

Orlan Scott Oral History Interview

MARK CUNNINGHAM: This is Mark Cunningham. Today is March 14, 2014. I am interviewing Mr. Orlan D. Scott. This interview is taking place at the Hilton Hotel, Clear Lake City, Texas. The interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center at the National Museum of the Pacific War for the Preservation of the Historical Information Related to World War II. First off, right off the bat, Mr. Scott, I want to say thank you for your service to your country. And I want to say, on behalf of the museum, thank you for your willingness to do this interview. Right off the bat, when were you born?

ORLAN SCOTT: I was born on March 15, 1927, in Brownsville, Texas.

MC: And tell me a little about your parents. Who were they?

OS: My parents was John E. Scott. My mother was [Delmay?] (inaudible). And my dad was a postmaster in Brownville, Texas. And at age five, we moved to Arkansas. He decided he wanted to be a farmer. This was in 1932, and times, you know, was still after the depression, was still pretty rough. So it didn't work out too good. And [he had older boys?]. He thought he could make a living. Well, he could make a living. Still got to have money to pay the payments

on the place, and taxes. Well, I went all my school years was did in Arkansas. And at age 17 is when I joined the Navy, in 1944.

MC: OK. Where did you do your boot camp?

OS: San Diego, California.

MC: Let me back up a minute. Did I say you hear that you had other siblings?

OS: I had four brothers. Myself, all of us boys was in the service.

MC: Same time.

OS: At the same time.

MC: So everybody served in World War II.

OS: Yes. Three of them in the Navy, and two in the Army.

MC: Wow, wow. Don't hear of that often.

OS: No.

MC: I've had one other family like that here.

OS: Two brothers that served in the Army.

MC: All survived the war?

OS: No, I lost one brother.

MC: Where?

OS: In Germany, at the start of the war. They was in the service when the war started. And my oldest brother was a training sergeant, a tech sergeant. And he trained troops. And his assignment was so critical, they wouldn't let him

go overseas. When I went in the service in 1944 and was sent overseas, all of us (inaudible) Navy guys was all overseas. He couldn't stand this. And they said, "The only way that we will release you to go overseas is a buck private." He requested his rank to be reduced from staff sergeant to private, and went overseas. The last six days of the war, he was out on patrol, and he was leading a patrol. And all the people in the patrol was killed. They thought they killed him. He had two machine gun bullets through his hips, broke his back.

MC: Now this was a younger brother?

OS: This was my oldest brother.

MC: The oldest brother.

OS: Yep. And they sent another patrol out. But the interesting thing about him, he never would talk about exactly what happened, until one day, he was drinking. He told one of my other brothers. The reason he went over, I was the youngest boy, and he was big brother. Always looks after the younger ones. And I felt bad about it myself, that he would do it on my behalf. But he was critically injured. And he said that he respected the German soldiers, that they was professional soldiers. And he said that after they had shot all his platoon up, he could see them smoking up in his headroom. And he had [part?] of the

machine gun (inaudible), but he wormed around there and set it up. And he said that was some Germans that he knew he killed. And the first time he woke up, they got him back in the back lines. They was under heavy artillery. So one of the officers said, "Pull that man in the foxhole." He was on a stretcher. He said, "No. He ought to trample me to death. Just leave me here." And he spent over a year in the hospital, and sleeping on his stomach all this time. I lost him several years ago. And I would [fly?] up to Beaumont at least twice a week. And [his daughter called?]. He was more critical. He passed away in the rain. I had to drive down, and he died within five minutes, or 10 minutes after I got to the hospital. Just like I told my sisters, it's like he was waiting for me to get there. But this was, he'd (inaudible). In World War II, people, they sold goods. [They couldn't wait?]. I went in the service the first time at 16. My parents caught me before they shipped me to San Diego. And my dad says, "If you go home, I'll sign for you when you're 17."

MC: What were you doing? You were in high school when the war broke out.

OS: That's correct.

MC: So you finished high school.

OS: No, I lacked three credits finishing.

MC: Pardon?

