: It's been so many different names, I've—but Todd [DePastino] from the Veterans Breakfast Club, they have a chartered bus and we ride in and get off.

[00:30:36]

But if I—well, I'll tell you what, for a while, I worked for the VA downtown in the federal building as a pharmacist and I was taking a course, a night course, on toxicology at Duquesne. So I'd get off work like at four [p.m.]. I'd go to the blood bank and give a pint of blood, grab a quick bite to eat, and then go to class, and I did that for a whole semester.

DeFries: Wow.

[00:31:07]

Ward: So—and I was already married.

DeFries: You were married in 1964. You said you had graduated in '62?

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: And where did—did you meet your wife at Duquesne or did you meet her—

Ward: No, no.

DeFries: —elsewhere?

Ward: She—I met her at South Side Hospital, after I left my internship at Saint Joe's. Chuck Roscoe was the chief pharmacist at South Side, I knew him. He asked me to go to work with him, so I did. So Marylou was a nurse there, she graduated from Mercy [Ward note: Mercy Hospital School of Nursing] and she had to come down to the pharmacy to sign for her patient's Percodan and I asked her for a date and then fifty-two years later, we're— (both laugh)

DeFries: Congratulations. (laughs)

Ward: We have four kids, two boys, two girls. Ten grandkids, five boys, five girls.
DeFries: Wow.

Ward: It's called family planning. (DeFries laughs) My youngest daughter-in-law, Molly, that's my youngest son Greg's wife, she was pregnant, and the girl said, "Molly's going to have a boy." It'll be five boys and four girls. We'll be outnumbered. So what did Molly do? She had twins, a boy and a girl. She accommodated them.

DeFries: Wow. (both laugh) Wow, twins, that's a handful. (laughs)

Ward: Yeah. They're nine now, so—

DeFries: Yeah, well, that sounds like you have a very nice, large family, so—

Ward: Mm-hm.

[00:32:29]

DeFries: So after graduation, you had told me before that you had worked for forty years, following—

Ward: Yeah, '62 I graduated, until I retired officially in '97, but then I did per diem. They were short of pharmacists, so I worked—I'd work three or four shifts a month. And I specified I wanted to work three to eleven [p.m.] because I could sleep in and then on my way home, I could stop at my Jugó-Slav Club, have a drink, you know.

DeFries: Okay. (laughs)

Ward: So I said, "John, I don't have a mortgage and I don't have a car payment, but I'll help you out." So—

DeFries: Well, that's good.

Ward: So—

DeFries: It worked out. (laughs)

[00:33:06]

Ward: Finally in '02, I think it was, we were driving to Sacramento, California for my ship's reunion and I get a phone call on our cell phone. Marylou was driving—it was John, my boss there. He said, "Where are you?" and I said, "I'm just going into Wyoming." He said, "JCAHO [Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations] is coming and we have some papers that human resources wants you to sign." I said, "John, I'm on my way to Sacramento. When I get back, I'll see you." I went back and I said, "John, you might as well give me my license because I'm not going to work anymore." I decided not to work. So—

DeFries: After your ship's reunion?

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: How many ship's reunions have you been to?

Ward: I started in '97 and I just missed the last two because last one was in Omaha, Nebraska and I've been there. I didn't care for that town that much. And the one year before that was in Pensacola [Florida] and I've been to Pensacola too, so— (laughs) We were in San Diego, El Paso, [Texas] Niagara Falls, [New York] Bennington, Vermont. That was our best reunion.

DeFries: Really?

Ward: Bennington, Vermont was a town that was named after—the ship was named after the Revolutionary War [battle] in Bennington, Vermont.

DeFries: Oh, wow.

Ward: And that's where Grandma Moses has a—and we went there too, but my buddy Bill Tometsko, he just died last September, September fourteenth. We went to boot camp together and he just died in September, [the] fourteenth. We had adjoining rooms at the motel up there. So, we went to Walmart to get a case of beer and, you know, I'm seventy-five or so, I don't know. Woman says, "I have to see your ID," and I said, "Are you carding me?" She said, "We are nondiscriminatory, we have to card everybody." (DeFries laughs) So Bill and I had to—and Bill's got white hair and that. So we got our beer, but then in the middle of August they have what they call Battle Day Parade, about the Revolutionary War, and it's a big parade. So a bunch of our guys, about seventy-five or eighty, bought white navy uniforms and Dixie Cup hats and marched in the parade. And I was having knee problems, so they had a Mercedes-Benz with a sunroof, and I sat in the front seat with the flag up—

DeFries: Very nice.

