

Oral History of

**Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr.  
U.S. Navy (Retired)**



**Interviewed By  
Paul Stillwell**

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## Foreword to Admiral Crowe's Oral History

By Admiral James L. Holloway III

It is with both sadness and pleasure that I write these remarks to introduce this remarkable oral history to those interested in the life and times of Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. The sadness stems from the fact that Admiral Crowe passed away before Paul Stillwell was able to fully capture the recollections of the last decade of his career and his post-Navy life. The pleasure is that I was a friend of Bill's and as you will read on the following pages, Bill had a remarkable life and this oral history serves as a celebration of that life.

With perishable e-mails and other digital media quickly replacing hand-written letters and diaries, oral histories are becoming ever more valuable resources for biographers. Since 1996, with the help of generous donations and dedicated staff and volunteers, the Naval Historical Foundation has captured over 200 recollections of Navy combat veterans and career personnel. These oral histories, along with those sponsored by the U.S. Naval Institute and many other Navy-related organizations, are providing insights for contemporary historians who are writing important works to advance our understanding of naval history. Admiral Crowe's oral history, combined with his excellent memoir, *In the Line of Fire*, will help future scholars who delve into the complex history of the Cold War Navy.

I am particularly grateful to Mr. Frank Gren and Admiral Chuck Larson, without whose perseverance and financial support this important oral history might never have been accomplished; and to Paul Stillwell who once again brought his superb interviewing talents, honed over years of such interviews, to produce this informative dialog with Bill Crowe.

## Preface

In the more than 60 years since the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was created during World War II, only five U.S. Navy officers have held it. The late Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., was one of the five. In 2006 Vice Admiral Robert Dunn, president of the Naval Historical Foundation, learned that Admiral Crowe had not done an oral history on his life and naval career, so he commissioned the one that appears in this volume. Admiral Crowe had previously worked with a coauthor in producing the memoir *The Line of Fire: From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military*, published in 1993 by Simon & Schuster. After a brief overview of the early parts of Crowe's life and service, the bulk of the book was devoted to his years as a flag officer.

My interviews with Admiral Crowe began in 2006; I very much enjoyed the process. Our goal was to fill in recollections that had not been included in his book. I found the admiral to be invariably gracious and friendly. He was a skilled raconteur who had a wonderful sense of humor. Thus it was a delight to converse with him and draw out his memories. I was struck by the candor with which he described his life, including the fact that he had coped with and shaken off a case of depression during his active service. He was candid as well in telling of others, including, for instance, his assessment of Admiral Arleigh Burke, who served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1955 to 1961.

In our conversations, Admiral Crowe talked about his parents and the many other influences that had shaped him. His mother taught him the lifelong pride she felt in being an Oklahoman. His father, who had served in the battleship *Pennsylvania* during World War I, became a lawyer. He instilled in his son the importance of organizing his thoughts and presenting them orally and in writing; he particularly stressed the value of being a debater. The Navy veteran also fully supported his son's desire to attend the Naval Academy.

Midshipman Crowe entered the academy during World War II and further polished his debating skills while in Annapolis. Among the other members of the class of 1947 were future flag officers Stansfield Turner and James Stockdale and future President Jimmy Carter. The relationship between Crowe and Stockdale was a particularly close one. After graduation and a brief tour in a surface ship, Crowe became a diesel submariner and in time held billets of increasing responsibility. In the 1960s he earned a doctorate in political science from Princeton University. It was a watershed experience, because it put him on a path in which his diplomatic ability and knowledge of politics were used again and again. He had an appreciation for the variety of points of view on a given subject and had the ability to disagree without being disagreeable. As he put it, a mind is like a parachute. It has to be opened to have its best effect.

Crowe had hoped to get into the nuclear power program headed by Admiral Hyman Rickover, but the timing was not right. Instead, he served in two further diesel submarine billets and later a tour of duty in the Pentagon. His work on planning the repatriation of the crew of the intelligence ship *Pueblo* brought him to the attention of the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Thomas Moorer, and later Crowe was part of negotiations on the status of territories in Micronesia. In between, because diesel

submarine careers were leading to dead ends, he sought and received an operational billet in Vietnam as the U.S. participation in the war there was winding down.

In 1970 Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., became Chief of Naval Operations and encouraged the selection of flag officers whose career patterns were out of the mainstream. Captain Crowe was selected for flag rank in 1973 and moved through a series of jobs that called for his training and ability in the area where politics and the military intersect. When he completed his service as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1989, Admiral Crowe was the last member of his Naval Academy class on active duty. In the process he established a close personal relationship with Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, who was the last Defense Minister of the Soviet Union. It was symbolic of the passing of an era, for Crowe's service as a commissioned officer coincided almost precisely with the duration of the Cold War between the two superpowers.

Sadly, even though Admiral Crowe and I did 16 interviews together, we did not cover his years as a flag officer in systematic detail. Even so, he made a number of references to events during his time as an admiral. We had planned further interviews, but the admiral's health deteriorated substantially in the spring of 2007, and he died in October of that year. Fortunately, he had already written extensively about his experience as an admiral in his published memoir. That book and this oral history thus complement each other.

One benefit of the timing was that the interviews began when the admiral's son, Colonel W. Blake Crowe, was in command of a Marine Corps regiment in Iraq. We also talked of the celebration in connection with Blake's homecoming.

In the interviews Admiral Crowe discussed the Iraq War on two different levels, that of a person with a wide knowledge of geopolitics and that of a concerned parent. Another concurrent activity was that the admiral was then teaching a course to Naval Academy midshipmen. It was a two-way benefit. His students learned from someone with vast experience in their profession, and he kept up to date on the culture of an institution in which he had been a midshipman 60 years earlier.

I am grateful to John Maloney, who did the excellent initial transcription of the interview tapes. Admiral Crowe did not submit any editing to the transcripts prior to his passing. I did some editing on his behalf in the interests of accuracy, clarity, and smoothness. I also added footnotes to provide additional background information for the benefit of readers. In a few cases I made corrections to the text on things that the admiral would probably have caught during his reading and in a few cases put corrections in footnotes. In checking the admiral's recollections against other sources, I found his memory to be remarkably accurate in nearly all cases. Once the editing process was complete, the admiral's son, by now a brigadier general, reviewed the transcript on behalf of the family. He provided useful inputs and supplied additional information in response to my questions. I much appreciate his help. The one element that Blake particularly emphasized was how greatly the admiral was devoted to his wife and children.

With the completion of this project, the Naval Historical Foundation expresses its gratitude to Frank Gren for the financial support that made this oral history possible. Admiral Charles Larson, who served as Commander in Chief Pacific a few years after Admiral Crowe held that billet, facilitated the link between Mr. Gren and the Foundation.

**Paul Stillwell  
January 2009**

ADMIRAL WILLIAM JAMES CROWE, JR.  
UNITED STATES NAVY (RETIRED)

William James Crowe, Jr., was born in LaGrange, Kentucky, on 2 January 1925, the son of William James and Eula (Russell) Crowe. He attended the University of Oklahoma at Norman from September 1942 to June 1943, prior to entering the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from the state of Oklahoma in 1943. Graduated on 5 June 1946 with the class of 1947 (accelerated due to World War II), he was commissioned ensign on that date.

Following graduation, he had air indoctrination training at the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, until July 1946, then joined the destroyer minesweeper *Carmick* (DMS-33). He was detached from that ship in October 1946 for instruction at the Mine Warfare School, Yorktown, Virginia. In February 1947 he was hospitalized for an injury to his left hand incurred during minesweeping training operations at Yorktown. He rejoined the *Carmick* in May 1947 and while on board participated in a seven-month cruise to the Far East.

Crowe attended the Submarine School, New London, Connecticut, from June to December 1948, after which he had duty afloat in the submarine *Flying Fish* (SS-229), in which he qualified in submarines on 31 March 1950. In July 1951 he joined the staff of Commander Submarine Force U.S. Atlantic Fleet as flag lieutenant and aide. In November 1952 he reported aboard the submarine *Clamagore* (SS-343), which completed a four-month European cruise in 1953. On 1 July 1954 he qualified for command of submarines. Detached from the *Clamagore* in July 1954, he became Assistant Officer in Charge of the Naval Administrative Unit at the Potomac River Naval Command, headquartered at the Naval Gun Factory, Washington, D.C. In that assignment he also served as Assistant to the Naval Aide to the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

From September 1955 to September 1956 he was a postgraduate student in personnel administration and training at Stanford University, from which he received the degree of master of arts. He next served as executive officer of the submarine *Wahoo* (SS-565) and in September 1958 was assigned as a branch head in the Personnel Research Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel. In March 1959 he was transferred to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, where he had duty as personal aide to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy) and assistant to the Administrative Assistant to the DCNO (Plans and Policy).

During July and August 1960 he attended the course for prospective commanding officers at the Submarine School, New London, after which he commanded the submarine *Trout* (SS-566). In July 1962 he entered Princeton University, from which he received the degrees of master of arts in politics in 1964 and doctor of philosophy in politics in 1965. In June of that year he joined the staff of Commander Submarine Squadron Three and in July 1966 became Commander Submarine Division 31.

He returned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in June 1967, and there he headed the East Asia and Pacific Branch, Politico Military Policy Division. Assigned in October 1970 to U.S. Naval Forces Vietnam and the Military Assistance Command Vietnam, he served as senior advisor for Task Force 211 and Commander Task Force 210. In that capacity, he had additional duty from 6 April to 10 August 1971 as senior advisor to the Deputy Commander, Tran Hung Dao, at Binh Thuy, Republic of Vietnam. In August 1971 he became Director of the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

In 1973-74 he served as Deputy Director of the Strategic Plans and Policy Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. From December 1974 through June 1976, in his first assignment as a flag officer, he worked in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) as Director, East Asia and Pacific Region. From June 1976 to August 1977 he served as Commander Middle East Force, based in Bahrain. Upon returning to Washington, he was promoted to vice admiral and became Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans, Policy, and Operations), OP-06. In that billet he was also Senior Navy Member, U.S. Delegation, United Nations Military Staff Committee.

Admiral Crowe served in three four-star billets: from 1980 to 1983 as Commander in Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe/Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe; from 1983 to 1985 as Commander in Chief Pacific Command; and from 1985 to 1989 as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He retired from active duty on 1 October 1989.

Following his retirement from active naval service, Admiral Crowe embarked on a number of pursuits in civilian life, including serving as a counselor for the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and teaching at the University of Oklahoma, George Washington University, and the Naval Academy. He wrote a memoir, published in 1993, titled *The Line of Fire From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military*. He served on corporate boards and was a director of the Council on Foreign Relations. In 1993 President Bill Clinton appointed Crowe as Chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, and from 1994 to 1997 the admiral served as U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, that is, to Great Britain. In 1998-99 he chaired the State Department Review Boards that were appointed after the August 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Admiral Crowe died on 18 October 2007.

Family Personal Data:

Wife: Shirley Mary Grinnell, married 14 February 1954  
Children: William Blake Crowe, 20 December 1957  
James Blake Crowe, 9 July 1959  
Mary Russell "Bambi" Crowe Coval, born 5 December 1960

Dates of Rank:

23 June 1943	Midshipman
5 June 1946	Ensign
5 June 1949	Lieutenant (Junior Grade)
1 June 1952	Lieutenant
1 January 1958	Lieutenant Commander
1 July 1962	Commander
1 July 1967	Captain
1 June 1974	Rear Admiral
23 August 1977	Vice Admiral
30 May 1980	Admiral

Chronological Record of Service:

Jun 1946-Oct 1948	USS <i>Carmick</i> (DMS-33)
Oct 1946-May 1946	Naval Mine Warfare School, Yorktown, Virginia
May 1947-Jun 1948	USS <i>Carmick</i> (DMS-33)
Jun 1948-Dec 1948	Submarine School, New London, Connecticut
Dec 1948-Aug 1951	USS <i>Flying Fish</i> (SS-229)
Aug 1951-Nov 1952	Staff, Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet
Nov 1952-Jul 1954	USS <i>Clamagore</i> (SS-343)
Jul 1954-Sep 1955	Assistant to the Naval Aide to the President of the United States

Sep 1955-Sep 1956 NROTC Unit, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, student

Sep 1956-Aug 1958 USS *Wahoo* (SS-565), executive officer

Aug 1958-Mar 1959 Bureau of Naval Personnel

Mar 1959-Jun 1960 Personal Aide to the Deputy CNO (Plans and Policy)

Jun 1960-Jul 1962 USS *Trout* (SS-566), commanding officer

Jul 1962-Jun 1965 NROTC Unit, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, student

Jun 1965-Jul 1966 Staff, Commander Submarine Squadron Three

Jul 1966-Jun 1967 Commander Submarine Division 31

Jun 1967-Oct 1970 Office of the CNO, Head, East Asia and Pacific Branch, Politico-Military Policy Division, OP-612

Oct 1970-Aug 1971 U.S. Naval Forces Vietnam and Naval Advisory Group, Military Assistance Command Vietnam (Senior Advisor, Amphibious Task Force 211 and Commander Task Force 210); additional duty, April-August 1971 as Senior Advisor to Deputy Commander, Binh Thuy, Republic of Vietnam

Aug 1971-Sep 1973 Department of the Interior, Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations

Sep 1973-Dec 1974 Office of the CNO, Deputy Director, Strategic Plans, Policy, and Nuclear Systems Division, OP-60B

Dec 1974-Jun 1976 Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), Director, East Asia and Pacific Region

Jun 1976-Aug 1977 Commander Middle East Force

Aug 1977-Apr 1980 Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans, Policy and Operations), OP-06, and Senior Navy Member, U.S. Delegation, United Nations Military Staff Committee

May 1980-Jun 1983 Commander in Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe/Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe

Jun 1983-Oct 1985 Commander in Chief Pacific Command

Oct 1985-Sep 1989 Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff



Principal U.S. Medals and Awards:

Defense Distinguished Service Medal (with 3 oak leaf clusters)

Navy Distinguished Service Medal (with 2 gold stars)

Army Distinguished Service Medal

Air Force Distinguished Service Medal

Coast Guard Distinguished Service Medal

Legion of Merit (with 2 oak leaf clusters)

Bronze Star (with combat "V")

Air Medal

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Paul Stillwell: It's great to see you again, Admiral, and a pleasure to get started on this project. As I've read about you, the name of the state Oklahoma comes up time and time again, but you actually originated in Kentucky. So could we start there, please?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I do have some Kentucky memories, not a great deal. My parents left there when I was five years old to return to Oklahoma.\* My father's family had migrated from the East Coast to Oklahoma about the turn of the century, and in the early 1900s his father settled in Oklahoma City. My father went to high school there in Oklahoma City and then to Oklahoma University Law School. He graduated in 1916, I think, or 1915, and was practicing law in a small town in Oklahoma named Henryetta for one or two years. Got married in that period. And then very shortly went to war, World War I.

Paul Stillwell: What led him into the Navy?

Admiral Crowe: I really don't know what led him into the Navy, but he enlisted, and I assume that he just may have thought his talents were best suited there. He enlisted in Oklahoma and went to boot camp in Great Lakes.† Oh, some 50 years later I went up and toured that little Great Lakes barracks—it was still there—that he was in. It wasn't being used, but it had not been destroyed. He was in boot camp during the great influenza attack on the country.‡ He used to tell stories about it quite a bit.

He left boot camp and went to, of all places, Harvard, for radio training. He had sort of a lifelong suspicion of Harvard people. I was fascinated by the fact that he had actually lived and attended school in a building at Harvard. I went with my mother and father on one short visit to Boston. They went out to the campus and I think even found the place where they had lived. It was very early in their marriage.

Paul Stillwell: Did he seek a commission?

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\* His parents were William James and Eula (Russell) Crowe.

† Recruit training, known more commonly as boot camp, was conducted at the Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois, about 30 miles north of downtown Chicago on the shore of Lake Michigan.

‡ In the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918-19 some 20 million people died, including more than 500,000 in the United States.

Admiral Crowe: No, he did not. He became radio operator, and then by the end of his tour he was a second-class, what they called radioman. He reported to the battleship *Pennsylvania*.<sup>\*</sup> I do have the pictures—I'll show to you before you leave today—of the battleship.

Paul Stillwell: Great.

Admiral Crowe: He was only on it about a year and a half, something like that. The war was over, and he was mustered out.

Paul Stillwell: Radio at sea was still quite primitive at that point and often unreliable.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and it gave him a lifelong interest in radio. In fact, he knew Morse code all his life. He never got over that. He was the first guy in La Grange, Kentucky, to have a radio, and he was always fascinated by wireless communications.

Paul Stillwell: Did he tell sea stories about his experience as you were growing up?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. But I was going to finish his sort of biography. He was going to return, of course, to the practice of law. But he had an uncle, his father's brother, who lived in La Grange, Kentucky, and was a lawyer. My grandfather and this man were both Canadians who had immigrated to the United States. He had set up law practice in La Grange, Kentucky and offered my father to go into business with him when he came out of the Navy in World War I. So he moved to Kentucky in about 1919-1920, I guess, before he actually got out of the Navy.

Incidentally, one of the things that happened on the *Pennsylvania* is they escorted Wilson to France after the war. The ship published a newspaper every day on that voyage, and my father's scrapbook had all those newspapers in it. You could see pictures

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<sup>\*</sup> USS *Pennsylvania* (BB-38) was commissioned 12 June 1916. She did not take part in combat during World War I but shortly thereafter escorted the transport USS *George Washington*, which carried President Woodrow Wilson to France for the peace conference at Versailles.

of the *George Washington*, which was the ship that Wilson was on. The two traveled together all the way to Brest.\* That was my father's only time on the continent of Europe. I think he had two or three days of liberty there and brought home some wooden shoes that we had for a long time. He was very proud of having seen Wilson and been a part of delivering Wilson to Europe.

He went into practice in Kentucky.

Paul Stillwell: Was it a general practice?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, just a small town, county seat. His partner, his uncle, was a very prominent man locally in Kentucky. He later ran for governor but was defeated. My parents lived there for about 12 years—till '32, something like that. They came out during the Depression.†

My memories of that—I have a picture there. My father raised collie dogs, and I had a dog I was very fond of by the name of Czar. They used to, evidently when I was very small, take me over across the street to the courthouse yard and just leave me there with the dog, and Czar would not let me go in the street. If anybody stopped to talk to me, he would stand between us. He was a very interesting dog. My father was very fond of him.

We saw something on television yesterday, a hailstorm. I remember seeing hail in Kentucky. Frankly, I think it was the happiest period of my father's life.

Paul Stillwell: Why do you say that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he talked about it with great fondness. And, of course, the reason they left was they had all kinds of financial problems in the Depression. But during the 12 years they were there life was pretty good. He was the county attorney two terms. In

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\* The transport *George Washington* arrived at Brest on 13 December 1918. She was escorted by nine U.S. battleships and several destroyer divisions.

† Following the crash of the New York Stock Exchange in late October 1929, the United States was plunged into the Great Depression, from which it did not recover until the nation geared up for World War II at the beginning of the 1940s. The Depression was marked by high unemployment and many business failures.

fact, he ran for county attorney and lost the first time. His opponent was a man by the name of Ballard Clark, who was a good friend of his. But Ballard Clark was a native La Grange man who had lived there all his life, and he ran on a logo of “Vote for the Home Man.” My father countered with: “The home man—home before the war, home during the war, and home after the war.” But he couldn’t beat him. But he did win the next election. He had wonderful stories in the courtroom of La Grange, Kentucky, old country stories, and people that he had defended or prosecuted.

Paul Stillwell: That seems be an example of what you said, that your father had a good sense of humor. And it could be that you inherited that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think I have. Then I might point out today that my grandfather, the minister, had a pretty good sense of humor. I gather he got that from the minister, and I got it from my father.

Looking back—of course, I’m an only child. They’re quite criticized all the time. Shirley’s an only child too. But I can actually bifurcate my own training, divide it up between my parents. My father was not easygoing. He didn’t have a lot of friends. He had a good sense of humor, but he also had a certain arrogance about him, intellectualism. He believed strongly in education, and he was a beautiful writer. I always wished I could write as well as he did. He wrote all my speeches in high school.

Even though he went to church, and had grown up in the Methodist Church, he wasn’t really religious. But he knew a lot about the Bible, much more than I’ve ever known. He could quote long passages from the Bible and from Shakespeare. My love of education came from him. But he was never a great lawyer because he didn’t suffer fools lightly, and I don’t think he was very good at attracting business. The law firm he was in got the business, and he wrote the briefs.

Paul Stillwell: Did he have an awkwardness in interpersonal relations?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. He did. Later in life, when I actually knew him better, he always felt people with money were higher and more prestigious, and he was

self-conscious about money. He always wanted more money, and he never really had a great deal.

But he read to me a lot, which I look back on as a great plus. He believed very strongly in oratory. He loved great orations and expression. He never told me what to take in school, except debate. He insisted I debate. He didn't give me a choice. But otherwise it was up to me what I wanted to study, and I went through a period where I thought I wanted to be an engineer.

My mother was completely different. She grew up in a frontier world. Her father had made the run in Oklahoma in 1889.\* He had a very interesting career. He moved to a town by the name of McAlester and started a wholesale hardware business. His name is still on the back of the building down there in McAlester. I saw it not too long ago. It was Russell Hardware, wholesale hardware. He made quite a bit of money. Built a big house in McAlester. My mother grew up in that house. He had three wives, incidentally. He was hard drinking and carried a gun all his life. He was a cowboy, really.

In about 1917 he was breaking a horse, was thrown, and broke his leg. It wouldn't heal, so he went up to Mayo Clinic and left the business in the hands of his number-two man, who lost the whole thing. My grandfather never really recovered from that. But my mother had grown up under rather well-to-do circumstances, and she had no regard whatsoever for people with money. They did not intimidate her at all. They did my father, but my mother paid no attention to how much money anybody had.

Paul Stillwell: I wonder if your dad felt self-conscious knowing your mother came from that background.

Admiral Crowe: I think that had something to do with it.

I got my personality from my mother. My father approached people cautiously, but my mother would talk to anybody. She'd walk right up and start a conversation. She didn't care if he was the governor or not; that didn't make a damn to her.

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\* At noon on 22 April 1889, choice lands in what had been Indian Territory were opened for claims by white settlers. An estimated 50,000 people took part in the land rush. Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

Paul Stillwell: Would you call her a warm, nurturing person?

Admiral Crowe: Very much so. And she had a couple of things that were absolutely critical in life. One was: "You're not stuck up; don't be stuck up." She hated people that were "stuck up." I remember that expression.

She was not as intellectually oriented as he was. She didn't read a lot. But she had a lot of friends, and she was sort of a homebody. But when she was in the university she was a big woman on campus. She was president of her sorority and president of this and president of that. If she'd been born 50 years later she would have been a completely different person. But when you got married back then, you just sort of died off the face of the earth, although in that small town they had a very active social life. He was a Mason and she was Eastern Star, and they were in the Methodist Church.

I can remember that we had ancestors on both sides of the Civil War. And there she was living in Kentucky, and a big organization was the Dames of the Confederacy, or Daughters, I forget what it was. Anyway, she decided she wanted to join that organization. She wrote her relatives in Oregon to tell them she was going to join, and they said if she did they would never speak to her again.

Paul Stillwell: Did she join?

Admiral Crowe: So she didn't join. She didn't join. But everybody that she knew in Kentucky was sort of Confederate. On the other hand, her ancestors in Kansas and the ones that went west had all fought for the Yankees.

But she was very happy in Kentucky. They never were able to replicate that social life in Oklahoma City. They had some, but nothing like they did before. It's the old story, a big frog in a little pond. And when they moved to Oklahoma City they were in bad shape financially. He had a nervous breakdown, and they moved in with his parents until he recovered. Then one day he was walking along the street and ran into a lawyer that he had known earlier in school. The man's firm asked my father to come and join them. That was about the middle '30s, and that was the beginning of his recovery.



Paul Stillwell: Was it the nervous breakdown that precipitated the move to Oklahoma?

Admiral Crowe: No, I think it wasn't. They had some financial problems in the firm, and he got a little worried. I never knew the details and didn't find out until years later that the head of the firm, his uncle, was doing some things that he didn't think were legal, but they were trying to bide over through the Depression. He wrote his father-in-law out in Oklahoma, and his father-in-law said: "You'd better get the hell out of there." I think he moved because of that. But the stress of the Depression on him brought on a—he didn't practice law in Oklahoma for a while. He worked in my grandfather's store, which sold old furniture. He may have been a Methodist minister, but the old man was a hell of a good businessman, so he kept this store going, and the whole family lived off of it.

Of course, from my perspective I didn't know one from another. My childhood was not tainted by the Depression. I didn't know anything. I thought the whole world was that way, and that's the way it ought to be.

Paul Stillwell: So you did not suffer a relapse in standard of living.

Admiral Crowe: Not to me. I look back, our standard of living was sort of lower middle class, but my father never considered himself lower middle class. He had an intellectual arrogance about him.

Paul Stillwell: Were there still Civil War veterans around when you were growing up?

Admiral Crowe: I guess there were. But my mother had a wonderful story. Her father had the first car in McAlester, and they drove that thing to Colorado one time. It took them a week to get there. And he took her to the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904. She was a girl. She'd never seen white-haired people before. Everybody in Oklahoma was young—either that or dead.

Paul Stillwell: I've seen a wonderful documentary on that World's Fair with the "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis," and ice cream cones and hot dogs and Ferris wheel.

Admiral Crowe: Well, she saw some of that, and I have a lot of pictures of her in that period of her life. And she took me to McAlester. They didn't live there, and they didn't own the house then, but took me through the house he'd built and where she grew up. She had a nice childhood, but her mother died when she was two or three. He remarried, and I'm not so sure my mother ever got along with that woman very well. Although her half sister by that woman was one of my mother's closest friends and is still alive, in Oklahoma. Ruth Bozalis is her name; she's 94. She and my mother were very, very close.

Paul Stillwell: Did you start school in Kentucky?

Admiral Crowe: No, I did not. I started school in Oklahoma City, Putnam Heights kindergarten and grade school. Then my father got back into the law business, and we bought a house. I remember what a big deal that was: 1936 Northwest 21st Street. Phone number was 53130. It was a small house. I took Akhromeyev one day, to Norman, Oklahoma. We were driving by houses, and I saw a small house, and I said to him, "I grew up in a house like that."\*

Akhromeyev said, "I grew up in an apartment in Moscow with four families on one floor with a common kitchen and a common bathroom." I forget how many brothers and sisters he had, but I lost the fight before I ever got started. But I loved that house.

Paul Stillwell: And that had to do wonders for your father's self-esteem.

Admiral Crowe: It did. It really did. To own a home was sort of the beginning of his second life.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and getting back into the law practice.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That was so important to him.

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\* Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergei Fyodorovich Akhromeyev was the last Defense Minister of the Soviet Union. He visited the United States for the first time in 1988, when Admiral Crowe was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Paul Stillwell: What values would you say you got from your parents?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I got my patriotism from my father. But patriotism was a common virtue out there. There was a sort of consistent stream of optimism, that we lived in a wonderful country and that no matter what the circumstances it would be better tomorrow, and that we were a better country than anybody else. And that Americans were independent, self-reliant. You read about those wagon trains going west—it wasn't totally true. They were also very narrow-minded, and racist. My father was a racist. He didn't like blacks, he didn't like Catholics. And I say in the book I didn't know why; we didn't know anybody that was Catholic.\* I wondered where he got all this from. I had one or two friends who were Catholic, but I didn't know it. It was years later I found out they were Catholics.

Paul Stillwell: Did you absorb some of those lessons and have to overcome them later?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I had a big fight with my father. I mention it in the book, but I don't dwell on it. I almost married a girl that was Catholic. That stopped all kinds of things. He used to send me these anti-Catholic books, three or four of them in a big package.

Paul Stillwell: What about in the racial area?

Paul Stillwell: Well, I don't know where he got his feeling about blacks from, but he just grew up in a segregated society. I don't know that he was any more obsessed with it than anybody else was. The schools were not integrated when I was in school. We had a black high school on the other side of town that always beat the hell out of us in football, but they didn't go to school with whites.

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\* For more on Crowe's parents and grandparents, see his memoir: *The Line of Fire: From Washington to the Gulf, the Politics and Battles of the New Military* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), pages 347-349.

Paul Stillwell: So you probably didn't have much interaction at that stage.

Admiral Crowe: None at all. The town I grew up in was homogeneous. It was white Anglo-Saxon. Now, Shirley's hometown had a large Catholic population: a lot of German immigrants and so forth. Nevertheless, they were as narrow-minded as anybody else. Shirley jokes about Okeene, where she grew up. The term is taken from three Indian names: part from Oklahoma, part from Cherokee, part from Cheyenne. But they never allowed an Indian in town. They were proud of their name, but they just weren't proud of Indians. Strange.

Paul Stillwell: Were you brought up on stories of the land rush in 1889?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I was, a little bit. My mother fostered that. Around 1932 or 1933, there was a big movie on the land rush and, man, she rushed me down there to see it right away.\* And as soon as I could grasp what was going on she drove to Ponca City for me to see the big statue of Pioneer Woman. And, of course, it's always been a mark of prestige in Oklahoma to be an '89-er. That's from having somebody in the family who made the run in '89.

It always tickled me. In Australia, when I finally began to know Australians, at first all the prison population of Australia played down their prison. Then after Australia became a functioning country it became the . . .

Paul Stillwell: Badge of honor?

Admiral Crowe: . . . badge of honor to have had a family that came over in the imprisonment period.

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\* In 1931 RKO Studio released the film *Cimarron*, starring Richard Dix and Irene Dunne. It was based on a 1929 novel by Edna Ferber. The movie won the Academy Award as the best picture of the year.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I was interested to read in an article by Bob Woodward that your wife's test of somebody's character is, "Would that person have made the rush in '89?"<sup>\*</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's sort of the way my mother looked at it. People were very brave in that they did it. And her father volunteered for the Spanish-American War. I don't think he got in it. He tried to get in the Rough Riders, but he didn't make it in. But he was a big booster of Teddy Roosevelt, and voted Bull Moose in that election.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: That influence from Roosevelt probably led to some of the patriotism and optimism that you describe.

Admiral Crowe: I think that's right. Oklahoma was patriotic. And yet we knew we had done some terrible things to the Indians. I can remember going to pageants where we recreated the Trail of Tears and stuff like that.<sup>‡</sup>

My father was very interested in politics and history. And, of course, it was harder in those days. All they had was radio. But he followed national politics. And every time they had a national election I remember he invited his friends in, and they stayed up all night eating hot dogs and listening to the radio.

His politics was sort of fascinating. I guess because of his time in Kentucky, he was a Democrat—loyal, tried, and true. And he supported Al Smith, who was a Catholic.<sup>§</sup> I've wondered how he rationalized that. But he was a big supporter of Al Smith's. He participated in the political machinery in Kentucky, and had a lot of great local stories about it. He was the chairman of the party in the county, and, of course, some of the voting places would be very small numbers, 10 or 12. And they'd vote for everybody that was blind or deaf. He always knew how many votes were coming in from

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<sup>\*</sup> See Bob Woodward, "The Admiral of Washington," *The Washington Post Magazine*, 24 September 1989, page 21.

<sup>†</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, who had gained fame as an Army officer in the Spanish-American War, served as President of the United States from September 1901 to March 1909. In 1912 he ran unsuccessfully for President as a candidate of the Progressive "Bull Moose" Party.

<sup>‡</sup> The "Trail of Tears" is a term used for the forced relocation of Cherokees in 1838 from lands in Georgia to the territory that later became Oklahoma. Approximately 4,000 Cherokees died in the process.

<sup>§</sup> In 1928 Alfred E. Smith, Jr., who had previously been Governor of New York, lost the presidential election to Republican Herbert C. Hoover.

every place. And he managed part of his uncle's, his partner's, campaign for governor. But he was a Democrat, and he believed strongly in states' rights.

Then along came Roosevelt.\* And the first thing Roosevelt did was, in my father's language, betray his own class. And the second thing he did away with was states' rights. Well, my father tolerated that through '32 and '36. But on the third term it was too much for him. He switched parties and spent the rest of his life Republican. And he hated Roosevelt. It was 20 or 30 years later before I discovered Roosevelt was a fairly decent President.

Paul Stillwell: There's a famous cartoon where some little girl runs into the house and said, "Johnny wrote a dirty word on the sidewalk: Roosevelt."

Admiral Crowe: Well, my father would have appreciated that. He had a lot of Roosevelt jokes he was telling. Of course, he couldn't stand Mrs. Roosevelt. Another thing he couldn't stand, in all these biases he had, was women lawyers. Oh, he would die today. It would just do him in completely, because he thought—what was it he used to say?—women lawyers are like dancing bears; it's not amazing they dance badly, it's amazing they dance at all. In his law class there had been one girl lawyer, and he had no regard for that at all. Just wasn't a thing women should be doing.

Paul Stillwell: With his consciousness of rich people and so forth, was he pretentious at all?

Admiral Crowe: He would have been if he'd have made money. But he wasn't, although he would boast if he won a lawsuit or something like that.

It was interesting. If I hadn't gone in the Navy I'd have been a lawyer. But he never stressed that. That would have been my choice. He never pushed me to be a lawyer. But when the prospect of going in the Navy came up, my mother thought it was an absurd idea and that I really wasn't serious about it. Everybody wants to be a fireman or a policeman or something. But my father leapt right onto it. He didn't think it was

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\* Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democrat, was President of the United States from March 1933 to April 1945.

absurd, and he thought going to the Naval Academy was great. I think that came from his time in the Navy, where officers were a class apart, and that he thought it was a very respectable profession to be a naval officer. Now, not everybody agreed with that. A lot of controversy over that. But his attitude toward it was to encourage me, and particularly not discourage me. When I said I really wanted to go, he went to great efforts to get me an appointment. He pulled out every ticket he had.

Paul Stillwell: I read that one of the things that influenced you was Kendall Banning's book, *Annapolis Today*.<sup>\*</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Yes, it did. I was quite taken with the idea of calling floors "decks," and ceilings "overheads," and "ladders" instead of stairs. Oh, I thought that would be wonderful, to live in a place where they talked like they were on board ship. Then I had those two pictures of the *Pennsylvania* over my bed. And I read all his shipboard newspapers, and he talked about ships a lot, his time in the Navy. He was a big admirer of the Marines, although they were sort of the policemen on board a battleship.

He was very familiar with Civil War history. And, of course, he lived through the Spanish-American War. He was a youngster, but it was in his life. Then his war was World War I. When he came back to Kentucky he was a big member of the American Legion. I remember going to a national convention with my mother and my father; I think maybe it was in Louisville. They went down there for that. And I can remember the first parade I saw, an American Legion parade, and oh, it was amazing. Bands and huge flags. All in World War I-type helmets. He talked about World War I a lot. He was very proud of his service. I've got a beautiful picture I'll show you there in a minute that he had made and gave to his mother, and it's so typical of the age it just hurts.

But the idea of me going in the Navy and going to the Naval Academy, he was a strong supporter of that.

Paul Stillwell: How much contact did you have with your grandparents over the years?

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<sup>\*</sup> Kendall Banning, *Annapolis Today* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1939).

Admiral Crowe: Well, my mother's mother died, and she didn't get along too well with the other woman. And her father was in mean circumstances by the end of his life, but he came to the house quite a bit. He lived down in Hobart, Oklahoma, and he did a bunch of various jobs. The money he'd had sort of had gone away. But he ended up at the end of his life marrying again to a Catholic woman, whom my father couldn't stand. He went back to McAlester, and then he died there. That's the only time I'd ever been to a Catholic funeral when I was a child.

I saw a lot of my other grandparents. We lived with them in the 1930s. The minister had a bad case of asthma. He was sick a lot. But he was a wonderful man and he was very gentle. When he died my father said, "I never heard him say a swear word." That's quite unusual. He was white-haired. And in his bedroom he had a lot of books; I remember that. He loved to read. But I was only about 14 when he died.

He never learned to drive, but his wife did, and she was considered the pillar of the entire family. She was tough, strong. Her name was Carrie. I called her Bermine. She lived for many years. I was on a submarine in Key West when she died. My mother was visiting me when my grandmother died. She was an anchor. She kept everything glued together. My mother would never wear slacks around her mother-in-law. She always wore dresses, because Grandmother didn't take to women wearing slacks. She had great respect. Nobody in the family would go contrary to anything she wanted. She was not mean, though. She was very nice, but she was sort of stern. She had grown up in one world and was not necessarily agreeing with everything that was happening around the world. Just like I am now.

Paul Stillwell: I think that happens to every generation.

Admiral Crowe: My father used to tell a great story about the journalist interviewing a man 95 years old. He says, "My goodness, 95 years. You must have seen a lot of changes in your life." And the old man says, "Yep, and I've been agin every one of them." Well, that's sort of the way.

My father had great respect for his mother, though. And his mother and father had been good to them. Took them in during the Depression and rode out the Depression



for them. As a family every Sunday after church we went to Grandmother and Grandfather's. Had dinner, and everybody went to bed and went to sleep. Always puzzled me—Why do we all take naps on Sunday? But as a young boy I was running around, and I was the only one awake. Everybody was asleep. Then they got up about 5:00 o'clock; we'd have a big dinner at 6:00 or 7:00. Then we played dominoes until everybody went to bed on Sunday. Grandfather and Grandmother both loved dominoes. They also loved "Amos 'n' Andy," "One Man's Family," and they listened to those religiously.\*

Paul Stillwell: What about FDR's fireside chats?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't remember those very much, but I don't know that they were interested in that. My father would have been interested. When we got started on the anti-Communist thing, my father felt lawyers were a niche above the rest of the country in their education and so forth, and that it was their responsibility to make sure the nation knew what the hell was happening. And that there were lawyers everywhere. It's not like professors at the university or something. But he felt the lawyers had a responsibility to preach anti-Communism and to bring it home to the ordinary folk. He wrote a speech for me in high school. You'll love the title: "The Original Oratory Contest." It was original, all right, but—

Paul Stillwell: But not by you.

Admiral Crowe: The big brother of the guy I was competing with was writing all his speeches. It was a tirade against Communism. In fact, he wrote a beautiful speech on patriotism. I remember some expressions—I still have the speech—some of the expressions. "The deep-throated guns of Gettysburg." He went back through American history, although I think he was a Southern sympathizer. He was more Southern than he was Northern, although he'd been born in Pennsylvania, but he lived in Kentucky and that colored his thinking.

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\* "Amos 'n' Andy" was a radio comedy program in which two white actors played black characters.

Paul Stillwell: What a culture shock it would have been for your dad to see you meeting Akhromeyev.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that may be right. My dad died not very happy. He was not happy at the end. He never thought he'd made a lot of money, as much as his talent deserved. He had a run-in with his law firm and he retired, and then went to clerking for a state Supreme Court justice. And that guy got impeached or something. But then before he died he went to teaching law school at Oklahoma City University and really enjoyed that. And that's sort of the reason I went into teaching. He kept telling me that he didn't realize how rewarding and satisfying teaching was. I always sort of wanted to teach, so when I retired I started teaching, and I'm still doing it a little bit. He was really quite pleased with his teaching, but my mother died and he was alone. He was scared to death he was going to die in the house and nobody would know he was dead. He sort of fell apart at the end. He died not very happy.

Paul Stillwell: When did he die?

Admiral Crowe: I should be able to tell you right away. He died the first year I was in San Diego—it was about '65. In fact, I think he died the same year that Jim Stockdale was shot down.\* He had a brain tumor and had a massive stroke, and I had to go home. They took out the tumor, but he never really recovered from it. Which was probably as well, because he would not have been able to live an independent life if he had survived that. He was a man of strong persuasions.

Paul Stillwell: Evidently. You had no siblings, so did you develop boyhood friends outside the family?

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\* Commander James B. Stockdale, USN, eventually a vice admiral, was a prisoner of war in Vietnam from September 1965 to February 1973. He was a Naval Academy classmate and close friend of Crowe.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I had quite a few. I had one relative, a cousin, Hubert, who was my dad's sister's son. He was nine years older than I was. I remember when he was 18 he was twice my age. He was pretty influential in my growing-up life. He was a big member of the YMCA, and he's the reason I went to camp. Every summer I went to camp. He was there as one of the senior leaders, and he worried about me. Later spent most of his life in Washington as an electronic engineer working for the government.

But then I had a host of friends from high school and college. Most of them are dead now. My best friends are all gone. One of the kids I competed against, speaking, is still alive, and I stayed with him the last time I was in Oklahoma. And another friend that introduced Shirley and me is still alive, but he has diabetes and he's lost both legs and he's in very dire straits. Not a very pleasant business. So I don't have many of my contemporaries. We considered going back to Oklahoma, and actually were there quite a bit after I retired, to teach. But as with all things I have less in common with them than it sounds, and they certainly had less in common with me. They thought I was a real Communist, or Socialist, or some damn thing. Being a liberal, of course, is a bad word out there. And the older I got the more I admitted I was liberal. That upset them.

Paul Stillwell: What sorts of things did you do for fun and entertainment growing up?

Admiral Crowe: Well, Oklahoma City was not a backwater. It was fairly sophisticated. Every summer I went to camp up in the Arbuckle Mountains. And I learned to swim; I loved to swim. I had an interest in sports, but I was never talented enough to play varsity sports, although I swam a lot and played basketball. And then when I got to junior high school, we had fraternities. I belonged to one of those and was president of the chapter. That made for a rather interesting social life. We had dances, and the girls all wore evening dresses. I started wearing a tuxedo when I was in junior high school. Then we went into high school, another fraternity. I was the president of my junior high school, and then I was the president of my high school. I was in school politics, and that was at my father's urging. In fact, I can tell you a wonderful story about my father.

I was in the seventh grade, which was the first grade in junior high school, and I was quite terrified that I had changed schools and was in a bigger school, and

intimidated. Along came the school elections, and I got nominated to run for secretary of the school. It was customary for the president and vice president to be either the ninth or—probably ninth grade, and usually the vice president out of the eighth grade. And then the secretary and treasurer were out of the lower grades. I came home crying, saying that I had been nominated for this school office. My father said, “Why are you so upset?”

I said, “Well, they have an assembly tomorrow and I’m to make a speech telling why people should vote for me. I’ve got to have a campaign manager. He speaks, I think, one or two minutes and I speak three minutes, and I don’t have the foggiest idea of what I’m doing.”

My father said, “Oh, we’ll take care of this.” He called a friend who had another son in my school and hired him as the campaign manager. He didn’t know what he was doing. But the crucial part of it wasn’t what he did. He was my manager, but he didn’t have anything to do, and he made a terrible speech. But my father sat down and wrote my speech.

It was customary in this school that it was very serious business to elect officers. These were not class officers; these were school officers. And that this auditorium, assembly, was pretty serious. The common format was: “ appreciate this opportunity to run for vice president and I will do it to the best of my ability, and I hope you understand that I have your interests at heart and I appreciate you voting for me.” Well, my father sat down and wrote a speech that was all humorous. I promised 40 acres and a mule to every voter, and the Hoover thing, two cars in every garage and a chicken in every pot, or something like that.\*

I was scared to death when I did this. I started into that speech, and I can remember those kids on the front row, all dozing. And all of a sudden they began to listen to what I was doing, and then they sat up and they started laughing. I ended up the speech with, “We will ring the old Liberty Bell again.” I had all these phrases that he brought in from past American politics.

Paul Stillwell: Did you memorize the speech?

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\* The rhetoric echoed that of Herbert Hoover, who was elected U.S. President in 1928.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I memorized the whole thing. It wasn't long; it was easy to memorize. I took some shots at the school administration. They had bought a bunch of evergreens and took some of the student money to do it. I said, "There are not going to be any Christmas trees on my watch." Sorry I can't remember any more of what was said, but it was a lot of just hackneyed old political phrases. Forty acres and a mule to every voter. And by the time I was through, everybody was laughing and clapping. And I won hands down.

Paul Stillwell: Laughter can be a great tonic in that situation.

Admiral Crowe: Well, but the kicker was that the faculty was mad about it. They let it be known to me that they didn't think that was a very appropriate speech. Well, I couldn't understand what they were talking about. I won, didn't I?

So the next year I ran for treasurer, and they censored my speech, and I lost. My father was furious. He used to come and listen to these things, and when he found out they had censored it before I spoke—well, then the next year I ran for vice president. I won that.

And then the last year I was running for president, and he said, "Now we've got to change the whole format. Everybody's being humorous now. Now you go to serious." So the last speech I gave was completely serious. There was no humor in it whatsoever. But he tooled my political career in junior high school, and he really enjoyed it.

Paul Stillwell: And that was his specialty.

Admiral Crowe: That's what he did. And then he insisted I enter the oratorical contest. We had standard oratory, and I gave Patrick Henry's great oration, which I discovered later we have no idea if Patrick Henry said that or not.\* Boorstin goes through it in his

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\* Patrick Henry (1736-1799) was a strong advocate of the American Revolution. The quotation most often attributed to him is from March 1775, when he urged the Virginia House of Burgesses to take action against British troops: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and

books.\* All we know about Patrick Henry are some people who remembered it 40 years later, and they disagreed on what he said.

There were two oratory contests, a standard and an original. It took me two years to win the standard, that my friend Sidney beat me the first time. And then the third year I entered the original contest oratory and won that.

Paul Stillwell: What was your topic?

Admiral Crowe: Well, Old Lamps for New. This was the tirade against the Communists. I pilloried the Communists pretty good here in my original oratory speech. And that led, of course, in high school to him insisting that I debate. He had debated in high school and in college. I think, to be absolutely frank about it, that the single most important educational experience I had was debate. And it wasn't even on the curriculum. It was extracurricular. But looking back, that had more to do with my life and my career than any other single thing. And it's interesting: Zumwalt in his biography says exactly the same thing.†

Paul Stillwell: It literally teaches you to speak and think on your feet.

Admiral Crowe: And to not be intimidated, and to be articulate, and to appreciate the value of a word. I mean, Stockdale's written a lot about that—that words do matter. And my father believed that wholeheartedly, words matter: the way you say it and the way you write it. He used to tell me, in making arguments before the jury, that the hard part is not what you put in. The hard part is what you're going to leave out. Because there are always some arguments that don't make the cut, but you want to get them in there. But a good speaker doesn't do that, he said. They winnow it and get rid of the chaff and just hit the hot stuff.

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slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

\* Daniel J. Boorstin (1914-2004) was a prolific American historian.

† Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN, was Chief of Naval Operations, 1970-74. His book was *On Watch: A Memoir* (New York: Quadrangle, The New York Times Book Company, 1976).

Paul Stillwell: I would think also part of it is being able to read your audience as you're going along.

Admiral Crowe: Well, in of course debating the really hard part is ten minutes. That's it. Ten minutes. And you've got to utilize it. You've got to organize, and you've got to prioritize. And while there may be a lot of great things in the back of your mind you'd like to say, you can't say them all. You've only got ten minutes. I saw many a debater go down the tubes, never got to the end of his speech and ten minutes was up.

The beauty of debating—the speaking's fine, but the real beauty of debating is making you organize what you're doing. Pressing you. And the rebuttals were only five minutes, so if you had a point to make you had to make it and don't waste time.

I felt where I went to school in Oklahoma we always loved to debate Southern teams because they took so long to say anything. We got more words in than they did.

Paul Stillwell: I remember once comparing a transcript against a tape I was listening to of Rear Admiral Bub Ward.\* Of course, I knew what was coming because I could read the transcript, but I was motioning to the tape recorder: Come on, come on, get it out.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it's interesting. I debated in high school from a very—I mention it in the book—a very successful coach. An older man, but boy, he was good. He had a sort of interesting thing happen. When he retired, he always wanted to go into politics, so he ran for the Oklahoma City board of education. All the kids that had debated for him campaigned for him. He didn't have any money, but he didn't need any. He won hands down.

But then I went to Oklahoma University for a year. I debated there with the guy who had beaten me in the state finals the previous year when I was in high school. He later practiced law in Washington and was a very good friend of mine, Tom Finney. He was a law partner of Clark Clifford's.† He was a real debater. I've known two real

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\* See the U.S. Naval Institute oral history of Rear Admiral Norvell G. Ward, USN (Ret.).

† Clark M. Clifford served as President Harry S. Truman's naval aide; as Secretary of Defense, 1968-69; a presidential advisor; and a highly successful Washington lawyer.

debaters in my life. One is a friend of mine now, Drew Devere. But I debated there in Oklahoma.

When I went to the Naval Academy they didn't have a debate team. So my partner in high school came to the Naval Academy the next year, and he and I decided to organize a debate team, and finally sold it, because it was the only way we could get out of there. We won the Eastern inter-collegiates that year, after some rather harrowing things happened. But we debated at the Naval Academy.

I went to a high school—it was typical of all Oklahoma—where the big things were sports. The football players. But here we had a football team that never won anything, a basketball team that occasionally won at state, but the most successful organization in the school was the debate team, which had won several national championships.

Paul Stillwell: Who were the judges in these competitions?

Admiral Crowe: Well, during the season we would go to 10 or 12 debate tournaments. They'd be hosted, always on a weekend, around the state. Usually they were hosted by junior colleges or even universities. The coaches of teams would always judge—not always, but largely—judge other teams. And then people from the local community did sometimes; my dad used to go judge in debate tournaments. But in the state tournament, which was sponsored by Oklahoma University, they just brought judges in from their own faculty, and so forth. I can remember West Point, when we debated in the finals up there, they had nine judges. We won five to four.

Paul Stillwell: Like the Supreme Court.

Admiral Crowe: God, we just barely got under the gate. But we had the wrong side. We had debated West Point twice earlier in the year, and we beat them good, when we had the affirmative. Maxwell Taylor discovered they had the affirmative, and he got mad as



hell that we had it.\* He didn't want his team debating the negative of compulsory military conscription. So when we got in the finals at West Point, and West Point made it in, he said, "I won't let my team debate unless they have the affirmative." We felt negative was the weakest side. But we took the negative. We'd debated the negative all year, and we took it.

Maxwell Taylor sat on the front row. Our sponsor was a reserve commander, a big fat guy. Taught English, history, and government, and he was our sponsor on the debate team. I'm trying to remember his name. But he sat beside Maxwell Taylor all during this thing. We made jokes over the West Point people, and every time we'd make one our guy would laugh, and Taylor would grimace, glower. I'll give him credit for one thing in that finals. He made all the cadets come. They didn't want to come. It was Sunday; they had things to do. We had 500 cadets in there listening to this deadly dull debate. But that's what Taylor said, "We're all going to listen to the debate."

Paul Stillwell: How much of your success in debating was because of a competitive nature that you had?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think you had to acquire that. I didn't start out with that. But you get it very quickly. I say in here that was in the period when we were not worried about the egos of kids. Today they have lots of debates you never decide a winner, because you don't want to offend anybody. You don't hurt the kids' growth. Well, we didn't have any of those biases. We had a winner and a loser, and you had to do both. You had to learn to be a winner, and you had to learn to be a loser. And in many respects learning to be a winner is harder than learning to be a loser. I remember my mother said, "When you win you don't crow about it." Boy, she was all over me. You do it gracefully. I can't stand professional athletes that scream and holler and jump up and down. I always loved Art Monk.† Art Monk never did any of that.

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\* Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, USA, served as Superintendent of the Military Academy from 4 September 1945 to 28 January 1949.

† James Arthur "Art" Monk was a wide receiver for the Washington Redskins and other NFL teams from 1980 to 1995. In 2008 he was elected to the professional football hall of fame.

Paul Stillwell: There's a great quote, and I forget who the player was. He said, "When you get to the end zone, act like you've been there before."

Admiral Crowe: Okay. That's right. It's not a new occurrence. Jim Stockdale used to say, "I don't understand why, when I get promoted, everybody congratulates me so heartily. Didn't they think I was going to get promoted?" Well, that was my mother's whole *modus operandi*. You accept success, and you accept it without making a lot of noise about it.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds like she was a very gracious person.

Admiral Crowe: She was, she was. But that was the frontier idea. Everybody's equal out here. There's nobody better than anybody else. That's stressed in the musical, "Oklahoma!" That idea runs through several of the songs.

When I was a midshipman we went into New York, and "Oklahoma!" was playing. My mother had written me a letter saying, now, you must see the musical "Oklahoma!" It was right in the middle of their run. Stockdale and I were in uniform, and we went down to the theater. I said I'd like to purchase two tickets. Well, when the woman got through laughing she told me that they were sold out for two or three years ahead of time. I said, "But you don't understand. I'm from Oklahoma, and my mother said I had to see this thing."

And the lady was very nice. She said, "I'll tell you what. Sometimes tickets are turned back. So if you come back at 4:00 o'clock, I'll see if I can get you a couple." Well, we came back and she had a couple. Sold them to us for cost.

About 6:00 o'clock Stockdale and I met two girls. So we were on the street trying to sell these tickets to "Oklahoma!" And nobody believed that we had real tickets. We finally sold them to two Catholic priests that came by. We didn't see "Oklahoma!" and I didn't have the nerve to tell my mother that. I didn't see it till about 1950 or '52. And it was another five years before I told my mother I hadn't seen it in—crazy story, isn't it?

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said that your success in debating was due to experience and technique. How much study of the substance of the topic went into that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, you tried to do a lot. But the fact remains, as any lawyer can tell you, an awful lot depends on the way it's done. That's another thing. In debate you got to see the whole spectrum of ability. One guy could take a very poor argument and do wonders with it, and another could take a good argument and not do very much with it. There were all kinds of—how you conduct yourself, how you—it's like something I read about the U.N. diplomat's speech he'd annotated in the margin. He said, "Speak louder—weak point."

Paul Stillwell: That would be the technique part.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it is a lot of technique.

Paul Stillwell: What did you do as a student government officer after you had won these elections?

Admiral Crowe: Well, you presided over the assemblies, and you presided over the student council. They sort of made a pass at the inmates running the place. But the inmates didn't run those places. They may today, but the administration ran schools when I was in school. But they had a student council, and they brought expenditures up, and we raised money. I was the president of the freshman class at OU, and we raised a lot of money, and we almost got in a lot of trouble over it. I forget why. I had to go see the president of the university, explain where the money went.

But we didn't have any of that at the Naval Academy. I didn't do as well at the Naval Academy as I had done in high school and OU. [Interruption]—suggestion once as first classmen, soon as the duty officers got through laughing at us.

Paul Stillwell: Let you have student government at the Naval Academy.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It never flew. You know, the Naval Academy disappointed me in some respects. First of all, I had wanted to go to the Naval Academy forever. I'd romanticized it a lot, and I really wanted to do that. It meant a great deal to me. But I went first to Oklahoma University for a year.

Paul Stillwell: I wonder if we could just jump back a little on high school and talk about the education other than the speaking and debating part of it. What do you remember about your development in school?

Admiral Crowe: Well, first of all I remember the girls. And this is a serious comment—I always felt blessed in one respect. I went to school with some really high-class girls. We had some in the school that weren't high class. But in my class in high school we had a group of, I would say, 30 or 40 girls that were very highly regarded. The older I got the more highly I regarded them, because they were really great. They were high class in every regard—good minds. I bring this up because the Navy didn't present that too well to us.

I always thought I had a good education. My father was instrumental in following what I was doing and what classes I was taking. But also, wanting to be in the Naval Academy dictated what I took in school quite a bit. I wanted to get in without having to take an entrance exam. Well, I succeeded at that, but the congressman gave an exam. I hadn't counted on that.

Paul Stillwell: What areas were you strong in?

Admiral Crowe: I was pretty good in math, but I discovered later that when you got into the really high-powered math I wasn't as good as that. I was always strong on history and in writing, English. I got that from my father. And that came out at the Naval Academy. My best grades at the Naval Academy were in those areas. And I had several professors that were very good on history. Also several teachers who were very interested in debate. They did honor debate, and they encouraged me. And on that oratory contest I had a coach that spent an awful lot of time with me, she did, helping me

in the oratorical contest. But I had a broad education. I didn't like Latin, but I passed it. I didn't do too well in foreign language. I studied German because my father had an inclination toward German. He'd studied German. I could memorize, but once you got away from memory and just started talking a foreign language I was in deep trouble.

Paul Stillwell: Well, there's a matter of having an ear for it too.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. You would think, given my training in speech, I would have had an ear for it, but I really didn't. I say I've studied more foreign languages and speak fewer than any man alive.

Of course, I always considered, because my father said, that I would go to college. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't go to college. It was only later that I learned several people didn't go. And, of course, where Shirley went to high school it was very rare to go to college. Then I had to lay down on chemistry and mathematics and some other things by what I had to do to get into the Naval Academy. But I was always very pleased with the education I had there.

On the other hand, my strongest suit in education was memory. I could memorize, and when I started studying German at the Naval Academy I remember the first semester in German I couldn't speak a word of German. My roommate was learning to speak it. But the professor gave us ten sentences every class—ten sentences either in English or German, back and forth—and told us at the end of the course that the exam would be taken out of all those sentences. My roommate and I memorized 300 sentences. We'd sit across the table from each other doing this on cards, testing each other. I got a 3.89 on the exam. But then the succeeding exams went to writing, and my grades went down, down, down. The last grade in the last course was 2.6, something like that. I just barely passed. Yet I was in the savvy section, and he could speak German, and he wasn't making as good grades as I was. I always fell back on that memory. It was Submarine School before I actually began to stumble on the idea that you don't memorize; you figure out the principle of something and use it to solve a problem.

I can remember coming back from a math exam, and the fellow across the hall from me was Stan Smith.\* He said, "How'd you do on the fifth one?"

I said, "Well, I forget." I said I thought I did all right.

He said, "Well, I couldn't remember the formula."

I said, "What did you do?"

He said, "Well, I derived it."

I said: "You what? You derived the formula?" That had never occurred to me.

Paul Stillwell: Had to employ a thought process.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. You either memorized it or you didn't. You don't derive anything. He said, "I derived the formula." I'll be damned. I learned to do that in Submarine School.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds as if you had a fairly active social life with these fraternities.

Admiral Crowe: I did. We had a very high social life. We had a social register in class in high school. And so did the other high school, Central. I can remember the award ceremonies at commencement at the end of the year. They had lots of awards, and I won a couple of contests: American Legion Citizenship Award, and I was an honorary Kiwanian when I was in high school. And then I won a few debate tournaments. That helped a little bit. But I had a big advantage in this Naval Academy business. I was never "finding myself." I knew what I wanted to do.

Paul Stillwell: Did you already at that point envision a Naval career?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did, but I didn't realize what that meant. I went to the Naval Academy to be in the Navy, and not all of my classmates were there for that. It always irritated me a little bit. But it's a big problem today, because their entrance standards are

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\* Midshipman Stanford S. Smith, USN. After graduation he resigned from the Navy and became a very successful rancher in Wyoming.

so high. We've got a lot of kids who are never going to stay in the Navy. They're going to find the Navy boring. They're too smart.

Paul Stillwell: How much did you keep up with world events?

Admiral Crowe: I started about junior year in high school. Of course, that's when World War II was starting.<sup>\*</sup> I can remember I began to follow the invasion of France. I was so desperate I even read *Time* magazine. I saved those covers of all those military figures that were on *Time* magazine. By the time I got to the Naval Academy I was really deep into particularly Navy history. And it helped me plebe year and plebe summer, because all the questions the first class—I discovered I knew a lot more about naval history than many of them did, and they were asking questions. I can remember very early in plebe summer Stockdale and I were at the same table, and they asked something about the Battle of Jutland, and I answered every question.<sup>†</sup> Jim said, "How in the hell do you know anything about the Battle of Jutland?"

Paul Stillwell: Did you have role models or mentors as you were coming up in school?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, but not Navy. Of course, I had read a lot of history.

Paul Stillwell: I was thinking in high school and so forth.

Admiral Crowe: My mentors came through the debate world. There were two kids a year ahead of me, and they were the national champions. One became a very good friend of mine, Gene Edwards. I still talk to him on the phone. The other was Bill Holloway, who is now the Circuit Court of Appeals judge in Denver and Oklahoma City. They

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<sup>\*</sup> World War II began on 1 September 1939, when German ground forces invaded Poland. Two days later Great Britain and France declared war on Germany.

<sup>†</sup> The Battle of Jutland was the most significant naval engagement of World War I. Fought between the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet, it took place 31 May 1916 in the North Sea, off the coast of Denmark. The British lost more ships in the battle but scored a strategic victory by maintaining control of the seas.

were my idols. Gene was the president of the student body ahead of me, and they were tremendous debaters. They were just great. To watch them do it was just fantastic.

In those early years school politics didn't bother me at all. I did very well in school politics. I had a lot of friends in all the classes, and I learned very early that you try to not alienate everybody. But at the Naval Academy—that wasn't much help at the Naval Academy. A different environment.

Paul Stillwell: Why did you go to the University of Oklahoma for a year?

Admiral Crowe: Because my father wanted me to be a member of his fraternity. He had founded the Phi Gam chapter at OU. And my mother said, "You've got to do this; you've got to do it for your dad." So I did it.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about that year's experience?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I was president of the pledge class; I remember that. I was the president of the freshman class. But I won that because we did some dirty dealing. My campaign manager promised our vote to three different other fraternities, I think, or some damn thing like that. The campaign manager was Tom Finney, the guy we were talking about that was later a lawyer. But that was a big year in my life. I was a member of the ROTC, and that's when I first got interested in the Navy really in a big way. The exec of the NROTC unit was a man by the name of Van Arsdall.\* He was a lieutenant commander in the Navy, surface type.

Paul Stillwell: Later a flag officer.

Admiral Crowe: Later a flag officer. And that was the first time that my life really began to—I'd read about it and I'd read history and so forth, but I hadn't had anything to do with the Navy until the ROTC. I was enamored with Van Arsdall. He was great. That

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\* NROTC – Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Lieutenant Commander Clyde J. Van Arsdall, Jr., USN.



opened up some other ways to get into the Naval Academy. There were some ROTC appointments, and they offered me that as well. But then I got this congressional appointment. I forget exactly what happened, but I had three ways of getting in: ROTC, congressional, and there was something else came up. Anyway, I took the congressional appointment because it was from Mike Monroney.\* He was a member of the fraternity and my father's friend, and so forth and so forth. Van Arsdall encouraged me strongly to go to the Naval Academy.

Paul Stillwell: Did you pick Navy ROTC over Army because of your father's influence?

Admiral Crowe: Well, because I wanted to go to the Naval Academy. I just assumed that having a year of the ROTC would be helpful. Now, it's interesting. In my ROTC class was Emmett Tidd.† Do you know Emmett?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: I went to the Naval Academy. He finished at OU, and then by the time I had been in the Navy a few years I ended up at the Pentagon. I think I was a commander, maybe I was a lieutenant commander, and Emmett was a commander. But he and I had been in ROTC together. Of course, he was senior to me because he went straight into the Navy. I was the number-one man in the class my freshman year, and the next year Emmett was the number-one man in the class.

Paul Stillwell: He was in Vietnam a little before you were too.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, yes, yes. And he was a member of the Zumwalt brain trust.‡ You know, he lives in Washington and I haven't seen him in years. Both our pictures are

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\* Almer Stillwell Mike Monroney, a Democrat from Oklahoma, served in the House of Representatives from 3 January 1939 to 3 January 1951 and in the Senate from 3 January 1951 to 3 January 1969.

† Vice Admiral Emmett H. Tidd, USN (Ret.). Tidd was commissioned ensign in the Naval Reserve on 24 February 1945, the year he graduated from Oklahoma University.

‡ Vice Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN, served as Commander Naval Forces Vietnam/Chief of Naval Advisory Group Vietnam from 30 September 1968 to 14 May 1970.

on the wall down there at OU as members of the ROTC that succeeded in the Navy. Emmett was a hard-working guy. He was a good naval officer.

Paul Stillwell: Anything specific about Van Arsdall you remember?

Admiral Crowe: No. He had a lot of sea stories. I remember listening with rapt attention when he'd talk about maneuvering a destroyer or running up the Pearl River in Shanghai. Oh, I thought, now there's a guy that's been everywhere.

I went back to speak at a party the ROTC had, I think 50 years later or something, and Van Arsdall was there. He was quite advanced in age.\* He didn't talk much. I guess he knew who I was; we talked some. But he was in that period where he wasn't saying much to anybody. But then he was still alive.

Paul Stillwell: What was the specific process by which you got the appointment?

Paul Stillwell: Well, my father wrote a bunch of letters. The main ones he wrote were to Mike Monroney. We were hoping for just an appointment. We got a nice letter back from Monroney saying, "I'd be glad to appoint your son if he can excel on the exam; the exam will be given on a certain time and certain date." My father pulled me out of school for a week, and he and I studied for a whole week getting ready for those exams. Then I remember the night before the exam he took me to a movie. I thought, "That doesn't sound right; we're supposed to be studying. What are we doing at a movie?"

Paul Stillwell: That was a smart move on his part.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. Incidentally, it's a piece of advice I've never taken. My own modus operandi is you study until you go in there. Anyway, I took the exam, and I was number one on the exam. Monroney wrote me. I was walking out of the Phi Gam house to go to a chemistry class, and somebody handed me a letter, and just as I was getting to the door I opened it up and there it was: my appointment.

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\* Van Arsdall was born in July 1913.

I can remember Paul Al, who was a very good friend of mine, said, “Well, what are you going to class for? You got the appointment. Why don’t you quit going to class?”

I said, “Oh no, I can’t do that.” I was a pretty serious student.

Paul Stillwell: I assume that your father countenanced this Naval Academy appointment instead of continuing on in his university.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, he was for the Naval Academy. The one year was enough; once I became a Phi Gam he was satisfied.

Paul Stillwell: That fulfilled that obligation.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that took care of that.

Paul Stillwell: What study materials did you use? Did you have old exams to look at?

Admiral Crowe: They had books of Naval Academy exams, which I had looked at quite a bit. But I remember on the Monroney exam they gave us a list of the subjects. There were only three or four subjects that were on it. One was history and one was math, and something else. My dad and I just went over the material in those three or four categories, hoping we’d covered enough.

Then when I went to the Naval Academy and passed through Washington I stayed with my cousin. Monroney had asked me to call him. I didn’t even know him. So I called him, and he invited me over to have lunch in the House dining room with him. So I went to lunch in the Capitol with Representative Monroney. That was a big deal to me. Wowee. That’s the first I’d ever been there, and there was Navy bean soup on the menu. That’s terrible soup.

[Interruption for change of tapes]

Paul Stillwell: We were talking during the break about the prophecy when you were coming out of junior high school. I think that's worth putting on the record.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was in junior high, and that was just published because they knew I wanted to go into the Navy.

Paul Stillwell: But it said that you would be an admiral some day.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. And also it said I dressed like an unmade bed, which was basically right. Linda Lee, a friend of mine, a girl, says every time I see her she remembers my white socks were pinned up with a safety pin to keep them from falling down.

I had a deep affection for my childhood. I think Oklahoma City at that time was a wonderful place to grow up. Now, you had a lot of biases with the intellectual environment it gave you. I see that today when I teach at the Naval Academy. These kids are still carrying around the baggage they brought from home. There isn't anything wrong with that. I figure the beginning of maturity is when you find your father is not always right. It's a big revelation to young people, particularly young men, I think.

Let me just say a word about Oklahoma University. Of course, it was a state university. I taught there after I retired, and I've been familiar with it, connected with it. Both my parents went to school there and were very proud of it, and Shirley graduated from there. Shirley's mother graduated from there. As far as I could see, it was a very good school. I knew children that had gone to the East Coast to school, but I didn't know many. I felt that anybody who had been to the East Coast was well traveled.

But I had actually been here before. I came to Washington in 1936 to the Boy Scout Jamboree. I was not an enthusiastic Boy Scout. I think I may have been the youngest member in the whole place, because the guy they gave it to, I was younger than he was. But my parents made a Boy Scout out of me and gave me a trip to Washington. And as soon as I got back I left the Boy Scouts. I never got along well with the Boy Scouts. But I was in the YMCA, and my aunt had taken me with my cousin to the World's Fair in Chicago, and my parents had taken me on camping trips to Colorado and

to the Grand Canyon.<sup>\*</sup> So I had traveled a little bit, but not outside the country. I guess we actually saw the Mexican border one time in El Paso, Texas. And my aunt took me to Detroit, where I saw the Canadian border. But that was about the size of it. On that Boy Scout trip we went from Washington to New York City. That's the first time I'd ever seen New York City. Then we went to Niagara Falls. And then we went home.

I had a terribly embarrassing experience in Niagara Falls. I was 12 years old, in a Boy Scout uniform, and I went in a gift shop up there. You know, all these cheap bric-a-brac items they sell in places like Niagara Falls. There was a roll of toilet paper hanging on the wall there with dirty sayings, raunchy poems and so forth on each sheet of the paper. I'd never seen anything like it. When nobody was looking, I started reading these sheets of paper. I pulled that thing down and it started playing "Stars and Stripes Forever" in the big music box behind it. Everybody in the place looked over, and I was reading this toilet paper. I overcame my embarrassment finally, but it was quite shocking for a 12-year-old boy.

But what I was going to say about the university—I grew up in an environment, including in high school and junior high, that you had a lot to do with girls, and you had a high respect for girls—at least the people I was with—at my mother's insistence. And even at OU, the fraternity was not exactly like *Animal House*, but there was a lot of drinking in the fraternity, etc.<sup>†</sup> But it was important to the fraternity's reputation that when girls were in the house that there was not much monkey business or anything in the house. The idea of pledges was to teach them how they act around girls, and how they act particularly in the house and when we were entertaining. It was important to our reputation as a fraternity that we not mistreat or abuse or do things that—if you were going to do something, that you did it so nobody knew about it. That was the big point. If you were going to indulge your senses, why, you did it in private. That was extremely important.

Now, I bring that up because it wasn't anything like that at the Naval Academy. I was really disappointed at the Naval Academy. This nonsense about officers and

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<sup>\*</sup> The Century of Progress International Exposition was a World's Fair held in Chicago in 1933 and 1934 to celebrate the city's centennial.

<sup>†</sup> *Animal House* was a 1978 comedy movie that depicted the exploits of an outlaw fraternity that held wild parties and generally did not conform to college standards.

gentlemen—you may end up an officer and a gentleman, but you can't blame it on the Naval Academy, because there was no real effort there to teach us. That may have changed a lot, that we have girls at the Naval Academy now.\* But in my day the way we ate, it was like animals at the table, and there was a lot of raucous stuff. And on the weekend when girls came down for dances and so forth it was every girl for herself, let me tell you. There wasn't anybody worrying about the reputation of the Naval Academy, or should officers act this way or that way. You did anything you could get away with.

Paul Stillwell: Interesting.

Paul Stillwell: And yet the brochure says, well, they teach you how to eat at the table, and they have these tea dances where you meet girls and so forth. It's all nonsense. What I'm really saying is I learned a lot more about how to act, social things, and how to be a decent person at OU than I did at the Naval Academy.

Paul Stillwell: Interesting. That 1933 Chicago World's Fair was famous for Sally Rand, the fan dancer.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That's right. I think I had a picture of Sally behind that big fan.

But I blame that not really so much on the university as I blame it on the fraternity. The fraternity was in many respects a civilizing experience. It's not pictured that way normally.

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: Of course, fraternity people are young, and their juices are flowing, so they do crazy things. And we did a lot of crazy things. But we did them inside the rules.

Now, that was true of the Naval Academy, too, in that regard. We didn't have an honor code at the Naval Academy when I was there. I really thought that was best. You

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\* Women were first admitted to the Naval Academy as midshipmen in the summer of 1976, the same year the other federal service academies admitted women cadets.

didn't have the problem of having to report your friends and so forth. But the more mature duty officers, if you did something wrong they fished you and put you on report, but they didn't think it was the end of the world. And then you'd get some duty officer that did think it was the end of the world. But most of them were Naval Academy graduates and thought this is not going to mean a hell of a lot, but this is what we do here. You had an understanding: if you violate the rules, you pay for it. There wasn't an honor code where we were trying to have everybody report on everybody else.\*

Paul Stillwell: But was there a sense of honor inculcated in other ways?

Admiral Crowe: Well, there was, but I'm not so sure that it was totally successful. There was some cheating at the Naval Academy. Not a whole lot, but there was some. There was a whole lot at Oklahoma University. Man, cheating at Oklahoma was rampant.

Paul Stillwell: Well, at the Academy there was a system. An earlier section would pass the gage to a later section. Was that considered honorable?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did some of that; they passed some of that around. The trouble is, you couldn't trust it. I mean, okay, so it was on that one. There was no guarantee it was going to be on this one. And we had some guys just memorize the answers and go in there and give the answers—wrong exam.

Paul Stillwell: They didn't fit the questions.

Admiral Crowe: No, they didn't fit the questions. And I discovered early in my life—and I discovered this at Oklahoma—they put so much trouble in cheating, if they put all that effort into studying they wouldn't need the cheating. It seemed to me it was six of one and half a dozen of the other.

I didn't see a lot of cheating at the Naval Academy. I did see what you just described, though. A section would come out and say, "Well, what we were asked was

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\* The Naval Academy's honor concept was inaugurated in the early 1950s.

so-and-so and so-and-so and so-and-so.” But you had to be smart enough to determine whether you were giving the right answer to the right question. We didn’t have any big cheating scandals when I was there like they did have later, and West Point had had a lot of them.

I thought the value system at the Naval Academy was big on courage and bravery in trying circumstances, and to see something through. Of course, the whole exercise at the Naval Academy was seeing something through. Very few people that graduated from the Naval Academy enjoyed being there, but they stuck it out. Stockdale and I used to talk about it all the time. I said to him one day, “You know, it’s just a waste of time what you’re doing here if you don’t graduate. If we plan on leaving, we should leave now, because the only thing this is going to mean is if we graduate from here. To have a year or two, that doesn’t mean a damn thing. You’ve got to graduate.” I never considered not graduating. I would have been mortified to go home without graduating. Now, that came from home, not from the Naval Academy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and you’d put so much emotional investment into it.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, absolutely. What is it? Be careful what you pray for; you’re going to get it. Then you really are trapped.

Paul Stillwell: You told me a couple of weeks ago that you plan to be buried next to Admiral Stockdale.<sup>\*</sup> How did that bond develop between the two of you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we actually met the first day we came to the Naval Academy. He was having breakfast with his father. It was in this small restaurant, and I was having breakfast by myself. I guess his father realized what I was doing and came over and asked me if I was entering the Naval Academy. Said I was, and he said, “Would you like to have breakfast with us?” Stockdale had a really colorful father. He had grown up as a salesman of ceramics in the Middle West. Remember the play, “Music Man”?

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<sup>\*</sup> Vice Admiral Stockdale died 5 July 2005 and was buried in the Naval Academy cemetery.



Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Well, his father was one of those guys. He was a marvelous man. Anyway, we can go into that later. I met him there, and then he and I were in the same group in plebe summer, and I knew him then.\* But then when they went into companies for the academic year, we got split up. I was in the 14th Company, and I guess Jim must have been the 15th. But it wasn't near us.

Then my youngster year Jim and his roommate, Stan Smith, lived right across the hall from me. They were in a different company, but this was on the company line, and I lived right across the hall from them. He and I became very, very friendly just from doing things together and lots of messing around.

Then first-class year we were split up again, but by then he and I had become very good friends, and we decided to request the same ship together when we graduated. We did, and we got it, the USS *Carmick* in San Francisco. But he had only been aboard out there about two months when he got orders to go to another destroyer, and he and I never served together again. He went to the *Rowan*, and then he went to flight training, and I went to submarine training.

Paul Stillwell: What specific experiences do you remember having with him as a midshipman?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, a lot of them. I can remember doing a lot of drinking with him. One time we had a debate; we were debating Duke or somebody, and he was the timekeeper. He wasn't on the debate team. But every time we spoke he gave us an extra ten seconds. He got me a blind date once that was just terrible. I remember that whole weekend was painful, and Jim kept apologizing as to what he had done.

We then went to the same ship together in San Francisco. That's when we were let loose. That was the first time we were out of the Academy. We had a lot of adventures out there. One I was going to tell you about was, one night Jim said, "You

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\* A midshipman in his or her first year is called a plebe; second year, youngster or third classman; third year, second classman; fourth year, first classman.

know, I've never had anything to do with a high-class prostitute. We ought to meet some high-class prostitutes. That's part of growing up. We ought to do that."

I said, "Well, how the hell do you do that?"

He said, "Well, get a cab driver." We didn't have any money. I think between us we had 13 bucks. But he got this cab driver, and he said, "Yeah, I can introduce you to some classy stuff."

We drove out to some district in San Francisco. This guy disappeared in the dark and came back with two girls. They were really good-looking, in fur coats. This was Jim's idea, and he was going to do the talking. I wasn't going to do any talking. Jim rolled the window down, and the girl immediately said, "Well, it will be a hundred dollars an hour." Jim turned to me and said, "What do you think?" I didn't know what to do. He said, "What do you think?" We didn't have any money. I don't know what the hell we were doing. I guess I was supposed to say something wise, or, "Well, I'll think it over." Then all of a sudden I started laughing, and the two girls got madder than hell and just stormed right off. That was the end of that. But I'll never forget, Jim turned to me and said, "Well, what do you think?"

Paul Stillwell: You didn't have many options at that point.

Admiral Crowe: No. What I thought was, "We're way over our pay grade here."

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about going on liberty with him as a midshipman?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he had inherited a lot of his father's gall, the traveling salesman. I can remember going to the Statler Hotel on a holiday, and our liberty was only during the day. We didn't want to spend a bunch of money for a hotel room we would get out of at 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon. So Jim said, "Well, look at all those people checking out over there." He went in the line and started talking to people about letting him check them out of their rooms: "We'll check you out," and so forth, and "Give me the money and we'll pay for it," and use their room during the day. He had the gall to do that. I could never have done that.

Were you there the day he was buried?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: I told a story about the Pennsylvania Hotel. That's my favorite story about Jim.

Paul Stillwell: Well, please tell it here.

Admiral Crowe: Jim Stockdale had a lot of ego and a lot of vanity. He got that from his mother, that he's better than most people. You know, it got him through prison camp. A very important quality in a man. All the way up on the train to New York City he said, "Now, look. We don't want anybody to think we're country bumpkins. When we get to New York City we're going to act like we know what the hell we're doing. They're never going to figure out we come from the Midwest, that we're city-ignorant." Again, I didn't know how we were going to do this, but I was all for it. We strolled out of the Pennsylvania Station, got in a cab, and said, "Pennsylvania Hotel." The cab driver looked at us sort of funny, did a U-turn, and charged us 50 cents. The Pennsylvania Hotel was right across the street. When we got out that guy was driving off. Jim and I started laughing, and Jim said, "The least he could have done was drive around the block, for Christ's sake."

But he was big on that. He could try and bluff his way through anything. I had a couple of girls that I went to high school with that were at Hollins.\* They came up for the weekend, and I got Jim a date with Betty Lou Lee, a very good friend of mine, dead now. She carried the whiskey for the weekend, because she was used to doing it in Oklahoma. We were a dry state, and the girls always carried the whiskey, because they had more ways to hide it than the boys did. Jim had worked in his father's ceramic factory, which made johns for the Pullman Company. One of his favorite lines was to say to a girl, "You ever been on a Pullman train?"

She'd say, "Oh, yeah, I have."

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\* Hollins College, a private women's school in southern Virginia.

“Ever use the john on a Pullman train?”

“Oh, I suppose I did.”

“Well, I might have carried it on my head when I was young.” Typical Jim Stockdale.

Paul Stillwell: Not a shy, retiring type.

Admiral Crowe: No, not a shy, retiring type.

Later on—this was not at the Naval Academy, but he was on a carrier, and I was on a submarine, and we both went to France. We were in Nice, about 15 miles outside of Monaco on the Riviera. We were anchored, and you could see the carrier from where I was. He and I went ashore together a lot there in Nice. He came aboard one night and said, “Well, I’ve fixed us up for tomorrow.”

I said, “What are you talking about?”

He said, “We’re going to go skiing.”

I said, “Jim, have you ever been skiing?”

He said, “No, I’ve never been skiing.”

I had never been on skis in my life. And I said, “What in the hell are you talking about?”

He said, “Well, sometime in your life you’re going to be in a cocktail party, and there’s going to be some wise Indian there talking about how he prefers to ski in the Swiss Alps. Well, we’re going to go skiing in the French Alps, and you can butt in and say, ‘Well, I personally prefer the French Alps.’”

I said, “Oh, really?”

We got up at 3:00 o’clock in the morning, caught this bus with a bunch of sailors on it about 4:00 or 5:00, and rode up into the mountains. This is a true story. We were dressed in blue—drill shirt, pants, dark socks. Not in uniform. We got out and went in a little place there and rented skis, never having been on them. Then we went over to the ski lift. I can hardly tell this story and believe it myself. We started up on the ski lift, and it had three stops. I said, “Think we ought to get off at this first stop?”

He said, “No, hell no, go to the top.”

I said “Okay, we’ll go to the top.” That was Jim all the way. So we got off up at the top.

Then the problem came in getting the skis on. People were streaming by us, and Jim kept asking, “Do you speak English? Do you speak English?”

Finally one man says, “Yes, I speak English.”

He said, “Can you help us? We’ve never had skis on before.”

This guy’s eyes got about that big. He helped us, but he kept saying, “Why are you up here? How are you going to go down this damn mountain?”

Jim said, “Carefully.”

It took us a half a day to get down the mountain. It was one of the most rigorous exercises of my life. And, of course, kids about this high were zipping by us, and we were just creeping along. Jim said, “The trouble is, this is all ice. We should be over there in the virgin snow.” So the next thing I know we were in the virgin snow, and it was up to here. I took off a ski to climb out of there, and while I was taking off the other one it went down the mountain by itself. It took an hour to retrieve the skis. It took us half a day to get down the mountain, and it was just a terrible experience.

Well, I’d brought a bottle of whiskey all the way from Norfolk. And once we got down the mountain, the bus and the sailors weren’t going back for another five or six hours. Jim and I took that bottle of whiskey over to the café and sat there and drank the whole thing that afternoon, watching people ski down the mountain. And it had taken us hours to get down that damn mountain, and we were lucky we didn’t bust our—I can remember him coming to a slope and he got up to the front of it, and he said, “Jeez, I’d never make that one.” Turned around, and as he turned around he fell down, and he said, “Nor that one.” That was Jim all the way. I mean, why we were at the very top? That was the last time either one of us ever went skiing. And, sure enough, I was at a party one time when somebody started talking about Swiss Alps, and I immediately informed him, “I ski in the French Alps.”

Paul Stillwell: Well, you fulfilled that obligation.

Admiral Crowe: Well, see, Jim thought that was very funny. That was a perfectly legitimate reason to go skiing in the French Alps.

Paul Stillwell: And it paid off one time in your life.

Admiral Crowe: We did a lot of things like that. He and his wife got married, and they were driving from Pensacola to Newport, I think. He said, “Well, you know, what we Americans usually do is go on these big highways. That’s sort of stupid.” So he took this map, and he drew a line from Pensacola to Newport, and they drove all the way on roads close to the line.

Of course, at the end of his life he turned out to be a real philosopher. He had a really good mind, a better mind than showed up at the Naval Academy. He was a genuine thinker.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds like he would sometimes do things just to do them.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, he would. He wanted a full life. He was an extremely interesting man. In those two months we spent in San Francisco we spent all the money we’d saved at the Naval Academy—adventure after adventure with him. He enjoyed life. And, of course, he turned out to be a hell of an aviator. He did a lot of deep thinking about aviation, which I really was surprised when he did it. Learning to fly is one thing, but to think deeply about what you’re doing is another. But he took the science of aviation really seriously.

Of course, near the end of his life he had lost a lot of his sense of humor.\* The very end of his life, the last time I was really with him was at Monterey, California. I went in and made a speech. His son was teaching at a school out there, and I made the commencement speech at his son’s school. Sybil and Jim came up for it, and we stayed at the big hotel right there in Monterey. We had suites right next to each other. I was over in their suite. Shirley and I were, talking, and I brought up Jimmy Carter’s name. Oh, Sybil doesn’t like Jimmy Carter at all. And I’ll tell you the reason. Because at the

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\* Vice Admiral Stockdale died on 5 July 2005.

55th reunion he gave the address in the chapel, and never mentioned Jim. Sybil never forgave Jimmy Carter for that.\*

Well, anyway, I said, “We want to put a statue up at the Naval Academy for Carter—been our only President—but I can’t get anybody interested in doing this. I can’t get any money out of the alumni.”

Sybil said, “We don’t want to build a statue to that asshole.” I thought that was rather strong language. And I thought, “Oh, my, we don’t?” Then she had a few nasty things to say about Carter. And then she said, “I’d rather have statues of you and Jim there.”

Jim, who had been sort of out of this conversation, straightened up and turned to me and said, “Then we’d have two assholes.” There was a flash of his old sense of humor. That’s something he would have said when he was younger.

Paul Stillwell: Do you think declining health was a factor in this?

Admiral Crowe: I think it was everything. It was an odd mixture. In the first place, he had seen a lot of disillusioning things about life. How a man can torture another man and get delight out of it? A sobering experience. But he’s the only returning prisoner of war that I know of that could actually articulate the experience in really sophisticated terms, and really talk about it without either getting mad or breaking down, one or the other. Life had just become a very serious business to him. Then with all this philosophy on top of it, and trying to figure out how you use philosophers and how he used it in prison camp. And, of course, he’d been through the Perot fiasco.†

Paul Stillwell: That was a disillusioning experience also.

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\* James E. “Jimmy” Carter, Jr., a Naval Academy classmate of Stockdale and Crowe, served as President of the United States from 20 January 1977 to 20 January 1981.

† In 1992 H. Ross Perot ran for President as an independent candidate. He asked Stockdale to become a placeholder as vice presidential candidate on the ticket, with the understanding that someone else would be named prior to the campaign. Perot then dropped out of the race temporarily. When he returned, Stockdale was still on the ticket. On short notice, Stockdale was called upon to take part in the televised vice presidential debate on 13 October 1992, even though he had little opportunity to prepare. The result was a blow to his reputation in the perception of many viewers.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, very disillusioning. Never forgave Perot for that, really. And Jim didn't drive anymore. He didn't write checks. She did everything. And he just sort of wandered off into the theoretical world of abstract thinking. Did it very well. I mean, he was certainly good at it. But it was not the world he started with. He was really a gung-ho, practical, fun guy, and my memories of him are all sort of sweet. I mean, he was fun to be with.

We terrorized San Francisco. And, of course, there everything was built around chasing girls. Then he went off and got married. He got married about a year after we graduated. I was in China when he got married, so I didn't get to go to the wedding.

Paul Stillwell: That had to be just a brief, happy moment for you when he made that comment about the statues.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I thought it was hilarious. Marvelous. What a wonderful comment. And that was the way he would have thought about it.

But he could get passionate about things. I heard Oscar Hagberg, the football coach, talk about Jim—though he wasn't much of a football coach.\* Somebody asked him who was the best football player he had, and he said, "Well, I've got some all-Americans playing for me. But if you asked me who had the most spirit and the will and the most stick-to-itiveness, I'd tell you it was a second-stringer named Stockdale." Tells you a lot about Jim.

Paul Stillwell: That's the way he was throughout life.

Admiral Crowe: That's exactly right. Exactly. He'd never say give up. He'd never, never, never, he'd never give up. He talked to me a lot about his prison experience. He said that I'd taught him the Oklahoma fight song, "Boomer Sooner." And they piped music into the cells, patriotic music. And one of the songs was the same music. And he

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\* Commander Oscar E. Hagberg, USN, was the Naval Academy's head football coach for the 1944 and 1945 seasons. The team's overall record in those years was 13-4-1, a percentage of .750.



said he used to sit on his bunk singing in as loud a voice as he could, “Boomer Sooner.” And the North Vietnamese had no idea what he was talking about.

Paul Stillwell: You search for little moments in that kind of prison experience.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I’m sure. Yes. Little things become very important. Well, it colored his whole life. And, of course, that came through in the Perot campaign. It was lost on the American public, who just saw what had happened, without thinking about what he actually said and what he’d been through.

Paul Stillwell: And the sad thing is that’s probably one thing that most Americans remember about him.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That is sad. That’s very sad.

Paul Stillwell: Just to backtrack, what do you remember about coming in, taking the oath, and going through plebe summer?

Admiral Crowe: Not a whole lot. It was sort of as I expected it would be—a lot of hollering and marching. I came through plebe summer pretty well. I had enough athletic ability that I could do the things we had to do. I remember we played volleyball. I loved volleyball. We swam a lot, and I was a good swimmer. Then, outside that, we rowed a lot, which didn’t seem to be too hard, although it was very hot in the middle of the day. It was cold in the morning. I remember when we got up it was always cold, and then by the middle of the day it was hot as hell. But everybody was feeling out everybody else.

The people who excelled, of course, were the people that came in from the fleet, who had already had a lot of military experience of one sort or another, and knew something about the Navy. I had a roommate that was out of the fleet, and he used to say, “I’ve been past more lighthouses than you’ve been telephone poles.”

Paul Stillwell: Who was he?

Admiral Crowe: Fred Sachse.\*

Paul Stillwell: Well, but you also had the benefit of that year in NROTC, compared to people coming in cold.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did. And in fact a lot of the stuff we took at the Naval Academy I'd already had at Oklahoma. I remember solid geometry—I'll never forget it. There's a problem in solid geometry where you plot it out, and so forth, but also the answer is 0-0, and you put a little circle around 0-0. I made a 4.0 on that exam. But I'd had it at Oklahoma before I took it. But I remember seeing through that and putting the circle around 0-0.

People who had been in the Preparatory School took a lot of courses that were very similar to the ones they took as plebes. I've got a granddaughter in NAPS right now.† She's just started, my Marine son's daughter.‡ We hope she's going to the Naval Academy next year.

Paul Stillwell: Did she have any enlisted experience?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, no. She's straight out of high school. But the trick was to get her to go to NAPS, to mature her more and so forth. She's agreeable. Her father's in Iraq right now.§

Paul Stillwell: You told me you learned e-mail to communicate with him.

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\* Midshipman Frederick C. Sachse, Jr., USN.

† Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) in Newport, Rhode Island.

‡ The granddaughter is Amanda Leigh Crowe, daughter of Lynne and W. Blake Crowe. Lynne was a Marine Corps officer from 1982 to 1988, when she left active duty and the couple started their family. Blake was promoted to brigadier general in 2008.

§ At the time of the interview, Colonel W. Blake Crowe, USMC, was commanding officer of 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. In 2006-07 he deployed the regimental headquarters to Western Al Anbar, Iraq, as Regimental Combat Team Seven (RCT 7).

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I'm on e-mail with him now. It's a big year in his life, change in his life. I noticed this morning in the paper they're losing more people now than at any other time since they've been there. He's lost 27 in his regiment since he's been there. I think what's going on now is such a disaster that it's just horrible.

Paul Stillwell: There's a new book out by Tom Ricks called *Fiasco* that I've just started reading this week.\*

Admiral Crowe: You did? Is it a good book?

Paul Stillwell: Yes. It traces the current war back to the 1991 Gulf War, taking lessons from that and what happened and didn't happen in preparation.

Admiral Crowe: These guys don't take lessons from anybody. At least that's my read on the situation. He got orders. My son's getting orders. When he gets back he gives up the regiment, and then on the first of June he reports as CO of the Marine Barracks, at Eighth and I.<sup>†</sup> So I said, "Blake, you're always bitching about VIPs visiting you out there. Wait till you get to Eighth and I. You'll drown in the middle of VIPs."

Paul Stillwell: Well, you'll see a lot more of him then.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, absolutely.

Paul Stillwell: About the Academy, you've said that you didn't take too well to the regimentation. What specifics do you recall?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I mentioned my biggest concern. I didn't think they put a lot of effort into making us more polished gentlemen. But I didn't like the discipline. It turned into be just a big contest between you and the administration. I was in a company that we

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\* Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: the American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006.)

<sup>†</sup> This refers to the Marine Barracks in southeast Washington, D.C., not far from the Washington Navy Yard.

were mostly simpatico. The bulk—not all, but the bulk of the company didn't like the administration's discipline, so we spent a lot of time flouting the system and hoping we'd get away with it.

We did a lot of drinking at the Naval Academy. I can remember sitting there in my room with a glass of whiskey with my hand out the window. And if the door flew open and there was a duty officer, I was just going to let the glass go.

Paul Stillwell: Where did you hide it?

Admiral Crowe: We had all kinds of places, most of which never fooled anybody. I had a fellow in the class that took his toaster and put it on a string outside his window, so it was outside the building. And, sure enough, some duty officer found that. You developed a certain pride in just telling them to take the system and—and, I say, the mature duty officers understood that.

But when I was a plebe we had a duty officer the name of McSomething, and I was the messenger for the day. I didn't know which end was up at the Naval Academy, but I'd go up there and I'd follow this duty officer around and put people on the pad, or names, whatever. It was on a Sunday, and it was during the war. So to take a guest to chapel you had to submit a request on Monday to get the name cleared to bring the guest in on Sunday. Well, it *was* Sunday, and some first classman walked in, and he wanted permission to bring his girlfriend to chapel. He sent this chit in, and I took it in to the duty officer to sign. The duty officer said, "Doesn't this clown know that this was supposed to be in here last Monday?"

I said, "Commander, I don't have the slightest idea what he knows or doesn't know, but he's got a girlfriend out there and he wants to bring her in."

So he said, "Send this guy in here." So I stood there as he and this commander had this conversation. He said, "Did you realize this was supposed to be in here on Monday?"

The midshipman said, "Yes, sir, I understood that. But on Monday I didn't know my girlfriend was coming today."

He said, "You know, if I sign this you get 15 demerits?"

He said, “Yes, sir. I know that.”

He says, “You know, that 15 demerits will detract from your class standing, and it may be ten years from now when you’re up for lieutenant commander they may draw the line right there, and because of this you’re under the line. You don’t make lieutenant commander for another year. Do you know that?”

The kid said, “Yeah, I know that, Commander.”

He said, “You still want to bring her to chapel?”

He said, “Yes, sir. I want to bring her to chapel.”

The duty officer signed the chit: “You’re on report.” And I thought. “That midshipman couldn’t have cared less about being a lieutenant commander. All that crap about the future. He’s got a girlfriend out there; he wants to bring her to chapel.”

(Interruption for change of tape)

Admiral Crowe: There was a lot of energy, and also pride, involved in going over the wall, you know, and I got into that mode.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I’ve heard that down by Thompson Stadium was a good place.\*

Admiral Crowe: We used to go out that way. There were several ways in and out of that place. And, of course, the stakes were fairly high. That was a first-class offense. It wasn’t a dismissal, but it was very easy to go over your limit that way. So we had, at least I had, a sort of a thumb rule that I tried to do all the chicken stuff—shine my shoes and keep my uniform clean, comb my hair—because I knew if I got it I was going to get it big, and I wanted to have a little room to maneuver there. I went all plebe summer without getting a demerit. Then they allowed plebes to date one weekend. My roommate got me a blind date, and I got fried three times that weekend over that damn girl.

You won’t believe this story either, but she was late to everything and, God, the weekend was a disaster. I didn’t know this girl, never seen her since. But on Sunday we picked up these two girls that we’d been with for the weekend—we were actually

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\* Thompson Stadium was then used for Naval Academy football games.

terrified of girls—and we asked them where they wanted to go to lunch. This girl said, “Well, we’d like to go to Carvel Hall.” You remember Carvel Hall used to be there?\*

Paul Stillwell: Yes, across the street.

Admiral Crowe: We had no goddamn money. We went in there and ordered a lunch, knowing we couldn’t pay for it, but we didn’t have the nerve to tell those two girls that we couldn’t afford that. And, of course, I ordered the cheapest thing, and they ordered the most expensive thing. I was not eating it. I was sitting there thinking: “What the hell do we do now? And we did this!” I was just sweating blood, just at the end of the bloody world.

There was a guy—first name was Joe—a year ahead of me, and he lived across the hall.<sup>†</sup> He came in with his father, who was a captain in the Navy, and they sat down for lunch over there. Finally I got up and I went over there, and I confessed our sins and asked if I could borrow money to pay for this damn thing. That captain thought that was the funniest thing he’d ever heard. He was laughing all over the place. He loaned us some money. I paid the bill, and then I paid Joe back as soon as we could get it. But we went in and ordered a meal because we were scared of those girls.

Paul Stillwell: What was the big attraction when you went over the wall? What did you do once you got out in town?