OS: I lacked three credits finishing. When the war was over, most of the people was getting [discharged?] in 1945, early '46. I was transferred off of the Battleship *Texas* at Okinawa, about 300 of us. We had not been in the service too long. We was single. And so they discharged on the point system. If you was married, you got so many points. If you had children, you got the extra points. If you had been in combat, at least two major engagements, you got so many points. And all the combat I had was Okinawa. The only points I had, I was single. So they took us short-timers out, let these people go home first. And I drew a ship that went to China, and I was in the liberation of China. And some of the other guys went to Japan for the occupation of Japan.

MC: OK now, when did you join the *Texas*?

OS: I joined the *Texas*, well, as I recall, it was late March, 1945. Just before the invasion of Okinawa.

MC: OK. Now back up a minute. Where did you take boot camp?

OS: In San Diego, California.

MC: OK. And then you went in, and went in '45, again?

OS: I went in the first time in 1944.

MC: 1944.

OS: Yes.

MC: OK, and then were you trained after boot camp? Did you take any special training?

OS: Yes. I was trained for the amphibious force, additional training with the marine. And there was quiet a few of us out of boot, went to additional training. They sent us to Shoemaker, California.

MC: OK, when you say amphibious training, what does that mean?

OS: Amphibious training is where you get on the [squall?] boats.

MC: You're taking the Marines in?

OS: You take the Marines in, or the Army. In our case, it was Marines. We had taken, I don't know how many thousands. We went to Shoemaker, California. It's only about an hour and a half's drive out of San Francisco. And they woke us up at two o'clock one morning. And they says, "You guys are going overseas as casualty fleet replacements." We was coming out of the amphibious force now. So they put us in the main fleet. But I never forget, to this day. You guys are going overseas as casualty fleet replacements. I found out later the reason we went aboard. They was expecting extreme, heavy losses at Okinawa. That was the reason. There was more people on the *Texas* than the 1800 that they were talking about. I was on there with 1960. That was the figure.

MC: You joined it right before Okinawa.

OS: I got on the ship, what, as I recall. It had come back to (inaudible) Islands after the invasion of Iwo. Take on ammunition and this, this, and that. And it was late '45. The transport to Okinawa, we had a destroyer escort. And they shot down the first Japanese plane one day before we boarded Texas. And that was a pretty safe harbor that they was in. And I actually went aboard at sea. We went aboard on a landing boat, and we climbed the ropes like we did at training. It was about a 10-foot wide (inaudible)...

MC: Onto the *Texas*.

OS: Onto the *Texas*.

MC: What was your first impression of the ship?

OS: I had seen the ship, numerous battleships, aircraft carriers. And there was a tremendous amount of ships in there, cruisers and whatnot. And I had made the remark, and it's unreal. We did not know what our assignment was going to be. And I told this young kid, we was up there. I said, "See that ole Battleship *Texas* up there?" And I said, "Since I'm from Texas, I sure hope I draw the Battleship *Texas*." I did. And he says, "Since I'm from New Mexico, I hope I draw the New Mexico." They called five minutes after we made that remark. They called our name. We had our name on the back of our shirt and

whatnot, on dungarees type thing. I don't know whether there was a high-ranking officer behind that had the authority to do this, or [whether we?] was assigned (inaudible). We don't know. But we could not tell what ship we was on. They censored our mail going in. They censored mail coming out. I could not tell where we was at, or where we was going, or where we had been. They were very secret in World War II, and the news (inaudible). They had to be cleared by the company they was assigned to or whatnot. And the reason for that, say the mail ship gets sunk, and you got this letter to be delivered here and there, (inaudible) USS *Texas* and all of that. And they sink it, and you get information. Her address was P.O. Box so and so, San Francisco, California. That's where our address was. And then the mail would come to us bulk and by ship or by aircraft. Usually by ship, because the aircraft was so tied up. But like I say, I couldn't believe that I drew the *Texas* as assignment. And that, to this day, is a pleasure. It was just a honor me to have been able to serve the ship named after the state that I was from.

MC: Alright, now tell me, when you got onboard. Three hundred guys went on board.

OS: I don't know how... No, no. [They was split among us?].
I don't know how many of us went aboard. The landing boat holds a lot of people. And it was full. I don't know how many of us went aboard at that time.

MC: Now, what was the accommodations like for you at that time?

OS: It was crowded.

MC: Did you have a place to sleep?

OS: Barely. I slept in the hallway with the bunk that the [combat?] had folded up. (inaudible)

MC: I've heard that a lot the last few days.