Ward: —in front of them. And there was the governor of Vermont, the American Legion Honor Guard, the American Legion Band, and then us. And we stopped and they read a proclamation—the governor got out and read a proclamation for the USS *Bennington* and all that. So we're going down and we're going to get near the end of the parade, we made a left turn to go into the fire hall. The honor guard and the band had lined up on the side of the streets, as we all marched by, they played "Anchors Away." Then we went back to the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] and had a ball. (laughs)

DeFries: That sounds really special.

Ward: Oh, we had some really good reunions. Our reunions are getting smaller every year. Our guys are all dying out. The last reunion I went to was in Gatlinburg, Tennessee and it was a nice one, but it was getting smaller. We used to have 200, 250, 275 guys show up. Now, we only had about eighty.

DeFries: Oh wow.

Ward: Well—

DeFries: Yeah.
[00:36:22]

Ward: I mean the ship, in 1970, they towed the *Bennington* to India and cut it up and made scrap. So the ship still lives in our heart.

DeFries: You still feel an attachment—

Ward: That was our home for eight—my home for a year and a half, so—

DeFries: Do you still feel that comradery with your shipmates—

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Oh yeah.

DeFries: —all these years later?

Ward: And I'll tell you what, up at our legion, I feel comradery with even the marines and army guys and navy guys. We're all service guys, so—

DeFries: Just kind of a—

[00:36:54]

Ward: You know, I think that come out of the—one of the things that come out of the Korean War that I like—freedom is not free. You got to pay a price. And I—all gave some, but some gave all. So that's two of my creeds that I live by. So—

DeFries: Holds a lot of meaning for you.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Yeah.

Ward: I'm not a philosopher or anything like that, but—

DeFries: Well, but that's true, I mean, it's about a sacrifice.

Ward: I've been to Arlington cemetery [Arlington National Cemetery] a number of times. Every time I hear "Taps," I get tears in my eyes. I'll tell you, do you get on the computer very much?

DeFries: Oh yes, yeah.

[00:37:39]

Ward: I'll tell you one, I've been on—I've gone to this so many times and Marylou says every time I go, I need a box of Kleenex. The Oak Ridge Boys—type in Oak Ridge Boys, "GI Joe and Lil," "GI Joe and Lil" [sic, "GI Joe and Lillie"]. They're Oak Ridge Boys and listen to that. It's only about five minutes. But we went a couple years ago, the Oak Ridge Boys were out at the Meadows [Racetrack & Casino] and

as soon as they announced it, I bought tickets. We were sitting in the second row, but they didn't play my song, the "GI Joe and Lil." (DeFries laughs) Marylou said, "Well, it's too sad." That's why she said, "You're going to need a whole ton of Kleenex," because I get choked up when I—

DeFries: I'll listen to it, I'll look it up.

Ward: Yeah, it's really good, so—

[00:38:35]

DeFries: How many veterans' organizations do you belong to or are you involved with?

Ward: I'm a life member of Korean War Veterans. I'm a life member of the VFW in McMurray. I'm a member of the American Legion.

DeFries: And who are you in the honor guard with? Which of those—

Ward: That was the Korean War Veterans, but we're defunct now.

DeFries: Oh.

Ward: Our guys are all—we can't get enough guys to do a—well this was me, this is our memorial. [hands photograph to DeFries] This is the president of Korea, South Korea, (papers rustling) but—

DeFries: How many years ago was this?

Ward: 2009.

DeFries: Oh, okay.

Ward: And here's—here's what our honor guard looked like with these South Korean officers in the middle there, but we'd get anywhere from twelve to fourteen guys to do military funerals.

DeFries: Wow. How many—and you said how many military funerals have you done?

Ward: I never counted, but probably a thousand. We were doing two and three a day for fifteen years or so. In the winter time, we froze our butts off.

DeFries: And so you'd play "Taps" and present the flag and do those things?

Ward: (speaking at the same time) No, no.

DeFries: No?

Ward: Well I don't play "Taps."

DeFries: Not you personally, (Ward laughs) but your group would play "Taps"?