Paul Stillwell: Well, you went out to see your girlfriend. But, of course, that usually involved a bunch of drinking out there, just in the group of people who were out there all yukking it up. It was a much purer place than it is now. Girls were much more guarded than they are today, and I didn’t see much real womanizing. There was some of it, of course.

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\* Opened at the beginning of the 20th century, Carvel Hall was a hotel across the street from the Naval Academy. It was a favorite meeting place for officers and midshipmen, and midshipmen’s dates often stayed there. It has since been torn down.

<sup>†</sup> Bancroft Hall is the large multi-wing dormitory that houses Naval Academy midshipmen. It also contains the offices of members of the executive department, including the commandant, executive officer, and battalion and company officers.

What they usually did, of course, after a dance you'd rush back to the house where she was staying, and there'd be four or five girls stay there, so there'd be five couples in the front room all kissing up a storm. The lights all out, and all this heavy breathing going on, with these couples all in the same room. All of a sudden about five minutes before we were due in, somebody would holler, "Five minutes!" They'd turn on all the lights, and all the women were readjusting their dresses and all the guys were pulling up their coats, and we'd rush out the door and run all the way back.

One night Jim and I were running together, and some girl in an evening dress was running with us. She'd obviously had something to drink. We didn't know her, but we were running along and here she was, running with us. About halfway back she was missing, and I said, "Jim, what in the hell happened to the girl in the dress?"

He said, "She buckled at the drugstore." We never saw her again. I don't know what happened to her. But that was quite routine. That was sort of the routine for the weekend.

Paul Stillwell: What was your success rate on flouting the rules?

Admiral Crowe: Pretty good. I didn't get a Class A. I got out of there without a Class A. Every one of my friends had a Class A. My company led the brigade. In fact, some other company pulled up one time and tied, and we had a meeting on what we were going to do about it. By the time the meeting was over my roommate got a Class A. We had a lot of Class A's in my company, but I avoided it. But I did have a lot of demerits.

Paul Stillwell: So you never got sent to the *Reina Mercedes*?\*

Admiral Crowe: No. We didn't really do that in those days. There was a lot of talk about it, but we never went there; we had confinement to our room. Jack Stephens, who later was the wealthiest man in the world, was confined to his room for two months, and I

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\* USS *Reina Mercedes* (IX-25), captured during the Spanish-American War, served as a station ship at the Naval Academy from 1912 to 1957. Until 1940, midshipmen being punished for various disciplinary infractions slept and took meals on board the ship but continued to go to classes ashore.

thought he was going to go bonkers.\* He really almost went over the cliff. Because he went out on V-J night and attacked the nurses' quarters.† The night the war was over.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I read in your *Lucky Bag* there was a two-day holiday after that.‡

Admiral Crowe: Well, there wasn't for him. There was a bunch of them who were over there that night. I missed that. I don't know why I missed it. Fortunately I missed it, though.

I was on a weekend here in Washington in the Statler Hotel one Saturday night and I ran into—I think he was a colonel in the Air Force or something. He'd just come back from Japan, and he was pretty drunk. I was talking to him, and he said, "You ever had any sake?"

I said no, I've never drunk sake in my life. He rushed in his room and got a bottle of sake and gave it to me. He said, "You'll like this sake." And then the last thing he said to me is, "Be sure and heat it up before you drink it."

So I put this sake in a shoebox, smuggled it into the Naval Academy, and invited everybody in my group up to the room after supper on Sunday night to have some sake. Of course, we were just stupid, so young and foolish and stupid. We were only three months from graduation. I got out my hotplate and we put the bottle of sake on the hotplate, lit it off, went on talking, and forgot to take the cork out of the bottle. All of a sudden there was this explosion—sake all over the room. You could get rid of the bottle very quickly, but the sake was everywhere. I had two roommates going around spreading Aqua Velva like this.

Paul Stillwell: To cover up the aroma.

Admiral Crowe: We didn't have a duty officer in that room for about a month. Just sheer luck. You could smell sake everywhere. You know, it was winter weather. We

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\* Midshipman Jackson T. Stephens, USN.

† V-J Day—Victory over Japan Day, marked the end of the war in the Pacific on 15 August 1945. Because of the time difference it was 14 August in the United States when combat ended.

‡ *Lucky Bag* is the name of the yearbook for each Naval Academy graduating class.



opened all the windows, froze to death trying to get rid of this smell. Until the day I left there, you could go into a corner and smell sake. We never had any. Somebody licked it off the desk, but I never got a taste of sake. All I knew is it exploded. Stockdale was there that night.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember Hector the Specter?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I do.

Paul Stillwell: Please tell me about him.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was a bona fide hero.

Paul Stillwell: Amos T. Hathaway. He was in the Battle of Leyte Gulf.\*

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I've made a couple of speeches on that incident. Wrote an article for a newspaper on it. We just considered him a duty officer, Hector the Specter. But he had a Navy Cross, and he earned it. Boy, he earned it the hard way.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, he did. But was he the epitome of the guy who was trying to put people on report?

Admiral Crowe: No, he wasn't very serious about it. He did put a lot of people on report. He was very good at it. But I don't think he ever took it too seriously. I can remember I had a dirty hat, and Hector came by the front row going this way, and as soon as he went by the guy in front of me, Bob Wilson, we changed hats.<sup>†</sup> We didn't think Hector had seen us, and he didn't even mention it. He just turned around and came right

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\* On 25 October 1944 Commander Hathaway was commanding officer of the *Fletcher*-class destroyer *Heermann* (DD-532) during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. San Bernardino Strait had been left unguarded, and Japanese heavy warships came through toward the invasion beaches. Under fire from Japanese ships, the *Heermann* fired 5-inch shells at the heavy cruisers *Chikuma* and *Tone*, seven torpedoes at the heavy cruiser *Haguro*, and three torpedoes at the battleship *Haruna*. For his wartime service he received a Navy Cross, Legion of Merit, and two Bronze Stars.

<sup>†</sup> Midshipman Robert H. Wilson, USN.

back down the aisle and stopped in front of me: “Oh, I know why you changed hats,” and put us both on report.

Paul Stillwell: What a certain poetic justice in that.

Admiral Crowe: He was pretty serious about reports. He was all over the place.

But some of those duty officers seemed to enjoy it. I had a classmate by the name of O’Shea, who had a really colorful career.\* Bob O’Shea was pretty relaxed, even as a plebe. He had an older brother that was a first classman when we were plebes, and his father was a colonel in the Marine Corps. One Saturday night when plebes were not allowed to go ashore, taps came at 10:00 o’clock, and my room was right next door to O’Shea’s. But the taps bell didn’t ring. Somehow the system got screwed up, no ring. Ten o’clock came and my roommate and I climbed into bed and turned out the lights. But O’Shea stayed in there washing his clothes or something. Ten-fifteen, and all of a sudden the mate of the deck, an upperclassman, came in and said, “Why aren’t you in bed?”

He said, “Well, I haven’t heard any taps bell.”

He said, “Well, it’s 10:15. Taps was 15 minutes ago. You should be in bed.”

“Well, I didn’t hear the bell.”

“Well, there wasn’t any bell.” So finally O’Shea climbed in bed.

It turned out the mate of the deck started back down the hall, and about that time the bell rang. O’Shea couldn’t tell when to keep his mouth shut. O’Shea hollered, “What’s that, mate? Reveille?” He turned right around and put O’Shea on report.

Paul Stillwell: Sometimes silence is the best answer.

Admiral Crowe: That was typical O’Shea. He just couldn’t know when to shut up. He’s still alive. He was a prisoner in Korea. He was a Marine, Bob O’Shea.

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\* Midshipman Robert J. O’Shea, USN.

Paul Stillwell: Was John Bulkeley teaching steam when you were there?\*

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't think he was, when I was there. Davenport taught it, though, a famous submarine commander and five-time Navy Cross winner or some damn thing.<sup>†</sup> He taught steam when we were there. I think Bulkeley came after that. We had several bona fide heroes on the staff and teaching people. And we followed all those events very closely.

But it was essentially a trade school. We studied a little naval history and a little bit of European history, I guess. We didn't study much.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I've heard there was a rote method of teaching, which would work for your memorization ability.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. It was very rote. Everything was rote. The only elective was language. O'Shea, curiously enough, had been on duty with his father in Mexico for four or five years at one point. He spoke fluent Spanish. He stood about the bottom of the class in everything, but Spanish, he stood two or three in the class. He later got out of the Marine Corps and went to work in Puerto Rico as some big drug company's representative, and lived there for years.<sup>‡</sup> His Spanish got him that job.

I've always regretted that I never could speak a foreign language. It's one of my big regrets, that I should have put more effort into that. If I had understood what was going on better, instead of rotating it, I would have tried to really speak it.

Paul Stillwell: Were there any parts of that educational experience that challenged you to think?

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\* Lieutenant John D. Bulkeley, USN, received the Medal of Honor for his operations in command of a PT boat squadron around the Philippines in the early part of World War II. As a commander, he taught at the Naval Academy after World War II. "Steam" refers to naval propulsion engineering.

<sup>†</sup> Commander Roy M. Davenport, USN, was awarded five Navy Crosses during the war for his service in command of the *Haddock* (SS-231) and *Trepang* (SS-412)—more than any other submarine skipper received. Postwar analysis, however, greatly reduced the amount of Japanese tonnage credited to him.

<sup>‡</sup> O'Shea retired in 1956 as a Marine Corps captain.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I guess in the sense you're talking about, I had high grades in English history and government on papers I wrote. That came from my other education. I stood higher on that than I did in any other subject, and I had to think there. But on the ordnance subjects, I just memorized everything that was on the damn plate. And seamanship much the same way.

But when I got to Submarine School they started asking different kinds of questions. They would teach you about what a torpedo is like, and then they would do it like a doctor. The torpedo has a headache. Why has it got a headache? And you'd have to think out the system. I think that's the first time I really began to think in a rational chain of events to come to a conclusion.

Paul Stillwell: There certainly wasn't what's now described as thinking outside the box. That probably wasn't encouraged.

Paul Stillwell: Not much of it, no. They didn't have anything like the kind of course I teach at the Naval Academy now. In fact, I've had several people, like Minter, who was the superintendent, come in and sit in on the class, and that was the remark he made when he left.\* He said, "I've never seen a class like that." And certainly they didn't have anything at the Naval Academy like that when I was a midshipman. Now they've got 19 majors, something like that.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember hazing, either receiving or delivering?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, of course, I always remember receiving it. I tried like hell to keep a low profile. I didn't always succeed. If you didn't do a varsity sport, you had to do an intramural sport, and they had a very spirited competition between battalions in the winter set. And everybody had to participate in something. Well, I've always been a very good Ping-Pong player. Our battalion team was sort of bereft of Ping-Pong players, so I went down there, and the coach didn't give a damn I was a plebe. I made the

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\* Rear Admiral Charles S. Minter, USN, was superintendent of the Naval Academy from January 1964 to June 1965. The oral history of Minter, who retired as a vice admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection. He remained in close touch with the Naval Academy until his death in April 2008 at the age of 93.

Ping-Pong team. Well, I was very quiet about it. I never mentioned that to anybody, because a plebe doing Ping-Pong was not customary. That was considered a sport that a first-classman would play, because there wasn't any real work connected with it.

Paul Stillwell: Not real manly.

Admiral Crowe: No. One day I was sitting there with my roommate. There were three of us—Guy Marvin, and Bowman, and myself.\* A first classman burst in the door, and we all stood up. (I'll tell you another Stockdale story in a minute.) We all stood up, and he said, "What sport are you in?" And somebody said this, and Bowman, who had no talent whatsoever in athletics, was in military track, which was just another way to say they ran the commando course for time; it was a terrible sport. Then he turned to me and said, "What sport are you in?" And I was trying to think, "Now, how am I going to handle this?" when Bowman, my roommate, started in and said, "He's in Ping-Pong." That was my last day in Ping-Pong. I was so mad at Bowman I could have throttled him. That first classman immediately enrolled me in military track, and I never got back to the Ping-Pong table.

Paul Stillwell: You said that you had another good Stockdale story.

Admiral Crowe: Jim Stockdale had a roommate, Stan Smith, who was a rancher from Wyoming. We finally figured Stan out. He was a cowboy before he came to the Naval Academy, he was a cowboy at the Naval Academy, and he was a cowboy when he left. He was a wonderful man, but he was a little naïve about a lot of military things, and really didn't give a damn about them either. There was a guy name of McIntyre from Oklahoma, of all places, in the class ahead of ours.† And he really had it in for Smith. He picked on Smith every opportunity he could get.

One day Stockdale and Smith are sitting at their desks studying. McIntyre slammed open the door, and they both stood up. The custom was to say, "Midshipman Stockdale, fourth class." And Stan, who had a tendency occasionally to get confused,

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\* Midshipman Stephen D. Marvin, USN; Midshipman Newell S. Bowman, USN.

† Midshipman Robert G. McIntyre, USN.

stood up and said, “Midshipman McIn-, I meant, what I meant was Mid-, what I meant was, oh, shit, here comes McIntyre.” Then Stockdale got to laughing. McIntyre got mad. It evidently was quite a circus. “Oh, shit, here comes McIntyre.” I forget what happened after that. That was enough.

Paul Stillwell: It probably wasn’t good.

Admiral Crowe: No. We did some crazy things. You know, I told you I was living across the aisle, and one night before an exam, after taps, I went over to Stockdale’s room to work on my slide rule. Smith came to our room to talk to my roommate about something. And in the middle of all this the duty officer showed up. He didn’t get too mad, but he found Stockdale and I working on this slide rule, and he said, “It’s after taps. You’d better get to bed. And you’d better get your windows up.” So we threw the windows up, he turned off the lights and left, and I get in Smith’s bed. We didn’t tell him I didn’t live there.

About that time Smith returned, found me in his bed, and said, “What the hell’s going on here?” And the duty officer’s trailing off down the hall; he didn’t even know the duty officer was there. That sort of nonsense went on. Once you live in a culture you get an instinct what you can do and what not do, and you know when trouble’s coming.

I had another roommate first-class year named Fantozzi.\* He was also a piece of work. He was an Italian boy from Chicago. His father was the head of a national symphony orchestra up in Chicago. One thing was overriding in his world. That was girls. He loved to chase girls. He was a very smart guy. He went to the University of Illinois and damn near flunked out. But he got to the Naval Academy, where we were regulated, so when he had to study he studied, and he did extremely well. But first-class year, June Week, there was a lot of partying going on.† Graduation was the end of the week. He came in after a big drinking bout and, instead of going through the front door the way you’re supposed to, he knew he couldn’t get by there, so he climbed over a

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\* Midshipman Donald W. Fantozzi, USN.

† June Week was the term at the time for the collection of festivities surrounding the graduation and commissioning of the first classmen. Naval Academy classes now graduate in late May during what is known as Commissioning Week.

railing over the moat outside of Bancroft Hall to go in the window of a bedroom, and fell. Fell in the moat. Hit his head, got a concussion, and didn't graduate for another month or two. They put him in the hospital, and then he got out and graduated. Later killed flying. But I can remember he fell that night in the moat.

I had a wonderful story about Fantozzi. I was in Washington one night on a weekend, and I met a Puerto Rican girl, very young—13 or 14, 15, maybe. Very attractive. I asked her if she'd ever seen the Naval Academy, and she said no, she'd never seen it. I said, "Well, why don't you come down and see it?"

She said, "I can't come down there, what are you talking about?" She said, "If you want me to come down there, write my mother." So I wrote her mother. And I got a nice letter back from her mother that said, well, she'd be glad to have her come down, but she would be chaperoned by Ms. So-and-so, and she named the name of this woman, who was 30 years old, something like that. She could come down for the afternoon on Sunday if that would be all right. I said that'd be fine. So I asked Fantozzi to go with me.

They drove up in a convertible, and we introduced everybody around. I got in the back seat with the girl I'd met. This woman drove us to a bar that we knew of somewhere that we thought we could drink. She let the girl and me out to go in and drink beer. Then she drove Fantozzi into the woods and screwed him all afternoon.

Paul Stillwell: Some chaperone.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. Then she came back and picked us up before we had to be in. The girl and I had a nice conversation. Fantozzi just fell into the whole thing. He had a talent for that sort of thing. I thought that was hilarious. That's the kind of chaperone I was interested in.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, of course. What do you remember about being physically hazed, or come-arounds?

Admiral Crowe: That went on, a lot of come-arounds, and a lot of nonsense that went with it.\* Of course, I had been a pledge at OU for a year, and it wasn't exactly all new to me. What you learn is that some people are mean as hell, but most people aren't. But every class has a few that are mean as hell, and you try like hell to avoid them. They can be very perturbing at times, and they can be mean as hell. Somebody made me eat a rutabaga sandwich once. I've never eaten rutabaga again. It can be very upsetting like that, but it wasn't that bad a year. Could have been a lot worse.

You learned to lie. You're supposed to do all these things as a plebe. Have garters on, and your tie collars right, and what else? Cuff links, and something else. But I learned that you didn't have to do all that stuff. As long as you had one garter on—he'd say, have you got all this on? I'd said, "Well, I've got a garter on." And they look at the garter and say fine. There were all kinds of ways to avoid it. But if you got caught, then you got caught.

The guys that were mean, they would carry it on for weeks. Pushups. My roommate, who had no strength or talent, Bowman—you're supposed to do as many pushups as your class number. The first time he tried he got three. But he finally ended up with 47. They came in every night till he could do 47. But I remember the first night he stopped at three. He never did climb 25 feet on that rope. We had to send somebody in there to do it for him. And I went in and took the swimming test for Fantozzi. He never could swim.

Paul Stillwell: How could you get away with that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's a good question. One of the things we did a lot of is we'd steal thermometers. They had sick call every morning. But there was an art to sick call. What you wanted was to be sick enough not to go to class, but to stay in your room.

Paul Stillwell: But not too sick to enjoy being in your room.

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\* A "come-around" meant having to report to the room of an upper classman to answer questions and perhaps undergo some form of hazing.



Admiral Crowe: And not sick enough to go to the hospital. If you had 105 you'd go to the hospital. About 100 to 102 you'd go to your room. So we would steal a thermometer and we'd get the right temperature in it and put it in our pocket. Go down to sick call. The corpsman would put a thermometer in your mouth and then he'd turn around to get the next guy and you'd shift the thermometers. Then learn whether you had made it right. I ended up in the hospital once. One day, you know? I had a temperature, and the chart said the rest of the 24 hours. But one time we went down there to try that, and everybody had stolen thermometers, and they didn't have any. We were all sitting there with thermometers, and the corpsman didn't have any. Now, that's something you remember.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: I had some very interesting people in my company. This fellow I mentioned a moment ago, Jack Stephens. He was from Little Rock, Arkansas, and had an eye problem. Never got commissioned, but he got graduated. He went back and went in business with his brother in Arkansas, Jack Stephens Industries. He has since died, but he was one of the richest men in the country, about seven and a half billion dollars. He was the richest man in our class. He was older than the rest of us, two or three years older. His roommate, Vernon Weaver, was a very good friend of mine, and is still.\* He and I were very good friends. He was a year or two older than I was. He had been to college three years before he came to the Naval Academy.

I had several admirals in my company: Bill Harris and Jeff Metzel and myself, Bill St. George.† They were all out of the company. We had sort of a non-reg company, but it was a good company. They're all still extremely friendly.

Paul Stillwell: In your *Lucky Bag* entry it said that you were a potential candidate for the posture squad. What did that mean?

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\* Midshipman A. Vernon Weaver, USN.

† Midshipman William L. Harris, Jr., USN; Midshipman Jeffrey C. Metzel, Jr., USN; Midshipman William R. St. George, USN.

Admiral Crowe: That meant my neck was crooked. They called me “The Neck.” “Der Hals.” That was German for neck. My roommate used to laugh a lot about my neck being crooked, and the upperclassmen were always making me straighten my whatever, I don’t know. They never succeeded altogether.

Paul Stillwell: So the unmade bed was a separate issue then.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But, really, the purpose of the posture squad was, if you had a serious problem you had to actually muster with the posture squad and do exercises and things. I can remember as a plebe a guy in my company by the name of Ellenberger, a Swedish guy from Minnesota, first classman.\* Huge man. Big weightlifter. Crew. And he stopped in front of me, very Scandinavian, very blond, and said, “You ever row?” Well, I guess first he said, “Where are you from?”

I said, “I’m from Oklahoma.”

“You ever row?”

I said “No, I’ve never rowed.”

He said, “Well, you don’t know what life’s all about till you’ve rowed three miles and thrown up in the shell.” And I thought, now that’s just the sport I’m looking for, that you go out and do it and then throw up in the shell.

Paul Stillwell: Ping-Pong sounds better.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that’s right. He thinks he’s going to get me out there rowing when it’s standard to throw up in the shell.

Paul Stillwell: People have different ideas for what life should be.

Admiral Crowe: Well, they do. That’s right.

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\* Midshipman Vernon H. Ellenberger, USN, class of 1945.

Ellenberger had a ship that cut a submarine in two later on, out in Hawaii. It's funny how these names come back. You don't see them for years and then they stroll in and stroll out, or something like that.

Paul Stillwell: Was that the *Stickleback*? She collided with a destroyer.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was the *Stickleback*.<sup>\*</sup> I had a friend that was the CO of the *Stickleback*, Schulz. He was a first classman. He was a mean son of a bitch when he was a first classman. Then he and I became very good friends. He once made me sing the songs from "Oklahoma!" Oh, God, I can't sing a lick. It was terrible. But he and I became very friendly later on in life.

Every plebe has a first classman, and I had a first classman name of Berger, who was a very nice guy.<sup>†</sup> But I never saw him after he graduated from the Naval Academy. He didn't stay in the Navy long. But his roommate, Cooley, I saw became an admiral later, a flier.<sup>‡</sup> I used to meet Seymour Cooley some. But your first classman is sort of your touch with reality—the only thing that keeps you sane.

Paul Stillwell: How did he happen to become your first classman?

Admiral Crowe: I think just sheer looking for a plebe. Just sheer chance. Lots of times if you were from the same state or something a guy would take it intentionally because he would have some sympathy for your problem. But Mel Berger, though, was a nice guy. He helped me out on several occasions.

Paul Stillwell: I once interviewed Schulz's lawyer, who got him exonerated in the *Stickleback* case, a submariner named Andy Kerr.<sup>§</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> The submarine *Stickleback* (SS-415) sank on 29 May 1958 after colliding with the destroyer escort *Silverstein* (DE-534) in the vicinity of Hawaii. The commanding officer of the *Stickleback* at the time was Lieutenant Commander Quinley R. Schulz, USN.

<sup>†</sup> Midshipman William A. Berger, USN, class of 1945.

<sup>‡</sup> Midshipman Samuel M. Cooley, Jr., USN, class of 1945.

<sup>§</sup> See the Naval Institute oral history of Captain Alex A. Kerr, USN (Ret.).

Admiral Crowe: He's a famous lawyer in the submarine force.

You know, when you get away from the Naval Academy everybody's always ready to leave. That's one thing about graduating at the Naval Academy. Everybody's happy to go. You really don't appreciate the Naval Academy for about 10 or 15 years after you graduate. Then it begins to dawn on you that the Naval Academy, first of all, prepared you fairly well for the ordeal of what you had to go through as a naval officer. And that the values they teach at the Naval Academy are pretty good for naval officers. I mean, they're very helpful. And you begin to appreciate what the institution means and can do. But it takes a little while to mature before you come to that conclusion.

Then, after the race is over and people sort of lay aside their oars, then you begin to become friendly again with a lot of these people that were your competitors in the mid-term, mid-life. You're much more mellow, and you're very fond and a strong advocate for the Naval Academy, much more than when you were there.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about competitiveness when you were a midshipman?

Admiral Crowe: Very competitive. Just from the get-go. Of course, the whole system was built on that. Every class had rankings on everything.

Paul Stillwell: Up to three numerals in the decimals.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And I can remember taking the first steam exam at the Naval Academy. The class all took the same exam at the same time at the end of the semester. We were in a huge room up there where they taught steam, about the size of this house. The whole class was in there. Bob Colquhoun was a classmate of mine, not in my company, but he was over a few desks from me.\* The test was mechanical engineering drawing, one of the first exams I'd had at the Naval Academy, and he got sick in the middle of the exam. You think anybody looked up? Oh, you sick? Too bad.

Paul Stillwell: That's your problem.

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\* Midshipman Richard G. Colquhoun, USN.

Admiral Crowe: He was throwing up in this wastebasket, and a professor finally came over, but nobody looked up. Nobody paid any—he's got a problem, it's his problem. And that pretty well permeated the whole place.

Paul Stillwell: But roommates were probably likely to help each other, weren't they?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. And, of course, on discipline we were all unified together against the bad guys. And you had a system in charge of room. Usually the guy with the fewest demerits was in charge of room, because he had more room to work with. But when you had two roommates that—150 was the limit; one had 147 and one had 148. The guy with 147 was in charge of the room. And I can remember the duty officer saying, "How come you're in charge of the room?"

He says, "Because my roommate's got 148."

But the idea of competition, a zero-sum game. And that was one of the hardest things I had to live with at the Naval Academy. I was willing to compete where I felt competitive, but I didn't like some of the other stuff. I felt that the emphasis on athletics was way too great. That was my personal prejudiced view. In fact, when I was made a distinguished graduate of the Naval Academy they introduced us at a football game out on the 50-yard line. I turned to Jim Watkins and said, "You know, this is the only time I've ever been on a football field."\*

Paul Stillwell: Well, in terms of the zero-sum game, were there people who would try to hurt their classmates?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't know that that was prevalent. I'm sure there were. But where you really saw it and where you followed it were in the top guys in the class. In the top ten, there was a pretty spirited rivalry, and every exam meant something to those guys, as to whether they'd go up to eight, or up to six. And the whole class would

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\* Admiral James D. Watkins, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 July 1982 to 30 June 1986. He and Admiral Crowe were selected in 2001 as distinguished graduates of the Naval Academy.

follow: “Well, how’d they come out this time?” But it didn’t concern most of us because we were not in the top ten.

But then when I went to Submarine School I did very well. Jimmy Carter was in my submarine class, and we had a lot of those top guys in the class. In fact, on the first set of exams I was number one, and on the second set I was number two, and then number three. And by the end of six months I was number five, I think. Every exam I went down a number. But I had several hotshots out of my Naval Academy class in Submarine School.

Paul Stillwell: And that competition extends beyond when you’re a midshipman.

Admiral Crowe: Oh yes, yes, after you graduate. In places like flight training I think it showed up really in spades. And, of course, a lot of people were bilged out in flight training because of physical reasons, such as coordination, not their mental ability.

I think the submarine business was primarily mental. But there are a couple things that submariners have to do that you don’t do on tests. One is spatial relations. It’s very important in the submarine business to be able to visualize a fire control problem while you’re looking through a periscope. You look through a periscope, but while you’re doing it you have to make the transformation: the end of the ship’s here, that guy’s there going this way, and I’m looking at him with the periscope, and you have to have in your mind what that means. You don’t do that very well in a test on a piece of paper. You have to actually do it to see. And, of course, they had trainers where we had to do it. A lot of people who did very well academically didn’t do well on that. And the same way in landing an airplane. You’ve got to have depth perception when you’re landing an airplane. I don’t give a damn how smart you are; without it you’re not going to hit the right wire.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we’re right at the end of the tape. I look forward to the next session, and we’re off to a great start today. Thank you.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don’t know how magnetic this is, but I enjoy the subject.

Paul Stillwell: Good. I do too. (End of Interview 1)

Paul Stillwell: We were talking last time, Admiral, about your time at the Naval Academy as a midshipman, and there were two superintendents then, Admiral Beardall and Admiral Fitch.\* What are your memories of them?

Admiral Crowe: Very slender. We go over to the Naval Academy a lot now, and we never go to a party at the Superintendent's there aren't a lot of midshipmen there. I never met a superintendent when I was a midshipman until the garden party for graduation. I never met Beardall and didn't have much to do one way or another. The second one—what was his name?

Paul Stillwell: Admiral Fitch, who was the first aviator to have the job.

Admiral Crowe: Fitch, yes. That's very interesting. I can remember the garden party at graduation.† My parents and I were in line behind the Stockdales, and Mr. Stockdale turned around—he was quite a character—and said, "I'm going to tell the superintendent I've enjoyed his hair tonic very much over the years." Fitch's Hair Tonic, quite prominent in those days. Mr. Stockdale was quite an irreverent but a fun guy. He was very funny. Of course, we thought they were very elevated aristocracy, but I don't remember a thing about Beardall.

We had a commandant of midshipmen whose daughter married one of my classmates. His name was Overesch.‡ And then we had more to do with the

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\* Rear Admiral John R. Beardall, USN, was superintendent of the Naval Academy from January 1942 to August 1945. Vice Admiral Aubrey W. Fitch, USN, was superintendent from August 1945 to January 1947.

† Graduation for the Naval Academy class of 1947 was on 5 June 1946. During World War II the curriculum was shortened to three years. To return to the four-year format after the war, the class of 1948 was divided into A and B sections. A graduated in 1947 and B the following year.

‡ Captain Harvey E. Overesch, USN, served from 1942 to 1943 as the Naval Academy's commandant of midshipmen.

commandant. He was relieved by Stuart Murray, who had a son in my class.\* I remember him from then, but I later on was his aide, many years later when he was SubLant.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember of Murray as commandant?

Admiral Crowe: Not much, just that he was very tall, and fairly commanding because he was so big. And that he was from Oklahoma. That I did remember.

Paul Stillwell: He mentioned Alfalfa Bill Murray in his oral history.†

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's one of his relatives. And his father had been the mayor of Oklahoma City. He didn't have much memory of Oklahoma, but we used to talk occasionally about it. I was a tremendous admirer of Admiral Murray's. He was a marvelous man.

Paul Stillwell: And his son was your classmate also.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, yes. Son's still alive. And then he had a daughter who married a classmate.‡ Her husband was a nuclear submariner, Tom Brittain, who died. And she remarried a man who has subsequently died. She was at our 60th reunion. She was a very gifted woman.

Paul Stillwell: Well, she's quite athletic. I met her and she had just come from the gym, working out.

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\* Captain Stuart S. Murray, USN, served from 1943 to 1945 as the commandant. His son, in the class of 1947, was Midshipman Stuart S. Murray, USN. The oral history of the father, who retired as a four-star admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

† William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray was governor of Oklahoma from 12 January 1931 to 15 January 1935.

‡ Suzanne Murray, daughter of Admiral Murray, married Thomas B. Brittain, Jr., who died 4 July 1971 when he was a captain. She subsequently married Eugene Stroup.



Admiral Crowe: But her mind's even better. She sold real estate for years. In fact, we bought a small apartment from her once. And she made her own way there after Tom died. But she was quite brilliant. She's a Stanford graduate.

Paul Stillwell: I didn't know that.

Admiral Crowe: I remember when she got married that Mrs. Murray was quite busy doing all the things that go with a marriage. They asked me to be in the wedding, but I had planned a vacation with my parents going out west, so I missed their wedding.

But Admiral Murray was very bright, very courteous, very kind. His initials were S. S., and his friends all called him "Sunshine."

Paul Stillwell: He was probably more genial than most commandants.

Admiral Crowe: It was very appropriate, the name "Sunshine." When we get around to it, I'll tell you a good story about that. He was a man who was wonderful to watch and to be influenced by, because he was really good, and he was not mean-spirited. And I say that because when I joined the Navy there were a lot of senior officers who were mean-spirited. It was part of the sort of pattern. I used to worry that I'd meet friends in the Navy, and I'd say, "Well, they'll never make it to leadership positions; they're not mean enough. It was an aristocratic Navy when I came into it."

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said that was one of the reasons you went into submarines was to avoid that atmosphere.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. That's so. But the Naval Academy—since I saw you last, I've been writing some remarks to give here at our meet-your-neighbor program. You tell who you are and so forth, sort of a shameless exercise. I put a paragraph in about the Naval Academy, and I essentially said it was not as romantic as I had envisioned it.

Paul Stillwell: Didn't fit the Kendall Banning image.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. And essentially the academic regimen was engineering. Very little liberal arts stuff. Strong emphasis on discipline and athletics. I was irritated by the preferred treatment that the football players got. And I don't think that's confined to the Naval Academy. That's sort of endemic in the world. Nevertheless, the Naval Academy always bragged that they didn't favor football players, which was sheer nonsense. They did. And then enjoyment was not high on their priority list either. If you enjoyed the place, you had to work at it. When I graduated I think the Academy itself had a strong suspicion of academics. And, of course, most of the professors were officers. There were some civilian professors, particularly in English, History, and Government.

Paul Stillwell: Did you ever have any contact with the Green Bowl Society?\*

Admiral Crowe: No, I didn't. I read about it. I heard it talked about. Even Admiral Murray and I talked about it, but I never remembered it. I guess it existed, but anybody that belonged to it didn't admit it. I assume that it was sort of restricted anyway.

Paul Stillwell: It was mostly athletes, and they would help people who came along later to get into good positions.

Admiral Crowe: That was the theme of it.

Paul Stillwell: Any recollections of Admiral Ingersoll, who came after Captain Murray as commandant?†

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was well liked. And, of course, he had just come back from the war zone, where he had had command of a carrier and some other things. We followed

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\* Green Bowl Society was a secret clique of midshipmen who promoted their own interests while at the academy and later in the fleet, presumably by helping junior members of the organization get desirable, career-enhancing billets.

† Captain/Rear Admiral Stuart H. Ingersoll, USN, served as the Naval Academy's commandant of midshipmen from 1945 to 1947.

the careers of all our duty officers. When they came, we knew what they had done and had not done. A submarine commander would lecture, for example.

Paul Stillwell: Were they useful role models in that regard?

Admiral Crowe: I think so, yes. And, of course, various professors. And, of course, each of these professors plugged his branch of the service. Occasionally, if you had a teacher you liked, or a duty officer, why, it had a lot of impact. There was a man in the executive department—I guess he was our battalion officer or something—by the name of Ebert, that I remembered had both wings and dolphins.\* He had finished the war working with Admiral Miles's special force in China.† I always admired Ebert. I liked him very, very much.

Paul Stillwell: Miles was one who didn't fit into that aristocratic regime. He had a wonderful sense of humor.

Admiral Crowe: I never knew Miles, but I knew of him.

Paul Stillwell: I met his widow once, and she was absolutely a charming lady.

Admiral Crowe: Is that right? I followed Ebert's career with great interest. He retired as a captain. But I always kept track of him. And then there was a commander or captain whom we all liked, all the class did. And, of course, we had a lot of them we didn't like.

Right in the middle of my first-class year, or maybe youngster year, Davenport showed up. Davenport was one of the very, very successful submarine commanders during the war. He had five Navy Crosses or something like that. And he was a steam professor. I never took it, but I saw him, monitored the exam and so forth. He also was

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\* Commander Walter G. Ebert, USN.

† Rear Admiral Milton E. Miles, USN, was deputy commander of the Sino-American Cooperative Association (SACO), which was headed by a Chinese officer named Tai Li. Miles's posthumous memoir was *A Different Kind of War: the Little-Known Story of the Combined Guerrilla Forces Created in China by the U.S. Navy and the Chinese During World War II*, as prepared by Hawthorne Daniel from the original manuscript. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967).

very religious. In fact, the war stories came out that he would do weird things. Like he would take a periscope observation, look at the ship, pull it down, and say, “God says not this one,” and let it go by.\*

Paul Stillwell: That is intriguing.

Admiral Crowe: He was very strict and assumed everybody at the Naval Academy was cheating, which I don’t think was true. I didn’t have much to do with him personally, but because of his record and so forth I knew who he was.

I remember vividly a lecture by the submarine officer who had been the exec of the *Growler* when the *Growler* lost their skipper.† What was that guy’s name? It started with an “S”. He stayed in the submarine business all his life.‡ In any event, he gave a wonderful lecture about the submarine business, and I can remember how much I was impressed with it. It sounded like the kind of Navy I wanted to get into.

Now, he went through a lot of trauma over that *Growler* thing. There were all kinds of second-guessing whether he should have left the skipper up there. I don’t know, the skipper may have been dead. He was wounded.

Later on Ward Bond, showed up in Pearl Harbor when I was out there to make a movie about the *Growler*. One of the humorous things that happened was, a little segment of the movie was the widow receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor for her husband. And they asked the Navy wives to come down to furnish the crowd for the ceremony. On the first filming the director stopped everything and went over to the girls and said, “Ladies, this is a sad ceremony here. You’re all hamming it up for the camera. You’re not supposed to be smiling during this ceremony.” I thought that was wonderful that they all went down to get in the movies.

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\* For more on Davenport and his religion, see Clay Blair, Jr., *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1975).

† On 7 February 1943 the USS *Growler* (SS-215) made a surface attack on a Japanese gunboat. The gunboat raked the bridge of the submarine at close range. Her commanding officer, Commander Howard W. Gilmore, USN, ordered the bridge cleared and then said, “Take her down,” sacrificing himself to save the boat. He was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor for his heroism. The submarine’s executive officer, Lieutenant Commander Arnold F. Schade, USN, brought the heavily damaged boat back to port.

‡ As a vice admiral, Schade served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet, 1966-70.

Paul Stillwell: Anything specifically to recall about Ingersoll?

Admiral Crowe: I noticed just the other day when Ingersoll was mentioned in *Shipmate* a couple of my classmates wrote in letters that they had had some contact with him, and how much they admired him and how kind he was when he was commandant.\* But I never encountered him myself.

I did meet some officers teaching history and the like, but most of the teachers in the English, History, and Government Department were civilians. I got mixed up with them in the debate business. I was a debater at the Naval Academy.

Paul Stillwell: We talked about that and Maxwell Taylor.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It wasn't very high on the Naval Academy's priority list, and it still isn't, which I object to something fierce.

Paul Stillwell: One of the midshipmen who encountered Ingersoll was Wesley Brown, who became the first black graduate.† Did you have any contact with Brown?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did. Not much, but my roommate had quite a bit. He was in our wing. He was a plebe when I was a first classman. He used to come by the room and so forth, and I saw him and met him. I had several classmates that were from the South who had vivid imaginations that they ought to do something about Brown. I think the bulk of the class never took that very seriously and informed them that was sort of stupid, and nothing ever happened, I think. But the color bias was still alive and well when I was a freshman.

Paul Stillwell: Brown remembered Ed McCormack and Jimmy Carter as two who were helpful to him.‡

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\* *Shipmate* is the monthly magazine of the Naval Academy Alumni Association.

† Midshipman Wesley A. Brown, USN, class of 1949. Brown's oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

‡ Midshipman Edward J. McCormack, Jr., USN, a classmate of Crowe.

Admiral Crowe: That's very interesting. Of course, Carter was from the South, but when you read about Carter's mother, she was in the forefront of the equal movement there in Georgia. I didn't know Jimmy very well then. And I knew of Ed McCormack, but I didn't—I have a wonderful story about Ed McCormack. It was secondary; I didn't witness it personally, but—

Paul Stillwell: Do tell.

Admiral Crowe: I had a friend who went up to electronics school in Boston for six weeks or something, and lived with the McCormacks, because he knew Ed. This was right after we graduated. Ed McCormack's father was Knocko McCormack, who was a ward heeler in South Boston. A bartender. In fact he owned the bar. Are you familiar with this?

Paul Stillwell: No. But his uncle was the Speaker of the House.

Admiral Crowe: His uncle was Speaker of the House, and, I think, was very helpful to Ed and then was a mentor for Ed.\* But his father was an old-time Irishman, weighed about 300 pounds, and had a big bar in South Boston and was a leader in South Boston, a big Democrat. This friend of mine lived in their house for six weeks. He said Knocko was really a piece of work. He was what you might imagine. I don't think he was educated well, but he had come up in a pretty rough-and-tumble business and was a leading citizen in South Boston.

He came home one night and said—and I'm told this is a true story, and evidently also told it was typical of Knocko. But he came home and said, "I went by the ice house today and talked to Pat and made sure I got that stallion for the St. Patrick's Day parade again. But we had a big argument. He said the stallion was a mare. And I said, 'Pat, that's not true. I rode that horse last year in the parade, and I heard several people say, 'Who's that big prick on the horse?'"

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\* John W. McCormack, a Democrat from Massachusetts, served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 6 November 1928 to 3 January 1971; he was Speaker of the House from 1962 to 1971.

Paul Stillwell: [Laughter] Okay.

Admiral Crowe: Isn't that a great story?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Great Irish story. Evidently he was a very colorful, bigger than life man. And my friend said that the house was in action all the time, with Knocko doing something or other.

Paul Stillwell: Sounds very entertaining.

Admiral Crowe: But, you know, Ed ran against Kennedy.

Paul Stillwell: In 1962, for the Senate.\*

Admiral Crowe: First race. And I guess they never spoke again after that.

Paul Stillwell: And Kennedy's still in that job.

Admiral Crowe: Ed might have done the world a favor by beating Ted. I don't know.

Paul Stillwell: Who was your roommate that had a lot of contact with Wes Brown.

Admiral Crowe: I had a roommate by the name of Newell Bowman. He was from right here, Hyattsville, but he's dead now. He just stopped Brown a couple of times, didn't know him, had him come in the room and talk to him. I sat in on some conversations

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\* Edward M. Kennedy won the Democratic primary and that fall's general election. He was been in the U.S. Senate since January 1963.

there. So Brown always came by and saw him. I always admired Brown. Gee, the first one. That's a tough business. They highly selected him to take on that assignment.

And, you know, when you read about what happened to the guy at West Point—are you familiar with that?

Paul Stillwell: Benjamin O. Davis.

Admiral Crowe: Davis. I can't imagine what West Point did to that man.

Paul Stillwell: He apparently was in Coventry for several years.\*

Admiral Crowe: That's inhumane. Why would the administration permit that?

Paul Stillwell: Brown was both very capable and has a sunny disposition, which undoubtedly helped.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was never put through anything like that.

Paul Stillwell: No. No, he wasn't.

Admiral Crowe: And it would never have occurred to me not to speak to him.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he was about ten years after....

Admiral Crowe: Benjamin Davis must have been a pretty strong character, and then to have the successful career that he did in the Air Force. I think it's a marvelous story.

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\* In 1936 Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., became the fourth black graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. He flew as a fighter pilot in World War II and entered the Air Force when it became a separate service in 1947. He eventually retired as a lieutenant general in 1970. In 1998 he was promoted to four-star general. He died in 2002. He told the story of his travails at West point in his book *American: an Autobiography* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991). "Coventry" refers to the silent treatment.



Paul Stillwell: Well, Brown had the backing of Ingersoll, whereas in earlier times black midshipmen had a hard time with the commandant.

Admiral Crowe: I don't think we'd ever had a black midshipman.

Paul Stillwell: There were a few, maybe a handful.

Admiral Crowe: They didn't graduate, though.

Paul Stillwell: He was the first. There was one named George Trivers who came in in '37.

Paul Stillwell: Really? I didn't know that. Well, it seems to me it's a hell of a blot on West Point's history. And I think several West Pointers would agree with that. I didn't know we'd had some, but I imagine we weren't very kind to them.

Paul Stillwell: No, they were essentially driven out.

Admiral Crowe: But, you know, there were several Latin Americans in my class. And I roomed across the hall from one of them in the class of '46. In the first place they were treated as equals. And they were, as a rule, very, very bright. A guy in our class became the CNO of the Venezuelan Navy. And Jimenez was in my class, an all-American soccer player, and became the naval aide in Washington to an admiral, from Peru. I had him in my house one night for a dinner party and he got drunk and threw up, I remember that. That made the evening lively. But as far as foreigners, I think we were pretty well limited to South Americans in the class.

Paul Stillwell: Who was "Jug Butt" that you mentioned in your book?

Admiral Crowe: “Jug Butt” Wilson, J.C.G. Wilson, out of the class of ’35.\* He was a commander that had come back from the war and was our battalion officer. He had a great big butt, and it was inevitable that he would be referred to as “Jug Butt.”

I don’t remember the cause, but he had me in to chew me out about something. He said, “You may make a good naval officer, but you’re a damned poor midshipman.” We didn’t have a hell of a lot of respect for him. That didn’t mean he wasn’t respectable. That just meant we didn’t know enough to know anything about it. But, anyway, I remember that statement. And I was a little hurt by it, because I was one of the few people that I really associated with around there that had wanted to go to the Naval Academy for a long time. Most of those people, either by accident or something else, had just all of a sudden made the decision to go to the Naval Academy. They had not had that in mind, or worked for it very hard. But that was not my situation at all. I had been working or thinking about that for a hell of a long time.

Paul Stillwell: Presumably some were there to avoid the draft during the war.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I think there were. I’m sure Vernon Weaver was there because his father engineered it and wanted him to avoid the draft.† And Stan Turner told me the other day—I don’t think he ever gave the Naval Academy much of a thought, and at the last minute decided to go to the Naval Academy.‡

We had a fellow named Dick Duden, who was in prep school with George Bush, the elder, in the prep school.§ Andover, is that the name of it?

Paul Stillwell: I think so, yes.

Admiral Crowe: I remember the day I retired the President came down for the ceremony, and a lot of my classmates were there, and he asked if Duden was there.\*\* I said, no, I didn’t think he was, because he had terribly poor health. He said, “Yeah, Dick and I were at Andover together,” and he told me about it. Dick was quite an athlete in my class. He

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\* Commander J. C. Gillespie Wilson, USN.

† Midshipman A. Vernon Weaver, USN.

‡ Midshipman Stansfield Turner, USN, who later became a four-star admiral.

§ Midshipman Henry Richard Duden, Jr., USN.

\*\* Admiral Crowe’s retirement was in September 1989, when George H. W. Bush was President.

was captain of the football team, an end, and also played basketball. He played basketball like he played football. They didn't use him to make baskets; they used him to stand in the lane there and clobber anybody that got near the basket.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about Stansfield Turner as a midshipman?

Admiral Crowe: I don't remember much, except that he was the commander of what we called then the brigade. And, of course, we all knew who that was. But Stockdale was a pretty good friend of his. I don't remember whether that happened after we graduated or before, but for some reason he had something to do with Stan, and they became very good friends. I met Stan through Stockdale, but I really didn't have much to do with him at the Naval Academy. He was above my pay grade. But he was quite impressive. He was a football player. He was a guard. And he was commander of the brigade. I think he stood 40-something, maybe 30, but in that range in the class. He had some family connections, I know. Eberstadt? That name mean anything to you?

Paul Stillwell: Well, there was the Eberstadt Commission after World War II.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He was a friend of Stan's father, or something along the line. But Stan was ticketed from the very outset. We all knew Stan was golden. Then he got that Rhodes Scholarship. Most of my friends said, well, they didn't understand why in the hell would anybody would go away on a Rhodes Scholarship. But I appreciated what he'd done. I thought that was marvelous, to be able to do that.

But he was a funny guy. He had friends, but he was not real personable, and he was not sensitive in some respects. And he was very insensitive to women. I don't know that from a fact, but Sybil Stockdale used to talk to me about it. She had several friends that dated Stan. Of course, we all were terrified by girls, so if he was scared of them he wasn't alone in our class.

Paul Stillwell: What do you mean by that, being terrified of girls?

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\* In 1948-49 Ferdinand Eberstadt chaired the Task Force on National Security Organization.

Admiral Crowe: Well, you know, we all knew that you should marry a woman, and I guess we all looked forward to it. But I was uncomfortable around them. And I got that from OU. The midshipmen that I knew, they weren't [unclear] of girls. They were very rude and were not very orderly around girls. And Stan was that way. He was really not sensitive. If he liked a girl he'd grab her or something. I learned at OU you don't do that. I don't think it's unusual for young men to be—I told you about the check—I had taken her to lunch, couldn't pay for it?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Incredible. I look back with fear and trepidation on that. But I always felt Stan was a little distant, maybe to me personally, but I think he was sort of that way with a lot of people. But let's face it, in that period of life he was an aristocrat. The Navy's partial to that sort of thing, and he fit right in on that, and he was very successful. Then as a captain he was the aide to the Secretary of the Navy. The first two men in my class to make admiral and also to make four-star admirals were Worth Bagley and Stan Turner, and they both had been aides to the Secretary of the Navy.\*

Paul Stillwell: They were both close to Admiral Zumwalt.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Actually, I'd been in mine warfare school with Bagley. He wasn't very bright. Worth Bagley—I really liked him, because he was fun and he was personable and he was easy to be with, and extremely attractive to girls. He was very attractive. We were at Yorktown at mine warfare school. But he wasn't very bright. He was a turn-back from the Class of '46. And so when he zoomed ahead with Zumwalt I was surprised at Zumwalt, because Zumwalt had a thing about people that weren't alert and knew answers. You know, he wouldn't allow anybody to use notes in the morning briefing. That separated a lot of the chaff out of the wheat, but he admired and liked

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\* Admiral Worth H. Bagley, USN.

Worth very much. But Zumwalt left, and the Navy in its wisdom saw fit to discard Worth. I don't know—I'm really not familiar with the details.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Admiral Bagley told me that he just wasn't comfortable in the new regime, and so he left early as VCNO. That's when Admiral Shear was called back from London.\*

Admiral Crowe: It's not in his character to not remain competitive. Of course, he was from a Navy family.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he made four stars before his older brother.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. But his older brother was probably smarter than Worth. David was hard to live with, and he was also a little childish. He still was betting his bathrobe on Army-Navy games. That always amazed me. I had a little more contact with David than I did Worth.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about David Bagley? Was that later in your career?

Admiral Crowe: Much later. I'd heard of him, but I didn't meet him until I was a captain. Then I was in Bahrain when he was CinCUSNavEur, and I did some business with him there, but we'll talk about it later.†

Paul Stillwell: Well, another football player was Don Whitmire.‡ What do you recall of him?

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\* Admiral Bagley served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from 5 June 1974 to 30 June 1975. Admiral Harold E. Shear, USN, held the billet from 30 June 1975 to 5 July 1977.

† Admiral David H. Bagley, USN, served as Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Eastern Atlantic from May 1975 to August 1977. For comment on the relationship, see Crowe's *The Line of Fire*, pages 168-169.

‡ Midshipman Donald B. Whitmire, USN, was in the class of 1947. He eventually became a submariner and still later a rear admiral. He was in command of the amphibious forces that evacuated Americans from Saigon, South Vietnam, in 1975.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I knew him. He was close to my company, and one of my good friends, Matty Matthews, knew Whitmire intimately, knew him very well.<sup>\*</sup> And, of course, he was one of the class's icons because he was such a hell of a good—and he was a great football player. I remember they just couldn't keep him out of the backfield. Every play he was in the other guy's backfield. He was a tough son of a bitch.

Then Whitmire was in my Submarine School class. Now, he wasn't very bright either. It made me mad in sub school. I loaned him all my notes and then helped him. But then came the next class and he gave my notes not back to me, he gave them to Coppedge, whom I didn't get along with that well.<sup>†</sup> Whitmire just passed them on without even a bow or anything else.

Whitmire was fun, but he was very arrogant. He was quite enamored of being a football player. In fact, that was the only thing in his life until late in his naval career when he got motivated by the Navy. He really made a serious attempt when he was a captain, and then he made admiral. He made a serious attempt to recast himself and to get away from his football image and be a naval officer. But it was damned near impossible given the adulation that swirled around him. Even in sub school, the professors all idolized Whitmire. When we put on our roasting skit at the end of the class we made asses out of the professors worshipping Whitmire. Both the professors and Whitmire were mad. And I can remember one night Matty stood up at dinner and said after class there would be a meeting of the Whitmire fan club in the phone booth. And Whitmire, he was vain enough he didn't like that.

I think he was a good submarine captain. You know, the crews really liked a guy like that. But in Submarine School, I don't even know where he stood in the class.

Paul Stillwell: But he made a career of the Navy. He didn't go into athletics.

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<sup>\*</sup> Midshipman Howard L. Matthews, Jr., USN.

<sup>†</sup> Ensign John O. Coppedge, USN, who later, as a captain, became the Naval Academy's director of athletics in 1968. He retired from active duty in June 1970, then remained in the job in civilian status until his retirement in 1988.

Admiral Crowe: He sure did. Now, he and Coppedge both spent a lot of time in their early career being football coaches for PacFlt and things like that.\* And, of course, Coppedge ended up here as the athletic director. I think Whitmire was considered for it at the same time, but for reasons I don't understand, whether Whitmire turned it down or they didn't think he would be as good at it, but they selected Coppedge.

Paul Stillwell: What memories do you have of Coppedge as a midshipman?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I remember a lot of him plebe summer. He was arrogant, and he had a loud mouth. He was from Arkansas, and he talked about his family and his father all the time. He was one of those guys who always talked with a loud voice: "HEY, PILGRIM!" and that sort of stuff. And he was a wrestler too. He was not only a football player, he wrestled heavyweight, and was one of the better-known members of my class. But I never felt he and I were friendly. I never felt he was threatening or anything. And then he didn't choose to stay in the Navy; he chose to stay as the athletic director at the Naval Academy.

Incidentally, his period at that was, I think, very, very successful. Maybe I'm wrong, but my instincts were that, as the athletic director he did a hell of a good job. Of course, they named the room down there after him, which was very suitable and appropriate.† He gave a lot of blood, sweat, and tears to that institution.

Paul Stillwell: I interviewed Chuck Larson, who he said Coppedge was very good at the business side of the athletic department.‡

Admiral Crowe: And that sort of surprised me. I've heard that. But we had some other men in the class who were very good athletes but not of the same personality as Whitmire and Coppedge. Jay McKie was shortstop on the baseball team, and later went to Submarine School behind me.§ He was a wonderful guy: very personable and got along

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\* PacFlt – Pacific Fleet.

† The Bo Coppedge room is part of Alumni Hall at the Naval Academy.

‡ Admiral Charles R. Larson, USN (Ret.).

§ Midshipman Jay G. McKie, USN.

with everybody, and very kind. We had several good basketball players. And then a lot of sports you never hear anything about—gymnastics. Don Houck in my company was a lacrosse player, a really good one, but who in the hell ever heard of lacrosse in that day and age?<sup>\*</sup> It was a walk-on sport. It isn't now, but was then. And yet the whole place revolved around athletes. The number-one man in the class, nobody ever heard of him, but he was in all my classes first-class year. I got so tired of that guy.

Paul Stillwell: Who was that?

Admiral Crowe: Jim Collier.<sup>†</sup> To have the number-one guy in your class every time was really painful, because he was really bright, and he worked hard, and he was determined to be the number-one guy in the class. And the competition for it was pretty stiff. We had a young man by the name of George Maragos.<sup>‡</sup> Now, this was a company I did follow. I followed this because, I wasn't in their league on schoolwork, but I knew who they were. And, in fact, five of the first 15 were in that company that I went—not my company, but the adjacent company. My company didn't have bright people. But George Maragos and a guy named William Porter, who was out of the fleet—had made a full career in the Navy; he was in electronics.<sup>§</sup> Maragos designed the *Spruance*-class destroyer.<sup>\*\*</sup> He went into EDO ship design.<sup>††</sup> He was in the same company as Collier, and Collier was the number-one man. Porter was not.

Then there were a whole bunch of those guys in the first 20 that I knew. But I always thought that for some reason the Naval Academy didn't recognize those people as much. There wasn't any hoopla made about being the—now, the day of graduation they got several swords and wristwatches and so forth, but the Naval Academy never made anything out of excelling in that kind of stuff. It's changed some now, but not completely even now. I'm a trustee of the Naval Academy, and the alumni are still hung up on

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<sup>\*</sup> Midshipman Donald F. Houck, USN.

<sup>†</sup> Midshipman James R. Collier, USN.

<sup>‡</sup> Midshipman George Maragos, USN, stood number three of the 821 graduates in the class of 1947.

<sup>§</sup> Midshipman William R. Porter, USN, stood number two.

<sup>\*\*</sup> USS *Spruance* (DD-963), lead ship of the class, was commissioned 20 September 1975.

<sup>††</sup> EDO – engineering duty officer. Maragos retired as a captain.



football. They spent \$40 million down there refurbishing that stadium. How many times a year that stadium is used?

Paul Stillwell: Half a dozen.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, about that. Ten million of that came from my classmate Jack Stephens. I thought that he was not sane then, but if he had have been I would have talked to him: “Jack, there must be something we can do with this ten million better than that.”

Now, there’s a man who was in my company, Jack Stephens. He became the wealthiest man in my class. Nobody would have guessed that he had just a knack for it. There were two people in my company who roomed together—Jack Stephens and Vernon Weaver. They were both extremely good friends of mine.

[Interruption for change of tape]

Admiral Crowe: This is priceless. This is my father’s picture he got for his mother in World War I. Look at the frame.

Paul Stillwell: It’s got a battleship and a destroyer and a seashell, and bugles and an anchor and an eagle and flags.

Admiral Crowe: Isn’t that something?

Paul Stillwell: He doesn’t look all that happy.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don’t think you were supposed to. I don’t know. But the frame is just marvelous. And that was, I think, very characteristic of 1918.

Paul Stillwell: It just shouts patriotism.

Admiral Crowe: It does. All over the place. He was practicing law in Henryetta, Oklahoma, and he quit and went to the Navy. In any event, that's really wonderful.

Now here's a picture at Jack's 80th birthday or something. That's Jack Stephens. There's Vernon Weaver, and there's Jim Stockdale. That was taken in Little Rock. Here's another picture of the three of us. Jack had had two years of college before he came to the Naval Academy. Vernon had had three years of college in Florida. Jack did have bad eyes, so he never got a commission. But they allowed him to graduate, and as soon as he graduated his brother, who was named Whit Stephens, in Little Rock, put him in his business. He waited for Jack to come out and join his business. Vernon went into business in Florida with his father and stayed there. He came back in for the Korean War, but he then went to work for Jack, and spent his entire life working for Jack Stephens. I asked him one day, "How much is Jack worth, Vernon?"

He said, "Well, it varies day by day, but it's somewhere between seven and eight billion dollars."

Paul Stillwell: Wow.

Admiral Crowe: They bought Louisiana Gas and Light in the early 1950s, and they bought it for a song. It seemed to me like a lot of money, but anyway, sort of for a song, and ten years later sold it. And *Fortune* magazine called them the only robber barons in the mode of Jay Gould. Vernon told me that Jack Stephens had an instinct for what would make money. Some foolish scheme would come up, and Jack would go think about it and then say, "Well, I'm going to buy it." And everybody would say, "You shouldn't, Jack." Then Jack would be right and they'd be wrong. And Vernon worked for him all his life. Now, Jack died just about a year ago.\*

Paul Stillwell: Did you see his astuteness when he was a midshipman?

Admiral Crowe: No. And that's interesting. I never would have given him that kind of credit. On the other hand he had a natural charisma about him. In terms of age and

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\* Mr. Stephens died on 23 July 2005 at the age of 81. See the *Congressional Record* for 27 July 2005.

experience he wasn't afraid of girls. He was sort of the leader of our company. And, of course, Vernon was older too. Vernon always seemed to me to be able to do well with less effort than any man I ever knew. But they were not very military, and they never caved in to the Naval Academy system in the slightest way; they battled on everything. But they were very talented men. As I say, Jack was the wealthiest man in the class.

Now they're fighting over his money down there. His son Warren runs the thing, but one of Whit's sons has got half, so the company's splitting up now. Vernon is still associated with them, but he says it's all going to hell, because they're all fighting over Jack's money.

I loved Jack Stephens, but even more so Vernon is a very dear friend, and I think he's going to probably die in the next few months. He's got liver cancer. Although he's fought it hard, and he seems to prevail, but we'll see. His daughter is a woman named Vanessa Weaver. Have you ever heard of her?

Paul Stillwell: No, I haven't.

Admiral Crowe: She was big in Democratic politics. And it's funny. You know, Jack supported Carter, but he was essentially a Republican. Vernon was a Democrat, but he wouldn't do anything unless Jack said it was okay. But Jack was one of these people who played both sides of the fence all the time, so he never told Vernon not to do anything. So Vernon was Small Business Administration under Carter. Under Clinton he was the ambassador to the EU.\* We used to see each other in Europe when we were both ambassadors.

Paul Stillwell: He was on the Academy's Board of Visitors also.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was, and very proud of it. Which was curious to me, because when he was a midshipman he wasn't that proud of it. But then he's very proud of the Naval Academy today, and he supports the class very strongly. But he's very sarcastic.

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\* From 1996 to 2001 Weaver served as U.S. Ambassador to the European Union

He's got a view of life that is cynical. Got a wonderful wife. But Vernon's an interesting man. He had an interesting father too. But those are the kind of guys. Now, when I saw them I thought, now, we'll hear some more from these people, unlike those football players. My daughter and I giggle about it today. She says, "Oh, I tell all my younger girlfriends: 'Don't ignore the nerds; they're going to be running the place when you're 20 years older. You may like football players today, but the nerds will be running Sears & Roebuck.'"

Paul Stillwell: It's a different world, especially with the electronics and Silicon Valley and all that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, now, the people we're looking at here were very non-regulation, all three of them. And Jim was in that a little bit. He wasn't quite as adventurous as the rest of us were on breaking the rules.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you took some pride in that.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, we did. You know, we were leading the brigade in Class A offenses when some other company pulled abreast, and we had a meeting what we were going to do about it. And while we were having the meeting my roommate, that I mentioned a minute ago, Newell Bowman, got a Class A, and we forged ahead again.

Paul Stillwell: What was that offense?

Admiral Crowe: Well, you have offenses, but then you have Class A offenses.

Paul Stillwell: But what was the one that put you ahead?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, Newell's? He got caught drinking, I think. I forget exactly what he did, but Jack got hammered. For a Class A, part of the punishment was you were confined to your room for ungodly amounts of time. He was confined to his room about

two or three months, and he was a bear. God, he hated that. He wasn't used to that at all, and he didn't take it well.

They got adventurous my second set, and said, instead of the guys with all the fine military aptitude ratings we'll pick some company commanders that we let them elect it. We elected Jack company commander second set. He had more demerits than anybody in the company. But I think we elected him sort of out of pique at the administration. But Jug Butt Wilson was the guy that worried about us, and we were always defying and trying to get around him and so forth, and so forth.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you were kind of putting him on the spot.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I enjoyed it, every bit of it. But I never got a Class A. I had a rule that I tried to avoid the little things because I figured there was a limit. You were allowed only 150 demerits, and a class A offense was 75. So I figured when I got it I wanted to have some room to survive. So I shined my shoes, and I did all that little junk, trying very desperately to keep myself ready for the day I got a Class A, because I was convinced I was going to get one. Never did.

Paul Stillwell: Well I've heard it's harder to finish as the anchorman than the top one.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's probably true.

Paul Stillwell: You have to calculate it very carefully.

Admiral Crowe: That's very true. It takes precise judgment. Hexter Williams was our anchorman.\* I was in mine warfare school with him. He died not too long ago. He was a loyal Naval Academy graduate, very loyal. But he was the anchorman. There were just a lot of guys that you ran into that, irrespective of where they stood in the class, you knew they were going to do all right. You knew that the world wasn't going to be able to

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\* Midshipman Hexter A. Williams, USN stood number 660 of the 821 graduates in the class of 1947. The Naval Academy Alumni Register shows the anchorman in the class as Midshipman John F. Jones, USN.

contain them. That was the way Vernon and Jack were. I wasn't worried about their future.

I had three roommates first-class year: Don Fantozzi, Newell Bowman, and Fred Sachse. Don was from Chicago, and he was probably the smartest guy in the room, but he loved women. When he went to the University of Illinois he damned near bilged out, because he was chasing everything that walked. Well, he came to the Naval Academy and they made him study, so he did extremely well. At the Naval Academy he was always making a hell of good grades, but he never missed a minute of liberty. His father was the director of a Chicago opera orchestra. I never knew it, but when I later met his father he said, oh, Don was a good flautist, but he never played the flute at the Naval Academy. He never mentioned it.

The other, Newell Bowman, was from Hyattsville. His father was a Naval Academy graduate. I don't think he wanted to be there, but he was there because of his father. He smoked and played the trumpet, and by the time we graduated he had TB. Got out of the Navy right away, and in fact he went to Princeton for his doctorate and taught chemistry at the University of Tennessee till he died.

The third one, Fred Sachse, was very interesting. His father was in the Navy, a Naval Academy graduate, and was a big name in lighter-than-air in the days when they were developing lighter-than-air.\* He was the commanding officer of Lakehurst when the *Hindenburg* went down. Fred, who was 14 years old or something right in there, would go out there and hang on a line and they'd give him 50 cents to dock those big dirigibles. He was hanging on a line when the *Hindenburg* went down.† His father came to visit. I met his father. And I was up in Lakehurst one day in the office there with all these pictures, and there was his father prominently displayed. He made several crossings on the *Hindenburg* as an observer.

Fred went into aviation. He'd been in the fleet. And Fred was a marvelous individual. Nobody knew Fred Sachse that didn't like him. When he'd get mad, he used to say to us, "I've been by more lighthouses than you guys have been by telephone

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\* His father was Captain Frederick Charles Sachse, USN, class of 1920.

† The German *Hindenburg* was one of the largest airships ever built. Completed in 1936, it was 812 feet long and 135 feet in diameter. It created an international sensation on 6 May 1937 when it exploded and burned while approaching its mooring at the naval air station in Lakehurst, New Jersey. That event ended regular airship service between the United States and Germany.

poles.” He was just a nice man. He went into naval aviation, flew VPs, and he was flying a P2V. He was the copilot, and they lost an engine when they were landing at Brunswick.\* They started to land and decided the runway was too short for their problem. So they circled around, and in the process evidently upped the flaps or something. They did something that they didn’t realize one engine wasn’t enough to do that. As they were circling around to land they crashed into a forest. I don’t know that anybody was killed, probably was. But, anyway, the pilot and copilot survived. Fred got out of the airplane, climbed on the wing and jumped off, and the pilot was coming out there—they broke the window and came out—and slipped and captured his foot in the window and couldn’t get it out. Fred climbed back up on the airplane to help this guy get out, which I think they did, but it caught on fire, and he got burned very badly. And 12 days later he died of pneumonia.† So his career was not very long.

I later met his daughter at our 50th reunion. She came by herself with a bunch of pictures, and asked to see people who knew her father. But of the four people living in that room he was by far the most pleasant personality. Although one afternoon on Saturday I have no idea what he did, but he got blind drunk, and he came into the room the middle of Saturday afternoon just crazy drunk. Three or four of us held him down and tied him to the bunk, because we couldn’t let him walk around Bancroft Hall. And our friend Stan Smith, who was a roommate of Stockdale’s, came in, looked at this—he was the rancher from Wyoming—and he watched Fred flopping around and us trying to stop it. He said, “I’ve seen Indians like that.” Turned around and walked out of the room.

Fred Sachse was a drummer. He was a musician, he was in the drum and bugle corps. He used to study while listening to Spike Jones records.‡ And where the gun would go off, he’d be studying and at the right moment, he’d go—and just keep going.

Paul Stillwell: The tape recorder couldn’t catch that, but you made the sign that he would hold his hand up like a pistol when the gun went off.

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\* The Lockheed P2V Neptune was a land-based patrol plane.

† Sachse was a lieutenant when he died 25 April 1952.

‡ Lindley Murray (1911-65) played professionally under the name Spike Jones. He was the leader of band called the City Slickers that created humorous novelty songs with offbeat instruments and sound effects.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That's what he'd do, just go like that, right on time. But he was a lovely man, lovely. And, of course, his father was in a diminishing asset, just like I was in diesel submarines.

Paul Stillwell: He literally gave up his life for a shipmate, or fellow pilot.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. He did. He was a bona fide hero. And his widow remarried in the Army. And she, in flight training, met Jim Stockdale. And when Jim came out of prison they were on duty in the Philippines, and when he got off the plane Fred's wife was holding up this big sign.<sup>\*</sup> And Jim was very impressed with that. Jim loved Fred Sachse.

Paul Stillwell: So there's a real bond among classmates and their families.

Admiral Crowe: Well, particularly in your company. The company you survive in, you live in. And at the 55th this summer we had a good turnout. We had a lawyer from Long Beach, California, Don Wallace, very successful.<sup>†</sup> Bill St. George retired as a vice admiral, very bright guy, and he was a baseball player. I think he was sort of a second-tier baseball player. He retired as SurfPac.<sup>‡</sup> And Jeff Metzel, who was one of my closest friends, submarine admiral, they were all there. Vernon and I had a lunch for the class, and we had about 25 company mates right there in the room.

Paul Stillwell: Jeff Metzel was a Navy junior also.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, very much so. I used to get annoyed at him because he was so pro-Navy. Are you familiar with his problem?

Paul Stillwell: No.

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<sup>\*</sup> Stockdale was released from prison in North Vietnam in February 1973 and flown to the Philippines for medical treatment before returning to the United States.

<sup>†</sup> Donald C. Wallace, Jr., resigned his commission in 1948 and attended Stanford Law School.

<sup>‡</sup> SurfPac – Surface Force Pacific Fleet.



Admiral Crowe: Well, in the first place he's one of these people that's just passionate about whatever he's doing and throws himself into it. And he went into the submarine business. I think he was the CO of *Nautilus* at one time.\* Rickover accepted him. I was surprised, because Jeff wasn't that smart. Anyway, he was very successful in the Navy and has worked hard.

He and I roomed together at the BOQ at New London, and then Jeff got married.† He came up there for some reason, I don't know what. His oldest son was swimming in the lake, went down the slide head first in shallow water and hit his head on a rock, and was paralyzed from the neck down. The kid's still alive. But the Metzels had to—nursing that kid, they got up three times a night and turned him and did this, and they did this for years. Now, I don't remember how many years, but two or three years. And you could watch him age. Well, they sued the U.S. Government. They won and got quite a bit of money. And then when that judgment came through, they could hire help. They got a wagon for the son. But that son dominated their entire life, and just took a lot of joy out of their lives. But Jeff played through. Boy, if he didn't have anything but guts he had lots of that.

Paul Stillwell: I remember seeing Admiral Zumwalt age when his son was going through the cancer.‡

Admiral Crowe: It goes very fast, I think. I watched Jeff just—got white hair and—but I hear from him quite often. He was there the other night. He was really a very good friend, and we lived together. But he always wanted to get married. I was amazed. He was one of the few men I knew that really was eager to get married. And he was more scared of women than I was.

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\* CDR Jeffrey C. Metzel, Jr., USN, commanded the nuclear submarine *Nautilus* (SSN-571) from April 1962 to October 1963.

† BOQ – bachelor officers' quarters.

‡ Elmo R. Zumwalt III, who served as a Swift boat officer in South Vietnam, died on 13 August 1988 at Fayetteville, North Carolina, of lymphoma and Hodgkin's Disease. His cancer was attributed to the dioxins in Agent Orange. See Elmo Zumwalt, Jr., and Elmo Zumwalt III with John Pekkanen, *My Father, My Son* (New York: Macmillan, 1987).

Paul Stillwell: How did your social life go during this period you were terrified of women?

Admiral Crowe: Terrible.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the hops and dating?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we drank a lot before the hop, then you'd go to the hop, and then we'd come back and drink a lot until we had to go in. I had several blind dates down there that my friends had got me. They were all disasters. I wasn't very good at it.

I had a lawyer working for me in Italy.\* His name was Dufour Woolfley. He was a State Department type, and he was the political advisor on the CinCSouth staff. Dufour was paunchy. He had big thick glasses, and Dufour was quite an intellectual and a very interesting man. He and I had a lot of wonderful conversations. One day we were walking around the streets of Naples, I can't remember why, and we stopped and watched some kids playing soccer in a vacant lot, and I said, "God, aren't they having a good time?" I said, "Dufour, you were young once, weren't you?"

Dufour said, "Yeah, but I wasn't very good at it." I've never forgotten that. I imagine he was a nerd in high school, and he wasn't very good at it. Well, that's the way I was dating girls at the Naval Academy. I wasn't very good at it.

Paul Stillwell: It's remembered from your 1986 graduation speech at the Naval Academy that you admonished the midshipmen to think about something and they could become that, but you said if that had happened when you were 18 you would have turned into a girl.

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\* Admiral Crowe served as Commander in Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe/U.S. Naval Forces Europe from May 1980 to May 1983.

Admiral Crowe: Well, the story is that I was advised that a man becomes what he thinks about, and this is designed to encourage studiousness and high thoughts, but I discovered it wasn't true. And, you know, the kids liked that joke.

Paul Stillwell: Of course.

Admiral Crowe: Well, but some of the jokes that we found funny the younger ones don't find. I've discovered that in my speaking. The older people and young people have a different sense of humor. But they liked that one.

Paul Stillwell: So you endured the hops when you were a midshipman.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, sort of. I'm not a very good dancer. I wasn't a very good dancer. That seemed to be irrelevant; the dancing didn't have much to do with the hops.

Speaking of hops, when we were debating my first-class year we went to the tournament at West Point, which was the big tournament on the East Coast. And on Saturday night they had a hop at West Point. We were invited to it. I saw an attractive girl there and I tagged on in and was dancing with her when I got tagged in on, and guess who, Doc Blanchard.\* And I thought, well, that's the last I'll see of her. Because there went Doc and my girl dancing away. When she saw Doc Blanchard her eyes got real big, and so did mine.

Paul Stillwell: Well, as you said, at that age the football players appeal.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they were the big shots of everything.

I still have the telegram I sent my father after we won that debate at West Point. I said, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." I sent it from a telegraph station there at West Point. And I have the original clipping out of the *Capital* or something in

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\* The West Point football team was outstanding during and after World War II. Fullback Felix "Doc" Blanchard won the Heisman Trophy as college football's top player in the 1945 season, and halfback Glenn Davis won the award for the 1946 season.

Annapolis that reported our win at West Point.<sup>\*</sup> That was my sole entry into competition with other schools. But I liked that.

I made some friends in English, History, and Government, a couple of professors, after that debate experience. I remember one of them wrote my father a letter after the season was over, highly complimentary. But I had not gotten much reinforcement like that at the Naval Academy. I made very good grades, but like all my academic experiences I made my best grades the first year and then they kept going down. The same thing in sub school. I stood one in the class the first set of exams, then two, then three, then four.

Paul Stillwell: You're supposed to go the other way.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, you're supposed to go the other way.

Paul Stillwell: Ned Potter and Neville Kirk were a couple of the history professors then. Do you recall them?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the one I liked the most was Darden.<sup>†</sup> And he had a son that later taught at the Naval Academy in English, History, and Government. I forget his first name, but he and my father became sort of friendly. My best grades were in English, History, and Government, although I had some good mathematics grades. I discovered in mathematics I did very well until we got in really advanced mathematics, and I didn't grasp that at all. I fell off the turnip wagon there somewhere in the process. And I did well in navigation, but I hacked up the final exam, and as a result I didn't star. If I'd have done well I'd have starred. But my parents had just come in for June Week, and the exam was that morning, and I couldn't have cared less, and I didn't do well on that exam, which is sort of foolish. I think I stood 80 in the class.<sup>‡</sup> Is that right?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

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<sup>\*</sup> The Annapolis newspaper at that time was called *The Evening Capital*.

<sup>†</sup> Professor William A. Darden, in the department of English, History, and Government.

<sup>‡</sup> Actually 81.

Admiral Crowe: And I had a very interesting experience. The stars were 76 and above, I think. The way they did the graduation was that the star men came in as a group and sat in the front. Then one man went up to get the degrees for the star men, and one man from each company went up. Well, the senior man in our company who wasn't a star was Fantozzi. I think he was 77 or something. I was 80. Well, he fell in the ditch before graduation and was in the hospital, so I got to go up and get the degrees for the company.

Paul Stillwell: The class was about 820, so you were in the top 10%.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I was in the top 10%. It's interesting. I've gone back through my academic records. I was in the top 10% in high school, top 10% in sub school, and top 10%, right about the 8 or 9% there in the Naval Academy. I don't know about OU. So I figure that's about where I belong. Cozy little space there.

Paul Stillwell: Right. What do you recall about the Army-Navy football games and the pageantry, and so forth?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were quite enamored with that, and my parents were, particularly. My plebe year, because of the war the game was at West Point. We didn't go. But a company of West Pointers sat on the Navy side and cheered. I thought that wasn't very successful.

The second game was at Baltimore. My parents came up for that game. Oh, incidentally, I bet a bathrobe on the first game and we won. That was the last time we won, because Blanchard and Davis took over then. My second year was in Baltimore and we got clobbered. The third year was in Philadelphia, and we got clobbered again. Lost a bathrobe both times. Then the fourth year, the year after I graduated, I went to the game, and that was probably the best game I ever saw. Blanchard and Davis—we damned near won the game. I think it was 21 to 18, something like that.\* And I saw Davis do a couple things in that game I couldn't imagine. He's the best football player I

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\* The score of the game was as Admiral Crowe recalled it.

ever personally saw play. But they didn't beat us—and the game ended with us on the five-yard line. And we got a penalty, that's right. We were down to the two and we got penalized, and we didn't make a touchdown. We were close to it.

I later worked with Bob Schwoeffermann, who was a football player that was our star halfback in that game.<sup>\*</sup> He was a flier. But Vernon and I looked at the Army-Navy game as an occasion to party, not as a serious proposition. The one in Baltimore, God, we marched for miles to the game. But in some of the games I went to, boy, it was cold as hell. Now, it doesn't seem to be that way anymore, but we almost froze at some of those.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I was at the last one, and it was pretty chilly.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I think it was. I watched it. As far as liking sports, I always liked to watch basketball better than I did football. And then, personally, plebe year I swam some. I liked to swim. I loved volleyball. It wasn't a sport when I was coming up through the Naval Academy.

But, you know, a lot of the football players made terrific submarine commanders. Both Dornin and Cutter were football players who later did well in World War II.<sup>†</sup> And then Moon Chapple, whom I didn't know, but knew of him.<sup>‡</sup> I knew Dornin. He was in New London when I showed up up there. I always felt so inferior around Dornin, because he was really an icon.

Paul Stillwell: He was a character too.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was. But, you know, he went to drink. And I knew several of those World War II guys for whom peacetime was not exciting. Their game was not peacetime, and Dornin was one of them.

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<sup>\*</sup> Midshipman Robert Schwoeffermann, USN, class of 1948.

<sup>†</sup> During World War II Commander Robert E. Dornin, USN, commanded the *Trigger*, and Commander Slade D. Cutter, USN, commanded the *Seahorse*. The two officers, Naval Academy classmates in 1935, both were quite successful as submarine captains. The oral histories of both are in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>‡</sup> In World War II Commander Wreford G. Chapple, USN, commanded the *S-38*, *Permit*, and *Bream*.

Paul Stillwell: Slade Cutter told me that everything after the war was anticlimactic.

Admiral Crowe: I think that's right. That was true of a lot of those people. And it makes sense. I mean, you live for years in that kind of environment. Everything is accelerated. Everything is adrenaline. And everything's life and death. Then along comes peacetime and—you know, in a certain sense Stockdale was that way a little bit. He was a little different. But nevertheless, in a certain sense the world that Jim came back to was never squared away like he thought it should be, having been in prison camp.

Paul Stillwell: I think he said that in a way those were the most enjoyable years of his life because of the camaraderie in the prison.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He never came out specifically and said things he would hint at. He essentially was saying: "Being a prisoner of war is the number-one thing in life. After you go through that experience everything's anticlimactic."

Paul Stillwell: Well, that was what defined him.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And, you know, he really got bored with a lot of things very easily. He had a very low threshold after he came back. If you were talking about what he was interested in—philosophy, Epictetus—sure, he'd love that.\* But, you know, Sybil took over all the—she wrote the checks, did the driving. He didn't want to mess with anything as low as that. And it was hard for him to do regular work. He had a low attention span, because he didn't feel it was important. And I can understand that.

Paul Stillwell: Because he had been through an experience like those submariners in World War II.

Admiral Crowe: Searing.

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\* Epictetus (circa 55-135 A.D.) was a Greek stoic philosopher.

Paul Stillwell: Survival was a day-to-day event.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. So they tried to make an admiral out of Cutter.<sup>\*</sup> He had the grace to say, “Stop that, quit talking like that.” But a lot of those guys wouldn’t make it. They sent them to the Pentagon to write op plans or something, and, Jesus, how diddly can something be? And the people at the war college told me that when Jim was president, he couldn’t take a meeting.<sup>†</sup> They’d have a meeting, and all of a sudden at ten minutes he’d cut it off. He just couldn’t stand those interminable gatherings, and I understand that; I couldn’t take it either! That was the worst thing about being Chairman. I sat through so much of that crap. So I guess it’s all relative.

But my class, essentially, served during the Cold War. That was in essence what we did. We were there at the beginning, and we were there at the end. Although, I don’t know, are you aware I was the last guy in the class in the service?

Paul Stillwell: No, I wasn’t.

Admiral Crowe: There were two of us, Wes McDonald and I, and he retired and I went down and spoke at his retirement ceremony.<sup>‡</sup> But I was the last one on active duty.

Paul Stillwell: Your tenure on active duty coincided almost exactly with the years of the Cold War.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Literally. Because we spent our entire lives whatever you do when you’re engaged in a Cold War. It used to amaze me when I’d be talking to Akhromeyev that I had spent so much planning and plotting to destroy his life, and there we were talking like two normal people.

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<sup>\*</sup> In the years shortly before Captain Cutter’s death in 2005 there was an effort on the part of his supporters to have him promoted to rear admiral retroactively; Cutter didn’t want to have anything to do with it.

<sup>†</sup> Vice Admiral Stockdale served as president of the Naval War College from 13 October 1977 to 22 August 1979.

<sup>‡</sup> Admiral Wesley L. McDonald, USN, served in his final active billet as Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, Commander in Chief Atlantic, and Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet from 30 September 1982 to 27 November 1985.



I didn't tell you what my teaching assistant said the other day, did I? I was talking about this thing. She was typing some of it for me. I said, "You know, the Naval Academy didn't live up to my imagination very much."

She said, "Well, I understand that. I came up here with all these notions, and I discovered it was run by people." That sort of sums it up. It wasn't run by gods; it was run by people. That means there are problems, and not everything is done right, and it ain't all roses.

But I never considered leaving the Naval Academy. Never for an instant. And yet today young people will get up and say, "Well, I don't like this." Or "I'm bored." Or "Somebody said something nasty to me today," and so they go away. And we had one. We went to great lengths to give him an A-OK and last through plebe summer. Jim and I were of one mind. We used to talk about that a lot. You don't have to throw us out of here; we're going to walk out. I think the main reason was that you wouldn't want to go home. I just didn't feel I could go home if I did that. It would be terrible to go home and not survive this place. The other reason was that we understood that if you didn't graduate it was a waste of time.

Paul Stillwell: Well, was it also because you were so set on having a naval career?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was originally. But at the time there were very few people that graduated from there that really were enamored with it when they graduated. As one would say, "I love to see it in my rearview mirror." And even today they'd say, "Oh, boy, it's here. Thank God it's here." It left you sort of—in some places you were ready to go. You get out from that life. It's oppressing. On the other hand, there was a purpose in it. As I said in my speech, it produced, it did its mission, and that was to train kids to be junior officers, and not to be surprised at what they ran into.

I never really cottoned to the honor code. We didn't have an honor code.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, you talked about that last time.

Admiral Crowe: West Point did. And my experience with West Point graduates in early life was, they sort of assumed the world was like the world they had been to school in, and it wasn't. It wasn't that way at all. You know, people will lie to you, and they'll maneuver outside—your enlisted men that work for you, you've got to be careful. Well, in our Naval Academy days there was not an honor code and we were not required to report on our classmates or anything. It was the system against us. I thought it wasn't all bad. The honor code is sort of an artificial way of life, and it's promoting it in people. But the world isn't that way. As Julia would say, it's run by people. And 50% of them don't tell the truth.

Paul Stillwell: Well, on the other hand there is a perception that the service academies are more honorable than the world at large.

Admiral Crowe: And I think they are. I saw graphic evidence of it when I was at OU. Everybody cheated at Oklahoma University. And everybody did everything. At the Naval Academy that wasn't true. We did a lot of things wrong, but we didn't do them in Bancroft Hall, and we did it with the full knowledge that if you're caught you're caught. And there's no excuse. We didn't make excuses when we got caught. Today if you give a bad grade down there, they scream and holler and come in and argue about it. It never occurred to me to go and tell a professor I didn't like the grade. Today everybody comes rolling in.

Paul Stillwell: Parents didn't sue the Academy back then either.

Admiral Crowe: No, they didn't. There was more respect for teaching, teachers and professors, and we weren't smartasses with the professors. Nor with our duty officers. But there were two kinds of duty officers. The kind that said, "Okay, you did it wrong, you were late, and I'm going to give you ten demerits, get out of here." They'd say it like it ain't the end of the world. "Please, go march off your ten and that's it." And then the other kind, they said, "Oh God, you're terrible, you'll never make it, you can't be a naval officer and be late to formation." The hell you can't. Didn't think it was the end of

Western civilization when you got some demerits. We liked the ones that said, “What’s going on here? You know you’re going to get frapped if you do something wrong, and we treat it as a casual event; so should you.” I thought they made better naval officers.

Paul Stillwell: Please tell me about your summer training cruises.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we went out on the *New York* at the end of plebe year.<sup>\*</sup> Of course, we were integrated into the crew. Incidentally, the war was still going on. We had several submarine scares and varied the places of exercises because of submarines. We were in a wartime mode. Nevertheless, it was near the end of the war. Not the end, but the submarine threat had diminished quite a bit. We went to Trinidad and St. Thomas. I remember those two places. Then we went to Guantánamo on the *New York*.<sup>†</sup> And, of course, our living conditions were crowded and a mess. And the only thing we could do in Guantánamo was go ashore and drink beer. I can remember walking back to the ship after an evening, a crowd of us going back, and we were all slopped up with beer. It was a half mile back to the ship. We were pretty screwed up, and somebody said, “You know, it’s a strange world when you’re glad to get back to the *New York*.” And that was it. We were going to get back and go to bed, and we were glad to get back.

Paul Stillwell: What were the living conditions on a ship built in the World War I era?

Admiral Crowe: My father, of course, was on the *Pennsylvania* in World War I. He had hammocks. We didn’t have hammocks. They had converted to the bunks like we do now, very crowded. Four or five bunk rows. But the johns were the same, I remember.

Paul Stillwell: Troughs.

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<sup>\*</sup> USS *New York* (BB-34), lead battleship of her class, was commissioned 15 April 1914. She had a standard displacement of 27,000 tons, was 573 feet long, and 95 feet in the beam. Her top speed was 21 knots. She was armed with ten 14-inch guns, 16 5-inch guns, and eight 3-inch guns. She was eventually decommissioned in 1946 after service in World War II.

<sup>†</sup> Guantánamo Bay, on the south coast of Cuba, near the eastern end of the island, for many years provided a fleet anchorage and training area for U.S. Navy ships.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, troughs. And I can remember my father talking about that. And it really intrigued me that there they were, still there. Of course the ship, I'd never seen guns that big fired. I was absolutely fascinated with the big guns. At night you could actually watch the shells, the trajectory and so forth.

One of my duties was in the masthead searchlight. We trained day after day, and you had a thing you were to train the searchlight so it stayed in sync with the guns. Well, we trained in the daytime. Nobody ever used a searchlight. So we'd go up there and play cards. Then all of a sudden we had a night firing exercise, and we were up there playing cards when the order came over, "Illuminate! Illuminate!" and we turned the light on and it went straight up in the air. We were frantically trying to get it down, and boy, here came an officer right behind. He was up the mast in microseconds. Oh, we were a mess. Things like that went on all the time.

But to load the guns and watch them fire, and to see the ship navigate, and to stand watch in the engine room. I stood some engine room watches. And, of course, the *New York* was an old ship. None of that technology we were studying in school. But there it was. Big ship, big wooden decks. We did holystoning.\* That seemed to me to be a waste of time. The efficiency of holystoning escaped me.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it's a cosmetic thing.

Admiral Crowe: I couldn't understand why the hell we were doing it. But that wasn't the only thing I didn't understand in those days in the Navy.

We went into the *New York*—and God, I wish I could remember his name. There was a chief warrant who had been with the *New York* his entire career. What was his name? He had a strange name—Turnipseed, or something like that. Anyway, he was a big man on the ship, and all the deck stuff, he was the boss.

Paul Stillwell: Was he a boatswain?

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\* Holystoning refers to the practice of cleaning a ship's wooden decks by scraping them with bricks pushed back and forth across the planks by means of wooden handles. It is a laborious operation.

Admiral Crowe: No. He was a warrant officer, chief warrant officer. We moored the ship in New York Harbor. He went on leave. They got orders to change mooring, and the captain wouldn't change till he got back. We went three piers down the river, but they had to have him aboard to do it. I thought that was sort of interesting. But he had been on one ship forever.

Paul Stillwell: It was the custom back then for many men. It was literally home and work in the same place.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. It was literally home to him. And nobody ever questioned him. I never saw an officer even go after him or anything. I guess the captain would, but nobody else would.

We had a lot of reserve officers on the *New York*. We would peek in occasionally and see the wardroom dinner there. We ate with the crew, of course, and that was good experience too. I never regretted that.

Paul Stillwell: Was that division messing, as opposed to a central galley?

Admiral Crowe: No, it was central. My father was in division messing, like they did on *Victory*. That's the same way they did on *Victory*, you know. They've still got it set up down there on *Victory*, how they messed in their little groups.\*

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the exposure to junior enlisted men?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was, of course, the first real time. We had a few at the Naval Academy, but most of the enlisted instructors were chiefs, on knot-tying and rowing and seamanship, and so forth and so forth. And we had stewards down in the mess, serving in the mess. We ate something like you would in a wardroom. They don't do that now. It's completely different now. I remember we had a big expression: "Ain't no mo.'" When

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\* HMS *Victory*, a ship of the line completed in 1765, is the oldest commissioned ship in the Royal Navy. In 1805 she was flagship of Lord Horatio Nelson in the Battle of Trafalgar. She is now a museum ship in Portsmouth, England.

you'd say, "Can we have some more potatoes?" "Ain't no mo'." We made a lot of fun of that. We thought that was interesting. The fact they could feed all those people at one time always intrigued me. They've got a completely different system now, brought on by reality.

But eating at the mess was a pretty primitive affair. I mean, it was every man for himself. And, of course, the plebes, it was a struggle to survive. I mean, they may get fed, and they may not get fed. Now they don't let that happen to the plebes. They still have their place, but the plebes are treated much better than they were when I was a midshipman. Every class says that, of course. Nobody has a good plebe year.

We ate all the meals. We were not allowed to skip any meals unless you had an athletic event or something. And we mustered three times a day to go to meals. Couldn't have food in your room. We all did.

The summer after I graduated, I went straight to Jacksonville for a month of indoctrination in flying; the Navy was trying to lure people into flying. But, of course, when I graduated you had to spend two years in the fleet before you could either go to flying or submarines. I was always sorry they did away with that. Then Stockdale told me that there were some aviators that had no idea about regular Navy protocol or anything, that had just gone through Pensacola and went into flying off a carrier. So they'd never been in the real Navy. I thought that making them go on a surface ship was useful; I was surprised that they quit that. Now everything is so regimented and trying to cram so much stuff in the defined period. And, of course, that's the problem with the Naval Academy today, trying to put too much stuff in four years.

But the cruises in the summer achieved it. We didn't spread out like they do now. We didn't go as many places, see as much. But in the 1930s they used to go to Europe. I was sorry we missed that. In the wartime we missed it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it came back just a little bit after the war.

Admiral Crowe: I think it probably did.

Paul Stillwell: In 1947 there was a cruise over to Norway and Britain and Scotland.

Admiral Crowe: That was just a shame. They ought to take every class to Sweden and let them see those blonde girls.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about the cruise in 1945 on board the *Raleigh*?\* She was also old.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was an old ship. We were always sort of surprised that it continued to go. But the guns weren't as impressive as they were on the *New York*. But a lot of them got to do a lot more seamanship stuff. And we did a lot of navigation, where we actually tried to navigate the ship, which I thought was worthwhile. I loved that. You know, they've done away with celestial navigation at the Naval Academy.

Paul Stillwell: I did not know that.

Admiral Crowe: Isn't that something? I don't know what you do when you run out of electrical power now.

Paul Stillwell: That's right. GPS is everything.†

Admiral Crowe: Get your mobile phone out and call Washington. "Where are we?"

Paul Stillwell: That's almost sacrilegious.

Admiral Crowe: It is, you know. We've done away with steam and celestial navigation—entropy and what all that stuff was in the steam classes. Never understood it very well.

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\* USS *Raleigh* (CL-7), an *Omaha*-class light cruiser, was commissioned 6 February 1924. She had a standard displacement of 7,050 tons, was 555 feet long, and 55 feet in the beam. Her top speed was 34 knots. She was armed with twelve 6-inch guns, four 3-inch guns, and ten 21-inch torpedo tubes. She was eventually decommissioned in 1946 after service in World War II.

† GPS – global positioning system.

Paul Stillwell: Where did the *Raleigh* go for liberty?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it didn't go anywhere. I really don't recall very much on the *Raleigh*. I remember Fantozzi was on one of the other ships, and he had a couple humorous experiences.

Something we didn't talk about was the athletic requirements for graduating from the Naval Academy. You had to climb that damned rope, and Newell Bowman couldn't do it. I think he could get four feet off the ground or something like that. Somebody went over and did it for him. Fantozzi couldn't swim. I went over and took the swimming test for Fantozzi, because he would never have gotten out of there. He'd sink like a rock. But they were so lax in the recordkeeping and the way they did it—and that was handled by enlisted men, usually—that we were able to fool the system.

I told you about the thermometers, didn't I?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: That was a Weaver innovation that we played to the very limit. But I don't remember very much about the *Raleigh* cruise. That's interesting that—it was not a very pleasant ship. Everything was so antiquated.

We did a little flying. A little at the Naval Academy, across the river there in those catapulted planes. And that's something we saw on midshipman cruise, on the *Raleigh*, as a matter of fact. They had an airplane, and they would take off and then come back and land. And it was always a sporty proposition whether that silly little airplane would get aboard without disaster. And we had torpedoes on the *Raleigh*. We didn't have any on the *New York*. But I was fascinated by the firing torpedoes, and they went away all of a sudden.

Paul Stillwell: Were you more like junior officers than you had been in the *New York*?



Paul Stillwell: Well, that was the theory, yes. It's interesting you mention that. That was the theory: we were supposed to have more junior-officer duties. I think as second classmen we actually wore a different hat. We didn't wear the little blue-striped hat.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about the mandatory chapel services?

Admiral Crowe: Well, they were all mandatory when I was there. That's where I learned to sleep in church. Still doing it. I always say the main thing I learned at the Naval Academy was how to dress quickly. And that was of great usefulness. I've used it all my life. We could dress in 30 seconds there. We were marvelous at it.

Paul Stillwell: Do what you have to do.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And then they still are way over-programmed, so I assume they're still doing that sort of stuff. Oh, I can remember we knew how much time it took for everything we had to do. And the worst thing that could happen to you at the Naval Academy was to take a nap and to wake up and there's nobody around. You don't know what's going on, but you know you're not someplace you ought to be. A terrible, sinking feeling. You're supposed to be somewhere, and you don't know where it is. That would happen often.

Paul Stillwell: Sleep is so precious in that environment.

Admiral Crowe: And was on cruise too. It was really on cruise that it was. And people slept in the oddest places. They could go to sleep anywhere: under a gun, on the deck.

Paul Stillwell: I remember doing that.

Admiral Crowe: But I remember sleep was at a premium. Every day was full. For what I don't know. And the food was not very good. I remember that.

Paul Stillwell: Was this on board ship or at the Academy?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, on board ship. I never got on a submarine until—I guess I’d walked through a submarine, but I had never been on board a real submarine until I went to Submarine School. That may not be true. I rode a submarine for a day out in Guam when I was on the *Carmick*, and I guess that’s the first time I’d been aboard a functioning submarine. We heard a lot of talk at the Naval Academy about it, but we never got aboard.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about ship-handling training in the YPs?\*

Admiral Crowe: I thought that was great. Now, that I really enjoyed. We’d do it in the summer, and we’d tool around Chesapeake Bay. That was an exercise that I really liked. I enjoyed that very much.

Paul Stillwell: That obviously has a professional application.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. Today they have nice YPs. I thought that made more sense than sailboats. And of course a lot of my classmates—and today sailing’s a huge sport at the Naval Academy. I had more to do than to spend it sailing.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that wraps up another enjoyable session. Thank you.