OS: Well, then you're hearing me right. And so that. You can tell, in the temporary. And when the minute you can go to battle station, I think it was six bunks high. They was folded up immediately. And it was no jacking around. It doesn't take less than a minute to fold up all six bunks.

MC: OK now, what was your initial assignment on the ship?

OS: My initial assignment, as far as duty station, they rotated us around a little bit. Actually, we was circles, you might say. There was plenty of people on. And I was in the boiler room three. It had six boilers on there. There was two boilers in each room. That was where I worked most of the time. In the boiler room, I drew what we called smoke watch occasionally. And that was way up high in the bridge, where we could look down that stack of the ship.

And that stack was split up this way, this way, and this way. And numbered one, two, three, four, five, six boilers. If that chip was smoking, I had to call. I had a headset on, and I called down in the fire room. And I could [tidy?] with all the fire rooms, plus other departments for a long time, on the intercom or telephone [conversation?]. And I would have to call down there if the ship was smoking, or it was black, or white, and which boiler it was coming from. So they could adjust it to stop the smoke. We wanted no smoke. And the reason for this is, I was explained the first time duty I did it. A guy come to me and he says, "Scott, you've got smoke watches going." And we had so much stuff put on us on boot camp, you know. [Put on his?] (inaudible) collar. I went on about the regular duty station, and an officer called me. And it was, maybe he had come... We met somewhere, in his office we met. And he said, "How come you [didn't do?] smoke watch this morning?" I told him, I said, "I thought that the guy was [pulling my leg?]." I didn't see no written orders, no [wording?]. And I says, "I thought he was pulling my leg." He explained to me exactly what it was for. Right there (inaudible) what the hell I was supposed to do. I guess the other guy would have told me. But just like they figured I knew what I was doing. He

didn't take no action. He knew I was sincere. And everything was, you didn't jack around with people.

MC: You were on the bridge, did I hear you say?

OS: I was way up high, above (inaudible). High up there. And then I could look down at the boiler. Look down the stack. And that's—

MC: When you went into action on Okinawa, is that where you were?

OS: Whatever your duty assignment was, that's where you stayed. If you was not on a specific duty, then you went to a certain battle station.

MC: OK. What was your normal battle station?

OS: It was at turret three.

MC: And what were you doing?

OS: I was putting the powder bags in the [excavator?] that took it up to the turret. And it is way down in the hole. Those powder bags weighed over a hundred to 110 pounds. And it would depend on how far we were shooting, whether it was shooting at bunkers or whether shooting at ships.

MC: But when you're up on that smoke watch duty, did you have a view of Okinawa? Could you see what was going on?

OS: Yes (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

MC: OK, so you saw some of the action of what was on—

OS: I seen a lot of action.

MC: OK, so you're an eyewitness to—

OS: I actually could look down on the planes that was coming in to kill us all, where I was. They were coming below the main deck. Have you ever been on board the *Texas*?

MC: A long time.

OS: OK, you know where the main deck is?

MC: Yeah.

OS: It comes [even?] lower than that. It come right on the water. And a lot of the planes was suicide planes. And the way I explained it [when I make?] talks, you know the fire that they had when they had the first Desert Storm battle, and they set all these oil fields afire? That's the way it looked, except the smoke was not that severe. But the New Mexico. I was telling you about my friend. It took three suicide planes one morning, between 7 o'clock. The last one hit about 9:30. And it was, first was burning when the second one hit. The third one, it was still burning. It was a lot of casualties. But it did not faze that ship. It hit the turret. That turret is very thick. And I've often wondered whether my friend survived or not. Because we never corresponded. There's no way he corresponded. And the Randolph, the aircraft carrier got hit, and it burned for 24 hours, still in combat.

MC: Randolph?

OS: Aircraft carrier, one of the large ones. Yeah. And that is... But I sank a destroyer. I didn't actually see it get hit, but it took the whole bow off of this destroyer. And we had a place in Okinawa as we were taking the beach over where, that area where the ship was taken completely out of action. It was kind of like a bone yard, and we put them in that area. And they was 343 ships hit by suicide planes. One of them (inaudible). One of the destroyers took five suicide planes one day. And three 500-pound bombs, and still didn't sink it. And the Captain Baker was our captain.

MC: I've heard his name a lot this morning.