Ward: Yeah, we would—they'd have a minister and then they'd turn it over and our commander would do a eulogy and then we'd go into our ceremony. And we would fire three volleys, play "Taps," "Echo," then did the fold the flag, and present it. First time I folded the flag was in a funeral home, D'Alessandro's over on Butler Street. We were short-handed, they said, You're going to have to do the folding today. Well I watched it, but I never did it. Did a perfect job, it came out. But, you know, it's—a lot of people don't realize what all's—you know, the significance of a military funeral is—of course, I'm a military person, so I appreciate it.

DeFries: The attention to detail that goes into it and—

Ward: (speaking at the same time) Yeah, yeah. When we'd fold the flag, we'd have three cartridge—empty cartridge shells taped together. We'd put that in the flag when it's been folded and that goes—

DeFries: What's the significance of them—

Ward: The last three volleys shot from their—

DeFries: Okay. What does it mean for you to be able to do that, to share—

Ward: It was an honor. I felt it was an honor to help my veterans.

DeFries: And you did World War II, you said, Korean War veterans, and some Vietnam?

Ward: Yeah, Vietnam, yeah. We did one—I'm forgetting that—we did so many cemeteries that we've gone as far north as Zelienople [Pennsylvania] and as far south as Greene County and, I mean, we did a lot of traveling. And it's just—our commander, he lives in Vincentian Homes up on Babcock Boulevard. He was a marine corps captain and I just—week from Friday, we had our Korean War Veterans Christmas party at Salvatore's [Events & Catering] and Burt and I sat together and his wife Jan. He was a really nice guy, but he'd book all the funerals and he was a typical marine. We call them jarheads.

DeFries: Yeah. (Ward laughs) Tough—was he tough?

Ward: He wanted things—well, we all wanted them to be perfect, you know. But—and we did three parades a year. Memorial Day we'd do Sewickley [Pennsylvania], which is a real good parade. Fourth of July, we'd do Brentwood [Pennsylvania], that's a long one and then Veterans Day downtown.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: But our guys are getting—we only get about three or four marchers now. Maybe two or about three cars.

[00:42:22]

Last Veterans Day, I didn't—I haven't gone to the last two because I've gone to Duquesne. I'd rather go to Duquesne than—you know.

DeFries: Yeah, it's a nice experience.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Breakfast is really nice.

Ward: They do a good job there at that.

DeFries: Mm-hm. That was my first time attending this year and I really enjoyed it.

Ward: Well, the year before was the young guy that wrote the article about the [*The Duquesne*] Duke and took my picture. He—that was the first time I was at the—well, I've been to the main ballroom before. In fact, I'm trying to think—I gave a donation—I forget when it was—I think it was only—I don't know if it was a thousand dollars or something. I paid it over a year and we got invited to a dinner with the president, I think it was Father McAnerny or—

DeFries: McAnulty?

Ward: McAnulty. He had a dinner down there in the ballroom. It wasn't real big, but I said, "Why are you wasting money? We gave you the money to use, don't spend it on—" I mean, it was a nice dinner, but they spent our money on it, so— (laughs)

DeFries: Now Father Mac became president while—your—probably your sophomore year of—at Duquesne. I think 1959 he became—

[00:43:37]

Ward: Have you ever heard of Father Nesti?

DeFries: Yes. I've interviewed Father Nesti, yes.

Ward: Do you know—do you know what? Something you wouldn't know about him, him and I were high school classmates.

DeFries: Really?

Ward: We ran together in high school.

DeFries: Oh my gosh.

Ward: Don went to Penn[sylvania] State [University], he was in the Blue Band up at Penn State [Penn State University Marching Blue Band]. His mother and sister had a sewing shop in Clairton.

DeFries: Oh my gosh. I didn't make that connection.

Ward: The last I heard of him, he was in seminary in Texas, running a seminary in Texas.

DeFries: He's at the University of St. Thomas, yes.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Yeah. Wow. That's amazing. (both laugh) So were you in the same year in high school or—same year group, like, were you in the same class or were you in different—was he older?

Ward: No, we were in the same class.

DeFries: Same class.

Ward: We both graduated in '53.

DeFries: Oh my goodness.

[00:44:23]

Ward: Tom Monito, Bob Miscik, me, and him.

DeFries: So you were friends?