(End of Interview 2)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, here we are on the day after the nation observed the fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks, and we’re going back much farther than that, 60 years, to finish up your time as a midshipman. I noticed in the *Lucky Bag* that you had a striper position your first-class year.<sup>†</sup> What did that involve?

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\* The YP is a yard patrol craft used for training of ship handling and seamanship.

<sup>†</sup> In order to provide opportunities to a greater number of midshipmen, the Naval Academy rotated positions so that there were three different “sets” of leaders in the academic year—autumn, winter, and spring. The leaders were known as “stripers” because of the number of stripes on their sleeves.

Admiral Crowe: I was a lieutenant, two stripes, and I was on the battalion staff. I forget what I did. It wasn't very much. But we didn't make the deal out of stripers they do now. I think they really have substantive jobs for three or four more times than we did. Jim Collier, who was the number-one man in the class, was the battalion commander, I remember, and I was on his staff. I don't know why I was doing that. I don't know that my military aptitude would have justified it or not.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the parades and reviews that were involved?

Admiral Crowe: I had to go.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you probably had to be out front as a striper, didn't you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I wasn't that big a striper. But yes, I had to go to the parades. It was the winter set. But the spring set, some of the parades I didn't go to.

Paul Stillwell: Anything to recall about finishing up the academics, final exams, and so forth?

Admiral Crowe: Well, no. I do remember I missed starrang because we had a navigation exam on Saturday before June Week, when my parents had arrived, and I just rushed in and took the exam and rushed out, and didn't do very well on it.

Paul Stillwell: I can just imagine the pride that your parents felt, especially after your dad had helped you so much to get into the Naval Academy.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Oh, he was very proud of that.

Paul Stillwell: How much choice did you have in service selection for what your first commissioned assignment would be?

Admiral Crowe: At that time you couldn't go into aviation or submarines until you'd spent two years at sea on a ship. So, except for the Marines, we were confined to surface ships. Jim Stockdale and I selected the same ship together. We selected a DMS.\*

Paul Stillwell: Was this based on class standing or lottery?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think it would have been if you were arguing about anything. The only real arguments I remember involved some people who wanted to go to the Marine Corps, and the quota wasn't big enough, and then the class standing became very important. But otherwise I don't think we had much choice—maybe in oceans or something, whether you went west or east. When I left Submarine School, class standing was everything, coming out of there. But graduating from the Naval Academy Jim and I were more intent on getting a ship together, and we looked into these DMSs. We thought we liked that. Also, we wanted to go to the West Coast. I don't even remember why we wanted to go to the West Coast. Seemed like a good idea at the time.

Paul Stillwell: And you mentioned that unfortunately that lasted only a couple of months together with him.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Then I went back to mine warfare school in Yorktown, Virginia. He had left by then to go to another ship. I was away for seven or eight months, because down at the mine warfare school in Yorktown, just before I was to graduate, I cut my hand in a minesweep wire accident. Almost lost my thumb. I was in the hospital at Portsmouth for over three months of therapy on the hand. Then I went back to the DMS.

Paul Stillwell: Do you have specific memories about the graduation itself? Both Admiral Nimitz and Halsey were there.\*

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\* DMS was the designation for a destroyer that had been converted to perform minesweeping.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and as I recall the speaker was Forrestal.<sup>†</sup> At least I have been under that illusion for several years. I remember something he said which I use when I do my own commencement addresses. He said, “Always conduct yourself that you will be welcome to return to your home town,” which I thought was pretty good advice.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, indeed.

Admiral Crowe: That’s about all I remember that he had to say. I told you that I got to receive the diplomas because my roommate fell on his head. It was an impressive roll of dignitaries on the stand that day. The place was full of World War II icons.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that was the first graduation after the war had ended.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Well, I guess that’s true. Yes, it was.

When I was a midshipman I marched in the formation that took Roosevelt’s body from Union Station to the White House.<sup>§</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Please tell me more.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I forget how many marched, but our company ended up marching in the parade accompanying the body. I do recall that, number one, we never changed arms the whole parade. Stupid. But when it was over they just took the rifle away from you and your hand stayed like this for a couple of hours.

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\* Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet during World War II; Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., USN, was Commander Third Fleet until shortly after the Japanese surrender.

<sup>†</sup> James V. Forrestal served as Secretary of the Navy from 19 May 1944 to 17 September 1947.

<sup>‡</sup> The class of 1947 graduated on 5 June 1946. During World War II the Naval Academy curriculum was shortened to three years. To return to the four-year format after the war, the class of 1948 was divided into A and B sections. A graduated in 1947 and B the following year.

<sup>§</sup> President Franklin D. Roosevelt died at Warm Springs, Georgia, on 12 April 1945. On 14 April, his body was escorted in a funeral procession from Union Station to the White House, where the funeral was held on 15 April.

Paul Stillwell: Locked in position.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, it was. It was a terrible ordeal. What I do remember the most, though, about the parade was I had never seen so many people crying. There was a crowd. Pennsylvania Avenue was crowded with people, and all kinds of crying and weeping and throwing flowers, etc., etc. Of course, I had grown up in a household that was very anti-Roosevelt, and I didn't think my father would appreciate it at all. Because he really didn't like Roosevelt. And it was a deep dislike. It wasn't just a momentary thing. He really had serious problems with the president. Reminds me a little bit of my own, when I get of age.

Paul Stillwell: You're speaking about the current situation?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I have sort of the same kind of opinions. But I later changed my mind on Roosevelt. I think history has pretty well vindicated him.

Paul Stillwell: I interviewed John McCrea, who was his naval aide in 1942.\* He came from a staunch Republican family in Michigan and had to explain to his mother that this was a naval assignment. It wasn't a political position.

Admiral Crowe: He had no choice.

Paul Stillwell: That's right. There's a famous photo I've seen in *Life* magazine that showed a black chief petty officer as Roosevelt's funeral train was going by, and he has an accordion, and tears were streaming.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I remember that. The people were like that on the whole route. In our company we weren't that affected by his death because we'd had some bias at home, and I remember most of my friends didn't like Roosevelt. But that's because we didn't

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\* Captain John L. McCrea, USN, was Roosevelt's naval aide in 1942-43. The oral history of McCrea, who retired as a vice admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

know much about it. When I was at the Naval Academy what amazed me the most was people had open minds about engineering problems, about mathematical problems, but they didn't have open minds about politics. They represented the politics of their family, whatever it might be. They really didn't have very sophisticated views on why they were doing that. But if you grew up in a Democratic family you were a Democrat, and vice versa.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that's probably typical for most people.

Admiral Crowe: And that carried over into the officer corps. I saw officers that would junk the blueprints, disobey the regulations, in order to reconnect a pipe so it would work better, but they wouldn't change their politics no matter what. And actually they just didn't follow it, I don't think. That was settled for them by another generation or a couple of events, or something.

Now, we didn't have much—well, I guess I should say we didn't have a broad education at the Naval Academy. And they never pretended that it was. Today they sort of oversell themselves. But nobody there pretended that you got a liberal education. You're a trade school, and that's what we're doing. We're turning out people to run ships.

They also had a built-in suspicion of academics, which was shared by the Navy in general. I said that in these remarks I made the other day. But nobody was fooling anybody. They weren't going to a Harvard with shoulder boards.

Paul Stillwell: A lot of the postgraduate education for the Navy then was in the technical pursuits.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. That's right. I began to pick up as I went along the possibilities of graduate education, but we hadn't thought too much about it. The main thing was air school or submarine school. And at that time there was no surface warfare school. You just went to ships. I always thought it was sort of a shame that they did

away with the initial two-year sea tour. It was pretty good to have that experience under your belt before you did other things.

Paul Stillwell: The four-year curriculum at that time was pretty much designed to put you as an officer on board a surface ship.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. That's exactly right.

Paul Stillwell: How long was that march with your arm locked in position around the rifle?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was a long time. It was a funeral step. It wasn't regular marching. And it went all the way from Union Station to the White House.

In the 1930s, before we went to the Naval Academy, a man couldn't marry for two years after he got out of the Naval Academy. Now, I don't know when they did away with that, but at least we could marry on graduation.

Paul Stillwell: I think it was 1942. Hal Shear, of the class of '40, was one of the beneficiaries when they changed the rule.

Paul Stillwell: Okay. Well, I remember I relieved Hal Shear in Italy.\* He said, "The best cook in this house is not the stewards; it's my wife." I don't think that's true, because the steward was pretty damned good.

Paul Stillwell: He had met her in Maine on a midshipman cruise.

Admiral Crowe: He was an interesting man. He was weird. When they left the house there, which we moved into, he had one room for an office, and he wouldn't let the

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\* Admiral Harold E. Shear, USN, served as Commander in Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe from July 1977 to May 1980.



stewards or anybody go in there. When they moved and he left personally, he carried 18 briefcases full of stuff out of there.

Paul Stillwell: Goodness.

Admiral Crowe: I think it was stuff he was supposed to be reading and hadn't gotten to. Because when I worked for him as VCNO he not only had an in- and out- basket, he had in-stuff all around the walls, on the floor. That was the trouble with the submarine force. You know, on a submarine you can actually learn everything that's going on on the ship. And some of those people don't ever get over that. They think that whatever job they're in they must know everything. Submariners as a rule didn't ever boss anything big. They didn't have to delegate, and when they did get in jobs where they had to delegate they weren't very good at it. They didn't like it. And they were big on detail. And Hal Shear was one of those a little while. Of course, getting anything out of the VCNO's office took months.<sup>\*</sup> He was something else.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I interrupted your train of thought. You were talking about the previous ban on early marriage.

Admiral Crowe: No, I just was thinking that we did go to sea for two years, but you could get married in that period of time. It was interesting in the early days how regulated they could make your life. They couldn't do that today.

Paul Stillwell: Slade Cutter got married early, and he just told them he was going to get married—"If you kick me out, so be it." And the Navy let him do it.<sup>†</sup>

Admiral Crowe: I bet they were glad they hadn't kicked him out.

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<sup>\*</sup> Before taking the CinCSouth job, Admiral Shear served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from 30 June 1975 to 5 July 1977.

<sup>†</sup> See the Naval Institute oral history of Captain Slade D. Cutter, USN (Ret.).

Paul Stillwell: I agree. Did you spend some time on board the *Carmick* before you went away to the mine school?\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did. Let me think about that. I was aboard three months maybe, maybe four—most of it tied up to a dock in San Francisco. We didn't have enough people to get under way. Then it went to the yard. We were under way going up. Got seasicker than the devil. And then while we were in the yard I went to mine warfare school.

Paul Stillwell: What was your initial training during that in-port period before the ship went to the yard.

Admiral Crowe: Not much. That poor skipper.<sup>†</sup> We got under way with fear and trembling because we had about 17 officers in the wardroom, and the ship was not prepared to have 17 officers in the wardroom. It wasn't built for 17 officers. But because we had a surfeit of officers right after the war there in ships that weren't under way, of those 17 only three had been to sea. So the first day we got under way in San Francisco to practice, weird things happened all day. I can remember a crossing situation, and the skipper turned to the communicator and said, "Show 'stop'." He put up four flags: S-T-O-P.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned that in your book, yes.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: At first the skipper was horrified, and then he started laughing, and he couldn't overcome the laughter. It was enough to laugh about.

Paul Stillwell: Where did you bunk, with all those officers?

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\* USS *Carmick* (DD-493), a *Gleaves*-class destroyer, was commissioned 28 December 1942. She had a standard displacement of 1,630 tons, was 348 feet long, and 36 feet in the beam. Her top speed was 35 knots. She was armed with four 5-inch guns and five 21-inch torpedo tubes. In 1945 she was converted to a high-speed minesweeper and on 23 June of that year reclassified DMS-33.

<sup>†</sup> The skipper was Lieutenant Commander Asa A. Clark III, USN.

<sup>‡</sup> *The Line of Fire*, pages 29-30.

Admiral Crowe: Well, several of them were married, and we were alongside, so they went home at night. Till we went to sea we didn't have a problem. But when I came back after my mine training and so forth, we were under way in San Diego every day, and within a month went to China.

I remember I had a strange thing happen to me. We had a new skipper, and he just assumed that I had been qualified as an officer of the deck before I went to school. So I never was qualified or anything. I just was put on the watch bill as the officer of the deck, and off we went. I was the navigator and the gunnery officer.

I had a chief quartermaster name of Ringstrom that used to bully me all the time. He never got a bad fix in his life. No matter how much he had to cheat, it was always good. But he was an old hand, boy. He didn't want that young whippersnapper getting us lost or anything. He wasn't going to have me get lost. But I had a chief gunner's mate by the name of Wood. He was marvelous. I had a first-class gunner named Stock, and the two of those men just saved me time and time again.

Paul Stillwell: What would be examples of what they did for you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the first time we had a live firing, at sleeves, I was directing the battery.\* I'd been on cruise on a battleship with 14-inch guns and 3-inch guns, but I'd never seen a 5-inch gun fire. Wood came to see me and said, "Now, the worst thing that can happen is an accident." He said, "I'll take care of that. You just do what I say, and I'll make sure that we don't shoot unless it's safe. But directing the damn guns, that's your problem. Good luck." But I never worried about the readiness and so forth because Wood was that good. He was just marvelous.

I can remember—what the hell was it that happened? We said, "Cease fire, cease fire," and just as I reported that all guns had ceased fire, one went off. I do remember that. Of course, operating with young kids that have never been to sea is ridiculous. We

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\* For antiaircraft gunnery practice in that era it was customary for an airplane to tow a tubular canvas sleeve that served as the target.

had a shipload full of them. The non-Naval Academy guys really were green, such as the communicator with “S-T-O-P.” At least I knew better than that, to put up “stop.”

Paul Stillwell: It’s a wise ensign who learns from his petty officers instead of trying to lord it over them.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that’s right. That would be my first advice to any. In my commencement address to the Naval Academy I made a big thing out of that: “Be sure you understand; they know things you don’t know, and you’ve got to learn, you’ve got to listen. Make friends with one of them right away.” But, of course, they just handled it.

We were a minesweeper too. I’d never seen any minesweeper. Well, we had two chiefs on there that had been minesweeping the whole damned war. I always got along with the chiefs. I never had any problem with chiefs. In fact, I admired them very, very much. We had several chiefs that I served with who had been officers during the war and came back to be chiefs until they retired, particularly in the submarine force. We were loaded with them.

Paul Stillwell: How long was that training course at Yorktown?

Admiral Crowe: Four months, and I got injured just at the end of the course.

Paul Stillwell: That literally was hands-on training.

Admiral Crowe: It was, yes, in the river there. That was where I got hurt. We were minesweeping.

Paul Stillwell: How did the accident happen?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was pulling in a minesweep wire, and we were clearing something on the wire as it rolled in the reel. The reel was going slow, but I think we had trouble getting this thing off and I was following it. Before I knew it, my hand got trapped between the reel and the wire, and that thumb was just hanging out there. They

got me ashore and the clinic said, “Well, we can’t do much for you; we’ll have to send you to the hospital.” But on the way to the hospital the ambulance broke down. So it was a couple hours getting somebody out to get the ambulance back. I got hurt about 1:00 o’clock in the afternoon, and it was 8:00 o’clock in the evening before a doctor got to my hand. He had a student and kept showing the student this and that, and I kept saying, “Come on, let’s sew it up.” I think it got infected because of that long wait, and that extended me in the hospital quite a bit. Then it wouldn’t move when I got it back, so I was in therapy quite some time.

Paul Stillwell: Did the therapy give you back full use of it?

Admiral Crowe: Well, as much as I can. That thumb’s never been right. The scar’s right there, down there. The hospital—this was post-war—was pretty filled with old mustang officers.\* In fact, my first roommate there was a fellow that had been an engineer for a long time. I don’t know how many years he had in the Navy. Of course, it seemed to me like he had a lot. Now that I look back on it, he probably didn’t have as many as I’ve had. But, in any event, he had a lot of sea stories. I used to listen in great amazement as he’d tell some of these stories.

I think he had been around the world with Roosevelt’s fleet.† Came in as a young kid in 1906 or something like that. And he had a wild story about they were under way and decided they’d take pictures of each other. So they rigged the boat boom out—this was while the ship was steaming along—and he went out and stood on the end of the boat boom while they took his picture. Until some officer found what they were doing. And he was also on the island of Midway during the Battle of Midway.‡

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\* “Mustang” is Navy slang for a former enlisted man who has risen through the ranks to become an officer.

† The “Great White Fleet,” comprised of 16 U.S. battleships and supporting vessels, circumnavigated the world during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. The ships departed Hampton Roads, Virginia, on 16 December 1907 and returned to that port 22 February 1909 after steaming 46,000 miles.

‡ From 4 to 6 June 1942, U.S. and Japanese naval forces fought a battle northwest of Midway Island in the Pacific. After Japanese bombers had struck the island, carrier-based U.S. dive-bombers attacked and sank the Japanese carriers *Hiryu*, *Soryu*, *Kaga*, and *Akagi* and the cruiser *Mikuma*. U.S. ships lost were the carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5) and the destroyer *Hammann* (DD-412). The battle was both a tactical and strategic victory for U.S. forces.

Paul Stillwell: So he'd been in for 40 years.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. He'd been in a long time. But he left, and I got a lieutenant commander as roommate, an aviator out of the class of '43, I think, who had an accident. We saw some films of his accident. Been burned pretty badly. And he was right there in the room with me, and I didn't realize—of course, I was sort of shy about the whole thing, because I was brand new to the Navy. But my bandages began to smell pretty bad, and I couldn't get anybody to look at them. And, boy, he stormed in and brought a doctor down there. Said this man's hand needs looking at. The doctor unwrapped it, and, sure enough, it was really infected. I can't remember his name. It was Spiegel, something like that. In these clips you see on the Navy occasionally you see his accident. I've seen it several times.

Paul Stillwell: Is that the one where the F6F breaks apart?\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it breaks a wing off and hits the pylon, and turns around several times. He was an awful nice guy. I remember one night we were on liberty. Don't know all we'd done, but we were giggling. And he told a joke about—I don't know why I thought it was so funny—the motorcycle policeman saw a big car rush by. He got on his motorcycle and chased this man. Just as he caught up with him the guy shifted gears and just left, had the car really going fast. The guy lost the motorcycle. And so he said that was interesting, turned around to go back, and there was the motorcycle cop wrapped around a tree. He stopped and he said, "What happened to you?" The motorcycle guy said, "Well, when you shifted gears there I thought I'd stopped and I got off to see what was wrong."

Great things happened. I learned about nurses in that hospital. They ran the hospital. I had a lot of trouble with them. These old hands just brushed nurses aside, but I didn't have that much gall.

Paul Stillwell: How much classroom was included in the mine school?

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\* Grumman F6F Hellcat fighters first entered fleet squadrons in early 1943.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, quite a bit. Of course, we were studying more than sweeping. We were studying laying mines, and the different kinds of mines. I had several classmates with me there. I became very friendly for the first time—I had never known him before—Worth Bagley. He wasn't much of a student. He had the unusual talent of being able to sit there and stare at the professor like "I'm sopping up every word you say." And all of a sudden the professor would call on Worth. The guy'd say, "Worth?" He was asleep sort of. He hadn't heard a word, but he looked like he was really sopping it up.

He was very attractive to girls. He had that secret. Jack Nicholson was in the class with me.\* A fellow name of Creque.† We had a big bunch out of my Naval Academy class. But we didn't like school very well, and Yorktown's not exactly the best liberty port in the world. Norfolk wasn't much better.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get into degaussing and magnetic mines?

Admiral Crowe: We did. But the only time I ever really used that experience, that part of it, was in Vietnam.

Paul Stillwell: Interesting.

Admiral Crowe: When they were using mines on us and vice versa. We were trying to win the high-tech battle. We didn't exactly succeed. The mine war business was really a mental problem more than it was anything else.

Paul Stillwell: What do you mean by that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, they were always developing new kinds of mines. These step mines, where they get the seventh ship instead of first six, etc., etc. The Germans developed a lot of very interesting mines.

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\* Ensign John H. Nicholson, USN, eventually a vice admiral.

† Ensign Robert H. Creque, USN.

Paul Stillwell: But that discipline has rarely been popular in the U.S. Navy.

Admiral Crowe: It was never popular in the Navy. In the submarine Navy they hated it. And yet occasionally they would make a submarine go out and lay mines. Nobody liked to do that. I thought the exercise of minesweeping was a pretty good seamanship drill.

Paul Stillwell: Could you describe that, please?

Paul Stillwell: Well, I'm trying to remember desperately the names of the things we put over. But we put over the actual mine sweep, and then we'd put over the wires, and it would come up to a float on the surface. We were on high-speed minesweepers, DMS, not a slow MSO or anything.\* We would lay that gear out going about 10 or 12 knots. Then when we got up we'd use it at speed. The *Carmick* class was probably the fastest destroyer class we had. Now, it was old then, so it wasn't always living up to its advertisements. But I can remember making a run after coming out of the yard on that thing where we were up to 35 knots, I think, for over a couple of hours. It was an amazing display.

Paul Stillwell: Were there cutters on the paravanes?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, there were. These were conventional contact mines that we were sweeping; that was the seamanship exercise. Of course, the other mines, we had some electrical cables we could lay, but that was about all. You just put them out with a field, and hoped you got them. And if you didn't get them, why, your hull would. But I never did anything in an actual minefield. I never had that opportunity, although I had several classmates who commanded MSOs during and after the Korean War.

Paul Stillwell: When North Korea mined Wonsan that really called for the heavy minesweeping.

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\* MSO – oceangoing minesweeper, a specialized ship built for the role, unlike Crowe's ship, which was converted from a destroyer.



Paul Stillwell: Yes. One of my best friends, Stan Smith, who died just recently, had command all through that anti-mining campaign. And yet the Navy never gave the minesweepers the time of day. It was not a mainstream activity.

Paul Stillwell: What was the procedure after the cable had been cut? How were you then to destroy the mine?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we would usually shoot them. Another ship would come along and do that if you weren't going to do it yourself. The *Carmick* had actually been through the Normandy landing.\*

Paul Stillwell: She was at Omaha Beach and Southern France.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It wasn't a minesweeper then. It was just a destroyer. And it was converted after that operation to a DMS, which they thought they were going to use in Japan. It didn't quite work out that way.

My first skipper was a guy named Asa A. Clark III; they called him A-squared, Asa A. He was probably the best ship handler I saw in the Navy. He was a marvelous ship handler. And later on he was out in Hawaii when I was CinCPac.<sup>†</sup> He'd married a Hawaiian girl and went out there and ran the Dole Pineapple fleet when he got out of the Navy. So I saw him out there a couple of times. He was a great big Scandinavian type. Loved going to sea, just terrific.

Paul Stillwell: What did he teach you about ship handling?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that it's an art, not a science. And that some people can do it and some people can't. Ship handling is sort of strange. Of course, before the war when they maneuvered squadrons and so forth and the screen battleships, ship handling was a very rigorous—and during the war in some of those large formations, keeping station and

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\* D-Day for the Allied invasion of France at Normandy was 6 June 1944.

<sup>†</sup> Admiral Crowe served as Commander in Chief Pacific from 1983 to 1985.

crossing with two battle fleets. But by the time I got into the Navy there wasn't a hell of a lot of that left. We did some of it. But there's a manliness about ship handling. And it helps the skipper, if he's a good ship handler, with the crew, but it actually has very little to do with anything else.

Paul Stillwell: But it develops pride in the ship.

Admiral Crowe: It does. That's absolutely true. And, of course, in the old Navy a skipper would never take a tug. But then as we got more and more sophisticated some of those ships couldn't risk not taking a tug. And in the submarine Navy, when it went nuclear with one screw, why, nobody would try and land that damned thing. So a lot of those arts just sort of faded away.

I was on the third officer on the *Clamagore* when the skipper hit the dock head-on one day and bent the bow back three or four feet.\* And to hear him tell it, the reason it got bent back is he was such a good ship handler. The way the story came out, only the best ship handlers can bend that bow back. I never quite understood the story, but he had a rather convoluted way of describing the accident.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you got thrown into the deep end, becoming an underway OOD so early.

Admiral Crowe: And also as a DMS we didn't do much underway logistics support. Now, guys in regular destroyers had a lot of that. But DMSs operated individually, so I was an admiral when I first started messing around coming alongside doing logistics stuff. Now, that *is* an art. And that's when seamanship really becomes important—that and heavy weather. I went through several storms in the *Trout* when I was CO. But there are just some guys that understand that better and know how. And the best way to do it, of course, is do a lot of it.

When I was on the *Carmick* we went through two typhoons. Wow. That was a real adventure. I've never seen anything like that. I was told that I would be so sick that

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\* Crowe served in the submarine *Clamagore* (SS-343) from 1952 to 1954.

I wouldn't be scared. I think it was the other way around. I got so scared I wasn't sick. Boy, when you see those big waves. When I saw that ship go over to 45 degrees, come back to 45 degrees. They were really bobbing ships.

Paul Stillwell: How did your stomach stand up to that?

Admiral Crowe: Not very well. I used to stand watch with a bucket there. But we stood watch. We didn't miss the watch. You went up and took it over. And when it was over you got back in bed.

Paul Stillwell: I remember it just being very satisfying to be an underway OOD because you're the guy.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. That's right. I can remember coming into Puget Sound one night. Had a lot of traffic outside Puget Sound. I'd never been there. But we were taking the ship into the yard. The skipper was in the sea cabin asleep. We were keeping company with a big ship, a civilian ship, and I made the mistake of not telling the captain. Well, we got in so close I couldn't tell him then. But he woke up on his own and walked out on the bridge and looked. There was a big ship right off our starboard hand. And he said, "What in the hell is that?" It wasn't dangerous. It wasn't going at us or anything. But we were close aboard, and I had to confess to him I just didn't report it, "Captain, I didn't see any reason to, and I didn't report it." He was upset, to say the least.

Paul Stillwell: Was that Clark?

Admiral Crowe: No, this was a new guy. The second skipper's name was Sugg.\* I went to China with him. He was a terrible ship handler. And he was one of these people that had no sense for the crew at all. He was not a very good skipper. Yet he was a big braggart. He was always telling about what all he'd done. I sort of felt sorry for him, actually. He was not a good ship handler.

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\* Lieutenant Commander Howard A. I. Sugg, USN.

Paul Stillwell: Did it bring back memories to you to see the movie *The Caine Mutiny*? That was set in a high-speed minesweeper.

Admiral Crowe: That was the same kind of ship. *Carmick*, or that class, was in that movie, yes. It came back lots of times to me. And that skipper was a lot like the guy on *The Caine Mutiny*.<sup>\*</sup> Not quite as bad as *The Caine Mutiny*.

Paul Stillwell: Well, who provided the leadership? Was it the exec in that situation?

Admiral Crowe: Well, when we went to China we lost our exec. That's the reason I became the navigator, because he was working on his car and let go of the windshield wiper and his hand flew up and he put his finger in his eye. Then went into the hospital to save his eye, and we didn't have an exec. So the engineer, who was a mustang, stepped up as exec. And he was a pretty good exec, but he'd had no navigation in his entire life. That's why I became the navigator. I at least knew something about it. I had never navigated, but he didn't know anything about it. His name was Lucas.<sup>†</sup> He was real good with the crew.

I can remember one of my crises. You know, there's something to be said for time. After you've been around a while you know things. The only way to learn is be around. We went into Victoria, Canada, for Empire Day and opened the ship up for visiting. Well, one of the town's hookers came aboard. I was the duty officer, and somebody said this woman was back in the after crew's compartment with a bottle of whiskey, and it might get out of hand. So I went back there. She was sitting on a bunk with a bunch of sailors around and her dress up to here. I ordered her off the ship. She just brushed me aside, said, "Sonny, go do your business." I didn't know how to get rid of her. I could slap her or something, but that wasn't what you were supposed to do. So

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<sup>\*</sup> Lieutenant Commander Philip F. Queeg, USN, was the fictitious commanding officer of the destroyer-minesweeper USS *Caine* in Herman Wouk's classic naval novel of World War II, *The Caine Mutiny*, published in 1951. Queeg was a mentally unstable martinet, so his name has become associated with overbearing, eccentric skippers. In one episode in the story, Queeg turned the ship upside down trying to learn what became of a missing quart of strawberries. The movie version of the story was released in 1954.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant Kenneth M. Lucas, USN, a former machinist's mate.

as I walked back up on deck to think about it, Lucas came by. He had been around a long time. He went down there and said, "If you don't get your ass off that bunk and out of this ship I'm going to drag you off by the hair in two minutes." And called her a couple of names and made a gesture, and, boy, she went running. He had no gentlemanly airs. Didn't bother him at all. Throw her ass off the ship. And, if necessary, overboard.

Paul Stillwell: And probably you never got another opportunity to use that experience.

Admiral Crowe: No, I couldn't. That's right. I did come aboard, though, one night on a submarine when I was exec.\* It was in Tahiti. And I came back from liberty, and there wasn't anybody on the deck watch. I went down the forward hatch, and there wasn't anybody in the forward torpedo room or the wardroom. I started walking through the ship, and there wasn't anybody anywhere. I went out the after hatch, and the whole crew was on the after deck. There were three Tahitian girls swimming off the dock there, naked. And the entire duty section was back there watching all this.

Paul Stillwell: The challenges of a duty officer.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. But Lucas was marvelous. And he did have a lot of sea stories. And he was a hell of a good engineer. He was the ship's engineer as soon as we got an exec, which we finally did. But we went all through the Chinese cruise without an exec.

But I didn't like the discipline of the destroyer force.

Paul Stillwell: In what way do you mean that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was very rank conscious and very formal. We worked for a main training command in Guam with a captain whose name was Simpson.† He was on our ass all the time. He would come aboard and stop officers saying their shoelaces

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\* Crowe was executive officer of the submarine *Wahoo* (SS-565), 1956-58.

† Captain Rodger W. Simpson, USN, Commander Underway Training Unit Guam.

weren't laced right and stuff like that. Three or four of our officers left the Navy because of that guy. But that impelled me to go into the submarine force. I thought it was sort of stupid. Because the stuff was serendipity. What he was talking about had actually nothing to do with the mission.

When I was in Vietnam, that was the beauty of the riverine force.\* We didn't have any formal rules at all. But we had a lot of discipline on the guns being ready and the firing. And in every hooch down there, there was whiskey that men were drinking, but they wouldn't drink before they went out. The dress was optional, etc. But they were good at it. They were good at riverine warfare. I enjoyed that. I liked that.

Paul Stillwell: They focused on the important parts.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. There would be two kinds of junior officers come down there. And I saw every one of them that worked for me, every one of them that came through. One would say, "Well, I don't have the instruction book for this PBR."<sup>†</sup>

I'd say, "Well, there aren't any."

He'd say, "You mean there's no tactical and all this?"

I'd say, "That's right, there's not."

"Well, I can't do that."

I said, "You damn well can't go back where you came from."

Because another officer would come down and he'd say, "You mean I know as much about it as my boss does?"

I said, "You're probably going to know more."

"And I can do what I want?"

I said, "That's right."

He'd say, "Oh, I love it; this is wonderful." And those kids were real fighters. They were good.

Zumwalt was right in his views about discipline.\* I know everybody kidded about it and so forth, but Zumwalt had his hand on the pulse. I didn't really like Admiral

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\* As a captain Crowe served in country in Vietnam in 1970-71.

<sup>†</sup> The Mark I river patrol boat (PBR) was built for use in Vietnamese waters.

Zumwalt, but I liked some of the things he did. But I guess the reason I didn't particularly like him, I was not a member of his brain trust, and I saw them getting ahead, his kitchen cabinet.

Paul Stillwell: Worth Bagley, certainly.

Admiral Crowe: Leading the bunch. And yet by the end I was an admiral because of Zumwalt. That's a strange set of circumstances that we can get to later. But I had to have Zumwalt aboard, and when Moorer threatened him, why, he did it.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: This approach that you described from Captain Simpson, that sounds more like a cruiser or a battleship than a destroyer.

Admiral Crowe: It was. He was a battleship admiral in the destroyer business, and he had no business in it. But he scared our skipper to death. I watched our skipper react, and he just went bonkers. But we got away from Simpson a lot. We were on independent operations.

I ran into the Navy justice system rather early in my career as a navigator. We had a sick kid. A man got sick and we were on our way west, and we had to put into Johnston Island. Have you ever been in Johnston Island?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: It's famous for later on. We put into Johnston Island our nuclear inventory that we were stashing until we were told what to do with it. But Johnston Island later on was loaded down with nuclear weapons that were not going to be used.

Paul Stillwell: It was the site of a number of tests also.

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\* Vice Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN, served as Commander Naval Forces Vietnam/Chief of Naval Advisory Group Vietnam from 30 September 1968 to 14 May 1970.

† Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 August 1967 to 1 July 1970. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, but Johnston Island's terrible. The channel that went through the reef had been built by the Seabees, and they just hammered, or blew out a little passage.\* It wasn't very wide. And when you got in the inner basin you had to do a lot of twisting to land. It was very crowded and very confined. So we went in Johnston Island, I think, for two days, off-loaded this kid, and then we got under way. And when we got to sea and went up to speed we had a tremendous vibration. Well, we'd bent a screw in mucking around there. I don't think we hit anything on the way in, but somewhere in the backing and filling we had bent the screw. So they had a board of investigation, and as the navigator I was one of the subjects of the board.

Really, not much came out of it. The skipper testified, I testified, and they couldn't determine where it happened. It was just not possible to do that, because nobody on the ship ever noticed it. And yet it could have happened anywhere of a number of places, because it was very confined.

Paul Stillwell: Who did the investigation?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was done in Guam by a group from another ship, I don't know. I can remember not helping them very much because I was an object.

Paul Stillwell: Did this chief quartermaster make a good navigator of you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he did in a sense, yes. I can remember trying to sight that light off Hawaii. We had estimated when we were going to see it; we didn't see it then. "Well, I hope we haven't missed Hawaii here." It came up about 35 minutes late, but I was staring at it for a long time.

Paul Stillwell: How helpful was Loran in that era?†

Admiral Crowe: Not much. We never used it, really.

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\* Seabees is the nickname applied to members of the Navy's mobile construction battalions (CBs).

† Loran (long-range aid to navigation) is a system of electronic navigation that involves the reception of pulse signals transmitted simultaneously by paired stations ashore.



Paul Stillwell: So the navigation was primarily celestial?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. We didn't have the stuff they've got now. Ringstrom was good at it. He just cheated a lot. When he figured out we weren't in danger, why, then he'd really give us a good fix.

The *Carmick* was a wonderful experience. Got to Tsingtao, China.

Paul Stillwell: Please tell me about that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were in a training unit so we would train in Guam. Then we would go to China and train people there for about a month. Then we'd go over to Japan and train for a month, and then go back to Guam, which was where Simpson was. He was our boss.

Paul Stillwell: Whom would you train?

Admiral Crowe: Other ships and other people, and even some foreigners, who rode us a lot. The training consisted of exercises. We would tow the sleds, the training targets, and we would lay exercise mines, and things like that. Then we'd set out with a bunch of minesweep people aboard. But mainly the exercises, which ships were required to do so many every quarter. We would haul the training party around from Guam. And we went through a lot of firing exercises, pulling sleds they were firing at. I always sort of enjoyed that, hoping nobody made a big mistake.

Paul Stillwell: It's been known to happen.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, been known to happen. But we couldn't even see those cruisers. We'd see the flash of the guns, and then there would be the splash behind us somewhere.

Paul Stillwell: Could you see the projectiles come through the air?

Admiral Crowe: I couldn't in the daytime. Now, in that battleship on the cruise we did. We sat there and watched those damned things go.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have ASW capability?\*

Admiral Crowe: Not very good. We didn't train—we acted as a target for submarines quite a bit. That's when I took my first submarine ride. There was a submarine there.

Paul Stillwell: What was the occasion?

Admiral Crowe: We were going out to be a target for these submarines, and they asked if anybody wanted to ride for a day. I grabbed it and went over and rode the submarine. Watched a kid out of '46, a year ahead of me, by the name of Savage.<sup>†</sup> He was firing this qualifying torpedo shot. Watched the torpedo run and watched the junior officer fire it. It was very exciting. I thought that was great.

Paul Stillwell: Had you entertained thoughts of submarines?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, ever since I'd been at the Naval Academy. I always wanted to go into submarines.

Paul Stillwell: So was this essentially marking time in the *Carmick*?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. My original plan, as much as junior officers have plans, I wanted to be a lawyer. We had a whole bunch of people in the Navy who were line officers, but also lawyers.

Paul Stillwell: It was a subspecialty.

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\* ASW – antisubmarine warfare.

<sup>†</sup> Ensign Stuart Savage, Jr., USN.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I mean, they weren't JAGs.<sup>\*</sup> The Navy sent them to law school, and then they would do sea duty in their regular jobs, and go ashore. In fact, I have a classmate who was very successful in that pattern, Bill St. George. I wanted to do that, and my plan was to go to law school. That was after I was in submarines. We had a few submarine officers who were senior to me whom I had talked to and had done that.

So I applied for law school, as did several of my classmates, as a PG course. That's the first one I—probably the second. I applied once for an oceanography course and never heard back from them. But I applied for law school. Got a nice letter accepting me. The Navy was then sending people to Harvard, to Yale, and one other. I called my father and he said, "Don't have anything to do with Harvard." I don't know why he didn't like Harvard. He had strong biases. So I applied for Yale and got admitted to Yale. There were five of my submarine classmates, Jim Wilson and I think John Shelton also were going to go.<sup>†</sup> I don't know if they were going to Yale or not. I was going to Yale because I had a girlfriend in New Haven. And two weeks before I was supposed to go the Congress did away with the money for it. So I never got there.

Paul Stillwell: What year was that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, let's think about that. I was on the *Clamagore*. I left New London in 1950 and went to the *Clamagore* about '51, '52, around in there. The night when I learned I wasn't going to go to law school I was quite upset. I went ashore and started drinking, and missed the boat the next morning. The skipper never said a word. He didn't hold it against me. I think I missed the boat altogether.

Paul Stillwell: Literally.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, literally. I was upset. But, again, that was probably pretty lucky for me.

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<sup>\*</sup> The Navy didn't establish the Judge Advocate General's Corps until the late 1960s.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant James B. Wilson, USN; Lieutenant John P. Shelton, USN.

Paul Stillwell: You just don't know what's down the path you didn't take.

Admiral Crowe: And you know, when I wrote this speech the other day I couldn't help thinking, in looking back at my career, how many things I did that I was advised not to do. Law school was one of them. I was advised not to do that. And then going to Princeton. I was advised heavily by my friends: "Don't do that; that will kill you."

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about going ashore in China. The Asiatic Station there had a very exotic reputation from before the war.

Admiral Crowe: Well, they still had a lot of that. Tsingtao was really interesting, because it had been a German colony, and there were Germans still living in Tsingtao from that era. And of course during the war several of our Navy people that were married to Chinese women got caught in Tsingtao and were interned by the Japanese. They came back after the war right to Tsingtao and went back in business again.

Tsingtao must have been at one time a very beautiful city. Big, large mansions and so forth. They were pretty run down when we were there. But the U.S. Navy was the boss, and we literally ran the place. We had a couple of destroyer tenders in there, big ships. And there was a Naval support unit or something ashore there. Rickshaws 50 cents for eight hours, or something like that, and you could rent a rickshaw boy all day long. He would wait for you and take you where you wanted to go. We had an officers' club, quite active. We tried anybody who was arrested by the shore patrol; the Chinese couldn't touch them. We shouldered them out of the way altogether.

I did some shore patrol duty in Tsingtao, which I'll never forget. I can remember standing outside this huge whorehouse, a whole city block. Had several floors. I had charge of this shore patrol detail, about four or five sailors and myself. We were at the four corners of this place. Sailors came running out of all the doors, and we would catch one occasionally, but not many.

Paul Stillwell: Was it supposed to be off-limits?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was all off-limits. And you'd see a rickshaw run by and a guy that was 6-foot-5 with a hat down over his eyes and a robe on. Well, it was a sailor in there. Of course, this was the first time I'd ever been in a teeming city of foreigners.

I had a gun; I carried a .45, which was probably dangerous in itself. One night when I was doing this duty, a little Chinese kid came up and started imitating everything I was doing. And a big crowd gathered. I didn't quite know what to do with this little kid. You know: "Shove off, Junior."

Paul Stillwell: Great fun for him.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, he was having great fun. And obviously I wasn't going to touch him, because I was surrounded by about 50 or 100 Chinese people who were laughing and giggling and thought it was all very funny. My only reaction was to laugh with them. I didn't quite know what else to do. Finally the little kid got tired and walked off. But I thought I was in real danger there for a while if I'd have slapped him or anything like that or tried to enforce my will on him.

This place, though, was just crowded. Crowds were all over the place all night long. But our American sailors were—of course the place was full of bars. Texas Bar, Idaho Bar, all American names down for two or three blocks from the shipyard into the town. Didn't take those Chinamen long to get in business and so forth.

Now, we were there when the Communists were just, oh, 75 miles away. There were closing off that peninsula, and we knew that Tsingtao was going to fall. But there were a lot of Chiang Kai-shek soldiers in town.\* I remember talking to some of them, some who spoke English.

And, of course, the Chinese girls were a real industry. The Marines were there, and I had a classmate, Bob O'Shea, who was in the Marine unit there.† They were in permanent residence. They had a big barracks, and I went over to spend the night with him one time. At midnight the brothel next door closed up, which meant all the Marines

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\* Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek served as President of Nationalist China on the mainland from 1943 to 1949 and as President of the Republic of China on Taiwan from 1950 until his death in 1975.

† Second Lieutenant Robert J. O'Shea, USMC.

rushed over in their back channel; they all had girlfriends in the brothel. All the girls came over to the Marine barracks when the brothel closed up. That was sort of interesting.

I went to a house one night with ten warrant officers who rented this big mansion, and they'd hired all these people. Each of them had a little homeless boy they had adopted who would go with them and carry their shopping bags and so forth. And the mansion had two or three Chinese cooks who did all the cooking; these guys were really in business. They had their own place. It wasn't costing them very much at all. What do you call it when somebody stays there forever? There's a slang term for it; I forget what it is.

Paul Stillwell: Shacked up?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. They were leading a pretty good life.

I can remember in the officers' club was a display case of things for sale. I had heard my father talk about an ivory chess set, and I looked in there and there was an ivory chess set for sale. But it was a little more money than I wanted to pay. So every night I went ashore I went over and looked at that thing. And the last night in Tsingtao I thought, "Well, I'm going to go buy it. Okay, so I can't afford it, but I'm going to go buy it for my dad." It was gone when I got over there. I hadn't acted soon enough. But I've still got some souvenirs in this room. See those two Chinese figures under that light?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: I got those in Tsingtao when I was an ensign. And I've got some other things around—I don't see any right now—that I picked up over there. And I loved to shop in China. It was really fun.

Another thing that happened, which was in *Sand Pebbles*.<sup>\*</sup> As soon as we moored a little Chinese man came out in a boat and rushed up to see the exec, and we

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<sup>\*</sup> *The Sand Pebbles* was a popular 1966 motion picture starring Steve McQueen, Candice Bergen, Richard Attenborough, and Richard Crenna. It was based on Richard McKenna's novel of the same name,

hired all kinds of people to run the ship while we were at anchor there. The whole crew of Chinamen would come aboard every morning, and we'd have quarters, and each sailor would take his orders and go get his Chinaman. Tell him: "I'm going to scrub this area today." The Chinamen would paint the ship. There were Chinese all over the place, painting the ship.

Paul Stillwell: I didn't realize it lasted after the war had ended.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did. Oh, yes, it did.

Paul Stillwell: Or reinstated, really.

Admiral Crowe: And Lucas had a lot of Chinese stories. He'd been there in the '30s, and he used to talk about their—what am I trying to say? Life didn't faze them. Every Saturday they would execute people down in the big field, and the whole place would show up and have a picnic every day and go watch these people get executed. One day he said they were docking their destroyer and the Chinaman who was on a little punt painting got caught between the destroyer and the dock and crushed his skull, and he died. The other Chinamen he worked with thought that was hilarious.

I enjoyed reading *Sand Pebbles*, because I assumed I'd seen a little of it, but not like those people had.

Paul Stillwell: That's a wonderful book and movie.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it is a wonderful book. That was a real Navy there. I can remember reading about how wardrooms used to survive on the exchange rate. They would play the exchange rate all the time. Well, you know, when World War II started a bunch of wardrooms had sizable amounts of money that didn't belong to individuals or

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published in 1962 by Harper & Row. McKenna served in the U.S. Asiatic Fleet shortly before World War II, including two years on board the gunboat USS *Luzon* (PR-7). The story depicted the interaction between the ship's American crew and the Chinese.

anything; it belonged to the ship. BuPers called them all in, made them give up all their money.\* But Lucas said he was in one that had a hell of a lot of money.

Lucas had a couple other stories that I remember. He was on one of the destroyers that rammed a German submarine. I forget the name of it. But he was a first-class machinist's mate on this destroyer. They sank the submarine, but the destroyer damaged itself so it was going to sink. It was afloat for about five or six hours. So they radioed for help, and they knew the help was coming, but they knew it wasn't going to come in time. They would have to abandon ship. So the skipper gave out orders: "We're going to abandon ship within the hour; everybody get ready." A brand-new ensign that hadn't been aboard a ship before came out in his blue uniform carrying two suitcases. Lucas said the skipper got so mad he threw the suitcases overboard. The kid didn't understand. "Why'd he do that?"

Lucas got in a raft. He said, "We took all our valuables and gave them to the yeoman, who was the smallest man in the place, and put him in the center of the raft. He had the wristwatches and wallets, and so forth. Then when they were getting picked up the propeller guard on this destroyer hit only one guy, and that was him. He went down with everything they had. He would magnify, you know.

Paul Stillwell: Embellish?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, embellish, and tell these stories, and we'd just listen with great interest to Lucas's sea stories.

Paul Stillwell: Some of which may have been true.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. Some of them might have been. I think that one was. He said before they abandoned the skipper said to take one more sweep through the ship, be sure everybody was out. And he went down in the engine room. The water was about five feet deep, or something. And there was still a young fireman down there recording temperatures.

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\* BuPers – Bureau of Naval Personnel.



Paul Stillwell: Sense of duty outweighed common sense.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. It was crazy. But it was a great Navy. The destroyer Navy, I think, was the best Navy of all, before World War II.

Paul Stillwell: What were the enlisted men supposed to do for entertainment if the brothel was off-limits?

Admiral Crowe: Well, they went to the brothel. Who cared whether it was off-limits or not? Lucas knew how to do that too. He was pretty good at that. And, of course, the young Chinese girls were very attractive. My God. Everything was available for a price. And the people who lived there, they all had—in fact while I was there somebody, an admiral, got court-martialed for bringing in refrigerators and selling them on the black market, in Tsingtao.

Paul Stillwell: In your shore patrol duties did you ever have to wade into a barroom brawl?

Admiral Crowe: No, but I thought I was going to have to once. I'm not very good at that sort of thing. I wasn't looking forward to it. When I was sort of watching it but before I got into the middle of it, the Chinese police showed up, and then the Americans all bound together real quick, instead of fighting each other. Because they knew that if they could stay with the Americans they would stay out of Chinese court and jail. We never gave the Chinese police the time of day. It was martial law, literally—martial law in every respect.

I did see a fight that we arrived on and stopped, where Chinamen were trying to harm these two sailors for reasons I don't know. This little street was full of people, and these sailors were back to back fending off people. They were in serious trouble. But we arrived, the shore patrol did, and the people backed off immediately, and we took those two sailors out of there. They would have killed them.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the justice system on board ship? A lot of things back then were handled in an informal way rather going to the captain.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I never saw it, but I'd heard that the submarine Navy was that way, particularly if you had Slade Cutter as the captain. He took care of that sort of thing himself. But I never saw that in the submarine force. Now, in the destroyer Navy, boy, they went to mast at the snap of a finger.\* Any kind of violation and boom, you were at mast. I was always at mast defending my sailors, or at least standing with them. We had mast all the time. We had lots of punishments.

I served on one submarine where we had a third-class cook—I think he'd been second-class but moved back to third—by the name of Crow, C-R-O-W. Crow was a pretty handsome young man, and lots of girls called up asking for Crow. Well, when he was through with them and they'd call up he'd say, "No, you're thinking about the one in the wardroom. You've got the wrong Crow," and they'd redirect the call up to me in the wardroom there.

We had to court-martial Crow because we discovered that he had a wife out in Iowa, and he was drawing money to send to her that he never sent. When we discovered that, why, then we busted him down to—when he was being confined to the ship I wandered into the after torpedo room when he was on confinement. He had a woman back there in the after torpedo room. They couldn't stay away from him. He was something else. Sort of a pretty nice young man, but he—

I met so many young enlisted people that I thought, "God, if they'd had an education they would have been gangbusters." Smart. Streetwise, but smart, and knew how to do things, how to achieve things, how to solve problems. The only thing is they didn't have an education. And of course the Navy, what I saw of it, we sent a lot of them to school. To the Naval Academy Prep School, to any kind of school. They had a program where we started sending enlisted men for college education.

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\* Captain's mast is a sort of court in which the commanding officer of a unit listens to requests, awards non-judicial punishment, or issues commendations. Most often captain's mast is used for punishment of lesser offenses than those that merit courts-martial

Paul Stillwell: NESEP.\*

Paul Stillwell: Yes, NESEP, that's right. That was really worthwhile. Because we had lots of material that could handle it. The value of education was just incredible.

Paul Stillwell: Was there a shortage of talent on board the *Carmick* because of the postwar demobilization that had taken place?

Admiral Crowe: Well, there was for a few years, but by the time I really got into the problem, when I was in submarines, it was no longer the case. The submarine force has always attracted smart people, many of whom became officers and deserved it. Of course, today in these nuclear submarines some of those kids have responsibility that just dwarfs anything else in the Navy. Running those power plants and so forth. And the leadership is just—the common perception is that the services are so strictly disciplined that it's not a problem. You just give the word and everybody has to do what you say, and so forth. That's all nonsense. The smarter a guy is, the more educated he is, the more you've got to play ball with him. He wants to know why he's got to do something. He doesn't want to just do it.

Of course, that's the reason the Army has so many regulations and so forth. For years they've had the lower mental categories, and they've discovered the only way to handle them is tell them how to do everything in great detail. But you couldn't get away with that today with these highly trained enlisted people that are sort of mind-boggling, they're so smart.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about your division officer duties?

Admiral Crowe: I loved running a division on a submarine. Well, I liked being the gunnery officer on a destroyer. I had a lot of fire controlmen and gunner's mates, and I discovered I got along pretty well with enlisted people.

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\* NESEP – Navy Enlisted Scientific Education Program, which is no longer in existence. Under its provisions the Navy paid for the college education of promising enlisted personnel, then sent them through the Officer Candidate School for training and commissioning as officers.

It's a danger for a junior officer. It's a big problem for him. Because the people his age on a ship like that, most of them are enlisted. And when he needs companionship and he's out and the juices are flowing, and so forth, there's a lot of pull toward making friends with the enlisted people. But you've got to turn around the next day and harshly discipline or something. It's a big problem for the first days.

I can remember on the submarine, my first one, I was the supply officer. And in the forward torpedo room we had a small shower for officers, and then we had a small head, which was the officers' head. I went out every day training people up in New London.

Paul Stillwell: This was the *Flying Fish*?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, the *Flying Fish*. And all of a sudden we were going to go on a fleet exercise. Well, because we went in and out every day the shower was not used for a shower. It was filled up with foul-weather gear and everything else. The shower was completely filled. So as the supply officer I had the duty that night, and I ordered them to empty the shower. Going to need it. And one of the enlisted men came to see me: "Mr. Crowe, you don't want to do that."

I said, "Why not?"

He said, "Well, they won't like it up in the forward torpedo room."

I said, "Well, I'm sure they won't, but—" That's the beginning of maturity, is when you discover you have to do things for your friends that they don't like, and you've got to do it.

Also, you very quickly discern who doesn't tell you the truth.

Paul Stillwell: You get "ship-wise," or whatever.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Whatever you want to call it.

Paul Stillwell: The equivalent of street-wise.

In your book you said you had some initial embarrassments on board the *Carmick*. What were those?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't remember that. What was that about? What'd it say?

Paul Stillwell: That you got over some initial embarrassments and then you learned the ship, or something like that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't quite know what I was talking about. But there were things. I would do something wrong and discover that was wrong and I shouldn't have done that. It's like anything else; you do it and you've got to learn. You learn what's acceptable and what isn't acceptable. I don't know if I've told you, but when I went to the Naval Academy the commander talking to the class before academic year started?

Paul Stillwell: I don't recall that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were all intimidated by what we were getting ready to do. Academics was going to start at the end of plebe summer. And some commander came in and lectured us, and obviously his mission was to calm down our worries or concerns. The last thing he said, which I have never forgotten, was, "Remember, now, no matter how dumb you are, somebody dumber than you has graduated from this institution." And I thought that was good to know. And, sure enough, that's true. And it's the same way on board ship and so forth. You discover pretty soon that no matter how dumb you are, there's somebody around here dumber than you are.

Paul Stillwell: And you want to find him.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, you want to find him right away. I tell that to kids going to the Naval Academy today: "Just remember, somebody dumber than you has graduated from here." And the Navy's a lot that way. But people have an instinct, and it really comes out on leadership. They have an instinct, first of all, for what can be done and can't be done.

I mean there are just certain tasks you can't ask enlisted people to do. I don't care what that is, there are reasons they won't and shouldn't. And there are other things that they don't like to do, but they'll do if you go about it right. And some people have the ways of going about it, of seeing quickly what they're up against, and some don't.

Paul Stillwell: What is that way, to get people to do things they don't want to do?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's something you don't learn in school.

Paul Stillwell: How would you articulate it?

Admiral Crowe: I don't know that you can articulate it. Of course, the thing the educational system has never figured out and never will figure out, I guess, is just how people will do in college. But they give you tests, SAT scores and so forth, and they admit you on the basis of all this information.\* But they know now from experience and from following people that some of those people they don't let in are very successful people. Now, why didn't they have a system that would say Joe was going to be successful, and let him in their institution? It's because Joe's strengths are not the SAT tests, they're salesmanship. There are some people that can sell. I've actually got a friend that could sell anything, and he was bound to be successful in life no matter what the hell happened. Well, it's the same way in the leadership. When I was an aide to Admiral Murray—or Admiral Crawford even worse; he was a bear—we had C. C. Kirkpatrick working for us as a squadron commander.† When the admiral was mad at people you couldn't find Kirkpatrick with a broom. He was nowhere around. But when the admiral was in a good mood, there was Kirkpatrick there. He was always there when the admiral was in a good mood.

Paul Stillwell: He had an antenna that picked this up.

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\* SAT – Scholastic Aptitude Test, now widely used in measuring the ability of high school students to do college work.

† Rear Admiral Stuart S. Murray, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 1 June 1950 to 6 November 1952. Rear Admiral George C. Crawford, USN, served in the billet from 6 November 1952 to 13 November 1954. Captain Charles C. Kirkpatrick, USN.

Admiral Crowe: He had an antenna. He had an instinct. He had a social instinct. Everybody liked Kirkpatrick. And Benny Bass was there.\* Benny always showed up when the admiral was mad. He'd wander in and I'd tell him four or five times, "You don't want to go in there, Captain. Not today."

"Oh, he won't mind." He walked in there, and the admiral hit him right in the face. Benny Bass didn't understand that at all.

Paul Stillwell: His antenna was out of phase.

Admiral Crowe: That's right, it was out of whack. But you can go into a wardroom and be there very shortly, and find out who the leaders in the wardroom are. Who is listened to and who the captain trusts and who he doesn't trust. Who's laughed at. There's always a couple that are laughed at.

Paul Stillwell: And the enlisted men know those things too.

Admiral Crowe: They know it right from get-go. I made some really good friends as enlisted men. But you say, how do you articulate that? I don't know how to articulate that. It comes from your socialization over life. First of all, most of those people want to be liked by other people. They want to be liked. They don't want to be feared, or they don't want a man that's always telling people to do things that he won't do himself. There are just other people that don't give that much time, that much credit to things, and just say: "I'm an officer; by God, everybody will do it."

There is a time for getting mad, though. And leadership does not solve everything. It solves a lot of problems, but that's the reason the justice system is there. There are certain people and certain guys, and you usually spot them right away, that nothing's going to make them do the right thing except fear. A very small number.

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\* Captain Raymond H. Bass, USN.

Paul Stillwell: We'll need to end on that note, Admiral. We're at the end of your time schedule and at the end of the tape. So thank you

Admiral Crowe: Oh, that's great. Sorry to cut it off, but we've got to go. (End of Interview 3)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, we're inside on a beautiful day.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, the weather is a marked improvement, isn't it?

Paul Stillwell: Yes, indeed. I think this is the last day of summer, and it's going out in style.

Admiral Crowe: Is this the last day of summer?

Paul Stillwell: I think it is. We talked last time about your time in the USS *Carmick*, and you had a colorful word picture about visits to China. Do you have comparable impressions from Japan?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we visited Japan. I was trying to remember. We operated out of Yokosuka for two or three months. Of course, this was immediate postwar Japan, and Yokosuka was a major naval base, which we had, for reasons of our own, left relatively untouched by the bombing. But from there right into Tokyo had been bombed, razed. It was fascinating to see the damage that we had wrought, and also in Tokyo itself how we had spared some buildings, including our embassy, but had knocked down everything else. I'm trying to remember. I haven't thought about that in a long time.

Tokyo was run by the U.S. Army. It wasn't very friendly to tourist sailors from Yokosuka just coming down to look around. You couldn't get a meal in the place, except an Army officers' club or a billet, and they were all closed. You had to be a member or something like that. I remember we had a hard time finding anything to eat.

The country was on its heels, and Yokosuka itself was quite busy, because we had hired the entire shipyard force. But the town shut up at 6:00 o'clock in the evening, when



everybody was in their homes eating. The only thing open in the whole town back then was the officers' club on the base.

The reason I mention this is that I visited Japan ten years later. Completely different than it was when I was there. Yokosuka had become a thriving center.

Paul Stillwell: That catered specifically to American Navy people.

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: There were tailors and honky-tonks and so forth.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and lots of bars. But when I was there earlier it was not that. There was no nightlife in Yokosuka. But one of the interesting things is that everything was paid for by reparations. If you took your shoes over to get them repaired, or to get a suit pressed, or any laundry, you didn't pay for it. You signed a chit and it went to be paid by reparations. Of course, the town was run by the U.S. military police. I was talking to the American nurse there and she said the only dangerous things she saw in the country were drunken American soldiers. The Japanese never bothered them.

The officers' club, though, hired a lot of Japanese entertainment, so it was a sort of a hangout. There was an enlisted club and a chiefs' club, and they were all going great guns and manned by Japanese.

Everybody worked in the entire town. I wasn't as sensitized as I was later, but I was curious enough that I saw it. If you had a little family, why, both the father and mother and all the children worked. And I assume for not very high wages, but they were very industrious, and they were trying desperately to come back. Also, they were not above forcing their girls into prostitution if it would help the income of the family. And it seemed to cut across a lot of economic groups. It wasn't just the poor people. In fact, I remember going to—I don't know why we had access to it, but—the house of a retired captain in the Japanese Navy, and his entire family was working and not doing very well.

Yokosuka was quite busy repairing ships, and it was our biggest base in the Far East. We used it great big time.

Paul Stillwell: Did there seem to be a stigma against former Japanese military personnel because they had lost the war?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I didn't recall it. I didn't have a lot contact with them.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have any encounters with Japanese civilians?

Admiral Crowe: Just those that worked on the ship and in the officers' club, or something like that. I remember on the trains going into Tokyo there was a section reserved for American service people. We didn't get on the trains with the citizens.

There was a lot better shopping in China than there was in Japan. I don't remember a single thing I brought back from Japan on that visit. Now, ten years later I carried the country away. But it's interesting—I don't think I have an artifact in this house bought in Japan on that trip. And I still have some bought in China, on the *Carmick*.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds as if these clubs were set up to fill a void because there was not much available on the Japanese economy.

Admiral Crowe: I think that's correct. They were settling into the occupation. But ten years later the town was lit up by huge neon signs, all kinds of clubs. Of course, when I came back I was on a submarine. We had a submarine unit in Japan, with regular billeting on the base for submariners to live ashore while we were there. And the town was very Americanized. However, comma, I do recall seeing some signs then: Americans not welcome. That's not the way it was worded. But only Japanese personnel, or something like that, in some of the restaurants and some of the entertainment joints.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have any mission of sweeping mines around Japan?

Admiral Crowe: No, we were a minesweeper, but we were training, not actually doing the work. We went up into the Sea of Japan a couple of times, but that was out of Tsingtao; that wasn't really out of Japan.

My most obvious impression was one of a country on its heels, working 24 hours a day trying to dig out. And without much resentment. If they resented our presence I didn't see it. Well, we saw a little of it, but the girls didn't resent our presence. And the families were not above—if a sailor took up with the daughter or something, and he brought home canned food and silk stockings and that sort of thing, he was welcome in the house. I'm sure he was living with their daughter.

Paul Stillwell: But that suited both sides of the transaction.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did. I can remember at the time I was reading something like *War and Peace*. What was the book that was made into a movie about Russia? With Julie—what's her name?

Paul Stillwell: *Doctor Zhivago*.

Admiral Crowe: *Doctor Zhivago*.<sup>\*</sup> Japan reminded me of what I'd read in there about Russia after the Revolution. You didn't see new suits. People were wearing old garb, nothing new. There were not many Japanese cars. All the automobile traffic was American. And the place was flooded with Japanese workers. But I do remember that I was at that age where we noticed Japanese girls. Morality was not high on our priority list. For the whole society, the whole point was to survive, get through this bad period.

Now, in China I didn't have that feeling at all. You saw a lot of poverty and so forth, but you didn't have the feeling that people were bending their backs. They were just living over there, and we were an occupying force to be profited from if they could hack it. The Chinese would take our money no matter what we wanted. Well, in Japan they'd do the same thing, but it was a different atmosphere. It was a defeated country,

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<sup>\*</sup> Julie Christie starred as Lara in the 1965 movie *Doctor Zhivago*. It was based on a 1957 novel of that name by Boris Pasternak. It dealt with life in the last days of tsarist Russia and the first part of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

and I'm sure they took the defeat very hard. The resentment, what little we saw, was in the older people. Not really in the younger people.

I do remember when I came back, later in life, you could tell who was the younger generation and who was the older by size. The younger were about six inches or ten inches taller than their parents, or other older people. Looking at a crowded street there'd be a lot of tall people and a lot of short people.

Another impression from the first visit was that the Japanese girls were not as attractive as the Chinese girls. They were short, dumpy. I don't mean all of them, but in general. Nevertheless, today you see a lot of very slender Japanese girls. There weren't many slender ones then. They were short, and they went out wide as they did up. But in China, very attractive.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds like you're describing an atmosphere of desperation there.

Admiral Crowe: I think it was, it really was. That's the reason it struck you so hard when you went back ten years later. They had made a complete recovery. Of course, now I know a lot about it because I teach it, on how they did recover and how the Korean War saved them. The Korean War saved us and it saved them too. Without the Korean War Japan would never have been the power it is today.

Paul Stillwell: Interesting irony.

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: When I got there in the '60s the shipyard people were very industrious and did quality work. Did you encounter that in the '40s?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. I had a couple friends that were in the occupation of Japan. They used to tell me how the Japanese were quick to adopt our habits and so forth, under the sort of abstract philosophy: You won, so everything you do must be better.

Paul Stillwell: Interesting. Who controlled the ship's operations? Were you under Commander Seventh Fleet?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, but in a very distant way. Our real commander was in Guam. We were attached to a training unit in Guam, and we were sent to Tsingtao and Yokosuka for periods of time to do training, so we didn't have a lot to do with the Seventh Fleet, except to just dock with them and go out and pull the sled for them, or something like that. And to participate in exercises, training exercises.

We got to fire a little, particularly when we were in Guam, because we went up the road there to a little island that we were using as a firing range.

Went through two typhoons off the coast of Japan on the *Carmick*. Wowee. Boy, that ship really bobbed. It heeled over 45 degrees. I can remember one day when the typhoon went away, coming on watch that day as everything was calming down, and the only thing I could see on the horizon was the top of Mount Fuji.\* Also, we began to smell Japan. You got within about 10-12 miles off the coast you could smell Japan. And of course their sewage was all open in the streets and so forth. That was my first real exposure to that.

Paul Stillwell: Benjo ditches.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, benjo ditches. That's the reason I chose the Pacific. I wanted to go see some of these things I'd heard so much about. It seemed to me that the prospect of seeing foreign countries was more lively in the Pacific, although I hadn't been to Europe either, so I still had a lot to learn.

Paul Stillwell: How would you describe the professional development you got from that first ship?

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\* Mount Fuji, at 12,388 feet, is the highest mountain in Japan and visible from long distances. It is a dormant volcano, conical in shape, and considered a symbol of the nation. It is near the Pacific side of central Honshu, one of the Japanese home islands.

Admiral Crowe: I had one good skipper, whom I mentioned to you was a superb ship handler. I saw a lot of seamanship on the ship. My second skipper I didn't like very well, and I did not admire him. I learned a lot about ship handling and a lot about putting minesweep gear out because I became the gunnery officer, and that was my job. I don't know why you connect minesweeping with gunnery, but anyway, that was my job, one of them. And I enjoyed those kinds of things.

And I enjoyed the few opportunities we had working with other ships. But I didn't get a lot of formation drills and so forth. We weren't with carriers. We did serve as a target in Guam for submarines to shoot at, and as a result I got my first ride on an American submarine. I spent a day on a boat there, which really intrigued me.

I would call it sort of mid-range, maybe. It should have been better. We didn't have a lot of professional leadership on the ship. The captain had been to sea, naturally, you'd think. Our exec didn't go with us; he went to the hospital. We only had three officers on the ship that had been to sea in Norfolk. There was the engineer I mentioned who became the exec, Lucas, and then I think we had one other officer who sort of took over as engineer while Lucas was exec. They were both mustangs.

I learned a lot from Lucas. He was an old hand in the military, and he and I became very friendly. We had a huge wardroom, 18 officers or something, but they were all ensigns. In retrospect I thought maybe it wasn't the captain's fault at all. He just didn't have much to work with. We were all learning, all stumbling over each other. I had two classmates on the ship. They're still alive, and I see them at reunions.

Paul Stillwell: Who were they?

Admiral Crowe: Jerry Lenihan and Jim Albright.\* Albright left the Navy and became a doctor, and Jerry settled in his hometown of Fresno. He was the number-four man in my class—Jerry Lenihan, a smart guy. And today he looks like a hippie. We have several hippies in my class, that live in trees in Monterey and so forth, so forth. I always liked Jerry Lenihan. He's a wonderful guy. And Albright was from Minnesota, I think. Very naïve. I can remember in San Diego he married a bar girl, and it was a terrible mistake.

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\* Ensign Jeremiah E. Lenihan, USN; Ensign John G. Albright.

They were only married a year or something like that. Lucas and I tried to save him from it, but there was no saving him. He was, I guess, aroused.

Paul Stillwell: Hormones at work.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I think it had been his first real, first real exposure to the seamier side of life and to girls. Lucas knew about women very much, but my classmates were intimidated by girls.

Paul Stillwell: So you still hadn't gotten over being terrified.

Admiral Crowe: No, not at all. And, of course, the Navy doesn't help. I mean, they send you to San Diego, which then was really a sailor town. And, as you say, the bars, well, San Diego, right from the dock clear up to the Grand Hotel was tattoo parlors and bars.

Paul Stillwell: Broadway.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, Broadway. I didn't own a car when I was in San Diego, and the chances of meeting a classy girl were absolutely very small.

And, of course, we went through Hawaii on the way out to the Pacific. I was quite enchanted with Hawaii. It really hadn't taken off in growth yet. It was in the wake of World War II, but it was a pretty relaxed place, and not as crowded and not as busy. I really enjoyed seeing Hawaii.

Paul Stillwell: You hit a lot of islands on that cruise.

Admiral Crowe: That's when we went to Johnston Island and I got in trouble.

Paul Stillwell: Kwajalein and Guam.

Admiral Crowe: Many years later, in fact three or four years ago, one of my students came to see me at the Naval Academy. He was short, Jewish, very bright. You could tell he was sort of a nerd, but he was a smart nerd. He said he had applied for graduate school and had actually applied for entry, and was having trouble making a decision where to go. I said, "Well, where have you been admitted?" Jeez, he said Harvard, Yale, Duke, Stanford. I said, "You really don't have a problem here. You've got the kind of problem that some people would kill for. I mean, you're just making a decision—you're sort of in good health." He had certain interests in academia, I forget exactly. But we talked about what these schools were best equipped, or at least what we thought they were best equipped to teach and not teach.

Then I said to him, "You got a girlfriend?"

He said "No, I don't."

I said, "Well, I assume you would like to get married some day."

He said, "Oh, yeah, I'd love to get married."

I said, "Well, the Navy ain't going to help you very much." One of the schools was the University of Miami. And I said, "I don't think you want to go to the University of Miami. You don't look like the type that either they would appeal or you would appeal to a beach bunny. That's not your type." And I said, "You know, the Navy, when you get to shipboard you'll probably go to Norfolk or San Diego or San Francisco, or someplace like that. Maybe Newport. But meeting classy girls is a problem. So you ought to pick a school that maximizes your opportunities."

He was shocked. He said, "Is that all right to do? To choose a school because...."

I said, "You're damned right it's all right. You can choose any one of these schools you've got here. You're not going to go wrong. But choose a school that will give you an opportunity to meet girls that are interested in education, that are well educated, and the kind of girl that would appeal to you. Because the Navy ain't going to send you back to those places. Once you leave there, you're on your own." He was stunned. He went away completely in shock. He had never thought about a school in that light.

Paul Stillwell: Did you find out what the outcome was?



Admiral Crowe: He finally went to Harvard, which I sort of thought was nice. What is it? Radcliffe right there?\*

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: But he just had the hardest time grasping that that should be a part of the calculus. I thought it was very important. And it was a part of my calculus, even though I met Shirley by accident. I went to the submarine base at New London, which was across the river from Conn College, and all the bachelors dated girls at Conn College.† That was my first opportunity to really meet class girls. A lot of the submarine officers married Conn College girls.

Paul Stillwell: And Coast Guard officers.

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, they lived right across the street, and a lot of them married. But they had to be in at midnight. They weren't near as troublesome as those Yale guys that drove over, that didn't have to be in at any time of night. We had trouble with them sometimes. But that experience really impressed me, because there was a whole school full of girls that were really great girls. They were terrific. A lot of fun, but bright, and a lot of them had come from wealth. But I don't know of another Navy school that would give me that opportunity.

San Diego in that regard was very depressing to me. I never met any of the girls out there that I thought were—

Paul Stillwell: What were the *Carmick's* main operations when she was back in homeport on the West Coast?

Admiral Crowe: Well, there's an interesting question too, isn't it? We went into minesweep training then. When we came back in to regular operations we reported to

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\* Radcliffe was formerly a separate women's college in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It has since been merged with Harvard, which is coeducational.

† It was then the Connecticut College for Women.

part of a mine outfit. I didn't do too much of that because as soon as—well, no. When I first went to the *Carmick* it was in San Diego. We operated for about two to three months. Then the ship went to the yard at Bremerton, and I went to mine warfare school.\* When I came back, the ship was in San Diego, and within weeks we went to China. And when I came back that time we operated out of San Diego, but not for a long time. We went up to Canada and Puget Sound on our way to the yard again for a major overhaul. And I left to go to sub school.

Paul Stillwell: Would it be fair to say you were restless to move on at this point?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, yes. I was not terribly impressed with the surface Navy. I thought it was too formalized, too rank-happy, and the atmosphere was not real—and I had a lot of my friends leave the Navy from the *Carmick*. We had an inspection out in Guam by a guy named Simpson, whom I mentioned before. When he got through, why, three guys sat down and wrote their resignations out right there. Didn't want any part of that guy.

My skipper was sort of a Down-Easter a little bit. He was a very unusual man. He later retired from the Navy and went into teaching, and I used to get letters from him. Even when I was Chairman I got a couple letters from him. Then he died. He had a good mind, but he didn't have a way with people at all. And he didn't understand the basic principles of leadership. He really left a bad taste in people's mouths. Sort of alienated them. But he couldn't run a ship without help. He wasn't that good. But he never made a mistake; that was the beautiful part about it. If he did, he never admitted it.

Paul Stillwell: There are people like that. Well, to move on to a more pleasant subject, please tell me about getting into the Submarine School.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I'd wanted to be in submarines ever since I left the Naval Academy. That was sort of my objective in life, although I didn't know a hell of a lot about them. But I'd read a lot about submarine exploits during World War II. And I took

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\* Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington.

their advertising seriously, which was that it's much more informal, and relations between officers and crew are very good. And that enlisted people enjoy a lot more respect in the submarine force than they do in the surface force.

I got airsick, so I knew I wasn't going to be a pilot. And I never really had a strong draw to being a pilot. But it seemed to me that submarine force still proved your manliness and that people considered operating somewhere in the ships a hazardous thing to do, although I don't think our peacetime accidents were anything like the aviation was. On the other hand, during wartime our losses were much higher.

Paul Stillwell: Was there any appeal that this was an elite force?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. Written into everything. And it was at a time when the submarine force was still very small and was not considered a particular threat to the rest of the Navy. It was possible to go to a submarine and after you had command of a submarine, go command a surface ship. Of course, that all changed later on. When the submarines became 25% of the Navy the other communities were intent on not letting the submariners out of their holes, and made them live with—whatever they'd chosen you lived with it. But when I first entered the submarine force people that had done well in submarines were doing well in all kinds of things around the Navy: commanding cruisers, getting good jobs in Washington, and so forth.

I learned early that there was something about submarining that was different. At least, before Rickover it was a much easier life and not tension-ridden.\* The junior officers were given a lot more responsibility. The captain would actually let you land the ship and wouldn't butt in. You might knock over a few things while you were doing it, but you actually got to do things on a submarine: fire torpedoes, land the ship, and get it under way, and do all kinds of things. And the responsibilities were very quick.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about the curriculum at Submarine School?

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\* Hyman G. Rickover was considered the father of the nuclear Navy. He ran the U.S. Navy's nuclear-power program for many years, from 1948 until he eventually left active duty in 1982 with the rank of four-star admiral on the retired list. Rickover Hall at the Naval Academy is named in his honor, as is the nuclear-powered attack submarine *Hyman G. Rickover* (SSN-709), which was commissioned 21 July 1984.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was sort of an illuminating part of my life. I've always had a very good memory, and I used it heavily when I was in school. I got through school on memory. And I learned for the first time in Submarine School that you can actually reason out things, besides just memorizing the formula. If you know how a torpedo works, or you know how the machinery behind it works, you can diagnose. And it was the first time that I think I really started to think in series and apply what I knew to solving new kinds of problems, etc., etc.

The course was six months. We had a set of exams every month, at the end of the month. Six sets of exams going through sub school, and an exam in each subject. We had seamanship, we had tactical, engineering, and I guess we had administration, or something like that. I think we had four or five separate subjects. And we had an exam in each one of those subjects every month. Well, the first month I stood first in the class.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned before that you sort of went downhill.

Admiral Crowe: The second month I stood second or third, and it went steadily downhill from there.

Paul Stillwell: Do you have an explanation for that?

Admiral Crowe: I don't know. It's sort of the story of my life, because I seem to let out. Like these pitchers that can't close the game out, I always got sort of haphazard at the end of the course. I think I was sixth in sub school.

I had some very interesting predecessors in sub school. Jim Wilson, who was the color company commander in my class, I think he was number one.<sup>\*</sup> And a guy I didn't know—what was his name?—was number two. And Jimmy Carter was in there somewhere, three or four. Nick Nicholson, who was a submariner that I have known forever, was number four or five.<sup>†</sup> Mike Leddick was a very, very bright guy.<sup>\*</sup> The

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<sup>\*</sup> Ensign James B. Wilson, USN.

<sup>†</sup> Ensign John H. Nicholson, USN.

competition for number one, which was a wristwatch, was very thick between Wilson and the second guy. His name was Ellis or something like that.<sup>†</sup> He was a classmate whom I didn't know well then and didn't know after that. But number three, I think, was Jimmy. Jimmy was married, and they had separate quarters from our BOQ, so you knew the married officers, but your social life was mostly with the BOQ people, although there were parties for the whole class.

My sub class was heavily my Naval Academy class. I bet over 60% of them were from my class. But then there was a whole group that wasn't. And I made some really interesting friends outside of the class. One was a man by the name of Lew Neeb, who's still in San Diego.<sup>‡</sup> He was the senior officer in the class. He was a full lieutenant and had been in small boats in the surface Navy, and in later life became quite a financial guru. Even while he was in the Navy he bought some apartment houses and then started living in San Diego permanently. A very interesting man. Everybody called him Uncle Lew, because he solved everybody's problems. But he was older than I was.

The people in my class that stuck out the submarine force were Nicholson and Leddick, nuclear submariners, and of course Jimmy was well on his way when he left the Navy.

Paul Stillwell: Nicholson went to the *Nautilus*, I remember.

Admiral Crowe: That's correct. He was the number-one guy in my class in the submarine force for a while. Now, Cobean might have questioned that.<sup>§</sup> Cobean was also a classmate. He wasn't in my sub class; he was later. This was the first sub class that our Naval Academy class could go to. But Nicholson became a nuclear, and so did Leddick. So did Jimmy. And so did Jim Wilson, the number-one man.

Paul Stillwell: Wilson wound up as a vice admiral. I met him and his wife up in Pennsylvania.

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\* Ensign Ross S. Leddick, USN.

† Ensign Samuel S. Ellis, USN.

‡ Lieutenant Lewis H. Neeb, USN.

§ Ensign Warren R. Cobean, Jr., USN.

Admiral Crowe: He's retired up there right now.

Paul Stillwell: Subsequently he had a stroke, and I guess he's not in good shape.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I guess somebody told me that. He was subject to strokes. He was really a very competent guy, and bright, but a little tough to—I don't know, he didn't seem to get very close to people. When he became a vice admiral—he was Chief of Naval Education and Training down there in Pensacola—he got across the breakers with Congressman Sikes, who was a big name in the defense business.<sup>\*</sup> He didn't like Sikes; he thought Sikes was corrupt, and he wouldn't let Sikes fly on his airplane. Sikes went to the CNO, and Jim was retired.<sup>†</sup> But he was adamant. He wouldn't play ball with Sikes. So I guess you'd say he had a strong sense of ethics.

He did well everywhere he went, and he was very bright, but very sort of distant. I never thought he had a real sense of humor, and those kind of people really worry me.

Paul Stillwell: His wife, the former color girl, had a wonderful personality.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And they lived just a block or two from our house there for a while in Cameron Mills, and our children got friendly with some of their children. He walked by my house catching a bus every day, I remember, going to work in the Pentagon. So we knew him for a long time and were friendly with him, but never real close, because he just didn't seem to me to be the friendly type.

Now, Nicholson was terribly friendly. I always got along with Jack. He was the second or third man to be picked up by Rickover for the nuclear business. Axene, from '45, was one, I think. And there was another guy there that went into the submarine program. But Nicholson was in the very first group and ended up on the *Nautilus*.

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<sup>\*</sup> Robert L. F. Sikes, a Democrat from Florida, served in the House of Representatives from 3 January 1941 to 19 October 1944 and from 3 January 1945 to 3 January 1979. His congressional service was interrupted by duty in the Army during World War II.

<sup>†</sup> Wilson retired 1 August 1978.

Paul Stillwell: Axene was the first XO of *Nautilus*.<sup>\*</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And then Nicholson had a series of commands. And he probably had to make the toughest decision I ever saw made in the submarine force. He had command of an attack boat out in Hawaii. I'm trying to think of the name. He had been to the Pole with that. His story of taking it through the Alaskan Passage and getting into the Arctic with just five or six feet under the keel is a fascinating story. But he did it, and it was really quite a feat.

But that day they had a fire on the ship, and it was burning out of control in the after torpedo room, and there was a nuclear warhead in there. And Jack intentionally flooded the after torpedo room.

Paul Stillwell: *Sargo*? Was that it?

Admiral Crowe: *Sargo*, that's right.<sup>†</sup> And I couldn't help thinking what a decision that must have been. But he said, "Flood it," and saved the ship. At least I assume it saved the ship. But he never suffered from it. He made the process of command.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember of the Carters specifically from that period at New London?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I knew him in sub school. I'd known him at the Naval Academy, but not well. And I took a cruise on the *New York* where Jimmy was, for some reason, close to me on the *New York*, and I heard him talk a lot and we talked some. That's the first I had ever had anything to do with him.

In Submarine School I knew him a lot more because, first of all, he was doing well in the class, and we were butted up against each other. I'm trying to think how

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<sup>\*</sup> Lieutenant Commander Dean L. Axene, USN, was the first executive officer of the *Nautilus* (SSN-571) when she was commissioned in 1954.

<sup>†</sup> On 14 June 1960, while under the command of Lieutenant Commander John H. Nicholson, USN, the nuclear attack submarine *Sargo* (SSN-583) was charging her oxygen tanks while at Pearl Harbor. A leak developed, and fire broke out in her after torpedo room; it was made worse by the detonation of two torpedo warheads. The ship's officers then made a shallow dive with the torpedo room hatch open to put out the fire.

many there were in sub class. I think we only had 60 in the class. Ralph Carnahan was in the class also.\* He was a submariner and then later became a nuclear submariner. But Ralph's mind wasn't as good as those other people in the nuclear business, Leddick and Jack and Jim.

I thought the Submarine School was pretty good. We grumbled a lot, but I really had very few complaints about it. They made us work pretty hard.

Paul Stillwell: Was it mostly memorization?

Admiral Crowe: No, it wasn't. Navigational, tactical problems. There wasn't any way you could memorize it; you had to work out the problem. And I remember very distinctly an experience I had in submarine school that stayed with me a long time. They had a guy by the name of Harry Fischer, who was the head of the engineering department, a lieutenant commander, wartime submariner.† We called him "Smiley," because he had a built-in frown. When you got to know him he really wasn't as bad as the frown, but you always thought he was mad because he just had a look on his face where he's going to get somebody. He's going to be mean.

Paul Stillwell: Joe Williams was later his exec in a submarine.‡

Admiral Crowe: Oh, really?

Paul Stillwell: He said that after Fischer's wife got pregnant, the skipper's disposition changed considerably.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was very interesting. We were studying the way the bow planes and stern planes worked one day. And we had an assignment. We all read the assignment and went to class, and Fischer was lecturing on it. I thought, "You know, he's got it all wrong. That isn't the way that thing works." I stood it as long as I could,

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\* Ensign Ralph H. Carnahan, USN, another member of the Naval Academy class of 1947.

† Lieutenant Commander Harry F. Fischer, Jr., USN, Naval Academy class of 1940.

‡ In the early 1950s, as a commander, Fischer was skipper of the submarine *Ronquil* (SS-396). See the Naval Institute oral history of Vice Admiral Joe Williams, Jr., USN (Ret.).



and I forget what happened. But, in any event, he and I got in an argument about the way the thing worked—the way you canted that pump, and it had a bunch of cylinders around it. He got quite upset with me. And I didn't change my mind. I didn't do anything. I just backed off. I wasn't going to argue with a professor. But he let me know that—"What the hell do you know about it? You don't know anything about it. You don't run the submarine." And I was quite concerned about this. My classmates were jostling me that I had clearly stepped on it.

The next day we came to class, and Fischer started the class off saying, "I've got something to say. "I stayed late last night, went on [the submarine there]. I took apart the bow plane, and Ensign Crowe was right about the way it worked."

Paul Stillwell: You've got to admire him for that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I was stunned. That's essentially what he said. He said, "No, Bill, you were right. I just didn't understand the system that well." But then he stayed there and took it apart to find out. I thought that was very impressive.

Paul Stillwell: It was.

Admiral Crowe: After that he and I were very friendly, and I didn't pick an argument with him anymore.

I had several professors, though, that—it was very interesting. Tom Kimmel was the head of the tactics department.<sup>\*</sup> We used to put our hats on the table outside the class where we went in, and one day he came in carrying this hat, and he said, "Whose hat is this? This is the dirtiest hat I've ever seen." Well, it was my hat. He was Admiral Kimmel's son, one of his sons.<sup>†</sup> Of course, one was lost at sea in the submarines during the war.

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<sup>\*</sup> Commander Thomas K. Kimmel, USN.

<sup>†</sup> Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, USN, was Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet from 1 February 1941 until 17 December of that year, when he was relieved of command in the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor earlier in the month. He retired in early 1942 as a two-star admiral, his permanent rank.

Paul Stillwell: Manning was killed.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And this was Tom. And I still have some business with his brother trying to get the admiral promoted.† In any event, his deputy was a man by the name of Dave Bunting, who taught the tac computer.‡

Paul Stillwell: The TDC.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, TDC.§ He was a lieutenant commander. And Dave and I, for reasons that totally escape me, became very friendly. He didn't know me very well except in class, as an ensign. He and I became very, very friendly, and he advised me on a number of things. And for several years there I would call or write him if I needed some advice.

One of the people in the school was Russ Kefauver, who was a terrifically successful submarine commander in World War II.\*\* I forget exactly what he was doing at the school. He may have been the exec. He went to sea with us a lot when we went out to shoot torpedoes. And of course, to read about what Kefauver did—and I've talked to people who served with him—he had a really classic mind for spatial business. He was very successful.

Kefauver watched me make an approach one day, and he and I became very friendly. When I graduated from Submarine School he took me aside and talked to me for quite a few minutes. The essence of what he was saying was that, "I've noticed you in this class." This is sort of shameless, but he said, "You're more mature than most of these kids are. If you choose to stay in the Navy you're going to have a real future in the Navy." It was interesting that he bothered to tell me that, and that he had concluded that. I don't know what from. Anyway, he was very supportive to me.

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\* In July 1944 Lieutenant Commander Manning M. Kimmel, USN, was in command of the submarine *Robalo* (SS-273) when she hit a mine and sank two miles off the coast of Palawan Island in the Philippines.

† For many years after their father's death, his surviving sons sought to get him promoted posthumously to four-star admiral, the highest rank he held while on active duty.

‡ Lieutenant Commander Davis E. Bunting, USN.

§ TDC – The torpedo data computer was a piece of equipment that figured approach courses for torpedoes to take on their way to a target and set the torpedo gyros prior to firing.

\*\* Commander Russell Kefauver, USN, was skipper of the *Tambor* (SS-198) during World War II.

That was about it. Fischer and I became friendly after that incident, but Dave Bunting and Kefauver were the outstanding memories I had of the staff in the Submarine School. I did well in Submarine School. I grasped the fire control problem pretty well. And my experience in Submarine School was very supportive.

Now, I met a couple of people on the staff who also had law degrees, and that's where I got sort of into the law business. They had been to law school on the Navy, and their secondary specialty was sort of practicing law. That appealed to me very much, and that's when I began to look for opportunities to apply for law school. It was a little too early to do it just as you're graduating from Submarine School, but nevertheless I was thinking about it when I was in Submarine School.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about training on individual systems? Were there simulators?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, there were. Of course, they were much simpler than now. But nevertheless they had a diving simulator there that was very real. You could get in trouble right there without even trying. That was also Fischer's business. The first time I saw a simulated dive, Fischer did it, and then we all had to learn to do that.

I think the base was commanded by a submariner by the name of Chuck Triebel.\*

Paul Stillwell: He had been a successful skipper during the war.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And he had a big scar, which somebody said came from a fight in Panama, I remember. Oh, and then the guy that took the gold out of the Philippines.

Paul Stillwell: Mike Fenno.<sup>†</sup>

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\* Captain Charles O. Triebel, USN, commanded the submarine base at New London, Connecticut. During the war he was credited with sinking 14 Japanese ships.

<sup>†</sup> In February 1942 the submarine *Trout* (SS-202) took aboard 20 tons of gold and silver from the island of Corregidor in the Philippines, which was then under siege by the Japanese. In early March she delivered the metal to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for safekeeping. The boat's commanding officer at the time was Lieutenant Commander Frank W. Fenno, Jr., USN.

Admiral Crowe: He was the base commander for a while. We went to a party at his house when we first got there. And the commander of the submarine force was Fife.\* He lived on the base. He'd never married, so he lived on the base, and in the BOQ. So you had to watch who you were bumping into when you were around the admiral's quarters.

Oh, and another classmate of mine in submarine school was the football player, Don Whitmire.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned last time that they had a roast at the school and said they could fit his fan club into a phone booth.

Admiral Crowe: We were always amazed at the way Whitmire—everybody knew who Whitmire was before he ever got there. But it was a good period in my life.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have enlisted instructors also?

Admiral Crowe: Sometimes, but mainly on the big subjects we had officer instructors.

Paul Stillwell: Did the instructors throw in sea stories and the lore and legends?

Admiral Crowe: All the time. All the time, yes. That was the nicest thing about Submarine School. And, of course, some of them had some terrific stories. I can remember Kefauver describing an approach on the surface at night. But they all had good stories. Even though some of them hadn't been in command, they had been at sea in the war. And we knew who all the big names were. You picked that up very quickly. And in the area, on the tender across the river, Dusty Dornin was a division commander, I guess. Very famous. I never met Slade Cutter. I knew who he was, but I never met him. But Dusty Dornin I ran into all the time there.

Paul Stillwell: He and Slade were classmates, and they had quite a rivalry.

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\* Rear Admiral James Fife, Jr., USN.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I think they did. I knew that Dornin was a football player and a successful submarine commander. I didn't realize how high in his class he stood. He was very high in his class. But he was a drinker.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned that before.

Admiral Crowe: We had a bunch of those around New London who had weathered the war well, but they didn't weather the return to peace, and they would be in the officers' club. There were a couple of famous submarine wives up there that had played pretty fast and loose while the men were at war, one of them a very senior ranking officer's wife. But you learned all this gossip and all the mythology of going in submarines. That was the best part of Submarine School. You learned something about the culture and became a member of it.

Paul Stillwell: What was put forth as the mission for the submarine force at that time? The ships to be sunk were no longer there.

Admiral Crowe: Well, the mission was to oppose the Russian submarine force and to contain it the minute war started. We had all kinds of fancy plans for putting the whole submarine force in the G.I.-U.K. Gap.\* The theory was that if the Russians came out we would attrit them pretty heavily coming through the gap. And we were beginning to think—we didn't have the capability, but we thought a lot about submarine on submarine. And then when we got the nuclear submarine in the water, well, that problem really opened up. But we thought about it in the diesel business, and we were prepared to do that. I don't know how successful we would have been. And even then, even in sub school, I was reading all the time about their exploits.

About that time an official history of the submarine force came out.

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\* G.I.-U.K. Gap – the sea area between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom.

Paul Stillwell: Roscoe and Freeman.\*

Admiral Crowe: I chose to stay on a boat in New London after I left sub school. I'd ridden it in training and I really liked it. And I thought, well, why the hell should I go anywhere? Nicholson, who stood three or four, wanted to go to Hawaii, so he did. But I somehow didn't have any yearning to go to Hawaii. I seemed to know New London, and it was very conducive to single life. And I found this boat, but the skipper of the boat got relieved by the time I got there, so I had a new skipper, not the one I had met previously.

The *Flying Fish* was one of the oldest boats. Of course, it had a very distinguished war record.<sup>†</sup> And what was the name of the guy that made the *Flying Fish*—Donaho?

Paul Stillwell: He was the first skipper.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Yes. The name Donaho was very much connected with the *Flying Fish*, and he was evidently a sundowner.<sup>§</sup> Merrill Kelly, one of my friends, served with Donaho.<sup>\*\*</sup> He was a pretty tough guy. But he was very famous for his submarine record. And a lot of those skippers lived right there, and we saw them on the river. Nimitz's son had the new *Sarda*.<sup>††</sup>

Paul Stillwell: He had headed the gunnery branch there at the school at the end of the war.

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\* Theodore Roscoe, *United States Submarine Operations in World War II* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1949).

† USS *Flying Fish* (SS-229) was a *Gato*-class submarine commissioned 10 December 1941. She had a displacement of 1,525 tons on the surface and 2,410 tons submerged. She was 312 feet long, 27 feet in the beam, and had a draft of 15 feet. Her top speed was 20 knots surfaced and 9 knots submerged. She was armed with ten 21-inch torpedo tubes and a 3-inch deck gun.

‡ Lieutenant Commander Glynn R. Donaho, USN.

§ See Julian T. Burke, Jr., "Stern Skipper," in Paul Stillwell's *Submarine Stories: Recollections from the Diesel Boats* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007).

\*\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Merrill E. Kelly, Jr., USN.

†† USS *Sarda* (SS-488) was commissioned on 19 April 1946 with Commander Chester W. Nimitz, Jr., USN, in command.

Admiral Crowe: He may have, yes. It's curious, though. He was most famous of all for swearing. I don't know why. Everybody remarked on his swearing. He did it liberally. But evidently was very successful in civilian life, I think.

Paul Stillwell: He was. He was the chairman of Perkin-Elmer Corporation. He wanted to get out and make money, and get out from under the shadow of his father.\*

Admiral Crowe: Father, yes. Well, they said serving with him was a real experience. I had two good friends who were junior officers over there on his boat, and he really made a big deal out of training junior officers. In other words, he would announce: Lieutenant (jg) So-and-so is going to take the boat in today, and everybody watch and criticize him, and things like that. They liked him. He was a natural-born leader is what he was.

Paul Stillwell: Probably got that in the genes.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I guess he did. And, boy, the people that worked with him loved him. One of the guys that worked with him was later the skipper on the *Nautilus*, Anderson. He was Nimitz's exec there on the diesel boat. Anderson's the guy that took it under the Pole.†

When I was on *Flying Fish*, my friend Kenny Carr spent six weeks on *Flying Fish* before sub school.‡ He came back to go to sub school, and they didn't have any place for him so he came down and rode our boat for about two months, then went to sub school. And he and I became very friendly. He's a wonderful guy. There's a bright man.

Paul Stillwell: He also was in the early crew of the *Nautilus*.

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\* Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, 1941-45.

† On 3 August 1958, the *Nautilus* made the first successful submerged transit across the geographic North Pole. She had submerged on 1 August in the Barrow Sea Valley and continued her voyage until surfacing near Greenland. Her total underwater voyage lasted 96 hours and covered 1,830 miles. For firsthand details from her commanding officer see William R. Anderson, with Clay Blair, Jr., *Nautilus 90 North* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1959).

‡ Ensign Kenneth M. Carr, USN, Naval Academy class of 1949. He eventually became a vice admiral.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. He and Nicholson and Axene were all on the *Nautilus* together. But Ken was one of these people that just seemed like he was very laid back and relaxed, but his mind was going 80, 90, and he was very smart.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the school boat and going out to get training on making approaches?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was sort of a goat screw, because we had to sleep in the wardroom bunks and the forward torpedo room, and we were always imposing on the crew. It was quite frantic while you went out there, but it was wonderful training. I mean, that's what it was all about. Go out and to actually shoot a torpedo. My God, that was really something.

Paul Stillwell: How much of that did you do?

Admiral Crowe: Not a lot, but we did a little. Did a lot in the simulator. We had an attack simulator where you could actually shoot at ships.

I was trying to think who else was there. At the very end of our sub class, O'Kane came in as head of the sub school, so I had seen O'Kane.\* I didn't know him very well, but a rather well-known man.

Paul Stillwell: Sure. He was also a demanding perfectionist.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he probably was. But I'm told by people that did know him that he was never the man after prison camp that he was before. He was a little spacey when we came along. But evidently, beforehand he was really clicking on all cylinders.

Paul Stillwell: That's what Slade Cutter told me, that he really trained hard with his crew so when they got to the situation they were ready.

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\* Captain Richard H. O'Kane, USN, served as officer in charge of the Navy's Submarine School from August 1952 to July 1953. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service in command of the *Tang* (SS-306).



Admiral Crowe: Well, that was the whole secret, was training those crews hard until they just didn't run into anything they couldn't handle. And when they did it they did it automatically.