OS: He is really a top (inaudible). He was hard on us. And when he went off the ship, he went off before I did. We was in the Philippine islands when the Japanese Army surrendered. And he says when he was transferred off, and he was transferred off before the war was actually over. But they had offered to surrender. And he got on there and he says, "I really appreciate everything you guys did." He says, "You know I was hard on you." He said, "You can remember when we was in the Battle of Okinawa." We was at battle station for 50-something days. It wasn't all night but some nights. And we [pay?] rations. But (inaudible).

But 50-something days. But I can sleep on a steel deck,
and all these guys you talk to. You sleep on a steel deck.

MC: How did you work? Did you work in four on, four off, say?

OS: Eight-hour shifts. On regular detail [when we was in
port?], we had eight-hour shifts.

MC: And then, when battle stations were called, you're...?

OS: You know, if we had an overage of people down there in the
boiler room, and this was the term prior, to where you
would go to battle station. I mean, you would be released
and this, this, and that. Otherwise, you stayed where you
was at, as far as manning the ship. They'd man that ship
in shifts of eight hours, and they had shift commanders.
All the shift commanders was officers. Several officers.
The engineering officer in charge of his people, and, you
know, there were divisions, all the way to the high-ranking
officers. And there was all did as a unit. But we had
service people that was not on duty. And I'm talking about
as far as running the ship. But at all times, the people
was running the ship. That's where you would remain, if
the shift was underway. The shift's got to do that. And
one of the guys I was talking to said, "You remember
Captain Baker (inaudible) the ship." We knew that plane
was going to hit us. And according to a lot of the guys...
I was topside that day, but the plane really come in

close. And, well, as I recall, one of our guns shot the wing off at the fuselage, and it [rode?], and it made one hell of a splash. The guys below said they could feel the concussion from it. And as Captain Baker said, everyone that was topside that day knew that plane was coming direct for him personally. That's kind of what he said. But everybody on that ship respected Captain Baker. And I was fortunately... I got out of service in '46. I finished high school, and I went back in the regular Navy. I was going to make a career out of it. And that's when... After I finished high school, I started learning (inaudible) foreign education [laws?]. And I got a good training in the Navy, and they had sent me to advanced diesel schools.

MC: OK, now let's back up a minute, because we're still on Okinawa. OK. Finish Okinawa. What else do you want to say about Okinawa?

OS: Okinawa, the battles on there, and this is coming from Captain Baker. This was when the war was almost over. He said, "You know," says, "First 30 days of the invasion of Okinawa, we shot down an average of a hundred planes a day for 30 days." Our best day, was, I recall, was 396 that we shot down in one day. There was 1446 war ships in the invasion of Okinawa.

MC: OK, that wasn't just the *Texas* itself, was it?

OS: No, that was the whole, that was... Either 12 or 15 battleships there. For every battleship, there was at least two to three cruisers. All battleships had a minimum of three to five destroyer escorts on each side of him, one ahead. We only had three. The newer aircraft carriers, whatnot, they had five escorts. And the rumor was, I don't know [whether?] it was true or not. The ones that flanked us on the sides, there was quite a ways. They was to take a torpedo before the battleships.

MC: But no kamikazes got close to you guys, did they?

OS: Oh hell yes.

MC: I mean, they didn't hit you though, right?

OS: No. No, the only thing that we was hit by was flack from other ships shooting at the planes. We couldn't go topside without-

MC: Now, you took some fire from strafing, right?

OS: Well, we took some fire, but they didn't hit us. One day, and I was talking to one guy. I said, "You remember when we was taking on ammunition, and had ammunition all over the deck." We was taking on ammunition for this ammunition ship. And this Jap come in strafing, and put two bombs in between the ships. He was going to get both of them. And they broke the lines. They didn't have to cut the lines

loose. There was big three-inch rope lines. And they cut the lines. And the [other ship?] went this way, the *Texas* went this way, and the two bombs went off in between. Didn't hit neither one of us. We was really concerned of all that ammunition on topside. And when this guy come in strafing and whatnot, we never took a hit. And the *Texas* got the nickname one time "The Lucky Lady." Of course, it had also got the nickname, "The Mighty T." But you know, one of the things that I remember, and it made me feel so good, those ships going in to land to [take?] troops... In fact, a guy I went to high school with was on the LSTs that was taking troops in. He was in the [signal?] corps. He signaled on the *Texas*. Through his parents' communication back and forth, he knew I was aboard the *Texas*, and asked if he knew Orland Scott. And the guy, he says, "No, I don't know him personally," he said. "But when I get the time, I'll locate him." And I don't know whether it was that day or the next day, but everybody was busy. But those ships, LSTs, whatnot, they would get close to us. They would see the *Texas*. And guess what they was hollering? "Come on Texas. Come on Texas." And so I made a talk to a bunch of military people this year a while back, retired military in all branches of the service. I'd tell them about that, that these guys would holler, "Come