Ward: Yeah. (DeFries laughs) Tom Monito—this is off the subject—his sister worked in Pittsburgh and she had an Oldsmobile 88 I think it was, two-toned green, and she drove into town and she put it in her garage behind their store; they had a store. Tom used to sneak the car out and we'd go riding. One time I had a toothache, so I couldn't go, and he was out on [Pennsylvania Route] Fifty-one out there near Sweeney's [Steakhouse] or—rolled the car into the ditch and wrecked. You want to talk about trouble. (both laugh) He used to drive the car, and everybody would pitch in a little bit of money and buy some more gas and so she'd never know.

DeFries: Oh my goodness. (both laugh)

Ward: Don Nesti, John Shramko, Bob Miscik, Tom Monito, and me.

DeFries: Wow.

Ward: So—

DeFries: Small world. (laughs)

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Well, that's really interesting.

Ward: We had a—this must've been our fiftieth reunion, that was quite a while back, Don was the emcee and he said, "The person who hasn't changed in the least is Phil Ward." So, (laughs) so—

DeFries: That's really—that's really neat that you still have those connections. (laughs)

[00:45:47]

Ward: He was president of Duquesne, my oldest son—Sean was looking for colleges and we went down there on a Sunday and Sean didn't care for the school. And he also got a lot of information from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia [Pennsylvania]. We took a ride out there, he wouldn't even get out of the car. He says, "I'm not going there," and he ended up going to Meadville [Pennsylvania], Allegheny College and my younger son went there too. They both loved the school and it's small. They both had jobs before they graduated. They're both bankers, so—Sean is—he's the older one—he's getting married again in May. He's a venture capitalist. He's got more money than Carter got little pills and Gregory worked for Associated Bank out of Milwaukee [Wisconsin] and he's in the Cleveland [Ohio] area. He goes over to New York and Pennsylvania—Pittsburgh—commercial real estate lending, so—he does dormitories, and, like, he did a bunch of Rite Aids—financed, you know.

DeFries: Wow, doing well.

Ward: So they're doing good—Allegheny College, but Sean didn't care for Duquesne, so—

DeFries: So none of your children have attended Duquesne then?

Ward: No, my oldest daughter went to Kent State [University] because she wanted to do nursing.

DeFries: Okay.

Ward: Then she went to—she was working at Mercy [Hospital] in cardiac. She went to—what's the women's college in Oakland?

DeFries: Oh—

Ward: Carlow [University].

DeFries: Yes.

Ward: Carlow. She got her master's in nursing in there and she went to Chicago and took the exam for a nurse practitioner, so she's a nurse practitioner now. And Sean got his master's—bachelor's from Allegheny, his master's from John Carroll [University]. And Megan got her bachelor's from Geneva—Geneva College, she manages an insurance office in Shaler [Pennsylvania]. And Gregory graduated from Allegheny with his—he had a double bachelor's in economics and English or something and he got his master's—MBA [Master's in Business Administration] from Case Western [University]. So—

DeFries: All very accomplished.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: But some of them followed you into the—well, and your wife—into the medical arena. (laughs)

Ward: (speaking at the same time) They used to—we would be having supper and Marylou and I would be talking, and they'd said, Why do you have to talk about medicine while we're having dinner? You know, (DeFries laughs) so—

[00:48:07]

DeFries: So, what about all your time in service, what stands out to you? What's been the lasting impact?

Ward: My service?

DeFries: Yes.

Ward: I enjoyed my time on the [USS] *Bennington*, a year and a half at sea. I really liked it. I mean, there were bad times, but you forget the bad times, you remember the good times. You know, when we entered port or leaving port, we'd man the rails. We'd be, like, in our whites and be all lined all around the flight deck. We left Mayport, Florida, had to go around Cape Horn, the navy band was on the pier and they're casting lines loose and the last line went, and they started playing, "Sailing, Sailing." Then the motor started up, we started going down the channel, they played, "California, Here We Come." (laughs) The things you remember, you know.

DeFries: Mm-hm.

Ward: Valparaiso, Chile, we were there for three days. One day took—I only had two days liberty, but one day we took the train up the mountain to Santiago [Chile] and I had a real nice time in Santiago and—you know.

[00:49:14]

Now my grandson, Kevin, last year—a year ago, he went from July to December. He did a semester in Santiago, Chile, and I had 1,200 pesos, I guess it was, left over from—so I gave it to him. He brought me back—he gave me a 2,000 peso note. He said, "I'm paying interest."

DeFries: Wow. (laughs)

Ward: But I don't know if the money was any good after all them years. But—

DeFries: How fun. That's nice that you're able to share that.