Although I was told that old Dornin, when he made a successful attack, he'd go down to test depth and bust out a bottle of whiskey and tell the exec: "Wake me up tomorrow." And drink the whole damned bottle of whiskey. Can you imagine that? There was a lot of that during the war. They had a lot of medicinal whiskey on board, and they used to issue it for "medicinal problems" whenever they felt like it.

But I served with a skipper by the name of George Morin who had been on a boat in which they'd had an accident diving and lost their compass.\* They made a famous retreat back to Australia with no aids, I mean just following stars. They could dive, but I don't think they had the low-pressure blower, so they had to husband their air. And the compressor may have been out. So they were surfacing without using compressed air. They'd try and drive the boat up to the surface and capture air. He had a wonderful story of that boat getting back to the base.

And then I met the guy who had been on the *Bergall*. I forget his name. The *Bergall* is the one that in a surface attack one night got hit by an 8-inch shell and couldn't close the torpedo loading hatch on the front of the boat.†

Paul Stillwell: I don't recall that one.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it wasn't because they sank a lot. They became famous because when they cleared the area in the middle of the night, discovered they couldn't close the forward torpedo loading hatch. And they dreamed up all kinds of schemes, with two-by-fours and so forth, and tried to dive it, and just couldn't do it. There was too much water coming in. So they made the passage back to Australia on the surface, the whole way. And evidently they held their breath for two weeks, three weeks, whatever it was.

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\* Lieutenant Commander George F. Morin, USN, commanded the *Clamagore* (SS-343), 1952-54.

† On 13 December 1944 the submarine *Bergall* (SS-320) and the Japanese heavy cruiser *Myoko* were involved in a surface battle that damaged both ships. The *Bergall* had to end her patrol after being hit by a dud 8-inch projectile.

Paul Stillwell: Because they were really vulnerable.

Admiral Crowe: They never got caught. They saw a plane once on a distant horizon there, and it didn't get very closer and didn't see them. But they were ordered to abandon the boat. And he sent back: "No, I can save this boat; let me try." And they took off part of the crew onto another boat, so they ran it back with a skeleton crew, and they got all the way back. A wonderful story. Submarine history in World War II is full of those stories.

Paul Stillwell: It was inspirational.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Just all kinds of stuff. And, of course, the *Wahoo*. Mush Morton was very famous.\* I never saw him.

Paul Stillwell: I read a book by George Grider, who served under him in the *Wahoo*, along with O'Kane, and he said those two were able to serve as a balance wheel and hold Morton back on his more outlandish schemes.† But he thinks that once they left, there wasn't anybody to stand up to him and that's what cost the boat.

Admiral Crowe: It may be. You know, Dornin had an interesting attack plan. Ned Beach was his exec.‡ And you know, two people that I would have never thought got along would be Dornin and Ned Beach, but they did. They got along very well. And when they were in attack mode on the surface Beach was the officer of the deck. He was on the bridge, because Dornin didn't want to be confused by scary things happening on the bridge. He just followed the TDC and fired all the stuff from the conning tower while Beach was up there watching all the ships go by, and occasionally getting shot at and all kinds of things happening. And Dornin was down there wrapped up in the TDC.

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\* USS *Wahoo* (SS-238) was one of the most successful U.S. submarines of World War II. Her last skipper was Commander Dudley W. "Mush" Morton, USN. She was lost in the Sea of Japan on 11 October 1943, probably the victim of an attack by a Japanese antisubmarine aircraft.

† George Grider, as told to Lydel Sims, *War Fish* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958).

‡ Lieutenant Edward L. Beach, Jr., USN, was executive officer of the *Trigger* (SS-237) when Dornin was commanding officer.

And then Beach also served with Street.

Paul Stillwell: In the *Tirante*.

Admiral Crowe: In the *Tirante*.<sup>\*</sup> And I later met Street. Now, there was really a nice man. He made an issue out of being nice. He was a very interesting man. And when I worked for Beach in the White House Street he used to come in occasionally, and every time he came in he'd say, "Well, the guy that really deserves this Congressional Medal is Beach, not me."

Paul Stillwell: I think there's some truth to that.

Admiral Crowe: That may be. Of course, Beach was an aggressive guy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and he was exec of *Trigger* under several skippers, and they did well under each of them.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, Beach got a Navy Cross out of that *Tirante* thing, as an exec. Beach has always liked aggressive—it's interesting, because it doesn't always go with a good mind. Good minds are not always real aggressive. They know too much about the problems. But Beach was an aggressive man. When war came he wanted to fight it. And evidently did extremely well at it.

Paul Stillwell: And he was disappointed that the war ended so soon, because he had just gotten command.

Admiral Crowe: I'm sure he was, yes.

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<sup>\*</sup> On the night of 13 April 1945, Commander George L. Street III, USN, commanding officer of the USS *Tirante* (SS-420), took the submarine into a small harbor on Quelpart Island in the East China Sea, 100 miles south of Korea. The *Tirante* fired six torpedoes, which sank the 4,000-ton transport *Juzan Maru* and two 900-ton frigates. She then exited the harbor at high speed. For this exploit and others during the submarine's first war patrol, Street was awarded the Medal of Honor.

A lot of my classmates came in in the next two or three sub classes. One of my classmates that was a very dear friend was Jeff Metzel.

Paul Stillwell: You talked about him previously.

Admiral Crowe: And we had been there about, I guess, a month and a half or two months when he had an accident in the engine course one day, repairing the engine or something, and his hand flew in his eye and he cut his eye. So he went to the hospital and was turned back to the next sub class. And that's how he got in the Rickover program, because he stood high. He wasn't standing high in our class. But when they did it again he stood pretty high, and that got by Rickover. And Jeff was so very an interesting man. But a devoted, dedicated Navy man.

Paul Stillwell: You talked about the problem his son had with his accident.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And Jeff gave all his blood and soul to the U.S. Navy. Jeff was in my company at the Naval Academy. But in my company there weren't many other submariners. Just Jeff, and that's about it. He and I were the only two that went into submarines out of my company.

The *Flying Fish* was really a joy.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else to mention about Submarine School?

Admiral Crowe: I can remember the last guy in the class. Lou Emme was the bucket man.\* There was a cocktail party for us just before we graduated, and Admiral Fife showed up at this party and went around asking everybody where they stood in the class. Emme looked him straight in the eye and said, "I stood in the top 99%."

We had several people in the class drop out, some of whom stayed in the Navy. And I have a story I tell to this day about Lew Neeb. We were in an engineering class near the end of the summer when it was hot as hell. It was in the afternoon after lunch,

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\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Louis R. Emme, USN.

and everybody was sort of dozing through the class. Lew Neeb was sitting over a couple of chairs from me, and somebody let wind, and a great big noise. Before it even was over, Neeb said, "Thank you, Bill Crowe." I don't know who it was, but I was tagged with it whether I liked it or not. And I couldn't get away from it. Lew Neeb, still to this day we talk and joke about that.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we've now got it officially for the record that you were not the culprit.

Admiral Crowe: Not the culprit, and Neeb insists I was. He doesn't know anything about it. He still lives in San Diego.

Matty Matthews was a Naval Academy classmate of mine and in my class at Submarine School.\* He's had a very unfortunate last few years. He's in deep depression and can't throw it off. Very sad. He and I were roommates in New London for a while. I was rooming with him when he got married. I was in his wedding.

Paul Stillwell: Did your social life pick up when you were near those Connecticut College women?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did. It got quite lively. It has something to do with staying on a submarine in New London. I'm not going to tell you any more about that.

Paul Stillwell: All right. Did you go through the escape tower?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did. In fact, I have a very vivid memory. Jimmy Carter was two ahead of me, and they put that thing on your mouth and your nose and then they duck you to see if it's working. Boy, he came up sputtering and said, "It isn't working! It isn't working!" Here we are at 100 feet, getting ready to go out the lock. Well, he hadn't turned the switch right or something, and they solved it real quick. But that's an interesting adventure.

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\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Howard L. Matthews, Jr., USN.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about the ascent?

Admiral Crowe: Well, actually, my nose clip came off on the ascent. And they had told us to let go—we held onto the line like this—let go with one hand and keep your nose plugged. So I did exactly what they told me to do and that was uneventful, but I was scared to death at the time. It's a terrifying business if you're not doing it every day. And, of course, in the lock at 100 feet when you're getting ready to go out the pressure gets quite interesting, and oppressive, and scary. And the water's up to here on you.

Paul Stillwell: That is, up to your neck.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It wasn't quite that high, but about here.

Paul Stillwell: Chest high.

Admiral Crowe: And, of course, the pressure's intense, so your voice is not natural, and blah, blah, blah, blah. But you had made an ascent at 18 feet and then at 50 feet, and then you make one at 100 feet. I was more than happy not to do it if they wanted to—but we didn't have a choice.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have the Momsen Lung on for this?\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I guess they're out of fashion now, huh? I don't know—what do we do now?

Paul Stillwell: Well, I would guess they take one of those deep submergence vessels and just hook it right onto the escape hatch.

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\* Invented by submariner Charles B. Momsen, the Momsen lung was a breathing apparatus to be used when ascending from a damaged submarine to the surface. It did not have its own air supply but used the air already in a man's lungs.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, try and save you that way. We didn't have anything like that. And, of course, the only real experience we had was the *Squalus*.<sup>\*</sup> We all knew about *Squalus*. In fact, a graduate of my high school went down with *Squalus*. We had several boats, including O'Kane's, during the war where they had made some interesting escapes.<sup>†</sup> Some did and some didn't.

Paul Stillwell: I think there were about a half dozen got out of his boat.

Admiral Crowe: The exec of the boat—do you remember what his name was?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: I think the exec was on the bridge when they went down, or something, and he made a direct ascent. But the people in the boat were mostly killed. It was *Tang*, wasn't it?

Paul Stillwell: Yes. I talked to one man named Larry Savadkin, who got out.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's who I was talking about. He was the exec. But he wasn't in the forward torpedo room. I think he escaped as the boat was going down and just in a few seconds made some decisions, and just did it. It wasn't a deliberate escape or anything. It was just the only thing open to him.

Paul Stillwell: Self-preservation.

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<sup>\*</sup> USS *Squalus* (SS-192), commanded by Lieutenant Oliver F. Naquin, USN, sank in 243 feet of water while conducting exercise dives on 23 May 1939 off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Twenty-six men died, but 33, including Naquin, were recovered through the use of the McCann rescue chamber. The submarine later was salvaged, refurbished, and renamed the *Sailfish*. For details, see Carl La VO, *Back from the Deep* (Annapolis; Naval Institute Press, 1994).

<sup>†</sup> Commander Richard H. O'Kane, USN, Medal of Honor recipient whose story is contained in his memoir *Clear the Bridge! The War Patrols of the U.S.S. Tang* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1977). He and eight of his crew members managed to escape after the *Tang* (SS-306) fired a faulty torpedo that circled around and sank the submarine. The crew spent the rest of the war in Japanese prison camps.

<sup>‡</sup> Lieutenant Lawrence Savadkin, USNR.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And succeeded. But the men in the torpedo room, I forget how many got out. It wasn't very many.

Paul Stillwell: But that really impresses on you the need to learn the techniques.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And they made a big mistake in waiting too long. You really need your senses about you when you're doing that sort of thing, so you really should do it right away, before the air gets stifling and you begin to get punchy and not thinking straight. If you're going to make an escape like that you should, the minute the boat settles down you should do it. Wowee.

Paul Stillwell: What safety measures did they have to protect you as you went up in that tower?

Admiral Crowe: Well, they had quite a few. There weren't any measures in particular, but there were swimmers around you. The people that ran the tower followed you up the whole way. And, of course, they did it every day. They were quite at home, comfortable. They could go from the surface to 100 feet and back up on the one breath of air. I don't know how in the hell they did it. But they escorted all kinds of people up if something really happened.

Now, I was over there one day making escapes on the boat I was on, and one of our chiefs did make a big mistake and busted all his eardrums, and came out of the water bleeding. They threw him back in the pressure tank and spent two or three days in there decompressing him, and he came out all right. But they had to decompress him.

We've learned a lot about that stuff that we didn't used to know. Of course, the whole business is a lot of trouble for something that the odds of ever successfully using it are very, very slim.

Paul Stillwell: The people from the *Squalus* were rescued in a chamber, not from free ascent.



Admiral Crowe: Chamber, yes. That's right. And today we just don't operate in that shallow water. If you're going to go down, you're going to go down.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the teamwork that was involved in those trainings approaches—tying in the TDC and the periscope and firing?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was the whole business, trying to develop a mind that could actually picture the fire control problem and then would change as the circumstances changed. And, of course, those guys that were really good at it, they didn't use aids or anything else. They just did it in their minds.

Paul Stillwell: Dennis Wilkinson told me he could do that.\*

Admiral Crowe: Well, I'm not surprised. Because after the war they did a study of 50 successful skippers, looking for common traits among men who had been very successful leaders. They couldn't find any, except one or two, and one was spatial relations.

Paul Stillwell: And probably aggressiveness.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that may have been, but I don't even remember that. But successful submarine skippers almost all had great spatial relations abilities. That's the whole problem, and it's a very difficult problem. You've really got to learn it. It doesn't just come to you. Because everything's in movement. And I can imagine what it must have been like under fire, I mean when they were in the middle of a convoy and so forth and targets were shifting and depth charges were dropping, etc., etc. It must have been terrific to just keep up.

That's the reason Dornin stayed in the conning tower. He didn't want to be distracted by all that nonsense. He wanted the one problem. And he fired at 500 yards. He said this process is not precise enough for me. If you're gonna hit you've got to get in close, and he did. He got in very close. Now, you could get too close and the torpedo

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\* See the Naval Institute oral history of Vice Admiral Eugene P. Wilkinson, USN (Ret.).

never arm. But I think it armed at 250 yards, something like that, and he'd fire them somewhere around 600 or 500 yards. And he says you don't miss when you're in there. But the guy on the bridge is really taking a lot. The ship's getting bigger and bigger and bigger that he's shooting at.

It's amazing that we spent so much time on the surface. It took us a long time to learn that. They started the war fighting submerged. And we got it from the Germans. Of course, the Germans did almost all their work on the surface. Of course, they had a real little boat. But Kefauver, his successes were almost all on the surface.

Paul Stillwell: Red Ramage was very famous in the *Parche* for that.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: Well, how readily did you pick up that spatial relationship part of it?

Admiral Crowe: I did pretty well at it. I don't think I was the best in the class. We had one of the class members that got thrown into an unusual situation in the attack trainer one day. He just moved his mind around and used the stern tube, and it really impressed the instructors, I remember. He probably had the best shot at the kind of mind they were looking for. You know, you can gear your mind to do that if you understand what the problem is and then begin to practice it and are always working on it.

I think those wartime skippers became good at it because they did a lot of it. And they did a lot of missing. They didn't hit all the time. They did a lot of missing. But pretty soon that problem became second nature to them.

Paul Stillwell: And then they had to learn how to evade, because the escorts were going to come after them.

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\* Commander Lawson P. Ramage, USN, earned the Medal of Honor while commanding the submarine *Parche* (SS-384) during a surface attack on a Japanese convoy the night of 31 July 1944.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't know that they learned anything about that. With the damned speed of the boat you just had to go down there and take it. I guess there were tactics for getting away, but by then your battery was so low you weren't going to do much.

Now, we got caught in the *Wahoo* when I was exec, off Vladivostok, and we spent a day evading like that. God, that was just horrible. But in the war they just had to take it.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else about submarine school to mention before you go to the *Flying Fish*?

Admiral Crowe: We were just coming in with the Guppies, so we talked a lot about it.\* And, of course, Beach was a leader in that, on the *Amberjack* down in Key West. Everybody wanted to go to a Guppy, but there weren't very many of them. Somebody in our class went, I can't remember who. The Guppies and snorkeling were just coming in. *Flying Fish* didn't have a snorkel. I didn't get into the snorkeling business till I was third officer on *Clamagore*. And of course *Clamagore* was a bona fide Guppy. It was a good boat, good for doing that sort of thing. A sound boat. We were a 412 boat, 412 feet depth. *Flying Fish* was just, I think, 312.

Paul Stillwell: I think 312 was the standard test depth for the fleet boats.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I know a lot of people exceeded that depth in the war, out of desperation, I think.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said you had a motive for staying in New London, and then you went to the *Flying Fish*. What do you remember about fitting in on board after you reported?

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\* The term "Guppy" grew out of the initials for the postwar modification fitted to World War II fleet boats to give them greater underwater propulsion power (GUPP).

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was a really marvelous wardroom, and very warm. Of course, all my memories of it are good ones, positive. It may not have been that way at the time, but that's the way I look back on it, because I became very good friends of all the wardroom. Until we ran aground. Then things went to hell.

Paul Stillwell: Please tell me about that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we'll get to that.

Paul Stillwell: Okay. Was Freeland Carde the skipper who left shortly?

Admiral Crowe: It was, Freeland Carde.\* And one day I got off a helicopter in Vietnam, way up in the U Minh Forest, and a young naval officer in greens walked up—Freeland Carde III. It was his son. And he spelled it C-A-R-D-E, so I knew immediately that there was some relationship.

Freeland Carde was a very interesting man, and a very nice man, too. He was not a stereotyped submariner.

Paul Stillwell: What do you mean by that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, you didn't hear a lot of braggadocio out of him. And "Boy, let me tell you what happened to me last night," or anything like that. He was very gentlemanly. And sort of cautious, and did a lot of thinking about philosophical problems and so forth. He was a little courtly for the group there to stomach sometimes, but we didn't object to it, because he was a very nice man.

But one time he was worried about me dating at Conn College, and he said something about, "Aren't you a little old to be dating at Conn College?" I forget exactly.

I said, "Captain, not at all. If you're really interested I can do something for you over there." He got a big kick out of that. I didn't hear any more about Conn College from him.

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\* Commander Freeland H. Carde, Jr., USN, commanded the boat from 21 December 1948 to 4 March 1950.

Of course, I was the only bachelor in the wardroom. I stood a lot of watches on New Year's Eve and Christmas. But the families of the wardroom were really—one of whom lives in Annapolis right now, very dear friends of ours that we see a lot of. Jane and Ernie Barrett.<sup>\*</sup> My mother came up and became very friendly with Jane, and before my birthday my mother would send Jane money and tell her to buy a birthday cake for her son. I was on that boat when his two children were born; they are now grown ladies with their own families. The wardroom was marvelous.

We had an exec by the name of Nicodemus, whom the crew called Mr. Nick.<sup>†</sup> He was Greek right through and through, but very laid back. He'd been in the merchant marine, then went to the Naval Academy and bilged out. But it was just before the war, so as soon as the war started he volunteered to come back in the Navy and they brought him in, and he spent the war in submarines. He was exec of our boat.

Lando Zech was on the boat; Ernie Barrett was on the boat.<sup>‡</sup> Perry Taylor out of '46 came aboard eventually, just a year ahead of me.<sup>§</sup> And a man by the name of Emory Creasman, whom I didn't know very well, never got that close to him.<sup>\*\*</sup> That was about it. I don't remember anybody else in the wardroom. Now, when we ran aground we had a different exec, who was a Harvard man. This was after Nicodemus.

The introduction to the boat was pretty easy, really. We were a school boat, so I got a lot of diving experience very quickly. Then we did do some traveling on the boat later on, which I enjoyed. We went to Puerto Rico, my first visit to Puerto Rico. But the whole business of qualifying, that was a big year for me, to qualify.<sup>††</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Please describe that process.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it's one of those things that happen to you when you leave school. It's sort of strenuous exercise, but there's nobody telling you that you have to do it. It's up to you. That's sort of a dirty trick right there, leaving it up to you, because you keep

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<sup>\*</sup> Lieutenant (junior grade) Ernest R. Barrett, USN.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant Commander Gordon K. Nicodemus, Jr., USN.

<sup>‡</sup> Lieutenant Lando W. Zech, Jr., USN.

<sup>§</sup> Lieutenant (junior grade) Perry W. Taylor, Jr., USN.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Lieutenant Emory H. Creasman, Jr., USN.

<sup>††</sup> This refers to the process of qualifying in submarines and thus earning his gold dolphins.

putting it off. Then, all of a sudden, you discover the year's about to end, and you start doing that notebook. I was a single man up there in New London with no real pillars of support, but I finally got around to working hard on that damned notebook.

Paul Stillwell: What were the various things that had to be completed?

Admiral Crowe: Well, there was a whole regimen of them. Every aspect of the boat had to be diagrammed, explained, etc., etc. You're familiar, I'm sure, with the qualification process. After you submit the book and the captain recommends you, then you go through a board that qualifies you in submarines. My board was headed by Miles P. Refo, who was skipper of another boat there.\* He was really mean, or at least he had a reputation of being mean. Ralph Carnahan was on his boat. It's a very trying exercise, but it was part and parcel of being a submariner. And it was extremely important, because until you actually qualified you couldn't wear dolphins, and that was the name of the game. No matter what you did in standing watches and so forth, until you qualified you weren't a real submariner.

Paul Stillwell: You had to demonstrate these various skills at all the different stations.

Admiral Crowe: Right. And when the board met, why, they'd walk through the boat, and you'd have to start a diesel engine, and you'd have to rig a compartment, and you would have to do these things. It was very comprehensive. And that was one of the beauties of the diesel submarine force. It's nice to have these nukes, but we actually knew every system on the boat, and it was simple enough that that was possible. We were fairly familiar with every casualty that could take place. Now, I couldn't really repair a diesel engine, but I knew an awful lot about diesel engines. And theoretically I could operate every piece of equipment on the ship. You had to demonstrate that to the board, and the board members were not bashful. They didn't hesitate to shoot you down, make you come back if necessary.

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\* Commander Miles P. Refo III, USN.

I remember Refo asked me a question that nobody could answer: “Where is the center of effort on a submarine?” He asked that question, and I didn’t know the answer. Everybody thinks it’s the center of gravity. Well, obviously it’s not. He wouldn’t have said center of effort if he meant center of gravity. I looked through all the stuff I could find. It never was mentioned. Well, Refo had done a PG course in shipbuilding.\* My skipper gave me a whole bunch of names to call to see if any of them knew. I went up to sub school. Nobody knew what the center of effort—what the hell he was talking about. I forget how we found it out, but we finally found it. Refo had great fun with that. He was enjoying the whole idea that he’d come up with a question that I couldn’t find an answer to.

Paul Stillwell: What was the answer?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the answer was the mental extension of the shafts and where they intersect, in the forward part of the ship. They don’t actually intersect, but if you extended the shafts, where would that point be? It’s about a third of the way back from the bow.

Paul Stillwell: How would it help you to know that?

Admiral Crowe: Not much. It was not very important, obviously. There were an awful lot of very successful submarine people out there that didn’t know what the hell it was.

Paul Stillwell: But it was an artificial concept.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. And I assume today when they throw it in the computer they probably do something with the center of effort. It certainly hadn’t come up in Submarine School. But I was walking all over the submarine base at New London trying to find out.

Paul Stillwell: So that suggests that the shafts aren’t exactly parallel.

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\* PG – postgraduate.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, they're not. No, they're not. And on different kinds of ships, of course, the center of effort is in different places. Some screws really do come in quickly, and some don't even come in at all. But that's rather rare. Usually they're canted. They're not usually exactly parallel.

Paul Stillwell: I didn't know that.

Admiral Crowe: But Refo got a big kick out of that.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember an initiation after you got your dolphins?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I do remember a little bit of one on that. I was on a pretty gentle boat. Being the only bachelor aboard, why, it was not too rigorous.

I do remember a lot of parties, though, in New London, that the bachelors had. Of course, your whole social life revolved around the boat. That was the beauty of the boat. You could come there not knowing a soul, but you had a community you were in. You were in the boat's. Anybody had a dinner, why, you were in on it, and they treated you wonderfully. And the girls you dated, they all got familiar with them, and so forth. They worried about your welfare and your quality of life, and it was a very supportive environment. I still have to this day affection for those shipmates. Three or four of those people are still around: Lando's still alive, and Ernie's, of course, alive. And Kenny Carr, who came aboard for a short time. The execs have all died. Nicodemus died.

Paul Stillwell: Carr and Zech both later headed the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, right. I retired Carr. I was CinCPac and he wanted to retire at the San Diego Recruit Center, where he'd entered the Navy. So I flew back from Hawaii and spoke at his retirement. Kenny Carr is a unique man, really. Marvelous man.

One of the reasons I went to the *Flying Fish* was that it had a reputation for being a friendly boat and a lot-of-fun boat, not too carried away with itself. And Freeland Carde was sort of overseeing this vigorous—all of us were young, all of us were young, and



Freeland was our mentor. Mrs. Carde was a Wellesley graduate. Her shtick, or whatever you want to call it, she'd sit down beside you and say, "Now tell me what you're doing. Tell me about your life."

Paul Stillwell: Most people are happy to respond.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. She's a very cultured woman, and my parents were quite enamored with Mrs. Carde. Of course, my parents were enamored with all senior officers when they got to meet them. But the families on the *Flying Fish* were just great to me, they really were.

Paul Stillwell: Did you congregate at the officers' club at the end of the day?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. We'd end up there not every day, but by the end of the week you'd go up there at least once. Then there was a happy hour. And the married officers would usually go up for an hour or two before they went home. The officers' club was big in their life too, because nobody lived in a house like they do today. They were all in Navy housing or an apartment or something, and they didn't have a lot of money. So if you wanted to really entertain, you went to the officers' club. And the whole submarine community in New London went there. On a Friday and Saturday night you'd see the whole place was there.

Paul Stillwell: And that creates so much togetherness for the whole force.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, yes.

Paul Stillwell: Was that an opportunity to make contacts with people in other boats?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, very much so. I remember I had a friend, Kurt Dorenkamp, who's still here in Washington.\* He was another bachelor, and we were having this big party at the club. But then the time came to close it, and the duty officer always had trouble with

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\* Ensign Kurt F. Dorenkamp, USN.

people going out. Nobody wanted to go. I can remember we were being ushered out of this crowd at the front door of the club, they were pushing us out, and all of a sudden the lights went off and this voice said, “Everybody out to my house.” Well, it was Dorenkamp. But the voice didn’t identify itself and never said where “my house” is. Then the light would come on and somebody would say, “Who said that? Who said that?” And nobody would answer. The lights would go off and Dorenkamp would holler, “Everybody out to my house.” They never tagged him with it, but that was typical of it.

I actually had a friend, not that I served with but in the BOQ—I made a lot of friends at the BOQ on other boats—he was out of the fleet, an ex-enlisted man. And he’d seen a lot more of life than the rest of us. His name was Joe—I forget his last name. He was a pretty rough customer, but he wanted a date with a girl at Connecticut College. He thought that would be really nice. Well, I made the mistake of getting him a date with a girl at Conn College. It started a big adventure that night.

I brought these two girls over, and Joe was with us. Well, Joe did a lot of drinking and got drunk. It was time for the girls to go home, and they weren’t very enamored with Joe to begin with. I said, “Joe, stay right here. I’ll take the girls back.” And took them over to Conn College. Then I came back, and the club was closed. I went up there and my friend Joe wasn’t anywhere. Then I went back to the BOQ, and Joe wasn’t there either. I had no idea what had happened to Joe.

Well, what happened to Joe was a tale in itself. He was pretty drunk, so when the duty officer closed the place up he dragged Joe out to the front step of the officers’ club and put him down there and then drove down to the BOQ and told somebody there’s one of the bachelor officers on the steps of the club; go get him. Well, by the time they got there Joe was gone. And what had happened is, two couples that had had dinner and were at the club for the evening came out and saw Joe sitting there. One came ahead of the other couple. He and his wife were in a good mood. They picked up Joe and put him in the back seat of the other couple’s car. Then they went home.

Paul Stillwell: As a joke?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Then the other couple came out, got in the car, and didn't even see Joe. Went out to Navy housing, parked, went in and went to bed. Joe's in the back seat of their car. Anyway, by then I had given up and I went to bed. Joe woke up about 5:30-6:00 in the morning, looked around this car, and wondered where in the hell he was. I guess he recognized Navy housing, but he didn't know anybody in Navy housing. He was in this strange place, but he didn't know why he was there. These people had left the keys in the car. So Joe drove the car back to the BOQ, and the plot gets worse.

Paul Stillwell: He didn't know whose car it is.

Admiral Crowe: No, he didn't. He woke me up and he told me this story, and I said, "God, Joe. You've stolen a car. Do you know where you were?"

He said, "Yeah, I do."

I said, "Well, drive the car back there and give me a call. Someone will come and get you, but get the car back."

He drove the car back and started knocking on doors. And they said, yeah, it's our car. And he told them the story. They got very suspicious and went and called the couple that they had had dinner with, and the guy confessed that he'd put Joe in there. He stayed and had breakfast with this couple, and then they drove him back to the BOQ. Isn't that some story?

Paul Stillwell: Yes, indeed.

Admiral Crowe: And that's the last date I ever got Joe.

Paul Stillwell: I'll bet.

Admiral Crowe: That's a true story. That's the kind of thing that happened in New London.

Paul Stillwell: The spirit of camaraderie.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I became very close to the people in the BOQ.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about Lando Zech as a shipmate?

Admiral Crowe: He was a very fine shipmate. In fact, he was a very admirable guy. He can be very serious at times. He was a natural athlete. But he was just wonderful to be with. He got married while I was with him, and he and I became close. Then when we ran aground, which I'll tell you later, he got caught, and I became very close to Lando then. But he was two years ahead of me. He was a classmate of Ernie's, captain of the baseball team at the Naval Academy. He played basketball as well. Could drive a golf ball 300 yards. He wasn't that big or heavy, but his timing was marvelous, and he had big wrists. He had been in surface ships during the war. Came in the submarine force after the war. And he was very serious about his business.

Now, I mention all this, but he was nice to be with. He later became a flag officer, and evidently not a very friendly flag officer, from what I'm told. He was very hard to work with and was quite taken with his rank. When I heard that, I was very surprised at it, because it was not the same Lando I knew. I've seen him over the years, but I understand he's real sick now.

Paul Stillwell: I hadn't heard that.

Admiral Crowe: He's got some kind of disease that has bent him over. He was one of four brothers in the family, and then I think he had four girls after he married Jo. But I really liked Lando. Lando was a very dependable and reliable guy. But got in trouble with this grounding we had.

We'd better cut it off there, and we'll talk about that next time, because that brought Lando's time in the *Flying Fish* to an ending. But the environment on the boat was never the same after that, after we ran aground. And most of the people I've mentioned were gone by then or something else. But it was a wonderful way to be introduced into the submarine Navy, with that group of people.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I'll look forward to that the next time. (End of Interview 4)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, it's a pleasure to see you on this beautiful early fall day.

Admiral Crowe: Isn't it nice?

Paul Stillwell: It certainly is. And we've got the doors and windows open to let the breezes come in. When we cut off last time you were talking about your experience on board *Flying Fish*. You had qualified for your dolphins, and you alluded a couple times to the grounding but didn't discuss that. What was involved in that, please?

Admiral Crowe: We were due to go to Norfolk, to operate out of Norfolk for a week. We started a little late and were to be ready to go on Monday morning. We ran the whole track down there on what we would call three engines on the line, 80-90, which gave us a pretty good speed, about 21 knots. But we were at 21 knots all night long. It wasn't rough weather, but it was overcast weather and rain and some wind. We hugged the coast all the way down. I was the engineer on the ship. Lando Zech was the navigator. Jay Whitacre was the skipper.\* And we had an exec, Charlie Duvall, who was a Harvard graduate.

About midnight the navigator changed the course two or three degrees toward land; I think it was because of a loran fix or something like that. It had us south farther than we thought we were. Of course, there's a line of buoys clear down the United States coast, close in, but we were outside those buoys. But that change of course around midnight threw us in pretty close just before we entered the channel going into Norfolk.

I had the watch from midnight till 4:00 o'clock in the morning. The whole time I had the watch we didn't see stars, but we had what looked like on the radar like weather ahead of us. I was told this; I didn't have radar on the bridge, but the navigator was in the conning tower the whole time. But what was looking like weather was Hog Island, a low-lying island right off the coast just before you enter the Norfolk channel.

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\* Lieutenant Commander John A. Whitacre, USN, commanded from 4 March 1950 to 22 December 1950.

Just before I left the watch we picked up a light, which was ticketed as a ship, and the radar was tracking it. But there were enough waves and so forth that the radar contact was intermittent. We could see the light, but we didn't see any running lights. All we saw was a light.

I got relieved at 4:00 o'clock by Emory Creasman, who was a lieutenant on the ship. Pretty senior. He'd been in submarines quite a while. I went below. The light we saw was a buoy, which we passed at about 4,000 yards, something like that, and never really identified it as a buoy. They thought it was a small boat of some kind.

Paul Stillwell: Were there any lighthouses in the vicinity?

Admiral Crowe: No. I had been off watch 20-25 minutes, so I think it was about 4:25. I was the engineer, and I went down below and walked back through the engineering spaces, because we'd been running at high speed all day, all night. Went up and went to my bunk and lay down. I'd no more than lay down than I began to hear the strangest sound. Well, it was sand near the bottom of the ship, but I didn't know that. All I knew was it was unusual. I got out of my bunk and went in the forward torpedo room, and the torpedoman was tearing up the deck plates up there because he heard the same sound. And about then we got an order: All back full, all back emergency. A lookout had reported breakers. We were going right into Hog Island, straight in.

I don't quite know what Emory did. There was more than one person on the bridge. Creasman was the OOD. Randy Zelov was not qualified in submarines and was standing junior officer of the watch.\* Lando was in the conning tower. I think Emory then stood up on the step and he saw breakers, and ordered all back emergency. We were doing a good 21 knots.

The ship ran aground. It was never fast aground. In fact, I'll tell you about it in a minute, but the surf would—we'd hit the bottom and BANG. Then we'd come off the bottom, and BANG. By then the screws had taken hold, and we backed off. Before backing he'd also thrown the rudder over, so confused where we were a little bit. I went out on the deck, and we could smell fuel oil. We'd got fuel in some of our ballast tanks,

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\* Ensign Randolph D. Zelov, USN.

and it obviously jarred loose the hatch at the bottom of the tank and then let some fuel oil go. And we had run aground.

We returned the ship to the original course and backed out. We didn't have any more trouble, except we had obviously run aground. After that we fiddled for a few minutes to clear the island and determine where we were. We finally then identified the island not as clouds and weather but as an island, and it was Hog Island. We got a pretty good grasp of where we were, and that we had passed a sea buoy. We went out beyond the buoy and then continued our trip to Norfolk. Of course, the skipper's concern was whether we had damaged the ship in any way. He had no way of telling, and he didn't want to dive the ship until we got a better handle on it.

He reported to the commodore in Norfolk immediately. Asked the crew on the IMC to not tell anybody what had happened till he had reported.\* But as I was walking down the dock I heard a guy on a pay telephone telling his wife we had run aground. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Had there been any warnings from the Fathometer?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we'd been on the same depth the whole damned time. We were in pretty close, and we were on the Fathometer constantly, but it wasn't till the last minute the Fathometer began to register really shoaling fast. Right outside the buoys it was showing, I don't know, 20, 30 feet, something like that, below the keel.

In any event, then a whole string of circumstances occurred. We cancelled the operation. Turned around and went to New London. Put the ship in dry dock. A board of investigation was convened immediately. The skipper, the exec, the navigator, Creasman, and myself were all declared interested parties. I think I have that straight.

Paul Stillwell: That would be a logical cohort.

Admiral Crowe: It's the kind of thing that you never really forget. And it was a little while convening this thing—one or two weeks. There were no lawyers in New London to speak of, but the one they had was assigned to the captain, and I think he also hired an

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\* IMC – the boat's general announcing system.

independent counsel, a civilian lawyer. But all the other interested parties were assigned counsels who were not lawyers. I had been through one legal proceeding even earlier in the Navy, when we chipped a screw at Johnston Island. But this seemed like more serious business.

Then they convened a court. I don't remember who headed the court, but they were all skippers of submarines at one time. And the court appointed a navigator. He was the guy that was to determine whether we ran aground or not. And they got the meanest man in the Navy, a fellow by the name of Don Baer.\*

Paul Stillwell: Pinky Baer.

Admiral Crowe: Pinky Baer. We thought at the time, my God, that's a terrible choice. As it turned out, his reputation as a mean man helped us out, because if anybody had found us going aground he could, but he couldn't find anything. Anyway, he was to determine the position of the ship and where we ran aground, and if we ran aground, etc., etc. As part of that he inspected the hull in dry dock.

That event destroyed a very good ship. The crew's morale just went zooming down to zero. It was my first experience with everybody in the submarine Navy telling us what we'd done wrong and how incompetent we were. We got very little sympathy out of anybody as far as I could see.

Paul Stillwell: What did the physical inspection of the hull show?

Admiral Crowe: Nothing. And I say, that's where Baer's reputation helped out. He couldn't find a damned thing on the hull. He couldn't even find scratches.

Curiously enough, the division commander was McClintock, who had run a submarine aground at 24 knots, the *Darter*, in World War II.†

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\* Commander Donald G. Baer, USN.

† Commander David H. McClintock, USN. During the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the submarine *Darter* (SS-227) torpedoed and damaged the Japanese cruiser *Takao*. The *Darter* and her sister ship *Dace* (SS-247) pursued the crippled cruiser through the channels of Palawan Passage in the Philippines. Just after midnight on 24 October 1944 the *Darter* grounded on Bombay Shoal. Efforts to free her were unsuccessful, so the crew evacuated to the *Dace* and rode safely to Australia.



Paul Stillwell: Bombay Shoal.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I actually flew over that wreck over there a couple of times. It's still there. In any event, they convened the investigation. Well, McClintock was very sympathetic to our cause. And McClintock immediately advised everybody to get the best legal advice they could put forward and told the skipper to take it very seriously. My memory, of course, concerns myself. I finally got around to testifying before the court of inquiry. I was an interested party, and before I got through testifying I had become a defendant. [Chuckle] I was rapidly ascending the ladder of whatever here; it seemed it wasn't good.

Paul Stillwell: What were the grounds for declaring you a defendant?

Admiral Crowe: Well, whether we had not noticed something during the 12:00-to-4:00 watch that should have indicated what was going on, I think. My assigned counsel was a guy by the name of Walt Esworthy.\* He was a lieutenant commander who was an instructor at the Submarine School, and who had also had command of a submarine. But he wasn't a very good lawyer. I remember I wrote the statement. Walter couldn't write that well. I had to submit a statement, and then I had to testify. But I became a defendant.

I can't remember the specifics, but just a general feeling that when we passed that buoy I should have identified it as a buoy instead of a small boat. But the radar had actually had a course and speed on it, even though it was a buoy. And we couldn't see much from the bridge. Of course, the officer of the deck on a submarine is really captive when something's going wrong, because there's not much, at least on the submarines of that day, there wasn't much technology on the bridge, and you depended solely on what they were telling you from the charts and so forth in the conning tower.

Paul Stillwell: Had they been plotting the position of that contact?

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\* Lieutenant Commander Walter H. Esworthy, Jr., USN.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. They plotted us all the way down, and when they picked up that buoy, as I said, they got a course and speed on it and determined we weren't going to collide with it. But the visibility wasn't very good. It was about 5,000 yards, something like that. And we didn't see breakers on my watch. In fact, when I left the bridge we were in clear water, but we were eating it up pretty fast. There were two lines of buoys, actually. We were in the outer line. But the inner line, nobody ever saw it. We passed the outer line of buoys. And they're very infrequent. They're not close together. But the navigator just had us in a position that was really out of position. We were in about five, six, seven miles closer than we thought we were. And his chart was right down the coast there, right toward the opening of the channel. You'd normally go down and turn the corner, and we cut the corner off because we were late. And we just were closer in to the beach than we thought we were.

Paul Stillwell: Did all the interested parties become defendants?

Admiral Crowe: No. The captain did, the navigator did, Creasman did, and I did.

Paul Stillwell: Not the exec.

Admiral Crowe: No. The exec was an interested party, but he really didn't have—if they were going to get the exec they'd have had to strain, that he'd written some guideline wrong or something like that. He really didn't participate. When he got in the act was that he became the navigator real quickly and figured out where we actually were, and backed us out of there.

Now, how long all that took. I remember Baer testified and found no physical evidence that we had gone aground. The court of inquiry concluded that they couldn't determine that we had gone aground, but they could determine that we had hazarded the ship, because we didn't know where we were. They awarded general courts-martial to the skipper, to Zech, and to Creasman, and somewhere along the line I dropped off.

While we were waiting for that finding, I became very friendly with Lando Zech and his wife. He was newly married, and I was single, and we didn't have anything to do. We weren't on the ship. We were sitting in the BOQ. And I used to go out and have breakfast with them every morning and commiserate for a couple of hours, and [chuckle] we became very close, comrades in misery there.

Now, some really interesting things continued to happen after that. Then we had three general courts-martial. I'm trying to remember the sequence of the courts-martial, and I'll be damned—I don't think I can. Whether the skipper went first or the other two. I think the skipper went first. He was found guilty of hazarding the ship, and lost so many numbers, I forget.\* Wasn't anything else. And he was relieved of command. Now, I testified at each of these, but I wasn't in there for the trial.

Lando was found guilty of hazarding the ship, but he was only given 15 numbers, or something like that, a terribly small number of loss of rank. And very few really nasty comments about his performance. I'm going to tell you some more now, in a minute. He made a huge hit on his court for some reason or other. I don't exactly know what happened. I didn't see him testify.

Then Emory was found guilty, and they hammered him pretty good. There was a Fathometer reading that came up on Emory, and he had acknowledged it and ignored it.

Now, a couple of problems. The only guy that witnessed the whole thing was the junior officer of the deck for Emory. He wasn't there on my watch, but Emory's watch. So they didn't make anything out of him because they wanted him to testify. He was the only guy that was free to testify that had been involved in it. They also had three lookouts, and one of the lookouts was the one that saw breakers. Hah. Then they had a whole raft of people that had heard the ship bump, and so forth and so forth. So then the problem became: How do you not tell a lie in the testimony but not help the goddamn prosecutor if you can avoid it.

Paul Stillwell: Who was the prosecutor?

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\* This refers to numbers on the lineal list of officers. Losing numbers means being demoted and can hurt chances for further promotion.

Admiral Crowe: That's a very good question. I don't remember. It was the same prosecutor in all three trials, and by the time he left he was goofy. He was so mad, because he knew there were a whole bunch of people that knew that ship ran aground, and not a one of them would say that.

First of all, the lookouts just said, "I don't remember." They were seamen; maybe one was a third class or something. And essentially they said: "If you don't believe it, stick it in your ear; I don't remember nothing." They just didn't remember anything.

Well, the officers had more problems than that. I didn't have a problem with what happened on the bridge, but I had heard the ship bump. I knew we'd run aground. And so my testimony was a work of art. [Chuckle] I really labored over it. I said that I had arisen from my bunk, I had heard all this commotion, and when I rushed in the control room the screws were backing emergency and everybody was hollering, and so forth, and so forth. And the ship was in the process of backing emergency, the ship was racking itself. And aside from that I didn't have a hell of a lot to say. But I never said the ship was bumping. They didn't really ask me. I just fuzzed it up. But I didn't say I didn't remember. I said, well, hell, yes, I remembered the hell out of it. I'd just been on watch and I was still awake. I didn't hide that fact.

I don't know what Lando said. First of all, they felt they had to find him guilty. But they didn't penalize him very much. And he so impressed the court that one of the guys on the court was going out to take command of a submarine on the West Coast and said he'd be happy to have Lando Zech work for him.

Paul Stillwell: Pretty good endorsement.

Admiral Crowe: And Lando went out and worked for him. That was an interesting recommendation. [Chuckle]. And Lando did very well on that ship. I never served with Lando again after that. I never had an opportunity to.

Paul Stillwell: And it didn't harm his career.\*

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\* Zech eventually became a vice admiral.

Admiral Crowe: It sure didn't. But there was little sympathy for Emory. I'm not quite sure why, but there just wasn't any, either on the ship or off the ship. And nobody said we were going aground. Emory left the Navy and I think left submarines. He was not much older, but a little bit older than the junior officers aboard.

My friend Ernie Barrett, who was the gunnery officer on the ship, was on leave. He wasn't aboard that night. I was not found guilty of anything and went right back to the ship for duty, and was still the engineer of the ship.

What else was it? It was sort of the talk of the submarine force, that how could we go aground and not mark the hull? Nobody understood that. Incidentally, the chart showed it as rocky.

Paul Stillwell: Interesting. And no damage to the sonar dome?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we didn't have sonar domes. We had a retractable sonar and a Fathometer, and they were up. We didn't have very good sonar, either. Our sonar mainly was on the upper deck, because it was an old ship. It wasn't a new ship.

We thought some careers might be hurt. The captain, of course, got relieved. The general thinking on the ship was that Lando just plain bloody made a mistake. And I don't think Lando ever would have said otherwise. He was his own worst critic. He realized he had made a big mistake, and he never pretended otherwise. I never heard Lando say a word that shifted the blame or attempted to. But he just had the kind of personality and so forth that people liked Lando. Then, they also could blame Creasman as being the actual guy that hit whatever we hit.

The court found some things in the captain's night orders that were sort of ambiguous. You know how the captain always gets it one way or another. And that maybe he should occasionally have been up while we were on soundings. And he didn't get up. I think the bumping woke him up. But, of course, he didn't have to testify. He never did testify. I don't know if Creasman testified in his court. I think Lando must have, because he made such an impression on that court of inquiry.

Okay. Then we had a completely new crew, so to speak. And an egomaniac by the name of Bob Black came aboard.\* I shouldn't call him that, I guess, because Bob Black did not hurt me. He had some things to say about the ship running aground, but he never said to me, "Well, you sure got off with something you shouldn't have," and he didn't talk much about the grounding. But he was an egomaniac in that he was constantly worried about his promotion and so forth, and that he had to take control now to square away the ship. And he was right, that the morale wasn't the best in the world on the ship. But Bob Black didn't improve it a bit.

Paul Stillwell: What was the submarine herself doing while all these legal proceedings were going on?

Admiral Crowe: They went and continued to operate, and they brought in, I think, the division commander to act as the commanding officer.

Paul Stillwell: I've got a name of Henry Reaves.† Was he the temporary skipper?

Admiral Crowe: That may be right. Reaves was a sub school instructor of mine. Hank Reaves. I think that may be right, that he sort of took it out a few days. Then I went back to the ship, and so did Charlie Duvall. Lando got transferred. Creasman and the skipper got transferred.

The skipper got a letter from his mother in the middle of all this. Hah! He was from Nebraska. And [laughter] his mother said, "I'm sure the Navy won't hold it against you since it happened at night." Mothers are a wonderful institution.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Even the skipper thought that was funny.

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\* Lieutenant Commander Robert G. Black, USN, commanded the *Flying Fish* from 18 January 1951 to 6 February 1952.

† Commander Henry G. Reaves, Jr., USN, commanded the *Flying Fish* from 22 December 1950 to 18 January 1951.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have these moments where you thought about what might have happened if you had been on watch from 4:00 to 8:00?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. Oh, of course. There but for the grace of God. All through the world you go through with—timing is everything.

Paul Stillwell: But maybe you would have been able to prevent it.

Admiral Crowe: Well, perhaps. I've been mixed up in several questions like that. Would you have done it differently or not? I don't know. The OOD, I repeat, the OOD of those old submarines was really at the mercy of the gods when he was on the bridge. If he didn't get good help from the conning tower, he was dead. And when you're in close to the beach like that—but I got all kinds of reports. I remember we tracked that goddamn island for a long time, and continually—even Lando told me it looked like heavy rain clouds ahead of us. And there were heavy rain clouds ahead of us. The trouble was, we weren't getting them on the radar; we were getting an island.

And also the what-ifs were: Why in the hell did he report it? If there was no damage in anything, what if the skipper had just taken the chance and never reported going aground and went right on? Well, that never even occurred to the skipper. And I don't think it should have, but it didn't. He never hesitated to call right away and say what he'd done, and that he did not like to hazard this ship further until he checked it, and have it checked, and so forth and so forth. The skipper played it straight up. And he never blamed a lot of other people. I never heard him strike out at people. But it ended a career, which was very unfortunate.

He was a very nice guy. He wasn't an extrovert, but he was a very nice man, and it sort of crushed him. I can understand why.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you've got to admire him, because he had to be concerned about the safety of the ship.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did, and he was. It's just one of those things. What is it they say? The Navy's a stern mistress. And in things like that it is. Where I really felt badly about the skipper was what other people were saying. Most of them didn't know a damned thing about the details or anything else. We probably made a mistake in—okay, we were late, but why not take the normal route, not cut the corner, and, okay, be late. So what? Take the static that goes with being late. And, of course, that was easy to say afterwards, because we didn't know where we were. That was the big problem.

And the navigational devices on the ship were not that good. We were using loran, really. That's what ran us aground. He had a false loran reading—they tracked that down—that put us six miles from where we really were. He believed the reading, and that's what did us in.

Paul Stillwell: That's what influenced Zech's course change.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. We went all night long, and he did not know where we actually were. Today you can go on that little gadget there and know within six feet of where you are. I always admired that about navigation.

I always felt that there was a cloud on my career. But when Black came aboard, and then Duvall left, I was about the only continuity in the wardroom. And I think Black knew that. I'd had engineer, torpedo officer. I had not been operations or navigator. I had actually been that on a destroyer before I got there.

But Black never hurt me. I don't think he catapulted [chuckle] my career forward very much. I don't think it was in his nature. He was always worried about his major command, and this and that. He had a lovely wife. That used to worry me some. All the mean men I knew in the Navy had lovely wives. And when I made admiral I thought, oh, God, I know I've got a lovely wife, so I must be a mean. [Laughter]

But then I went from there. Admiral Murray was looking for an aide, and I went from that job to aide to SubLant.

Paul Stillwell: In what way did you perceive that there was a cloud on your career?



Admiral Crowe: I think it was sort of in my imagination. Well, the *Flying Fish* had a reputation of being the ship that ran aground. And that was sort of interesting to participate in all that, because everybody takes a shot at you. They're a cruel lot. The professionals I remember—Admiral Fife. I don't know why he got in it, but he testified at one point. And he was a very, very successful World War II submariner. I forget what he said, but it wasn't very helpful. It wasn't very sympathetic. You know, that whole crowd of successful submarine skippers had to have some ego to even do the thing. And they were all self-acknowledged experts on all submarining. So we were fighting that.

Now, Whitacre was one of those guys that had never had a wartime command. Even Carde, the previous skipper, had not had a wartime command. Those crowds were just coming in. And, of course, the whole World War II crowd looked down on those guys. They'd never fired a torpedo in anger, and blah, blah, blah, blah. Most of them were out drinking somewhere. We had a whole bunch of alcoholics up there from World War II.

Paul Stillwell: Did people tease you, or bring this up in conversations?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, some would. But after I didn't get hit, as my role as defendant disappeared [chuckle], well then I became rather thick-skinned about it. I didn't pay too much attention. I would have preferred not to be involved in it, but I was.

Now, this is sort of shameless, but I always felt that the best defense that was made for me was what I wrote myself. Esworthy was useless. He was sort of intimidated by the whole process and didn't understand, and wasn't very good with the written word. So I felt one of the main reasons I didn't get scooped up was my own ability to deal with the problem.

Paul Stillwell: And your artful testimony.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. And my artful testimony [Laughter]. I had to testify three times, and we always discussed—oh, God, pretty soon that guy's going to break us down, the counsel is. Oh, he was upset. But the enlisted men had the best. They just didn't say

nothing. And they couldn't get them to say anything. And Randy Zelov, who they had purposely left out of everything so he would say something, just said: "I was new on the bridge and I didn't even realize what was going on." [Laughter] And everybody knew that everybody was being artful. It makes the job of prosecutor pretty tough.

Paul Stillwell: Especially without any physical evidence.

Admiral Crowe: It was also a sign of the morale on the ship, though, before it was destroyed. Nobody wanted anybody to get caught, and they were willing to not say. [Chuckle] And he tried to get everybody to say the ship ran aground. He just couldn't get it.

Paul Stillwell: How was Commander Black as an operator, once you got out and going again?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I thought he was a little nervous. Of course, I guess taking over a ship's that gone aground you'd get nervous. [Laughter]. It's interesting. I had two or three skippers in the Navy that I didn't think were—one on the *Carmick*, and both Carde and—Carde was a very nice man. Black wasn't. But even Carde was not an aggressive operator. He did too much thinking about it sometimes. And Black was very worried about his own career.

That's a big deal in the submarine force. And where the rubber meets the road is not in things like a grounding, but in letting the junior officer land the ship. How much you butt in or don't butt in. Or to fire a torpedo with an onrushing target, how much you butt in or don't butt in. That's hard. And yet, first of all, it was part of the history and the tradition of the submarine force that you do that sort of thing. Not all the skippers honored it.

It always annoyed me when I was a division commander and so forth, everybody kept score, for example, on torpedoes fired and torpedoes hit, and so forth and so forth. But that wasn't the real question. I mean, the question wasn't who hit with the torpedoes the most. The question was, who let the junior officers do it and didn't butt in, and were truly training junior officers? And sometimes that was hard to decode, to really say, well, Ship A, that guy really lets his junior officers do things, and he

takes some risks. Because really in peacetime the commanding officer's job was not to be ready to go out and sink the other guy's navy. His main job was to train junior officers to be good submariners. Because one of them some day is going to have to go out and do it. Some skippers were not capable of doing that. Some guys were very good operators and so forth, but they couldn't let go and leave it up to some kid, you know, 22 years old that had never done it before. And that's very hard.

(Interruption for change of tape)

—that they even promoted that idea and that they really did do it in some respects. And I don't think there was any other part of the Navy where junior officers got their hands on doing it as there was in the submarine force.

Paul Stillwell: Well, obviously, aviators get hands-on in doing things.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, in single aircraft.

Paul Stillwell: What was the mission of *Flying Fish* during that time? I have read that there were some mine exercises at Norfolk during that time. And also that she was reclassified as an auxiliary to do experimental sonar work.\*

Admiral Crowe: I don't recall the mine exercise. I don't recall what that would be. But I was aboard when she was reclassified. They put an experimental sonar on. They put a huge dome around the conning tower and the deck, which was the forerunner of the sonar arrays we have today. The first time we'd actually had multi-whatever bars and sonars. It destroyed the maneuverability of our ship as a real warship. But we took it out and tested it many times. We also went out and tested a couple of devices that used oxygen/hydrogen instead of diesel fuel oil. Not main propulsion, but a couple of gadgets that were proving an aspect of that. And diving the ship was pretty tricky once we had that big sonar array aboard.

Paul Stillwell: In what ways?

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\* The *Flying Fish* was reclassified AGSS-229, an auxiliary submarine, on 29 November 1950.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was just awkward, clumsy. Because this thing was huge. This was, oh, about 25 feet in diameter, and it was about seven or eight feet tall. And it encircled the bridge and the conning tower. We were very ugly. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: You probably had to do some experimentation to see how the ship handled.

Admiral Crowe: We did, yes. And we used to sit on the bottom a lot with it. That was the first time I purposely went down and sat on the bottom. [Chuckle] We used to do that. We'd sit on the bottom and everybody would turn in except the watch. And the scientists would work with the sonar—pre-arranged targets, and so forth and so forth. We weren't involved directly in that. We took out scientists all the time. I met an interesting group of people in that business.

Paul Stillwell: Anything that you recall, as far as the scientists?

Admiral Crowe: No, not really.

Paul Stillwell: Was it both active and passive?

Admiral Crowe: It was mainly passive. And, of course, in that day we really weren't into the passive business. We had gone into the active business. In World War II you weren't in any business; you just tried to get away. But we had actually gone into the active business: Fight when you were submerged and using active sonar. But clearly that gives away that you're there, so it didn't have long-range merit. And that's when they went so heavily to try and do something about the passive.

The trouble with the passive was ranging. They just couldn't range passively. They tried a bunch of stuff that gave them rough calculations, but they just didn't solve the problem while I was around.

Paul Stillwell: Well, when you talk about sitting on the bottom, was this in any way related to the development of SOSUS?\*

Admiral Crowe: Ah, I don't know that. That's interesting. It might have been. Because it was early. It very well might have been.

Paul Stillwell: It's a logical leap, because if you're going to have a passive thing sitting on the bottom, this may have been related.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And the SOSUS arrays that we ultimately developed obviously had some relationship to spring from what we were starting to train with, or experiment with.

We went up to Philadelphia to do that. That's the first time I'd ever been to Philadelphia. And to make the passage up the Chesapeake to Philadelphia was quite an interesting event.

Paul Stillwell: On the Delaware River.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. We ran it several times, every time I crossed the bridge there. They were building the Chesapeake Bay Bridge when we were running it. I never go over it I don't think of that, because we ran under it a lot. I did several things on the *Flying Fish*. We took a trip to New York City one weekend to take out Reserves, and we went through Long Island Sound and Hell Gate, and right down the East River and alongside the highway there. That was a great—I had the deck doing that, and that was fun.

Paul Stillwell: How was the current through there?

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\* SOSUS – sound surveillance system, a seafloor network of listening devices used by the U.S. Navy to detect noises from transiting ships.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we had a pilot. And I went through Hell Gate the other day on this yacht Shirley and I were on. They claim it's still a tough thing to do, but it wasn't obvious to me that it was very tough. The day we went on the yacht, the pilot said, "Well, we'll have a little problem here; this is what the currents are, and so forth." And he knew his business. He just didn't have a problem. We went through it. But I can remember racing down the East River. There was a guy driving a car over there about 50 yards away. [Chuckle]

Then I went up to SubLant. I wondered what would happen to me then. That sort of cleared my record, the theory that he wouldn't bring a junior officer up as his aide that had no future in submarines. Now, whether the theory was valid or not [chuckle] I had no idea, but I was operating under the principle it was. I was single, and I didn't have to move. I was in New London. I went up and got interviewed by the admiral. He had been the commandant of midshipmen when I was a midshipman. I didn't know him then, but I'd seen him several times. And he had Oklahoma roots. We were both from Oklahoma, interestingly enough. He was about 6-4 or 6-5. Sunshine Murray, a big, tall guy.\* And the nicest man in the entire world. I worked for two guys in that job. I think I was the aide for 17 months, something like that. I had eight or nine months with Murray, and eight months with "Turkey Neck" Crawford, the meanest son of a bitch in the Navy.

Paul Stillwell: Is there anything else to remember about *Flying Fish* before you get there?

Admiral Crowe: No. When we were in New London we went through the Cape Cod Canal several times. And went up to Boston for Fourth of July. I called my mother at home and said, "I'm going up to Boston for the Fourth of July." And she said, "Well, people will think we're crazy, but I'm glad you're going up there on a submarine instead of driving a car." [Laughter]

When I was on *Flying Fish* one Memorial Day—I was on there with a friend by the name of Tom Cuddy.† He was in the second group. He came aboard *Flying Fish*

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\* Rear Admiral Stuart S. Murray, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 1 June 1950 to 6 November 1952. The oral history of Murray, who retired as a four-star admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

† Lieutenant (junior grade) Thomas W. Cuddy, USN.

after we'd had all our trouble. He was from Massachusetts, and he and I went up to Boston on Memorial Day and watched the Red Sox play the Yankees in a double header. And the first game was 16 innings long. And Ted Williams won both games with a hit. What a great day that was. And Boston booed him. I thought, "What the hell's wrong with these idiots?" Greatest player in the game and they boo him! [Laughter] He didn't give the fans very much. He might give them the finger occasionally or something like that, and they didn't like it. And that's, I say, my first exposure to Boston, which didn't impress me very much.

Paul Stillwell: Did your chain of command change any when the *Flying Fish* went into that experimental role?

Admiral Crowe: No, we didn't. We were sort of handed off to some other outfit, but we stayed in the squadron. I don't remember what our official formal chain was, operationally.

Paul Stillwell: But did you still do some of the normal submarine things, like firing torpedoes?

Admiral Crowe: Not much, no, after we started doing that. And that was near the end of my tour on *Flying Fish*. We went to Bermuda on the *Flying Fish* several times, and went to Puerto Rico. And that was my second visit to the Virgin Islands, because I'd been there as a midshipman. We went through our own training down at Guantánamo, and weren't there very long. But we brought back a load of whiskey, I remember, that nobody was supposed to know about. And we about fainted when we had that whiskey aboard and Admiral Fife came aboard and rode the day, with all that whiskey.\* [Chuckle] And we were scared to death he was going to find out about it.

Paul Stillwell: Where was it hidden?

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\* Rear Admiral James Fife, Jr., USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 15 April 1947 to 1 June 1950. The oral history of Fife, who retired as a four-star admiral, is in the Columbia University collection.

Admiral Crowe: In the food lockers and below decks, the ammunition locker. The *Flying Fish* finished the war with two 5-inch guns on it. It was one of the submarines that were particularly configured at the end of the war to attack small Japanese fishing boats. They were running out of targets.

Paul Stillwell: They made a run into the Sea of Japan.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, but this was mainly an in-close thing. There just weren't any targets. So they said, well, the people that are giving us fits are all these small fishing sampans. And they took several submarines and put deck guns on them. The *Flying Fish* had two. Then while I was aboard they took the second gun off, and then when we put this big sonar array on.

The *Flying Fish* had a very distinguished record in World War II, particularly under Donaho. And we had a couple of men aboard that had been in the *Flying Fish* during World War II. We didn't have any officers, but we had some enlisted. We had a man aboard by the name of Riddle, who had been sunk on the *Sculpin*.

Paul Stillwell: She was sunk in a surface action.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, she was. Yes. Well, it wasn't by choice, the surface action [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Right.

Admiral Crowe: They were damaged and had to surface, and then the Japanese immediately riddled it. And this guy was picked up and spent the rest of the war in

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\* On 16 November 1943 the submarine *Sculpin* (SS-191) attempted to attack a Japanese convoy but was discovered, depth-charged, and badly damaged. Her commanding officer, Commander Fred Connaway, USN, surfaced the boat and attempted to fight the enemy. He and other members of the bridge team were killed by gunfire. The senior surviving officer ordered the boat scuttled, and a number of the crew members were recovered by the Japanese and became prisoners of war. Captain John P. Cromwell, USN, on board as wolf pack commander, voluntarily stayed on board and died rather than face the potential of revealing classified information. He was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor.



Japanese prison camp. We had guys with unusual stories on that boat. We had a man—I guess he was a gunner's mate; I'm not sure—by the name of McDonald, who had been a sergeant in the Army during World War II, in armor. He drove a tank across Remagen Bridge.\* I think he was the third guy across, something like that. But he was a tank commander as a sergeant in World War II. Then he stayed on in Europe in the Army occupation. He had some wild stories about that, because of all the money and the black market equipment. And then he got out of the Army and joined the Navy and became a petty officer. Very competent guy. We had some competent people on *Flying Fish*, some really great enlisted people.

Had a chief of the boat who had been an officer during the war and went back to chief to fill out his time. That was not unusual. We had several of those around the submarine force. And, of course, they knew more than the junior officers did, all of us. His name was Kunick—I knew in talking to him he knew more about that damned boat than I ever knew. But he was an awful nice guy. Then we had another chief, same situation. But there were a lot of sea stories on the *Flying Fish*.

Paul Stillwell: Did you fire the deck guns at all before they were taken off?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did.

Paul Stillwell: Was that part of the training at Guantánamo?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Mm-hmm. When we did fire them it was always a goat drill. Ooh-whee! It was all done by hand. [Chuckle] There wasn't any targeting. You went up there and the officer said, "Up three," and you let it go. [Chuckle] And the ammunition all had to be hand-lifted up. We always dreaded it when we had to fire those things.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else you remember about the yard period at Philadelphia?

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\* The Allied capture on 7-8 March 1945 of the railroad bridge across the Rhine at Remagen, Germany, was a key milestone in the campaign against that nation. Germany surrendered two months later.

Admiral Crowe: I remember a couple of nightclubs in Philadelphia. But on the *Flying Fish* we went through a major reconfiguration of the sonar thing at Philadelphia. And I was trying to think if I went through an overhaul. I didn't go through an overhaul of the *Flying Fish*. But we had a sort of midterm thing that was an abbreviated overhaul, but it was done in New London right alongside the dock. I don't think I took *Flying Fish* into a yard, except Philadelphia.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else to wrap up this submarine?

Admiral Crowe: The main thing I got out of it was that *Flying Fish* was my introduction to submarines. But there was great merit in being on a World War II submarine. Occasionally you could just stand back and look at that boat and say, "That boat's been places; that boat's done things." I think it made 14 patrols in the war or something like that. And it's an amazing ship that could do that. Now, it didn't go real deep. I think we were limited to 312 feet. I think it was a thin-skinned, and it always amazed me that that ship had done what it had done.

Paul Stillwell: Did it satisfy the desire you had had in getting out of the surface Navy and into submarines?

Admiral Crowe: Very much, it did. Yes. It was a much easier life. And, of course, it was across the road from Conn College. [Chuckle] That had a lot of merit. And I got a real affection for New London. But, like everything else, I never really went back, and I don't think I wanted to go back. Because I spent five years in New London, and it was really happy stuff. I was young and vigorous. And the senior people were all very nice, and particularly on the boat. But I made a lot of really long-time, dear friends in New London, some of whom I haven't seen for years. But, you know, they could walk in the door there and it would be like yesterday.

Paul Stillwell: Please talk about the transition to serving with Admiral Murray.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was an easy transition to make, because he was such an easy man to work with. I didn't know anything about being an admiral's aide. Had to learn rather quickly.

Paul Stillwell: What were some of the things you learned?

Admiral Crowe: He came in. I became his aide as he arrived from Hawaii. His wife was formidable. She scared me to death. The first thing you learn is you're working for both of them. You're not working for just the admiral. You're working for his wife, etc., etc.

The second thing you learn is that nobody knows what an aide's supposed to do. It's strictly up to the admiral. There's no guidebook or tactical doctrine, or nothing you can read that will tell you for sure what the admiral wants, and I think it's just a relationship that's worked out by what he wants, his personality, and so forth. I really had trouble with Turkey Neck Crawford, but working for Admiral Murray I didn't have any trouble at all.\* Of course, that was the story of Admiral Murray's life. He did not make people's life miserable. He went to great efforts not to. He was such a kind gentleman, but he was also smart as hell.

I remember—it always amazed me—submarines sent in a noon position report in that day and age, before we had nuclear<sup>†</sup>. And that's all it said, just the latitude and longitude where I am today. And the admiral would thumb that file every day, and occasionally he'd look at, say, the *Irex*'s position and he'd call me in and say, "Take this down to ops. I think if this position is correct they traveled about 600 miles yesterday." [Laughter] I'd take it down to ops, and it would be wrong. I don't know how he made that, but he remembered the *Irex* didn't report that position yesterday. He would put his finger on things like that. It was really quite amazing. Very, very bright man.

But he didn't mess with details. He was very conventional. They had an annual inspection of the base and he would be the head inspector, but he wouldn't inspect

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\* Rear Admiral George C. Crawford, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 6 November 1952 to 13 November 1954.

† With the advent of nuclear submarines, and their ability to stay submerged for long periods of time, came the SINS – ship's inertial navigation system.

anything. He'd get his deputy, a captain, and a squadron commander to go around and inspect the base and report on it, and Admiral Murray would sign off. Well, Turkey Neck went down and spent three days inspecting the base, because I think he enjoyed picking on people.

I couldn't have learned more in that job because of those two men. One taught me a lot about how to act, and the other taught you how not to do, how to alienate half the Navy. But Murray was very considerate of people. One time we were flying to Puerto Rico for a war game and spent the night in Key West. And a man named Germershausen, one of the commanders with us, went out and got drunk and ended up in the BOQ out at the air base, and missed the plane. They couldn't find him, and finally one of his friends went to Admiral Murray and said, "Well, we just can't find the commander. I suggest we go on, Admiral."

He said, "No, we'll wait for him." Sure enough, about 45 minutes late came Germershausen, and we took off. Germershausen went up to apologize to the admiral, and the admiral never got mad. He said, "Well, I would have preferred you be on time. But all right." And that was the end of it. It would never have occurred to him to leave Commander Germershausen [Chuckle]

I can remember we were getting on a plane in Norfolk. We drove up and jumped out of the car and rushed to the plane, and the admiral started up the gangway, and he stopped and said, "Didn't thank the driver." Turned around and walked clear across the runway and thanked the driver, then came back and got on the airplane. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: That's very impressive.

Admiral Crowe: Hah! He did that all the time. That's the way he was. Now, his wife wasn't. His wife was a, boy, she could be a bearcat. I've got a wonderful story. We had a Brazilian come through—the Minister of Defense of Brazil, I think he was—and we had to entertain him. They sent him up to us and showed him some submarines, and then had a big dinner for him. And, of course, as the aide I arranged the dinner. Went to the dinner. This guy had met Admiral Murray sometime before, when he was the commandant of midshipmen at the Naval Academy. And after the formal toasts were out

of the way—this guy spoke a little English, but not much—he tapped his glass. He’d been drinking some wine. He said he wanted to make a personal toast. That this morning when he got off the airplane it was overcast and it was gloomy, but when he got to the foot of the gangway at the airplane all the gloom was dispelled by his old friend, Sunshine Murray.

Paul Stillwell: That was a gracious thing to say.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was fine, so far. And wanted to toast Sunshine Murray. So we all stood up and toasted Sunshine Murray. That went great. The guy had a few more glasses of wine and he tapped his glass a second time. [Chuckle] And, you know, just your instincts tell you, “Ooh, I’m not sure we want to do this.” He said he had a second toast he wanted to propose, because that was also a friendship. And he wanted to propose a toast to Moonshine Murray, Mrs. Murray. [Laughter] You could see what was going through his mind. Very romantic, Mrs. Murray and romance and so forth, “Moonshine Murray.” Well, a silence descended on the crowd, just microseconds, and they all looked at Mrs. Murray to see how she would react. And when she smiled, we all stood up and toasted Moonshine Murray. (Laughter). I’ll bet he never knew the difference. He thought he’d had a social coup of the first order.

Paul Stillwell: What other recollections do you have of Mrs. Murray?

Admiral Crowe: Well, actually, she was always very kind to me, but she didn’t look kind. She didn’t act kind. I know her daughter real well, and her daughter’s a little like that. She’s all business. And, boy, Moonshine expected things to go right. And I was always doing something that didn’t go right. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Was she demanding?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, she was pretty demanding. I think probably not as much as I thought she was, but it seemed to me at the time. [Chuckle] I had not had much experience with that sort of thing.

Paul Stillwell: What sort of duties did you have for the admiral?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I met him every morning at the car when he got there and walked to the office with him. And then if he had any errands to be run during the day. I set up all his social functions, and I kept his calendar. I did anything he wanted to do. If he was going to ride a submarine, for example, I would call down and say. “Here’s what I know about the admiral, and what he wants, and what you should do for him during the day, and what he would like and what he doesn’t like.” Then I’d go with him. We’d ride the boat.

Living in the BOQ as a single officer I was always having trouble with the Marine guards on the base. It was a running gunfight between the people that lived in the BOQ and the Marines. One day it was cold and rainy. It was in the winter. The admiral walked across the hall and into my office and said, “Let’s go to the ship’s service.”

I said, “Fine, sir.”

We walked out and he said, “I’ll drive the car. We don’t need the driver.” He got in his car, and we drove up to the ship’s service. Well, there was a car parked in the admiral’s parking place. It didn’t bother him a bit. He said, “Well, we’ll find a parking place,” and he found another parking place. But I took the number of the car.

We got back in the office, and I called up the Marine and told him I had this license plate. Well, it turned out to be a gunnery sergeant in the Marine Corps, and I thought, boy, now I get even here. I said, “I want to see that guy in the admiral’s office.” I told this Marine officer that this young man had parked in the admiral’s parking place, and I wanted to know what the hell he thought he was doing—a gunnery sergeant. This was during Korea.

The gunnery sergeant showed up on crutches, with all kinds of ribbons, Purple Hearts, and I lost my nerve completely. [Laughter] I said, well, “You were in the admiral’s parking place.”

He said, “Yes, I was.” He said, “I bought a set of tires and it was raining, and I didn’t think the admiral would be using it right away, and I couldn’t make that walk very well.”

I said, “Well, just don’t do it again. Forget it.” And I didn’t have the guts to say a word to that guy. [Chuckle] I was looking forward to it so. I was going to even the whole scoreboard there in one whack, but it didn’t work out very well. But it didn’t bother Admiral Murray a bit. He never told me to check on that or get somebody, or anything else. It didn’t matter to him if somebody parked in his place. That was just not in his character to get excited about that.

Paul Stillwell: Were there things that did bother him?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I’m sure there were. He liked things to go right. But because of his nature and his tranquility everybody knew—if he just had a stern look they figured that he was mad, because he wasn’t that way very much. And he didn’t have to say much. If you’d done something wrong, he’d call you in and say something. But he wouldn’t even mention it and you’d know that, “You’re on the list, and I’m going to follow you pretty closely now.”

We had some real experts on that staff. His chief of staff was—I forget the first guy’s name, but the second was Foley, the wartime submariner.\* And we had down in operations the *Flasher*’s commanding officer, Whitaker, who probably sank the most shipping of all of them in World War II.† He was the ops officer, and he hated aides. He made my life miserable. He later became an admiral.

Paul Stillwell: Reuben Whitaker.

Admiral Crowe: Reuben Whitaker. That’s exactly right. Every branch head was a wartime submariner. The staff was only 26 officers, if you can imagine. Today that’s nothing. But he ran SubLant with 26 officers. Had a guy named Fagan as the engineer,

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\* Captain Robert J. Foley, USN.

† Captain Reuben T. Whitaker, USN.

an EDO. He was really good. But Admiral Murray liked for things to go right, and he noted when they didn't go right. He saw immediately what was going wrong. But he just expected people to do what he wanted them to do. When he was mad he wouldn't go after them. He just would be curt, like, "Okay. That's fine," and not smile or anything, and it wasn't like him not to. Everybody knew that, well, he's pretty upset.

Paul Stillwell: But that kind of personality engenders loyalty.

Admiral Crowe: It does.

Paul Stillwell: People want to do well to please him.

Admiral Crowe: That's absolutely right. That's absolutely right. He was beloved, he truly was. And people did want to do well by him. I always felt badly when I had fouled it up or something. I thought I'd hear from her. [Laughter]

And, you know, the other couple was exactly the opposite. Turkey Neck was terrible, and his wife was lovely. Her name was Lurline. Strange name, Lurline, the same as the ship.

Paul Stillwell: Matson Line.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And I thought the guy could run for president as long as she was campaigning for him, because she was perfect. I saw in my files the other day after I left, I got the nicest note from her, from Lurline. I've still got it in my file. She was fantastic. I really worshipped her. I thought she was a pretty ideal Navy wife. Of course, compensating for that guy was a full-time job. He was from North Carolina. He was a mean bastard.

But Admiral Murray had fought the war, mainly as a submariner, although I don't think he made any patrols as a skipper. He was a division commander, came out of the Philippines on a boat, went to Indonesia, and ran away there again to Australia on a boat, and then came back to Pearl Harbor.



Paul Stillwell: He was Lockwood's chief of staff.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Then he became commandant of midshipmen, and left there to captain the *Missouri*.† He was on the *Missouri* when it went through the peace business.

Paul Stillwell: He did a wonderful oral history and described that surrender ceremony in great detail.‡

Admiral Crowe: Well, he told me some wild stories about the *Missouri*. They came around to the East Coast after that and went in New York City and opened the ship for visiting, and people stole everything on the ship, including trying to chip out the plaque in the deck where the treaty was signed. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Somebody even swiped his cap.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, really? And it probably didn't upset him too much. But he was just a real pleasure to be with.

Paul Stillwell: Was there professional growth for you in learning from him?

Admiral Crowe: Absolutely.

Paul Stillwell: In what ways?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't know. In the first place, I'd never had anything to do with admirals, and I'd never seen an office at the top rung. That was quite a learning experience for me. I had never watched how a man did his business like that. Did he

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\* Rear/Vice Admiral Charles A. Lockwood, Jr., USN, served as Commander Submarines Pacific Fleet from February 1943 to December 1945. He was promoted to three stars in October 1943.

† Captain Murray commanded the battleship *Missouri* (BB-63) from 14 May 1945 to 6 November 1945. The ship was the site of the formal Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945.

‡ See the Naval Institute oral history of Admiral Murray.

write his own speeches or no? What *did* he do about speeches? And how did he get this done?

Of course, he depended on the staff for everything. How did he delegate and not delegate? He was pretty good at managing his time. He'd get an op order in there and read it over, and he could do it in about 20 minutes. He had a good mind. He could rush through it and not miss a hell of a lot.

He ran good meetings, I thought. And he had a wonderful relationship with his yeoman, a fellow named O'Kane, who was my next-door neighbor there in offices. He also was a learning experience. He was great. Later retired from the Navy as a commander.

Then I saw what he had to do with the local society, with the mayor of New London, and that he was wrapped up. And then he had a lot of World War II stories. MacArthur came through and made a speech from a train, and the admiral refused to go down there.\* He said, "I wouldn't listen to MacArthur." He hated MacArthur. Of course, that was quite true of the whole Pacific Navy. The World War II Navy didn't like MacArthur.

He was a big admirer of Lockwood's. And Nimitz. He never said much about Spruance, or I didn't hear him talk about Spruance, or even Halsey.†

Paul Stillwell: Nimitz had been his division commander when the submarines first went out to Hawaii in the early 1920s.

Admiral Crowe: Is that right? Well, that sort of figures. He knew that whole crowd. And when Crawford was going to come he called me in and said, "You're not going to like him real well." We had been in Norfolk one day when Crawford was the commanding officer of the base down there, and he came over and called on Admiral Murray on the tender. When he left, with blowing of whistles and pipes, he turned to me and said, "He wants my job." And he got it. I don't know. Next thing I know Murray

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\* General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, USA, accepted the Japanese surrender on board the *Missouri* in 1945. During the Korean War he was fired by President Harry S. Truman for insubordination.

† During World War II Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN, commanded the Fifth Fleet in the Pacific, and Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., USN, commanded the Third Fleet.

called me in and said, “Admiral Crawford’s coming up here. You’re not going to like Admiral Crawford real well.”

I said, “Why is that, Admiral?”

He said, “Well, he’s a pretty harsh man. Just do the best you can for him.”

I said, “Well, when am I going to get out of here?”

He said, “Well, we’ll see what we can do about that, but it will be up to the admiral. I’ll tell him that I think he should get an aide, and as soon as the aide comes and relieves—that will be three months, maybe cut you down to three months with him.”

Well, it didn’t work that way at all. Sure enough, he wanted a new aide, but he kept extending me. I think I stayed seven or eight months with Crawford. But I was never so glad to see another guy come in my life as I was when Hugh Nott relieved me as the aide to Turkey Neck.\*

Hugh Nott was a man made to be an aide. He was ideal as an aide. He was much better than I was. He had a gift for writing thank-you notes and that sort of stuff. I’d never seen any stationery with flags at the top of it when I went to work for Murray. Of course, it’s insidious, and I’ll be frank about it. Once you work for an admiral you want to be an admiral, and to put it bluntly, that’s what happens. And in many respects that sort of screws things up, because a lot of people who work for an admiral don’t get to be an admiral, and they consider themselves as failures. Well, it doesn’t mean that at all. Nevertheless, once you work for an admiral you want to be an admiral someday.

(Interruption for change of tape)

Paul Stillwell: When we were changing tapes here you mentioned Admiral Crawford did some injustices to people.

Admiral Crowe: Well, when somebody mal-performed he never forgave them. He didn’t give a man twice or three times. He would make up his mind, and that was it. He fired Captain Foley without telling him he was doing it. Foley just discovered one day there was a relief on the way. Crawford didn’t like what Foley was doing. I don’t know

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\* Lieutenant Hugh G. Nott, USN.

all the details, but Foley would come in and tell him some things that he didn't like to hear. But he was a very authoritarian person, and very meticulous in his appearance, etc. Saved his money and very frugal. Carried his cash in a little coin purse. Of course, I did a lot of the spending of his money as the aide and, boy, he doled it out one nickel at a time. [Chuckle]

I was on the golf course with him one day. Well, I never was a golf player, so I started playing golf before he got there. He turned out to be a real fanatic, an addict, on the golf course. I just wasn't up to his game, so I didn't say a word about golf. But I always set him up for a foursome every Saturday. One day he was out there driving balls during the week, and he saw me on the golf course. He said, "Well, I didn't know you played golf."

I said, "Well, Admiral, I don't, really."

"Oh, well, we'll have to play sometime." Well, I couldn't get a foursome, so he said, "Well, why don't you come along?" Well, a terrible mistake. I was the fourth, and they all were golfers, and I was just a neophyte. We played that whole damn round betting little stuff on each hole, but on the last hole was, whether we won \$5.00 or \$20.00, I forget what it was, and I had a four- or five-foot putt. And the Admiral kept saying, "There's nothing to it. Just be quiet, just calm down. You won't have any trouble." Well, I missed the goddamn putt. [Laughter] He took out his coin purse, threw \$5.00 on the green, and walked off without a word. And I thought, well, I wonder how I'll like running a gas station. I thought, well, that's the end of that. But he was annoyed. He didn't like losing. [Laughter] It seemed to me near close to the end of the world.

Paul Stillwell: So you were his partner in this?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I was, of all things. That's the last time I ever played golf with him. He never asked again. I understand why. [Chuckle] I wasn't a very good golfer.

He hated black people. He was a North Carolina racist of the first order. He would put up with Filipinos, because they were in their place. And he had strong views about that. But occasionally something would happen.

He spent a couple of weeks by himself there when he first arrived. His wife had stayed in Norfolk, with his Philippine steward. So he was living in the BOQ for a couple of weeks and then ate all three meals in the mess. We weren't used to that. Everybody came in for lunch, and nobody was there for dinner except the duty officer, and several, not many, for breakfast. But when the admiral came he ate all three meals there. I was the mess treasurer. [Chuckle] The first clue I got was, he gave me five meals that he wanted for breakfast. The only one I remember was the fish meal. What are those little fish? What do you call them?

Paul Stillwell: Sardines?

Admiral Crowe: No, but like that. Anyway, he had bacon and eggs.

Paul Stillwell: Herring?

Admiral Crowe: We're getting close, but that's not it. And he had something else with cereal on that. He had five meals. And he said, "These are what I like for breakfast, but I don't want to know what I'm going to have for breakfast." Okay. [Laughter] And the first day the steward put the cup of coffee down and the admiral tasted it and said, "It's the wrong temperature," and didn't touch it again. The second day he did that, threw the coffee back, and said, "Anybody make decent coffee around here?"

I went in to see the admiral about the coffee. I said, "Admiral, we're here to please you, and I'll make that coffee any way you want it. Now, what temperature do you like?" "HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TEMPERATURE I LIKE? I DON'T KNOW WHAT GODDAMN TEMPERATURE THERE IS!" And he said, "It's just not right! My steward knows!" Well, his steward was in Norfolk, not here. And we screwed around with that coffee for two weeks, and I don't think we ever pleased him. That steward showed up, put a cup of coffee in front of him, and he said, "Just right!"

Paul Stillwell: It was probably the same as he'd been getting.

Admiral Crowe: I could have shot him. He didn't know whether it was just right or not. And he got me, he said, "I want banquet service at the noon meal mess, and I want it done right."

"Okay, Admiral." So I went out and got one of those books by Emily Post. I took it down to the mess there. I sat down and they served me and we worked out all these, the silverware and the plates and everything. Something I had never done anything with before. A kid from Oklahoma. How in the hell did I know where the fork goes? Anyway, I worked hard at this, and the stewards trained, and we began to sort of please the admiral. [Chuckle] We hadn't been at it very long. It was a long table. He sat at the end—by rank, everybody was by rank right down the table, and at the clear end was the mess treasurer. That was me. [Chuckle] I was abused by my contemporaries on the staff all the time.

Paul Stillwell: Was this on board the tender?

Admiral Crowe: No, we were in a building in New London.

Paul Stillwell: Officers' club? Or BOQ?

Admiral Crowe: No, no. This was in his staff building, in SubLant's staff. It was a nice building. Wasn't very big, but it was a nice building, and we had a mess there. And we had a guy running the mess, Felix, a Filipino, who kept stealing food out of the commissary. [Chuckle] That's the reason our mess bills weren't too high. Every time they'd call me and say, "Felix just stole something again."

Anyway, I was sitting there and the admiral was at the other end of the table. And we had fish. He got this fish in front of him, and he said, "Where's the ketchup?" Well, there wasn't any ketchup on the table. The steward went running by, and as he ran I grabbed him by the arm and I said, "Put it in a saucer on top of a doily. Right?"

He said, "Right," rushed off, came back with a tray, a doily, a saucer, and a bottle of ketchup. [Laughter] I thought I was going to have a cardiac arrest. The admiral looked at it, picked it up, and went WHACK, like that, and put it back, like: These clods

around here! When that kid came through with that bottle of ketchup there I thought I was going to die. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: I just got a mental picture of that as you described it.

Admiral Crowe: And we went through all kinds of things like that. One time we were in Key West, and the mayor of Key West was—what was that guy’s name? It was a Cuban, and his name was on all the park benches all over Key West. He was elected. Marti, or Martino, or something like that.\* He was a very famous man in Key West. And he gave the admiral a huge fish, which we immediately slapped in ice. Put it on and off the plane, landed at Norfolk. That night I got more ice and put the damned fish back in the plane. Got to New London and put the fish in the icebox there. One day Felix came in and said, in a big whisper, “The fish is gone.”

I said, “What are you talking about?”

He said, “The Key West fish. Gone. Somebody stole the fish.”

I said, “Oh, God. What kind of fish was it?” [Chuckle] Well, I don’t think he knew, but he guessed. I said, “Can you find another one?”

He said, “I’ll see.”

Well, my charming fellows I worked with—we got another fish and replaced it, but the admiral never saw it. But he was up at a cocktail party and everybody was drinking, and one of them told him the story: The fish was gone, and they’d replaced it with another fish. I could have shot that guy. [Chuckle] The admiral then began to needle me about the fish. He’d like to have fish. “Can we have that Key West fish?” [Laughter] And I knew there was something wrong here. He knew that his fish was gone.

He made big things like that. Before World War II, when he was a commander, he was head of the tactics department at sub school, and he used to run all the drills for firing torpedoes with the simulators. His theory was there was no excuse for missing with a torpedo. If you did it right, by God, you hit! And he was famous throughout the submarine force. He trained all those guys that went out to fight the war. And he said if

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\* C. B. Harvey was the mayor of Key West, Florida, from 1951 to 1957.

you miss, you screwed it up. Well, he went out as a division commander in Hawaii, and one of his skippers got sick so he took the boat out on patrol. And I talked to a guy that was on the fire control party. The first fish he fired hit nothing, and the guy said it was all they could do in that conning tower, the officers, to keep from smirking or laughing, or whatever, because he had told the whole world that there was no excuse for missing. And he fired three torpedoes before he hit. [Laughter]

He was famous throughout the submarine force, but he was brutal. He would laugh hard. [Chuckle] When somebody got shot or something he'd think that was funny. But one night when he was living in the BOQ he had a cold, and on the way home from a movie he dropped by the dispensary. And he was in civilian clothes. And who waited on him in the dispensary but a black sailor. Well, he didn't think the admiral should be waited on by a black sailor, and the next morning he fired the head of the dispensary. That was the clue right there we had a problem.

Then when he started inspecting the base, which usually was perfunctory, he came in with a pair of white gloves and a flashlight and spent three days going through every building on the base. Every bloody building, me walking along there with him. In fact he closed up the ship's service that day, the cafeteria. Found a lot of dirt and said, "I'm going to come back [I think it was two days later] and if it's not clean," he told the manager he was going to be fired. And wouldn't let anybody eat there for two days till they got it cleaned up.

We had a little sandwich shop outside the base, called Chow Line. He usually on a good day would have ten people in there, eating submarine sandwiches. The day the cafeteria was closed he looked out and there were 150 people in his parking lot wanting something to eat. [Laughter]. He about had a heart attack for two days there till we got back to battery. But that was the way Crawford was.

I went in to see him one day and said, "I'm going to put in for PG school, Admiral."

"Why?"

"Well, it's one of the benefits of the Navy. They say that they send people to postgraduate school."

"You don't want to do that."



I said, "Well, Admiral, I sort of think I do."

The next day he called me in, and he had a Naval Academy register out there, and he had gone through his class and he marked everyone that had gone to PG school. [Laughter] And he went down the list with me. "You know where he is? He's in Panama. You see that guy? We've sent him to Alaska." Every one of them was a failure in his book. And he said, "You don't want to go to PG school."

I said, "Yes, I do, Admiral. I want to go to postgraduate school."

He said, "Get the hell out." I put in for PG school, but it was for a crazy one called oceanography, and I didn't get it. Thank God I didn't get it. But he had a thing about: The place for a young man's at sea; you don't go going to school anywhere. Now, his wife thought he was nuts on that. She said, "You put in for the damn school."

He had two daughters, and he treated them just like sailors. One daughter worked one summer and got enough money to buy herself a fur coat. But she knew that the old man wouldn't put up with that. So she stashed the fur coat with a friend about three houses down. The date would come by and pick her up, she'd go down and get her fur coat, go out on a date and come back, put the fur coat back, and come home. [Chuckle] Her mother knew about it, but neither one of them told him. And she told me that story, "That's the way we get around that."

Paul Stillwell: How would you compare the two admirals as far as the substance of doing the job as ComSubLant?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think that Murray had it hands down. We just didn't look at it as a technical situation. People liked to work for Murray, and Murray would get things done through people. But, boy, everybody that worked for Crawford was scared to death of him, and suspicious of him, and they didn't trust him.

Paul Stillwell: Did ComSubLant have operational control at that point?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. Yes, he did. Now, he was technically capable, knew everything about submarines. He was an old hand at it. And he would ride the boats. Oh,

God, they dreaded it. But he would ride *one day* and come back, and he would have formed an opinion on that boat, either good or bad. And if it was bad there was nothing you could do about it. As far as he was concerned, that skipper was a loser. Which I thought was just absurd.

Paul Stillwell: What were the missions of the Atlantic Fleet submarines at that point?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were training all the time to standard. But the big mission was we were going to go up to the UK-Iceland gap and fill it up and attrite the Soviet submarine force coming to sea. That was our wartime mission. The whole damned force was going up there.

Paul Stillwell: How much did the submarines deploy overseas during that period?

Admiral Crowe: Not much. They were beginning to deploy. By the time I got to the *Clamagore* we were going; there was always a submarine or two with Sixth Fleet. But that was new. And, of course, we did several submarine exercises where we went up to the gap to plug up there, and others ran the gap, and we practiced what we were doing.

Paul Stillwell: How much intelligence gathering?

Admiral Crowe: Not much. Not like you know it today.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the *Cochino* had been up on a mission in '49 and had been lost.

Admiral Crowe: I was at New London when the *Cochino* went down.\* A submarine classmate of mine was on it, John Shelton.† I bought my first car from John. Frank

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\* USS *Cochino* (SS-345) was lost off Norway on 26 August 1949 as the result of battery explosions and fires. For details see the Naval Institute oral history of Rear Admiral Roy S. Benson, USN (Ret.), and William J. Lederer, *The Last Voyage* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1950).

† Lieutenant (junior grade) John P. Shelton, USN.

Clifford was on it.<sup>\*</sup> He was later a friend of mine. He was out of '45, two years ahead of me. But then the SubLant was Fife, and Fife made the decision that that's one of the things that happens in the submarine business, that we're in a risky business. And Benitez—wasn't that his name?

Paul Stillwell: Yes. Rafael Benitez was the skipper.

Admiral Crowe: Rafael Benitez.<sup>†</sup> He did not ruin him or his career. There was no disciplinary action that I know of at all. It was written off as an accident. Of course, it was a new submarine with a battery that we had not really had a lot of experience with, a Guppy. But curiously enough, I think the most people that were lost were on the *Tusk*, the rescuing ship, when a wave came over while they were alongside or coming alongside and took several of the anchor party away.

Paul Stillwell: I don't recall that detail.

Admiral Crowe: Well, the *Cochino* was about to sink.

Paul Stillwell: They came across on a board.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they did. They came across on a gangway. And I think they did it Chinese-style.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Like this. But in the process they had the line handlers out on deck and a wave swept several of them overboard. Whereupon they forgot the *Cochino* and started looking for their people. Didn't find them all, and I think they lost five or six people, something like that in the process of the rescue. And incidentally, John Shelton went by

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<sup>\*</sup> Lieutenant Frank F. Clifford, Jr., USN.

<sup>†</sup> Commander Rafael C. Benitez, USN.

a small boat from the *Cochino* to report to the *Tusk* skipper what was going on on *Cochino*. He had a rather adventurous ride over, because it was fairly rough. But when they actually got alongside *Cochino* and put that thing over, they saved everybody on *Cochino*. I don't think *Cochino* lost a man.

Paul Stillwell: The exec was badly burned. He tried to shut off the supply in the battery compartment.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that may be right. I don't recall all the details. But that was the biggest accident that we'd ever seen in my career, and we were all quite wowed by that.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember Roy Benson from being around New London?\*

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I do. I didn't know him well, but I knew him. He and Murray were very good friends. He later was SubPac.

I had a funny thing happen. [Chuckle] My tour as aide was full of funny things. Admiral Crawford relieved Admiral Murray on board a submarine down on the dock. So it was all set up. I didn't know Crawford then, except that I was going to be his aide. Murray spoke and stepped back. Crawford spoke, and stepped around to shake Admiral Murray's hand, and as he spoke a draft of wind came and his speech lifted up. And I rushed over to grab his speech, and he shook my hand. [Laughter] He looked at me like: What am I shaking your hand for? And I said, "Speech, Admiral," and went and grabbed the speech. But, you know, what an auspicious start. [Chuckle] Shaking hands with me before he had with Murray.

Then one day we were taking a trip down to Puerto Rico, but we were going to spend the night in Key West. The admiral outlined very carefully to me that he wanted to eat sandwiches on the airplane and [chuckle] not have to stop in Norfolk. We left early in

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\* Captain Roy M. Benson, USN, was then Commander Submarine Development Two. The oral history of Benson, who retired as a rear admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection and includes his recollections of the *Cochino* incident.

the morning, 4:00 o'clock. Had a little JRB, or whatever, we flew in; went about 120 miles an hour or something like that.\* We went up to Quonset and took off.†

So I had Felix get all the lunches ready, and we were in the headquarters about 4:00 o'clock in the morning, and at 5:00 o'clock we all jumped in the car and drove off, and forgot the food. Felix prepared the lunches and didn't bring them up there, and saw us drive off, sitting on all the lunches. I didn't give the lunch a thought until all of a sudden, outside of Norfolk, I—"I don't remember seeing the lunch come aboard." And I was feeling behind our seats, looking for the bologna, or whatever it was, and it wasn't aboard. Oh, Christ. I guess I suffered more right then than I did any day with Crawford. I had to tell Crawford it wasn't aboard. He got mad. Didn't say anything. So we landed at Norfolk and ate lunch with him not saying a word to anybody. [Laughter] Then we climbed back on the airplane and went on down to Key West. Oh, it was sheer pain.

Paul Stillwell: You told me before that C. C. Kirkpatrick was great at reading the admiral's mood.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was. He was an idol of mine. Anybody that could do that you had to admire. He was a squadron commander, and Benny Bass was the other squadron commander. He came every time he wasn't welcome. [Chuckle] But, in all fairness, one day Crawford said, "I just can't help from liking Benny Bass. I was a division commander in Pearl Harbor when Bass sent in a message that he had expended all his torpedoes but he just had a big target on the surface; he was going to surface and take it under gunfire. "And," he said, "he did." He said, "I just can't get too mad at Benny Bass." (Laughter). But he always had a piece of him whenever he was unhappy.

But he was a man of World War II. Nothing ever happened in Crawford's life that compared with World War II, although he later had command of a cruiser, and then he commanded a group of ships when they evacuated Tsingtao, when the Communists took over the Peninsula out there. He was in on that, when they withdrew from Tsingtao. Nevertheless, his whole world, at least as SubLant, was World War II.

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\* The Beech JRB Expeditor was a small Navy transport plane.

† Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island.