on, Texas." And I said, "I'd like to hear it just one more time." So they did. And I said, "I didn't hear you." And I got, I got blasted out. But this, you know, there was a lot of concern, as I will say it. But we was trained to do a job. It did not interfere with us functioning as we was trained to do. People asked me, "Were you scared?" I said, "Sure, I was scared." But what helped me the most was a guy from Dallas. And this particular day, I was on brig guard, on assignment.

MC: You was on what?

OS: Guarding the brig. We had two guys in the brig. From why, I don't know, but it had to be serious for to put them in the brig in combat. And anytime you was in combat and was there anybody in the brig, you had to open the door. And I was on brig guard. (inaudible) first one aboard. And this guy named named Ross, I could never forget him. He's from Dallas, and he says, "Scott, are you scared?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Don't be ashamed of it. I went through this for a year and a half." He was over in the Atlantic and the Pacific both. And that helped me more than anything. I mean, you don't know... You know, you're concerned. But I always felt safe on the Battleship *Texas*. It had armament on that thing. It could take a direct

torpedo hit on the side. [It wouldn't have been sunked?].

Do you know why? They had what they called blisters.

MC: Yeah, I've been hearing about the blisters.

OS: Dangit, there's 96 of them. And they is what this much of water. They've got the [outer spill?], the shell, and then you've got the [thick?]. I think it's like six inches thick on the inner (inaudible). But outer one, a torpedo would explode. It would probably kill a few people. But I don't think it would penetrate it. About the only way you can penetrate a battleship is in the [down speck?] or in the screws.

MC: Does the ship still have these blisters?

OS: It still has those blisters.

MC: Can you see them from the topside?

OS: Yes, you can see them [head on?] bulge out there. But there's water in them. And yeah, [there's a little bit of?] changes on them.

MC: OK now, the war ended while you were at Okinawa, right?

OS: No, we was in the Philippines in (inaudible, location), August of 1945. And where we was at, at August 14, in some locations, it would have been the fifteenth, on account of the... But anyhow, we was watching a movie up topside. And so they stopped the movie, and the captain gets on the P.A. system. And he says that the Japanese has offered to

surrender. We will not fire unless fired upon. In other words, if any planes are coming, we would have shot them down. And the Philippines had been taken [so quiet?]. And the only people still fighting was the Army and Marines up in mountains. Is somebody knocking?

MC: No, that's mine.

OS: But anyhow, and he says, "Tonight, the ship is yours." We had aircraft carriers, cruisers, battleships, and...

MC: And [laity?]?

OS: And laity. And anyhow, he said, "Tonight the ship is yours." You talk about celebration. We shot flares in the air. We sent out big searchlights in there, and ships blowing their horns. I'm talking about all these ships. And I don't know, but I would say safely, there was 1000 to close to 2000 ships in that harbor.

MC: OK, so when the war ended...

OS: When the war ended, we came back to the states. After the Japanese offered to surrender, Captain Baker was transferred off to come back to the states. And Captain [Silisky?], I believe was his name, come aboard, and we received orders to go back to Okinawa for the peace treaty to be signed, which was signed September 2 of '45. And we was in Okinawa, and to the best of my memory, I think we was at battle station. Because I know they mentioned the

fact the Japanese pulled so many tricks, they was going to be prepared for it. There was a lot of ships, you know, off the coast of Japan, as well as the Missouri that went in for when the peace treaty was signed. And we served with the Missouri. It was in Task Force 58, Okinawa, same as we was. But our celebration was [lit?] on August 14. You talk about celebrating the war. That's when the war was over for us, but the peace treaty was not signed until September 2, 1945.

MC: Now you guys, when you went back to Okinawa, you picked up troops and took them home, didn't you?