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: Both [of you] have been there. (laughs)

Ward: For Christmas, Marylou—we were at the liquor store—and she bought a bottle of Chilean wine for him. He lived with a family in Chile, you know. It was a good experience for him and for his birthday, he flew to Easter Island. Spent a couple days in Easter Island, so—

DeFries: Sounds like a lot of fun.

Ward: Yeah. So he got a good education. He's a senior. He'll graduate not this December, next December from Loyola [University] in international business and he speaks Spanish too. In fact, he was (coughs)—he taught, when he was going to high school—Walsh Jesuit in Hudson, Ohio—they were sending him into Akron [Ohio] to work with the Spanish families to help teach English, you know. So he was doing that, so he's very fluent in Spanish and he's a good businessman too, so—

DeFries: Sounds like he's gotten a great education.

Ward: He loves Chicago too.

DeFries: Really, (laughs) wow. So is there anything else today that we haven't talked about that you'd like to share or would like to talk about?

[00:50:56]

Ward: Well, I got my plot for my burial. National Cemetery of the Alleghenies. Did you see on TV they were getting it ready for Christmas?

DeFries: I didn't see that, no.

Ward: They're putting a wreath on all the graves.

DeFries: That's nice that they do that.

Ward: I had two graves out at Queen of Heaven [Cemetery]. I had bought a package about fifteen, twenty years ago. Two graves, two vaults, two opening and closing. I paid about 5,000 dollars for that. That was a while back. Friend of mine works out there, he told me that package is worth 9,500. So when they opened the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies, a friend of mine, who's the manager of the Laughlin Funeral Home over in Mount Lebanon [Pennsylvania], I said, "If you can sell me my two graves, I'll give a good price." Nothing happened for about three or four months. Mike called me, he says, "Phil, I got a woman and her husband just dropped dead. She's interested in your package." He said, "How much you want to charge?" and I said, "Well, they told me it's worth 9,500," I said, "Make it 6,000." So she took it. So— (coughs) Big deal, but I mean—but, you know, I appreciate the education. I appreciate—I got a good education in the navy, too.

[00:52:14]

So I learned—you know, a couple years ago—they have bus tours to [Washington] DC for vets, W-W-II, Korea—so Tom and Auggie, two of my buddies, we went—it was in May. We met at Green Tree [Pennsylvania] at the shopping mall there. The bus left from there. So I got up at four in the morning and I left at five and I went over to Mount Lebanon and picked them up and we caught the bus at six. Stopped at Breezewood [Pennsylvania] and had a boxed lunch in the parking lot. Went to the W-W-II Memorial, the Korean Memorial, the Semper Fi [Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel], the Iwo Jima [US Marine Corps War Memorial], then we went to Arlington cemetery [Arlington National Cemetery] for a ceremony. We had two seniors from, I think, Ambridge High School or Beaver Falls [Pennsylvania], junior marines in full

dress blue uniforms. Good kids, really good kids, and they would—they come around on the bus, serve cookies and banana nut bread (coughs) and then anywhere we'd go, they'd push the wheel chairs or help everybody. Courteous guys, really good. [I was] Talking to the one kid and he said, "Sir, what did you get out of your military [service]?" I said, "Discipline and responsibility." He said, "Sir, that's what I want." He said, "I want to become a marine officer." These kids—we went to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and it's curved with the sidewalk coming around—I don't know if you've ever been there.

DeFries: Not to—I've been to DC and to some (Ward coughs) of the memorials, but I haven't been to that one.

Ward: This one is very solemn. The guy, sergeant-at-arms says, "We appreciate quiet. This is a solemn ceremony," and we're watching the changing of the guard. We're leaving and he told us on the bus, stay together coming up the walk, so, we're coming up the walk and it must have been some Catholic high school—all the boys had white shirts and ties and the girls had dresses—and they were lined up on the sidewalk and they're applauding us and thanking us. Makes you feel, good. So—

DeFries: Thank you Phil. Thank you for sharing—

Ward: Yeah.

DeFries: —your memories today and thank you for service.

Ward: Okay. You're welcome.

DeFries: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Ward: Well, I can show you some of these pictures. They might—

DeFries: Sure, yeah, we can do that when we're finished. But I do want to thank you for your service and thank you for your time today. I appreciate it.

Ward: (speaking at the same time) This one—this picture— (papers rustling)

end of interview