Paul Stillwell: What other good stories do you have from that tour?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't know. That exhausted that. But one of the things I learned, he was very particular about details with guests. He would go to great lengths to be ready for the—CinCLant was coming, and that there were magazines on the airplane when CinCLant left, things for him to do. That CinCLant liked this and liked that.

He was very particular in his home. He did woodworking, and everything in the basement where his woodworking stuff was was all arranged. He was a compulsive personality. Everything was in its place and a place for everything. I think it drove his wife absolutely bonkers. And they picked a real nice home to live in, which he was very proud of.

Strange man, though. His most enjoyment in life was when somebody else was suffering. That didn't appeal to me too much.

Paul Stillwell: So you truly were relieved when you were relieved.

Admiral Crowe: You bet. I was so glad. Yes, it's interesting, though. He had a sense about things. I wanted to go to a boat in New London. Now, I don't know what he knew about my life or didn't know about it, but he knew something, because he called me in and he said, "No, I don't think you ought to go to a boat in New London." And I started to say, "Why?" And then I thought, well, that's not a good question to ask the admiral. But I think that he knew something about me that he wasn't supposed to, and that for my own health and my own career he got me out of New London. Sent me to Key West.

Paul Stillwell: Do you have any suspicions what it was that he knew?

Admiral Crowe: No. Well, if he did, I know what it was. But he wasn't supposed to know anything about it. But the way he acted. And he said something about that. He said, "You know, you can stay in one place too long, and you don't want to do that with your naval career." And he never gave me the choice. He said, "I'm going to send you to Key West." I thought it was purgatory. And there was a certain amount of that. But I

wondered why he did it. I was involved in something. It probably wasn't healthy to remain in New London.

Paul Stillwell: Did you suspect this had to do with your social life?

Admiral Crowe: This I always suspected, but I never knew, and he never elaborated. Of course, if you hang around a place like New London as a single man you're bound to play footsies with trouble somewhere at one time or another. And I always assumed that, while he was mean as hell, that Crawford was smart, and he probably knew a hell of a lot more than people thought he knew. And in that case I sort of think he did.

Of course everybody knew the aide, and everybody knew what the aide was doing. That always annoyed me somewhat. We had a big party—it was the biggest party they'd ever had in New London at that time—five of us living in the BOQ. And I went to Argentia with Admiral Murray and picked up a whole load of whiskey up there for this party, and brought it back on a P2V. Every guy that had a boat invited all the people on his boat, and between the five of us we pretty well covered the whole New London community. We took over that whole BOQ for that night for that party. And it was some party. It was a wingdinger. And people were talking about it till I left, I remember.

Kirkpatrick got mixed up in that. We'd sent out all these invitations. Kirkpatrick was in the headquarters one day, and he went in to see the chief, but I could hear him. He didn't know I could hear him. He said, "Chief, who in the hell are these guys?"

These were the five bachelors. The chief said, "Well, Commodore, that's five bachelors, and one of them is the aide next door." And he pointed at the name.

Kirkpatrick went out and came right in my door and he said to me, "Bill, I got your invitation. Be glad to come. Great idea. Appreciate your thinking about me," and walked out. [Laughter] You know, five minutes before that he had no idea who I was.

Paul Stillwell: So he invited himself.

Admiral Crowe: But that party. Strange things happened at that party. I remember one of my friends, Maggie Peters, was playing the piano in one room, and they wanted it in

the other room, so they picked the piano and her both up, and moved in there with her continuing to play the piano. [Chuckle] It was a great life.

Paul Stillwell: Some booze may have been consumed that night.

Admiral Crowe: I think it was. Boy. A lot of it was. But it was a hard-drinking life. Everybody in Oklahoma thinks the Navy is synonymous with hard drinking, and there's some truth in that.

Paul Stillwell: Well, since everybody knew you, you had to avoid getting into trouble, because you were not anonymous.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. And there are two kinds of people: Ones that don't like the aide, and ones that try to take advantage of the aide. That's the only other kind, use him to see the admiral and know the admiral, and the kind that hate all aides. They think it's a stepping-stone to promotion for superficial reasons. And there's something in that.

I left that job with the feeling that it was a tremendous learning experience. Not all of it. You wouldn't want to spend your whole life doing that. But I was aide again to a vice admiral later, and I went into that job with a fairly clear idea of what I was doing, because I'd been an aide. The problem with the job is an aide never has any responsibility. He learns a lot, but he doesn't have the responsibility of command. So you've got to know more about the guy than the fact that he's an aide. But in the Navy there's a strong tendency to promote people that have been executive assistants to the Secretary, or Assistant Secretary, or to CinCLant, or something like that, which I think is a terrible mistake, but it's the reality.

Paul Stillwell: Were you in any sense a gatekeeper in monitoring the flow of visitors in to see the admiral?



Admiral Crowe: Well, not of the big names, no. You know, a commodore wanted to see the admiral he saw the admiral. And Kirkpatrick probably never even went through me. He just stuck his head in the door. But he knew when to do that. Anybody else who wanted to see the admiral, yes. And the admiral would occasionally say, “Don’t let so-and-so in here; no matter what you do, don’t let him in.”

Another thing you learn a lot about is when the sons of your friends are in trouble. You know, Sunshine Murray had several classmates. A couple of them had sons that got in trouble, and he’d get a call. Usually not from the father but from another classmate, saying, “Joe’s son is—can you get him transferred?” And Sunshine would call down there and he’d get it done. He looked after his friends. He would call me in sometimes and say, “Do you know this officer?” I might or I might not. And he’d say, “Well, he’s had a problem on a submarine. I’m going to get him moved.”

They were all friends. Of course, they grew up in a Navy where they knew everybody in the Navy. It must have been pretty nice, actually.

Paul Stillwell: It was like a club.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. The Navy was their life, and they were extremely loyal to the Navy, and proud of the Navy, and they didn’t expect anybody else to understand it. Okay, it’s our Navy, not theirs, and they don’t understand what we’re doing. I used to joke about: Crawford thought there were more people in the Navy than there were civilians. [Chuckle] He used to come in sometimes and say, “I had dinner with this civilian. He’s really a nice guy, you know? He does this, and he does that. I was amazed.” And he’d talk like: “My God, there are some nice civilians out there; not many of them around, but I met one of them.” [Laughter] But that’s gone now—too big a Navy and so forth.

And they all had little cliques they were members of. And because they knew each other they all had opinions of each other.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that term “service reputation” was very important.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was vital. And all of them understood that. They protected with every measure they could their service reputation. I later on was a captain in the Navy when Admiral Murray had retired. And he came occasionally in there selling something—I forget whom he was with, but he had a job after he retired. And I just sort of cried when I saw him, hat in hand, come in and talk to some of those people. “Well, we’d like to sell you this.” I thought that a man with that talent and that experience, he shouldn’t be doing that. These people shouldn’t require him to do that.

And Nimitz felt that way. He felt he had no business going to work after he retired. He had commanded all those people, and he owed it to them not to go to work, and to be their, sort of, idol.

Paul Stillwell: The gray eminence.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. And I later was aide for Admiral Austin, whom I didn’t like very well. But the outstanding memory I had with Admiral Austin, who was very competent and who was a vice admiral, a very good friend of Arleigh Burke’s and served with Burke when Burke was out in the Solomons.\* He made a run at four stars, and there was another competitor, was a man by the name of Sides, whom I did not know. Admiral Sides. Admiral Sides was promoted and, I think, sent to CinCPacFlt.†

Paul Stillwell: He was. He was a missile expert when missiles were just coming in.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Austin was crushed. You know, here I was, a lieutenant commander. It seemed to me Austin had done pretty well in his life. But that thing knocked all the wind out of him. And I heard him say one day, “I have no career. All these years and it was for naught.” Then he went up to head the War College before he retired.‡ But I thought, Jesus, this really is whinging. I mean, this is a bit much to say, if

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\* Captain Arleigh Burke, USN, commanded Destroyer Squadron 23 in the Solomons Islands in 1943. Commander Bernard L. Austin, USN, was a division commander under Burke. From 1955 to 1961, as a four-star admiral, Burke was Chief of Naval Operations and controlled flag officer assignments.

† Admiral John H. Sides, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet, 30 August 1960 to 30 September 1963.

‡ Vice Admiral Austin served as president of the Naval War College from 30 June 1960 to 31 July 1964.

I don't make four stars I've had no career. But he felt that way. He was absolutely crushed.

Paul Stillwell: Bob Peniston was with Admiral Austin up at the War College, and he had a lot of admiration for him.\*

Admiral Crowe: Did he? I didn't. I just couldn't bring myself to like Austin very well. He was not good under pressure. I assume he was at sea, under pressure, but there are different kinds of pressures, and the pressure can get pretty heavy right there in Washington. It always tickled me that people would come in there with ribbons up to their gazoo, and face machine guns and everything else, but wouldn't tell their boss what he was doing wrong, or that something was about to happen. Different kind of bravery.

Paul Stillwell: Yep.

Admiral Crowe: Evidently it's easier to be brave on the battlefield than it is in Washington. And you're seeing it right now. Those guys have really got a problem.

Paul Stillwell: In the Iraq situation.

Admiral Crowe: I don't know what they do or do not tell Rumsfeld.† But I know that Peter Pace has got a terrible job.‡ Rumsfeld is so vindictive and hard.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it's an intriguing note to end on. We'll get going on the *Clamagore* next time. Thank you, Admiral. (End of Interview 5)

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\* Lieutenant Commander Robert C Peniston, USN. He was a Naval Academy classmate of Crowe.

† Donald H. Rumsfeld served as Secretary of Defense from 20 January 2001 to 18 December 2006.

‡ General Peter Pace, USMC, served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1 October 2005 to 1 October 2007.

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, the weather's a good deal cooler than the last time we convened.

Admiral Crowe: It sure is.

Paul Stillwell: Fall is with us. When we finished up last time you were describing your time as aide to ComSubLant, and you just missed going to law school at Yale. What were the factors in missing out?

Admiral Crowe: The Congress decided that they had enough people coming in with law degrees already, and they didn't need to manufacture their own. So they just deleted the money for it out of the budget about two weeks before I was supposed to go.

Paul Stillwell: What alternatives did you have on that short notice?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I just stayed where I was. I was third officer on the *Clamagore* and I stayed on for several months. I missed the ship that day; I remember that. Went out and had a few drinks and slept through the ship departing the next morning, and was appalled at that. [Chuckle] But they just went out for the day, and the skipper wasn't too upset by it. But that was the only grieving I did.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get some choice of duty after leaving ComSubLant, in being able to get to *Clamagore*?

Admiral Crowe: I didn't have much choice, no, but I think we discussed that a little bit last time. The admiral sent me to Key West. He thought I ought to broaden my career a little bit. He didn't like me staying in New London all the time. So he was big on me going to Key West, and I couldn't fight that. But the *Clamagore* was a brand-new Guppy, and we thought that was a pretty good idea.\* I'd never served on a snorkel or a Guppy submarine.

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\* USS *Clamagore* (SS-343) was a *Gato*-class submarine commissioned 28 June 1945. She had a displacement of 1,525 tons on the surface and 2,410 tons submerged. She was 312 feet long, 27 feet in the

Paul Stillwell: What differences did that make in operation, being in a Guppy?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was a more capable ship. The depth wasn't any greater—just a World War II submarine configured as a Guppy. But the speed and the battery were different, and it had a snorkel, which meant that we would stay submerged a lot longer than we would on an ordinary World War II submarine. But it was a very capable submarine. And when I stayed on, why, then we did a deployment in the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, the first time I'd ever been to the Mediterranean, and a very, very worthwhile cruise on the *Clamagore*.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember of your skippers from that boat.

Admiral Crowe: Well, my man was George Morin, and I remember he was a graduate of Bates University and had played football at Bates.\* Said a guard was just a quarterback with his brains knocked out. I think George played quarterback. He may have played guard, though. [Chuckle] Anyway, he was a great big man and a good athlete, and a very strong fan of football, and also golf. He played golf a great deal of the time. He had somewhat of a temper. I do remember that. He and I became very good friends. But the only time I ever thought a skipper was going to hit me was with George Morin.

Paul Stillwell: Why was that?

Admiral Crowe: He got mad one day. [Chuckle] I don't quite remember all the details, but it was in the conning tower. I had the watch and he came up, and I had done something and I took issue with what he wanted to do. His face began to get red, and then he got mad. I don't remember the details, but I do remember thinking: "He may hit

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beam, and had a maximum draft of 15 feet. Her top speed was 20 knots surfaced and 9 knots submerged. She was initially armed with ten 21-inch torpedo tubes. In 1947-48, at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, she was modernized, including the installation of a snorkel.

\* Lieutenant Commander George F. Morin, USN, commanded the submarine *Clamagore* (SS-343) from June 1952 to June 1954.

me” [Chuckle] He was prone to do that sort of thing. He was very physically oriented. He didn’t, though.

We did have an officer on the submarine by the name of Cossaboom, a rather unusual name, who was a very, very bright young man.\* He and the skipper used to play cribbage some. I’ve never played cribbage, although I do remember an incident on the ship that had something to do with cribbage. Something happened in the game where the skipper lost. And there was some money bet on it, I think \$5.00 or something like that. But Cossaboom said, “Oh, well, it doesn’t matter. I didn’t think we were really playing for money.” And the skipper got mad and threw the \$5.00 on the deck outside of his cabin and went in his cabin, closed the curtain, and went to sleep. That \$5.00 sat on the deck out there for two or three days, and everybody was afraid to pick it up. [Laughter] Nobody would pick it up. The skipper wouldn’t take it back and Cossaboom wouldn’t take it, and nobody else was going to get in on it.

Paul Stillwell: Wonder what ever happened to it.

Admiral Crowe: We all tiptoed around the \$5.00. [Laughter] I remember that.

George Morin had a very fierce temper. He had a nice wife, a woman named Hope, who had a heart problem. A real swell girl. But she’d had an operation. Maybe rheumatic fever, I bet she had, and she later died prematurely. She didn’t lead a long life.

Paul Stillwell: Did that inhibit her role in coordinating the wardroom wives?

Admiral Crowe: No, not particularly. But George Morin had a fierce bias against women being on submarines. And I don’t mean duty; I mean for any reason. He never invited his wife down to the submarine, and she never came down and ate, because he didn’t want women on the submarine.

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\* Lieutenant William M. Cossaboom II, USN.

Well, I got married while I was on *Clamagore*. We were in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the yard, so it wasn't a problem up there.\* But then I went to PCO school in New London for six weeks, and then when I finished PCO school I flew home directly and got married. And Shirley and I then flew back, I think, to New York. I went to New Hampshire and joined the boat, and she drove down to Key West, and the ship went down to Key West.

Well, I was newly married, and I invited Shirley down for dinner every time I had the duty. George Morin would come in the next morning, and at the lunch table there would be some nasty comment passed about, "I understand there was a woman on board last night."

Finally it got to the point where I said one day at lunch to the skipper, "Captain, if you don't want my wife on here, tell me. Tell me I can't have her aboard, and I won't. But until you say that, I'm going to have her aboard." Then, [chuckle] like Cossaboom and the \$5.00, George got mad at me. He stormed out of the wardroom. But he never told me not to have her on board.

One day when she came down for dinner she was leaving just as he arrived late. He came back to the ship for some reason, I forget what. She climbed out of the hatch just as he was getting ready to go down it. [Chuckle] He was grumbling about that. I forget. But I repeat, he and I became very good friends. I couldn't have gotten away with that otherwise.

Paul Stillwell: What was the basis for his objection?

Admiral Crowe: I have no idea. He just had strong views that we were engaged in a manly pursuit, and he didn't want women as part of it. Of course, today he would have a cardiac arrest at what has happened to the Navy. He's dead. His wife died, and then he died a few years after that. But he just felt so strongly about it.

He also was allergic to shrimp. Cossaboom was the supply officer [chuckle], and couldn't understand and kept cooking shrimp, and every time we did we damned near

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\* Though officially known as Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, it was actually on an island at the mouth of the Piscataqua River and part of Kittery, Maine.

killed the captain. He didn't even eat it. It just got into the ventilation system and he would begin to swell up in the throat, and so forth, and so forth.

Paul Stillwell: My wife has exactly that same allergy.

Admiral Crowe: Is that right?

Paul Stillwell: She has to be very careful.

Admiral Crowe: Well, finally he got across to Cossaboom that he just couldn't take it. I had never seen that before.

Paul Stillwell: Did some of the other officers bring their wives on board too?

Admiral Crowe: I think they did. But I was the only one that it became an issue with. Of course, we had Hope on our side. She was the skipper's wife, and she would calm him down. She would kid him about his strong, thickheaded views.

But to his credit he, first of all, ran a good ship. It was a good ship. And secondly, if you performed for him, why, he gave you credit for it. He'd put up with a lot as long as you were doing your job. I was the third officer, and we had some problems with the second officer, the exec.

Paul Stillwell: Who was that?

Admiral Crowe: A man by the name of Ajax Miller. Did you ever run across that name?

Paul Stillwell: No, that's an unusual name.

Admiral Crowe: He was sort of famous in the submarine force. Ajax was a wonderful sailor. He'd gone through the war in submarines. But he was one of these people that, as soon as he hit the beach he was uncontrollable and sort of went crazy. I had to bail him out of jail twice. But at sea he was marvelous. He was where he wanted to be and that's



what he'd always wanted to do, and he was really good at it. But he liked to drink heavily, and he couldn't control himself when he went ashore. So in essence I sort of inherited a lot of the exec's job because the captain would take it away from Ajax.

He got relieved by a man by the name of Merrill Kelly, who was a pretty nice guy.\* Merrill really didn't bother me very much. He let me just continue on with what we'd been doing. And then he got passed over for commander, I think. And he just came unglued at the seams when he got passed over. So we had a lot of problems with our execs on the ship.

Paul Stillwell: What was your official job?

Admiral Crowe: Well, my official job was operations officer. First I was communicator and operations officer. Then I inherited some of the exec's stuff, and also sort of became a gunnery officer. But I really liked the ship. It really was a high-performing ship. I'd never gone at 21 knots in a submarine before. Had high-capacity batteries, which were new to me. And the snorkeling. It was a real challenge to stand a watch while it was snorkeling.

Paul Stillwell: Why do you say that?

Admiral Crowe: Because of the depth control. You didn't particularly jeopardize the ship, because the snorkel was configured to shut down if you ducked it, so we at least allegedly had an automatic safe system. But if you shut down very long the engines had to stop, and if they didn't stop, then the vacuum in the boat ran way up and you'd pop a few eardrums. So the ideal situation was not to duck it and also not to broach it. Particularly since we had never had one, everybody that was involved had to learn to do that. We hadn't grown up with it. And in rough seas it was very, very difficult. On the other hand, you could stay submerged and didn't have to surface.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the mission of the submarine at that point?

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\* Lieutenant Merrill E. Kelly, Jr., USN, who eventually became a captain.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were very, very heavily engaged in submarine versus submarine, and we practiced that quite a bit. But then, of course, the nuclear business was creeping on the horizon there, and everybody had a certain amount of cynicism about it. On the other hand they fully understood that if it worked, that the problem of submarine on submarine was going to become a great deal more difficult.

But then we got mixed up, or more or less mesmerized by our Mediterranean cruise. So the last year I was on the ship, why, either getting ready for it or doing it was preoccupying us. And we worked with a carrier task force over there.

Paul Stillwell: Was that something new for the submarine, to deploy overseas?

Admiral Crowe: No, it wasn't new to deploy, but it was new to work with a carrier task force, which we were doing. And Jim Stockdale was on the carrier. I told you my Switzerland skiing story; well, that happened when I was on the *Clamagore*. We were in the Mediterranean about four months. The first time I'd ever been to Italy, first time I'd ever been to France. Incidentally, Morin, the captain, was of French extraction, and thought he spoke French very well. Well, we discovered in France he didn't speak French very well. [Chuckle] Almost got arrested for going the wrong way on a one-way street, with the policeman and the captain screaming at each other in French, which the Frenchman didn't recognize as French. [Laughter] Morin would do things like that. He would get convinced he was capable of doing certain matters, and he just dug the hole deeper. He didn't know when to quit. [Chuckle]

But, of course, working with the carrier we made many, many approaches on the carrier and had lots of training that involved the destroyers in the group. From a training standpoint it was wonderful, because it was right there and we were with them all the time. We went through the Straits of Gibraltar in formation with them, I can remember, in the middle of the night. Ajax was the exec and, I say, he really was good at sea.

But he had a system for beating the roulette wheel he had read about, so he convinced me to go with him over in Cannes, France, to the casino, and we'd break the place with our system. [Chuckle] I was so naïve. I thought, "Well, Ajax, they won't let

us in if we have a system. If they see us using some kind of system they'll arrest us or throw us out." Of course, they were looking for guys with a system. [Laughter]. If there was anything they loved it was a man that had a system. We went over there with our paltry payroll and started betting the very minimal bet.

It was going fine. I was at one end of the table here doing the hedge betting, and Ajax was at the other end. But it was all in French, and I could never understand what they were saying, except "lay in la play (phonetic)." I missed getting the hedge bet down on one step there and, sure enough, we lost our money. But Ajax was at the other end smiling because he assumed I had a hedge bet. Well, I had missed it. It wasn't down. And the system collapsed around us right there. [Laughter]. That was the end of that venture.

Paul Stillwell: How were Americans received in Europe?

Admiral Crowe: Very well. We were in Italy when Stalin died, and that's the first time I'd seen real-live Communists.\* Everybody that was a Communist was wearing a black armband, and there were a lot of them all over the place, which was, for a young, naïve kid from Oklahoma was sort of a thing of wonder. I had heard a lot about Communists but had never met one. [Chuckle] And we had some sort of built-in fear of them, I don't know why. But they were different than other people.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Italy was one of the key countries in George Kennan's containment policy.†

Admiral Crowe: It was, yes.

Paul Stillwell: And Forrestal.

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\* Joseph Stalin ran the Soviet Union essentially as a dictatorship from the late 1920s to his death on 5 March 1953.

† George F. Kennan, who served on the State Department's policy-planning staff in the immediate post-World War II period, is credited with developing the U.S. policy of "containment" toward Communism. That strategy was a key point in U.S. international relations during the Cold War.

Admiral Crowe: And we damned near lost it.

Paul Stillwell: I interviewed the editor of a ship's newspaper once, and he said when he put out the story on Stalin's death he had a very short headline: "Red Head Dead."

Admiral Crowe: "Red Head Dead." [Laughter]. That's marvelous.

Well, George had a sense of humor, but it was mainly locker-room humor built around his football experience. He didn't have a refined sense of humor by any stretch of the imagination.

Paul Stillwell: Was he aggressive as a submariner?

Admiral Crowe: Very. Yes, very. But he had done a tour as a squadron engineer, and he was a little intimidated about making mistakes. He would butt in to the junior officer handling the ship on the landings and on the torpedo firings, and so forth. He just couldn't bring himself to stay completely out of the act. Which I understand is very difficult for the captain, to stand aside and watch a young man make a couple of mistakes and let him do it.

Paul Stillwell: You said in your book that that was one of the great gifts of Chuck Griffiths, that he would let the JOs do it.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, Chuck Griffiths would. Chuck Griffiths was the best skipper I ever saw. George had a theory that he and I used to argue about, that if you never let a young officer make a mistake, then he'll learn not to make mistakes. I didn't agree with that at all. I thought the best thing about making a mistake was learning. What was it Will Rogers said?† That good judgment derives from experience, and experience mainly

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\* Lieutenant Commander Charles H. Griffiths, USN, was later Crowe's skipper in the *Wahoo* (SS-565).

† William Penn Adair Rogers (1879-1935), an Oklahoman, was a popular comedian, actor, and newspaper columnist in the early years of the 20th century.

derives from bad judgment. [Chuckle] If you want to learn something the best way to learn it is make a mistake doing it. Then you don't forget it.

Paul Stillwell: Was this considered a direct support role with the carrier?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. We were not doing our business; we were doing their business. We were, in a certain sense, supposed to protect the carrier from other submarines. That was sort of the theory.

Paul Stillwell: Was that really a doctrine development theory?

Admiral Crowe: Not really. It was doctrine development, yes. We were not that far along in it. We had not advanced to the point where we could coordinate with a destroyer that had sonar contact on something, and keep us informed, etc. That was all new. We were fumbling around in the woods on that.

Paul Stillwell: How did the tactical command work? Did the carrier direct your movements?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, the skipper or the admiral on the carrier did. We had an experience on the ship. I remember we were anchored off Cannes. The whole squadron was, the carrier and everything else, when the—they have a name for it, when a quick wind comes up. It's an Arabic word. I forget it now.

Paul Stillwell: Mistral?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it may be something like that.

Paul Stillwell: Sirocco?

Admiral Crowe: Anyway, we got hit that morning, Sunday morning, by a strong wind. Very, very strong. And our anchor started dragging. The skipper wasn't aboard, but Ajax was. A submarine doesn't have a lot of problems, because we can get on line in about a minute, so we just got the diesels lit off. We immediately went on the battery and then lit the diesels off and started maneuvering the ship, and we just drove it to sea. But the destroyers were dragging, and they couldn't get steam up quickly. There were anchors dragging all over the place, I remember, and a couple did go aground. But the poor destroyers just didn't have much wherewithal to get under way quickly. Now today, using gas turbines, they could have been on the line very quickly and stopped that.

Paul Stillwell: Who provided the opposition in these submarine-versus-submarine exercises?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, usually the destroyers in the group. When we ran into some other groups while we were over there we would occasionally do that. But mainly it was all handled within the group of ships we were with.

Paul Stillwell: No, but would there be a friendly submarine that would try to attack?

Admiral Crowe: No. No, we didn't have another submarine. But when we were in Italy we did do some work with a submarine group at Naples, where we just went out with another submarine and worked. It really wasn't very good. We weren't doing much of that.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember what the carrier was that you worked with?

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't. It was not a large carrier. We had some semi-carriers in those days.

Paul Stillwell: The CVS?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, something like that. Of course, I may be wrong about that. I just don't remember. Now, I went over one day, but that wasn't in the Mediterranean. I went to sea with Jim one day and flew. Landed on a carrier and took off from a carrier, and my pilot was a kid by the name of Bob Schwoeffermann, who was out of the Class of '48 and a football player.\* I remember he started the Army-Navy game once by receiving the kickoff. I later worked with Bob Schwoeffermann in OP-61 when I was a captain. But he was my pilot that day, that Jim let me go up with and come back. I had quite a day out on the carrier. In fact, I spent the night out there. But that was before we deployed. I can't remember where we were when we did that. That was my only takeoff and landing on a carrier.

Paul Stillwell: What kind of airplane was it?

Admiral Crowe: It may have been a TBF.<sup>†</sup> I remember there were two seats. I was in the back seat of this plane. And when we catapulted off my canopy flew open. Jim saw that [chuckle] from the look of horror on my face, like "What's falling apart here?" But he was flying single-propeller-driven aircraft. I said they weren't attack, but it was sort of a bomb run. I don't remember. I just thought surviving was enough. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Did you work with any of the NATO navies in the Mediterranean?<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did. We did quite a bit. And when we did that we did have other submarines in the area.

Paul Stillwell: How capable were they?

Admiral Crowe: As far as we could determine, not very capable. It seemed to me that they didn't take it as seriously as we did, but that may be unjust.

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\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Robert E. Bob Schwoeffermann, USN.

<sup>†</sup> The Grumman TBF Avenger was a torpedo plane and bomber of World War II vintage.

<sup>‡</sup> NATO—North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which was established in 1949 as a means of coordinating defense against a potential attack from the Soviet Union.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get involved with the British at all?

Admiral Crowe: No, not there. We worked with some Greek submarines once. That was really sort of a circus. But the submarine opposition was mainly Italian.

Paul Stillwell: What specifics do you remember from being ashore, other than the armbands after Stalin died?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I can remember Cannes and the casino, and the bars. I can distinctly remember going into a bar with Jim, and I think the name of the bar was The Rabbit. What's the French word for rabbit?

Paul Stillwell: I don't know.

Admiral Crowe: Anyway, it was the French word for rabbit, and on the bar there they had a great big ceramic rabbit. And when you ordered a glass of wine he'd put it under the rabbit and twist its ear and it would fill up the glass. [Laughter]. We got so fascinated with that we kept ordering wine to see the rabbit fill up the glass.

Paul Stillwell: That may have been part of the reason it was there.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, we were just what they were looking for. I did have one shore experience that really impressed me. I had never seen Spanish dancing before, and we went into Gibraltar and I got absolutely fascinated watching those Spanish dancers. It was just incredible. And Morin just couldn't stand that stuff.

I went shopping with Morin once, and his idea of shopping was go in, you see something, buy it, and go away. My idea was, well, I'd look at it and tell the guy I'd be back later after I'd looked at some other things. Morin got absolutely disgusted with my shopping habits. I had some of the things I bought there. But I don't now; I think they're all gone.



I was fascinated by the Mediterranean. We didn't go into Toulon. I didn't see Toulon till I was an admiral. But I'm trying to remember where we were, in a French port, when we were overrun by salesmen from Germany.

Paul Stillwell: Villefranche?

Admiral Crowe: It may have been Villefranche. With cuckoo clocks and Bavarian mugs, and whatever they push up there, and of course we were very vulnerable and bought all kinds of stuff. I had several mugs around here, but we gave those all away. And clocks. They all were selling clocks in a glass envelope there where you could see all the workings of the clock, and so forth. Everybody was fascinated with those. We had a whole ship full of them. I had never bought anything. Oh, yes. I bought a homburg in Naples. I don't know why I bought a homburg.

Paul Stillwell: Were you a hat collector yet?

Admiral Crowe: Well, no. I wasn't. And for some reason I bought that damned homburg, and I had it for years and never wore it. It became part of my collection. But why I bought it that night absolutely escapes me. But anyway, I bought a homburg. [Chuckle]. I thought homburgs were distinguished and dignified, etc.

Paul Stillwell: Well, they were. I remember my dad had one, and it gave him that look.

Admiral Crowe: But I never had the nerve to wear it. It was a wonderful cruise.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get to Malta? North Africa?

Admiral Crowe: We got to Malta, and I was fascinated by Malta. Absolutely fascinated. We were in Malta with a couple of other American submarines when we went in there. I remember the *Tusk* was in there. I had two friends on it. Have you been in Malta?

Paul Stillwell: No, I haven't.

Admiral Crowe: The harbor in Malta is just—it's masonry from the Knights Templar days, and it's just incredible. Of course, it's an HMS, or was. In the Royal Navy it was a ship. Their stations were called HMS. We went through a lot of the battlements where the ghosts were supposed to roam. It just was absolutely intriguing, the whole harbor. And, of course, they withstood the siege in the 1600s of the Turks. And then they had a place called the Gut in the middle of Valletta, which was where all the nasty things were going on. We made a liberty there one night and were suitably awed. Some British officers took us on a tour of the Gut.

Paul Stillwell: What specifically do you remember about that?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, just that there were a lot of bars and a lot of dancing and a lot of hoopla, and rough customers in the bars.

Paul Stillwell: It was a place of some violence among sailors too.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. It was a real sailor port. I ran into that in Tahiti. But you got the impression in Malta that there were just rough customers in the Gut. I assume there were a lot of drugs there, although drugs were not a prominent topic in that day and age. I never was on a ship where we really had a drug problem, although I know the Navy was having drug problems, but I never saw it on board ships that I was on.

Paul Stillwell: But much more so in the '60s and '70s.

Admiral Crowe: And on little ships it's easier to catch the problem. If it had been there we would have detected it immediately. You can't hide it.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about your enlisted crew members?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it's funny now. I can recall some of the names off the *Flying Fish*, but I can't recall many of the names on the *Clamagore*. But about two or three

years ago I went to an annual meeting of the *Clamagore* veterans and spoke. And I did dig up some of the names from the *Clamagore* that night for my speech. Of course, Ajax Miller figured prominently in the whole thing, because I could remember Ajax. But we had several crew members. Had a real good pharmacist's mate, I remember, who was a big man in the crew. I was trying to remember who the chief of the boat was. I just don't remember.

I remember I liked the crew. The night I left, in Key West, I was really quite saddened by leaving the ship. I felt like I had sort of grown up in the submarine business on that ship.

Paul Stillwell: Well, particularly when you had to do part of the XO's job as well.

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: So that was really a broadening tour, professionally.

Admiral Crowe: Very much so. And then my first experience in Guppies, and so forth. At that stage the Guppy was a big deal in the submarine force—a high-speed submarine. We were right behind the *Amberjack*, and that sort of thing. I really liked the *Clamagore*.

Paul Stillwell: How did she compare in capability to the new *Tangs* that were just coming out?\*

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think she compared very well. The problem was that the new *Tangs* wandered around in the wilderness for about three or four years before they ever got them squared away. They had all kinds of problems when they first came out, particularly with the pancake diesel engine. I was on the *Wahoo* when we lengthened her and put a decent diesel in there. And until that happened the *Wahoo* was a problem. God, there was always something out. A screw wouldn't work, or something else. They

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\* The Guppies led up to a class of diesel-powered fast attack submarines, the first new U.S. submarine design after World War II. The first of the class was the *Tang* (SS-563), commissioned 25 October 1951.

were just constantly dogged by technical problems. But once they got that problem squared away everything fell in place, and they were pretty good ships.

*Clamagore* didn't have that. It was an EB submarine.\* I had not been on an EB submarine. *Flying Fish* was not. We just didn't have any big technical problems while I was on the *Clamagore*. Of course, the skipper had been a squadron engineer, and he was very partial toward engineering problems. He had been on a submarine during the war that had been one of the legends of the submarine force. What was his name? Anyway, the submarine that flooded the machinery space one night when they were surfacing and lost a lot of their capability. When they survived the attack, why, then they had the problem of getting home. I don't think they had a gyro, and they didn't have a bunch of other stuff, because they'd lost most of the machinery in the space. And they were using air out of the torpedoes to surface.

Paul Stillwell: Wow.

Admiral Crowe: And the trip back, we heard about it many times from him. And then I read about it later in—the skipper wrote a book. It really was a marvelous feat, what they did. And while they were submerged under attack they destroyed all their classified because they thought they were going to have to surface and just give up, but they didn't. I used to know all those people's names, but I don't recall them well now.

Paul Stillwell: Those World War II veterans populated the submarine force for a number of years afterward.

Admiral Crowe: Many years, yes. And the stories were legend, and there were a lot of them. The World War II submarine, in retrospect, was really an amazing machine—what it took and what it survived, etc., etc.

Paul Stillwell: Which specific duties of the exec did you take over when Ajax Miller was having his problems?

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\* EB – the Electric Boat Division of the General Dynamics Corporation is a long-time submarine building yard in Groton, Connecticut.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I took over managing the crew and general quarters, and that sort of stuff, from Ajax. Ajax had been on the crew of a captured German submarine that we, after the war, used in experimentation. He was on that crew for a while.

I don't remember a lot of the events. Of course, I got married on the *Clamagore*, and that took my mind off a lot. Also, I was mixed up in that law school business, which Captain Morin thought was stupid. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Well, you haven't talked about the process of meeting Shirley, and the development of that relationship.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it all happened on the *Clamagore*. My father had a heart attack, and I went home for the recovery. My mother was still alive. I drove from Key West to Washington, left the car in Washington with my cousin, and then flew home. My father was in the hospital; I think he got out while I was there. I can remember him driving for the first time after he got out. My God, it scared me to death. But I spent a few days there.

We had a friend by the name of Roddy Sanger, and he was married to a girl named Molly Ann, whom Shirley had flown with.\* They lived in Oklahoma City. Roddy and I were pledged together at OU when I was there. Shirley was coming over to spend the weekend with them, and they went to dance lessons or something. I don't know what they did, but they asked me to go out and meet Shirley and bring her to their apartment on Friday night while they went to their dance course, or whatever.

I went out to Oklahoma City's municipal airport and picked her out of the group and introduced myself and took her back to the Sangers' apartment. I'd had the wisdom to buy a fifth of whiskey before all that started. And when the man that they had arranged for her to have a date with over the weekend to go to the football game showed up, I sort of gave him the bottle of whiskey and he disappeared in the kitchen, and Shirley and I sat in the front room and talked. [Laughter] That's when all the trouble started.

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\* Shirley Grennell was a stewardess for American Airlines before she met Crowe.

Before she flew away I asked her if she'd like to go to the Army-Navy football game in two weeks.

Paul Stillwell: Was this in 1953?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. She was flying into New York back and forth, but she said yes, she would like to, and arranged it. And then I saw her a couple of times before then. I was in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and she was flying out of Tulsa into New York. In fact, when the weekend was over and I flew back to Washington she flew to New York and I drove up to New York, and we spent the day together up there.

Paul Stillwell: So the spark must have caught pretty quickly.

Admiral Crowe: It did. It caught immediately. And by the time the Army-Navy game came along I asked her to marry me.

Paul Stillwell: How much elapsed time was that from your first meeting?

Admiral Crowe: About two or three weeks.

Paul Stillwell: My goodness.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were advanced in age. I was 29 and she was 26, and we made up our minds pretty quickly.

Paul Stillwell: That fifth of whiskey was one of the best investments you ever made.

Admiral Crowe: It was, absolutely. The guy's name was Johnson or something. I forget. I never saw him again. [Chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: So, how did you communicate in the meantime?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we talked on the phone all the time. We didn't have faxes or e-mail or cell phones or anything else. And then several times I flew down to New York and met her when she was coming in. I do remember, after we had decided to get married, I met her in New York City. I was in PCO school in New London.\* And at the end of the weekend I was—she had brought some things up that she thought she might use, and I got on the train in uniform carrying a sewing machine and a set of golf clubs to take back to New London with me. [Laughter] That caused a lot of comment on the train, the young lieutenant carrying a sewing machine and a bunch of golf clubs in the middle of the weather. It was January. She never used those golf clubs while we were married. [Laughter] She used the sewing machine. Then I went back to PCO school, and when I finished PCO school I flew directly home and got married.

Paul Stillwell: When was the marriage?

Admiral Crowe: February 14, 1954. That's Valentine's Day, so I can remember that.

Paul Stillwell: So that really was a short time from when you had first met her.

Admiral Crowe: Three months, something like that. And our parents had set it all up. Shirley had gone down to Oklahoma City and met my parents on her own. I thought that was a rather courageous act, particularly because my father was formidable. He was a little bit overwhelming. But she went down there and knocked on the door and said, "I'm Shirley." But the families arranged the wedding in her hometown.

I had a few friends come to it from the Navy. Vernon Weaver showed up, and Jack Jones, the guy I debated with at the Naval Academy showed up. And then a whole bunch of Oklahoma people. It was a beautiful day, absolutely lovely. It wasn't a winter day at all. In this little church that Shirley had grown up in. It was a wooden church.

Paul Stillwell: What was the name of the town?

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\* PCO – prospective commanding officer.

Admiral Crowe: Okeene. And the Okeene Methodist Church. Shirley's home was right across the street from it. Then we took our honeymoon in Mexico City, courtesy of American Airlines. She had so many miles when she retired from there that she could use, so we flew down to Mexico City and spent a week there.

Then we went up to New Hampshire; the ship was in the yard in Portsmouth. Started our home in a place called the 1798 House, which is a little wooden house built in 1798. Had two bedrooms, and cracks in the floor. You could see the basement through the floor. We lived there about a month, I think, before the ship got out of the yard and went back to Key West.

Paul Stillwell: So that was the end of her flying career, I take it.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that was the end of her flying career. Shirley has flown more miles and knows less about what keeps it up than anybody I ever knew. [Chuckle]. She was absolutely fearless in an airplane. It didn't bother her at all. And she's traveled a lot in an airplane since then.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you sort of have to take that on faith. What was Key West like as a homeport?

Admiral Crowe: Well, for a single man it was horrible. For a family it was very nice. And, of course, the weather was nice. But the town was pretty degenerate. I think they chased gambling out of there. They chased gambling out when Truman started wintering down there, so there wasn't any gambling when I was in Key West.\* But we had all kinds of night clubs, and neon signs "50 Girls 50," and stuff like that. It was a tough town. It was a sailor town, and is still a sailor town. I knew that before I ever got there because I went down there with the admiral when I was his aide. They had a Cuban

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\* Harry S. Truman maintained a "Little White House" at the Key West naval base during his term as President from 1945 to 1953.



mayor, who ran the place. And, of course, the Navy was his biggest customer, so we had a part in the running of the place.

Our friend Jane Barrett got us a house down there called a “Bahama” house, which is one of those houses the lumber came over from the Bahamas when they built it. George Morin came in and said, “You know, if the termites quit holding hands here this house is going to fall down.” Well, it did. [Chuckle]. It had termites all over the place. I’d never seen termites before. They’d be on the sheets of your bed. And I put my hand through the wall one night on the stairway, and sure enough it was termite damage.

But a woman owned it and rented it part of the year, and Jane had gotten it for us. I used to get up in the morning and go out in the garden and eat breakfast out in the open garden, and then walk to the base where the ship was. It was a pretty ideal existence.

We were only down there a few weeks. Now, why do I say that? We had just come back from the yard, and then I got detached after we showed up down there.

Paul Stillwell: Why do you say it wasn’t a good place for single men?

Admiral Crowe: Well, there were lots of girls, but there weren’t any decent ones in the place. The intellectual expansion of Key West didn’t have much to offer. [Chuckle] There were a lot of tourists, of course.

Paul Stillwell: So it was an amazing stroke of fortune that your father had his health problem when he did.

Admiral Crowe: Absolutely. I said he and I had heart trouble at the same time. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Different kind of heart situations.

Admiral Crowe: That’s right. Just plain good fortune was all it was. And he lived longer. He didn’t die then. When I think back on all that it really is amazing. Certainly Key West didn’t have anything to offer me for finding a wife.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about the PCO school?

Admiral Crowe: Phil Beshany was the PCO instructor when I was in PCO school.<sup>\*</sup> He was later my squadron commander when I commanded *Trout*. It was a six-weeks course that focused almost solely on the attack problem. We spent hours and hours in the simulator. Then we went to sea for a week on the school boats and fired a lot of torpedoes. That was the sum and substance of the course, really, was your ability to operate the TDC and to conduct an attack.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you'd apparently had a number of experiences up till then with that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I'd had a number of them, but not a lot.

Paul Stillwell: So this was fairly intense.

Admiral Crowe: This was very intense. We did have other things, lectures on leadership, and if there were some engineering problems that were particularly dogging us, why, somebody would come in and talk to us about it. And the administration. But once you finished there, well, you theoretically were cleared to be an exec or a CO of a submarine. And in my class were several guys. Jim Calvert was in there while he was in command of a submarine that was in the yard, and he went through PCO school.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: He was several years senior to you.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, four or five. Of course, he was a big name in the submarine force, because he'd been the detailer, and then later went into the nuclear business. I remember he had to leave PCO course early. They had a fire on his ship while he was in the yard, and he had to get back up there.

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<sup>\*</sup> Commander Philip A. Beshany, USN. Beshany, who retired as a vice admiral, is the subject of a Naval Institute oral history.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant Commander James F. Calvert, USN, commanded the fast attack submarine *Trigger* (SS-564) from January 1953 to April 1955.

Paul Stillwell: Who were the instructors?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I was trying to recall. I can't remember the instructors. Of course, for the PCO course Beshany did a lot of the instructing. He was the PCO guy. So he wasn't sitting on a large staff or anything. He just sort of ran the course and did a lot of the lecturing. But he had a couple of assistants, and I don't recall who they were.

Ernie Barrett, my friend that I see a lot of down in Annapolis, was in the course with me.\* We were on the same ship together at one time. We weren't then, but we were on the *Flying Fish* together. And Ernie was getting ready to take the *Threadfin* when he went to PCO school. We had about, I think, 15 people in it. Not many more than that. Several people had been twice to PCO school, but I only went once.

Of course, one of the problems in PCO school is, right there in the room are your competitors. [Chuckle] It's a little different than Submarine School, when everybody was starting. But everybody there had been relatively successful in the submarine force, and they were right in the heat of the battle.

Paul Stillwell: Was the class standing important, as it had been in Submarine School?

Admiral Crowe: I don't remember that so much, but it was important to make sure that when you left, that the guy that ran it was impressed by you. [Chuckle] I don't even remember if we had a class standing. Now, I was the more junior guy in the course. Most of the people in the course were getting ready to take command. I was just there because we were in the yard.

Paul Stillwell: But how did that competition manifest itself?

Admiral Crowe: Just in the number of fish you fired and whether you hit and didn't hit. And in the middle of an approach, why, of course everybody was acting as other people's fire control party, and if you missed you always had to find somebody to blame for it. [Laughter]. Some tempers flared occasionally, I remember that.

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\* Lieutenant Ernest R. Barrett, USN.

Paul Stillwell: Did you find that you had a knack for making approaches and attacks?

Admiral Crowe: I was fairly good at it, and you get better as you begin to really have some time doing it. The hard part of it, of course, is to visualize in your mind what it really looks like if you're sitting above that, watching it all. What that ship's doing and what you're doing.

Paul Stillwell: Sort of an imaginary God's-eye view.

Admiral Crowe: It's all got to be in your mind. You can look over at the TDC, etc., but a really good approach officer, when he put that periscope up he knew exactly what these ships were doing. He could see immediately if the ship had zigged. Then he had to reorient his whole mental approach. That's the one thing all submarine officers had in common. They had to have some talent with spatial relations.

People compensated for their weaknesses by the way they did their approaches. Like Dusty Dornin during the war; he wouldn't go to the bridge. He would sit there and watch the TDC, and Beach was his officer of the deck up watching all the stuff fire. But he didn't want to be bothered with that. He wanted it so that just he and the ship he was shooting at were his world, and he found staying down there in the conning tower watching that TDC was better in that regard. I can certainly sympathize with that.

Other people didn't like that. Other people preferred to be on the bridge, or actually shooting in the conning tower. I think Russell Kefauver, who was my tactics instructor in sub school, was probably the best I ever knew personally in keeping things straight in his mind. I watched him make some illustrative attacks and, my God, he was just marvelous. And he did it all in his mind.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Dennis Wilkinson claimed he did a lot of it that way also.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Of course, the acid test was whether you hit or not. That was all it was. Everybody had a different way of doing it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, in World War II an accurate attack didn't necessarily produce hits because of the torpedo problems.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That really bitched up everything. The injustices that were done in World War II probably were incredible. If we'd had a reliable weapons system, then we could have been much more confident in what we were saying people could do or couldn't do. And I'm sure there were several injustices. I've discovered even in the submarine force, after our grounding on *Flying Fish*, that people who were not there at all didn't hesitate to make judgments. They just jumped right in and told you everything you should have done. And the submarine force was not gentlemanly about it. They were bloodthirsty.

Paul Stillwell: How reliable was *Clamagore* mechanically?

Admiral Crowe: Very. It was very good. We always felt the EB boats were probably the best. Well, Manitowoc was supposed to have made the best boat, but they didn't make a lot of them.† EB and Portsmouth were the two boats that were most common. I think the Fairbanks-Morse engine was a little better than EB's, but as a boat EB's was better constructed. At least that was the conventional view.

Paul Stillwell: Was there anything out of the ordinary about that yard period at Portsmouth?

Admiral Crowe: No. I can remember going out—because I'd just been married—and making the test dives after the yard period. I'd never really given much time of day to the test dives before, or thought about it very much. Then I got married and discovered: What am I doing down here at 412 feet? I later made a dive on the *Sunfish* when I was

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\* During the early part of World War II, U.S. torpedoes were notorious for running deeper than the designed settings and for malfunctioning or poorly functioning exploders in cases in which the torpedoes did hit their targets. For details see David E. Cohen, "The Mk-XIV Torpedo: Lessons for Today," *Naval History*, Winter 1992, pages 34-36.

† During World War II the Manitowoc Ship Building Company in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, built a number of submarines for the U.S. Navy.

in Naples, and went down to 1,200 feet.\* That's the deepest I've ever been. And I thought: "What am I doing here as an admiral? This is what junior lieutenants ought to be doing. If anything happens down here at 1,200 feet I'm not going to have anything to do with it one way or another. I wouldn't even know where to start." And here we were at 1,200 feet.

Paul Stillwell: What took you out in the *Sunfish*?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I just went out to ride it, and they'd just come out of their intermediate upkeep, and he felt he had to go down to depth to test everything. So, by God, we went down to 1,200 feet.

Paul Stillwell: Was that when you were CinCSouth?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was.

Paul Stillwell: So you just went out for curiosity, or what?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. I didn't know he was going to do that. I just went for a ride. Of course, after it was over I was glad. I had never been down that deep. I thought that was pretty big stuff, going down that deep.

Paul Stillwell: So, was it just routine overhaul work on the boat?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It wasn't anything major. I ran into him sometime in the last year. He came up and introduced himself, said he was the skipper of the *Sunfish* when I went out on it. I forget where it was, but someplace, and he and I talked a few minutes.

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\* USS *Sunfish* (SSN-649) was a nuclear-powered submarine that was commissioned in 1969 and served until her decommissioning in 1997.

Paul Stillwell: Portsmouth is such a quaint town, especially if you're interested in history.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Of course, we lived in London many years later. That was the way London was. The whole damn town just had history dripping out of the place. Everywhere you went, something had happened there worth remembering. That was the most enjoyable thing about London.

I think on *Clamagore* was the first time I'd really begun to think about the possibility of having command of a submarine. And I watched George Morin like a hawk, because my curiosity had been aroused about what skippers do or don't do.

Paul Stillwell: It's curious that you hadn't contemplated that previously.

Admiral Crowe: I had contemplated it, but not as a serious proposition.

Paul Stillwell: Any specific lessons that you learned from him?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I learned from George not to butt in so damned much, on the landings and shoots and so forth. I didn't think the officers were getting the most out of it, because he just couldn't stand to leave it alone.

I remember one time on the *Clamagore*. The skipper, as I said, was a cribbage player, and he found that there was a leak in the sound phones back in the after battery, where the crew's mess was, and he used to sit in his bunk and listen to the conversations back there on the phone. They didn't know that he could hear. And one time two of them were playing cribbage back there and one guy said—I forget exactly how cribbage goes, but, “Two-four-two-two-four-two-six-two-eight-two-eight.”

The other guy said, “Two-sixty,” or something like that.

One of them said, “Well, I don't know if it's that or not. Count it up.”

And the other said, “Well, those bastards up in the wardroom don't count it up.”

He said, “Well, those bastards are gentlemen. Now, count the goddamn thing up.” [Laughter]

I learned from George not to have such a fierce temper. I mean, when he got mad he'd get red in the face, and puff and sputter and salivate [chuckle], and all kinds of things. And, you know, taking cribbage so seriously and leaving that \$5.00 sitting out in the hall. I thought that was a disaster, the whole bloody thing.

Paul Stillwell: Would you say he had the crew intimidated?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, he did. Of course, he had seen some of that in World War II, where we had skippers that did intimidate their crews.

He had a way of expanding stories so that they came out flattering, but it was not the real event.

Paul Stillwell: [Laughter] I think we all do that at times.

Admiral Crowe: We bent some of the bow back one time, and he used to describe that incident as if only a good ship handler could have done that, and I sort of doubted that. But, anyway, I took George with a grain of salt. And he did run a good ship. We had a good ship. And that's one thing I learned. It's really hard to have a more satisfying experience than to command a ship that everybody's working together and that they all have one mind on it, in that they like each other.

I liked the enlisted men in the submarine force. There were some exceptions, but not many. Of course, today it's all changed. Hell, the enlisted men are as educated as the officers are in some of these things. The equipment they've mastered is just incredible.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else to remember about the *Clamagore*?

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't think so.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the assignment to the White House was certainly unusual. How did that come about?



Admiral Crowe: I don't know how that came about. A friend of mine had the job.

Paul Stillwell: Who was he?

Admiral Crowe: Matty Matthews, out of my class.<sup>\*</sup> I had been a roommate of his up in New London, in the BOQ for some. Then he got that job in the White House working for Beach.<sup>†</sup> I guess he was going to go back to sea. Anyway, the first thing I knew I was going into that job, and Matty went somewhere else. I guess that's the way he got the job. He had been in Key West when Beach was in the *Amberjack*, and Beach had approved him being assigned to the White House. But when my law school fell through, then they started scrambling around to get me other orders, and that's when I went to the White House.

That was the first time Shirley and I lived in Washington. We went to a little apartment very close to where we just finished living, the Quaker Lane Apartments there in Alexandria, and set up shop.

Paul Stillwell: I'm sure it was a lot less congested than it is now.

Admiral Crowe: It was, yes. There are a lot of things about Washington that were nicer. On the other hand, there still was heavy traffic. I was quite awed, of course, to be in the White House. Like everything else, after you do it a while you get pretty comfortable and act like you were born there or something. And the opportunity to work for Beach was interesting, because I'd heard a lot about Ned Beach.

Paul Stillwell: How had this come to you about him? What things had you heard?

Admiral Crowe: Well, just that he was very bright and a golden boy, and he wrote books about the submarine business. Number two in his class, etc., etc. In the submarine force,

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<sup>\*</sup> Lieutenant Commander Howard L. Matthews, Jr., USN.

<sup>†</sup> Commander/Captain Edward L. Beach, USN, served as naval aide to the President from January 1953 to February 1957.

of course, the main thing you heard about him was he took the *Amberjack* and did a lot of new things down there with a high-speed submarine.\* He would make dramatic ascents from depth to periscope depth, take a look, and go back down, all in a matter of seconds, and use big angles on the ship to do that. Of course, people were scared of large angles on the ship because they were afraid you'd lose control. Then you really did have a problem. But he ran that ship right up to the envelope. He pushed the envelope on all of it.

Paul Stillwell: That was just his nature.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, evidently. It is interesting. His personality and his eccentricities were the most fascinating of all the people I worked with. He wanted to analyze what the hell was going on there. Because he really had a lot of flaws in his sort of general approach to life. He was so focused, so enamored with the Navy, that really anything outside of the Navy didn't interest him very much.

He had a secretary that was madly in love with him, and I don't think he ever noticed. It never even occurred to Beach. [Chuckle] And if it had occurred to him it wouldn't have impressed him very much. He didn't think that thing was very important. [Laughter]

I told you the story about DiMaggio?

Paul Stillwell: The tape recorder wasn't running when you told that story.

Admiral Crowe: He came out of the office, and he had a yeoman name of Langelo, and Langelo and I were talking about baseball. Just as Beach came out, the name DiMaggio went by, and Beach said, "DiMaggio—I've heard that name. What the hell does he do?" [Laughter]

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\* Beach commanded the Guppy submarine *Amberjack* (SS-522) in the late 1940s.

Paul Stillwell: That was the year that DiMaggio married Marilyn Monroe.\*

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's probably why he'd heard it. [Laughter]

When I read his books I was quite interested in the love scenes, because really I considered Beach a rather naïve person about some of the facts of life.† It just seemed to me he was above that sort of thing, or I don't know what.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he and Ingrid did have three children.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they did. [Chuckle] And actually the love scenes in the books weren't too bad. Of course, Jim Webb would say you've got to live with that for all your life if you've followed this business.‡ I think the love scenes in Webb's books were better than Beach's. [Laughter]

But Beach was terribly energetic. God, he had a lot of energy. And worked like a workaholic.

Paul Stillwell: Did the job really demand that degree?

Admiral Crowe: I don't know that it did. But he made it. And, of course, he had that kind of personality that, he was almost a Marine. If you assigned him something he never said, "No, I don't do that." He would just, "Aye aye, sir." He would take on every responsibility. He kept accumulating responsibilities in the naval aide's office. It never occurred to him to say no, or "No, we don't do that," "I can't do that," "I'm busy," all that stuff. He was just willing to take on the whole world as long as somebody would give it to him. But he didn't read people, always, very well, and that's absolutely essential, I think, in my judgment. I mean, somehow when you meet a person you've got

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\* Recently retired New York Yankees baseball player Joe DiMaggio married movie star Marilyn Monroe in 1954; they were divorced later that same year.

† Beach wrote a number of books, most notably the submarine novel *Run Silent, Run Deep*, which was published in 1955 and later made into a movie.

‡ James H. Webb served as Secretary of the Navy from 1 May 1987 to 23 February 1988. He was decorated for heroism as a Marine Corps officer in combat in Vietnam in the late 1960s. He later became an author and in 2007 a U.S. Senator from Virginia. For details see Robert Timberg, *The Nightingale's Song* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

to understand—very shortly you’ve got to figure out whether he’s for you or against you, and Beach wasn’t very good at that.

Now, Beach did not have mean thoughts. He was not a mean person or a shyster or a manipulator. But the trouble is, the rest of the world is. [Chuckle]. I mean, I always felt about West Point graduates that they had to be out of the Military Academy ten years before they discovered what the real world was all about. Because in West Point they didn’t teach them about the real world; they taught them about some theoretical, conceptual, abstract nonsense. And it’s like this girl with the crush on him. Beach didn’t know what was going through her mind, but I knew in a matter of seconds what was going through her mind. But he didn’t.

I don’t think Beach really understood that some people didn’t like him. They were jealous of him. And if he did, he just pushed it aside as being very unimportant. Well, it was unimportant enough to foul him up in the end.

Paul Stillwell: What do you mean by that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I mean that he didn’t make flag because there were some people that were jealous of him, including Admiral Fife. I always thought it was sort of an essential part of his career to—anybody that was so focused on a career and wanted it so badly should be a little more sensitive to what he was doing and the impact it had on other people, that they didn’t always enjoy him being successful.\*

Paul Stillwell: Did you see any examples of that that you remember specifically?

Admiral Crowe: Well, no, I don’t remember it that much, but that was just the impression I had. When I was the admiral’s aide and on the staff, I would hear senior officers talk about Beach all the time. We had two on the SubLant staff there—of course, wartime skippers—who didn’t like Beach.

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\* For more reflections on Beach’s personality, see the Naval Institute oral history of Admiral Harold E. Shear, USN (Ret.), who served as Beach’s executive officer in the submarine *Trigger* (SS-564) in 1952.

Paul Stillwell: Who were they?

Admiral Crowe: Well, one's name was Garrison, and the other one, I think, was Whitaker.\* Of course, Whitaker didn't like a lot of people.

Paul Stillwell: Reuben Whitaker?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And those guys had a proprietary interest in the submarine force they knew, and what they had done, and they were not too warm about any upstarts that came along and monkeyed around. I'm sure they felt the same way about Rickover when he came along and they thought, "Well, this guy is just out of his mind."

There were two schools of thought on Beach. There was a whole covey of people that thought what he was doing down there with the *Amberjack* was great, and a whole covey of people that thought it was just showboating. If Beach understood that, it was never obvious to me. Now, he may have understood it very well, I don't know.

Paul Stillwell: Well, one thing that Admiral Shear told me, and they served together in the new *Trigger*, was that Ned was inclined to criticize his bosses, and didn't seem to realize how that was coming across.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, he would tell the emperor if he didn't have clothes on. And he assumed everybody was happy to hear that. [Chuckle] They were not. And I think it was those vested interests that frustrated him becoming a flag officer. I don't know that. I was not privy to any of the actual doing or not doing. But to this day his classmates are complaining about the fact that he was not promoted.

Paul Stillwell: I did not know that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I heard one the other day, Ernie Schwab.† This was two years ago, I guess, at a memorial service for Ned Beach.\* Schwab got up in the questioning

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\* Captain Malcolm E. Garrison, USN.

† Captain Ernest L. Schwab, USN (Ret.), Naval Academy class of 1939.

period and lamented that satanic people had kept Beach from being promoted, etc., etc., and what a terrible injustice it was. And you heard the same thing about Slade Cutter just before he died.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Slade himself never complained about that.

Admiral Crowe: No, he didn't. And neither did Beach. I never heard Beach complain. Now, I'm sure he was bitter, but I never heard him. Now, I didn't.... I spent one year with Beach and never was with him again, so what the hell do I know about it? But there are malevolent forces at work in the world, and you'd better damn sure know who they are. I mean, if you really want to play the chess game.

[Interruption]

Well, you meet a lot of people. My first skipper on the *Flying Fish*, Freeland Carde, was, I thought, always a little too idealistic for the real world, and not quite understanding some of the things. On the other hand I met a lot of people that at a very young age understood what was going on.

Paul Stillwell: So Ned didn't have what you might call street smarts.

Admiral Crowe: I never really thought he did. He thought that gentlemen fought with rules and so forth and, of course, what he was engaged in was not rules. You know, Jerry Miller is a contemporary of Ned Beach's.<sup>‡</sup> He understood the game very well. He was one of these people who did understand it.

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\* Beach died on December 1, 2002.

† Captain Cutter died 9 June 2005.

‡ Gerald E. Miller, who eventually became a vice admiral, graduated from the Naval Academy in the class of 1942, three years behind Beach. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

Paul Stillwell: Jerry Miller's got the kind of personality that you just automatically like.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But not everybody does.

Paul Stillwell: Really?

Admiral Crowe: That's the trouble with a guy you automatically like. There's people that don't like him. [Laughter] And they don't like their success, that's what it is. My friend, Matty Matthews—I just mentioned his name—said, "You've got to start believing in luck when you see your classmates getting ahead." [Laughter] That's a pretty sage statement.

Paul Stillwell: What was the division of labor between you and Ned in that job?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was the naval aide to the President, and I was sort of his gofer. But what he assigned to me was that I took care of the bomb shelter. I became the leading authority in Washington on bomb shelters. And I ran the basement there where we had the bomb shelter, and there were a bunch of officers in the bomb shelter. Theoretically there wasn't anything going on day to day in the bomb shelter, but we were prepared for people to all go there and work. And anything to do with that, or the people that worked down there.

Then I worked with a guy by the name of George Fowler, who was a supply officer that had Camp David.\* And then we had the boats down at the Navy Yard. I worked for Walter Slye, too, sort of.† But I worked in the White House, and Walter was down at the Navy Yard. So I took care of the boats. I didn't do Camp David. Fowler went up there a couple of times, but I didn't have that. Then I generally did anything that Ned Beach wanted.

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\* Lieutenant George O. Fowler, Jr., Supply Corps, USN. Camp David is a secluded presidential retreat near Thurmont, Maryland.

† Lieutenant Walter C. Slye, USNR.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get involved in the social side of the White House?

Admiral Crowe: No, I didn't. I always sort of wanted to. But the aides were all unmarried. They didn't take married men for social aides. We got into that some, because Beach ran the naval part of it. That's another thing. I think he took over all the aides, one of the little duties he acquired. But I did mostly what Ned Beach wanted. I wrote some memoranda, and I went and did some sort of investigative things. I delivered stuff all over Washington. I really learned my way around Washington in that job, because I was delivering things in every office in Washington.

Then I was lecturing everywhere on the bomb shelter. [Chuckle] People asking me all these questions as if I knew what I was talking about. Hell, I'd never been in a bomb shelter till the day I walked in there. But bomb shelters were popular in that era.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you've got a story in your book about how Ned was concerned about a threat of atomic attacks in several cities, and he wanted you on the alert for that.\*

Admiral Crowe: Well, and I think the book says he called me one night and said come in, which I did, and he and I sat there and watched the clock move past the witching hours which was supposed to have blown bombs all over the East Coast. And he said, "I don't think this is going to happen, but we'd sure look neglectful if we weren't in here. There isn't anybody else around here, just us." [Laughter] And I thought, "Well, I don't know if people would take a lot of comfort in that." [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: What were you supposed to do?

Admiral Crowe: I don't know. It wasn't clear to me. We were just going to get blown away with them, I guess. But we were in the bomb shelter at the point in time. The President was making a speech in the Statler. He just shoved it aside and didn't give it a second thought. Went over and made a speech, while we watched the clock go by [Chuckle]

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\* *The Line of Fire*, pages 39-41.



I thought as I was driving into town, here I've been lecturing all over Washington about the necessity to prepare for something like this, and my own wife was at home with no preparation. She didn't have a car, she couldn't go anywhere, she couldn't do anything, and here I was rushing in to the White House, in to Ground Zero, and everything I had told people to do I hadn't done myself.

Paul Stillwell: This was sort of reminiscent of when Ned was a first classman as a midshipman and Orson Welles had his Halloween broadcast, and Ned was trying to activate the brigade to repel them.\*

Admiral Crowe: I'd been with him quite a while before I ever heard that story. But it's a great story. [Laughter] He still, to this day—well, not now, but he was a little sensitive about it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I think he got teased a great deal about it.

Admiral Crowe: He did, yes. And it was interesting. His classmates, as far as I could tell, were not the jealous ones that hurt him. They were in other places. His class sort of admired Ned, and I never really blamed them for his problems. It was other people that were jealous.

And, of course, writing a book and getting money for it, that was criticized by many people in the Navy, the old hands. I didn't think there was anything wrong with that at all. It seemed to me that was fine if he could do it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it really redounded to the Navy's credit, because it portrayed it in a good light.

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\* On 30 October 1938, the day before Halloween, Orson Welles and other members of the cast of the Mercury Theater broadcast an adaptation of the story *War of the Worlds* on nationwide radio. The play was presented as if it were a live news broadcast of an invasion of New Jersey by Martians. Many listeners did not hear the explanation that it was a fictional program and thus believed it was a genuine news event.

Admiral Crowe: Boy, they didn't like it, though. I remember Garrison didn't like it. Garrison really unloaded on that. And when Ned had a boat he always came up with some public relations scheme. Like the *Triton* going around the world.\*

Paul Stillwell: Well, that's probably the foremost example.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But even when he had the *Trigger* he took it to Rio.<sup>†</sup> Jesus, you would have thought that Ned Beach discovered Rio de Janeiro. [Laughter] That's where the SubLant staff was following him up there, the staff I was on, and they thought, Jesus, every time we pick up the paper Ned's looking out over the mountain there with the statue of Christ in the background, or something. Oh, there was a lot of junior sniping at that. Ned didn't mind at all having a large profile in the press.

Paul Stillwell: He sort of inherited that from his dad, who was a popular writer.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: I think he did, yes.

Paul Stillwell: Did he ever discuss with you his books when he was working on them?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, he discussed the books, but he never discussed his father's problem. Everything I learned about him and his father I learned outside of Ned Beach, not with him. He never mentioned that.

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\* In the spring of 1960, the USS *Triton* (SSN-586), commanded by Captain Edward L. Beach, USN, made the first submerged circumnavigation of the world. Commissioned in November 1959, she was ostensibly a radar-picket submarine but actually a test ship for a two-reactor propulsion plant.

† USS *Trigger* (SS-564), a *Tang*-class fast attack submarine, was commissioned 31 March 1952. She had a displacement of 1,615 tons on the surface and 1,990 tons submerged. She was 269 feet long, 27 feet in the beam, and had a draft of 17 feet. Her top speed was 15 knots surfaced and 18 knots submerged. She was armed with eight 21-inch torpedo tubes. Commander Edward L. Beach, USN, was the first commanding officer. The boat's shakedown cruise for training the crew went to Brazil. During the cruise Beach sent a number of messages that complained about the submarine's pancake diesel engines. For details, see Admiral Harold E. Shear, "Those Disastrous Pancake Diesels" in Paul Stillwell, *Submarine Stories: Recollections from the Diesel Boats* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007), pages 227-231.

‡ His father, also named Edward Latimer Beach, was an 1888 Naval Academy graduate who wrote fiction for boys.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he later wrote a book about his dad's grounding.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. And when I was with him I didn't know much about that. I didn't know that background at all. I learned it later.

Paul Stillwell: But did he discuss his outside writing with you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, he did, a little bit. When they were going to make *Run Silent, Run Deep* into a movie, we all had a little lobby going there in the office as to who should play what parts, and so forth.

Paul Stillwell: Clark Gable was a little long in the tooth to be a submarine skipper at that point. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't know how much money he made out of that, but he must have made a considerable amount by the standards of the day.

Paul Stillwell: I would think so.

Admiral Crowe: But, you know, that was not looked at by some people—that's sort of like me going into politics. I made a lot of people mad because career officers don't do that sort of thing. They don't do that. Well, that's the way they looked at Ned getting money for a movie.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and he had the explanation that he had done that on his own time

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\* On 29 August 1916, while under the command of Captain Edward L. Beach, USN, the armored cruiser *Memphis* was anchored in the harbor of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. An unexpected tidal wave forced the ship ashore, where she was wrecked. The skipper's son wrote a detailed history: *The Wreck of the Memphis* (New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), published 50 years after the event.

rather than playing golf or some of the other things that officers did.

Admiral Crowe: So what?

Paul Stillwell: Right. How much interaction did you have with President Eisenhower?\*

Admiral Crowe: Not much. I met him. And he bumbled into the bomb shelter one day when I was down there. Then I had to show him around the bomb shelter. But that was about it. I didn't have much more than that. I've got a picture of him that he signed when I left.

But the guy that ran the White House was Sherman Adams; it wasn't Dwight Eisenhower.<sup>†</sup> Ike was doing big things. He ran it like he ran the Army. He didn't do much socializing with the people who worked there. My friend Fowler, who ran Camp David, had a lot to do with Mamie.<sup>‡</sup> George really had a high profile, because anything that changed at Camp David, why, Mamie was right on top of it, and if it was bad, why, Fowler got it.

Fowler was up there one night when she was up there by herself. And they always had a doctor from Bethesda in residence whenever she was there, and she would invite him over for the movie after dinner sometimes. So George went over there, and this doctor was there to watch the movie, and the stewards were all circulating, giving everybody drinks, and this doctor kept renewing his drink. The doctor got drunk. George called Beach as soon as he got out of the movie, and within a day the doctor was up in Alaska. [Laughter] They got rid of him. That was one thing about that job; you could get rid of people very quickly, very easily.

I'm going to have to go here.

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\* Dwight D. Eisenhower served as President of the United States from 20 January 1953 to 20 January 1961. During World War II he had been Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force for the invasion of Europe.

<sup>†</sup> Sherman Adams, who had served in the Marine Corps in World War I, was governor of New Hampshire from January 1949 to January 1953. He served as assistant to President Dwight D. Eisenhower from 21 January 1953 until his resignation on 22 September 1958.

<sup>‡</sup> Mamie Geneva Doud Eisenhower was the President's wife.

Paul Stillwell: All right. Thank you for another interesting interview. (End of Interview 6)

Paul Stillwell: Good morning, Admiral. Before we turned on the tape recorder, you said you have a story about Ned Beach and the presidential yacht.

Admiral Crowe: One of the things I learned in the White House is that, number one, there's always a fierce competition to get whatever organization you're in in front of the President, or draw attention to him, and so forth. And number two, when you called up anybody and requested anything and said, "I'm in the White House," you had to be very careful, because people would overdo things. If I called the Navy and told them I needed a hammer, they'd send me a gold plated one in a velvet box, or something like that. [Chuckle].

When President Eisenhower came in he eliminated the *Williamsburg*.<sup>\*</sup> You probably recall that, the presidential yacht. A very nice yacht. I'd been aboard it once or twice. I think he came to New London once when I was up there, and a friend of mine served on it, so I got to go aboard it, but I never did any cruising in it. It was out of commission by the time I got to the White House. The pilot was Walter Slye, who, when they put the *Williamsburg* out, they kept him on the White House staff, stationed with the remaining boats.<sup>†</sup>

When I was talking about it, why, Walter Slye headed the President's small-boat unit and they kept him on down at the Washington Navy Yard. In any event, he had grown up on the Potomac River. His father was a riverboat pilot on the Potomac River, and he traveled with his father a lot as a kid. Then he became captain of a tugboat, worked for some company there in Georgetown, gravel or something like that, lots of traffic on the river.

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<sup>\*</sup> USS *Williamsburg* (AGC-369) had originally been built in the 1930s as the steel-hulled, diesel-powered yacht *Aras* for Hugh Chisholm. In 1941 the Navy acquired the ship, renamed her *Williamsburg*, and converted her to a gunboat. She later was the presidential yacht from 5 November 1945 to 30 June 1953. She displaced 1,806 tons, was 244 feet long, 36 feet in the beam, had a maximum draft of 14 feet, and a top speed of 13.5 knots.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant Walter C. Slye, USNR, was the ship's first lieutenant. He was also an experienced Potomac River pilot and did the conning when the *Williamsburg* got under way.

The war came along and they started looking for people that could pilot ships, and Walter volunteered to come into the Navy, and they gave him a commission, I think as a warrant officer. He ended up out in the Pacific for a while at Guam bringing big ships in, and then in Japan as we went into occupation. And then, I think, he left the Navy. But when they put the *Williamsburg* in commission they were looking for somebody that knew an awful lot about the Potomac River and they discovered Walter in their files and asked him if he would consider coming back into the Navy and being the navigator of the *Williamsburg*, and they'd make him a lieutenant. He did come in and he was the navigator. When they put the ship out of commission, why, they sort of did in his job, so they kept him on as the head of the small boats that worked for the White House and were kept at the Navy Yard.

Well, when they put the *Williamsburg* out of commission the Navy—I don't think Beach—Beach may have had something to do with it, I don't know. But the Navy wasn't going to be shoved aside that easily. We had two or three small boats that always followed the *Williamsburg*—the press and the guard boat. And somebody in the Navy, I don't know who, got the wild idea, well, we'll take the best of those three small boats and we'll convert it into a pretty nice thing, and the President's still got a yacht, whether he knows it or not.

Paul Stillwell: Mini yachts.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And, of course, it wasn't near the size of the *Williamsburg*, but nevertheless. So they ran it over to Trumpy's in Annapolis, a small-boat shipyard, and started redoing this boat in a fashion that would be appropriate to the President of the United States. But nobody had consulted the President of the United States about this. The Navy just was doing it, and obviously it wasn't well known. But all of a sudden one day on the front page of *The Washington Post*, right down at the bottom, right in here, was a picture taken from the Academy side of Trumpy's that showed this thing alongside. And then there was an article in it about the Navy refurbishing this boat for the President.

Well, Sherman Adams hit the fan and we all went to battle stations. I don't know what part Beach played. I think he knew what was going on, but he hadn't paid much

attention. We rushed over to Annapolis and went through this little boat, and it was very nice. The decorator from Baltimore who had done the boat showed it to us. He was a little weird, about like a three-dollar bill. And he was showing Ned Beach the soft pile on the carpet and the curtains on the windows; they were silk. And Beach said, "Tear it all out."

The man said, "What? What? What?" It had already been paid for.

"Tear it all out." And so they tore it all out. Went down and got stuff off the *Williamsburg*, which had been put in stowage, and brought it back up and put it in the ship, and said there's nothing on the ship except what came off the *Williamsburg*. Never mentioned that the stuff that had been there was now in stowage and had already been paid for. [Chuckle] That was one of my first glimpses of realpolitik.

Paul Stillwell: Wasn't one of those boats named for President Eisenhower's granddaughter?

Admiral Crowe: *Barbara Ann*, yes. I know her now. In any event, that was a practical solution to what threatened to be a sort of political problem.

One other time we had a similar problem, not as of great moment. But the President was in the habit of eating a quick lunch at his desk and then going out on the lawn and driving golf balls into the back yard, and they had sort of a little green there for him. And of course, as always, when he was out there there were several people hanging around. Evidently he had some golf tees there that he used, and one day he came out and there were no golf tees there. It didn't bother him very much. He just put the ball on the grass and started hitting. He said, "Those damned squirrels got my golf tees." Well, big mistake.

We got a memorandum from Sherman Adams—ought to see what we can do about getting the squirrels from taking the golf tees. So being the low man on the totem pole I got the research project on this. You know, Beach's mind was always thinking. He said, "Well, we keep starlings off with a radio beam, so see if we can get a radio frequency that would bother squirrels." So I called the University of Maryland and got some professor that was big on this and asked him about my problem. He said, "Well,

no. That won't work. Maybe if you give me some tapes of squirrels I'll play them and see if there's something that—"

So we got two sergeants. The White House Army Signal Agency did all this dirty work. They trapped some squirrels. I wasn't there; I heard the tape. These two sergeants were there with this damned squirrel, and he said, "Well, they ain't making any noise. What good's the tape going to be if he doesn't make any noise?" And the guy said, "Give me that pencil. I'll get some noise out of him." And you heard this "SQUEAK." [Laughter] He jabbed this squirrel with this pencil, and we got all kinds of squeaking on the tape before it was through. Sent them out to the Maryland professor and got back a completely negative report, that that was not practical.

So the next suggestion was to trap the damned squirrels and send them out in the woods, and then they wouldn't bother the President's tees. So the White House Army Signal Agency was out there trapping squirrels. Another article on the front page of the *Post*. [Chuckle]. Maurine Neuberger—remember her?

Paul Stillwell: She was a senator from Oregon.

Admiral Crowe: Well, her husband had died, and she was taking his senatorial post.\* She made a speech on the floor of the Senate that the White House was destroying a White House institution. They were trapping squirrels and letting them go free in the woods, and there would be no more squirrels at the White House. Of course, again, the President didn't have the slightest idea what that was all about. [Laughter]. It was sort of like the general in Beetle Bailey who never knows what it's all about.†

Well, then a hateful memorandum came out and said: You can't do *that*. So we're out in the woods getting the squirrels and bringing them back. [Laughter]. And that all started with her speech. Those kinds of drills were quite common.

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\* Maurine B. Neuberger, a Democrat from Oregon, was elected in a special election on 8 November 1960 to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband, Richard L. Neuberger. She served from November 9, 1960, to January 3, 1961; also elected in 1960 for the term commencing 3 January 1961 and ending 3 January 1967. Both Beach and Crowe were gone from the White House by the time Mrs. Neuberger became a senator.

† Mort Walker's newspaper comic strip "Beetle Bailey."



Paul Stillwell: Do you have other examples like that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I have one or two dumb examples. I think I mentioned to you when we ran the big relocation drill for civil defense, the secretaries only had manual typewriters and they all complained when they had to go out in the woods and use a manual typewriter. So we started looking for electric typewriters that we could transfer to the woods so the secretaries' fingers wouldn't get tired. [Laughter]

And, oh yes, one day somebody gave the President a couple of Russian wolfhounds, and they put them up at Camp David. Mrs. Eisenhower was up there; she often went up by herself. And I told you about the guy drinking up there, the young doctor. She went into the kitchen one day and opened up her refrigerator and there was dog food in the refrigerator, and she said, "What's this dog food?"

Someone said, "Well, it's for the two Russian wolfhounds," because the staff up there was taking care of the dogs. And she got furious. "I will not have dog food in my refrigerator." So George Fowler and I were out looking for a refrigerator. And one of the guys we did business with over in Washington, a lot of business, gave us a refrigerator to put up there at Camp David for the dog food.

Paul Stillwell: Did *The Washington Post* get that?

Admiral Crowe: No, no. They didn't get that. One other thing they didn't get that I thought was rather interesting. When the President was nearing retirement he had bought that farm in Gettysburg. We started re-transplanting trees from Camp David up to Gettysburg. We had a chief petty officer up there that had built a golf green at Camp David for the President, and he was quite a gardener, so we just transplanted trees. But we had to transport them up there in an unmarked car. So Beach got on the phone. It was very seldom this happened, but it did happen in this case. He got on the phone, and he discovered that the anti-drug people had taken over a lot of cars, and they just sold them or junked them. So he called up the guy and said, "This is the White House. I'm naval aide to the President, and I need an unmarked car."

The guy said, "Well, so what?"

He said, “Well, I thought maybe you could get me one.”

He said, “That isn’t the way we do business here. You write me a letter and go through the goddamn procedure, and I’ll get you a car, but don’t bully me around.” That was an unusual answer.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds like an exceptional one.

Admiral Crowe: It was an exceptional answer. But we finally got an unmarked car that we brought trees up to Gettysburg in. But I remember that guy. [Chuckle] You didn’t push him.

Paul Stillwell: Do you have any other Camp David memories?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I didn’t spend much time up there. I just went up there to look around. I can remember seeing a painting that Eisenhower was working on personally. I really admired Eisenhower. I didn’t have much to do with him. I’ve got a picture of him with his signature on it in there. But I was quite an admirer of his, although I think he ran the White House much like he did an Army staff, and Sherman Adams ran the White House.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he had Walter Bedell Smith in World War II for that function.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he sure did. And Mrs. Eisenhower was a typical general’s wife. She’d had a lot of things done for her. But she had a little bite when she got annoyed or irritated, or didn’t go her way.

Paul Stillwell: So if she found dog food in her refrigerator she’d make a noise.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, she’d make a noise. She didn’t like politicians very well. She loved entertaining their Army friends, but I don’t think she liked politicians very well.

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\* Lieutenant General Smith was Eisenhower’s chief of staff in World War II.

And I didn't have much to do with her. I met her a couple times. But my compatriot, George, had a lot to do with her, because he ran Camp David, and he went to Camp David every time she was in camp, or anybody was in camp he was up there. He really liked them. He liked the First Family very much and was quite familiar with them, and was taking care of Camp David. He was a supply officer, a classmate of mine at the Naval Academy. But he had really defined duties. My duties were sort of amorphous. I was the bomb shelter man, and—

Paul Stillwell: Well, more ad hoc, whatever came up.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. Whatever came up Beach would call me in and see if I could help out or deliver a message or take a packet to somebody. I do remember that they'd just formed the CIA a few years before that.\* We did a lot of business with the CIA, and I had to go back and forth. They at that time were in the old BuMed observatory there, where we have quarters now.†

Paul Stillwell: That's on 23rd Street in Washington. In fact, that's where the CNO lives now, because there was mold discovered in Tingey House.

Admiral Crowe: Really?

Paul Stillwell: So Admiral Mullen is over in that BuMed area.‡

Admiral Crowe: I didn't realize that.

One of the sort of advantages of my job, which I didn't realize until after I got out of it, I learned about everything in town. At one time or another I was in practically every building in town, usually delivering something, but nevertheless I got to see. There were very few buildings I didn't get in. And then I learned an awful lot about getting my

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\* On 18 September 1947, as a result of the new National Security Act, the Central Intelligence Agency replaced the previous Central Intelligence Group on 18 September 1947.

† BuMed – the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

‡ Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 22 July 2005 to 29 September 2007, and then became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 1 October 2007.

way around Washington. And I learned a lot about the contact sport, or the blood sport of Washington. The competition in the White House was just fierce among people, starting with secretaries who carried their bosses' shoulder boards, and then the people themselves trying to get face time with the President. And Beach was very good at taking on new responsibilities. Anything anybody was hesitant to do, Beach would do it.

Paul Stillwell: He just had that can-do spirit.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. He truly did. And the man I talked to on the phone the other day, he knew that. He knew all about Beach's tremendous love for the Navy. And, of course, Beach was an expert on naval history. I used to enjoy that quite a bit. I think he was not the first man in the class; I think Ned was second, wasn't he?

Paul Stillwell: He was. Lou Roddis was first.\*

Admiral Crowe: And he used to talk to Roddis on the phone quite a bit. Now, Roddis, I believe, was in the early days of the nuclear program.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, he was. He worked with Admiral Rickover.†

Admiral Crowe: When I first got there I didn't have any idea who Roddis was, but he and Beach talked a lot and I think Roddis helped him get into the *Triton* command, and so forth. That was my first real association with the Class of '39, but through a variety of instances, including the Naval Academy, I seemed always to have known quite a few people in the class of '39, including Blackie Weinell.‡

Paul Stillwell: I've heard a lot of admiration for him.

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\* Midshipman Louis H. Roddis, Jr., USN. He later resigned his active commission to work in the Navy's nuclear power program as a civilian. He eventually retired as a Naval Reserve captain.

† Hyman G. Rickover was considered the father of the nuclear Navy. He ran the U.S. Navy's nuclear-power program for many years, from 1948 until he eventually left active duty in 1982 with the rank of four-star admiral on the retired list. Rickover Hall at the Naval Academy is named in his honor, as is the nuclear-powered attack submarine *Hyman G. Rickover* (SSN-709), which was commissioned 21 July 1984.

‡ John P. Weinell eventually became a four-star admiral. He retired in 1977.

Admiral Crowe: He was a mentor. I loved Admiral Weinel. He gave me some awful good advice. I may be a flag officer today because of him.

Thirty-nine was a big class. Of course, it was, from a promotion standpoint, wartime standpoint; it came just at the right time. There were a whole bunch of big names in that class. But I had a couple of professors at the Naval Academy in that class who had gone right up to commander in a year or two. And, of course, you follow those guys all your life. You read *Shipmate* and see where they go.\* And I had several in submarine school that were in '39 up there.

There are certain classes that you really get to know. The Class of '21 I used to follow quite a bit, because Admiral Crawford was in the class. That's amazing how they got tied up with the class. Everybody knew everybody's class [chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: That was one of those split classes, as '48 was.

Admiral Crowe: Was it? Well, it just sort of comes naturally to you after you've been in it a while, but I was always amazed at how everybody knew everybody else's business. [Laughter].

Paul Stillwell: Did you get much involved in the political side when you were there in the White House?

Admiral Crowe: Not really. Beach, of course, couldn't avoid it. Every now and then he'd get trapped. A lot of people didn't like him shoving his nose under the tent all the time, but he took it very well. Ned Beach, I never saw him really get upset with anybody. He didn't seem to have anybody he hated.

Paul Stillwell: He wound up working for Jerry Denton when Denton was in the Senate.<sup>†</sup>

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\* *Shipmate* is the Naval Academy alumni magazine.

<sup>†</sup> Rear Admiral Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr., USN (Ret.), was a Vietnam War prisoner. A Republican from Alabama, he served in the Senate from 2 January 1981 to 3 January 1987.

Admiral Crowe: Did he? Well, Jim Wilson, my classmate, ended up working for Denton too, for a while. He didn't do it long. I don't think he liked it very well.

I think Ned Beach had enough confidence in himself that a little sniping at him really didn't bother him a lot. And that was the first time I had seen people get—this is just part of the maturing process, but I assumed if you got bitterly criticized you were then shoved aside and there was no life left for you. That's not true at all. He took a lot of criticism and just absorbed it and went right on about his business and did very well at his business, and didn't let critics rock his boat at all.

Paul Stillwell: What was the basis for the criticism?

Admiral Crowe: I don't recall right offhand, but that was on the political side of the house.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he was just imbued with a sense of the Navy, because his father had been in the Class of 1888 and in the Spanish American War and World War I, and he grew up with all of that as an example.

Admiral Crowe: All of it, everything. We did have one other experience with Beach. I went to graduate school at Stanford right after that—I'll tell you about that in a minute. His mother lived in Palo Alto. Of course, he grew up there.

Paul Stillwell: And his dad had taught at Stanford after he retired from the Navy.

Admiral Crowe: His dad, yes. So we had a couple parties and invited his mother. She was French, and he spoke French, Beach did, and wrote French. Wrote all his letters to her in French.

Paul Stillwell: His parents had met in Haiti on the basis of that common language.

Admiral Crowe: Well, she told us a couple of stories about Ned, that when he was younger she always talked French to him, and he'd come home from school and said he was not going to talk French anymore. He talked English at school, and he wanted to talk English at home. And she said, "I quit speaking to him," and it would go about two or three days and he decided he wanted to talk to his mother, so he would go back to French. [Laughter] But she insisted on that, and I think that's it; he learned French whether he liked it or not. We saw some of her there. She was very gracious and very French, and that was probably my first contact with a real Frenchman.

Paul Stillwell: Well, fate is interesting, because his father's first wife had died. Otherwise, Ned wouldn't have been born if his father hadn't remarried.

Admiral Crowe: I'd forgotten that. I remember he had several pictures around the office of his father. I didn't at the time know the story of his father, but I learned it later. But at the time I didn't know it. There were some whispers occasionally about his father, but I didn't pay much attention to that.

I had that job, and it was going to be a two-year job, but I wanted to go to graduate school. I had not succeeded up until then, except going to law school on my own. Incidentally, the whole time I was at the White House I went to night law school at GW.\*

Paul Stillwell: How far did you get in the curriculum?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's an interesting story too. I went a full year, including summer. I forget how many hours I got, but I got over a year's credit. I think to be a lawyer you had to have 76 hours, and I got a heavy schedule and I knocked off a bunch of them. Then when I went to Stanford I went over there and took two law courses. I had to fight the whole bureaucracy to let me do it, because I hadn't been admitted to law school. And, boy, they were tough. That school was a lot tougher than GW. And one of the courses I didn't do very well in. But anyway, I acquired two more credits there at

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\* GW – George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Stanford. Then I came back, and when I was working for Austin I went to night law school. But I had to quit finally; I just couldn't take that. And then Princeton got in the way and I never finished. The requirement for a degree was around 76 hours, and I think I had 62 when I got mixed up in Princeton and never finished.

Paul Stillwell: Did that knowledge prove useful to you?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, all my life. Yes, very much so. I never regretted going to law school. I always regretted I didn't have a law degree, but—and my father, of course, thought it was great that I took those classes. He encouraged me quite a bit.

But when I was going to Stanford I went in to see Beach and asked if he would object if I applied for this course at Stanford, which was a personnel course, and he didn't object. I did that because when I did it with Crawford he got all upset. But Beach didn't. I didn't think he wanted me to leave. He thought: "Why would you leave the White House?" But I said, "I want to get some graduate education, and I'm not doing very well at it, and here's this course that I would like to apply for." He didn't object, so I applied.

One of the reasons I applied was that I was a little scared at the White House, and Beach was too. We used to discuss it seriously a little bit. There was no command center in the White House. President Eisenhower absolutely refused to set up any kind of machinery, because he would be accused of, having been a general, that he was taking over the generals' business, and his military background was butting in. But any time anything happened in the military business, the way the President found out about it was that either the Secretary of Defense came over and told him, or—it wasn't quite as bad as I'm painting it—he had a military assistant, it was Goodpaster, and the Army would get hold of Goodpaster.\* But it wasn't on the phone or anything. They'd just get the word to the President, and there wasn't a real system. When anything busted we didn't have a way for really jumping on top of it and going to a 24-hour watch, and a plot for the President to keep up with. We didn't have that.

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\* From 10 October 1954 to 20 March 1961, under Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, Colonel/Brigadier General Andrew Jackson Goodpaster served on the White House Staff as Defense Liaison Officer and Staff Secretary to the President. Goodpaster eventually became a four-star general as served as NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.



Paul Stillwell: It's interesting. There had been such a thing in World War II, called the map room.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I think so. And Beach was worried about it. I always thought if we had a real problem, when the dust all settled, well, we'd be severely criticized that we hadn't set it up. Now, they did ultimately do it after I left, and they re-did all that bomb shelter space I had and put in a command center. But I don't think they did it for Eisenhower. Eisenhower was pretty adamant about it.

Paul Stillwell: How robust was the National Security Council at that time?

Admiral Crowe: Well, curiously enough, that's where I first met Max Rabb.<sup>\*</sup> That was another part of my life later on, and Max Rabb was the, I guess what you'd call today the National Security Advisor.<sup>†</sup> We didn't have a National Security Advisor. Goodpaster did it. But Rabb was the secretary of the National Security Council, and he literally sort of set up the National Security Council. It was in the early days of the National Security Council. I didn't know much about it, but I knew that, and I remember meeting Rabb. Then later he was the ambassador to Italy when I was CinCSouth in NATO.<sup>‡</sup> He's quite a piece of work too. [Chuckle]. But I can remember he was the big setter-upper, and really organized and brought the Security Council together with a staff. When they first went in they didn't have much of a staff, but Rabb was very instrumental in that.

Paul Stillwell: But you're saying you were hesitant to stay there longer.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I just thought some day the world might descend on us, that we hadn't really worked it out the way we wanted to. And, of course, the reason Beach didn't push harder was he was so busy, he had so many things. Of course, that's the

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<sup>\*</sup> Maxwell M. Rabb was associate counsel to the President and Secretary to the Cabinet.

<sup>†</sup> Robert Cutler held the official title of National Security Advisor to the President from 23 March 1953 to 2 April 1955 and from 7 January 1957 to 24 June 1958.

<sup>‡</sup> Rabb was U.S. Ambassador to Italy from 1 July 1981 to 3 June 1989.

whole story of Washington. It's nice to think in the future, but everybody is so damned busy with current affairs and politicians, the priority is going to be today. Who gives a damn about January? And, of course, as I rose in the Navy I discovered that's a big problem. Every time you have a crisis you want the whole world to stop while you deal with this crisis, and the world doesn't stop. It continues to go around, and you continue to be immersed in unimportant nonsense. It just wouldn't go away. That was the first time I'd seen that.

Paul Stillwell: I heard that expressed, that the urgent takes precedence over the important.

Admiral Crowe: Boy, absolutely. And I teach my class that. We talk about that in class a lot. The desire for it to stop is really strong. You get mad at your subordinates and chase them out of the office. "Get this crap out of here; I can't deal with this right now." And yet that night there's a dinner at 7:00 o'clock. The world just pinches you. It keeps shooting darts at you while you're trying to center on a bigger problem.

Paul Stillwell: Well, on what basis did Ned support or encourage you in getting to PG at that point?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he didn't object. But again, I think he was so busy with his problems he—okay, you're going to go away, let's get another one; let's get at it.

But I did go to Stanford. Everybody wondered: Why in the hell would you leave a White House job to go to Stanford? But I wasn't that big a cog in the White House. In fact, a couple of things I learned there. I learned to finish furniture in the White House. Shirley and I had moved into a small apartment out in Northern Virginia. We were newly married, and we were buying unfinished stuff and finishing it. Well, I didn't know anything about finishing furniture, but because I was the officer in charge of the bomb shelter I was a big man around the basement of the White House, so I knew all the repairmen in the White House. Electricians. In fact, the electrician had been there for years, and he said, "I never make a diagram of anything, so they can't fire me. I'm the

only guy that knows the history of this stuff. If you make a diagram they just fire you and the next guy picks up the diagram. They can't do that to me." [Laughter] And I met all the butlers.

But one of the guys was the furniture finisher. So I went to consult with him on a coffee table I was making. He spent a lot of time with me, and I learned an awful lot about it, and then went home and finished our furniture that we were putting together.

Paul Stillwell: What were your working hours like in that job?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I got there about 8:30 in the morning. I was not in the paperwork business of reading the dispatches before, like a staff really does. Like you said, I did whatever Beach wanted. And I was not in his substantive paperwork with the White House. I was just doing all these things that had to be done. But I'd go down in the afternoon. Nobody ever came to the bomb shelter. I was in charge, but nobody ever came down there.

Incidentally, it wasn't a very good bomb shelter. It was made in a curious fashion. It would not have countered a nuclear weapon. It was made for the East Wing to collapse on the bomb shelter and a lot of the protection would come from all the rubble and so forth if the White House was bombed, but the bomb shelter would survive. Talking about conventional weapons now. I thought that was an interesting design. They actually calculated in that they would use the upper floors to protect them.

But nobody was down there, and I'd go down there and study, and then I would walk over to law school. At least in the good weather I did. Then Shirley would pick me up. I think I was out of school at 8:15 or 8:30, something like that.

Paul Stillwell: That's still a pretty long day.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, it was a long day, and hard on a marriage. We were brand new, and here I was going to night law school. She's never complained about anything like that. Never, never, never. I really did have serious designs on getting a law degree. I didn't

intend to get out of the Navy, but I thought I could use my law degree. We had a system where line officers who had law degrees could go back and forth.

In any event, the whole year we were there I went to night law school. And we handled it pretty well. Occasionally something at night would get in the way and I'd have to skip school or something, but in general it worked out. And Beach knew I was doing that. That was not subterranean. And, of course, he was as bad as that himself. He would come home and work till 2:00 o'clock in the morning around his house. The whole year I was there he was working on his house.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and writing books too.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and writing books. He had tremendous energy. I wondered when he slept. But, you know, those tours weren't important tours per se, but being the aide to an admiral—people always badmouth that, but, boy, you learn a hell of a lot. You learn a lot about real life and what's going on and why it's going on. And the same way in the White House. Things I learned in that tour in the White House stuck with me all the years till I came back. In fact I got a big kick when I became Chairman, going through all those spaces down there that had been turned into a command center. They were not there when I was there. And nobody could believe that I had actually been working in that place. But for young people those tours shape your life a lot, and they certainly shape your ambition. That's the trouble with being an aide to an admiral. You get the idea that you've got to be an admiral or you're not successful. For better or worse, that's true.

Paul Stillwell: But that was the kind of exposure that most junior officers wouldn't get at that level.

Admiral Crowe: That's true. And I had the advantage of two admirals that I worked for as an aide. Then a third—later on I worked for Bernard Austin.

Paul Stillwell: Somebody said that Admiral Austin had a nickname when he was in the Little Beaver squadron of “Long Count” Austin because he talked so much on the voice radio.