OS: OK, let me back up a little bit. When we went back to Okinawa, this is where I said people was getting discharged with the point system. Us short-timers that had not been in two battles or overseas a year and a half, we was transferred off to temporary tents on Okinawa for reassignment. Some of them drew duty and went to Japan for the occupation of Japan. The ship that I drew, there was five of us off the *Texas* that drew a tanker, the USS *Wabash* at (inaudible). A small tanker. And we was the mother ship for the mine sweeps and refueled them. The wooden ones had to refuel every couple of days. And we had five wood ones, and I believe there was about seven or eight of the metal, the big ones. The wooden ones, they'd get the

shallow mines, and the steel ones would get the deep mines. And the steel ones didn't have to refuel but about every two weeks. But the wooden ones are small, and they had to refuel pretty... The first week of the mine sweeping, we lost two of the wooden ones. The mine, when they blew it up, it was too close to the ship. So they found out we had to get a little more distance. We didn't get a lot of people seriously injured, but it did sink a ship. And that went on. We swept the mines out. We first swept Hong Kong Harbor out. And then we went from there to what is French Indo-China, which is now Vietnam. We swept them out, and all the way up to the coast off of Shanghai. And after things got pretty much through, we'd rotate to another ship. We'd been in Shanghai maybe for a while, and they'd come to Hong Kong. Hong Kong was good duty, which they was controlled by the British. And it was really...

MC: When did you get back to the states?

OS: I got back to the states in May of 1946.

MC: And then when did you get out of the Navy?

OS: I got out in 1946, and I went in the reserves. I was in what was called V6, (inaudible) six months, but that didn't work out very long. And I was only 19 when I got discharged. I finished high school, and as soon as I finished high school, I went back in the service in 1947.

MC: And how long did you stay in that time?

OS: About five and a half years, a little over five years.

MC: And what were you doing there?

OS: I was a diesel engineer. I served actually, it was a chief engineer on one ship, and I was in charge of all the engineering. I was also trained on the boats. And I would (inaudible). A.P.A. was on during the Korean War. I think we had 32 landing boats. I was the engineering guy in charge of all the boats. And I had to engineer on each boat. Some of the boats were three-man crews. Some were five-man crews. A five-man crew had two machine guns on the front of it, on the (inaudible).

MC: Was your duty all stateside?

OS: No. I was overseas three times.

MC: That was the peacetime Navy though, right?

OS: Up until Korea. When we went overseas, Korea was back in the wartime [footage?]. In fact, I was to receive a discharge. I want to say something like it was July of 1950. Seven of us had went to the hospital for a physical to get out. And so we was to receive our discharge that day, and they said, "You're going to have to wait until one o'clock. You guys go on to [chow?]." And we done heard Truman was going to freeze all service people, because that thing was picking up over in Korea. (inaudible). And so

they froze all of us. And so I thought, "Well, I don't know how long that will go on, so I [went on?] and re-enlisted for another six years.

MC: How many years did you do in the Navy?

OS: Actually, it was pretty close to seven years. So I got a discharge during the Korean War.

MC: Well, you've had quite a military career, haven't you?

OS: It's been busy.

MC: What did you do after you got out?

OS: Well, in the diesel business, when I come back to the states from Guam... I was out there 23 months in peacetime. That's when I was chief engineer on that ship. I come back to the states, and I had the opportunity to go to advanced diesel training.

MC: This is the civilian, or still in --

OS: No, it was still in the military. And so I had taken, and I went to this diesel school. And you had to be a nonconventional officer to get in it. And if you passed all the tests, I would have got a commission as a Lieutenant Junior (inaudible). But the Korean deal, it started. After you finished that school, if you'd get the officers, it was a quite complicated deal. It took anywhere from six months to a year. So I was in Korea, and

I got hurt over there. So I got a medical discharge out in 1951.

MC: How did you get hurt?

OS: I had a piece of metal, went through 90%, through my left eye. After I was flown back to the states, I was in Balboa Naval Hospital. And the second surgeon was able to get the metal out. I lost all vision for a long time.

MC: You have vision now?

OS: Oh, yeah. (inaudible)

MC: So you did recover?

OS: Yes, yes, absolutely. That was way after I was out.

MC: Well, is there anything else you want to tell me, [either?] that we haven't covered?