Admiral Crowe: [Laughter] I never heard that. Of course, that was his nickname, “Count.”

Paul Stillwell: Right. Well, there was a little mocking of his nickname.

Admiral Crowe: That’s interesting. [Chuckle] Never heard that. Well, we’ll talk about him. He was another part of my life. I didn’t like Austin very well. And Admiral Clarey warned me, but anyway.

Then we moved into the Stanford thing. I enjoyed Stanford. But there were some regrets about leaving the White House job. I mean, you are at the center of the world there in a certain sense, and to just walk away from it was a little tough. But we did it.

Paul Stillwell: You talked in your book about the marvelous interaction you had with the civilians, both the students and the professors there, and that it was good for both sides.

Admiral Crowe: Oh. I might make a comment about night school. I had never been to night school before. And of course GW, at least today—I later taught at GW—it’s now predominantly a night school. And a lot of day students go to night classes because the better classes are offered at night. But when I went there that’s the first time I had ever been to a night school. The law classes were very large. I mean large. There would be 150 people in that class. And they represented the whole spectrum. They were people that were working in Washington that wanted to get a law degree, and they were very serious about getting it, but they weren’t very serious about doing everyday work. That work for law school had to step aside while they did their real work, and sometimes they’d be prepared for class and sometimes they wouldn’t be. It was not unusual for a student to say, “I didn’t read it, Professor.” And the professor didn’t get upset; he just

shifted gears. He *knew* half the class hadn't read it. And, of course, the only grade they took was on the final exam. That was *the* grade. I had never seen anything like that.

But it was extremely interesting. Of course, we were in the case study mode, and there'd be a case on the lumberyard business, and the professor would start talking about what happened in the case. Some student would stand up and say, "Professor, that's not the way we price lumber." And this guy was in the lumber business. [Laughter] The professor had to be very careful what he was doing, because in practically every case there was somebody in that class who was in that business, and they'd really pull him up short. On the other hand, there were a lot of stupid people in that class too. The mental agility ran the entire spectrum, and also the energy level ran the entire spectrum. There were some very old people in the class. I took a lot of classes over there at night.

Paul Stillwell: How much time did you have for studying, in addition to your day job and the night class?

Admiral Crowe: Well, due to the White House bomb shelter I got more time than anyone [chuckle], because I could submerge myself down there and nobody ever bothered me. I was in the bomb shelter and that's all they knew, and I was studying. I did very well in law school. In fact, I did damned well in law school—until I hit Stanford. [Chuckle]. That Stanford law school, boy, it was a brick wall. It was hard penetrating that.

Paul Stillwell: How would you explain the difference?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it's a high-class law school, and the competition was very, very stiff. Now, I had a full academic load besides the law school, and I was married, so I didn't attend the law school as much time. But the professors there, it seemed to me they were more theoretical than GW. A lot of conceptual stuff and philosophical stuff.

I took a course in trusts, and I'm not sure I ever understood the course very well. That was my problem. I just didn't understand what they were getting at. But at GW I did very well. In fact, while I was in Key West, applying for law school in the Navy, I had to take a test, a SAT—they didn't call it that, but it was your aptitude for law.

Paul Stillwell: LSAT is what it's called now, the Legal Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Admiral Crowe: I drove up to Miami and took it, and I stood in the top 98½ percentile. So if that course was valid, and I don't know if it was, I had some aptitude for law. And, of course, my father encouraged me. He thought that was great, to get a law degree if I could. It's interesting that my attitude and my desire to get further education came from my father. I didn't run into many senior Naval officers that ever encouraged going to school. They just weren't around.

Paul Stillwell: Was it as much of a prerequisite for promotion as it later became? You're shaking your head no.

Admiral Crowe: As far as I could see, none at all. I guess there were two reasons for that. First of all, they didn't have any. There weren't many people in the human sciences, at least, in the Navy that had any graduate education. And secondly they didn't believe in graduate education. The place for a young man's at sea.

Paul Stillwell: Well, more so in the technical side it was pushed.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Now, I'm not talking about the technical side. But to worry about political philosophy or something like that, that wasn't a naval officer's job. Why in the hell would he? And yet today when they do a study on the Naval Academy, 75% of the recommendations are that these guys ought to be more sensitive to this, to that, they ought to have more foreign language, they ought have—and the picture in the paper—a friend of mine, Mal MacKinnon's, in the picture.\* He and I were talking after class about what it was like at the Naval Academy when we were there, and Mal said, "I found your class extremely interesting. When I was at the Naval Academy there was only one side on every question." [Chuckle] He said, "We didn't discuss the goods and the bads; we

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\* Rear Admiral Malcolm MacKinnon III, USN (Ret.), Naval Academy class of 1955. MacKinnon and Crowe were pictured in an article about the class Crowe was teaching during the period of the oral history interviews. See Linton Weeks, "The Admiral Charts an Unknown Course," *The Washington Post*, 22 November 2006, pages C1 and C3.

discussed the answer to the question, and there was only one answer.” And that was the way it was. That was the whole educational system. It’s not like that today. And my class isn’t like that.

Paul Stillwell: You wouldn’t get any feedback at the Naval Academy as in, “No, that’s not how we price lumber.”

Admiral Crowe: No, that’s right. [Laughter]. And, of course, my views on teaching and so forth all came from my graduate education, particularly my Princeton education. The way I teach is the way they taught at Princeton, essentially.

Paul Stillwell: How would you describe your way of teaching?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it’s just a seminar where I assign reading and then we discuss—I attempt to get their views on the reading. I comment all the way through, and I interlace it with stories about myself to illustrate something. But I don’t lecture.

Paul Stillwell: And there’s not necessarily a school solution.

Admiral Crowe: No. And I’m very careful, because in political science they always want to know who I’m going to vote for, and I don’t tell them that. It’s not the point of my course to tell them who to vote for. The reporter talked to me about it after class. He said, “You never did say what you thought about coming in and out of Iraq.”

I said, “Well, I work on the assumption that if they learn enough about it they’ll come to the right answer, but that’s for them to come to, not for me to come to.” That’s a little hard to do. That’s not as easy to do as it sounds.

I invite adults to come to my class. There were four or five yesterday. And they always ask, “Well, why didn’t you tell them to go A instead of B?”

I said, “Well, I don’t do that.”

But they’ll pop up and say, “Well, the answer to that is \_\_\_\_.” Most of these adults are Naval Academy graduates. [Chuckle]



Paul Stillwell: We can predict the views of many of those.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. But it's different today. And Mal, my friend, said he was really impressed with the class. He said, "Gee, that's healthy as hell, what they're doing." I'm trying to get them to think critically about matters and come to their own conclusions. The ideal class is for them to do the talking, not for me to do the talking. It doesn't always work that way, but that's the idea.

Paul Stillwell: I got an e-mail last night from a member of the Naval Academy Class of '45, and it said, "I don't actually hate John Kerry, but I'm pretty close." [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: Well, why is that? You know, Kerry went to Vietnam.\* No matter what else they can say about it, he went.

Paul Stillwell: And Karl Rove cleverly used that against him.†

Admiral Crowe: Yes. A bunch of guys that didn't go came out better in the argument. Of course, that's something else I learned in Washington, that any position can be defended. And the idea of education is not right or wrong, it's to increase your ability to defend whatever your position is. [Chuckle]. And a lot of idiots with mis-ideas can do very well. They're articulate.

I used to watch Admiral Moorer.‡ Admiral Moorer was not articulate, but he was very smart. And Burke was the same way.§ They'd get in trouble down there in the Tank when they'd start these debates. They would take advantage of the admirals'

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\* John F. Kerry served in the Navy from 1966 to 1969, including duty in Swift boats in Vietnam. A Democrat from Massachusetts, he has served in the Senate since 3 January 1985. He ran unsuccessfully for President in 2004. During his campaign a group known as the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth denigrated his naval record and thus harmed his candidacy.

† Karl Rove was a political advisor to President George W. Bush.

‡ Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 August 1967 to 1 July 1970. He was later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 3 July 1970 to 30 June 1974. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

§ Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 17 August 1955 to 1 August 1961. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

vocabulary being limited, and so forth. Anything to win an argument. That's what Richard Perle does.\* Richard Perle is probably the best debater I ever ran into. He can defend about any position in the world and do very well at it. And I guess Rove is a lot the same way.

Paul Stillwell: Well, there's this stereotype of the military mind, and from what I observed with Admiral Moorer he was pretty close to that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was very conservative. I've got some stories about him and Train.† I think Moorer died not speaking to Train. I may have that wrong, but it was a tragedy, because Moorer was so conservative. But occasionally you'd run into a guy, a military guy, that is very bright and done very well, and of course Beach was one. But we see them today, like Trainor, who was up there at Harvard.‡ He can take care of himself very well.

Paul Stillwell: He's got a new book out.§ I haven't read it, but I'm eager to.

Admiral Crowe: As Jim Stockdale used to say, words are important, and not all military officers understand that. I can remember being in some talks in Korea, and the last day we were supposed to, in these bilateral meetings, sum up the substance of what we had talked about in our meetings in the final report, and both of us would sign it. And the Koreans had had a big input, and they put a bunch of things in this report I didn't like, and I said, "No, I can't sign that." And here it was, three or four hours before we were leaving, and I said, "No, I can't sign that."

The Korean admiral said, "Well, let's get it back to our staffs."

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\* Richard N. Perle is a political advisor and lobbyist who was an assistant Secretary of Defense from 1981 to 1987 in the Reagan Administration and a member of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee from 1987 to 2004.

† Captain Harry D. Train II, USN, was Admiral Moorer's executive assistant in the late 1960s and later became a four-star admiral. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

‡ Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor, USMC (Ret.), was at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government from 1990 to 1996.

§ Bernard E. Trainor and Michael R. Gordon, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006).

I said, “We don’t have time to do that.” So I took this piece of paper and I rewrote the report that I didn’t like and what I wanted to say, and he signed it. And one of my staff said, “You know, that guy hadn’t written something himself in 20 years, and when he saw you sit down and start writing the report he was....”

Paul Stillwell: He was helpless.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was helpless. [Chuckle]. He wasn’t going to do that, for chrissake. But in the business of government, where everybody is clashing all the time, those kinds of things are very, very important.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and I would think that was where your legal training helped, because words are so important there.

Admiral Crowe: Very much, along with my debate training in high school and college. I got in an argument one time in Charleston when I was CO of a submarine.\* This was after I did a tour with Austin. I had a division commander down there who was sort of awkward, and I had a couple of friends that I had been with on the staff in New London who were characteristic naval officers. One night at a party we got to arguing. I forget what started the argument, but somebody had done something in the Navy we didn’t like. And I said, “Well, we do it all wrong. What we need for CNO is a lawyer, because I’ve seen them, I’ve seen this. They go into the JCS and they represent the Navy, and they have to be good at manipulating the . . .” Well, you’d have thought I’d put a turd in the punchbowl. [Laughter] That party degenerated so rapidly, and they were mad. I said, “We not only need a lawyer, we need a Fifth-Avenue lawyer from New York up there protecting our case, arguing our argument.” [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: That was heresy.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I was having fun then.

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\* Train commanded the USS *Trout* (SS-566) from 1960 to 1962.

Paul Stillwell: Of course.

Admiral Crowe: Because I was really laying it on. And they, oh, they were mad.

Paul Stillwell: You were baiting them.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, baiting them. But I thought there was something in that argument. [Chuckle]. There are professional advocates in the world that really know a lot about it. My father was one. But they didn't like that solution, and we still don't have a lawyer as CNO. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Well, please tell me about the substance of your work at Stanford.

Admiral Crowe: It was a really curious situation. It was billed as personnel administration and training, and I went out there to learn about personnel administration and training. But there isn't any course out there for personnel administration and training, so we ended up in the school of education. And that was what we were doing, was getting more education. The application to personnel administration sort of escaped me. I guess there were some things we took, but—

I took my first courses in psychology. I took a course in sociology, which was one of the most interesting courses I ever took in my life, and I still talk about it to this day. I only had a year, and the year was divided into threes. But it was a marvelous year, because I had so much freedom to take what I wanted to take.

Paul Stillwell: So you were essentially designing your own course?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it wasn't clear to me. But anyway, I could take courses that I liked. There were a couple of things that we had to take, but otherwise we were free to select from the educational school's catalog. Of course, that came under the rubric of training. We could justify it. And I really got into statistics. I had never had anything to

do with statistics. But I was fascinated by psychology and sociology. And counseling—we took some courses in counseling. I discovered one of the great disconnects in the world is that one of the most important people in your life might be a counselor, but it's not considered a good profession, so the good people don't do counseling.

Paul Stillwell: How would you explain that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it may not make sense to you, but you go to a high school or something, the worst teachers in the place are the counselors. And yet they have a tremendous influence on students' lives. The rewards aren't great enough to get good people into counseling. I don't have any other explanation than that.

Paul Stillwell: Did you wear your uniform when you were there?

Admiral Crowe: No, didn't wear it the whole time I was there. That was my first experience doing that. But Stanford's a wonderful school. And also living in Palo Alto was pretty good.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about that aspect of it?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the weather's good in California. But it was just a good school, and that was my first brush with really a high liberal arts school. Had girls in the class that were smart as hell. That was sort of annoying. [Laughter] There were 12 of us in that group. Three Marines and nine naval officers went that year, and we had quite an active social life with them.

Paul Stillwell: How was the administration done? Was that through the NROTC unit?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And the Navy had had this contract with Stanford for many years. Anyplace where you've been in a long time you get treated very well. It's when you show up at a civilian school and they've never had anything to do with the military that

they—like we sent lawyers for years to GW, and GW is a big believer in Navy lawyers, because, hell, the top ten in the law school class included naval officers every year. And we sent officers to Tufts a lot; we have a great relationship with them.\* This personnel administration course had been going a long time. It wasn't considered liberal arts; it was considered personnel management, which, I say, had very little to do with it. But you had a lot to do with psychology of leading, and that sort of thing. And the professors were great at Stanford.

Paul Stillwell: And because of that long relationship I presume that the professors were receptive to having military students.

Admiral Crowe: Very much so. Now, I went over to the law school, they never had anything to do with me. They didn't give the military the time of day in the law school, but in the education department they were very receptive. They wanted to continue. Any place that we have put officers in graduate school they want to continue, because they do well. In the first place they're older.

Paul Stillwell: And they're motivated.

Admiral Crowe: They have responsibilities, a family and so forth, and they're more mature. And once you get into that, then you're welcome, because they do well. These people are good to have in your class.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get any personnel administration at all in that course?

Admiral Crowe: As far as I could see, we didn't. [Laughter] And I really wasn't interested in being a personnel administrator. But I was interested in getting something in the graduate field, and that was the only thing I could find at the time. But it became crucial when they decided to open up for doctorates. They were very naïve, "they" being the Navy, and the first two years they just put out the word that said you need a master's

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\* Tufts University is a private research institution in the Boston suburbs of Medford/Somerville.

degree before you can apply for this program, but they didn't say in what, they didn't say anything. Well, I had a master's degree, but of course it had nothing to do with what I was getting ready to study. Well, they corrected that later, but the year I went in it was all very vague, and my Stanford experience helped me. I applied at Stanford, and they said: "Once admitted to the graduate school at Stanford you are always admitted." So yes, you could come here to graduate school. I didn't go, but the reason I didn't go was I always was told that if you wanted to teach at School A you had to have a degree from School B, so I thought if I wanted to teach at Stanford I'd better get it on the East Coast [chuckle], because Stanford's the best place in the world to teach.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said in your book that you had that hope to go back and teach there. Did you have a civilian advisor that was sort of directing your course?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did. His name escapes me, but I can see him, and he was a professor there that was assigned to take care of all the Navy students, as our advisor and so forth. I think he was sort of the guy that started the program, talked the Navy into it, and talked Stanford into it. We sent some people to Stanford later on who were in the international relations business. That's what Stockdale went to. But we had not done that before. The Navy did have a couple of engineers out there in graduate school. We even had that at Princeton. They had sent some civil engineers to Princeton. But the Navy relationship with Stanford was mainly in the school of education.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have a combination of lectures and seminars?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And classes. I really was attending undergraduate classes, the one in sociology and one in statistics and some of that stuff, and in counseling. But I do remember the name of the professor in sociology. His name was Spindler, and it was a most interesting class.\* One of the things he had done was that he had been in the Army during the war, and a bunch of sociologists got together after the war and the thrust of

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\* Anthropologist George Spindler of Stanford University was a pioneer in ethnography, a discipline that uses field work to provide a descriptive study of human societies.

their thinking was—of course, sociologists are always looking for the core culture, whatever in the hell that is. They said, “We’ve got a wonderful experience here. We’ve had 16 million people in a relatively similar environment in the military. Perhaps we can, by taking samplings out of that and studying it over a period of years, we can get at the really core culture of America.” He had been instrumental in that study, and so a lot of the course was taken up in what that study found about American society, but all in a military context, because that’s where they felt that certain attributes would come out. I mean, what do people worship in America, and under the stress of war and so forth you find out.

Then they had done a similar study but not to the great numbers, a sort of a smaller study, of both the German and the English populations. I found that absolutely fascinating, what it told us about Americans.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any of the conclusions?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I do. I was fascinated, of course, because it said a lot about the military. We weren’t as good at, well, at things like how many missions before you go crazy, in flying. Americans could take about somewhere into 40 maybe, but the British were up to about 60, and the Germans, because of their problems, were up even higher than that, because their air force was going away. Then he would relate this back to certain things in the German culture.

As a matter of fact, the other studies were as interesting as the American one, because it sort of dispelled a lot of the myths. The myth that I grew up on was that the people in the German Army were not thinking. Everybody was doing the thinking for them; in a dictatorship nobody thinks. Well, that’s totally untrue. The German Army was very fractured and very distributed, and their units performed very well when officers were lost. They had thinking sergeants, and they were very innovative in the field. The Russians weren’t, necessarily, but the Germans were. And, of course, that was sort of un-American, to think that a dictatorship could produce good fighting men. That wasn’t what we were being taught about Japan and Germany. They worried a lot about their enlisted men, more than we ever gave them credit for.



Paul Stillwell: That's interesting.

Admiral Crowe: Of course, the original German Army was a first-class army while it was still a real army. And that study concluded that they were very good under pressure. They could stand starvation. In the U.S. military the people that we brought in, where you bring in this huge number of civilians, they weren't as good as we had been told. First of all, they took advantage of their position as officers. In the German Army the officer never eats first, he eats last. So does the Marine Corps; the Marine Corps does the same thing. The U.S. Army didn't do that, and a lot of people took—well, I used the right word—took real advantage of their being officers and never caught on to, never got it, about how you treat enlisted people and how you get the most out of them, and so forth. They were very prone to exploit their positions, much more than either the British or German armies.

Then I can remember one thing he said about the British. The British officer corps is much more egalitarian than ours, but the gap between officer and enlisted is much larger in the British than it is in the American.

Paul Stillwell: That's interesting too.

Admiral Crowe: Isn't that interesting? But if you're once a British officer, that's a class by itself. The rank didn't have as much to do with it as the fact you were a British officer. So the space between ranks of officers was greater in America than it was in Britain. But he could go on like that for hours about the things they had found.

In fact, I wrote a paper out there on the Korean prison experience of prisoners of war, and he talked a lot about that, how they stood up in prison, all three. The British probably did the best of anybody in prison. They were very prone to organize immediately, and their rank structure held up very well in British prison camps. They accepted that, and that's the way it was. We always tested it. Americans evidently pushed the envelope, and many took advantage of prison camp to degrade the officers and let other people lead, other than officers. I found that sort of thing really fascinating.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the classic study on flying missions and going crazy is *Catch-22*.\*

Admiral Crowe: How you find it out. You let him just go until they go crazy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you can't stop flying missions until you're crazy, but anybody who wants to stop flying must not be crazy. That's the catch. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: I was thinking the other day—where was it I was watching? Well, I was watching football. They ran at each other real hard, and I said to Shirley, “You know, you've got to be crazy to play the damned game.”

Paul Stillwell: Did you have a thesis or some major paper you wrote?

Admiral Crowe: No, I didn't write for that.

Also, I learned a lot about growing up—which was all new to me—what they found out about children and their mothers. In fact, my Navy career almost came to an end. Most boys in American society sort of grew up with some kind of suppressed resentment of their mothers, because the mothers do all the disciplining. At least they used to; it may be changing in our society today. But he talked about when we were a young country and you had children in order to share the work on the farm. The boy went into the field with his father very early in the game, and these problems didn't occur, because his father did a lot of the raising of the child. Then we became an industrial society, and the father disappeared at 8:00 o'clock in the morning and came back restless at night at 7:00 o'clock and didn't want anything to do with the children. The women took over the raising of male children, and that this has caused over the long term some real problems.

And he had a lot of the tests he gave. He started off that segment of the class by showing a picture of—let me see if I can get it straight—it was a middle-aged woman

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\* The mocking term “Catch-22” came from a novel of the name by Joseph Heller. Essentially it refers to an internal contradiction in which you're damned if you do and damned if you don't.

looking out a window, and it was sort of vague, but there was enough of her features that you could determine something from it. Then he asked the class to all write down what they thought the woman was doing. We had some girls in the class, and there was a distinct difference in the girls' answers and the boys' answers. Then in the next class he told what he had found from the papers that had come in, that about 70% of the boys had said she's mad, and she's looking out the window at her son coming home from school. You know, if somebody had said that to me before, I would have said, "So what?" Well, it turns out that all the boys in the class thought she was mad. [Chuckle] He went on from there and developed how you do resent your mother some. The myth is that you honor, revere, and so forth.

Well, I got in an argument with the skipper of the *Wahoo* over that when I was the exec, and told him what they had said in graduate school, and he got mad as hell. He was Catholic, and, boy, he was mad. "That's just not right. All American children like their mothers." About a week later he called me in and he said, "You know, I talked this over with my wife, and we started talking about our childhood." And he said, "You know, I apologize for getting so mad. There is something in it." [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: How did the girls in the class react to that picture?

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, he contended that no matter how they react they all end up like their mothers. And he said to the girls, "Beware, if you don't like your mother, that's probably the way you're going to be." I don't know if that's true or not. But that was the kind of thing he was dealing with, and I found in the boy/mother—I was serving with guys who—well one, Doug Guthe.\* He had open warfare with his mother, and when he died he had three women in the funeral: his girlfriend, his wife, and his mother, and they all couldn't stand each other.

He died of cancer. Inveterate smoker. And I was involved in his funeral. It was the damndest funeral I ever got into. But, in any event, I began to understand Doug. I heard him talk about his mother at the wardroom table all the time. His mother had lost

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\* Captain Douglas B. Guthe, USN, a graduate of the Naval Academy class of 1949, was a submariner. He died 2 May 1970.

her husband, so she followed Doug around, like MacArthur's mother. And he had a real thing about his mother.

Paul Stillwell: Where did you serve with him?

Admiral Crowe: In *Wahoo*. He was the third officer. I was exec, and he was the engineer. And I had just come from Stanford, so I was a know-it-all. [Chuckle] I knew all about that stuff.

Paul Stillwell: Were you reading Samuel Huntington at that point?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I was, yes. I started reading him at Stanford, but it didn't have much to do with what I was studying there. I later met Samuel Huntington.\* I met him on several occasions, and I studied him a lot at Princeton.

Paul Stillwell: What impressions did you have from meeting him?

Admiral Crowe: Of course, I had read *The Soldier and the State*. I'd read it and I really liked the book. I found him—well, two things. I found him not as a “hail fellow well met,” as I may have inferred, but he was courteous; he wasn't discourteous or anything, but he was a little distant. And then later on I think he quit advancing. He sort of got frozen in whatever he was preaching, and times were moving beyond him.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about your relationship with the civilian students that you were in classes with?

Admiral Crowe: Well, frankly, it was very good. And that's when I first ran into—I had several students, about three or four, who had served a tour in the military. They had come back to pursue their careers. And they all at one time or another sort of captured

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\* Huntington is a well-known, sometimes controversial, political scientist and prolific author. Among his best-known early works was *The Soldier and the State: the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957).

me and told me how much they had appreciated the time they had spent in the military. They didn't want to be career military men, but that they had left high school not knowing what the hell they were doing, and not ready for life. Typically, they said, "I went in the military and I came out and I knew exactly what I wanted and I was motivated, and I always attribute that to my military experience." I had several people talk to me about that, which I found sort of fascinating.

Paul Stillwell: Well, another phenomenon is that people who are in only for a relatively short time look back many years later and recall that as the most exciting time in their lives.

Admiral Crowe: They do. I think I mentioned to you, when I was in Britain it fascinated me. Of course, the World War II generation was dying in gross lots. Every obituary in the paper—the guy died at 68, was an insurance salesman, and the picture would be of him as a major in World War II, and the whole rest of the obituary would be about what he did in the war. [Chuckle]. After the war he acquired a wife, he acquired three children, spent 40 years in the insurance business, but the obituary was all about what he did in the war.

Paul Stillwell: Well, even when you look at the obituary pages of *The Washington Post* today where they have the paid-for ads, it will frequently have a military portrait of the individual.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and, of course, they're always young then.

Paul Stillwell: Right. [Chuckle].

Admiral Crowe: I came away from the Spindler experience with not as high an admiration as I had been taught for Americans under pressure, and that the other races do handle pressure better than we do because of their experiences.

Paul Stillwell: And the culture.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and the culture. He stressed time and again that in the German culture the icon was an iron man. If you can put up with deprivation, all Germans admire that. And overcome your failings, and they didn't blame it on a conspiracy somewhere. That's the way life was, and a good German stood up to it. And he said that lapped over into the army. They made hell of a good soldiers because of that.

I talked with an Italian general who had served with the Germans. He said, "You know, you tell a German to go fight and he says, 'Well, where are my tools?' and you say, 'Well, take this spoon,' and they say 'Fine,' and walk off with the spoon." He said, "An Italian will say, 'Now, wait just a minute. I'm going to need a gun here. I'm going to need the best gun, and I don't think I'll...' " He had served in Russia with the Germans, and he said they'll fight with whatever they've got, and they'll do it damned well. And he said German generals would go to the front and look into what was going on. And you read Ambrose about how few American enlisted men in Western Europe saw a general; it's really quite incredible.\* And you never saw Eisenhower or any of that crowd at the front. That wasn't true of the Germans.

Paul Stillwell: And men kept going out in U-boats even though they were getting clobbered.

Admiral Crowe: And never lost their morale. I don't understand that, but they didn't. Spindler had a few words about that. Anyway, it began to open some horizons that I had—I was a typical victim of American mythology. I don't think that's wrong; that's part of the deal. On the other hand, you've got to have some realistic view of it.

Paul Stillwell: What was your relationship to students who had had no military experience?

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\* Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose (1936-2002) was a historian and the biographer of Presidents Eisenhower and Nixon. He was a prolific author, particularly on the subject of the European Campaign in World War II and particularly the D-Day invasion of Normandy in 1944.

Admiral Crowe: It was mixed. Some were fascinated, and some thought we were out of our bloody minds. Didn't have much to do with the girl students. I knew a couple of them, and I watched them perform in class, and they were smart as hell. But, of course, we were married. There was a Marine lieutenant colonel who was not the senior guy in the class, but he was next to it. He was middle-aged. He said, "God, it's so nice to see women that don't wear girdles." [Laughter] Of course, all these young girls were running around with various stages of undress. The girls at Stanford were very high class, boy, and they were smart.

I was in class with an all-American tackle from Stanford, Paul Wiggin. Do you remember that name at all?

Paul Stillwell: I don't recognize it, no.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was playing tackle when I was there and later played pro ball, and was an all-American.\* He wasn't a brain surgeon. [Chuckle] He was a hell of a good football player.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get caught up in campus life?

Admiral Crowe: Not really. Our social life was all among ourselves, the military group there. And some with the professors. We were older. But no, the answer is no. It's very difficult. Even in Princeton we didn't have anything to do with the undergraduates, not much.

Paul Stillwell: Are there any things that you could single out that you learned during that year that had application later in your career?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think all this stuff about Spindler and about how enlisted men are handled, and the American tendency to—well, just what the American tendencies are.

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\* Paul Wiggin, who graduated from Stanford in 1957, subsequently played 11 seasons as defensive end for the Cleveland Browns of the National Football League. Wiggin was Stanford's head football coach from 1980 to 1983.

Then when I was in Britain I was always comparing that with what I met there, and so forth. Then I could better read military history after that, and some of the performance.

Paul Stillwell: Did it in any way change your approach to enlisted men?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did. I think it did.

Paul Stillwell: In what ways?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I sort of liked the German model better than I did the American. Of course, the Russians are worse off. They don't have an NCO class like we do.\* We're much better off than that. The military I was in then was not an all-volunteer military; there was some draft, and so forth. Since I was at Stanford we've moved quite a ways on leadership. Zumwalt was a big factor in that, on how to lead.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and another factor is that you get enlisted personnel now who are much better educated than they were then.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. Of course, the book I'm reading now, you always ran into enlisted men who were bright as hell and you thought: "Jesus, if he just had had some education he'd have been a world-beater." Did you ever know Jack Shanahan?

Paul Stillwell: No. I've heard of him.

Admiral Crowe: Yeah. He came in as an enlisted man.† Jack didn't have a lot of education, but he was smarter than hell. It would have been so much better if he had had a little education, because he had a first-rate mind.

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\* NCO – non-commissioned officer.

† John J. Shanahan enlisted in the U.S. Navy prior to the outbreak of World War II and retired in 1977 as a Vice Admiral. Among his commands was the U.S. Second Fleet. He later became director of the Center for Defense Information.



And that business about family, that's affected my life. What I learned about the resentment between mothers and boys, and about Rorschach. Rorschach things always fascinated me. That they'd throw that thing in front of you and you'd start musing on it, and what people would derive out of an inkblot. [Chuckle]. Just incredible.

Paul Stillwell: There's a great story in Tom Wolfe's book *The Right Stuff* that one of the astronaut candidates had a blank sheet of paper thrust in front of him and was asked, "What do you see there?"\*

He said, "Well, I can't tell. You've got it upside down." [Laughter.]

Admiral Crowe: And, of course, the standard joke is: "Sex; I gave him four or five Rorschachs and they all reminded him of sex."

And the guy says, "Does everything remind you of sex?"

He said, "Don't blame me. *You've* got the dirty pictures." [Laughter]

I got quite fascinated by psychology.

Paul Stillwell: Well, please tell me about that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I'd just never been exposed to any of the research they'd done, and how they can design an aptitude test or an interest test. Of course, the best test they've ever put together is an interest test. They do that much better than they do aptitude stuff. But I had never had anything to do with the designing of tests, and how they really try like hell to—how they design an IQ test. Of course, Stanford was sort of the leading school on IQ tests. They did a survey out there of gifted children over—I think when I was there it was about 50 years they had been looking at them, and they were continuing that. Spindler briefed that quite a bit. It was amazing how many gifted children didn't do very well, and some, of course, were world-beaters. But having a real good mind didn't guarantee you anything.

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\* Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1979).

Paul Stillwell: Well, that question where the professor asked you to interpret the picture of the woman at the window was a test in psychology.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. Exactly.

We talked about officer fitness reports some, which I actually got into later. In that short tour I did at BuPers, my next-door neighbor at the desk was a civilian psychologist who designed the officer fitness report.\* So I was in a better position to talk to him after I'd been to Stanford than before. But he said something really fascinating to me one day: "You know why the senior officers in the Navy are pretty high-grade?"

I said, "Well, what do you mean? They got good fitness reports."

He said, "No, I think the only thing that saves us is the high bar of entrance into the officer rank. If you make that bar high enough, pretty soon the people that come out the top are going to be pretty good. But what those fitness reports say is just sort of accidental." [Laughter]

Well, the main problem they just can't overcome, and that's comparing people doing different lines of work in different parts of the world. It takes a strong ego to think he's really doing something when he compares them. This guy about would go crazy designing the fitness report. You just can't overcome some of the problems.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the tendency is to mark people higher.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes.

Paul Stillwell: And the fitness report form gets redesigned every few years to try to counteract that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they're always fighting it. Then you also get, like on a submarine, particularly a diesel submarine—the mental challenge is not—you can actually master a diesel submarine. In a wardroom of, say, eight or nine officers you'll have three or four officers who have overcome the intellectual challenge of the submarine. There's no

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\* BuPers – Bureau of Naval Personnel.

difference in them; they all understand it. So the captain ends up making his distinctions on whose fingernails are clean or, as my girl in class would say, who wears eye shadow or who doesn't. But you often make the important distinction on unimportant reasons, because you're grasping for how do I detect differences between people.

Now, that's not true when you start really thinking about leadership, because that's such a complicated subject and you can find differences. You learn that some people can lead and some can't and it's all sort of vague, unlike the intellectual challenge where they understand what makes a diesel engine go, or something. Nevertheless, the fitness report system today requires you to make differences. Everybody's not the same. Well, you've got to be real careful with the reason you made the differences. Actually, ship handling. That's a big one for weeding out people. "Well, he's a better ship handler." But someone else would probably be a better company commander than a guy that's a good ship handler.

I find this fascinating, and I didn't get this from Spindler—but the only time we've ever engaged in a war where we were promoting people that didn't have good records was the Confederacy. They were running out of stuff, and they often found people that weren't very good company commanders were excellent division commanders, that had a talent for high rank, which they would never have found if they were successful, if they had a lot of people, because those guys would have been weeded out. Do you find that fascinating?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: And like Gordon, General Gordon, lieutenant general in the Confederate Army, wasn't a very good platoon commander.\* As the author said, he would have had no career at all if all the officers hadn't have been killed!

Paul Stillwell: Is it likely that the differences among officers are more demonstrable in combat than in peacetime?

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\* Major General John Brown Gordon (1832-1904) was one of General Robert E. Lee's most trusted subordinates during the Civil War.

Admiral Crowe: I think that's true. Well, it certainly is in terms of leadership. I had a friend in high school that was in the Army. He landed on Okinawa and got 150 yards inland and discovered nobody was with him. His platoon didn't come with him. [Laughter]. He had to go back to the beach and talk them into going inland.

But let's face it, whether you can handle a ship or not, later on is irrelevant. Jim Calvert was not a good ship handler.\* Jim Calvert was a hell of a good officer. Yet ship handling gets in everybody's blood, in their id, in their mythology. And the same way with an aviator, landing on board a carrier or something. Some guys do it better than others, but that doesn't mean a damn thing about running an air campaign. And that's hard, how you sort that out. What's the right way to do it? We're fallible.

Paul Stillwell: Especially since the Navy has put such a premium on operational skills.

Admiral Crowe: And the Army puts it on physical skills. I mean, rock climbing and their ability to persevere for a month instead of 15 days, and to go without food. Those are all important, but I've sort of reached the conclusion, though, that—and this is just outhouse psychology—that it's awfully good when you're in a battle to have a warrior there, but warriors don't win campaigns; good minds win campaigns. But they're both needed.

The Germans had a saying, which I can't repeat, where they put everybody in four categories. Are you familiar with that?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: They have four categories. Anyway, the most dangerous was the dumb and energetic [laughter].

Paul Stillwell: Oh, I have heard that, yes.

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\* On 3 August 1958 the USS *Skate* (SSN-578), under Commander James F. Calvert, USN, became the first submarine to surface at the North Pole. He later became a vice admiral and served as superintendent of the Naval Academy and Commander First Fleet.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, something like that. Where the guys that were best platoon commanders, the guys that were best generals, and the most dangerous were . . .

Paul Stillwell: Dumb and aggressive.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they're energetic. Insisted on *doing* things. [Laughter] I forget the, I wish I remembered it, because it really is a good categorization. And there's also a wonderful joke in NATO about heaven and hell. Have you ever heard that joke?

Paul Stillwell: I don't think so.

Admiral Crowe: I can't put it all together, but in heaven the English are the policemen and the Frenchmen are the cooks and the Italians are the lovers, or something like that. And, of course, in hell the Germans are the policemen and the Americans are the lovers. [Laughter]. I forget what the British were there. Anyway, it's very good, playing on national characteristics.

Paul Stillwell: Well, any more to say about Stanford?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was an important year in my life. In the first place, I learned what living in California was all about. I'd been in San Diego, but San Diego was a Navy town, and Stanford was not. Palo Alto was standard civilian living, and you see why so many people ended up in California, and particularly on the peninsula. It must have at one time been the most attractive place in the world.

And what a beautiful school and what a wonderful school Stanford was. I already had an appreciation for graduate school but didn't know much about it, but I came away with the thought and I felt that all naval officers ought to go to civilian colleges. If the subject can be taught in a civilian college, they ought to send them to there instead of to military school. Now, there are some subjects, classification and so forth, that only the military can do, but I'm not a big believer in the Naval Postgraduate School. If we can

teach it in a civilian institution I think the experience of living in the civilian community for a professional officer is really worthwhile. You do discover what people think of the military, and vice versa. And I got that from Stanford. I concluded that if we could run our whole officer corps through civilian education, some of it—

Paul Stillwell: Do you think you were able to have an influence on some of your fellow students?

Admiral Crowe: Some of them, yes, I do. I thought so. Because we all did well, and that surprised some of them. And, of course, I had that experience at Princeton, too, although the ones I was with at Princeton were smarter than the ones I was with at Stanford. I was with some guys at Princeton who were really—they bordered on genius.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you were in a higher level program there too.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. What was it that my lawyer friend in Oklahoma said? He says there's a thin line between genius and mental illness. [Chuckle] And there is something in that. Some geniuses can't keep their life together for beans. And that's what that gifted study showed. There were several mailmen that had had gifted childhoods, but had never really done much outside of that.

Well, probably the brightest guy in our group at Princeton never got a degree, because he got so sidetracked by causes. He was really bright, but he never settled down and really got into the real world, and never achieved very much, I don't think. And it would be terrible to have him leading anything.

Paul Stillwell: There are geniuses who just don't have a pragmatic approach to things.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. The genius is not interested in leading. I've been reading these articles in the *National Geographic* on astronomy and, God, it's fascinating. But they're of a different order of people. They're not interested in politics. What the hell, their minds are out there several billion miles away.

Paul Stillwell: Herman Wouk's classic line in *The Caine Mutiny* is that Navy is a system designed by geniuses for execution by idiots.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think the Army is probably more so than the Navy, because the Army has a lot of idiots, and particularly in the draft system. When you're on a draft everybody that wants to avoid the draft goes into the Air Force or the Navy, and then you've got the Marine Corps, which is depending on its size. But then everything else is in the bloody Army. I always thought the Army was way too over-administered, but when I was in Vietnam I discovered why. That is, when you're dealing with that kind of people in large numbers you've got to have a rule for everything and you've got to enforce it. Otherwise, you can't keep idiots into what they're supposed to be doing. The Army's designed that way, and it works very well.

The Army, by far, has the most serious personnel problems of any of the services. But I always thought the Navy had it backwards. If you're real outstanding in the Navy and you get good fitness reports and you do this and you do that, they give you the best ship. Well, the best ship is full of educated people. It's sort of like quarterbacking Notre Dame. I thought I could quarterback Notre Dame if you had those fullbacks and defensive ends working for you. Well, the best guys ought to be on the worst ships, because they're the hardest to administer, they're the hardest to deal with, and they're the hardest to make go. But we always line everybody up on a ladder, and the worst ship the last guy gets.

Paul Stillwell: Well, a case that I know you're familiar with, the *Pueblo*.\*

Admiral Crowe: I was just going to say.

Paul Stillwell: Bucher was not considered good enough to command a submarine, but then he was faulted because he didn't perform the way the topnotch guys would have.

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\* USS *Pueblo* (AGER-2), an electronic intelligence ship, was seized on 23 January 1968 in the Sea of Japan by North Korean naval forces. The ship's crew members were held as prisoners until 23 December of that year. Of the 83 officers and men on board, 28 were intelligence specialists. Her commanding officer was Commander Lloyd R. Bucher, USN.

Admiral Crowe: Precisely. And that was the Navy way; that's the way it's done. My friend Matty Matthews, had command of an LPD and he was appalled at how little support he had.\* He had to be on the bridge for everything, because he didn't have any officers working for him that he really felt he could trust up there. And yet on a submarine—he'd had command of a submarine—you're pretty safe, because you've got good people. But that's the way we do it.

But leading in the Army, you've got to be a real leader in the Army if you're going to make sense out of what's going on—that was discovered in Vietnam—and to keep a disciplined organization together. What was the test we had in the services? But anyway, the score was 60, or something. Not an IQ test.

Paul Stillwell: GCT and ARI?†

Admiral Crowe: Yes, or something like that. You've got a whole batch of those people.

Paul Stillwell: And some of the lower scoring people were involved in war crimes because they weren't sophisticated enough to perceive what they were doing.

Admiral Crowe: That's who they gave combat billets. They don't put them on running something; they give them a gun. Because running something—you've got to repair a truck it requires certain skills, to cook requires certain skills, so everybody with no skills gets a gun. They're probably the last people in the world who ought to have a gun. We said the most dangerous thing in Vietnam was the gun you carried yourself, and the second most dangerous one was the gun your friend carried, and the third was Viet Cong.‡ [Laughter].

Actually, the average naval officer doesn't have any idea of the challenges the Army officer has. And vice versa, the mechanical and technical and electrical challenges

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\* LPD – amphibious transport dock, a type of amphibious warfare ship with a landing deck for helos and well deck for landing craft.

† GCT/ARI – general classification test/arithmetic aptitude test.

‡ The enemy was the Viet Cong, abbreviated VC. In the phonetic alphabet, those letters are Victor Charlie, so the Viet Cong were known in the slang of the day as “Charlie.”



the Navy, running that stuff. A lot of Army officers couldn't do it. But there are a lot of awful good leaders in the Army, and that's the reason for all the emphasis on leadership.

You know, I watch my son. That's probably his biggest strength. He's not a brain surgeon, but he does get along with his people, and he is a leader. I was out the other day visiting one of his people that was wounded by a sniper, that's at Bethesda.\* Blake sent me a message saying: "This is one of my best enlisted friends; he requested to go with me to the regiment."<sup>†</sup> I walked in the room, the guy was black. Blake never mentioned that. I didn't know he was black. Never mentioned it.

Paul Stillwell: That says a lot about your son.

Admiral Crowe: It does. And when I was talking to the kid he was telling me how much he liked Blake, and he said, "When they were carrying me into the clinic after I'd been shot," he said, "Blake was screaming at me, 'Hold on, don't give up, don't give up.' " He said, "He went right in with me."

Paul Stillwell: Wow. I think that's a combination of innate qualities and training.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's what he does best. He seems to have a talent for understanding that he doesn't understand all the electrical stuff, so he gets guys that do. Now, that's an interesting quality. Some people won't admit they've got a problem and have to seek advice, and so forth and so forth.

When I was 06 I was the Navy's OpDep and I would go to the JCS with the CNO every day.<sup>‡</sup> I'd been doing that about three months when it seemed to me the Army was much better organized than the Navy was, on their papers and their staffing for those meetings. I didn't quite know why, but it just seemed to me that the OpDep and his deputy always came in a little more organized fashion than we were.<sup>§</sup> So I went to the

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\* National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.

<sup>†</sup> Colonel W. Blake Crowe, USMC, was commanding a regiment in Iraq at the time of the interview.

<sup>‡</sup> As a vice admiral, Crowe served as OP-06, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans, Policy and Operations), from August 1977 to March 1980.

<sup>§</sup> OpDep – operations deputy.

Army guy and said, “How about letting me come down and visit you, and you run through how you do your staffing?”

He said, “What for?”

I said, “Well, I’ve got the impression you guys do it better than we do. I want to know what you’re doing.” So he did, and I spent two or three days down there. And I later was in the same church with this guy, and he said to me, “You know, the whole time I was in the Army nobody came down from another service and said, ‘Tell me about how you do it so I can do it better.’ I’ve never forgotten that you did that.”

Paul Stillwell: Who was he?

Admiral Crowe: John Gerrity.<sup>\*</sup> He damned near died in our church from some kind of stroke, but he didn’t; he recovered and now is living in Naples, Florida.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: But the typical approach is chauvinism about your own service.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that was what he was pointing out. He said, “I went to my Chief of Staff and said, ‘Listen, this guy Crowe in the Navy must be unusual. He’s the only one who ever wanted to know what the hell we were doing, and if it’s better he’s going to adopt it.’ ” And his chief was Shy Meyer, and Shy Meyer said, “That’s un-American!”<sup>‡</sup>  
[Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Well, what did you discover in observing him for a few days?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I discovered first of all they had been doing it a lot longer than we had. They’re better at staff work than we are, and they put more emphasis on staff work. They promote people on the basis of their staff work instead of other things. Of course, they spend more time on staffs than the Navy does.

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<sup>\*</sup> Major General John L. Gerrity, USA.

<sup>†</sup> On 18 January 2007, two months after this interview, Gerrity died of lung cancer in Naples, Florida.

<sup>‡</sup> General Edward C. Meyer, USA, served as Army Chief of Staff from 22 June 1979 to 21 June 1983.

They had a real good system for winnowing things out, but not dropping them out. To making corrections and saying this is the reason we made it and there is a dissenting view, and so and so. There will always be footnotes as to who disagreed with this, so if you wanted to pursue it instead of taking the action officer's word, why, you needed some guy that you could bring in the other side of the question and decide for yourself. I didn't do a lot of the stuff they had, because it was all sort of mechanical. Also they had a larger staff than we did.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and that's been the stereotype, that the Navy people are out operating while the Army people are training and educating.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But that showed up in Washington. They had a lot of people that had been around Washington. So did the Air Force. Air Force, they almost had a specialist corps for people for Washington. If a guy got tagged that he was good in Washington, the Air Force never let him go away. Put a big red spot on his back or something and always brought him back there. [Chuckle]

Of course, that's what I did. After that I very seldom went anywhere except Washington when I wasn't at sea. And that was the big knock on me: not enough time at sea.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we're just about ready to talk about a sea billet. Please tell me about getting to the *Wahoo*.

Admiral Crowe: I'm just trying to think if there's anything else about Stanford. I learned a lot about the culture between the University of California and Stanford. [Chuckle] They've got their own Army-Navy game out there called The Big Game, and there's a couple of things happened to that while I was there. I remember they started panty raids at the University of California while I was at Stanford, and the next day on big packing boxes on the corner at Stanford, the guys had put them out and said, "Girls, help your friends across the bay; contribute your lingerie." And they were putting their panties in there and sending them over to California. [Laughter]

Also, just the general ambiance in California is different. The children are different, the younger people are different, and I'm not so sure for the better. But obviously it was a more fast-lane existence than people that grew up in the middle of the country—or at least it was then. Now everything's real-time, so I don't know. I think everybody eats Chinese food and uses heroin all over the country. But then there were differences in the sections between the way I'd grown up and the way I saw children out there.

But I really got a big appreciation for professors out at Stanford—to see a really first-class professor that could lecture and was an authority in his field. And I was surprised at two things I learned. They had sabbaticals, and they took them seriously. When they had a sabbatical they just didn't go fishing; they would climb on an airplane and spend six month climbing the Himalayas or whatever. Whatever was in their area, they'd be out there visiting it during their sabbatical.

Also that Stanford had a system in order to track people. They only had to teach three days a week, something like that, maybe four. They'd have one day to themselves to earn money the way they wanted to, as consultants and so forth. That was a big attraction in getting professors. See, the Naval Academy doesn't have anything like that.

Paul Stillwell: Or maybe it would just be a day to think.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was up to him. He could do whatever he wanted to. But he did have a day that he controlled, to either profit from it or to just encourage his own work, or whatever. That was the first time I saw that academics really was a lifetime profession. They got immersed in their profession, and they were proud of it and their expertise and what they knew. I had had some glimmer of this, but not really, beforehand, and I shared the Naval Academy bias that professors live in a world that's not real. Not totally true, particularly in the law school. God, the professors in the law school, all of them had practiced law before they started teaching. Many had clerked for very prominent judges in the country, and they were teaching law school. That's not true in most law schools.

And I learned that Stanford is a high-grade—oh, it has a lot of biases, but—and, of course, the icon out there was Herbert Hoover.\* And my father had always admired Herbert Hoover; my parents came to my graduation. Our degrees weren't given at the graduation, for some reason. But, in any event, my parents came to that ceremony, and unexpectedly who showed up but Herbert Hoover, and he was in the procession. Nobody was expecting him, and they saw Herbert Hoover come down and they applauded as he walked down. I don't remember the commencement address, but he got up and said a few words, and it was better than the commencement address. My father was quite thrilled to actually see Herbert Hoover; he was really taken by it. And that's the last commencement my father saw. He didn't get to see any others I was connected with.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Hoover was respected as an elder statesman at that point.

Admiral Crowe: He was.

Paul Stillwell: I know President Truman had a high regard for him.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. And Truman used him.

Paul Stillwell: The Hoover Commission.†

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And of course you've got the Hoover Institute out there, and that big tower—they claim that's Hoover's last erection. [Laughter]

In any event, that was a pretty high-grade institution. They had a—what was his name, Sokoloff, or something like that?—a professor at the Hoover Institution I took a course under, who was an Austrian naval officer at one time in his life. He taught a course in strategy, and so forth. He was a guy that Stockdale really got to know and liked very much. Anyway, I audited a course from this man, because he was speaking on strategy. But he used to always talk about the Austrian Navy, and I thought that was sort

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\* Herbert C. Hoover (1874-1964) was an 1895 graduate of Stanford University. He served as President of the United States from 1929 to 1933.

† After World War II Hoover headed a study on the organization of the U.S. Government.

of interesting. I had never heard of the Austrian Navy. Of course, they had a port, Trieste, at one time, and that's where they were based. But the Hoover Institution was loaded with those guys. Very unusual. People doing various segments of education, and so forth.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it still has people from a wide range of intellectual backgrounds.

Admiral Crowe: My fellow students at Stanford—I said we had three or four Marines. One of them had come out of the reservoir in Chosin, an artillery officer named Boyer.<sup>\*</sup> I used to see his name mentioned, but that's been years ago. And an aviator, Paul—I can't remember his last name. Then an Irishman. The senior officer was a lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps who was from California. I think his name was O'Leary, something like that. He was very interested in his own self-advancement, I can remember that. Then we had several naval officers, one of whom was George Watson.<sup>†</sup> And in the Navy itself had Hank Clay, a submariner.<sup>‡</sup> He was the class behind mine, and he was very bright. He was in the group. So we had surface officers and aviators, all doing personnel management. And we got hooked up on special lectures—not course-wise, but extra-curricular—with my first political scientist. Some of the officers knew a couple of professors over in the political science school. We used to have dinners, and they would come over and lecture to us about what was going to happen in the elections and so forth, and that was my first exposure to a real political scientist.

Paul Stillwell: You said you had the idea that you wanted to come back and teach at Stanford one day. Was your idea that you would go to captain and then retire and go into academia?

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<sup>\*</sup> Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. In December 1950 the Marines staged a fighting retreat from Chosin and were evacuated through the port of Hungnam.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant Commander George W. Watson, USN, a naval aviator.

<sup>‡</sup> Lieutenant Commander Harold S. Clay, USN.

Admiral Crowe: I was always looking forward to that when they forced me out of the Navy. I think in many ways that's the reason I went to Vietnam.\* I didn't consider my promotion prospects that bright. Certainly, if they were high it wasn't obvious to me. And, of course, I had been to Princeton then, and I had a political science degree. My reasoning was, among other things, first of all, I thought it would be nice if I got in a war before I got out. I didn't want to be in the Navy for many years and not ever been to war. [Chuckle] And my wife was tolerant with that.

I was told that I was nuts for doing that. When I look back on my career, I did more things that people told me not to do, and going to Vietnam was one. Everybody said, "Don't do that." But, anyway, I thought I should go to war. I also thought, "Now, if I leave the Navy and I go into the political science field they're going to be discussing Vietnam for 40 years. And how in the hell can you stand up and talk about it if you haven't been there? So I ought to go there." And that was in the back of my mind, that it was a prominent political science subject.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we're 40 years after Vietnam, and it's still being talked about.

Admiral Crowe: It's still being talked about. It's still talked about with some force. We did yesterday, in my class. And I thought that was pretty important. Well, that's off the subject here. That's about it, I guess, for Stanford. It was just one year of my life, but it was a very pleasant one, and I think very fruitful, although I learned a lot of things that didn't have anything to do with why I was there. But I got a degree out of it.

That was another problem. Everybody wanted a master's degree, and it wasn't customary to give it that quickly, in one year. But the Navy finally talked them into it, and we got a master's degree in education, which won't buy you much except get you on the subway, maybe.

Paul Stillwell: But it was a ticket to punch.

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\* As a captain, Crowe served in Vietnam in 1970-71.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And everybody was very worried about whether they would get that degree or not; I can remember that. It worked out where we did.

Paul Stillwell: Why couldn't you go longer at Stanford?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was just nine months. The Navy sent us there for nine months, and that was the end. The Navy wasn't worried about the degree.

That's another thing. The Navy never did worry about degrees very much, which I think is a little naïve. That's like going to the Naval Academy. You don't go to the Naval Academy three years and then leave. [Chuckle]. If you don't graduate, you haven't done a damned thing.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it wasn't even until 1933 that the Naval Academy began giving degrees.

Admiral Crowe: Is that right? I didn't realize that.

Paul Stillwell: It was because only half the class graduated because of the Depression.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that I did know.

Paul Stillwell: And so they figured, "Well, we've got to give them something if we can't give them a commission."

Admiral Crowe: So they gave them a degree. An engineering degree, I assume, BS?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Right. They were still giving that when I was there. [Chuckle]. As Mal MacKinnon would say, the one side of every question. They always told us the right answer to everything. But that was about it.



Paul Stillwell: My sense is that the Navy now places much more emphasis on degrees than it did then.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Yes. And I'm partially responsible for that.

A question, of course, that was uppermost in my mind was what would they do with me when I left there? Would I have really damaged myself with the submarine force? But time and again that question came up, and I finally decided to quit worrying about it. The submarine force was interested in getting people back, because they had personnel problems too, and they'd always threaten you. When you'd do something unusual they'd say, "Well, you're going to be out of the mainstream here; I'm not sure we can use you." That was sheer nonsense. Everybody that did that always came back, because they needed you. Until we got the nuclear business going. Then they really needed you, because they had a lot of billets that they had to fill that weren't specifically in the nuclear program but were support billets. So they took all their diesel people and put them in them. But in any event, they always wanted you back.

Then in 1956 I got orders to be exec of the *Wahoo*, and I was quite thrilled about that, because that was a new boat then, and of our latest class.\* The nuclear business was going, but it wasn't really heavy going yet. But while I was on *Wahoo* several of the officers, junior officers, went into the nuclear program right then. I remember I applied and never heard anything from anybody. [Laughter]. Story of my life.

When I got there, Hank Hanssen, was my skipper.† He was from Missouri, Wentworth, and out of the Naval Academy class of '44. Very smooth, slick. Understood the politics of the Navy very well. When he left the boat, he went up to be the flag secretary to SubPac.‡ And Chuck Griffiths, who had been flag secretary to SubPac, came down and took the boat.§

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\* USS *Wahoo* (SS-565), a *Tang*-class fast attack submarine, was commissioned 30 May 1952. She had a displacement of 1,560 tons on the surface and 2,260 tons submerged. She was 269 feet long, 27 feet in the beam, and had a draft of 17 feet. Her top speed was 15 knots surfaced and 18 knots submerged. She was armed with eight 21-inch torpedo tubes.

† Lieutenant Commander Henry R. Hanssen, USN, commanded the *Wahoo* from 23 July 1955 to 2 August 1957.

‡ SubPac – Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet.

§ Lieutenant Commander Charles H. Griffiths, USN, commanded the *Wahoo* from 2 August 1957 to 6 December 1958.

Chuck Griffiths was the best skipper I ever had. He was a good skipper. And it was a good boat. It was probably loaded with more good people than I'd ever been with on a boat. The wardroom was loaded with good minds. We had Doug Guthe; a fellow by the name of Bean who stood number one in his sub class; Tom Sisson, who had stood one or two, something like that; a kid by the name of Brown that stood very high; and then I got another guy that stood one, a younger officer, I forget his name.\* The wardroom was full of a lot of talent, a lot of potential, and Chuck was a damned good skipper; he really was good.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said in the book that he was willing to give a lot of time to training of junior officers.

Admiral Crowe: And he was willing to let them do it.

Paul Stillwell: And let them make the inevitable mistakes.

Admiral Crowe: That's what impressed me the most. He would stand there and let them fuck it up, and keep his cool. But he had been the flag secretary to SubPac, so he had some confidence about the organization and how it worked, and what the admiral admired, and so forth, so he was willing to take those kinds of risks.

Paul Stillwell: What other qualities did he have that you admired?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was by far the most important. He didn't try and be the exec. He had been an exec, and he didn't butt into my business very much. He left the crew to the exec, and then he would do the awarding and so forth. But he was a hell of a lot smarter than I thought he was going to be. Not much got by him. But he didn't make a big deal out of it, and he was very calm when things went wrong, which on a submarine is a tremendous virtue.

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\* Lieutenant Douglas B. Guthe, USN; Lieutenant Thomas U. Sisson, Jr., USN.

Paul Stillwell: Because there's a lot of potential for things going wrong.

Admiral Crowe: He had a couple things really go wrong.

Paul Stillwell: What were those?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the main one was getting caught off Vladivostok. We were inside the three-mile limit when we got picked up, and spent the next 48 hours trying to get out of there without being forced up to the surface. Chuck was very calm through that whole thing. We prepared to destroy all our papers.

We lost a screw in the middle of that. We had an explosion of the electrical motor, so at the end we were operating on one screw. We came all the way back to Yokosuka on one screw. That was a genuine crisis.

Paul Stillwell: Did he deliberately go inside the three-mile limit?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, no. We were ordered to go in.

Paul Stillwell: Ah. Well, then I guess it was deliberate.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was deliberate. We'd been told, I think, to spend one or two days inside the limit if we could get in. It wasn't a lot of time, but we were to spend one time in the patrol to go in close. What we didn't know, and found out later, was that early that morning we had been at periscope depth when a Russian helicopter or aircraft, I don't know which, saw us. We weren't in then; we were on our way in. But we didn't realize we had been detected ahead of time. So when we got in there, there were plenty of people out there looking for us—not that we just stumbled into it on our own. That was something; we truly got ambushed.

Paul Stillwell: What were you supposed to do during this time in so close?

Admiral Crowe: Well, photographing, and to see what their detection system was. We'd spent some time right on the limit. We were outside the limit there off and on for several days. But the one day we went in close, of all the days, we got detected, and that was it. We thought they were just out there pinging for the hell of it, but they were out there looking for us, and they found us.

Paul Stillwell: Were you also doing electronic surveillance?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. We had a whole list of things we were supposed to do. But once we got detected we went deep and went to flank speed, and that's when we had the explosion in the motor. We were up to 18 knots when it happened, and we were at 700 feet, and we were really getting out of there. And right in the middle of this the sonar operator said, "I think there's a torpedo in the water!" That made life most interesting. [Chuckle]

It wasn't a big explosion, but it just shorted out the engine, and the word came up, "We've lost our port screw." So then we went down to slow speed, trying to figure, we're going to waste that battery the way we were doing. If we want to get out of here we've got to go slower. We think we broke contact there, but we didn't break it forever. I think it was almost 30 hours before we got our snorkel up, and managed to snorkel for about forty minutes.\* We were out of it then. We were quite a ways out, 20 miles out. But they came out with us. They didn't just chase us off; they were following us the best they could. But in the middle of all this we stuck the snorkel up and snorkeled at night for almost an hour, maybe 40 minutes, and that saved us. They didn't detect that, for reasons I don't know why.

Paul Stillwell: Did the air get pretty thin?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did. You couldn't light a cigarette. And we were bumbling around trying to get stuff ready to destroy. The very time you don't want to spend energy

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\* By snorkeling, the submarine was able to draw air into the boat to refresh the atmosphere, also to run the diesel engines and recharge the batteries.

is you're getting the boat ready to surface and you don't want to do that, because what we really wanted to do, and did for a while, was get everybody to go to bed. Went down to slow speed and everybody go to bed, and spend as little air and as little energy as possible.

Anyway, it took us three days. We thought we had repaired the engine, the motor. When we got out there, the patrol wasn't over, so when we finally broke contact and were way out we lit off the motor and it exploded again. So we hadn't fixed it. So that's when we decided to come home. Came home through the strait.

I saw a picture last night of Mush Morton, and they discovered they found his submarine.\* They dove on it, they said. I didn't realize that.

Paul Stillwell: Also named the *Wahoo*.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And he was trying to get through La Pérouse Strait. I can remember transiting La Pérouse both ways. But he got shell fired; he was on the surface when he got hit, evidently. Then they tried to dive, and I don't think they could do it. I think they had some damage, they couldn't dive, so they tried to go through on the surface, and the Japanese sank them.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you had a report of a torpedo in the water from the sonarman.

Admiral Crowe: It just turned out to be a noisemaker. They used a noisemaker to attract torpedoes off them. I think it was not a torpedo, but that was the report we got, "Torpedo in the water." It wasn't a torpedo. It was a Foxer, I think they called it. Something they had thrown over the side to make noise, to detract our torpedo. They never fired anything at us that we could tell.

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\* Commander Dudley "Mush" Morton, USN, was commanding officer of the previous submarine *Wahoo* (SS-238), which was lost in 1943. On 31 October 2006 Commander U.S. Pacific Fleet announced that in July of that year a Russian dive team had photographed the *Wahoo*'s wreckage lying in about 213 feet of water in the La Perouse Strait between the Japanese island of Hokkaido and the Russian island of Sakhalin.

The *Gudgeon* had surfaced one night out there out there, been forced up, so we had the experience of the *Gudgeon*, and we figured if we got out far enough that maybe they wouldn't do anything dramatic and we could surface, but we didn't know.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that was a real test for a skipper—remaining calm when all those things were happening.

Admiral Crowe: All that stuff. The *Wahoo* had a strange periscope, where you could look through and then there was a third one that somebody else could look through at the same time. When we got detected the skipper and I were both looking at this guy charging around up there. We think that's when we got picked up. The sonarman reported, "He's pinging on us now." Right away he said, "He's got us," and that's when we pulled everything down, went deep and tried to get away. We were doing very well until the motor blew up. [Chuckle]. That was an exciting night.

Paul Stillwell: Well, did you collect any useful intelligence before that?

Admiral Crowe: If we did, I don't remember it. [Laughter]. I don't think we collected any more than we had throughout the trip. We'd observed a lot of exercises. But I can remember seeing that guy through the scope. He was turning right toward us, dead on, and he was at high speed. He was probably about 2,000 yards out, sitting on the thing.

Paul Stillwell: Was it unusual for a U.S. submarine to go in that close?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It was not unprecedented, but sort of unusual. Well, it was unusual enough they made a big deal of it in our orders: One day you want to go in and see if you can get in close.

I've never been to Vladivostok. I had an invitation when I was Chairman, but I couldn't spend that much time in Russia. I always wanted to go. Never got to see it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, is this a convenient breaking place?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Why don't we do that?

Paul Stillwell: Well, I look forward seeing you.

Admiral Crowe: And we'll look into *Wahoo*.

Paul Stillwell: See you next week. (End of Interview 7)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, we've been chatting here before we started, and you mentioned a shipmate named Martinez you had in *Flying Fish*. If you could put in that story as a P.S., please.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was a Latino from southern Texas. In fact, he grew up working on the King Ranch. He was a cowboy, but when I knew him he was an electrician's mate first class. In the war he had come into the Navy, and I think he was serving on the *Astoria*, one of the ships sunk at Savo Island, and went into the water for the night when the ship sank.\* And the next day he was rescued, but he had trouble convincing anyone that he was an American, because he looked sort of Japanese and had an accent. But he finally succeeded in that, and then later in his career he went into submarines. Was on the *Cochino* when they lost it.† Then he came aboard us and that's when I knew him. He did something for us in the middle of a crisis one day that was very imaginative and innovative. He was a really smart young man. I remember him well. And in fact I now remember why he died.

In any event, he liked Hopalong Cassidy.‡ We were having a little ceremony for him, so I wrote away and got an autographed picture, of Hopalong Cassidy and gave it to him, because he really admired Hopalong Cassidy.

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\* On the night of 8-9 August 1942, between Guadalcanal and nearby Savo Island, a Japanese surface force surprised Allied forces and sank four cruisers, the USS *Astoria* (CA-34), USS *Quincy* (CA-39), USS *Vincennes* (CA-44), and HMAS *Canberra*.

† As discussed in a previous interview, the submarine *Cochino* (SS-345) was lost off Norway on 26 August 1949 as the result of battery explosions and fires.

‡ Hopalong Cassidy was a character in Western movies and a comic strip of the era.

My understanding of it is that he later—this was when we had an embassy in Cuba—was ordered to the embassy. He spoke fluent Spanish. He was serving in Cuba when he died. He got a sickness of some kind, a stomach ailment, an ulcer that got infected, or something like that, and died while he was in Cuba. I sort of think he was connected with Benitez, the skipper of the *Cochino*, who may have been in Cuba doing some work and brought Martinez down there with him. That's my memory of it a little bit. But he was a sterling sailor. I remember him very well.

Paul Stillwell: That's too many ship sinkings for one man to go through.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's a lot. I was just saying I think the most dangerous thing that happened to me at sea was the transfer of small boats to a submarine deck in any kind of weather, even just a mild sea run. It was dangerous. It was hard to do, and a mistake could be, if you got caught between the boat and the small boat, why it would very likely kill you. I saw it really when I was in the Middle East Force. We were in Yemen, and we took some people out on the flagship one day, a surface ship, and while they were out the sea came up, and to get those people back from that deck of that surface ship into a small boat to take them back it took us a couple of hours to get people aboard, and without killing them. It was really dangerous.

Paul Stillwell: Was your flagship one of those converted AVPs?

Admiral Crowe: No, they had gone away. Actually it wasn't on the flagship. My flagship was an LPD, but it was one of our destroyers that was working for me, and we had to transfer from them. Essentially you timed your jump and jumped from the deck into the boat. It would be bad enough to have sailors do that; these were civilians. I could see all kinds of litigation coming out of that.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you were also mentioning before we turned the tape recorder on about an experience you had in the *Wahoo* that was hair-raising.



Admiral Crowe: Well, we came out of Perth, Australia, after spending a week there, and went right into a storm. I was exec of *Wahoo*, and I was seasick. I was lying in my bunk when the collision alarm went off, and as I came out of my bunk and put my feet on the deck it was in 12 inches of water. We had taken a large wave over the bridge, and the hatch was open to the bridge and it just came down the trunk and went right into the forward battery. We spent the next three hours trying to keep the 12 inches of water—which didn't seem to be very much, but it was a lot of water—keep it out of the battery. And then secondly to pump it. Since the ship was rolling wildly while we were doing that, it was very difficult. That's probably the main crisis I participated in, aside from losing a screw up off Vladivostok, the main accident that I saw on the ship. That could have been very dangerous.

Paul Stillwell: You certainly were wide-ranging, going all the way from Vladivostok to Australia. Was that in the same deployment in the *Wahoo*?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. It was in the same deployment. Did I mention how we got to Australia?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: Well, did some interesting things on that ship. When I reported to the *Wahoo* they were still having a great deal of trouble with the pancake engines, and they had already scheduled, way before I got there, a yard overhaul to lengthen the *Wahoo* and put in diesels.\*

Paul Stillwell: Horizontal diesels.

Admiral Crowe: In-line diesels, Fairbanks Morse. Very shortly after I got there, first of all I discovered that they had had that trouble so long that everybody had learned to live

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\* The “pancake” diesel engines were an innovation in the *Tang*-class submarines. They were designed to save space and weight in comparison to the engines used in World War II submarines. Their design included a vertical crankshaft.

with it, having an engine out or not being able to use a screw didn't bother the *Wahoo* at all. They just went to sea. [Chuckle] In fact, the first time I rode with them, as we were backing off the dock we lost a screw, and the captain didn't even smirk or anything. He just took the ship out on one screw, and it didn't upset him at all. [Chuckle]. They had *so* much trouble with those engines.

The tour I had in *Wahoo* was a fascinating tour, with all the things we did. We were getting ready to go into the dock for that lengthening, and so the last weekend before we went in we took half the crew and went to the island of Kauai for a weekend. The wardroom's wives all flew over for the weekend. We docked on a Friday night in Kauai, in a little harbor called Nawiliwili. We had docked at a commercial pier there, and behind us was a great big commercial ship. Not an oiler or a tanker, but a merchant ship. The wives had flown in, and we all had reservations at the Kauai Hilton, or some damn thing, a beautiful hotel where we were going to spend the weekend, and it was right on the beach.

I was awakened at 8:00 o'clock in the morning by a phone call that said they were expecting a tidal wave and were evacuating the hotel. And, of course, I wasn't worried a bit about the hotel. I couldn't care less about the hotel. I was thinking about the ship. Well, the skipper, Hank Hanssen, was awakened at 7:00 o'clock and was told that there was a tidal wave had passed Guam—now, none of us knew anything about tidal waves—and was expected in Hawaii within an hour or two. The skipper said, "Well, how big is it?" He said 18 inches, a foot and a half, or something like that. So the skipper didn't wake up anybody. He took one of our two cars and went down to the ship by himself, and the ship had the skipper and the engineer, Doug Guthe, a third of the crew. He decided that since it was such a small wave that there really wasn't going to be much of a problem. Well, that's not the way tidal waves work. [Chuckle] It may be a small wave out at sea, but when you get, say, a foot and a half, or two and a half feet, of huge breakers upwater, and it comes into an inlet, the tide may go 50 feet, something like that. But we didn't know all that. So all the rest of us jumped up, the whole wardroom got out of bed. The skipper wasn't there; he'd already gone to the boat.

We dropped the women on high ground and drove down to the harbor, and the ship was under way. What got him under way was the first meanderings of the tidal

wave were coming in and a big whirlpool was starting. He had decided at the last minute to lie to in the middle of the harbor, not against the dock, and the ship was under way and it was sitting out there right in the middle of the harbor with a whole bunch of little fishing boats in the area. The guy on the merchant ship had decided there was nothing he could do. He'd have to just rough it out, whatever. Actually, Nawiliwili wasn't very impacted.

Anyway, we arrived in time to see all the action, but we weren't aboard. And we sat there on this damned dock and watched the first wave come in, and all of a sudden the tide went down eight feet and then the next minute came up 16 feet, and this big whirlpool action started in the middle of the harbor. The skipper was obviously maneuvering to keep his position, and then all of a sudden he couldn't. The whirlpool went out and he went with it. In any event, it's a fascinating story. I hate to bore you with all this.

Paul Stillwell: It's not boring. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: I guess it was like this. We had a seawall here and a great big causeway breaker here, and over here was a cliff, and the channel came in like this.

Paul Stillwell: Made kind of an S-turn.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, although it was more exaggerated than I'm making it. It was a longer channel. But our pier was over here. He got out here, and he was fighting this whirlpool, and all of a sudden he was swept out and no way to stop it. So he reversed his engines, went ahead full and went down the channel, and went right at that cliff. He was trying to make that turn, and the second wave came in and pushed his bow back, and he backed off and tried it again with engines, and he came within about 25 feet of that cliff and just drove out.

And a lot of other things were happening in the middle of all this. I haven't given you the full story. They were coming out the first time, and he tried to make that curve and couldn't, so the boat came back in the channel and went aground. We weren't quite

sure what was happening, and nobody ever knew we went aground really. We never used the word “grounding.” But he got hung up. I guess that was it. He was coming down like this, and the bow got hung up and the ship turned around.

Paul Stillwell: Pivoting on the bow?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, fair to the channel. And in the process the ship heeled over about 25 or 30 degrees. Two men fell overboard when it happened. We didn’t lose anybody, but it was a real crisis when we saw these two men come over. We were standing over here on the seawall, which would be more like that, watching this damned thing. We’d just seen this tide go crazy. This was a flat here, shallow flats, but against the wall of the cliff it was very deep, fortunately. All these kids had on life jackets. One was named Bergald; he was later lost on *Scorpion*.<sup>\*</sup> He got washed up on this flat and walked ashore. We met him when he came ashore. The other was a young quartermaster. I can’t remember his name, a really young kid. He went out to sea and then came back in and climbed on the buoy. There was a buoy there right at the beginning of the harbor, and he rode out the storm sitting on the buoy.

The second time they tried, and they made the curve all right and cleared out of the harbor. All this happened in about 16 minutes, something like that. All very exciting. We weren’t sure where we stood, whether he’d hit anything on this cliff or not; we couldn’t see very well. But we were sure glad to see him get out of there, because the maneuverings and meanderings of this ship in the channel and coming down without being able to control itself until it straightened out were quite exciting.

Paul Stillwell: He wouldn’t have been casual about losing an engine then.

Admiral Crowe: No, he would not have. And we couldn’t have done it with one engine, one screw. I thought for a while that what he would do was he would just come back and come back in the harbor, because he was coming down broadside. But they might run

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<sup>\*</sup> The submarine *Scorpion* (SSN-589) was lost with all hands while en route from the Mediterranean to Norfolk. She was last heard from on 21 May 1968. On 27 May she was reported overdue and on 5 June presumed lost with her entire crew of 99 officers and men. The wreckage was located on 30 October of that year. No definitive conclusion has been reached as to cause.

aground here, because there were all kinds of flats here, and if he'd have had to make that channel in there he would have had a very small window. But he wasn't going to do that if he could avoid it. He was going to go to sea.

This was at 8:00 in the morning, and he stayed at sea for about three or four hours, until the subsequent waves kept going down. And about 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon he came back in and we all met him, and then we had this great big powwow in the wardroom as to what the hell do we do now?

Now, we had sent a message that after a harrowing escape from Nawiliwili that the *Wahoo* was all right, and so that's about all we said in it. But—this is a terrible word to use—but fortunately the wave was all over the Hawaiian Islands. All kinds of things were happening. Ships were going aground and the tides of northern Oahu were 50 feet. Pearl Harbor made out pretty well. Pearl Harbor is ideally suited to fight that because, in the first place the opening is to the south, and secondly it's a small opening in a large harbor, which defeats the tidal wave. The worst is the other way, big mouth and small declivity.

We all read up on tidal waves, became experts right away on tidal waves, and I had to write an article for the submarine magazine about our adventure. But when we got back to Pearl Harbor everything was oral. "Well, how'd you make it?"

"Well, we just made out, but we're okay." [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: So this is the second grounding that you sort of skated by.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. And nobody asked too many questions or anything, because a lot of things had happened that day. The airwaves were full of stuff. And we were going in the yard on Monday, so the safety of the boat wasn't going to be a problem. We were just going to get a major overhaul.\* They were going to lengthen the boat. And we went ahead and went into the yard on Monday, and that this sort of faded away. There was no disciplinary action taken or anything about the boat.

I don't think anybody really realized how dramatic it was till I wrote the article. We got a lot of plaudits on the article. In fact, a division commander—he wasn't mine—

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\* The shipyard period was from April to October of 1957.

is in my church now, in Trinity, and we used to often talk about that. He said he had no idea what we'd gone through till he read that article.

Paul Stillwell: Who was he?

Admiral Crowe: Norm Nash.\* He was a wartime, he was out of the class of '42. Later he was a captain. He never made admiral. But he had the sub group in Yokosuka when he retired.

Okay, that was the first thing. Then we went into the yard, and we were in the yard nine months, something like that. That's a major operation, to take that ship and pull it apart, and put in 16 feet. I watched all of that. It was fascinating how they did it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, she had suffered for years with those terrible pancakes, ever since she was commissioned.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were really looking forward to the change.

Paul Stillwell: Sure.

Admiral Crowe: But the precise measurements they had to go through, and they lifted in that section of the hull and it just fit precisely. It was incredible.

Paul Stillwell: Was it prefabricated?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. It didn't have the engines in or anything, just the section of the hull, but they just luffed it down there and put it back together and welded it, and it was perfect.

Paul Stillwell: How did you go about ship's work during that much disruption?

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\* Captain Norman C. Nash, USN (Ret.).

Admiral Crowe: Well, we didn't. Of course, we didn't live on the ship. But there was a lot of work because of the disruption. As I said, that's a major operation, to put completely new engines in it and everything else.

Paul Stillwell: What sort of things did you do, day by day?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were working on the ship to sever all the lines and so forth and pull the ship apart, and then put them all back together. That takes a lot of work, not only the yard but the crew. We had to oversee all that. We were the safety guys. The Navy yard workmen just did what the job order called for, and whether it was right or wrong, we were the guys that had to blow the whistle if it wasn't. I don't mean to demean their work, but nevertheless there was a lot of responsibility on the skipper to make sure what they were doing was safe.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have an EDO as a go-between?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, the project manager with the ship. His name was King, and his father had been the governor of Hawaii.\* A Republican. All governors of Hawaii were Republican then, before it was a state. Pali King was his name. He was a Naval Academy graduate, an EDO.

Well, we no more got out of the shipyard than we went to Tahiti.† Our shakedown cruise, why, that skipper talked them into sending us to Tahiti.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have Commander Griffiths by this time?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Griffiths took command while we were in the yard, and Hank went up to be the flag secretary of SubPac, under Grenfell. We went to Tahiti. The

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\* Samuel Wilder King was Hawaii's governor from 1953 to 1957. He was a 1910 graduate of the Naval Academy.

† The trip to Tahiti was in November 1957.

division commander went with us, Dick Garvey, an old friend of mine.<sup>\*</sup> We had a week in Tahiti and it was something else. Jesus Christ, that's a different place.

Paul Stillwell: Well, please describe it.

Admiral Crowe: Well, first of all, Tahiti didn't have an airport then. It was still serviced strictly by ships. And once a week a big seaplane flight came in from Australia, and otherwise—it landed in the ocean, but it was the only flight that did that.

Tahiti's different. In the first place, all the sand down there is black, which I found fascinating. And it was a French colony, and there were a lot of people down there that were enjoying life. [Chuckle]. And the Tahitian women, starting with the *Bounty*, of some hundreds of years before, they are devoted to making life pleasant for everybody.<sup>†</sup> And I wasn't sure we were going to get our crew back once they went ashore. [Laughter] God Almighty, I just was never sure when we got ready to go that they'd want to come back.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the French artist Gauguin exposed that place to the world.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and it's just like that, or at least it was then. And it was full of French women. There were a bunch of really fancy yachts, in the main harbor, and one yacht they had, I forget the name of it, they said: "Are you going down to this going-away party?"

I said, "Well, no. I don't think we've been invited."

He said, "Oh, well, everybody's invited."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "Well, they've been here for several months now, and every Saturday they're going to leave and they have a big going-away party on Friday night, but the party wipes everybody out, so they don't leave, till the next week." [Laughter]

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<sup>\*</sup> Commander Richard S. Garvey, USN.

<sup>†</sup> In 1789, Captain William Bligh, RN, was commanding officer of HMS *Bounty* during a voyage to Tahiti to obtain breadfruit plants for the West Indies. A mutinous crew, led by an officer named Fletcher Christian, cast Bligh and 18 others adrift in an open boat. They made a remarkable 4,000-mile voyage in the boat to Timor, in the East Indies.



Paul Stillwell: Then let's have another party.

Admiral Crowe: So he said, "Every Friday night we all go to the going-away party on this American yacht that has yet to go away." [Laughter]

There were several Americans down there who chose to retire, but you can't buy land, so most of them were married to Tahitians. Because the only people who owned any land were the Tahitians. The French were smart enough to pass that law so that outsiders couldn't come in and buy up the bloody island.

And, of course, the Tahitian dancing. I've never seen anything like that. We had several records we all bought and played on the ship for the next six months. [Chuckle] Everybody that had been there.

One of the people we met there was a guy by the name of—well, I guess his name was Rutgers. I'm trying to remember. Anyway, he was in the family that founded Rutgers University. They had quite a bit of money, and he had built a Tahitian home on the top of a hill overlooking the harbor. A fabulous home. But it was built Tahitian style. It was not a mansion like we would see one. They had a hut with a kitchen in it, and you'd go in the kitchen and have wall-to-ceiling freezers and all kinds of fancy cooking gear in there, like any expensive American kitchen, but it was in a grass hut with stuff. And then the living room was over here in another hut. It was a huge thing, the whole business.

One of the interesting things that happened there is that Norman Hall retired there after he wrote the book *Mutiny on the Bounty*, and his widow was still alive.\* So the captain and I received an invitation to have tea with his widow. That was standard procedure for Mrs. Hall with anybody visiting the island. She was French, and she lived in a South Sea home, not Tahitian style. It was Tahitian style, but it was a regular home. She said, "Well, now, I must show you the library." This was all done in a sort of sacred way to preserve the memory of her husband. She opened the door, and we walked into this study and she said, "It's exactly the way it was the day he died." And there were

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\* In the 1930s Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall wrote three novels, known as "The Bounty Trilogy," that gave Bligh an image as martinet and tyrant.

books on the shelves and there was a pen on the table, and he had a note he wrote with the pen, or something like that.

Paul Stillwell: A shrine.

Admiral Crowe: A shrine, exactly. And people came from all over the world to see that place, and she had several stories about him. He was sort of a cult figure, and people came to see it, and she preserved that so they would see where he was. She married him when she was very young. I think she was 16 or something like that. They had built a home across from where she was, that was right on the beach, a Tahitian home. She said, "We lived there before we were married, and then after we were married we lived there. Then when he made some money we moved into this house." And she was the reigning matriarch on the island. Now, the Rutgers family was also the most wealthy outfit on the island. He was American.

Her name was Hall, and they had some great stories about a couple of sailors on a merchant ship coming ashore and jumping in the cab and wanted to go to the whorehouse, and the guy thought he said the Hall house, so he took them out there. They went in to have tea with Mrs. Hall [laughter], and they kept looking for the girls. It was quite a while before they discovered they were in the wrong place. They thought she was the madam. [Laughter] That was the story.

We met a couple of Americans there in a bar that were, I think they *were* married, come to think of it, but they were living with several women at once, I think, if I understand it. And they had gotten a great idea about the piece of cloth that the women wear, I forget what it was called.

Paul Stillwell: Sarong?

Admiral Crowe: We would call it a sarong, but they had a name for it, a Tahitian name. And they do everything. When they get ready to go to bed they wear it here, when they swim they put it over their thighs and cinch it in and go swimming, and when they're just living they wear it as a sarong, from here down. And they said these things are real

colorful, so they took out an ad in *The New Yorker* magazine: “Send \$185 to Tahiti and you can get one of these pieces of material.” They kept getting checks, but they never sent them out. [Laughter] They were down there drinking it up. The *New Yorker* ad was a big hit, but nobody ever got any material out of it. We thought that was quite funny.

It was a decadent place. Everybody was living with somebody else’s wife. Of course, we were young and virile, and we just weren’t used to that kind of thing. And the island was really insulated because of no airport. They had a small French Foreign Legion contingent there. I visited it when I was CinCPac, and it was a little different. Now they have a huge airport, and it’s quite a vacation spot. In fact, their only industry is tourism. But we were there before the tourism, and everything went. It was an open society, and nobody had any shame about anything, as far as I could see.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I’ve read that those *Bounty* books, which were fictionalized, really made Bligh out to be worse than he actually was, and that’s sort of become his image.

Admiral Crowe: Well, actually he had quite a career. He also was the governor-general in Western Australia later on. Also had a problem there; had a mutiny. I think he *was* overdone. On the other hand, he was of the old school and must have been a martinet.

A lot of the history is preserved down there. They take you out to show you where the *Bounty* came in, and they can tell you to the very person who got on the *Bounty* and went on to Pitcairn. It’s part of their history, which they know very well.

It’s one of those places you think as you leave, oh, what an ideal place to live. I think it would be a horrible place to live. They got no news for six weeks after everything happened, and the news they got wasn’t very good, and nobody was interested or cared about it.

Everybody on the island either sang or danced, and the dancing was quite important. Everybody knew who the good dancers were, and to be an up-and-coming member of the society, even the foreigners, you had to learn to dance that way. Boy, they let it all hang out every weekend, they let it go. They were proud of all that.

And—as the *Bounty* found out and as sailors ever since have found out—the men didn't object to their women going with the tourists and the sailors. The Tahitian men just had no problem with that at all, which is not normal.

Paul Stillwell: It's just their culture.

Admiral Crowe: There was a huge bar down there at that time—I think it was named Flynn's—that was famous all over the Southern Pacific. I'd never heard of it till I got there. But we went in there one day at noon, and one of our electricians, a little kid about that big, who was meek and mild, never spoke up and never distinguished himself, he had a girl sitting in a booth over there on the other side of the dining room. I guess the girl went to get a drink or something, and another girl came over and sat down beside him. The captain and I were sitting there watching all this. When the first girl came back, a huge fight started between these two girls. They got right out in the middle of the dance floor there, screaming and hollering and tearing each other's clothes off, and nobody said more than, "Oh, isn't that interesting?" Went right on with their drinking.

Paul Stillwell: That was literally the floor show. [Laughter].

Admiral Crowe: Literally. And the place was full of sailors, not only our sailors but other sailors, and the bartenders didn't do anything. And I can remember the one girl before the fight started took her teeth out and put them on the table [chuckle] and then she went to work on this other girl, and finally won and threw her out of the bar. Then she went over and sat down by this young man, put her teeth back in, and went on with the day's business. It was like a movie.

Paul Stillwell: Possibly this wasn't the first fight she'd been in. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't think it was. A John Wayne movie. And, of course, we were crazy about our Tahitian fling, I guess you'd call it. We had seen a lot of life down there and it was all good. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Did you get any training done during that cruise?

Admiral Crowe: Not a lick. Well, we did during the cruise, but not in Tahiti.

When we left everybody came back, but the dock was full of girls wearing American sailors' caps. They'd left their caps there. And the whole island came down. Every time a boat came or left the whole island came down and watched it, because that was one of the more exciting things that happened to them. I don't think that's true now, because it is a tourist spot.

We visited Samoa when I was CinCPac, and we watched an American cruise ship go out. When I arrived there, there was an American ship in the harbor in Samoa, and they left while I was there, and so we went down to see it. Samoa's completely different than Tahiti. But the whole island came down, and they sing, they sing a cappella. And the whole dock sang as this ship got under way and went down the channel. They were singing in their own language, but it was obviously a traditional going-away piece of music, and the sailors were waving and everybody on the dock was waving. And, of course, everybody in Samoa is barefooted. Have you ever been to Samoa?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: Their feet are about two feet long. My foot is a small foot compared to the Samoans, and they grow up barefooted. And they grow up in religious music; they get that from the missionaries. They all sing. The prettiest music in Hawaii was to go to the Samoan church every Sunday if you really wanted to hear some beautiful music. They didn't need a choir, because all Samoan children are taught to sing. But I can remember that American ship going out the harbor and all this singing going on on the dock.

Paul Stillwell: As you paint these word pictures, it does indeed sound like a movie.

Admiral Crowe: It does. It was like something you'd seen in *South Pacific*.<sup>\*</sup> But Samoa is a very orderly place. Tahiti is not very orderly [chuckle], and everybody is dedicated to decadent things. But Samoa is not that way at all. I made a very good friend in Samoa; we'll talk about it later.

So the *Wahoo* came back from Tahiti and no more got back than we went to six months in WestPac.<sup>†</sup> And that's when we got in trouble with this incident I told you about off Vladivostok.

Paul Stillwell: What took you to Australia?

Admiral Crowe: That's also a unique story. I think of that story every Tuesday and Thursday as I'm driving by the Naval Academy stadium, because at that point in time they built the Naval Academy Memorial Stadium.

Paul Stillwell: Gene Fluckey headed the fundraising drive.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't know who did, but they sure made a big smell about it, I'll tell you. In any event, we get a message from Commander Seventh Fleet saying the stadium was being built and it's being built by private contributions, and the commander was confident that all personnel would be interested in contributing to the stadium. [Chuckle]. Not exactly true. I mean, to tell the crew they should contribute to some dumb football stadium back at Annapolis, that was a hard sell. [Laughter].

Admiral Crowe: Well, they set up a competition between the fleets.

Admiral Crowe: Now, that's the next thing. It was clearly stretching or straining. And the next message that came in said that the ships that gave the most money in proportion

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<sup>\*</sup> *South Pacific*, a 1958 musical starring Mitzi Gaynor and Rossano Brazzi, was based on a Joshua Logan play and on James Michener's *Tales of the South Pacific*.

<sup>†</sup> WestPac – Western Pacific.

<sup>‡</sup> In the late 1950s, when he was a department head at the Naval Academy, Captain Eugene B. Fluckey, USN, spearheaded the drive to raise money for a new football stadium.

to their size would be considered for special R&R.\* Well, nobody on the ship had ever been to Australia. The captain called me in and said, “What do you think about this?”

I said, “Well, I think I’d like to go to Australia. How about you?” [Laughter]

He was dying to go, but he said, “We can’t force this, so have a meeting with the crew and explain what’s going on and tell them that if they want to go to Australia, if we can win we’d probably get it .”

So I called the crew together, explained that there’s a stadium back in Annapolis being built [laughter], and here’s an opportunity for us to get a whack at Australia, but that it would require some imagination and some effort, and contributions. I told them that the captain was not about to order this. I wanted the crew to vote on it. And I left and they took a vote, and they voted to try. We were in Yokosuka when that happened.

Well, they had a lot of imagination. We auctioned off guns, we auctioned off a case of whiskey, we auctioned off two or three Japanese girls [laughter] over at the submarine bar. There was one bar there that catered to submarines, and those girls were there every night. They all knew of them, there wasn’t anything new about it, they were just trying to get it free, that was all. And these girls cooperated.

Paul Stillwell: So they were raising money from outside the ship, I take it.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. We were raising money in any way we could get it. So finally the results came in, and we were not the winner. A division of destroyers had *been* to Australia [chuckle] and wanted to go back. They were really incentivized, and they won the contest, all four of them, the four destroyers. We were fifth.

Then a peculiar thing happened. Trouble broke out in Indonesia, and the fleet commander came out and said to the destroyers, “I can’t authorize a passage through the archipelago because of the instability, and so forth and so forth; you’ll have to go somewhere else.” And, boy, our skipper, Chuck Griffiths, was up there like a bolt of lightning, and he said, “We can go through undetected, and we would like to go to Australia.”

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\* R&R – rest and recreation.

And they said, “Fine, you’re going.” [Laughter] So we went through the archipelago submerged. Not all the time, but most of the time. We just steamed right through there and steamed into Perth, and had a whole week in Perth.

The catch in this was that we had to extend our deployment. Our deployment was up, so we extended to almost seven months in order to get Australia. Wives were not too happy about the whole thing. But in any event we took the ship to Perth. Oh, it was a most worthwhile visit. It was wonderful. Two of the *Wahoo* sailors ended up marrying girls they met down there. They didn’t marry them then. They came back to Hawaii, and then flew back down and married them.

Paul Stillwell: And Perth is on the far side of Australia.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. The only part of Australia we saw was Perth. We went in there, and, of course, it’s a beautiful city. My God. I judged from what I saw that Perth was probably the way my hometown of Oklahoma City was about 1930. The refrigerators were 25 years different than ours. The heating systems and all this stuff were still not upscale or modern like the United States. But the city was terribly friendly. Perth had been a submarine base in World War II, and there were girls who had grown into mothers coming down there to see if there were any sailors they had known in World War II. [Chuckle]. And, of course, the submarine force had this terrific reputation in Perth.

Had a big navy command there who hosted us, the commodore. And then I saw Australian football the first time. Damned near saw a riot; they were going to kill the referees, and the police were defending the referees. [Chuckle] I had never seen anything like that.

Then, of course, they’d drink beer, and the Australian girls were very, very receptive. Their own men don’t treat them very well. Of course, the American sailor, he’ll spend every cent he’s got on a girl. It was a great visit.

Then I returned to Hawaii, and then we had an inspection right then. I didn’t have much time, I think just a matter of days. We were stroking for the “E.”\* I don’t think we

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\* An “E,” for excellence, is generally awarded to a ship or component of a ship as a result of top performance in competition with other ships during a given time period.



won it. I swear I don't really remember. I do remember that as soon as we returned we had a full-fledged inspection, administrative inspection and operational inspection, which annoyed everybody, including my wife, because we went right down to the boat and worked 24 hours till the damned thing was over, and we'd been gone for six months.

Now, an interesting thing had happened while we were gone. We adopted a child, our oldest, Blake, the Marine. He was almost six months old when I got home. When I left to deploy, it was right after Christmas Day. Three or four days before Christmas Shirley left and flew back to Florida to adopt our child. Then she flew to Oklahoma and spent about half of our deployment in Oklahoma with the small baby. The first I had seen of him was when we arrived back from this deployment, and she came back to Hawaii for two or three months.

Then I was detached, and I'm trying to remember where I went. I went to Washington.

Paul Stillwell: What memories do you have of living in Hawaii during that period?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I found it extremely interesting. My wife belongs to a women's organization called PEO.\* It's a social and charitable organization that is very strong in the Middle West, although there are some here as well—one chapter in Annapolis and two or three chapters in Washington. Every place we've gone she's always identified with one of those chapters. So she had a lot to do with some of the people that actually were native, not Hawaiians but had lived permanently in Honolulu. Several in her chapter had been there all during the war. And we got to meet a lot of the people that actually lived in Hawaii, as well as our own Navy circles. And, of course, you can't live in Pearl Harbor without—and I've lived there twice, later on as CinCPac—the heavy shadow of history all over you. In fact, every day when I was CinCPac and I walked out that front door I saw those Japanese planes coming down that Loch.

Paul Stillwell: In your imagination.

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\* The P.E.O. Sisterhood is an organization that supports and creates philanthropic and educational growth opportunities for women.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. The first time we were there we lived in Navy housing, so we were not part of the community, but we were part of the Navy community. But it was very active socially, and we became very familiar with Hawaiian music and their history.

The best thing about the whole business is we had a superb wardroom on the *Wahoo*. It's the best wardroom I ever served with, even when I had command.

Paul Stillwell: How would you account for that?

Admiral Crowe: I think it was more or less an accident of history more than anything. I don't think it was anything by design. It was these people. Of course, it was one of the new six-diesel boats, and we were drawing pretty well on that. The nuclear business was there, but it wasn't widespread yet. All the officers in the wardroom were trying to *get* in the nuclear program, but none of them had *been* in the nuclear program.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and it was more in the Atlantic at first too.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And Chuck, the skipper, he was trying hard to get in.

Paul Stillwell: Any names that you remember from that outstanding group?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, I remember them. We had Doug Guthe, my friend who died later of lung cancer. He was the third officer. A beautiful mind, very unusual man. Very vain and very ambitious. He had a mother that followed him everywhere and a wife that—he couldn't understand why his wife didn't do what he told her to. [Chuckle] He spent all the time in the wardroom bitching about his marriage.

Had a young man by the name of Beanie Brame, had just come to us before we deployed, the number-one man in his sub class.\* He left the Navy, and I later made a speech many years later in Denver; he was practicing law in Denver and came to the speech and I saw him.

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\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Frank A. Brame III, USN.

We had a kid by the name of Chris Brown, who was very smart but not an exceptional officer; at least I didn't think so. Later had command of a nuclear submarine.

Tom Sisson was on the boat.\* He was a Naval Academy graduate. I guess he was about the fourth or fifth officer. He was from Washington, from Bethesda, and also very bright. They were all bright, that was the interesting thing about it. Tom later became the defense attaché or naval attaché to France. And when he retired from the Navy as a captain he stayed in France. Then he came back here for a short time, lost his wife, got remarried, and then moved back to France. Lives in France today.

Now, when I said they were all very bright—it was my first real running into having bright people that were not necessarily full of common sense sometimes.

Paul Stillwell: Do you have examples?

Admiral Crowe: Well, just on the ship. I mean, Chuck and I, probably both were not as bright as some of these kids, but they didn't get along with the crew as well as they should have, some of them. I can remember Brame [chuckle], who was pretty mature, but he was young. When we got to Japan everybody went ashore and bought baseball caps with their name on them, and so forth, and "USS *Wahoo*." We all did that. Brame thought that was sort of childish. He went ashore and bought a hat and put on it "Clyde Suckfinger." [Laughter] And he wore that on the cruise all the time. That was a social commentary on the Navy culture. [Chuckle]. I got a big kick out of that, but not everybody thought it was funny. I did, I thought it was funnier than hell. But Beanie stuck it right in their ear, and he thought it was a bunch of children playing at submarining.