OS: No, but I want to tell you this, that I'm just as proud of the old *Texas* as I was when I went aboard it. And I'd like to see it maintained, and people support it. And as long as I'm alive, I'm going to support it. I do support the *Texas* financially. I also support the Nimitz Museum financially. So I'm fortunate that I'm able to do that. This is where I learned my trade, was in the Navy. And before I got out, I received instructors' rating on every engine made by General Motors for the service. These small boats, they called them, me and the guys was talking about that the other day. We called them [Gray Marine?]. We'd

have so much [argues?] about a gray marine and General Motors. It was General Motors, the guy that put them in the boats and perfected the reduction gears name was Gray. We called them Gray Marine. But anyhow, that was the Detroit division, become the Detroit division. And they made about eight different models. And I went to school on every model. And this was (inaudible). But the Cleveland division of General Motors is what the tanker had on it. It was four B-16s for the main power. And I went to school on that engine, all different makes and models, from the [six?] on up to the B-16. And then the electric motor division, I went to school on that engine. And there's not too many different models. And the Navy used it on submarines. They used it on LSTs. Some of them had two, some had four. Submarines had four. And all the submarines back then used either the Cleveland division of General Motors engine, which had four B-16s, (inaudible). It was number two that they used. Had nothing to do with (inaudible). But I was a specialist when I was in the Navy. When I got out, I didn't know how to properly get a job. I worked for a short time right here in Houston for Missouri Pacific bus lines, and I was a bit of a troubleshooter for them. And they had problems, and they had to have a guy ready to rebuild the engines. And they

just put me where they wanted me. And that was a real good company, and they was half union and half (inaudible). Union (inaudible). One day, I looked in the paper and General Motors was looking for a service rep to go to work for them in Albuquerque. And they hired me over the telephone. I was with them about 10, 11 years. And that's where I learned the trade. And I served five years as a service manager after I left the factory. In 1967, I went in business for myself specializing in General Motors and Detroit engines. And the first few years, we [lived?] actually with another company. We'd take and work on Air Force missile science, and Navy missile science. And when I went in business myself, I was the only independent guy I knew of in any state that specialized in those engines. We had a service plane, and we had a pilot. We had a service plane. And we had, I think total, my wife quit teaching school. She started up in August. Might have had 12 people working for us. A small company. I trained every person that worked for me. They was (inaudible) mechanic, but I trained them. And one guy in particular, he was a black guy, he was the cleanup man. He come to me and he said, "I sure would like to learn this business." And I says, "Well, if you're sharp enough, I can make a master journeyman out of you in four years." I did. And the

first time I seen him out on a job, [I remember?] the contractor called me and he says, "I don't know about this black guy." And he said, "[Will he do?] as good a job as Mr. Bill?" Well, Mr. Bill was my shop foreman and my service man. Everybody worked in our company, including the sales. I did a lot of special (inaudible). But it was on business. And I sent him out there. So the guy was [escorted?]. I told him, "He'll do you as good a job as Mr. Bill, and quicker." And he charged for the hour. And being a black man, it was a little bit, you know, [old black guy?]. But the guy was good. But I had personally trained him. My shop foreman was supposed to. He knew it, but he couldn't teach it. There's a lot of difference between trying to teach people. A lot of people, you take like yourself. (inaudible) handed back to you. He'd teach with hands on. You'd let them do the work, and you tell them how to do it. And that's the way I learned, and that's the way... But I feel real fortunate. I retired in 1958. The main reason, my wife's health was failing. Back up, 1985, I retired (inaudible). At that time, I was financially able to retire. And since then, (inaudible) during that time, I still do volunteer work. I flew for the air patrol up until two years ago, and I figured, 85. [Time?] to hang it up. But I've had several careers. Flew

for the service department for 17 years as a reserve officer. They wanted me to work full time [when I first retired?]. I said, "Uh-uh." I wasn't going to be on a committee. I says, "My wife's health." And we had 12 good years before she passed away. I lost her 14 years ago. But the (inaudible) I've the military what I did. If I had to do it all over, I'd do it again. The only thing that's different, I would have went to finish college before I went back in. Because you make more money if you get a higher rank.

MC: Well, I think we covered your military career pretty good.

OS. OK.

MC: OK. And once again, I want to thank you for your service.

OS: Well, my pleasure.

MC: I appreciate you talking to us.

END OF AUDIO FILE