I was trying to think of one or two others. There's one other. I can't remember him. Most of the things I remember. But also obvious on the boat was, it was a simpler Navy than today. As I've said earlier, a youngster with a good mind could learn essentially about everything on the boat. Well, we had guys that could do that, and we had three or four of them. It presents some problems. First of all, like Beanie Brame, he wasn't about to stay in the Navy. He didn't consider it a hell of a challenge, particularly.

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\* Lieutenant Thomas U. Sisson, Jr., USN.

Secondly, and a very important problem, it's hard to distinguish between them, so you end up distinguishing between them, in fitness reports and so forth, for silly stuff that's not very meaningful. But that was the only distinction. There wasn't any intellectual challenge that they couldn't all handle, and they all handled it pretty well.

Paul Stillwell: You said there were problems in relation with the crew. Were they condescending?

Admiral Crowe: Well, some were. I almost think—it's not obviously true, but there's sure a lot of evidence that leadership is inherited and not learned. I guess that's not true, because you can learn to be a leader, and some people do it, and well. But to really get along with people—and I'm talking now all people, but it ends up with the crew—I think by the time you get in the Navy you've either got that or you haven't. I don't know that the Navy can produce it for you. Some people are just not people persons, and others are so talented intellectually they don't want to get along with a lot of people, and they don't suffer fools gladly.

My skipper was not that way. I saw him just the other night. We had dinner with him over in Annapolis, by accident, not by design. But he wasn't that way. He was really a good guy.

Paul Stillwell: This is Griffiths?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He and I both got along with the crew better than any of the wardroom did. And I think we furnished the maturity and also the balance for the crew.

Paul Stillwell: What was the level of quality in the enlisted men?

Admiral Crowe: Very good. Although, curiously enough, I don't remember as many enlisted men on the *Wahoo* as I did on the *Flying Fish*. I guess the closest I ever really got to a crew was on the *Flying Fish*. Or maybe the *Carmick*, when I had to learn to distance myself instead of be part of the crew. [Chuckle] That was a hard lesson to learn.

But the *Wahoo* was a good boat. It was really a good boat. We had some chiefs who really stood out that night in Vladivostok when we lost the screw and had to spend the night thinking we were going to have to do something dramatic. The chiefs were great. We had a chief of the boat named Coney who had been an officer during the war. He'd been an enlisted man and officer during the war, and went back to chief after the war. And we had a guy named Weingard who was a chief electrician. I can't remember the chief of the boat I liked so well, a torpedoman, after Coney. Coney was a torpedoman too, but his name was Roos, and he was married to a Japanese woman.

When I was in Japan I bought Shirley a kimono, had it made. Still got it, a very nice kimono. And I asked the woman I bought it from how to wrap it, and this Japanese woman told me all these things. Hell, I didn't remember. So as we were transiting home, why, I pulled it out from under the bunk and I couldn't remember any of these instructions. So I asked Roos to help me, since he was married to a Japanese woman. He and I were wrestling with this damned thing and he said, "You'd better not be too good at this," he said. [Laughter] He said, "When you get home you don't want to know *all* about it." He was really a wonderful guy.

Of course, you can't have a life in the Navy without developing a very deep admiration for chiefs. They make the whole place go.

Paul Stillwell: Were the submariners essentially a closed community there at Pearl?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they were. And I don't mean that in a derogatory way. It's just, we had our own separate base, and we had our own separate chapel. We did share the medical with everybody. We didn't have a hell of a lot to do with the surface Navy, and certainly didn't have anything to do with the aviation Navy. It was over on the other side of the island. We had some contacts with them, but it was sort of incidental.

Paul Stillwell: Any recollections of Admiral Grenfell as the type commander?\*

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\* Rear Admiral Elton W. Grenfell, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet from 1956 to 1959.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I do. Of course, I served with two people who got to know him very well. Hank and Chuck had been his flag secretary. They both liked him. But he was very emotional, very passionate.

Paul Stillwell: Very ambitious, from what I've heard too.

Admiral Crowe: Very ambitious. Very loud-spoken. Had a big mouth. I didn't like Grenfell at all. But I can remember we had a basketball team that we had taken out of the submarine force, and they didn't do anything but play basketball. We were playing some other base or something, and Grenfell went to all the games. Then he got mad at one of the decisions the referee made and stormed out onto the court from out of the stands. [Chuckle].

I later saw Grenfell in Washington when I was working for Admiral Austin. Grenfell was one of the branch heads there in OpNav. The flag list came out and didn't have enough submariners on it to suit Grenfell, and he started a big campaign to correct that sort of thing because, he said, "Submariners are pre-selected; we should have a much larger proportion of the flag list than any other community." Well, that didn't sell very well around the Navy.

I at least had had something to do with the rest of the Navy when I was working for Austin in the Pentagon, and I had seen a lot of people doing rather well in the Navy that weren't submarine officers, although our submarine officers in World War II were very highly admired throughout the Navy. But not all of them made flag rank. I saw some really on-the-ball people that were not submariners operating OpNav, including aviators and surface people. And then I had been in graduate school a little bit.

I was always proud to be a submariner, but I was not excessively proud of it. We had people that, when they got through with their command and went to other billets that they didn't like, left the Navy, because they felt if they couldn't be a submariner they didn't want that. I always felt my primary loyalty should be the Navy, not the submarine force.

Paul Stillwell: You didn't let that define you.

Admiral Crowe: No, I did not.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Grenfell maneuvered to get SubLant as a three-star job and took it over.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. He was loud, though. That grated on me. You could always tell when he was in the corridor out there; it was reverberating up and down the corridor. And he was one of these people that: “If I do it, it’s better than anybody else, and whatever I do is the best.” That’s sheer nonsense. He was old Navy; he was not the new Navy. But I never had any real personal contact with him.

I did have some funny thing happen one day. [Chuckle]. Fluckey was SubPac, not when I was on the boat but later when I was in San Diego, and I was visiting SubPac one time.† It was fitness report time, and outside of Fluckey’s office was a big picture of all the staff. He was out there with a big sheaf of fitness reports looking at these pictures. [Laughter] And you could tell what was going through his mind: I’m getting ready to sign this on Joe; now, who the hell is Joe? [Laughter] I never told anybody that story before, but I thought that was interesting.

I admire what Fluckey did; I think he may have been the best skipper of the war. But I never really liked Fluckey very well. I don’t know why. I didn’t have much to do with him, but what little I did have to do with him I never seemed to really like him.

Paul Stillwell: Well, how did you adjust to instant fatherhood?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was all amazing to me. [Chuckle]. The first night I was home the baby cried, and I woke Shirley up and said, “The baby’s crying!”

“So what?” I assumed we’d all go to battle stations if the baby cried.

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\* Vice Admiral Elton W. Grenfell, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 2 September 1960 to 1 September 1964.

† Rear Admiral Eugene B. Fluckey, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet from 1964 to 1966.

I should say a word about Shirley. She never, never complained about anything. I never heard a bad word about—oh, a couple times when we worked late or something, but I never heard her, never a word about the Navy, that we should do something else. On the other hand, if I had chosen to do something else I don't think she would have objected.

She never understood the rank system in the Navy, and it didn't mean that much to her. She was not rank-happy, and every place she's gone she's been friends, mainly because she's an egalitarian. People are people and friends are friends, and it didn't matter to her what the hell the rank was or what they did, or anything else.

She's very, very kind, and when we had stewards she always worried about them. She worries about Sid, who's our driver now, much more than I do. She's been the human side of our family in a very big way. People who know Shirley really love her. Now, in her older age she's had some changes that are physically induced that have changed her personality some and also her ability to remember. But in the time when she was really clicking on all cylinders she was a marvelous wife, and a good Navy wife. She never met anybody that wasn't friendly that she didn't like.

Her father was the same way, and she inherited it all. He never met somebody he didn't really like. He didn't hesitate to introduce himself. One night Blake, my oldest son, took Shirley to a Redskins exhibition game. It was a night game. And when he came home he said, "Dad, she didn't watch the game at all, but she knew everybody around us for ten rows." And that sums her up pretty well.

Paul Stillwell: That's a good Midwestern background.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. I think it is. I really believe it. You know, when I was growing up the worst thing you could say about somebody was: "He's stuck up." My mother would hit me with a hammer if she thought I was stuck up. Well, Shirley's the same way. She is not going to be accused of being stuck up. We've had a lot of success in our life, and it hasn't changed her one single bit.

Paul Stillwell: And there are some Navy wives who are extremely rank-conscious.



Admiral Crowe: I've known a lot of them, and I found it very disgusting. They never seem to be able to avoid that thing. It gets in their blood or something. I can remember that little column in the old *Saturday Evening Post*. They used to put in a little box every week "The Perfect Squelch."

Paul Stillwell: I remember that.

Admiral Crowe: You remember that thing? And they had one in there about the four admirals' wives playing bridge. [Chuckle] One was a new admiral's wife and the rest of them were old hands. I can't remember exactly, but I think the young wife had said something about "The admiral in the morning," talking about her own husband. What (?) did you see your admiral (?) and she said, "He was in pajamas," she said, the old wife. But it was an admirals' bridge party, and the wife was being repulsive. And a lot of wives are. They just can't avoid it.

And it works the opposite way. A lot of wives are very fawning when you're a senior officer and somebody's working for you. You run into a lot of wives that are just transparent as hell.

Paul Stillwell: With the idea they can advance their husband's career.

Admiral Crowe: Advance their husband's career. That would never occur to Shirley. And if it did occur to her it wouldn't occur very long. She wouldn't think that was very important.

Like right now. Our daughter is married to a captain who just retired from the Navy. And I've never heard Shirley saying one thing or another about the fact that he didn't make flag officer. It didn't bother Shirley a bit. And as my daughter would say, "I'm not worried about it. I have been around admirals, and it ain't too pleasant sometimes." [Laughter] I've got a daughter who lets you know what she thinks about the world. [Chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: Which one is that?

Admiral Crowe: Bambi. That's our only daughter. She's the light of my life. And Shirley today can't tell what rank we're talking to. [Chuckle]. She doesn't know one rank from another.

Paul Stillwell: Were you navigator in the *Wahoo*, among other things?

Admiral Crowe: No, I wasn't. I was exec. I never did navigate it.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about the administrative side of your job?

Admiral Crowe: Well, in many respects the exec's the fun job, I always thought. I guess I couldn't say it's more fun than the captain; that's not true. But nevertheless the exec gets into everybody's business, and everything that's unimportant he runs. [Chuckle] A lot of paper and a lot of signing, but you get to know everybody. And on a submarine you can know everybody. That's the beauty about it. Big ships, that's not possible.

In fact, I always thought they had the homosexual argument all backwards. You saw pictures of Senator Warner and Senator Nunn climbing in bunks in a submarine, saying how close everybody lives.\* Homosexuality is not a problem on a submarine. If a man is homosexual, he doesn't say a damn word and nobody brings it up, and he doesn't bother anybody. Where it's troublesome is on a big ship, where they can go to parts of the ship where they're alone, there's nobody there, and nobody knows what they're doing. And, B, they can collect and serve as a group and make contacts for homosexuals. It wasn't the small ships that are a problem. But to sell that to a congressman—they wouldn't know what we're talking about.

On the *Flying Fish* we had a young man we called "Padre." Dwyer. He was Irish. Later became a priest. Spent his whole life in the priesthood. He was a

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\* John W. Warner, a Republican from Virginia, has served in the Senate since 2 January 1979. He had previously been Secretary of the Navy from 4 May 1972 to 9 April 1974. Samuel A. Nunn, a Democrat from Georgia, served in the Senate from 8 November 1972 to 3 January 1997. He was chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee from 1987 to 1994.

homosexual. I knew he was a homosexual. He never bothered anybody in the crew. He was very much admired in the crew because he was sort of educated. And he was pleasant to be with. They called him Padre because they knew he wanted to be a priest.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds as if you implemented “Don’t ask, don’t tell” before that was articulated as official policy.\*

Admiral Crowe: I think so. It just sort of fell naturally. It never occurred to anybody, because they would throw him off the ship. And, as I say, he was respected on the ship. And the few that I’ve known, I’ve never known a homosexual in the Navy that didn’t perform. I’ve known a few that were damned good at what they did. I think the argument is dumb, if you think about it. There’s a certain percentage of sailors that are hard to deal with, that are a disciplinary problem, and there are a certain percentage of homosexuals that are a problem. But otherwise I don’t think there’s a hell of a lot of difference. The ones that are not a problem all get along and all do their job, and they understand the limits of what they’re doing. But we have a talent for making everything bigger than it is.

Paul Stillwell: Did you operate with the Seventh Fleet while you were deployed?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did.

Paul Stillwell: What did that involve?

Admiral Crowe: Not much, but a little. We didn’t go through a big exercise. WestPac deployments were really built around the one patrol you make off Russia. Everything—leading up to it or afterwards—was: What did I do and what I didn’t do. But we would occasionally work with carrier groups and we would make approaches on the carriers.

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\* The policy concerning gays in the U.S. armed forces was changed with the advent of the administration of President Bill Clinton in 1993. The new policy does not openly condone homosexuality in the services; it maintains the traditional prohibition. Its "Don't ask, don't tell" provision indicates that the armed services will react only in response to overt evidence of homosexual activity.

Paul Stillwell: As an opposition-type submarine.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, as an opposition-type submarine.

Paul Stillwell: How successful were you?

Admiral Crowe: We were pretty good at it. I always enjoyed that. That's the name of the game.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get to fire off some green flares at surface ships?\*

Admiral Crowe: Well, we fired. But by the time I became skipper everything had shifted over to submarine on submarine. We did a lot of that. But when we were in Oahu we didn't do much of it.

Paul Stillwell: Was there any of the use of a submarine in direct support of the carrier task group?

Admiral Crowe: Not much. When we went to the Mediterranean with *Clamagore* we had a lot of it. But in Oahu we never really operated with a task force. Our transits to and from WestPac were similar. I don't remember any station keeping at all on the boat.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you haven't talked much about Commander Hanssen. What can you say about him?

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, the bulk of the time with him was in a shipyard. He was well known in Hawaii. He was out of the Class of '44. Very smooth. Very political. I don't mean politics in the big sense, but in the small sense. He was a very smooth Navy politician. He was good at expressing himself and at smoothing over troubled waters. And sort of ambitious. But like the two of us, he never got into the

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\* During an exercise the firing of a green flare by a submarine simulated a torpedo firing.

nuclear program, and I think he never really—he reminded me of my father a little bit. His achievements never matched his own opinion of himself, and he sort of suffered from that later, not when I was with him.

He wasn't as friendly with me as Chuck was. I think Hank always suspected my education a little bit [chuckle], particularly after I told him that American boys don't like their mothers. He didn't like that. A very strong Catholic. But a very interesting man. He was redheaded, and he did have a temper when he—so was Chuck, though. Chuck was redheaded, too. Chuck, as a younger man, didn't learn to control his temper, but when he was a skipper he had. Hank didn't just spark off, but would get mad sometimes. Had a strong ego.

Paul Stillwell: You wrote in your book about how Chuck Griffiths made a point of training the junior officers. Was that also the case with Hanssen?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I didn't see much of that. When I was first with him we had those damned pancake engines, and then we went through the overhaul and I didn't see him much after that. My contact with Hanssen, frankly, was more social than anything else. He let the exec run the boat. He didn't butt in a lot. And he was pretty cool under pressure. And, of course, pancake engines, you were always under pressure because you were always missing a requirement. Missing a rendezvous, or something. It was a tough time for a skipper in those damned boats.

Paul Stillwell: Who monitored the progress as you went along on the overhaul, to make sure you were meeting milestones?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the EDO guy did the most. But that was the skipper's job. That was the one thing he was really interested in. Are we going to make our schedule? Are we going to do this? And so the EDO and the skipper were together all the time.

Paul Stillwell: That would be a frustrating job for a skipper who was not going to take her to sea subsequently.

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: A yard period is not a fun time in the life of a ship.

Admiral Crowe: I never liked it. The best thing I liked about the yard period was playing volleyball. [Chuckle] We always played volleyball at lunch. I enjoyed that. I loved volleyball. All my life I've loved volleyball. None of my children play volleyball [Chuckle]

I do remember about Hanssen—they had lived in Hawaii quite a bit, and we got an invitation to a party that said: Coat and ties. That made Hank mad. You're not supposed to have a party in Hawaii with coat and ties.

Paul Stillwell: It's unheard of.

Admiral Crowe: So he made us all wear sarongs, and then a shirt and tie and a coat. But we came out in sarongs, and the host was all bent out of shape [laughter], that the captain made his wardroom all wear sarongs. That was something Hank Hanssen would do.

He was a meticulous dresser. He always looked like he was shipshape. Chuck wasn't that way; neither was I. When I graduated from high school the class will said: "Bill Crowe, who dresses like an unmade bed." I sort of lived up to that reputation in the Navy, between that and my hat collection.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else to wrap up *Wahoo*?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I was trying to think. I was always proud of being on the *Wahoo*, though. It was a real ship, a real fighting ship. And it worked as a crew. They wanted it to succeed; they wanted to do well. And it was rewarding. I think there are few things as rewarding as being a member of a crew that learns to weld itself together. And *Flying Fish* was a lot that way. And it came out when those courts of inquiry started and nobody would testify. We didn't have any problems in the *Wahoo* like that. But you had the

impression on the *Wahoo* that everybody liked everybody else. If we had any real dissidents I don't remember them, at the time I don't—but I would have known as the exec. We didn't have any internal rivalries or anything like that. Our rivalries were with the other boats, the *Tang* and the *Gudgeon*. And they had more problems. They were not as good a boat as either the *Tang* or the *Wahoo*. Our big competitor was the *Tang*. We followed what they did very carefully and tried to exceed or excel.

Paul Stillwell: Did you play any practical jokes on each other?

Admiral Crowe: Not what you're thinking about, no, not much. We would exchange messages occasionally, but no real practical jokes. What was the name of that lifebuoy they had around the Navy for so long?

Paul Stillwell: Well, there was a picture of Esther Williams that got passed around.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's what I was thinking about. My friend Lew Neeb got all hooked up in that. He was a friend of Chuck's. Lew had command of a submarine that stole that damned thing once. But Lew Neeb spent a lot of time on that kind of stuff. [Chuckle]

Chuck Griffiths enjoyed one—I thought it was an advantage. Coming from being the admiral's flag secretary gave him a lot of confidence. He was willing to run risks and he was willing to, as I said, let junior officers do things. He seemed to have a good grasp of what the limits were, that you didn't have to do everything perfectly, and that the boss would understand that. People that had not served up there, they were always so scared of the boss that they'd do things that were not really as admirable. But Chuck had a lot of confidence in his ability to prevail no matter what. And he didn't have any hesitation about going to see people. And about that Australia thing. He bounced right up there to the fleet commander and said we want to go to Australia. He didn't hesitate to do that.

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\* In the 1950s various ships of the Navy engaged in energetic rivalries to see which one could pilfer and then retain possession of a photo of Esther Williams, a movie star of the period. For details see Captain William C. Green, "My Affair With Esther," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, September 1990, pages 121-123.

Paul Stillwell: And that's the kind of thing a crew loves.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, yes. Really eats that up. And so did I. I always admired him.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we're right near the end of the tape. That's a convenient breaking point. Thank you, Admiral. (End of Interview 8)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, it's good to be inside on this cool, rainy day.

Admiral Crowe: Isn't it, though? It's a glum day.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, indeed. We talked last time about your service as executive officer of the *Wahoo* out in sunny Hawaii, and now you're ready to move ashore again. If you could resume it at that point, please.

Admiral Crowe: I went to work in, of all places, what we used to refer to as the Bureau of Naval Personnel. I'm not sure what the name is today.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it's been something else, and I think it's back to that again. It was the Naval Military Personnel Command for a while.

Admiral Crowe: Is that what it was? It kept changing names as much as we changed uniforms. Every new CNO brought in a uniform innovation, and then they'd all of a sudden start changing the names of all the shops and organizations. But I went to the Bureau of Personnel, and that, of course, was the fruit of my Stanford training, because theoretically I had been at Stanford on naval orders for personnel management; that was the reason we were there. So this was my payback tour for Stanford. I ended up, of all places, in personnel research. We had some interesting projects going in personnel research, but it was not the mainstream of the bureau by any means.



Paul Stillwell: Were you in the Arlington Annex?\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I was. I had a branch head by the name of Captain Zimanski, who retired out of that job.<sup>†</sup> But it was interesting in several respects. First of all, I wasn't aware that we were doing a lot of personnel research. And then, secondly, when I became aware of it, it was sort of a futile effort, a lot of that stuff. It was very common to receive calls saying: We're getting ready to do something down here, and we wonder if you've done any research on blah-blah-blah."

And you'd say, "Well, yeah, we have, as a matter of fact."

"Well, what did you find out?"

"Well, we found out that out of A, B, C, probably B was the best..."

"Well, thank you. I'm not interested." If we didn't have their answer they weren't interested in our research.

Paul Stillwell: What would be some examples of blah-blah-blah.

Admiral Crowe: Well, as to how we were going to use petty officer ranks, how we could rename a rank or mission statement, or somebody. People were always getting ideas and they wanted support for their ideas, but not for our own individual research.

There was one thing we got mixed up in that [chuckle] I found it laughable at the time, and I still find it laughable. It was the naval officers' fascination with a grading system of 4.0. It starts way back in, I guess, the early days of the Naval Academy; I don't know when. But we did a lot of research on this simple little custom, first of all as it applied to fitness reports, and secondly as it applied to much of the categorization that we did in the Navy in every field. It was sort of interesting that we would immediately lean back on one point, two point, three point, four point. And we determined that, given the stereotyped view of that and the overuse of it, that probably any system would be better.

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\* The Arlington Annex is a large, multi-wing building near the Pentagon and the Arlington National Cemetery. It contains the headquarters of the Marine Corps and for many years had the Bureau of Naval Personnel also.

<sup>†</sup> Captain Frank A. Zimanski, USN, who retired from active duty in 1963.

Lord Almighty, it got to the point where they actually had a meeting of the senior branch heads on the subject. I think it was going to go into the fitness report system, and we were recommending a ten-point scale. And some senior, aged captain stood up and gave about a 20-minute speech on the traditional value of 4.0, and it was very emotional. He was very articulate, very dramatic. He had absolutely no basis whatsoever in practice or in fact, or any research, or anything else. It was just all based that: "We had had it a long time and it would be stupid to depart from it." That whole crowd voted to keep it, and we went back to ourselves and threw away the research on it. [Chuckle] Put it in a file somewhere. I can remember at the time—I was a lieutenant commander—it was sort of depressing, that on a silly little thing like that nobody would take action.

My desk was physically next to a man by the name of Joe Cohen, whose sole duty was designing the fitness report for officers. He was a psychologist, and a very interesting man, and a lot-of-fun man. So I went to lunch with him a lot, and we talked a lot at parties. I remember we had a party at our house, and Joe came and said he had been taking care of the children for two weeks because his wife was visiting home or something. And I remember that night we elected him Mother of the Year, or Mother of the Month, or something [laughter], because he had been taking care of his children.

But he said some very sage things to me. First of all, he would complain constantly about how difficult it was to put men in competition doing different things at different times in different places, working for different people, and to assimilate all that. Of course, we all knew that. Everybody who participated in it was fully aware of that. But he said a very interesting thing one day. He said, "The reason the Navy has good flag officers is because of the high entrance requirements for getting commissioned."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I mean that all these fitness reports don't do a hell of a lot to tell you who's bad or who's good. But if you make the entrance standards high enough, whatever system you have is going to spit somebody out at the top that's pretty good." And I thought, well, that's fascinating.

They changed the system on fitness reports once while I was there, but, of course, he was constantly arguing for changes, and very few were ever approved. But he did a lot of research on the numbers, and what was fashionable to improve your fitness report and what wasn't. But I didn't get the impression that much attention was given to personnel research in that regard.

Paul Stillwell: Was he a civilian?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was, and a very good one. My instincts were that, from what little I knew about him, that he was. Shortly after I left he quit. He just threw it up and said, "I can't do this any longer; this is a depressing exercise."

Paul Stillwell: Well, the standard drill is that the Navy changes the system because there's grade inflation.

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: They want to overcome that, and pretty soon people figure out how to inflate grades on the new form.

Admiral Crowe: That's personnel research. That's about the extent of the personnel research on that subject. They were very reluctant to take new suggestions. Of course, when you get into the personnel business it's close to the bone. The Navy's very reluctant to take anybody's advice on it that hasn't been in the system and either suffered from it or been rewarded by it. I can remember when I was working for Admiral Austin, who was the next step in this process.\* I didn't like him very well, but he and I had a few conversations that I remember. I don't know where I got the nerve, but one time we were in a car driving somewhere and got talking about personnel advancement and the fitness report, and I fired some shot that, well, I thought we weren't doing it very well and that we should change it this way or that way. The admiral said to me, "Bill, what you don't realize is that everybody now that's in high command thinks the system's pretty good." [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: That's right.

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\* Vice Admiral Bernard L. Austin, USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy), OP-06, from March 1959 to July 1960. Austin's oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

Admiral Crowe: And he said, “To overcome them is tough.” [Chuckle] “And as long as you just talk to the people who have been promoted by it, you’re not going to make much progress.”

Paul Stillwell: And the people who have been promoted tend to promote people like themselves.

Admiral Crowe: Exactly. Even to the point of friends. Of course, when the Navy was smaller, I think friends were very, very important. They’re still important, and I think in some services—my instincts tell me in the Air Force it’s absolutely vital. But in the Navy it’s not as important as it used to be, because the Navy is so large now that you’re constantly having to make judgements on people that you do not know and you’ve never seen before and may never see again. So all you have to work with is paperwork.

Now, in the board I headed, a flag board later on in my life, occasionally a name would crop up and somebody on the board would have served with him. But what was unfair about that was that very few names came up of officers whom somebody on the board had served with. So when one did come up, why, he could really get an edge if his advocate chose to plug him hard.

But to level the playing field, according to Joe Cohen, and it certainly bore out in my own experience, is just an impossible exercise.

Paul Stillwell: Well, do you think then that the promotion system does not pick the best people?

Admiral Crowe: Sometimes it doesn’t. I’m persuaded of that. Probably the main problem—and this is just a personal view and not everybody would agree with this—is that some of the most capable people are also capable of alienating the boss. So they don’t get the fitness reports that would allow them to be promoted, not because they’re not competent but for some other stupid reason, that the boss didn’t like them or they were constantly in there telling him he didn’t have clothes on, etc., etc. I found in my own experience, when I started writing fitness reports, that the hardest part is to detach

yourself from everyday experience and say, “Now, what are we doing in the Navy? Why are we promoting people? What am I looking for? And would this officer do that well, despite the fact that he’s constantly complaining at me, or has got a better idea than I’ve got?”

Paul Stillwell: So it would be tough for an iconoclast to make his way up.

Admiral Crowe: That’s true. At least I thought it was true. But you run into officers, I think, that do promote those kinds of people. I think I’m one myself. Both ways. I did give good fitness reports to some people I thought: “God, I get awful tiresome with that guy—but he was thinking.” And also when I got promoted to flag the number-one thing in the letter that year from Zumwalt was: “I want some iconoclasts.”\* I don’t think I’d have made it without that thing in there.

Paul Stillwell: So timing is obviously important.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, God, yes. Timing is everything. And circumstances and fortune. Of course, the main thing that impacts, or influences, the average officer is what’s fashionable. The Navy is, number one, not predictable, and number two, fashion can change very quickly. And while you’re trying to become a nuclear submariner and all of a sudden the winds change, that we’re not going to promote too many of those people, you don’t find out about it till too late. [Chuckle] You go to A, and all of a sudden A is not fashionable. And things fashionable matter.

Of course, the nuclear submarine business is probably the most graphic example in my life. The careers of the early people that got selected were all pretty secure. But everybody else that came in, judging from them, discovered that when the numbers got large they weren’t secure in any respect, and that the example they had followed was not necessarily profitable to them.

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\* Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 July 1970 to 29 June 1974. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection. Zumwalt was an iconoclast himself.

And, of course, there were different requirements in the other branches of the service. In the Navy we were on the periphery of some of those wars, not in the middle of them. But in the Army and the Marine Corps—well, in the Army if you hadn't been to Korea, why, you wouldn't go anywhere. The Marine Corps took Korea pretty seriously, but it was a little later. But Vietnam duty was essential to an Army officer's promotion.

The Marines had certain things you had to do that, once you did them you had an edge over the other people that hadn't done them. And I watch my son right now. In Desert Storm, a curious thing happened in the Marine Corps. In the first promotion board after Desert Storm a lot of the people in the war didn't make it.\* The Commandant discovered that and had a study done and reported to him directly, how come?† Well, what it added up to is that a lot of people that didn't get into Desert Storm said: "We can't let these guys march off just because they were lucky enough to go there." And the next year the Commandant said: "I want those guys promoted." And my son was in that group. He was a company commander in Desert Storm. He got passed over, and then he made it the next year.

But historically the Marine Corps has not been as upset by pass-overs as the rest of the services, and my son's a very good example of that. And secondly, the Marine Corps has historically been very hep on combat.

Paul Stillwell: That's understandable.

Admiral Crowe: And combat would be the mainstream. Well, as I say, the Navy is not that way, because Vietnam, for the aviators it was mainstream, but for the rest of the Navy, they really didn't think Vietnam was our business.

Paul Stillwell: And the Navy still had to deploy to the Mediterranean during the Vietnam War.

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\* In January 1991 U.S. and Allied Coalition forces attacked Iraq to get it to retreat following its August 1990 invasion of neighboring Kuwait. The holding action in the meantime was Operation Desert Shield. The conflict itself became known variously as Operation Desert Storm and the Gulf War. Coalition forces won the war in February 1991.

† General Carl E. Mundy, Jr., USMC, served as Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1995.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And still should be running big ships firing missiles at 100 miles, etc., etc. And the only way Vietnam became at least fashionable in a short period of time there, was Zumwalt. Zumwalt imposed that when he was CNO, against great opposition and resistance.\*

My own theory, after being in Vietnam, was that we should take advantage of every war there is. If the only jobs we had were small craft, we should have rotated the entire line corps through there, because that experience told them something about those officers that non-war doesn't tell you—their flexibility and their ability to keep their heads, and so forth. But we didn't do that. It was not an up-check to go to run a small-boat unit in Vietnam, not until all of a sudden Zumwalt just plain imposed it. But for naval aviators who had not flown in Vietnam, it was death not to have done it.

Paul Stillwell: Was Admiral Holloway the Bureau chief when you were there in that research job?†

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was.

Paul Stillwell: Any special memories of him?

Admiral Crowe: Well, [chuckle] I never met him when I was in BuPers. But, of course, we heard a lot of stories about him. This was just when Rickover began to have a stranglehold on the personnel in the nuclear program, and a friend of mine came out of the meeting one day—he had a meeting of his branch heads every so often—and said that Admiral Holloway had said there were some vicious rumors around that Rickover had taken over Naval Personnel's business in the nuclear submarine business. He wanted to assure all the personnel people that wasn't true. He said, "I've known Admiral Rickover

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\* From 1968 to 1970, before becoming Chief of Naval Operations, Zumwalt had served as the three-star Commander U.S. Naval Forces Vietnam.

† Vice Admiral James L. Holloway, Jr., USN, served as Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel from 2 February 1953 to 31 January 1958. His oral history is in the Columbia University collection. Actually, he had left the bureau several months before Crowe arrived.

for years, and I'll handle Admiral Rickover. That's my job, and the way we're going to handle him is give him anything he wants." [Laughter]

You know, it's interesting. He was laughed about more than taken very seriously, and yet he made some overtures. The Holloway Plan was around the Navy for years.\* And I assume he did some really serious things. But the only things I ever heard about him were always funny ones. He was famous for drinking. What was it? "Whiskey Jim," they called him.

A friend of mine that had been in NavEur when Holloway was running it told a story about Holloway wanted always to see Windsor.† He'd never been in Windsor Castle. It became somewhat of a problem, because you can't normally drive in there or anything, but somehow or other he got special permission to do this. And so they went up to a cocktail party at Oxford, and then they were going to go through Windsor on the way back to town. But the admiral got to drinking, and they couldn't get him out of there. He kept saying, "Well, one more drink."

The aide said, "Admiral, if we're going to go by Windsor, and we've got this special ticket and so forth, we've got to go." And he waited too long. The admiral rushed out to the car and got in it, and the aide said, "Well, I don't know. Do you think we can go?"

He said, "Skip Windsor!" [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: After all this trouble.

Admiral Crowe: They'd been working on it for six months, something like that, to get him in there, and he said, "Scratch Windsor." I never met the senior Holloway, but they had a lot of raging stories.

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\* In 1946, the Holloway Plan was enacted to establish a Naval ROTC program that would pay for the college education of individuals and grant regular, rather than reserve, commissions upon graduation. It was named for Rear Admiral James L. Holloway, Jr., USN, who had much to do with its development.

† As a four-star admiral, Holloway served as Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (CinCNELM) and USComEastLant from February 1958 to March 1959.



Paul Stillwell: Jerry Miller worked for him in getting computers into BuPers, and said that Holloway really gave him his head and believed in the words “special trust and confidence” in the officer’s commission.<sup>\*</sup> Backed him up when he needed it.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he must have done something right. He was rather well known, and he had some good jobs. Of course, that was then. The reason I got mixed up in that business is, a friend of mine convinced me that a good way to flag was to be in the personnel business. I believed that till I went to the Pentagon and worked for Admiral Austin, and what I was seeing there didn’t bear that out at all.

Now, there’s a good example. When I was Austin’s aide I developed some rather strong views as to what was the mainstream and, if you could engineer it, a good way to make a senior rank in the Navy. I saw it really close up and vivid. Every place else, like in BuPers, I wasn’t anywhere near anything like that. And even when I was aide to SubLant, I heard his own personal views about some of his competitors, but I didn’t get the feel for how you made admiral or anything.

Paul Stillwell: Anything on Zimanski specifically you recall?

Admiral Crowe: No. Zimanski was a very nice man. And he was just like you said. He really trusted his officers. He didn’t have that kind of background for research, and in general he just relied on everybody else that had ideas to take care of it. He wasn’t, I didn’t think, especially bright, but it didn’t hamper his ability to do business, because the civilians were all permanent. I mean, they had been around a long time, and they knew what was going on.

I got mixed up in one of our favorite projects on the junior officer business, and I don’t even remember exactly what it was. This is an indication on how little the job impacted me. But in the presentation of this project I had to make the briefing. First of all, somebody else was going to make it, and Zimanski called me in and asked me if I’d ever done any briefing. I said yes, I had done some. And he said, “Well, I don’t think

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<sup>\*</sup> Lieutenant Commander Gerald E. Miller, USN, served in the Bureau of Naval Personnel with Holloway. The oral history of Miller, who retired as a vice admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

that we're going to do very good with this. Can you go away and work it, and then come back and give it to me and see how you do?" I did that, and he said, "Oh, my." He said, "That's great." So I did the briefing and shepherded it through the process there. Not much came of it, but at least we got it up to the boss, and Zimanski was very, very pleased. So from then on I did all of Zimanski's briefings. But I was only there about eight or nine months.

Paul Stillwell: Did you see any applications in this job from your Stanford work?

Admiral Crowe: Not really. Not outside of just the psychology of dealing with people. And this is sort of a terrible thing to say, but I hadn't been there very long when I was really looking for some way to get out of it. It seemed to me very thankless, that no matter what we did, even when we had a success, it didn't seem to impact us very much. Nobody was very interested in us. And so many people made up their minds on all these subjects before they ever came to us. I thought we wasted a lot of money. We didn't get the kind of support from above. If you want an outfit like that to work, the boss has got to personally intervene and say, "I want them to do so and so," and then support you when you do it. Otherwise a contemporary is not going to depend on you unless you have some enthusiastic support for his idea.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get involved any in research in the two-crew concept for the Polaris submarines?

Admiral Crowe: No, we didn't. We toyed with it a little bit, but I wasn't around then. We toyed with it not because of the missiles, we toyed with it for relieving ships overseas, but the Polaris missile business hadn't come around.

But I was constantly looking for a way out of there. And then along came an opportunity. One of the advantages, of course, of being in BuPers is you get to know the detailers. And, of course, the great advantage of *being* a detailer is that when you're through you assign yourself to a nice job. [Laughter] And they did that all the time. That was one of the fruits of it, and nobody objected to that, because those guys worked like

dogs. On the other hand, you learn that detailers are not very compassionate, and that you'd better worry about yourself. Don't let the detailer do your worrying for you, because he's worrying about a different problem than you are.

One of the terrible things about detailing—well, just like we were talking a moment ago. They actually begin to believe all that stuff. I attended a party one night, and the host was almost a contemporary of mine. He was about a year or two senior to me, and he was a detailer. He was single, and he had moved into this new apartment. They had a rating system. They weren't on the 4.0 scale. They had a rating system from 0 to 100 for each age group and each year group. This is hard to imagine, but he said something like, "I've never had anybody in this apartment below the 96th percentile," or some damned thing. And I thought, "I can't believe this." [Laughter]

When you'd go see the detailer, he'd have your file out there with your name on it. And under the file, which you didn't see, was the listing of everybody in the year group by where they stood, given fitness reports and so forth. You never saw that, but you knew the bastard had it. [Chuckle] If you were at the top of the list, you were a nice guy; if you were at the bottom of the list you were an idiot. And I frankly never saw a hell of a lot of relationship between that and the fitness reports. The fitness report doesn't answer that stuff. But detailers create an aristocracy in their minds.

Paul Stillwell: They can have great impact on career development just by where they send people.

Admiral Crowe: It's incredible. And when I was in that job one of the detailers told me, "When you get a letter from the detailer saying we've got this very attractive position down in Panama" [chuckle], "or up in Point Barrow, Alaska, and your name has come up; are you interested?" He said, "You immediately answer that and say: 'Hell, no.' Because he'll send out about 10 or 12 letters, and 11 guys will come back and say, 'I want nothing to do with it.' The 12th guy will say, 'Well, I can't influence it, I won't pay any attention to it.' He's the ones who goes there!" [Laughter] And he said it's just flying trial balloons all the time. And "Don't believe they're going to worry about your

career; he's going to fill that Point Barrow billet. There's going to be somebody go up there."

My son-in-law, who just retired from the Navy, was scared to death just before his retirement. He had one more tour in the Navy, and he was sure he was going to Iraq, where he didn't want to go. He wanted to go to a job that opened up some of the contacts with people that might be able to employ him when he left the Navy. But he was pretty persuaded the detailers were very frantic about sending people to Iraq, and they were having trouble finding anybody who wanted to go. That's just like Vietnam. The Navy didn't want to go to Vietnam. I'm sure the Navy doesn't want to go to Iraq, because what they're in is the support business.

Paul Stillwell: What's your son-in-law's name?

Admiral Crowe: Brian Coval.\* He's now retired. He was the commanding officer of the blue crew of the *Michigan*; that's where I got this shirt.† We went out for his change of command. He had a very successful command, but it wasn't good enough for the submarine force. He had some problems on politics. But he relieved out there as a lieutenant commander, in command of the USS *Michigan*. More technology packed into that little pipe than—

Paul Stillwell: Actually a pretty good-sized pipe.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, it was a great big ship. But still I couldn't believe giving that to a lieutenant commander.

Paul Stillwell: Well, some of those are commanded by captains, I think.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he went on to make commander, and he made captain. But you talk about a rigid outfit, the nuclear submarine business, as to who is going to high

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\* Captain Brian S. Coval, USN (Ret.).

† Commander Coval commanded the blue crew of the ballistic missile submarine *Michigan* (SSBN-727) from April 1999 to December 2001.

command, there really *is* a mainstream there, and you can almost tell immediately whether a man's going to go or not.

I also did my dissertation on the Royal Navy, and the Royal Navy was very, very much like that. You knew when a guy was a lieutenant who the admirals were going to be. I think that's had a little to do with the low state of affairs in the Royal Navy. Occasionally there was an exception, but not many. They were not kind to icons or innovative, or upstarts, or people that didn't follow the beaten path.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any other of the research projects you did in BuPers?

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't, really. It wasn't a very exciting tour.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds like there was a great deal of frustration on your part.

Admiral Crowe: There was. And Zimanski didn't fight for responsibility. You noticed this right away. He was not real competitive with his counterparts. He was not as articulate, and also he was on the brink of retirement. So he was not a good advocate for personnel research. We did things because other people thought they were important to do and told us to do them.

Paul Stillwell: And then ignored your results.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But Zimanski wasn't out there fighting, like "We can solve this," and so forth, and so forth. The state of morale in the organization was pretty low. Now, the civilians had lived with it long enough they just ho-hummed it: "It's always been this way." But when I was detailed to it, why, my friend Jim Wilson, who was a detailer, kept telling me that, "Oh yeah, this is a good billet."\* And I know damned well he was lying. I felt I had really been thrown away.

Paul Stillwell: How did you manage to escape, then, to get into OP-06?

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\* Lieutenant Commander James B. Wilson, USN, a Naval Academy classmate of Crowe.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't always remember the exact details, but I got a call one Saturday morning from a man by the name of Chuck Nace.\* Ever come across that?

Paul Stillwell: Yes, he was a submariner.

Admiral Crowe: Out of '39, and later made admiral. He was Admiral Austin's executive assistant, and he was a captain. He said, "Admiral Austin's aide is leaving."

I said, "Who is Admiral Austin?"

He said, "He's OP-06. [A job I later had myself] He's an ex-submariner that went into the surface force and has become sort of a political-military guy. I'm his executive assistant, and I asked the submarine desk to send me some names of possibilities, although Austin is considering everybody. He's in contact with some other places." And he said, "Would you be interested in a job like that?"

Of course, my answer was, "Yes, I would." [Laughter]

He said, "Well, would you come over and see me?"

I said, "Be glad to." I went over and had about, oh, I guess 30 minutes, 40 minutes with him. He was a wonderful man. I knew the minute I saw him that he was a likable man, but then I later worked with him, and he was marvelous. But I had an interview with him, and he said, "Well, let me see what I can do. The submarine desk just sent us some names, but didn't push anybody. It just sent us some names."

Then time went by and I thought, oh, well, I guess that's just gone away. Then I got another call from him, and I never saw Austin before I got there, just saw Nace. He said, "I've put your name in and fought for it. They're going to order you in here as the aide to Admiral Austin." So then Zimanski got all bothered and excited, but as I say, his influence around the bureau wasn't very heavy, so he didn't turn out to be a problem.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said in your book that you weren't really eager to become an aide again, but I guess anything was better than what you were doing.

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\* Captain Charles D. Nace, USN.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I didn't like what I was doing. I didn't feel I was in the Navy, in a certain sense, although [chuckle] I had a nice parking place. When I went down to leave, I was going to cancel that, and the guy said, "Where are you going?"

I said, "I'm going to the Pentagon."

He said, "Well, you ought to keep this one. You're a lieutenant commander. The parking place they'll give you over there is farther from the Pentagon than this one is."  
[Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Did that prove to be true?

Admiral Crowe: Just about right. I didn't *have* a parking place over there. I was way out in North Parking, whenever I could find a place.

But, incidentally, when I was doing all this I was in night law school. Being at BuPers I could do that. But I discovered very quickly that in OP-06 that I was expected to stay around as long as the admiral was there, and that it was going to be very, very difficult. I finished up the semester in the spring, but I didn't go the next semester. I couldn't do that. I think it sort of annoyed the admiral that I was going to school at night, so I quit it.

Later, though, when I applied for graduate school, Austin sent a letter recommending me. I wrote him a note and asked him if he'd mind doing that. He sent a nice little letter, which sort of surprised me.

But, in any event, I was eager to get there, just to get out of BuPers. I liked Nace, and I liked what they said they did. I didn't know what the hell they were talking about, but it was the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans and Policy.

Paul Stillwell: An opportunity to get a much broader view of the Navy.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it seemed to me to be the kinds of things that I would be interested in. And it turned out that, while I was not a member of the Austin fan club, it was a very influential tour in my life, because of what I saw.

Paul Stillwell: What sorts of things do you mean by that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that the admiral was the number-one advisor to the CNO for plans and policy, but more importantly he was what we called the OpDep.<sup>\*</sup> He was the JCS guy for CNO. He went to all the JCS meetings with the CNO. And we produced all these papers on JCS matters, and I watched that process from the bottom right up. They were much more ritualistic then than they are now. It was a very formal process and very rigid. The paper would come up through the line, and then we would have a meeting before the JCS meeting, which I got to sit in on, and Austin would brief the CNO on everything we were going to do down there. Then when they'd come back Austin would hold another briefing, and all the action officers would come in and he'd tell them what they did. So I got to see a lot of the CNO. I don't mean to talk to, but just to sit in the same room with him. And to watch Austin brief the CNO on what was important and what was not important.

Paul Stillwell: So you went to the meetings in the Tank?

Admiral Crowe: No. No, I didn't go to the meetings in the Tank.<sup>†</sup> This was all up in OpNav.

Paul Stillwell: I see.

Admiral Crowe: This was in preparing the CNO for the meeting. And then afterward all the action officers came in, so I literally had met every action officer in 06. And, God, there was a large number of them.

Sometimes I would be helpful getting a paper going, or not going. And I did a lot of personal things for the admiral, which I didn't enjoy. But I enjoyed watching this process work. Of course, we didn't get our way on everything in the Tank meetings. When he came back from these, the action officers would get quite upset because their

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<sup>\*</sup> OpDep – operations deputy.

<sup>†</sup> "Tank" refers to the room in the Pentagon in which the Joint Chiefs of Staff meet on a regular basis.



position wasn't accepted by the JCS. To expect all your positions to be accepted is sort of la-la land, but these action officers were a tough bunch. [Chuckle] They had a hard time dealing with that, and Austin was always fighting them. He'd get quite annoyed at them. He'd go and have a piece of them. "You've got to learn you're in a hard business here. They hit and we hit too, and they hit back."

Paul Stillwell: Did you get a sense of how strong an advocate he was in the JCS meetings?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did. I got a very good sense. Obviously, a lot of what I saw there was coming back to where I had started as a debater in high school. I saw the written word was a big deal. And, man, these action officers didn't really appreciate that. Not only the written word, but how they expressed themselves. We then also learned to determine how well we were doing or not doing in the Tank from listening to these constant debriefs. I never got in the Tank. But I was really fascinated.

I had a locker at the Pentagon athletic center. I don't quite remember why I had it there. I used to come over there and play volleyball a lot. And my next-door locker was Admiral Clarey, whom I had met out in Hawaii when I was exec of the boat, but I didn't know him real well.\* I had met him. We would sometimes show up at the locker at the same time, and he was very friendly and he would talk. He was then a rear admiral, and I forget what job he had.

Paul Stillwell: He was later ComSubPac.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I guess he was chief of staff to SubPac while I was out there in Hawaii, and that's where I met him. And one day just out of the blue he said, "I hear you're going up to work for Admiral Austin."

I don't know how he knew that, but I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "Do you know Admiral Austin?"

I said, "No, I don't."

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\* Rear Admiral Bernard A. Clarey, USN.

And he said, “Well, I used to work for him.” And I thought, “Oh-oh, I don’t like the body language around here with that tone.” [Laughter]

He said, “I’ll give you a little piece of advice.”

I said, “Yes?”

He said, “Admiral Austin is southern, and he has a great deal of charm when he wants to use it. And to women and outsiders he’s terribly courteous and correct. But to the people that work directly for him he’s a son of a bitch.” I had never heard it quite put that way, but I tucked it away and I thought: “Well, that doesn’t sound too good, does it?” And he said, “No, he’s hard to work for.” Well, that turned out to be right on the mark. [Chuckle]. His image to the outer world was a very genteel one, but, boy, inside the office—he didn’t handle panic well. He was in a very high-pressure job, for two reasons. Number one, the job was high pressure, and Arleigh Burke was the CNO. That’s where I got to observe Arleigh Burke. And Arleigh Burke was hard to work for, I mean in some respects. He had strong views.

But Austin had been with Burke before. He’d been a commander in the Little Beavers.\* So he and Burke had a long history. It sure wasn’t obvious from watching the two of them. Burke sort of had a piece of Austin quite a bit. But nevertheless they had had a long history. The job was a hard job. Austin had been the director of the Joint Staff before he took a fleet, and then from that job he came up and took OP-06.†

Now, as the director of the Joint Staff he had a lot of experience that I had never seen before. On the other hand, it didn’t seem to me that Austin had a lot of depth. He didn’t impress me as a deep thinker. But irrelevant of that, the job was hard for two reasons. Number one, it was built into the job, and he had a hard taskmaster, Burke. Number two, it was Austin’s run at four stars, and he looked at the job exactly that way: “If I’m going to make four stars, this is it.” And I heard him say, “This is a year in my life that’s going to be a watershed one way or another.”

Paul Stillwell: It turned out he didn’t make it.

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\* Captain Arleigh A. Burke, USN, was Commander Destroyer Squadron 23 in the Solomons during fighting there in 1943. He later served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1955 to 1961. DesRon 23 had the nickname “Little Beaver Squadron.” Austin was a division commander in the squadron.

† Vice Admiral Austin commanded the Second Fleet from 5 May 1958 to 21 March 1959.

Admiral Crowe: Didn't make it. And I lived through that, too. What was the comment he used to make? I just almost threw up. He said, "I've been in the Navy 30-some years, and all for naught. I've been thrown away." I thought he'd had a very successful career, from where I stood.

Paul Stillwell: Sure.

Admiral Crowe: But he went up to the Naval War College and then retired. He was devastated when he didn't make it. The billet he wanted was CinCPacFlt, and Sides made it.\* And I watched the anticipation. Nace and I rode to work every day and talked a lot. Nace knew a lot about what was going on, so I got that through Nace. Nace was great, and he put up with Austin real well. He had no background in that kind of work, but he was just a graceful man and knew how to handle those things, and was slow to anger, etc., etc. While Austin was very trigger—he'd be angry in a matter of seconds.

I was a lieutenant commander, and I discovered almost all the aides in that corridor were lieutenant commanders, except CNO's was a commander. I knew a couple of them. That's when I met LeBourgeois the first time.†

Well, anyway, Nace was a submariner, and so my connections with the detailer were pretty good because of Nace. But it was a hard job, my job. Austin was terribly busy. He'd tell you to do something, and I did a lot of personal stuff for him. He was in the quarters out on Massachusetts Avenue by the communications station. Very nice set of quarters. I went out and helped Mrs. Austin move in.

Incidentally, Mrs. Austin was wonderful. Her name was Isabella, but they called her "Ice." That was her nickname. All her friends called her "Ice." She liked everything in blue. I mean, the whole house was blue. But she was a very, very pleasant woman, and very kind to me. The last admiral I'd been aide for [chuckle], the wife wasn't too nice; she was sort of formidable. But Mrs. Austin was marvelous. And I went to their dinner parties. They invited Shirley and me to dinner parties, and so forth. That was my first exposure to dinner parties.

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\* Admiral John H. Sides, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet, 30 August 1960 to 30 September 1963.

† Commander Julien J. LeBourgeois, USN.

The big help to me was Nace. Nace spent a lot of time with me on what I should do and not do, and how to handle Austin and not handle Austin.

In that job, OP-60 was Griffin, OP-61 was an aviator; I thought I'd never forget him, because he wrote a lot.\* Then we had 63 and 64. But the important people I got to know were, number one, Griffin, OP-60. I forget who 60B was; at the time 60B didn't mean that much to me. I later was 60B.

But Tom Moorer showed up as a special assistant to OP-06.† He didn't seem to have a job, but every time they wanted to brief the CNO Tom Moorer did it. And I knew Moorer right away. I thought, "My God, there really *is* a comer," because they were using the hell out of him, and he had the reputation of being the slickest one to go with up the stairs. I didn't have much to do with him, just observe. He was the picture of confidence, and he was young by the admirals' standards. He was just a brand-new admiral. I got to admire Tom Moorer right away, because everybody sort of deferred to Tom Moorer.

Admiral Austin's deputy later became CinCPacFlt, Roy Johnson.‡ Oh, God, what a piece of work he was. But he was preceded by a guy name of Miller, a sort-of thinking admiral, but he wasn't there too long till Johnson showed up. Johnson detested the working hours. And he was a rear admiral. And at 4:00 o'clock, or 5:00 o'clock, I guess, he would quit working, and he'd put on his coat and his hat and sit at his desk and read till the admiral left. [Chuckle]. But he wouldn't do any work after 5:00 o'clock.

Paul Stillwell: Good. I admire that. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: He just thought it was so bad, what they had to do. He was an independent cuss.

Paul Stillwell: What were some of the chores that Admiral Austin had you do that you were not fond of?

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\* Rear Admiral Charles D. Griffin, USN, was director of the Strategic Plans Division from 1959 to 1960.

† Rear Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, who was later Chief of Naval Operations from 1967 to 1970 and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs from 1970 to 1974.

‡ Admiral Roy L. Johnson, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet from 30 March 1965 to 30 November 1967. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

Admiral Crowe: Get his car repaired, I remember doing that. And going down and getting a new license for the car, a District of Columbia license. And picking up some stuff. And then, of course, I managed his dinner parties. That I knew something about, which sort of surprised him, because I'd done that for Murray.

But I can remember sitting at my desk one day, one afternoon. Admiral Austin came out of the office, and he had read something in the newspaper. He said to Nace [chuckle], "Chuck, what are we doing about Africa? We ought to pay more attention to Africa."

Paul Stillwell: Right. That's in your book.

Admiral Crowe: And I thought, "My goodness, this is big stuff we're talking about here. I'm in the right place. I want to learn about these things." And I thought from then on I wanted to be in that kind of business. I was quite impressed with that. [Chuckle] Here he was, worrying about the whole continent of Africa, which he knew absolutely nothing about.

Paul Stillwell: Did you get a chance to be involved in any substantive things?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I did infrequently. Occasionally he asked me to write a paper for him, or he said, "You heard that conversation; write me what you think of it," or something like that. And something really interesting happened. He went up to commission the *Triton*. I can't remember when that was, because it was colder than hell. I was only in that job a year and a half, so I guess it was the next winter after I had gotten there.

Paul Stillwell: And Ned Beach was the skipper.\*

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\* USS *Triton* (SSRN-586) was a nuclear-powered radar picket submarine, built by the Electric Boat Division of the General Dynamics Corporation, Groton, Connecticut, and commissioned on 10 November 1959. Captain Edward L. Beach, Jr., USN, was the first commanding officer.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was the skipper. But Austin was to make the main address. A couple of speeches came up, and he'd hand them to me and say, "What do you think of these?"

I read the speech and said, "Well, I don't think it's very good, Admiral."

He said, "Well, I've asked them to rewrite it, and they haven't done much good at it. You ever write a speech?"

I said, "Yes, I have."

He said, "Well, why don't you see what you can do with it?"

So I wrote a speech about the *Triton* and so forth, and the admiral was really pleased. He was quite shocked. He said, "This is really great." But what happened that was a bad deal. He took that speech to give up at the *Triton*, and the weather was so bad. He gave the speech, but he had to cut it back, which was proper. I mean, I agreed with him. He wasn't going to stand up there for the full length of the speech with that kind of weather. And nobody was listening; everybody was trying to survive. It was snowing, and it was doing all kinds of other things. But that was the only speech I wrote for him.

Now, I made some enemies out of that. The guy who had the shop that had been writing the speeches was a captain then; he was later an admiral. Boy, he really had a piece of me, that I had made him look bad and embarrassed him, and so forth. I said, "Well, it's not my doing; that's what the admiral wanted and I did it."

"Well, you should have told me and let us have a piece of why you were doing it."

What I really thought was, "If you write those dumb speeches, why, you are in trouble, if you can't tell a dumb speech when you see it." [Chuckle]

My main problem with Austin was that he had a job where things were moving fast and changing fast, and he would just blow apart every time they would change the rudder order. The first time it seemed natural and logical to me, but it happened all the time. So I thought, "Well, now, you've got to have a different mode for dealing with that. You can't blow apart every day of the year."

Paul Stillwell: And this was the pressure that he transmitted downward, that made it difficult for his subordinates?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he made it very difficult on subordinates. But unfortunately, I think he transmitted it upwards too. I sat in on his briefings for Burke, and sometimes he was good at it, but sometimes he wasn't as good at it. But he was every bit as articulate as Burke was. Burke was not a very articulate man. He was a thinker, and he liked a lot of things, and he was a doer. But as far as just being able to extemporaneously carry an argument, or to suggest words for the argument, he wasn't very good at that. He wasn't very good with words, I didn't think. At least that was my judgment.

Paul Stillwell: Well, your impression is shared, that he was not a good public speaker.

Admiral Crowe: No, he wasn't a good public speaker at all. He was much better just extemporaneously answering questions. But that was answering questions for the public, and so forth. In this business, you've got to—I'm going to reveal my biases here—the guy that's O6 ought to be able to write himself, so that when he has to do things quickly and on the mark he can say, "This is what we're going to say." And he ought to be very good.

When I was leaving O6 and they were choosing a relief for me, the CNO asked, "How do you want to do that?"

I said, "Well, what do you mean? I'm not doing it; you're doing it."

He said, "Well, I've got to choose between people here."

I said, "Well, ask the guy if he's made any speeches, and tell him to send them up to you, and see what he writes. See how he writes. See what he says." And I think Hayward did that.<sup>\*</sup> I don't know that he did. He chose Foley, who was an aviator, and I always thought he chose him because he was an aviator.<sup>†</sup> And Hayward was a lot like Foley.

But my advice always, when I was Chairman, was to pick these big jobs—I said, "Look at his Congressional testimony." I'd say this to SecDef. "Let's get some of his

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<sup>\*</sup> Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 July 1978 to 30 June 1982.

<sup>†</sup> Vice Admiral Sylvester R. Foley, Jr., USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans, Policy and Operations) from March 1980 to May 1982.

testimony up here, let's get his speeches up here, let's see what he's said publicly, and then talk to him." And I suggested we start sending people over to the President, with that CinCEur job. And, of course, the military didn't really want the President butting in if they could keep him out of it. But I think that's a good way. 06 has got to personally be able to write a damn paper. [Chuckle] He just can't critique it and say, "No, I don't like this." He's got to be able to do it himself if necessary.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember specific cases in which Admiral Austin panicked or blew up?

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't. Not really. And in those cases I was not in the argument. I just remember going to the briefing, and he and the action officers exchanging words, and him getting very mad at action officers. The action officer would say, "Admiral, I only had six minutes to do this," and then Austin would get mad. And then later when I had the job, you just had to live with that. You didn't get mad; you just had to rock with it. But that job really, number one, it excited my intellectual instincts and really had a big influence on my career, and particularly my request for graduate education. And I learned a lot from Admiral Austin what not to do.

Paul Stillwell: Anything that's beyond what you've said already on what not to do?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he used to philosophize some, and we would talk, but he was never very friendly. When I got orders out of there to command a submarine he said to me one day, "Well, you'll enjoy this, but, you know, after you've had one command you've had them all." Now, there was a man that had had quite a few commands, but he didn't subscribe to the standard philosophy that the more commands the better. He said they're all alike. I didn't quite know what that meant, but I thought it was an interesting statement. He sort of punctured my balloon a little bit [chuckle], because I was getting ready to take my first command. But he's right. What do you learn about in the second and third command? You learn some, but it's usually a little increment of what you've learned before.



The Navy's so enamored with sea command, which is fine, but you can have a very good commander at sea, and that's the limit of what he can do. He can't do anything else. And really the most trying jobs in the captain level in the Navy are those in command of shore bases. Running a big base is a hell of a lot harder than running a ship. But that was down the priority. That wasn't fashionable; it wasn't in the mainstream.

Paul Stillwell: Not nearly as promotable.

Admiral Crowe: No. That's because it's not in fashion. It wasn't the way they looked at the world and the life.

Paul Stillwell: Any more on Admiral Burke and your observations of him?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, well, I'll have a lot to say about 06. But I'm going to have to go, Paul.

Paul Stillwell: Okay.

Admiral Crowe: Why don't we put it off till then?

Paul Stillwell: All right.

Admiral Crowe: I did have some observations on Burke, because that was my first exposure to a CNO and what a CNO did or did not do.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we'll start with that the next time, and in the meantime I hope you have a great Christmas. (End of Interview 9)

Paul Stillwell: When we talked last time you mentioned the role that Captain Nace had had in bringing you into OP-06. What more can you say about how he did the job as EA?

Admiral Crowe: I thought he did eminently well. He was a captain then, and he later made admiral. I don't think he had much founding in foreign affairs and so forth, but he was a very bright man and understood staff work extremely well, and what he was supposed to be doing and not doing. He was also very, very personable, easy to do business with and to oil the gears in 06. He fashioned what I think was a fairly good relationship with Austin, although Austin was a distant man. I don't think he and Chuck were friends or anything.

Paul Stillwell: Did Captain Nace function essentially as a chief of staff to coordinate all the different elements?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's essentially what he did. His substantive comments were not so important as that he shepherded all the paperwork and got what the admiral needed and didn't need, etc., etc. And, of course, from where I sat he was very, very good for the people that worked for Austin. In fact, he was the man that kept Austin's staff satisfied. I don't think Austin spent a lot of time on worrying about who worked for him. But really, 06's chief of staff—not his executive assistant—is OP-60, and that was Griffin. He was very, very good.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about him specifically?

Admiral Crowe: Well, first of all, he was very bright. He was easy to get along with. He was a very kind man. And very energetic, I thought. I thought he was a damned good 60, at least from what little I knew about it, and Austin relied on him very, very heavily.

Paul Stillwell: And he wound up achieving what Admiral Austin didn't, which was the fourth star.\*

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\* Admiral Charles D. Griffin, USN, served as NATO's Commander in Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe from March 1965 to January 1968. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

Admiral Crowe: That's right, yes. Probably the only difference in them was personality. Austin was bright, but he had a tendency to sort of panic, and Griffin was very calm and cool. And, I think he was a very, very good friend of Moorer's. In fact, Griffin may have brought Moorer in there; they had a special billet for Moorer, 06C, or something. I forget what he did, but as far as I could see he was the main briefer of the OP-06 organization. If they had a crucial brief they wanted to give, Moorer gave it.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned last time that he was obviously a comer.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he really was, and he and Griffin were very good friends.

Nace was a submariner by trade, and, I think, a real submariner. I don't think he'd had duty anywhere else. Maybe his first duty out of the Naval Academy was in a big ship. He was a fanatic golfer, but he had hurt his back so he wasn't playing golf anymore, but he watched all golf tournaments, and vicariously played golf every Saturday afternoon. [Chuckle] I really felt for him, because he wanted to get on the golf course in the worst way. He had a very serious back problem.

I can remember one day he went to a class luncheon, and he got back about 2:00 o'clock. [Chuckle] I was at my desk and I looked up, and he was in the hall peeking in the door, and he motioned for me to come here. I came over there, and he wasn't really drunk, but he'd had quite a bit to drink. He said, "I don't think I can make the afternoon. Can you handle the admiral for the afternoon?" [Laughter] So I forget the story we conjured, but I had to handle the admiral all afternoon, and Nace was out of the problem. But he was the kind of guy you were more than happy to do that for. I mean, he was a wonderful man.

He and I drove to work together. We lived not too far from each other out Route 50 in Falls Church, and we sort of carpooled together. I really liked Admiral Nace. Boy, he was a great guy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, as we've said before, loyalty downward produces loyalty upward.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. Yes, he stood between me and disaster several times [Laughter] He was very calm, though. In the first place, he was very handsome. He was a good-looking man, a tall man. A little bit balding, but still a very attractive man. And I can remember while we were there one of his best friends, Bob Carroll, a real comer in the submarine force, was killed on a flight from Washington to Norfolk.\* I had a classmate on that flight, Joe Melesky.† It was somewhere just south of here and had trouble and landed in a forest, pancaked in a forest, and killed the people aboard. I never served with Carroll or anything, but he was famous. He was *very* good looking and had a beautiful wife.

Paul Stillwell: He was a submariner also?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was a submariner. A golden boy of some kind. I remember Nace handled all the funeral arrangements, and kept me apprised of what was going on in the funeral. It was quite a shock to the whole submarine community of Nace's vintage.‡

That was my first exposure to funerals. I remember I went with Austin to Dulles's funeral at the National Cathedral.§ Does that sound right?

Paul Stillwell: He died in 1959. That could be.

Admiral Crowe: That's when I was there, yes. Also, Austin had quite a coterie of friends in Washington, one of whom was Grosvenor, the head of the National Geographic, I remember was a very good friend of Austin's.\*\*

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\* Captain Robert M. Carroll, USN, who was then on the staff of Commander in Chief Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean. He was a veteran of ten submarine patrols in World War II. All 48 people on board the Capital Airlines flight were killed when the plane crashed on 18 January 1960.

† Lieutenant Commander Joseph Howard Melesky, USN.

‡ Carroll, who was 43 at the time of his death, had entered the Navy as a reservist in 1942.

§ John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State from 26 January 1953 to 22 April 1959. He died 24 May 1959.

\*\* Melville Bell Grosvenor (1901-1982) was a 1923 graduate of the Naval Academy. He resigned his commission the following year. He served as president of the National Geographic Society and editor of *National Geographic Magazine* from 1957 to 1969. His son, Gilbert M. Grosvenor, edited the magazine in the 1970s and 1980s.

Paul Stillwell: Well, there was one Grosvenor that was in about the Class of '23 at the Naval Academy.

Admiral Crowe: Okay, that makes sense. That's the Grosvenor that he was very friendly with. And the National Geographic always had this relationship with the Naval Academy I didn't quite understand. Grosvenors were in the Navy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Alex Grosvenor commanded the Naval Station a number of years later.\* He was the class of '50.

Admiral Crowe: I don't know him, but I know the name Grosvenor was threaded all through.

Paul Stillwell: Oh, yes.

Admiral Crowe: Austin was very courtly, for outside consumption. It was sort of funny sometimes. Austin wasn't very tall. I don't know, but I'd guess he was about 5-7, something like that. And I can remember standing beside him one day. We had a man one year ahead of me at the Naval Academy by the name of Albie Beutler.† He was about 6-4 or something like that, and he married a girl, Gloria, who wasn't 6-4, but she was tall. And I can remember introducing them to Admiral Austin as they came through the receiving line. And Austin had a standard line that he used without paying much attention. He shook Beutler's hand and said, "And how's your little lady today?" and turned around and he was looking right at her bosom. She was up here somewhere [Laughter] Albie's "little lady" was a great big lady. [Chuckle] That caused some backroom laughter.

Paul Stillwell: I'll bet.

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\* Captain Alexander G. B. Grosvenor, USN.

† Lieutenant Commander Albert G. Beutler, USN, a submarine officer who eventually became a captain.

Admiral Crowe: Austin, of course—I think he got the name “Count” from, what, his South background? Southern courtliness, and so forth?

Paul Stillwell: Probably.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, by the way, I had forgotten. He was quite a stock player. He was the first naval officer I had ever seen up close that really, number one, played the stock market, and number two, knew a lot about it. He spent a lot of his spare time on it. I don’t think he read novels or anything, I think he read prospectuses and stuff like that. I think he was very well off, financially. I didn’t know whether it was family money or what. But his wife’s name was Isabella. They called her “Ice,” and she was very nice.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, you mentioned her last time.

Admiral Crowe: She always stood between Count and the world. But she was a pleasure to work with, and soft spoken, and very attractive. She was also southern. It’s interesting. I sort of ended up working for Southern admirals. Admiral Crawford was from North Carolina, and Admiral Austin was from South Carolina.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I have his bio here, and Admiral Austin went to The Citadel before he went to the Naval Academy.

Admiral Crowe: Naval Academy. A very military tradition in his family. That whole outfit—Moorer was southern.

Paul Stillwell: Yes. Alabama.

Admiral Crowe: Don’t know about Griffin. But we were heavily laced with southern admirals, mainly aviators. That’s when I first sort of began to dope out how the world went.

When the war ended the submarine force was such a small part of the Navy that it sort of had a niche of its own, but it wasn't threatening to anybody. So it was very possible for a successful submarine commander to move right out of there and take command of a cruiser, and maybe become eligible to be an admiral or something. Several of those submarine admirals did, but they represented only about 2% or less of the Navy. And yet Whitaker made admiral and Fluckey made admiral.<sup>\*</sup> Of course, a lot of the guys that would have made admiral got killed. A long article I noticed the other day on the *Wahoo*, finding the *Wahoo*. O'Kane never made admiral.

Paul Stillwell: Slade Cutter didn't make it.<sup>†</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Slade didn't make it. I had some business with O'Kane, and I think O'Kane's mind was affected. I think after the war O'Kane's mind was never what it was when he was running *Tang*.<sup>‡</sup>

But nevertheless it was interesting to follow the submariners that made it. They usually weren't the most famous. They were successful, but they were not in the—of course, Fluckey was an exception.

Paul Stillwell: And Grenfell made it.

Admiral Crowe: And Grenfell's career, well, he just made a couple patrols and then flected up, but Grenfell was the number-one admiral.<sup>§</sup> We had all kinds of names floating around the submarine force that didn't make admiral.

Paul Stillwell: Elliott Loughlin made it, even though he'd had the problem with the *Awa Maru*.<sup>\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> Rear Admiral Reuben T. Whitaker, USN, Naval Academy class of 1934; Rear Admiral Eugene B. Fluckey, USN, Naval Academy class of 1935.

<sup>†</sup> Captain Slade D. Cutter, USN, Naval Academy class of 1935.

<sup>‡</sup> Captain Richard H. O'Kane, USN (Ret.), Medal of Honor recipient whose story is contained in his memoir *Clear the Bridge! The War Patrols of the U.S.S. Tang* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1977). He and eight of his crew members managed to escape after the *Tang* (SS-306) fired a faulty torpedo that circled around and sank the submarine. The crew spent the rest of the war in Japanese prison camps.

<sup>§</sup> Vice Admiral Elton W. Grenfel, USN, Naval Academy class of 1926.

Admiral Crowe: But the only admirals I really remember were Joe Williams and Whitaker.<sup>†</sup> Some of the guys that made admiral had shifted by then; like Austin, they were really out of the submarine force. Fife.<sup>‡</sup> Fife was SubLant when Murray relieved Fife. But, like you say, Cutter didn't make it. Cutter and Dornin were always the big question marks—why didn't they make it? I think Dornin didn't make it because he drank too much.<sup>§</sup>

Paul Stillwell: I've heard that before, from several sources.

Admiral Crowe: And there are a lot of currents running through the submarine force. Of course, Beach was the most recent.<sup>\*\*</sup> But during the war Joe Williams had a wife that fought her own war and worked her way through several generations of submarine people. And then when he came back and made admiral she became an admiral's wife, but she was famous all over the submarine force.

Group commanders were World War II admirals when I was in the submarine business, and there'd be guys there I never heard of in the history books and so forth. But the ones you heard the most about, a lot of them never really went that far afterward. The real problem with a guy like Dornin, and I suspect Cutter, is that the peacetime Navy didn't live up to their—it wasn't near as good a fighting a war.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that's what Slade told me.

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\* The submarine *Queenfish* (SS-393) sank the Japanese merchant ship *Awa Maru* in April 1945, despite the fact that she had been granted safe passage by the United States. The skipper of the *Queenfish* was Commander C. Elliott Loughlin, USN. The oral history of Loughlin, who retired as a rear admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection. He was in the Naval Academy class of 1933.

† Rear Admiral Joseph W. Williams, Jr., USN, Naval Academy class of 1933.

‡ Rear Admiral James Fife, Jr., USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 15 April 1947 to 1 June 1950. The oral history of Fife, who retired as a four-star admiral, is in the Columbia University collection.

§ Captain Robert E. Dornin, USN (Ret.), Naval Academy class of 1935.

\*\* Captain Edward L. Beach, Jr., USN, with whom Crowe had served in the White House in the 1950s, was passed over for selection to flag rank in the mid-1960s.



Admiral Crowe: And the same thing happened to Jim Stockdale.<sup>\*</sup> Despite what he went through, life afterward was never like it was running a prison camp, and getting the Congressional Medal of Honor out of it. The rest of life just didn't live up to that. They did different things about it. Some just went home and quit working, and others just went to drink. We had all kinds of alcoholics in the submarine force after World War II.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Slade told me that he didn't expect to live through the war, so he burned the candle brightly.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he lived longer than any of them, didn't he.

Paul Stillwell: He did. [Laughter]. He just died last year.

Admiral Crowe: Of course, we had a Slade Cutter in my class. Not the same exact, but sort of, and that was Don Whitmire, was our all-American who parlayed football into a Naval career.<sup>†</sup> The Navy never lived up to his football. [Chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: He made flag.

Admiral Crowe: He made flag. I'll be damned if I know why. [Laughter] But he made an attempt late in his life, and it was sort of pathetic, to all of a sudden become intellectually oriented, and he didn't have it in him. He'd been talking loud too long. He couldn't mute himself, [chuckle]; it just wasn't in him to do it. Yet he was very well liked, particularly by senior officers. I don't think he was well liked by his contemporaries too much, although we always paid obeisance to football players, for reasons that totally escape me.

Paul Stillwell: And he was a very good football player.

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<sup>\*</sup> After he was released from prison camp in North Vietnam in 1973, James B. Stockdale went on to become a vice admiral.

<sup>†</sup> Midshipman Donald B. Whitmire, USN, graduated from the Naval Academy in the class of 1947. He eventually became a submariner and still later a rear admiral. He was in command of the amphibious forces that evacuated Americans from Saigon, South Vietnam, in 1975.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Oh, God, Don was marvelous. I can remember watching him play in Army's backfield all afternoon. Oh, he was tough; God, he was tough. He was really tough. Then he roomed with Jenkins, who was our fullback, from Alabama.\* All those kids were southern boys. Most of the guys on West Point's team they'd played with in Mississippi and Alabama before they both went to military academies.

Paul Stillwell: I think a number of them went through the Marion Institute down there.

Admiral Crowe: May have, very well.

Paul Stillwell: You were talking about these southern admirals, and the time you were in OP-06 was during the civil rights movement.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I was going to tell you a little more about that; I started it. What had happened was, at the end of the war the glut was pilots. All of a sudden we had more pilots than we had billets. This was just my own perception, sitting at a desk reading about it, and I'm not even sure it's totally true. But my impression of it was that after the war that we used to talk about the hump.<sup>†</sup> The hump was mainly made up, up through Korea, of aviators. And a lot of complaining about that. But what it allowed the aviation community to do was to do a lot of things besides fly. There wasn't enough room for them to fly, so some aviators went into intelligence and ended up running intelligence. Some went into building, some went into engineering. And Tom Moorer went into plans and policy, that sort of work. There weren't excess surface officers to do that. And the submarine force was too small; they didn't furnish anything. So the best admirals we had when I was a commander and so forth were World War II aviators. They were more broadly based. They had actually seen a hell of a lot of the Navy.

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\* Midshipman Robert T. Jenkins, USN

<sup>†</sup> The "hump" was created by the large number of officers who entered the Navy during World War II. As this cohort of officers moved through the years, there were fewer billets available at each higher rank. To match the available individuals to the billets required attrition, either from those in the hump or those coming along in later year groups.

Along came Vietnam. They sucked up every aviator and sent them on multiple deployments to Vietnam, and there wasn't a single one of them available to do anything but fly. The surface community came up.

Paul Stillwell: Well, also, the nuclear submarines didn't have excess.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, they came up. But the way Rickover did it, he was so repulsive that the rest of the Navy vowed that they would give the submarine force their due and no more. They just ruled with an iron hand. They got even.

Paul Stillwell: No, but the nuclear submarine supply was so close to the demand they didn't have much opportunity to get out into other billets.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's what I'm saying. But Rickover, the way he ran—he didn't think that had anything to do with it. He thought all his people should be promoted to admiral no matter what they were doing. But the fact was that he wasn't producing anything but guys that knew about reactors, and it killed them. He creamed off just some brilliant people in the Navy and put them in that system, and they got passed over. That was a real tragedy. He thought he could run the personnel business better, but in fact for their benefit they'd have been much better off with the Navy running it than Rickover running it.

With the regular Navy way, if you need three you get four, and train four or five, not just train three. That gives people that want to do other things an opportunity. And Rickover froze all that out, so that in the running of the Navy the submarine force, despite its increased influence, was not a hell of a big force for a while. Until finally Long and people busted out.\*

But the next community to rise up and start running the Navy was the surface Navy, because they had a lot of excess officers that could do a lot of different things. It was a complete turnaround, and the aviators were getting thrown aside. And, of course,

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\* Admiral Robert L. J. Long, USN, served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from 1977 to 1979. He later served as Commander in Chief Pacific, 1979 to 1983. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

they felt they ought to rule the Navy because of their numbers. But they were doing the same thing, in a sense, that Rickover was doing. They weren't doing anything but flying. A lot of those aviators got passed over in Vietnam, that felt they were really cheated out of being flag officers.

But some people can't get it through their dumb heads that if you're only going to have so many admirals, they're going to be looking for admirals that do more than one thing, and that know more than one thing about the Navy. You've got to pack a lot into them.

When I was the head of a flag selection board later on I went through the whole list of admirals. I made several lists, and it was incredible how few admirals had anything to do with going to sea. I don't mean in their background, I meant as admirals. I think it was about 20 to 25% of the admirals had seagoing jobs.

Paul Stillwell: That's a surprise.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it's a surprise till you think about it. And these huge staffs soak up admirals. And they were sitting all over the world. You don't go to sea in those staffs.

Paul Stillwell: Especially with the increased emphasis on jointness.

Admiral Crowe: Exactly. We had jointness, we had education, we had foreign billets. And every time they created anything the Navy said: "Well, we should have a share of it." So they'd get three admirals on that staff. But those admirals didn't go to sea. And your time as a rear admiral was not very long. To get a sea billet as a rear admiral was pretty tough. And it was *really* tough on the nuclear submariners, because the only sea billets they'd give them were in the nuclear business. So what that did is just, built on what they'd already done it made them more and more narrow. On the other hand, if the guy wasn't going to be promoted they'd send him to France as a defense attaché or something, which he knew nothing about.

It was interesting to watch those community patterns go back and forth. It's happening today. Mullen's got surface people in every niche and cranny.\* What do you hear about Mullen?

Paul Stillwell: Not much. The Navy has such a low profile in the current war that you just don't hear much.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I'm getting a lot of complaining about him. Not necessarily informed, just sort of grouching.

Paul Stillwell: What's the nature of it?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that in an effort to keep us in the game he's doing a lot of things we shouldn't be doing. Of course, the number-one thing is the huge support force we're building for the Army and Marine Corps over in Kuwait with sailors ashore carrying mail. That's an exaggeration, but—

Holloway went to a four-star conference, which I regretted I didn't go, and spent the day hearing the Navy brief, and they didn't mention carriers at all.† Holloway was furious. Never once did they mention a carrier. I can't imagine that. And, of course, the littoral ship and so forth, can go in shallow water and peripheral operations, and shooting missiles at everybody.

Paul Stillwell: Well, this is the word you were talking about earlier: fashionable.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But Mullen's got a huge problem in that the money's going to the Army and the Marine Corps.

Paul Stillwell: And it's going into current operations rather than building.

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\* Admiral Michael G. Mullen, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 22 July 2005 to 29 September 2007, and then became Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 1 October 2007. He was CNO during this interview.

† Admiral James L. Holloway III, USN (Ret.), who was CNO from 1974 to 1978.

Admiral Crowe: That's what I meant. Yes. He thinks his Navy's small now, but I see no way in the world it can get bigger until things change in some fashion. And yet he's got plans. The scheme you talked about the other day—weren't you the one telling me about the 1,000-ship navy?

Paul Stillwell: Well, that's a concept that brings in foreign navy ships, certainly not U.S. Navy ships.

Admiral Crowe: No, I understand that. But the retired community doesn't think that's a very good idea. It's sort of a desperate measure. And, of course, the practical problems of making something like that work are so huge. You can't even talk to them on the radio, much less operate with them, and so forth and so forth.

Of course, Clark was—God Almighty.\* My son-in-law, his vintage really was shook up by Clark. They felt they were being told to run the Navy like a corporation, and that Clark wanted to turn us into General Motors, not into a Navy. I didn't know if that's true or not; I didn't have much to do with it. But, boy, the noise was loud. They were glad to see Clark go.

Paul Stillwell: He came out of a business administration background for his postgraduate work.

Admiral Crowe: That's the trouble with educating these people. [Chuckle] You have no control. As the guy told me when I got back from grad school, "We didn't send you up there to come back with ideas." [Laughter] We just sent you up there to make a better advocate for *our* ideas, not for *you* to have ideas. And yet you educate those guys [chuckle] and they're going to come back with—they'll change things, and it will be in the light of their own experience. That's the danger you run. But I would think Mullen's got a really serious problem in that we're going to be, for a long time now, concentrating on the Army and Marine Corps. Now they're going to increase the size of them, which I think's well to do.

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\* Admiral Vernon E. Clark, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 21 July 2000 to 22 July 2005.

Paul Stillwell: Right.

Admiral Crowe: And the Navy's bound to suffer. They just aren't going to have the money to do the kinds of things a mind like Mullen's would want to do. I don't know how in the hell he's going to do it.

Paul Stillwell: Especially because ships have become so expensive.

Admiral Crowe: Expensive! McCain cornered me the other day at the Naval Academy; he was over there delivering a lecture.\* He was screaming and hollering about the price of ships. Well, he's dead right. We can't afford these. We can't build a destroyer for three billion dollars. You can build one, but that's like Coolidge said: "Why don't the aviators build one plane and take turns flying it?"† [Laughter] That's what we're going to be doing with ships.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I wonder if we can take it back from the current day to OP-06 days. You mentioned the southern admirals. This was during the civil rights movement. Did you hear talk in the office about civil rights?

Admiral Crowe: A lot of it. But you didn't hear Zumwalt's view. The Moorer school, very worried about discipline, very worried about orderliness, no nonsense. And I didn't even know who Zumwalt was. My first tour there in OpNav, I guess that's when I first heard of Zumwalt.

Paul Stillwell: He was in SecNav's office.

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\* Captain John S. McCain III, USN (Ret.), a naval aviator, is a Republican from Arizona. He became a member of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1983 and the U.S. Senate in 1987.

† Calvin Coolidge was President of the United States from 1923 to 1929 and notably parsimonious. The remark attributed to him, probably apocryphal, came after a request for increased funds for military aircraft: "Why can't they just buy one airplane, and take turns flying it?"

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But I never met him, and we didn't hear much about him. I don't know if he was up there right then. I think he was out at sea somewhere, but I'm not familiar with Zumwalt's timelines. But I am familiar with the fact that I never heard much about Zumwalt until I later went to San Diego, I began to hear about Zumwalt. He wasn't a factor yet. Of course, Burke was CNO, and all those southerners there.

Burke had a wonderful story about PG school. Did I tell you that story?

Paul Stillwell: I don't think so.

Admiral Crowe: I didn't have much directly to do with him except I sat in on all the OP-06 briefings for admiral Austin before he went to the JCS. Austin would brief him, and the main players would sit at the table. You'd have Burke at the head, and Austin on his right or left. And then Austin would say, "Well, today we have three items. Number one is" so-and-so, and Austin would brief it. But then if they got into the nitty-gritty he'd say: "Well, Captain so-and-so is here," the action officer, and he would stand up and say things to the admiral. And they'd go all through the agenda before they went down to the Tank. That was for Admiral Austin. The debrief, Austin would come back and debrief *his* people, not Burke. Burke had been there.

Burke was a little condescending with Austin. You got the feeling sometimes that Austin was a bit much for Burke. I mean, he was a little obtuse. Burke would want to get to the point a little quicker than Austin would. Griffin was a great briefer; he was sort of on Burke's frequency.

One day, somehow or other, the subject of PG school came up. Burke had been to postgraduate at the University of Michigan in ordnance engineering. And evidently there were several naval officers there from BuOrd.\* And they noticed on a bulletin board one day that the pacifists were having a big rally down on Friday evening. This was pre-World War II.† And they decided they'd go down and bust up the rally. He said, "We went down there. Those pacifists can really fight. They beat the hell out of us." [Laughter] I thought that was a wonderful story.

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\* BuOrd – Bureau of Ordnance.

† Burke got his master's degree from the University of Michigan in 1931.



Paul Stillwell: A huge amount of irony there.

Admiral Crowe: He said, “We really stepped into a buzz saw.” [Laughter] Then he’d laugh in a great big sort of horselaugh. He would think that was funnier than hell. And of course we all laughed, because CNOs are always very funny. [Chuckle]

But I would sit in the back row and watch all that stuff. I didn’t have anything to do with it, but I sat in on every one of them they’d let me sit in on.

Paul Stillwell: Any more observations on Admiral Burke?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did. I had several. I’m about to say something heretical here. I didn’t think he was as good a CNO as he was a ship commander. I think he suffered from a couple of things. But even to this day I feel guilty about it. I mean, what the hell does a lieutenant commander know? This guy was a great man. We all agreed on that. And I didn’t know everything he was doing. But I did know some of the things he was doing.

In the first place, when he had that job he was a hard worker. He decided he wasn’t getting things done, so he started coming to work earlier and earlier and earlier. My God, he was getting into the office at 6:00 o’clock in the morning, and it was really discombobulating the staff because they had to be there before him. And as far as I could see the briefer started at midnight on the news stuff to get ready for Burke at 6:00 o’clock, and he kept shoving it up. He kept coming earlier.

But where I noticed it the most, because we wrote a lot of letters for Burke, just personal stuff. And he was an absolute nut, that he would answer and sign every single personal letter that goes out.

Paul Stillwell: And he wanted it done very quickly.

Admiral Crowe: I didn’t think he was a very good manager of his time. Now, I understand the personal pull on him, that he was a sailor and he loved sailors, etc., by

God. And he loved to answer letters on things he knew about—that Seaman Jones was being mistreated in the engine room, or something. But I'm sorry, the CNO's got things to do, and the Navy should be manly enough to understand it doesn't mean he doesn't love the Navy when he shoves some of that stuff aside. It means that, well, somebody else can do that, and that they're depending on him to do the things that nobody else can do.

The things that nobody else could do were not things that he did really well. And one was to articulate the Navy's case by word of mouth down in the Tank. He sort of got run over down there by some people that were not as smart as he was but more articulate and a little more experienced at bureaucratic infighting, and so forth and so forth. And that's when I developed that argument I told you I got into, that you ought to have a Madison Street lawyer up there instead of a naval officer. There's some truth in that. Now we're developing naval officers that can do that, but we didn't then.

I watched Burke, and Moorer, just get so frustrated because they hadn't made their case, and "That smart-ass down there said so-and-so." They never got it through to them that one of the problems is that they were not nuanced. They were: "Aircraft carriers are good! Now, why should I have to say any more?"

We had a whole World War II generation there that got money and were lionized and appreciated because of their battle accomplishments, but it doesn't spill over very well. Jim Stockdale came back with the Congressional Medal of Honor and everything, and he still discovered that somebody had to run the War College, and he was the president of the War College and was expected to do it, and he didn't want to do it.\* What's important about that crap, whether we're going to build a building there tomorrow and have five classrooms instead of four? That's not very important; why am I messing with this?

They were neither equipped nor wanted to make those kinds of concessions. You know, in World War II we wanted more money we got more money, for Chrissakes. They were like we were talking about the submarine commanders coming back. They liked the wartime environment better than they liked the peacetime environment. And

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\* Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, USN, served as president of the Naval War College from 13 October 1977 to 22 August 1979.

they liked the whole idea that on Navy matters the Navy should have the say, and nobody else should have a yea or nay. And even to a young officer you could see that that wasn't the environment we were going into.

We had developed a JCS, all new, very bureaucratic. Christ, we had a paperwork system—and the reason was that the Army dominated all that. And the Navy didn't like all that kind of crap. And also in that generation the inter-service rivalry was alive and well, and many of those briefings were spent swearing at the Air Force and Army. You never heard Austin say, "Well, now, you guys have got to really understand we're in a little different...." He never would say that.

Now, he did say that in defending Burke. He'd say, "Well, the admiral didn't get what you wanted down there, and the reason is so-and-so and so-and-so. Now, I know Burke's really pitching hard for you," and he would defend Burke. But he would never defend jointness. Jointness was not in their lexicon.

Paul Stillwell: Well, there was one example in which Admiral Burke fought to make the strategic targeting joint by sending some senior naval officers out to Omaha, just to ensure the Navy had a piece of the action.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, they'd do a lot of things to guard themselves. They were always spying on each other, and they were always trying to get hold of back channels that the other service had. They knew the guy was talking from a back channel, but they didn't have it. And the services would combine against another one occasionally. Some of the action officers get together, the Army and Navy, and skewer the Air Force. But it was very combative. And they hated LeMay, just hated LeMay.† And I can remember Austin mimicking LeMay a lot.

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\* In August 1960, at the instigation of Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates, the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff was established. The JSTPS is discussed in the Naval Institute oral histories of several officers who were assigned there: Admiral John J. Hyland, USN (Ret.); Vice Admiral Gerald E. Miller, USN (Ret.); Vice Admiral Kent L. Lee, USN (Ret.); Vice Admiral Edward N. Parker, USN (Ret.).

† General Curtis E. LeMay, USAF, served as Commander in Chief of the Strategic Air Command from 19 October 1948 to 30 June 1957. He was a lieutenant general until 29 October 1951. The original title was Commanding General, changed to Commander in June 1953 and changed to Commander in Chief in April 1955.

My reading of history, and you're much more dug into this than I am, that probably of the immediate postwar guys Sherman was probably the best.\* Am I wrong about that?

Paul Stillwell: He had a broad strategic view, and unfortunately died before he could have too much impact.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. But I always got the impression that Sherman was much more attuned to what he was getting into in the postwar than the older guys were. And you wondered how he got the appointment as CNO. I don't know the answer to that.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I think he was a compromise candidate when Admiral Denfeld got fired.† He had been over in Sixth Fleet and he had not been part of the Revolt of the Admirals, per se.‡

Admiral Crowe: Well, that must have been important, not to have one like Radford or somebody.§ On the other hand I thought the pressures within the Navy would have been so great that Sherman didn't actually represent what they were. He seemed a man who was pretty reasonable, sort of a Spruance type.\*\* I always inclined toward those guys. That shows my own bias, but I always liked what Spruance had to say and I always liked what Sherman did. And it seemed to me they were a little more—and this is a terrible thing to say, but they were thinking a little more about the country. Because it was quite

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\* Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 2 November 1949 until his death on 22 July 1951.

† Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from December 1947 to November 1949.

‡ In the late 1940s, the Navy and Air Force were competing for scarce defense dollars. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson accelerated production of the Air Force's B-36 bomber and canceled the aircraft carrier *United States* (CVA-58) soon after the beginning of construction. The Navy fought back, as detailed in Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals* (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1994). See also Paul Schratz, "The Admirals' Revolt," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, pages 64-71.

§ Vice Admiral Arthur W. Radford, USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air), OP-05, in 1946-47. As a four-star admiral he was Vice Chief of Naval Operations from January 1948 to April 1949.

\*\* Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN, served as Commander Fifth Fleet during World War II and as president of the Naval War College afterward.

common to think just about the Navy. What was it Stimson said? The only true church is the U.S. Navy?\*

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember specific cases in which this rivalry flared up?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't. As an aide to 06 I don't remember an issue. But I remember the general tone. And the action officers were worse than the admirals. Boy, they went down there to fight when they would attend those action officer meetings before a paper would go up. And they hated the other action officers for the Air Force and the Army. It was very seldom you'd hear anything nice said about them.

This is ahead of our story here, there was a guy in my church by the name of John Gerrity. When I was OP-06 Gerrity was deputy to the Army's equivalent, Shy Meyer.† Gerrity told me this story just about a year ago, before he moved to Naples, Florida, to retire completely from life. He was a very tall, gaunt, thin, infantryman, and was a major general in the Army. When I'd been the Navy's OP-06 for about three or four months, I got hold of Gerrity and asked him to come and see me.‡ That was very unusual, to come up to 06 and come in and see the boss. Gerrity told me this story recently, and I had even forgotten it.

He said, "You had me come in the office and said, 'You know, I've been noticing down there in the Tank that you guys seem to do a lot better staff work than we do. Would you mind having me down and brief me on the way you staff papers in the Army?'" And Gerrity said, "I was bowled over. He said, "I went back and I called Shy Meyer and said, 'I've got to come and see you.' And I said, 'We've got a problem.'" [Laughter]

Shy Meyer said, "What do you mean?"

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\* Henry L. Stimson was Secretary of War, 1940-45. From his memoir, written in third person, "But some of the Army-Navy troubles, in Stimson's view, grew from the peculiar psychology of the Navy Department, which frequently seemed to retire from the realm of logic into the dim religious world in which Neptune was God, Mahan his prophet, and the United States Navy the only true Church." Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, (New York: Harper, 1948), page 506.

† Lieutenant General Edward C. Meyer, USA, served from 1976 to 1979 as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, United States Army. He was later Army Chief of Staff, 1979-83.

‡ As a vice admiral Crowe served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans, Policy and Operations) from August 1977 to March 1980.

He said, “The Navy’s brought in an admiral down there that’s going to give us a lot of trouble.”

Meyer said, “What do you mean?”

He said, “He asked me for help and wants to know how we staff our papers, and so forth.”

And Shy Meyer got to laughing and said, “Well, what are you going to do?”

And he said, “I’m going to show them to him.”

Meyer said, “That’s fine.”

Gerrity said, “I’ve never met an admiral like that.” [Laughter]

So I went down and spent a week with the Army, going through how they staff papers. But Gerrity said, “You really rocked the Army staff, and they thought, ‘Now, this guy’s going to be trouble.’” But Gerrity and I have been friends ever since then. I’ve always been a friend of his. That was unheard of when I was a lieutenant commander. You didn’t do that sort of thing. And all the humor up there was when the other guy was in trouble we were—it’s like my children. When somebody got in trouble the other two were angels. We loved to see everybody in trouble but ourselves.

Now, when I was up there Burke made a couple of decisions which I didn’t really understand at the time, that I understood later, that were extremely important, on the design of the Polaris submarine.\* There was a question of how many missiles the Polaris submarine would carry. That wasn’t an engineering decision or anything. That was a bunch of goats sitting in a room just saying, “Twelve sounds like a pretty good number. Let’s put 12 on the damn thing.” And that’s the way that decision was made.

Paul Stillwell: Well, somehow they would up with 16.

Admiral Crowe: Well, and then it went up to 16. They had a little argument about it, but there weren’t drawings out or, you know, the ship’s level does this, or this gives us so much righting arm. None of that crap. It was just the senior submariners sitting around

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\* The first version of the submarine-launched Polaris ballistic missile, the A-1, was 28 feet long, 4 feet in diameter, and weighed about 30,000 pounds. It had a range of 1,200 nautical miles. The missile entered fleet service in 1960 in the nuclear-powered submarine *George Washington* (SSBN-598).

with Burke, who didn't know a lot about submarines. Finally they ended up with 16 and said, "Put 16 in it." And that's what they did.

But the really brave decision was to go into the business, because actually he had some word from the technical people: "We think we can do this." But they didn't *know* they could do it. And Burke said, "Do it." And I doubt if there's been another decision made in the U.S. Navy in the postwar period that would be more important than that one.

Paul Stillwell: Someone described it that Polaris required a succession of miracles to occur simultaneously.

Admiral Crowe: That's absolutely right. And the people that turned that out were Raborn and Levering Smith.<sup>\*</sup> And then we've got one in my generation, out of '46.

Paul Stillwell: Bob Wertheim.<sup>†</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Wertheim. Those guys were fabulous. They literally put their careers on the line and made it happen. I look back on that historically as a really gutsy call.

Paul Stillwell: And it required canceling the Regulus program, which was quite a ways on.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: It required a lot of things, and they were dealing with uncertainty. And that's what senior officers have to do; they have to deal with uncertainty. And there was a lot of hunch in it, and they just had that much confidence in their own people and their own ability. And then they had the leeway to do it. I don't know that you could do that

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<sup>\*</sup> Rear Admiral William F. Raborn, Jr., USN, was director of the Special Projects Office, which developed the Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile system. He held the post from 2 December 1955 to 26 February 1962, being promoted to vice admiral in 1960. His Polaris oral history is in the Naval Institute collection. Captain Levering Smith, USN, was technical director of the project.

<sup>†</sup> Rear Admiral Robert H. Wertheim, USN, served as director of the Strategic Systems Project Office from 14 November 1977 to 1 November 1980. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>‡</sup> Two Regulus missiles were designed to be fired from surface ships or surfaced submarines. Regulus I, which entered the fleet in 1952, was 34 feet long, weighed 12,000 pounds, and had a speed of Mach 0.9 and range of 500 miles; Regulus II, which had its first flight test in 1958, was 57 feet long, weighed 22,000 pounds, and had a speed of Mach 2.0 and range of 1,000 miles. Regulus II did not go into fleet service.

today, because so many cooks would be in the stew. But you look back on it, he must have had some second thoughts about that, off and on, for about a couple of years. But they turned it out. Amazing decision.

Paul Stillwell: And the first submarine, *George Washington*, was commissioned at the end of December, '59, so they could get it right at the end of the decade.

Admiral Crowe: What was the significance of that?

Paul Stillwell: I don't know, but it said something about milestones, I presume. I've got to believe that was deliberate.

Admiral Crowe: You do important things for unimportant reasons.

Paul Stillwell: Do you have more on Admiral Burke and his decision-making?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I felt that he had a strong tendency to lean toward the things he knew a lot about. Which is fine, but unfortunately we had a lot of people around there that knew a lot of things about those things. And that he would consciously bend away from the things that he should have been doing, because they were hard, and he wasn't as confident about that as he was about some of the others.

Paul Stillwell: What were some of those areas?

Admiral Crowe: Well, problems with ships would come up, and so forth, and he'd get right into the details of what happened in here, and so forth, and we'd better get hold of this commanding officer and do that and do this, and do that. And I felt sometimes on problems that he was being briefed for in the JCS that he didn't understand them very well, and he didn't go to an effort to understand them. He read the stuff he liked and didn't read the stuff he didn't like.



Yet there are several things that only the CNO can do. Only the CNO talks to the OSD, or to the SecNav, for that matter.\* Only the CNO can go testify on the budget up in Congress, really meaningful testimony. And if you've got a congressional problem only the CNO can handle that. He gets over there and talks to the chairman of the committee. Now, there are a lot of other people talking to staffers and so forth, but—

He didn't like the State Department, and we had many nasty comments on diplomats and their inability to decide things, and so forth and so forth. And he used to wonder whether we were all in the same country or not.

Paul Stillwell: But one advantage he had was that the Secretary of Defense then, Gates, been Secretary of the Navy, and so he knew the Navy's perspective, whereas when McNamara came in he was much more inclined to rule from the top down.†

Admiral Crowe: Well, but, you know, we didn't find that worked that well too much. We got a little irritated after Gates went up there, because he knew all our dirty laundry. [Laughter] And, you know, on trying to get the Navy and the Army and the Air Force together on the big problem they had, the super carrier and so forth, and on the tactics, Gates was the man that finally said to the JCS, "I'll go ahead and make the decision, since you can't make it." Well, we felt when Gates went up it would all be pro-Navy. He knew too much about the Navy, and that was another lesson that I remember stands out. I can remember Burke swearing about Gates, "Well, he knows better than that. He knows that's not a good decision." Well, he knew a lot more about the Navy. And, like so many people, he bent over backward not to be favorable to the Navy. So I'm not so sure it's always good to have your man.

Now, militarily it was different. When Twining went up to Chairman—ooh, he was pro-Air Force all the way and he used the chairmanship to do nothing but Air Force. I'm not that familiar with Radford as Chairman, but of course Radford was a terrible

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\* OSD – Office of the Secretary of Defense.

† Thomas S. Gates, Jr., served as Secretary of Defense from 2 December 1959 to 20 January 1961. Robert S. McNamara served as Secretary of Defense from 21 January 1961 to 29 February 1968.

fighter on the Revolt of the Admirals.\* It's amazing that Radford ever became Chairman, given what he did down there when we were fighting the Revolt of the Admirals. I sometimes think he's the guy that killed Forrestal.† He made Forrestal's life miserable. He would not compromise in any way whatsoever, Radford wouldn't. And here was poor old Forrestal just trying his damndest to protect the Navy and also satisfy President Truman, and boy, Radford wasn't any help at all. That's where Sherman came up as being helpful.

Paul Stillwell: Well, things had calmed down and there was a new President.‡ It was Eisenhower who picked Radford.

Admiral Crowe: But Eisenhower had a very low opinion of the Navy, too, you know. They were all aware of what Radford had done. I still think it's amazing he ended up Chairman. But I think Bradley supported him.§ I don't know why. Be careful, because Bradley didn't like the Navy too well either. He probably had some other agenda in mind, like: "This guy ain't smart enough to be the...." [Chuckle] I don't know, but that Revolt of the Admirals, those guys were shameless. I can remember as a junior officer being ashamed of the way the Navy was acting. As that girl in my class said the other day, "It sounds like they were girls arguing over eye shadow." [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: This is your class at the Naval Academy.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That's my little girl that had all the one-liners. "Ethics are expensive." Did I tell you that story?

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\* Admiral Arthur W. Radford, USN, served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 15 August 1953 to 14 August 1957. General Nathan F. Twining, USAF, served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 15 August 1957 to 30 September 1960.

† James V. Forrestal resigned as Secretary of Defense on 27 March 1949 and subsequently became a patient at the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. He committed suicide on 22 May 1949 by jumping from a window of the hospital.

‡ Dwight D. Eisenhower was President from 20 January 1953 to 20 January 1961.

§ General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, USA, served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 16 August 1949 to 14 August 1953.

Paul Stillwell: No, I don't think so.

Admiral Crowe: We were discussing whether ethics is helpful or impeding of foreign policy. And she didn't say anything, and that argument went on a while, and I finally turned to her and said, "Ruth, what do you think of this?"

She said, "Ethics are expensive." It's a very sage remark. That's the way she felt about it. And these kids read these histories. How could we have argued over stuff like that? Grown men.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any cases where it was to the disadvantage to the Navy that Admiral Burke was not an articulate spokesman?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes.

Paul Stillwell: What would some of those be?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I don't remember the specific issues, but we lost so many fights over Omaha.<sup>\*</sup> And finally we got a guy out there, but we didn't win the fight in Omaha. And over trying to stop SAC command from taking everything. We got our lunch taken a lot of times on that. And, of course, LeMay just ran over the JCS on the SIOP, and Burke finally hammered out, what you'd refer to, a sop, that we would have a naval officer out there.<sup>†</sup> But we were well aware that naval officer wasn't going to be very influential, not for a while.

There was a general feeling, which I just didn't understand, that if we went to a single service—which was behind all of this. That was really what started it. Eisenhower and Marshall wanted a single service, and they couldn't get it so it seeped up in other ways.<sup>‡</sup> But even Eisenhower, before he walked out of office, said, "If I'd have gotten my single service we wouldn't have all these damned problems." The Navy felt

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<sup>\*</sup> The Strategic Air Command, based at Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, Nebraska. It has since become a joint service command, Strategic Command, rather than Air Force only as it was then.

<sup>†</sup> SIOP – Single Integrated Operational Plan, which specified the targeting for U.S. nuclear weapons.

<sup>‡</sup> General of the Army George C. Marshall, USA, served as Army Chief of Staff from 1 September 1939 to 18 November 1945. He was promoted to five-star rank in December 1944.

that the Army would run all over us in the bureaucracy in Washington. And it was sort of as if we weren't capable of defending ourselves, that our case wasn't good enough, and we had to be sovereign and we had to be independent and we had to be self-reliant and we couldn't depend on anybody else to see out point of view, and we weren't persuasive enough to change them.

I didn't agree with that at all, and I don't today. In fact, naval officers that really get involved in the Washington mechanism do every bit as well, if not better, than the other services do. It was that we just weren't emphasizing it. The Air Force would grow them, and if they were good in Washington they were doomed there all their lives. And, of course, I'm a product of that. I spent my whole life in Washington. But that wasn't so much by design as by just, sort of, unfortunate events. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Well, another part of the Navy culture was that OpNav duty was better than joint duty, for promotion.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, my. They didn't give joint duty credit for the time of day. We had a couple of guys down there that had acquired quite a bit of it and were really bright, and they didn't do well in the Navy. I'm trying to remember one of them I used to do business with. Forget his name. He was a senior captain and had a lot of JCS experience, and was really good, but the Navy didn't give that much credit.

That's when I first saw the joint mechanism, was when I was the aide to Austin. But we were building even then a small group of people, about that size, and we'd run into each other now and then and say, "We've got to reorganize the goddamn system; we've got to get into this joint business, and we've got to change the way the JCS feels, the way we feel about the JCS." But we were a very small minority in the Navy.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any others who were in that group?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I was trying. No, I don't. I'm sorry. Escapes me. They were usually people that had been defeated by the system, who were very depressed and discouraged, and left the Navy.

But you could sit in those briefings, and occasionally there would be an action officer who would speak up and actually say, “On this issue I don’t agree with this; I think cooperating with them is going to be to our advantage.” God, you’d have thought he’d put a turd in the punchbowl. The first priority down there was not cooperation. That came out of World War II.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have any contact with people at your level in other services at that time?

Admiral Crowe: Not much. Of course, I met some occasionally. I met aides. The aides are always running into each other. In fact, we had a situation, and I don’t know to this day what happened. But I was the aide to Austin and I was very friendly with the aide to 04 next door.\* And I don’t remember his name, and I guess we’re better off I don’t remember. He was a lieutenant commander, I was a lieutenant commander, and he and I went to lunch together a lot and did a lot of comforting each other over our various problems. In fact, we made a trip to Jacksonville with our two admirals one day.

Anyway, my friend just disappeared. He wasn’t in the office. I went and asked, and they said, “Well, he’s not in today.” Then a week went by, and he still hadn’t been in. He disappeared. Well, I had a friend, a classmate, who was the aide to the chief of Naval personnel, and six months later I brought up this subject and said, “What happened to my friend? He just disappeared.” He got to giggling, and said, “Well, your friend had an adventure.”

I said, “What do you mean?”

He said, “Well, the Pentagon police caught him in the parking lot screwing an admiral’s wife.”

I said, “Oh?” [Laughter] I didn’t have that high a regard for him after that. [Chuckle]. Anyway, he was transferred out in two days.

Paul Stillwell: That would do it.

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\* OP-04 was the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Logistics).

Admiral Crowe: That would do it. The aides had their own circuit. I even had a little to do with the CNO's aide, when coordinating Burke's schedule. I told you about Austin being the senior submarine officer at the annual submarine party?

Paul Stillwell: I don't recall that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, the submariners have an annual—they did then, I guess we still do, I don't go—submarine birthday ball. Austin was the senior submarine officer in the Navy, although he hadn't been in submarines in years. The submarine community really didn't consider him, just the way they don't consider me one now. But he was the senior submarine officer, so he was the host of the party. He invited Burke, and Burke and Mrs. Burke came. Austin was a glutton for details on social things, and we spent a lot of time on arrangements, who'd sit where.

Then Austin said to me, "Now, we want to get some of these hotshot young submarine guys that are making so much noise down there and so much publicity. We want to get them at the head table, and want to pick out one to sit beside Mrs. Burke." So I got hold of the submarine desk, which picked out Dick Laning, a terrible mistake.\* [Chuckle] A terrible mistake. He knew all about submarines, but he didn't know anything about Mrs. Burke, and he didn't know anything about big dinners. [Laughter] So he sat beside Mrs. Burke at the same table there with Austin, and spent the entire evening telling her about midget submarines, and why we should have some, and so forth. [Laughter].

Austin came to work on Monday and said, "Who is that son of a bitch Laning?" He had a piece of me, as if I'd done this. I didn't do this.

I said, "Admiral, the submariners picked this guy out, not me."

Anyway, he said, "Mrs. Burke was so bored. The nerve of that stupid bastard, to think that she would be interested in all the details of midget submarining." He was really mad [chuckle], and I thought it was sort of funny. Like eye shadow.

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\* Commander Richard B. Laning, USN, was the first commanding officer when the USS *Seawolf* (SSN-575) was commissioned 30 March 1957. She was the Navy's second nuclear-powered submarine.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Laning was just a super-enthusiastic guy, and he had been CO of the *Seawolf*, and so he probably told her a bunch about that.

Admiral Crowe: Whatever he told her he didn't go over very big. [Laughter]. He said, "Mrs. Burke was so glad to get away from that guy that...." Isabella Austin thought it was sort of funny. So did I. [Chuckle] We used to commiserate with each other occasionally, and I thought it was hilarious. And that was typical of that whole crowd that Rickover had picked in the first shot. Well, they were exciting, they were nuclear, and they were doing things that nobody else had ever done before, and I can see where they got all wrapped up in it. And they didn't see why the rest of the world wasn't quite as enamored with it as they were. [Laughter] And, of course, from Austin's standpoint, all he gave a damn about was Admiral and Mrs. Burke having a good time at the party. That was all that he was interested in.

Paul Stillwell: So it boomeranged.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Ooh, he was mad. That's like when I was trying to get Ace Lyons promoted, and I took him up to see Jim Holloway.\* And Jim Holloway called me and said, "Don't ever let that son of a bitch in my office again." Ace Lyons is one of these guys that thinks: "If I could just have five more minutes I could convince him." [Chuckle] Do you know Ace?

Paul Stillwell: I know *of* him.

Admiral Crowe: Have you ever met him?

Paul Stillwell: No, I haven't.

Admiral Crowe: Boy, he's a piece of work. And unfortunately extremely bright.

Paul Stillwell: Why do you say unfortunately?

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\* Rear Admiral James A. Lyons, Jr., served with Admiral Crowe in OP-06 in the late 1970s.

Admiral Crowe: Well, they're the worst kind to handle. I mean, God, with no tact, no couth, no nothing, except he's damned bright and *very* energetic. He worked for me when I was 06, and he was a great action officer, because he could sit there and bore everybody to death until they just got tired and went home, and then he'd get his way. [Chuckle] And nobody was as patient as he was. But he was mean. He could be a very mean man, and very emotional, very passionate, but very bright. I wanted him to make admiral, and I made him an admiral. He quit speaking to me before it was over, but anyway, he was a lot like that.

Paul Stillwell: Why did he quit speaking to you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he got relieved. He was CinCPacFlt and I was Chairman, and we were convoying in the Gulf.\* We were trying to get a big ship in and out of the Gulf without the Iranians knowing about it. Anyway, we called CinCPacFlt and told him to do something, and then I went out of town. I wasn't even in town when it happened. Ace was so confident in himself that he designed this thing, and it was well thought out, but he didn't tell CinCPac. And they came out. He had conducted a whole operation of getting a group of ships in and out of the Gulf without telling CinCPac, which I assumed he would do. I was wrong. CinCPac was Ron Hays, and Ron Hays was furious, and sent a message to Weinberger saying that he couldn't work with this CinCPacFlt who had consciously and deliberately ignored him, and he wanted something done.† Weinberger fired him within 12 hours. And when I came back it was done.

Ace thought I should have called him and told him he was in trouble, and be back there defending him. Well, first of all, I didn't know it was going on. Secondly, I didn't realize he hadn't told CinCPac, which was a stupid thing not to do. But that was enough.

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\* In the summer of 1987, during a war between Iran and Iraq, each side was attacking tankers in the Persian Gulf. In order to protect the flow of oil in the gulf, the United States re-flagged a number of Kuwaiti commercial tankers to provide them U.S. registry. That enabled the U.S. Navy to escort the tankers in an operation labeled Earnest Will. Admiral James A. Lyons, Jr., USN served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet from 16 September 1985 to 30 September 1987.

† Admiral Ronald J. Hays, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific from 18 September 1985 to 30 September 1988. Caspar W. Weinberger served as Secretary of Defense from 21 January 1981 to 23 November 1987.



Ace quit speaking. And then he retired and got in trouble transporting whiskey in his retirement, for sale, and so forth, and some other things. The typical kinds of things that happened to Ace. But still, when you put him on a paper or something, he was bright as hell. His mind was always clicking. And those kinds of guys are hard to live with [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Well, I remember interviewing Admiral David Richardson, who had Lyons on the Sixth Fleet staff, and he said he was always sharp there.\*

Admiral Crowe: He always had more ideas than anybody else, and always some good ones. And lots of ideas. If A didn't work, he'd come up with a B, or a C. But he was not cooperative, either in or out of the Navy. He didn't cooperate. He was very ambitious, and a very, very close-knit friend of John Lehman's.†

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: They were next-door neighbors. I never really got along with Lehman, although we'll get to that later. But Ace always had Lehman in his back pocket, and vice versa. But those guys can typically make stupid errors. They're bright, but they sometimes don't use common sense, and to just not let Hays in on it at all was more than Hays could take. Hays always felt he was a little—I think Hays had an inferiority complex a little bit. The Navy was always picking on him. But, boy, he got mad about that. And Weinberger didn't mind firing Ace at all. He didn't like Ace. [Chuckle]

It wasn't a Navy proposition. Hays didn't work for the Navy. He was CinCPac, and it was all done in the chain of command. I don't know if I'd have been there whether I'd have been able to do anything, because once you do something stupid like that you've got to live with it. Hays went directly to Weinberger, and there wasn't anything wrong with that. He had that privilege.

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\* Vice Admiral David C. Richardson, USN, commanded the Sixth Fleet from 14 August 1968 to 29 August 1970. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

† John F. Lehman, Jr., served as Secretary of the Navy from 5 February 1981 to 10 April 1987.

Paul Stillwell: Well, anything more on your original OP-06 tour to mention?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. From my personal standpoint, it was my first peek into the running of the Navy, and you get hooked. It's endlessly fascinating. Okay, you're a lieutenant commander, and so forth, but you get the idea: "Wouldn't it be nice to be somebody running the show, doing these kind of big things?" And particularly the—I'm always having my dad's lawyer in me—the arguments, and my debating in high school came back to me completely. It was fascinating. And the work that 06 did, really—I felt that's what I wanted to do. I didn't like Austin, but I loved what his shop dealt with, and how it was divided, and watching these various people deal with it.

And you see for the first time the broad picture. Serving the Navy ship and the enlisted men and the people that work for the captain, they all look and see what his skills are, and they like the idea that he's a good ship handler and he knows a lot about this and he knows a lot about that, and he knew how to manipulate the crew. Then you discover, you go up there where you've got a bunch of commanders working for admirals, and they don't give a shit whether the admiral can handle a ship or not. They had a completely different view of leadership. It was whether the admiral could see the problem, tell you how to write the paper to get it solved, and how he could sell it through the bureaucracy, which requires completely different skills than running a ship. And running commanders is not like running enlisted men. Commanders expect new things from the boss. I found all of that.

We had both kinds there. We had guys that were great ship handlers that were terrible staffers, and we had people they've never heard of that turned out to be great staffers when they got up there. They knew what buttons to push, whom to pick up the phone and talk to. And they could spot a paper and say, "That ain't going to sell down there." It may sell in the *Navy*. That's the biggest problem. We could always write papers that sold in the Navy, but we couldn't write papers that sold outside the Navy, and we couldn't bring ourselves to do that.

You know, my father used to tell me that the hardest part of an argument before the jury was not what you said, it's what you didn't say. He said, "You couldn't say everything; that would kill it." So you had to pick what you were going to say—A, B,

and C, and I'm sorry, I may know D to Z, but it ain't going to get in this argument. Navy officers couldn't believe that. If I know A to Z I'm going to get every point in that damned paper. Convincing people not to do that, it was a completely different skill, and yet the people who do it, they expect the commander to have that skill. They don't want to work for an admiral that doesn't have that skill.

Jim Calvert was a great example. Jim Calvert was a terrible ship handler.<sup>\*</sup> And on board ship that may have had some impact. But he was a great naval officer. He could see arguments, and so forth and so forth. And then when he got up there in the top, why, it served him extremely well, and whether he was a ship handler or not was irrelevant.

The same way with pilots. You get these pilots that are wonderful fliers, and they get up there and don't know where you put a comma or a period, and what sells and what doesn't sell. As far as they're concerned, the arguments for carriers were so outstanding and so prominent that there was no need to elaborate or shape it or compromise. It was a different world, and it was an intellectual world, largely.

Paul Stillwell: Well, just to bring up another example, Admiral Boorda was known as a brilliant ship handler. Then he ran afoul of things in Washington.<sup>†</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Yes. How many ships did he handle when he was CNO?

Paul Stillwell: That's right. None.

Admiral Crowe: And, you see, that was my problem with Burke. Burke wanted to go back to the things that he did know really well. And it's hard to get into the things you don't know much about and say, "I've got to deal with this, because nobody under me is going to deal with it." That's a strong tendency, and Burke was not the only one that had

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<sup>\*</sup> On 3 August 1958 the USS *Skate* (SSN-578), under Commander James F. Calvert, USN, became the first submarine to surface at the North Pole. He eventually became a vice admiral.

<sup>†</sup> Admiral Jeremy M. Boorda, USN, committed suicide on 16 May 1996 while serving as Chief of Naval Operations. Among the several reasons cited as possible causes was that he was about to be interviewed by news media representatives about whether he was entitled to combat devices on his service ribbons received during the Vietnam War. See Nick Kotz, "What Really Happened to Admiral Boorda," *Washingtonian*, December 1996.

that tendency. We've all had it, like I'd prefer to get somebody else to do this, because I'm on unfamiliar ground here. And yet there are lots of things in which you've got to deal with them because you're the only one. The OSD doesn't want to talk to the action officer.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any of these cases where the Navy suffered because Gates did have that Navy background?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we suffered on the SIOP. We finally took the SIOP away from Omaha, and at least the JCS had a whack at it. The JCS never made up their minds what to do about that. Twining and Gates kept shoveling questions in, urging, prodding, pushing, and they couldn't get a corporate view. And at the end of the year Gates said, "Screw you all; I'm going to tell you what to do." And the Navy didn't like it. He came out with an answer that helped, but still left the levers in the Air Force's hands, which we wanted to see the Air Force screwed altogether and Gates wouldn't do it. That's the biggest problem.

Getting the SIOP out of Omaha was a big thing. You read about that, and I can't believe our country allowed that to happen, that LeMay ran that with nobody else. For five years nobody touched the SIOP but LeMay. Should have been sent to prison.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and after him General Power was very powerful.\*

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was very noisy. He made some stupid statements.

Paul Stillwell: Well, here we are, 45 years after that, and the head of the Strategic Command is a Navy admiral.

Admiral Crowe: How do you like that? [Laughter] And I've always cited that, that we think we wouldn't do well in the fight, and by God we're doing very well in the fight.

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\* General Thomas S. Power, USAF, served as Commander in Chief of the Strategic Air Command from 1 July 1957 to 30 November 1964.

And we could have been in the fight earlier if we'd have been a little more reasonable. We didn't have to put it off as long as we did. But, boy, we fought it tooth and toenail. And I think our people that have had that command have done extremely well.

What is it Power said there? What was the great statement? Something like, "Just as long as the last two people that are left are Americans, we'll win."

Somebody else said, "I hope one's a woman and one's a man." [Laughter]

Are you Catholic?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: When I was debating in the Naval Academy we debated Villanova. I'd had very little to do with the Catholic religion, and after the debate they had a little dinner for the debate team. Our coach was a big fat guy, a reserve commander who came in in the course of the war and taught English, History, and Government. He was the sponsor of the debate team. I think his name was Johnson. Anyway, he was with us, and he had a big sense of humor. There were three or four priests at the table, and he took that time to tell the joke about the atomic bomb destroying the world, and the cartoon showed the two monkeys crawling out of the caves, meeting, and one of them says, "Well, I guess we'll start all over again." And these priests didn't laugh at the joke at all. They didn't think it was very funny. [Chuckle] And I said later, I said, "I wonder why they didn't laugh." Well, I've been told why they didn't laugh. I didn't realize the Catholic Church took some exception to that.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, indeed.

Well, are you ready to start on the *Trout* today?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we might as well.

Paul Stillwell: Before we get into that, I wonder if we could get an update on your family as of that time. You talked earlier about adopting Blake. Then you had Brent and Bambi after that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, when I was on *Wahoo*, in Hawaii, we decided we weren't going to have children and became very interested in adopting children. My mother's sister was married to a doctor in Oklahoma City by the name of George Bozalis. He had been trained as a baby doctor, but he was an allergist. We immediately consulted with him, and he had a classmate in medical school that was a very dear friend of his, an obstetrician by the name of Schneider, I think—that may be wrong. He lived in St. Petersburg, Florida.

My uncle said this doctor often treated young girls that were going to have babies and were not married. Adoption was much simpler in those days than it is today. And so he called his friend and told him our situation, that we were interested in adopting. Then he came to Oklahoma City, because that was his home originally, and we met him. And then he went back to St. Petersburg.

I was getting ready to deploy on *Wahoo* when we got the word that he had a boy baby that would be born very close to Christmas, and were we interested? And Shirley was very interested; so was I. So we immediately informed that we would like to take the baby. But my schedule was in the way, and, of course, in that day and age it wasn't necessary to have family visits and blah, blah, blah. If this doctor got somebody, that was all sufficient.

So I deployed out of Pearl Harbor on the 26th of December 1957, the day after Christmas. Shirley had heard on the 18th or something like that and went straight to St. Petersburg. Blake was born on the 20th, and I think it was two or three days before she could get him out of there. I knew that we had him, and his name, and how pleased she was, but then I deployed.

She flew to Oklahoma City on the 23rd, I think, right in there. And she'd had very little experience with babies, and the baby cried all the way on the flight. The reason was that the milk bottle was stopped up, and she didn't know milk bottles got stopped up. The kid wasn't getting anything to eat. [Chuckle] The minute she got to Oklahoma, where her family met her, the doctor took the baby away from her and said, "This kid's not getting anything to eat." They solved that problem quickly. But she

spent about three months in Oklahoma with her family and my family. Then she moved back to Hawaii, and we came in in June, and that's the first I saw of Blake.

Then we came back to Washington in the BuPers job, and we went back to the same doctor twice more. We got Brent, our second son, there, and then the daughter, Bambi, was born when I was in command of *Trout*, in Charleston, and we brought her up from St. Petersburg. We got all three of our children through that one doctor. Very simple matter. My parents and her parents thought three children were too many, and didn't like the idea of getting a third child, but it was one of the nicest things we ever did. Can't imagine not having our daughter.\*

Paul Stillwell: It was a fortuitous connection there in St. Petersburg.

Admiral Crowe: Very, very. We've always been extremely grateful for that doctor. He died just recently, and his wife died earlier. But through my uncle's connection in medical school we were able to solve that. Had a very wonderful weekend this weekend, and hope we get our son back out of Iraq in January. The Commandant was with him on Christmas. He came to Anbar for Christmas Day. And the Commandant used to be my aide when I was Chairman.

Paul Stillwell: General Conway.†

Admiral Crowe: Yes, Jim Conway. So Jim has known all my children, and as well Shirley and myself. I have great faith in Jim Conway. So pleased he's the Commandant. But he's got a big job. Anyway, those are the three children.

Back to the *Trout*. I was due to go to command in the normal sequence of events when I left Austin's office, and the first question was whether I could leave Austin. Well, as I've mentioned, Austin was running very hard for four stars, and he really was almost shameless about the run. There wasn't anything smooth about it. It was: "This is my one chance to be a four-star admiral." And at least in the office there he was quite

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\* William Blake Crowe was born 20 December 1957, James Brent Crowe on 9 July 1959, and Mary Russell "Bambi" Crowe on 5 December 1960. The latter is now Bambi Crowe Coval.

† General James T. Conway, USMC, has served as Commandant of the Marine Corps since 13 November 2006.

frank about it, and he became very nervous and anxious and picky, and worried about every single thing going wrong. And his competitor was Sides, whom I never really knew. I saw him from a distance.\*

Paul Stillwell: He was big in guided missiles. He was on the ground floor on that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He was a research type. And the job in question was CinCPacFlt. And Austin was obviously playing on his long association with Burke. I think he sort of thought he had an edge because of that. But Sides had a strong supporter up in OSD, I think Gates. I always felt that Gates was the big guy behind Sides. Anyway, then the decision was announced that Sides was going to be promoted, and it took the steam right out of Austin. I've never seen a man collapse so quickly. It was not usual for him to say personal things to me, but one day he said, "It's so depressing to think what you've worked for all your life is, now I'm a failure." It didn't seem to me he was a failure being a three-star. It seemed to me he'd done rather well.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: And he was on the way to be president of the Naval War College, which he didn't think was much of a job. He was a defeated man in some respects.

Paul Stillwell: Did Captain Nace serve as any kind of a buffer between you and Admiral Austin?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. I was going to get into that. Well, that eased the problem of me leaving. There wasn't any question I'd have to stay longer. Then I could leave to go to command, and Nace cleared that with Austin right away. And then there were several of my friends that were just beginning to trickle into the nuclear program, and it was pretty clear, at least so far, that I had been a diesel submariner and was probably

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\* Vice Admiral John H. Sides served as director of the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (WSEG) from 1957 to 1960. WSEG provided analytical support for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



going to remain one. I didn't know what my prospects for command would be. Nace really did more for me in the submarine community than he had to do with Austin. He said, "Well, let me handle that. I'll try and do the best I can for you. What would you want if you could get it?"

I said, "Well, I'd like to get one of those six new submarines, diesels."\*

He said, "Well, let me try. I'll do it." And I think he used Austin's name. Nace really was the guy that...

Then I told Austin that I'd really been impressed with the work I saw in OP-06 and hoped I could return to that sort of work, and that I would probably be requesting graduate school. Well, Austin didn't think that was a very good idea. We bickered about it and bickered about it. He never really thought I needed to do that.

But then he said, "Well, you're going to go to command." And I was quite puffed up about that. He said, "Well, just remember, when you've had one command you've had them all." And here was a guy that had seven or eight commands. And he said, "You learn 95% of what you're going to learn on the first one, and the rest of it—" He sort of took the wind out of being in command. I didn't appreciate that very much, but that's what he said.

I later on asked him to write some letters for graduate school when he was in the war college, and he did; he wrote some very nice letters. I ran across a note from his wife in my files not too long ago. She was very kind to me, but he and I never really struck it off.

But I think the reason I got *Trout* was Nace. Nace worked very hard for me. I had come over there to sort of help Nace. Nace was having trouble finding an aide, and I'd come over there and tried to help him, and he and I had become very friendly, and he had a lot to do with me. And very shortly after that Nace made admiral, which I really appreciated. I thought that was wonderful.

Paul Stillwell: Did you give any conscious thought to the possibility of going into the nuclear program?

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\* The first new diesel submarines designed and built by the U.S. Navy after World War II were the six boats known as fast-attack submarines. The first of the class was the *Tang* (SS-563), commissioned 25 October 1951.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I had applied several times, and I'd never had a taker. So by the time I got to *Trout* I assumed I was going to be a diesel submariner.

Paul Stillwell: So you didn't even get called in for an interview.

Admiral Crowe: Well, not up until then. Then things started happening sort of screwy. But I went to *Trout* fully aware that my prospects for being a nuclear submariner, at least in my mind, were very small. Now, I could have been one, evidently, but you'll hear about that later. At the time I was sort of crushed, but it's the luckiest thing that ever happened to me.

You know, I was reviewing my career the other day and it's sort of interesting how many things I did that I was advised not to do. [Chuckle] I was constantly not taking other people's advice. Being an aide to Austin—several people thought, well, you've been one aide, why are you being another? That's stupid. But in terms of my overall career that simple job with Austin as aide and the line of work they were doing, it was very influential to me. I really felt that's what I wanted to do.

I had a classmate, Bill St. George, who had been to law school and came into 06 a little after this period.\* When I was doing my dissertation I used to go up there and get help from St. George. He was a perfect staff officer. He was wonderful. Smart as hell, and he helped me in all kinds of ways. He's one of those guys that just fitted in in 06 like a hand in a glove. He's dead now. He died in San Diego not too long—he was SurfPac before he retired. He was a company mate of mine at the Naval Academy. Real smart guy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the three *Barbel*-class boats were just coming into the fleet then, as diesels, but the six *Tangs* were still at the top of the heap.†

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\* Commander William R. St. George, USN.

† USS *Barbel* (SS-580) was commissioned 17 January 1959. She had a displacement of 2,155 tons on the surface and 2,650 tons submerged. She was 220 feet long, 29 feet in the beam, and had a draft of 28 feet. Her top speed was 15.5 knots surfaced and 18.3 knots submerged. She was armed with six 21-inch torpedo tubes. The sponsor of the *Barbel* was Mrs. Bernard L. Austin.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they were. And the beauty about *Trout* was that by the time I got there all the engines had been changed, and I didn't have the *Wahoo* problem of having to get rid of the flat pancakes and getting real engines. We already had them in *Trout*.

My predecessor in *Trout* was a man by the name of Carvel Hall Blair.<sup>\*</sup> Have you heard that name anywhere?

Paul Stillwell: Yes, his son became a four-star admiral.<sup>†</sup>

Admiral Crowe: That's right. Right in my neighborhood. They lived very close to us, where my daughter lives now. In high school Denny Blair he was a golden boy, and at the Naval Academy he was an all-American lacrosse player, and one of these people who was doomed from the outset to be a success. [Chuckle] But the father was very, very bright. He was out of the Class of '45, and was a little bit of a nerd, but was very smart, and was noted for it. His classmates all deferred to Carvel Hall. And, of course, when I was at the Naval Academy the big hotel in town was Carvel Hall, which has subsequently disappeared. Obviously, the name's the same, but why it's the same I don't really know.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I heard a story that I later found was apocryphal, that that's where he was conceived. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: Well, that may be. That would explain a lot. And Carvel was a very funny guy, a very interesting man. Had a lot of great stories. And, of course, they had the pleasure of raising this unusual child. They were always getting kudos on their child, which is Denny.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Mrs. Blair came from a Navy family too.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And what was her name?

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<sup>\*</sup> Commander Carvel H. Blair, USN, commanded the submarine *Trout* (SS-566) from 1958 to 1960.

<sup>†</sup> Admiral Dennis C. Blair, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific from 20 February 1999 to 2 May 2002.

Paul Stillwell: Ansel was her maiden name.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and Mrs. Blair's brother was a classmate of mine, Ansel.<sup>†</sup> She was the real joker in the family. She was fun. I can remember being in their house one time. They had a big carpet under the dining room table. One of their girls babysat for us. There was food all over the floor, and she said she had someone to cut it up and make it soup. [Laughter] She was really laid back. The world just didn't get on her nerves. She did what she damn well pleased and when she felt like it. It was very interesting. She was really great fun, and I think Denny inherited some of that from his mother. I knew him then. Not well, but we watched this young kid that we kept hearing so much about.

Before relieving Carvel, I went to New London for six weeks and was in PCO school.<sup>‡</sup> The PCO instructor was Phil Beshany, who later became my squadron commander down in Charleston.<sup>§</sup> Phil Beshany is the one that advised me not to go to graduate school. Strongly. He called me in and said, "You're ruining a very good career here." And, you know, ten years later he called me and said, "I was wrong." [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: It took a big man to do that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did. Took a big man. But it was sort of depressing. You decide to do something, and everybody's telling you you're crazy. Anyway, we went to PCO school for six weeks.

Paul Stillwell: Was that mainly just refresher?

Admiral Crowe: Refresher. I'd been to PCO school once before. I forget who all was in that class with me. My friend Ernie Barrett was in that class.\*\* Small class. Shirley moved up, we lived in Gales Ferry in a rented house there just for six weeks. Moved into

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\* The wife of Commander Blair was Abbie Ansel Blair. The oral history of her father, Rear Admiral Walter Ansel, USN (Ret.), is in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>†</sup> David D. Ansel, who eventually retired as a captain.

<sup>‡</sup> PCO – prospective commanding officer.

<sup>§</sup> Captain Philip A. Beshany, USN. The oral history of Beshany, who retired as a vice admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

\*\* Commander Ernest R. Barrett, USN.

it. Had a lot of friend in the area, and enjoyed our short time, the only time she ever spent in New London. I don't think anything remarkable came out of it.

I went from there down to Charleston to assume command. And I remember my family came down there with me. My mother and father met us down there, and Shirley and the three children. They came for the change of command. The boat was in the yard when we changed command. It had just had a fire the day before I got there. [Chuckle] It turned out to not be a major fire, but a little fire. And Carvel was getting ready to give it up.

Carvel and I actually had a little more business before our lives were over. He was in Vietnam just before I was, and I sort of took over a job in Vietnam that Carvel had had in Vietnam. And I admired Carvel. I really liked Carvel. I was a little intimidated by his mentality, because he had a reputation of being—but he was an engineer, he wasn't otherwise.

I can remember I was a little apprehensive about relieving command of a boat in the yard.\* How do you get your arms around it? You don't, really. You just sort of stumble in there and take what you've got. In a sense it's almost like commissioning a boat. The boat you're actually on has never been to sea with all these things working, so you go out and see if they work or not.

Paul Stillwell: And you presumably had a bunch of new crew members too.

Admiral Crowe: I think we had, but we didn't have a new wardroom. We had a pretty stable wardroom. My executive officer—I just got a Christmas card from him this week—was a man by the name of Bill Shaughnessy, out of the class of '51.† He was the number-one man in his class. I never knew a man that could concentrate as well as he could. He could actually be working on something and the general alarm would go off and he'd never notice it. He wouldn't even look up. The year he graduated from the Naval Academy was a boomer year for giving away wristwatches. He had so many that

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\* USS *Trout* (SS-566), a *Tang*-class fast attack submarine, was commissioned 27 June 1952. She displaced 2,108 tons surfaced and 2,700 tons submerged. She was 278 feet long, 27 feet in the beam, and had a draft of 20 feet. Her top speed was 16.3 knots surfaced and 17.4 knots submerged. She was armed with eight 21-inch torpedo tubes.

† Lieutenant William D. Shaughnessy, USN. He stood first among the 725 graduates in his class.

every member of his family had a Naval Academy wristwatch that Bill had won in 1951. [Chuckle]

I have a humorous story about him. I later talked to a young officer who had been Bill's exec when Bill had a submarine. I said, "You know, when Shaughnessy was my exec I never saw a misspelled word." And this kid said when he was Bill's exec, "I saw a lot of them when the captain sent them back to me." [Laughter] But he was a very, very bright man, and had some very unfortunate things happen to him because of Rickover. We can get into that later, but it was a typical mean-spirited thing that Admiral Rickover chose to do.

Paul Stillwell: When did that happen?

Admiral Crowe: After I left *Trout*. Bill had been ignored from the nuclear program, and then all of a sudden attracted into it by Rickover. He spent his year, and Rickover refused to certify him, or some damned thing, and it ruined him. It was terrible.

But in my case he was very thorough and very knowledgeable and very bright, and understood the whole boat, so going out of the yard I had to rely on him very heavily, and my trust was justified. Although I had on the boat several officers who later went nuclear and became commanding officers of nuclear submarines. And had a very good engineer on the boat. So we didn't have any trouble coming out of the yard, but for a new commanding officer I guess the worst, the immediate problem I had was familiarizing myself with the channel out of Charleston and the currents.

Paul Stillwell: Cooper River.

Admiral Crowe: And the Cooper River in general, which was overlaid many times with fog. I had had some experience with fog in San Diego, but I hadn't had a lot of experience on the East Coast with it. But the transit to and from the base at Charleston was always interesting. I concentrated on that very hard at first to make sure we didn't have any problem. And then I'd had very little experience with tugs. We made landings with tugs lots of times, depending on what the current was there in the river.

I'm a fairly good ship handler. I'm not a superb ship handler. And still, Charleston wasn't as hard to make a landing as New London was. New London is the worst. It can really be hairy.

Paul Stillwell: Is that because of the current there?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and the size of the river. In Charleston we had a big river to back into, but in New London you are very limited in how far back you go. New London's the place to build ship handlers, and I spent two or three years on the *Flying Fish*. That's where I learned to handle a submarine, was on the *Flying Fish*. New London was a hell of a challenge.

Paul Stillwell: Did the *Trout* provide the satisfactions of command that you had anticipated?

Admiral Crowe: It didn't at first. The morale on the ship wasn't the highest. Had a very poor chief of the boat, and it took me a little while to work through that. But then I finally relieved the chief of the boat and got a sonarman by the name of Bond; although he was prickly to deal with, he was really good. He and I were of one mind as to how to treat the crew and how to run ship's parties, and so forth like that, and to look after the crew. Once Bond became the chief of the boat and I'd had a little time, and then we went to sea, got out of the yard, the morale came up very high. Then I began to really enjoy the ship.

Unfortunately we didn't deploy overseas when I was CO. I deployed to the Caribbean, Guantanamo quite a bit, went to New London some, up and down. Went into Key West for six weeks. Went through an operational readiness inspection at Key West. And that was all very good. I liked that. Had a lot of challenge, and I thought I had a good wardroom. Probably not as good as the *Wahoo*, but still a very fine wardroom. Bill got relieved by a man named King, who was the exec when I left the boat.

We won an “E” on *Trout* my first year there.<sup>\*</sup> Then had a little disaster in the next week that tested me, but we can talk about that a little later.

The challenge of command is just that. It’s just what it says it is. You’re independent and you now have the whole responsibility, and that takes a little getting used to. I can’t speak with any authority about the nuclear submarine force, but the beauty of the diesel submarine force is that 98% of the men that became commanding officers were well prepared for everything. They’d had a lot of experience on a ship that was not too hard to understand, and had been allowed to fire torpedoes and had been allowed to ship-handle. We had a great system where we allowed junior officers to do things. At times it took a little guts on the CO’s part to be quiet while a JO was jamming the ship in there, but it was customary to do that in the submarine force.

Paul Stillwell: Did you take the same approach the Captain Griffiths had done?

Admiral Crowe: Absolutely. I tried my damndest to do that. I had a friend ride the boat with me one time from Miami to Key West, and we were landing at night in Key West. Jack Hellewell had the deck, and he brought that ship in.<sup>†</sup> [Chuckle] It was really hairy. I didn’t say anything, I just let him handle it. And my friend said, “I don’t see how you stand aside while those kids are doing that.” He said, “That was really quite close, wasn’t it?” But that’s what it’s all about.

That really should be the mark, in days like peacetime, of a good commanding officer, what he’s done for the junior officers. Has he allowed them to actually learn, so that when war does break out we can have some real faith and confidence that the people in command are where they ought to be. And the peacetime skipper never gets to fight it. By the time the war comes, he’s gone.

We always regretted a little bit that boat itself wasn’t faster on the surface. I had come from the *Clamagore*, and the *Clamagore* could outrun the *Trout* all over the place on the surface. Of course, we were better submerged. I think the ship’s systems were very good. And we were pretty tight. I never had a problem going to 700 feet. I had

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<sup>\*</sup> An “E,” for excellence, is generally awarded to a ship or component of a ship as a result of top performance in competition with other ships during a given time period.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant (junior grade) John S. Hellewell, USN.



never been to 700 feet before, but we came right straight out of the yard and went right down to test depth. We didn't rush down there, but we went down there, tight as a drum.

We'd go down to Guantanamo and act as targets and I would often go to 700 feet at high speed. The ship was really well engineered, I thought. It was a good ship, and it was a good tight ship.

Paul Stillwell: I take it the engineering plant was reliable by then?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was very reliable. We made it unreliable one night, but that wasn't its fault. But the crew had a lot of pride. They were very good at covering up our mistakes and working our way out of problems. I had some engineers that took a lot of pride in the ship.

Had a great pharmacist's mate, which on *Wahoo* we didn't have. One of our great tragedies on *Wahoo* was our pharmacist's mate. [Chuckle] The pharmacist's mate makes a lot of difference. There are the people on the ship, individually who make a world of difference—the yeoman, the pharmacist's mate, and the cook.

I was looking at the menu on the *Trout* one day and decided, "My God, there's 21 meals a week, and 19 of them we serve potatoes." I said there must be something we can serve in place of potatoes: rice, macaroni, noodles. So I started varying the menu. I damned near had a mutiny. [Laughter] American sailors like potatoes. I'm sorry, that's what they want. They want potatoes. We went right back to potatoes; I didn't argue over it.

Paul Stillwell: You said that you and the chief of the boat were of one mind in dealing with the crew. What was that approach?

Admiral Crowe: Well, to begin with, a month after I took over they had a ship's party. It was the first ship's party they had since I'd been there. It was a complete disaster. And we *charged* for it. I called the chief of the boat in and I said, "Why did we charge for this?"

He said, "Well, we needed money to run it."

I said, "We don't have any money?"

He said, "No, we don't have any money."

I said, "Well, sailors aren't going to pay for a ship's party. What are you talking about?"

He and I had a real fight over it, and he said, "Well, I don't know where you're going to get the money."

I said, "Well, I'll worry about getting the money, but we don't do that again."

Well, when Bond became chief of the boat Bond was masterful. He said, "I know how we're going to get the money. We'll set this party for Christmas [or something], and we charge nothing. It's a ship's party and everybody comes, drink and eat all they want and bring their girlfriends, and not cost them a dime."

I said, "Okay, how do you get the money?"

He said, "Well, I'll tell you." And he went down before we got under way; I think we were going to Cuba. And we went to Jamaica a couple times down there; that's the first I had ever been to Jamaica. Also, we hit the Bahamas a lot.

He went ashore and he bought about a dozen cases of Hershey bars, and Milky Ways, and some other popular stuff, I forget which, but he had a whole inventory of this stuff. And he divided it in two: midpoint of the cruise and the end of the cruise. Then he started through the boat and he said, "We're going to have an auction next week, on Friday. But there's only a limited amount of Hersheys," he told the forward torpedo room. "And the guys in the forward engine room are really after it. They're going to get those damn Hersheys." [Laughter] He went through the whole boat, pitting them all against each other. And then they started this damned auction and, you know, half a box of Hersheys would sell for \$80.00. They would get to arguing with each other on the ship's phone about the price. He had the whole crew screaming and hollering at each other, and bidding up, and "Don't let them have it! Get it!" And we made three hundred and some dollars on this auction.

Then we had another auction, and that all went into the ship's party fund. So they got used to them. We would do that every time we got under way.

Paul Stillwell: So the crew was still paying for the ship's party.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, but they didn't know it. [Laughter] They would have a little party after they'd got something, they'd go take their little candy up to the forward torpedo room and they'd all eat it up there, and they wouldn't let anybody else on the ship have it.

Then we had personalities, and of course the wardroom was the butt of everything. One of their main purposes was to drive the wardroom up and then leave them there, and let them buy something, you know, that cost a lot of money. [Laughter] Well, the wardroom knew what they were doing, but we cooperated with that.

Then we had a couple other things he auctioned off. Bond started raising money. And he made it clear it was going into the ship's recreation fund. But he was masterful at getting this money. We never again charged a cent for any ship party, and we had a lot of them. It really worked well.

Paul Stillwell: And that helped morale a lot.

Admiral Crowe: It did. It helped a lot. And then we'd get in these contests with other boats when they were raising money for charity. We won every one of those. He'd go and tell the crew this other boat's pulling up—we just need another 150 and we'll win. I wouldn't take it up until the last minute, so nobody could pass us at the last minute. I'd give 150 in just the last 30 seconds.

We had a bad reputation with some of the other boats because we were so competitive. We were competitive on social drives and everything. We were competitive on everything. Bond and I were in cahoots on that. He was a little stiff-necked. He'd get offended easily when I didn't do what he wanted. He had a lot of pride. But he was an awfully good chief of the boat. I was very fortunate to have him.

And then our wardroom was good. We had a couple of mustangs in the wardroom. Skip Warden. But I had Jack Hellewell. Evan Baker was my engineer.\* John Allen was an expert piano player, a classical piano player. I often wondered how he could ever command a submarine with some of his high thoughts about virginity and piano playing, and so forth. But those kids all excelled. Evan Baker got out of the Navy

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\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Evan S. Baker, USN.

and later became national president of the Navy League. Bill Shaughnessy went on; we'll talk about that some more later. Larry King, I don't know what happened to him very well. I wasn't with him very long.

Of course, I had a personal problem when my mother died while I was on the ship. She acquired leukemia back in Oklahoma. I had a little problem in that she died in Charleston a day or two before we went to Key West. I asked permission to go home. Beshany was my squadron commander, and he didn't like the idea of the exec taking the boat down there. But, finally, after some self-flagellation, I guess, he told me that the exec could take the boat down, so I went home for the funeral. Brought my father back with me and met the boat in Key West, and my dad rode the boat back up. Also, Shirley's father rode the boat one time with me when we went down to Key West.

I had a division commander for a while by the name of Rothamel, whom I saw not too long ago.\* He wasn't very good. Nice man, but I didn't have a lot of regard for him.

But the other skippers down there—I had come competitive competition. Sam Packer had the other fast-attack boat, *Harder*.† Sam was tough. And Matty Matthews had the *Clamagore*.‡ His home was Charleston, and he was a very dear friend of mine, a classmate. He and I had lived in the BOQ together in New London. I was living with him when he got married. I was in his wedding. The fight for the “E” was a hell of a fight, and we won that. And immediately stepped in the pond the next week, but I'll tell you about that later. I found it a very rewarding experience. Grenfell came down and gave us our “E.” That was the only time I'd ever really had anything to do with Grenfell.§ Didn't have very much to do with him then.

My group commander was J. W. Williams, and my squadron commanders were Mort Lytle and then Phil Beshany.\*\* When the boat got in trouble it was Mort Lytle, who lived next door to me in Charleston, whom I always liked very much. I'd met Mort on ComSubLant staff when I was the aide. And then Mort Lytle was married to the widow

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\* Commander William P. Rothamel, USN.

† Lieutenant Commander Samuel H. Packer II, USN.

‡ Lieutenant Commander Howard L. Matthews, Jr., USN.

§ Vice Admiral Elton W. Grenfell, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 2 September 1960 to 1 September 1964.

\*\* Rear Admiral Joseph W. Williams, Jr., USN; Captain Morton H. Lytle, USN.

of famous Navy pilot, O'Hare. He was a classmate of Lytle's, and her husband died and she married Mort Lytle.\* They lived next door to us. And many years later I made a speech out in Walden Park, California, some retirement community out there, and Mort and his wife were in the front row there, sitting there. I hadn't seen them for many years. But I loved Mort Lytle; he was marvelous.

Beshany was my second squadron commander, and I thought he was always eminently fair and easy to get along with, but he was a little distant, and conventional. I remember putting in for graduate school, and Beshany thought that was a terrible idea. We were friendly enough that he saw fit to talk about it a lot. Didn't think I should do it, and thought it was not a good idea, that that would take me out of the mainstream of the Navy.

But there was a good example of a guy that had never *been* in the mainstream of the Navy. He'd been in the mainstream of the submarine force, but what I had seen in the Pentagon he had never seen. Now, he later did. He became 02.† But even then, that's a little late to learn about it, as an admiral. And some of those 02 admirals never really were big names around OpNav. OpNav's like any other organization. You would find out who the shakers are. And there are just some people that had all equal jobs, but some people weren't equal at all.

Well, I applied for graduate training about halfway through my *Trout* tour. The Navy had just the year before come out with a new program for sending people for Ph.Ds in the human sciences—international relations, etc., etc. I missed it the first year; I didn't even apply, because I'd just taken command and didn't want to jeopardize my command. But the second year they came out with the same thing, and I jumped right on it. Despite the fact that Beshany advised me against it, he gave me a very nice recommendation. I applied for it, and I got a terribly interesting letter from BuPers. I've never gotten a letter since then like that, and they don't send letters like this anymore. It was a very simple letter that said, "Reference your application, blah, blah, blah, you have been accepted to

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\* Midshipman Edward H. O'Hare, USN, graduated in the Naval Academy class of 1937. As a lieutenant (j.g.), while flying an F4F fighter from the carrier *Lexington* (CV-2) in February 1942, he was credited with shooting down five Japanese bombers in a brief period and damaging a sixth. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his achievement. He was shot down and killed the night of 27 November 1943, when he was a lieutenant commander. Chicago's O'Hare International Airport is named in his honor.

† Vice Admiral Philip A. Beshany, USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Submarine Warfare), OP-02, from 15 March 1971 to 11 August 1972.

attend graduate school in international relations. It is your responsibility to gain admittance to the school of your choice in the subjects that you're going to study, and when you've got it squared away let us know." That's about all it said. [Chuckle]

They didn't understand what they were doing. And one of the conditions to apply was that you had a master's degree, period. It didn't say a master's degree in what, and that it had anything to do with what you were going to study for a doctor's degree, or where, or anything. It didn't say anything. So I called up BuPers, and I said, "Let me get this straight. I can go to school anyplace I want to?" And they said yes, "If you can get admitted."

I said, "You're not going to tell me where to go to school?"

He said, "We don't give a damn where you go to school." [Laughter] So guess whom I called next?

Paul Stillwell: I don't know.

Admiral Crowe: My father. He said, "Don't go to Harvard." He hated Harvard. [Chuckle] I don't know why. He said, "You can always tell a Harvard man, but you can't tell him much." And, of course, Harvard's what always comes into your mind. He said, "No, don't go to Harvard. It won't fly in Oklahoma." So I thought, Jesus—now, I'd been to graduate school at Stanford, and so I went all through this thinking process. Somebody told me if you want to teach at a place you get your doctor's degree at another place. You don't get it where you want to teach. So I said, "Well, I want to teach at Stanford, so I'd better go on the East Coast."

Also, I could travel. I got some travel orders to visit some places. I got on the train and went up to Yale, and I went up to Princeton. I started down to Duke; I never got there. Where else was involved? But I immediately wrote a letter to Stanford and asked what I had to do, and they said, "You don't have to do anything. Once admitted to the Stanford graduate school you're always admitted. If you want to come here in international relations, or political science, or whatever, we'll admit you."

I thought, “Boy, that’s a nice offer.” Because these other guys were not as amenable to that. And the man at Yale just didn’t understand what the hell I was talking about.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said in your book that he thought maybe you were going to live in your submarine and commute. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: Yes, as if the ship would in the harbor! His name was Dahl, a big name in the political science world, but in civil administration, and, boy, he was naïve about the rest of the world. He really wasn’t interested till he discovered the Navy would pay for it [laughter], and then all of a sudden he got interested. I applied to Yale and was told, well, probably they won’t admit you; they never had anything like this. Well, I did get admitted to Yale. I got back a nice letter saying, “We’ve never had a military student in our political science department, and we find it might be quite challenging.”

But by that time I had actually visited Princeton, and they were ecstatic about it. They had had Army and they’d had Air Force for years. And they had two guys up there, Sprout and Furness, the guy that went to Ohio State.\* Anyway, they wrote about France a lot. They really wanted a Navy man. And, of course, Princeton was a small town and a beautiful campus. I had three small children, and it just seemed to us that living in Princeton was a hell of a lot better than New Haven.

Paul Stillwell: Were you taking leave from the submarine at this point, to visit these schools?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did. I just took about seven or eight days and went up and down the coast, by myself. Then I got, late coming, a letter from Yale saying they’d be happy to admit me. I wrote them back and thanked them and said I’ve already selected Princeton. I got a letter from Stanford saying I’d be all right there. I applied to one other school. I forget what it was.

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\* Dr. Harold Sprout and Dr. Edward Furness.

Anyway, the process I went through there was so uncertain and so ambiguous. It seemed weird to me that the Navy wouldn't help me. So when I got in a position of responsibility we changed all that. The idea that they would allow me to go to school and not interfere in it in any way, or guide it, or throw their prestige behind it, seemed to me to be foolish, because they didn't do that in other disciplines. When I went to Stanford we had a regular agreement with Stanford. The Navy furnished ten students every year, and Stanford expected that and Stanford took the Navy's word for these ten. And here I was explaining Navy policy to each of these schools. They'd never received a word from the Navy or anything. That's the reason Dahl didn't understand what I was talking about.

Paul Stillwell: But the plus side was that that gave you complete freedom.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, it gave me freedom, as long as it worked out that way. But what I was afraid of was I couldn't get in the schools, while if the Navy had been behind it I could have gotten in. But Princeton had one tremendous advantage. You entered as a Ph.D candidate and you came out as a doctor, and we didn't go through that silly master's, where you do the whole bit and then they decide if they're going to let you go on to a doctorate, which is more characteristic, more conventional. But the political science school at Princeton, called the politics department, admitted you as a Ph.D candidate. As you went by the second year they gave you a master's degree, but there wasn't any testing of it or anything. You were in the Ph.D program, and the third year was for your dissertation.

Paul Stillwell: So there was not a separate master's thesis.

Admiral Crowe: No. Nothing. I just acquired a master's degree, but I didn't have to work at it. And that was a big item, because actually the way it was set up, normally you didn't know if you were going to get admitted to the doctor's program until after you got a master's degree. Of course, the master's degree I had previously from Stanford was in education, so it had absolutely nothing to do with what the hell I was getting ready to



study. The Navy finally caught on to that and changed it. [Chuckle] They don't do that anymore.

This was a big test in my life, whether, number one, to do this, and I did it. Well, I'd no more been admitted, and was quite thrilled about it, when this nuclear business came up. My next-door neighbor was Jay Beam, another commander of a submarine.\* I said to Jay, "Well, what's this, a good idea?"

Jay said, "You can go to nuclear school, and you can get command of a nuclear submarine, and you run it on a rock and the Navy will throw you away. You go get a Ph.D, and the Navy can't take it away from you, no matter what they think." And that sort of governed my thinking, and I thought, "Well, I'm not in the nuclear program so I'll probably be leaving the Navy at the best as a captain, and this will give me some edge toward the rest of the world." I sort of adopted a political science attitude toward the world after doing this.

Well, I was about to go to Princeton—I guess it was just a month away—and I got a call from BuPers saying, "Admiral Rickover wants to interview you."

I said, "Oh?"

They said, "Yeah, he has requested that you come for an interview, and that will be next Saturday."

I said, "Well, I'll be back to you."

Then Shirley and I sat down for about an hour and talked, and I said, "I don't think I can go for an interview unless I am prepared to go into the nuclear program. I mean, to go up and go through it all and, if he was kind enough to say, 'We'll accept you,' say 'No thanks, I'm not going to do that.'" I didn't think that was right. I decided that if I went up there, I must be prepared to go nuclear. And by then my thinking was really getting quite fixated by going to school again. I talked to my father. Of course, he thought going to school hands down was the decision. He never hesitated a second.

I was making a speech that weekend, and was playing volleyball and crushed my ankle, so another guy had to make the speech for me and I was lying in bed wrestling with this contest. I finally called BuPers back and said, "I can't go."

"What do you mean, you can't go?"

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\* Lieutenant Commander Jay K. Beam, USN.

I said, "Well, he's invited me for an interview, and I'm not prepared to go in the nuclear program."

Oh, groaning and moaning. This was the submarine detailer I was talking to. He said, "You can't turn this down."

I said, "I said, 'I just don't feel comfortable about going up there unless I'm prepared to go into the program now. If you're going to send me to nuclear school after I get out of this, that would be fine.'"

He thought, oh yeah, I'm sure everybody would agree with that! He thought that was the silliest idea he'd ever heard of. And he said, "You're absolutely sure?"

I said, "I'm absolutely sure. I can't go." So they put a checkmark by my name then. Unresponsive, or whatever. I thought Beshany was going to have a baby. Anyway, I turned it down.

I went to Princeton. I'd been there one year. Summer program had just started. I'd finished my first year. I got another call from BuPers saying Rickover wanted to interview me. I said, "I thought we'd been through this."

He said, "Yeah, we have. But it's a little different this time. Rickover says he will not interview anybody else until you come down here for an interview."

I said, "You can't be serious."

He said, "Well, he's dead serious, and he's really making our life miserable. This isn't a request. This is an order. You're coming down for an interview."

I said, "Well, I'm not so sure I agree or enjoy, or anything else."

He said, "We aren't asking you what you're doing. Be here" on blah, blah, blah, blah.

So I drove down there. My car blew up just outside of Princeton. Had to put it in the garage and catch a bus down. I went down there for an interview, and his assistant that day was Commander Jim Holloway. I went through this little orientation, all demeaning, and finally got in to see Rickover. And, boy, he really ripped me a new one. He didn't like people that had been to graduate school. He didn't like people that were going back to graduate school. He didn't like people that had been aides.

Paul Stillwell: Didn't like people that had said no to him.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he didn't mention that, but that was obviously in the background. And he started questioning me about some of the psychology courses I had taken out in Stanford. The main text was written by a man by the name of Hillenbrand, and he made like he knew something about Hillenbrand. I didn't know if he did or not. He disagreed with Hillenbrand on this or that, and we got in these stupid discussions. He was really quite offensive and abusive, but that didn't bother me too much, because I was not expecting to be selected. I thought this was just a formality to clear the slate.

So he threw me out of the office, and I sat there sucking my thumb for a while, and then he brought me back in the office. What went through his mind I have no idea, what he really was thinking. I just never will know. But he said to me, "If I accept you today are you ready to go to the nuclear program?"

I looked him right in the eye and said, "Admiral, I want the nuclear program, and just as soon as I finish Princeton I'm ready to go." [Laughter]

He got so bloody mad. "What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm very invested in what I'm doing right now. I'm a third of the way through, and I think it would not be in the Navy's best interest or in my best interest to throw that all overboard and launch into something new. But I would be a damn good nuclear submarine officer, I can guarantee you that. And I can pass your course and I can do anything you want me to do, but I have to finish at Princeton first."

He said, "Thank you very much," and threw me out of the office, and he didn't accept me.

I was staying with Jerry Nuss in Washington.\* He was a classmate who was in the nuclear program. I went out and got in the car and drove back to Princeton in a funk all that night. I don't know how I got back. I didn't have my regular car. Anyway, I drove back to Princeton, and I thought it was probably the end of the bloody world. But very soon I was absorbed in what I was doing at Princeton and never gave it another thought.

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\* Commander Jerry J. Nuss, USN.

I assumed that the submarine desk officer would want no more to do with me. Oh, that wasn't true. Hell, they had all kinds of billets they had to fill. But it was well known that I had ripped my jeans with Rickover.

The same day I went through that, guess who was there. Harry Train. He and I were both interviewed, and both turned down. Now, he claims today that he was turned down by design, that he wanted to be turned down.\*

Paul Stillwell: Yes, he does say that.

Admiral Crowe: I wonder if it's true, because it didn't come through that day. But I don't know. I don't know Harry that well. It's funny, Harry and I didn't dislike each other, but we never could strike up a real close friendship. Harry made admiral before I did. We'll talk about that later. But, anyway, he and I were turned down the same day. Now, as far as I knew, I didn't know why he was turned down, because I assumed Harry Train would be an ideal candidate.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he said that he went the Admiral Smedberg, who was chief of Naval personnel, and said he did not want to be in the program, and asked Smedberg not to issue orders to the nuclear power program.† So Admiral Smedberg told Rickover that he would not order him to it.

Admiral Crowe: Well, why in the hell did he interview him?

Paul Stillwell: He didn't mention being interviewed.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, he went all through the interview. We both sat out there glaring at each other, wondering what the hell was going on in there. And I remember Holloway's role that day. He didn't do anything or say anything. I don't even think Admiral

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\* See the Naval Institute oral history of Admiral Harry D. Train II, USN (Ret.).

† Vice Admiral William R. Smedberg III, USN, served as Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel from 12 February 1960 to 11 February 1964. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

Holloway remembers me, because he and I have now become very friendly and he's never brought it up. But, anyway, he sat in on my interview.

That was my sole exposure to Rickover and his program. While I was devastated that day, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. If I had gotten into that program I'd have never been heard from again, and a lot of my life would have been miserable, studying mathematics down in the middle of Florida, or wherever they were studying it. It was the last thing in the world I was interested in.

Paul Stillwell: You never know what's down the road you didn't take.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. I had met Rickover before, when I was aide to SubLant. [Chuckle]. He came in from the admiral's office one day and walked into mine and said, "I want to use your goddamn telephone."

"Well, yes sir, admiral. Right there." And that's all he said to me. It's like Jack Aubrey and Nelson.\* "I asked, 'Pass the salt,' once." Rickover wanted to use the goddamn telephone. [Laughter] That's the only other time I ever met him.

I was told later that he wanted to admit me to the damned program, but he just couldn't take what I said.

Paul Stillwell: Your condition.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He just couldn't handle that.

I think we'd better secure, Paul. (End of Interview 10)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, we're back together again in the new year. Happy New Year, and we'll move forward.

Admiral Crowe: Well, thank you, Paul.

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\* John Aubrey is a fictional character in a series of novels by author Patrick O'Brian. They deal with the Royal Navy in the Napoleonic era. Lord Horatio Nelson was an actual officer in the Royal Navy of the period.

Paul Stillwell: We were talking about your command of *Trout* last time, and you discussed the yard period. Could you talk, please, about the refresher training for the crew, coming out of the yard?

Admiral Crowe: It was pretty conventional. There wasn't anything unusual about it. We just were truly starting from scratch. We just started over in building the crew and some morale, and so forth. I think I mentioned that I had some problems with my initial chief of the boat, that didn't seem too enthusiastic or energetic to me.

Paul Stillwell: You did. Well, the only one you mentioned specifically was the issue of the crew having to pay for ship's parties.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's the first flag that came up.

Paul Stillwell: Were there other symptoms?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think it was throughout the boat. It was running pretty well, but there wasn't any real tone or spirit of trying to be exceptional or trying to rise above the norm. Certainly as the commanding officer that was the main challenge I had. We were very well served. I had an exec who was brilliant.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned that Bill Shaughnessy really took the lead early when you were in command.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and he sort of furnished the continuity. He had an exceptional mind. But he wasn't very attuned to personnel matters, except as part of the administration, what you do to keep the paperwork going, and so forth. But I always felt that the first six months on the boat, while at times it was a little discouraging, that the whole problem was trying to energize the crew and deliver a different kind of spirit and, first of all, get us in the race for the "E." That was about the only thing we had working down in Charleston. We weren't involved in many other things. There weren't many

patrols going into the Soviet area from Charleston. We did deploy ships on a regular basis to the Caribbean and to the south, and occasionally to the Med. But *Trout* wasn't scheduled for much of that, or at least not to the Mediterranean.

I felt I always was disappointed in my operations schedule, that we spent a lot of time in Guantánamo. In the process we visited Jamaica, and then we went to the Bahamas occasionally, and then we spent some time operating out of Key West. And we participated in several exercises off the coast. But that was about it. We didn't have an exciting deployment to look forward to. When I was in the Pacific, you could always set the date of when you deploy as that's when you really aimed at. You had a full complement, and you wanted everything to be as on track as possible at the day you deployed. We really didn't have that goal to look for.

One cruise that went out of Charleston, which everybody was anxious to get, was the annual circumnavigation of South America. That wasn't just a submarine business, but one submarine went with the group down there.

Paul Stillwell: The UNITAS exercise?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, the UNITAS. *Clamagore* went that year. My friend Matty Matthews had the *Clamagore*. That was the most exciting regular cruise that took place out of Charleston every year.

Paul Stillwell: Your book says you went to Halifax.

Admiral Crowe: To Halifax?

Paul Stillwell: It said that your travels ranged from the Caribbean to Halifax.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that may be true, but I never got in Halifax. [Laughter] I don't think I've ever been to Halifax. Always wanted to go. When I was the aide to Admiral Murray I got to Argentia in the winter, in the depth of the winter. God Almighty, that

was as much winter as I ever wanted to see. But I always thought it would be interesting to go to Halifax.

Paul Stillwell: That was my first liberty port when I was a seaman apprentice.

Admiral Crowe: Was it really? Well, was it good liberty?

Paul Stillwell: Yes, it was. And it was my first time on board ship, too, and we'd been doing a lot of rolling, and when I got on land I was still bobbing back and forth.

Admiral Crowe: That's pretty common, yes.

Paul Stillwell: Right. Well, how would you describe the mission of the *Trout* during that period?

Admiral Crowe: Well, they had already done, before I came aboard, a series of trips to Key West, where they participated in a regimen of depth charging, to see how the ship stood up under depth charging at various depths. So we went down to Key West to do some of that, and some pretty high-powered training. Then we went to Guantánamo and went through training, about two weeks, which I had never done on a submarine. I knew that they do that down there. Probably the most rigorous antisubmarine effort I faced the whole time I was on the *Trout* was down at Guantánamo. We were really assigned training for the surface ships, but it was our training too. We spent so much of that deployment that way. We didn't spend long periods at sea; we went out every day. But the day we went out, man, we went to test depth and spent the week at test depth and at high speed, which was sort of infrequent normally. You didn't do that every day, but in Guantánamo we did. We did it every day.

Paul Stillwell: How successful were you in evading detection?



Admiral Crowe: Well, it was mixed. I never felt that we were inferior, because with the new test depth we could pretty well get, one way or another, to a depth that was difficult for us to be detected, no matter what the circumstances that day were. But some days they would limit us on depth, for the very reason that when we went down deeper they had trouble locating us. But we had enough water to work with, 700 feet to the surface, that you could find a pretty comfortable layer somewhere.\*

Paul Stillwell: The thermocline.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, particularly in Guantánamo, where you've got a lot of cool water and hot air. But we didn't have trouble breaking contact. That was due to our speed. Of course, the catch in all that was that we didn't—which we didn't do there—was after you spent two or three hours doing that we'd surface and go home, while in the real world, after you've been up to speed for a great deal of two or three hours, the real world is you're out of juice.

Paul Stillwell: You've chewed down the battery.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Like when we got caught off Vladivostok that was our problem. We broke contact, but we were still there. We had not cleared the area. And, as you remember, we lost a screw and we were out of battery power. But they were searching for us all over the ocean. The whole fleet was out there.

Paul Stillwell: This was when you were in the *Wahoo*.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. So the result of high speed is just great, but on a diesel submarine your problems just start when you've been doing that.

Paul Stillwell: Were there specific tactics or doctrine for evasive maneuvers?

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\* Finding a thermocline is useful in enabling a submarine to avoid sonar detection, because a ship may encounter a reception problem when the sound signal hits a layer of water between temperatures that are markedly different.

Admiral Crowe: There was a lot written on it, and in PCO school they taught some things that had worked. But I don't think the doctrine was very specific, and the fact was that every skipper ignored the doctrine and looked for what worked for him. It was sort of like I discovered when I was Chairman. All these war plans we have, every major commander is looking at what he's really going to do [chuckle], no matter what the war plans say. And that's the way it was with the skippers. And that was the beauty of being in Guantánamo. We found some things that worked and some things that didn't work. Once you had some things that worked pretty well, that began to determine your own tactical approach.

We were still in an era when the nukes were coming in, but they didn't dominate everything. There were just a few of them around, and they were in great demand, so we were essentially still dealing with the same problem of World War II submarines, with the exception of the snorkel. That's what we did on *Wahoo*. We finally got our snorkel up right in the middle of the whole bloody ocean and snorkeled for an hour.

Paul Stillwell: What tactics did you find worked, to get away in those situations.

Admiral Crowe: Well, the first thing I found was to go immediately to speed. If they contacted you, not to say, "Well, we'll fool them here, we'll deceive them, and we'll crawl around, or we'll stop, or we'll just gently drift down in depth, or something." I didn't find that ever worked. Once they had contact on you, you had to break it, because they were good enough that they could hang on pretty well. Our first thing we did was immediately, when we felt they were centering on us, is we picked a depth, whatever we thought was best, and we went to speed and did a lot of full-rudder turns, and tried to kick up a lot of cavitation.\* We were going to cavitate at that speed no matter what. Although we were told to worry about cavitation, we didn't much then. And then after you had four or five really strong turns, in the middle of it to try and go under it, and then slow

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\* Cavitation is a disturbance in the water created by the rotation of a propeller. It produces a sound that can be detected by sonar.

down and try and go away. That worked pretty well, when we had enough depth to play with.

Paul Stillwell: Was there enough knowledge of Soviet ASW tactics that those could be practiced by the U.S. surface ships?

Admiral Crowe: I don't know that we knew that much. We always felt in our own minds that the Soviet submarines were very noisy, much noisier than they gave themselves credit for, and that if they couldn't follow them one way, why, they could listen and they'd be making noise some way. They just didn't have the discipline in their regime to cut down noise on the ship. At least that was our opinion. Whether it was true or not I don't know. But the submarine force had pretty good luck surfacing Soviet submarines when they actually had the opportunity to try it. Of course, they surfaced some of ours.

Paul Stillwell: Did you work against P2Vs at all?\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did. We worked against a lot of them. I never felt that sonobuoys were much of a problem, although the proponents insisted they were. But our experience was that they weren't very good with it.

Paul Stillwell: How could you ascertain that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we would have exercises with them on it. Of course, the *Trout* was, while it wasn't nuclear, it was a new submarine. It was smaller, and it was tighter, and our maneuvering was better, and we had better speed. It was a pretty good little ship for breaking contact and avoiding contact. Of course, when you were approaching, why, you, as much as it would be possible—it wasn't always possible—but as much as it would be possible was to keep your bow right at them, with the lowest cross-section you could manage. The *Trout* had a very little cross-section.

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\* The Lockheed P2V Neptune was a land-based patrol plane

It was a great ship underwater. It was sort of spry and reacted quickly. You could throw the rudder over on that thing and spin on a dime. We could undercut any turning circle of a surface ship. We all believed in our hearts that in real war we'd get a chance to come up in the middle of one of those and pop somebody. Ned Beach was preaching that very strongly when he had *Amberjack*. That was not really encouraged by the higher command, but we were all familiar with it.

Paul Stillwell: Was that seen as too foolhardy?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that was seen as pretty—and, of course, the real problem was in peacetime training it could go wrong, and when it went wrong it really was hazardous. Remember we lost the *Stickleback* out in Pearl Harbor when I was out there in *Wahoo*, and everybody was very conscious of that.

Paul Stillwell: Did you serve as a target for hunter-killer submarines?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did.

Paul Stillwell: How did those go?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we did that on exercises. We did fine in that, except we had trouble with the nukes. One big exercise I was in, there were two nukes in the exercise. One was commanded by Al Whittle.\* I don't remember the name of it, but I remember the skipper. Really, the thrust of the exercise was we would try and transit from one post to another post and avoid being picked up by the Russians, and the nukes would play in the screen we had to go through to get there. This all was dictated by our strategy, going up to the G-I barrier, or straight up there in case of war.† The thrust of the exercise was: Can we get up in there or not, without incident?

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\* Commander Alfred J. Whittle, Jr., USN, was then commanding officer of the USS *Seawolf* (SSN-575).

† G-I – Greenland-Iceland.

We did quite a few things. We sort of enjoyed those exercises, because we could avoid pretty well. But, again, our number-one weakness should show up. We had to charge the batteries, and we never got caught when we hadn't. One day when we got caught we had just finished charging. We had actually done everything right. We had finished charging, and we had gone back down and we had radically changed course, but Al had us. He had heard us charging from a distance. We didn't know he was there, of course, and he followed all those maneuverings and then popped us within about 45 minutes after we had finished charging.

Paul Stillwell: Well, some of those early nukes were fairly noisy, but he could lie still and wait.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He was in a sort of a barrier. He was not transiting or anything. Also, we weren't quite used to their noisiness then. We didn't have the best sonar in the world on the *Trout*. We had some good stuff, but not like they have now. On that exercise, I was trying to think how many times we got detected. I think that was the only time we got sunk. We had another detection, but when we communicated what we were doing, why, he had all our stuff wrong.

We went through about 1,200 miles of ocean, and then we took a couple of days, or one day, and then went back. We had a problem. I was trying to think what it was. Something we had to fix in the engine room where we needed to surface and needed lots of air. So we actually surfaced and changed the number on our submarine. The crew thought that was great fun. We rushed out there and plastered a new number on it.

Paul Stillwell: With paintbrushes?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, with paper and paintbrushes, and so forth, and so forth, and then sat on the surface for a while while we repaired what we had to repair. It never fooled anybody, because they didn't detect us, but we thought sure, sitting on the surface, somebody would find us. So we just changed our number to throw the whole thing into

confusion. [Chuckle] We thought it would be great fun when they tried to identify a submarine that didn't exist.

Paul Stillwell: Right.

Admiral Crowe: I don't think my division commander, Rothamel, would have appreciated that very much. He was really conventional. He had an original thought once, and he didn't like it, so he never had another one. [Laughter]

But we did win the "E" after my first year. At the end of the year they had a series of exercises in the DivCom rode for ten days, something like that, and made a trip with us to Key West and back, exercising all the time with hypothetical problems. And we won the "E," which annoyed the hell out of the other skippers, because they didn't feel that class of boats were—they were usually worrying about their engines or something instead of—and Matty had the *Clamagore* and he was upset. But, in any event, we won the "E" and what a little ceremony was associated with that.

And, Lord, within the month we were going to make a trip to Key West, and I had a young man on watch; I don't know if I used his name in the book or not. We flooded an engine room in the middle of the night.

Paul Stillwell: No, I didn't find that in the book.

Admiral Crowe: I probably didn't deal with it in the book. They were charging batteries and not using that engine room, and he didn't take the trip through the boat that he should have. It wasn't a precipitous; it wasn't something that happened quickly. It happened very gradually. And the water got almost up to the floor plates when they discovered it. So by the time I came to work that day, why, they had gotten the water out, but they had flooded two generators. So there we were. We had a big crisis, and I think this happened two or three days before we were to leave for Key West.

Paul Stillwell: This was in Charleston?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. The enginemen and the electricians said, “We can fix this thing. It’s not a problem. We can dry that generator out. But we’ll need a little time.” And the big question was whether to tell the command we had done it, or try and fix it all within the confines of the boat. I didn’t feel real comfortable doing that, so I went up to see my squadron commander, Lytle, and told him what had happened. I told him that we could get one generator back on the line before we left. And that we would have the other one on the line before we got to Key West, and that we could handle it within the boat. I was interested in what his reaction was. He was very good. He said, “Well, if you can handle it yourself, that’s terrific, and we won’t make an issue out of it or anything. Fix it and go down there and do your commitments. But if you’re going to miss your commitments, then you’ve got to let me know and then we will have to tell somebody about it.”

Paul Stillwell: That was a fair response.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. I was quite upset with my duty officer and that we would have this happen right after the “E” competition. Lytle said, “Well, just look at it this way. You won an ‘E.’ That means you’ve got a good boat. Now prove it.” And we did. That’s exactly what we did. The crew went to work on the first generator. Nobody went home. They threw it apart and dried it out and put it back together again, and then all the way to Key West they were working on the other one. And by the time we got to Key West we were ready to go. But that was the biggest crisis of the entire time I was on the *Trout*. And that was personnel error, just plain, bloody personnel error that we let that happen.

That young man—I can’t remember his name—was a very fine guy but his heart was not in what we were doing. I didn’t take a lot of disciplinary action. I didn’t give him a very good fitness report, but I kept him on the boat. But he soon after that left the Navy and became a minister. That’s what he really wanted to do. And I thought, “Well, the world’s probably better off, because he wasn’t that energized by the Navy.” But he did have strong leanings toward the ministry and then went back to the seminary and became a minister.

On the ship I had some really unusual people in the wardroom, one of whom—Evan Baker?<sup>\*</sup> Mean anything to you?

Paul Stillwell: Not off the top of my head.

Admiral Crowe: He was the president of the Navy League for a couple of years.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Oh, yes. You mentioned him before.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, after he left the Navy. He was the most rambunctious of all my officers. He was full of passion and always had a solution to every problem and was quite noisy, but very good. He was a competent officer and very motivated. He got out of the Navy because he was not accepted for the nuclear program. And I think he read the tea leaves right. He went to work for a couple of defense contractors, and then somehow or other got mixed up in the Navy League in a big way and ended up as the national president of the organization. And when I was, I think, 06 or something I used to hear from Evan a lot. I would go to his meetings and so forth whenever they were there. I've never been terribly enthusiastic about the Navy League, but I know they get pretty worked up over it. But it seems to me they never did that much for the Navy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, there's a big social aspect to it.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, there are tremendous social group. As Jim Griffin, who's a classmate of mine, used to say, "It's just a fraternity of guys that were in the Navy once, and all they want to do now is get together and talk about it."<sup>‡</sup> [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Or maybe people who wish they'd been in the Navy.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, or something like that.

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<sup>\*</sup> Lieutenant (junior grade) Evan S. Baker, USN.

<sup>†</sup> Evan Baker was National President, Navy League of United States, 1993-1995.

<sup>‡</sup> Commander James Walter Griffin, USN (Ret.).



Paul Stillwell: What would be examples of Baker's rambunctiousness?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was very loud, and also when he had an idea he was very persuaded that it was the idea we should follow. So I never had any qualms that they were blindly following me, because if I asked for advice old Baker would really give it to me. [Laughter] He had an idea on every subject, and he didn't mind telling me I was wrong.

We had John Allen on there, who went to the nuclear submarine business and later had command of a nuclear submarine. I saw his name the other day in *Shipmate* somewhere. He retired from the Navy as a captain. A fellow by the name of Hellewell, who did the same thing, was in the wardroom. John Allen was a fantastic piano player, I remember that. I mean, he could play classical piano as well as just normal stuff. But otherwise I had one or two mustangs in the wardroom, and then I had a man by the name of King who relieved Bill Shaughnessy as exec.\*

The wardroom was pretty good. But that's the only time that I ever felt I'd been let down, was on the flooding of that engine room. And that was just a sheer, I'm convinced, a sheer matter—and I'd gone through it myself. They just didn't tour the boat as much as they should have. They were stunned when they discovered the water was there.

Paul Stillwell: Did you practice management by walking around just to keep in touch with the crew?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I was always in touch with the crew. We had a phone link in the crew's mess, I used to lie in my bunk and listen to the conversations back in the crew's mess. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: What did they say?

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\* Lieutenant Commander Robert A. King, USN.

Admiral Crowe: Well, they had views on everything. One day they had an argument over cribbage, and I couldn't tell exactly what was going on. All I heard was the argument. And he said, "You can't do that." And the guy said, "Well, they do it in the wardroom." And he said, "Yeah, them bastards are gentlemen, but *you* can't do it." [Laughter]

I had good relations with the crew. I always have. I get along with submarine crews. It's curious, most of the names I remember on the crew were on my first submarine, where I really did have a lot of contact with them.

We brought a kid aboard by the name of Evers, who had been thrown off another submarine. I talked to the skipper of the other submarine and he said, "This guy's not worth a damn. We can't get him to do anything, and he's sullen," and he does this and he does that. Well, he was an engineman, and we needed an engineman. We were getting ready to go and we had to have one, so I asked to see him. The guy came on, and he had sort of a defiant look on his face. If I didn't take him they were going to throw him out of the submarine force. I asked him if he could work for us, if he'd do what he was supposed to do. And asked him if he wanted to remain in the submarine force, and he said he did. I said, "Well, how badly do you want to do it? Are you willing to try and shape up?"

He said, "Yeah, I think I am. If you treat me right I'll do what I've got to do."

He turned out to be terrific. We took him and we treated him right. The chief of the boat was in on all this. He and I had talked about this particular guy before, but we talked about treating him right too. We just didn't watch him all the time; we tried to make him part of what was going on there, and he worked out fine.

I took two or three people like that on the boat, and every one of them paid off. I never was double-crossed. But I told you about the selling candy and so forth.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: That was one of the biggest items in the whole ship. Not that the candy mattered so much, but the gang in the forward torpedo room and the guys in the engine room and the guys in communications, and there was a healthy dispute and contest

between all of those gangs, which the chief of the boat was constantly fostering. I was amazed how well that worked. They were always kidding each other, and they were always going to win this or win that. And it not only worked on candy. When we had fund drives the crew made a decision that we would win all the fund drives. And they would—the forward torpedo room would give more money than the guys back in the after battery, and so forth, and so forth, and then we would win it. And then, boy, the crew would—we'd buy a keg of beer and go over to the baseball field for the afternoon because they'd won it. They took great pride in that.

Now, my wardroom was sort of, they weren't sure this was all a good idea, the chief of the boat and I doing all these things. They were college kids and it seemed a little immature to them. The chief of the boat and I decided we would call ourselves "The *Trout* Tigers," and I used that term a lot talking to the crew, about tigers. Well, that just sickened some of the kids in the wardroom. "What are we doing that for?" And, "That's sort of childish." [Chuckle] Well, it *was* sort of childish. So what? What matters is, does it work? And it did, it worked well.

They would fight over the crew. Nobody'd say anything about the *Trout*. They would rise to the bait right away. So I enjoyed that part of it. As a matter of fact, I probably enjoyed that more than anything else on that tour, because we were not deployed. I've always felt deprived because we didn't deploy when I was on the ship. I wanted to deploy in the worst way.

Paul Stillwell: And you said in the book that there weren't that many intellectual challenges either.

Admiral Crowe: No. After a while you looked for stuff to think about. I think I did say this in the book—that the biggest problem was distinguishing between officers, because they all understood the boat and they could understand piping systems, and when you close this valve so-and-so happens. But you end up making fitness reports on who has the cleanest fingernails. [Laughter]

One of the kids I had was Chris Brown.\* He was very bright, but he didn't have a feel for men, and he wasn't a very good ship handler. Well, I felt, now, Brown's got a real good mind, and yet he's not a very good ship handler. You don't grade him down, because ship handling's—so what? You want to save his mind for the Navy. On the other hand, the strong tendency when you're looking for distinctions is that, well, he didn't handle the ship as well as some of these other guys did, but he had a better mind than they did. He went on into the nuclear program.

I had the same problem on the *Wahoo*. We had some real hotshots on the *Wahoo* who had stood number one in sub school, and so forth, but distinguishing between them was very, very difficult. You finally sort of decide, well, if a guy should be saved for the Navy, why, you give him all a good, whatever.

Paul Stillwell: How much opportunity did the JOs get to fire torpedoes and make approaches?

Admiral Crowe: When I was the skipper we did a lot of it. I let them do everything, because I really felt strongly about that. I sort of felt that by the time the skipper comes there he isn't going to fight a war. If we go to war, why, by the time he gets out there he'll be gone. But he's got to make sure these other people can fight a war. But the pressures for the charts to look good were so great.

But I learned that from Griffiths. Chuck didn't worry about how many hits we had on the division commander's graph. He let everybody fire torpedoes. And, of course, that's a big thrill, to fire a torpedo when you're a junior officer, actually make an approach and try and hit somebody with that. Theoretically, you have to do that before you can qualify, but not everybody got the opportunity. Because like when I was on *Clamagore*, George Morin was scared to death we'd miss something, so he made sure, if he could, that we didn't miss, no matter who was making the approach. And he didn't like letting a junior officer land without a lot of guidance. He and I had an argument over it. He said, "Well, my theory is that if you never let them make a mistake, then that

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\* Lieutenant Christopher H. Brown, USN.

teaches them what's right." Well, I think that's dead wrong. You remember your mistakes a lot better than you remember doing things right. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: There was never again a lapse on sounding and security after that engine room flooded.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. That's absolutely right. Boy, that that pulled everybody up by a wedgie. No, I'm a big believer in letting people make mistakes.

I remember this kid that had the watch that night, one time in Guantánamo he made a landing, and I think it was a 150-degree turn to come around into the pier, and he was clearly not going to make it. I mean, we were coming around, and by the time he got around he was going to overshoot the pier something fierce. And I just let him do it. He got around, and the pier was over there and he was over here [chuckle], and it occurred to him that he hadn't done it right. Now, in Guantánamo you had a lot of water to play with. It's not like the river in New London. We missed that thing, and I said, "What are you going to do now?"

He said, "Well, I'm going to back out of here and do it again." Well, you could do that, but in New London you couldn't do that. So he messed around for a few minutes and finally got it back into some kind of shape and we finally got alongside.

But my exec thought, well, you shouldn't have let him do that, and I said, "Why not? We've got a lot of time. There's nothing going on down here, and he'll never forget that landing." [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Right. Did you have hot wash-ups after these exercises?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, we did. Had fierce arguments. In fact, I can remember—of course, you always know the class ahead of you, and so forth, and there was a guy in the class, Harvey Lyon.\* That name mean anything to you?

Paul Stillwell: Yes, indeed. He was a real stickler.

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\* Lieutenant Commander Harvey E. Lyon, USN.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was a piece of work. Well, where were we? I can remember the exact instant where I had a problem with him, but I can't remember the overall context. It was a wash-up of a fleet exercise, and we had just been to the meeting with the surface people, and several arguments had busted out. And Harvey Lyon was big in arguments. If there was an argument around, he was usually in it. And he and I rode in the car back to the ships together. Of course, he was senior to me, and he made a lot out of seniority. He started telling me that those wash-ups were really great, because you brought everybody together and you could get everybody's opinion, and so forth. And he said, "But the biggest problem is they really don't understand that the submarine guys are always right and they're wrong." [Laughter]

And I thought, "Oh, is that right, Harvey?"

He really believed that. He said, "They just have got to get around to our way of thinking, because they don't understand what the problem's all about." He was so persuaded that everything he did was right. He sounded like George Bush a little bit. But that was Harvey.

And Harvey had a wife. Did you know Marge?

Paul Stillwell: I didn't know her, but I heard about her.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, God Almighty. Marge was Harvey squared.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I heard she had a great sense of humor.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, she did. She had a great sense of humor. He didn't, but she did. But, oh man, she was a cannon. But she worked. She managed a lumberyard. I think it was a family business or something like that, up in New London, and she made her own way in the business world. And I could see where she was a tough businesswoman. But I often wondered what their pillow talk was like. [Chuckle]. God, they must have fought all the time, because they both had *strong* opinions.

Paul Stillwell: I talked to Admiral Kelso, who served under Lyon in the *Pollack*, and he said they were teasing Mrs. Lyon and said, “All you have to do is live with him; we have to work for him.”\* [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: You know, let’s face it. I really didn’t like Harvey because of that. In every discussion it had to go his way or he was irritated. And it sort of upset me that we could have an organization that would push a guy like that up to the top. Now, there’s a legitimate line of thought that that’s the way senior officers should be. Nobody else is thinking but them. But I don’t subscribe to it.

Paul Stillwell: And that would be the kind that would give junior officers less opportunity.

Admiral Crowe: That’s exactly right. But Harvey was so persuaded of his righteousness. I met a lot of people like that, but I don’t know that I ever met anybody that was quite as sold on it as Harvey was. [Chuckle] I think it would be scary if you did work for him. I never worked for him, but my opinion was, boy, if you really took issue with him he’d crush you. That was just speculation.

Paul Stillwell: You don’t get the other viewpoints that might help you if you have that kind of approach.

Admiral Crowe: That’s right. Now, on a submarine maybe it isn’t that important. But that’s the trouble with the submarine force when it gets to senior ranks. The skipper on a submarine can learn everything that’s going on in the boat, pretty well. But there are some jobs in the Navy, in the world, that you just can’t do that. I remember Hal Shear, who was the VCNO, and I relieved him in Italy—the big bear.† Hal Shear never got over being a submarine skipper, and when he became VCNO—now, I’m telling you, this is

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\* See the Naval Institute oral history of Admiral Frank B. Kelso II, USN.

† Admiral Harold E. Shear, USN, served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from June 1975 to July 1977 and as Commander in Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe from July 1977 to May 1980. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

the truth—his desk was full of stuff and he ran out of room there, and he started putting piles of paper against the wall, on the floor, all around the office, that he felt he should read before they went any further, and know what was in that stuff. Well, he was getting further and further behind, and the piles kept growing, going around the office. When I relieved him in Italy, he had one room in the house that was his office at home. He wouldn't let the stewards go in there. And when they left, to retire, 21 briefcases came out of there full of papers of some kind or other. I don't know what they were, but he pulled 21 briefcases out and took them home. [Chuckle] He just couldn't grasp that there were things going to go on that he couldn't get his own handle around, as VCNO, and delegating was terribly hard for him, terribly hard.

Now, you take a guy that's been a carrier skipper, he's very used to the fact that you've got to depend on other people.

Paul Stillwell: He has no choice.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. In that whole big ship, 85% of it he never knows a goddamn thing about, but that's the way it is. And they fitted into large staffs and so forth very easily, but submariners had a lot of trouble with that, going from small to big.

Paul Stillwell: There's one story that might illustrate that. This Captain Brown, who ran the *Missouri* aground, was used to running things himself in a submarine.\*

Admiral Crowe: Is that right? I didn't even know he was a submariner.

Paul Stillwell: Had to rely on others when he had that big a ship.

Admiral Crowe: In fact, something I saw last night surprised me. I guess I knew it, but I'd forgotten it. Denfeld was a submariner.\*

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\* The battleship *Missouri* (BB-63) ran aground near Norfolk, Virginia, on 17 January 1950. Her commanding officer, Captain William D. Brown, USN, was relieved on 3 February 1950 by Captain Harold Page Smith, USN, a previous skipper. For Smith's recollections of the event, see "The Value of Confidence," *Naval History*, Fall 1991, page 36.



Paul Stillwell: I had forgotten that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he's in a picture in there with dolphins on, and I had forgotten it. I didn't think we'd ever had a CNO that had been a submariner. Well, of course, that's not true. Nimitz was CNO, and Nimitz had been in submarines for a while.<sup>†</sup> But I had forgotten Denfeld was a submariner. Of course, King was too, in a sense.<sup>‡</sup> It's sort of odd the way King did things. It's a great picture in there of Spruance, King, the whole crowd.<sup>§</sup> Nimitz. I was trying to think of who else. Oh, and Cooke. We talked about Cooke the other day.<sup>\*\*</sup> I always revered Cooke for that submarine accident.

Paul Stillwell: The *S-5*. I read that book after you told me about that incident.<sup>††</sup>

Admiral Crowe: I just can't believe that. What a man with a real taste for life. He was going to survive!

Paul Stillwell: Yes. Did you have disciplinary problems with the crew in that boat?

Admiral Crowe: I had one. They had a fight in the barracks ashore one night, and one of my men clobbered another one with a beer bottle. It really hurt him. That was the major problem I had. I had some problems, both on the *Wahoo* and on the *Trout*, not a lot, but I had a man on the *Wahoo* and then again—it was almost a copy of the case—a guy on the

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\* Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 15 December 1947 to 2 November 1949.

† Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 15 December 1945 to 15 December 1947.

‡ Admiral Ernest J. King, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 26 March 1942 to 15 December 1945; he was promoted to the rank of fleet admiral in December 1944.

§ Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN, served as president of the Naval War College from 1 March 1946 to 1 July 1948.

\*\* Vice Admiral Charles M. Cooke, USN, served as Commander Seventh Fleet from 2 October 1946 to 28 February 1948. During World War II he was a top planner on the staff of Admiral Ernest J. King.

†† As a lieutenant commander Cooke was the first commanding officer of the submarine *S-5* (SS-110). During trials off the Delaware Capes on 30 August 1920 she took on water so that her bow settled to the bottom. Blowing ballast raised her stern so that she was spotted by merchant ships. The crew of the steamship *General Goethals* cut a hole in the submarine's hull and rescued the crew. For details see A. J. Hill, *Under Pressure: the Final Voyage of the Submarine S-5* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

*Trout* who, every time we left, his wife maxed out their credit cards, and he had these terrible debt problems. We just couldn't get a handle on it, because she absolutely refused to be controlled, and we had to get them both out of the submarine force. We just tried to manage the problem and just couldn't get our arms around it.

Now, when I was on *Wahoo* in Hawaii I had a man who came to me one day and said that he and his wife, both very young, had gotten mixed up one night in a wife-swapping thing. It was a group in enlisted housing that they got mixed up with and evidently had participated in it for a few weeks. And then had a meeting among themselves and said, "You know, we just can't do this, we just shouldn't be doing this, so let's quit." He went to one of the other people it involved and said, "My wife and I are not going to do it anymore."

The guy said, "You have to," and threatened his life if he withdrew from this thing.

So the next day he came right in to see me, first thing in the morning, and said, "What am I going to do?" We transferred him out of there in two days, off the island. He was a good kid. He was an electronics technician, and smart as hell, but got screwed up. In any event, the same thing happened on *Trout*. That stuff was much more prevalent than I thought it was. But the fact that people had not only participated in it but get so involved and engaged that they want to threaten other people over it was really shocking. With the one on *Trout* we didn't stay involved in it, but once we got that thing taken care of I turned it over to the Naval Investigative Service and they went after it. I don't know what happened.

Paul Stillwell: I wonder what would motivate something like that. Boredom? Or curiosity?

Admiral Crowe: I guess, I don't know. People are people. People are funny. As I tell my class, the downside of democracy is that it's run by people. [Laughter] Anything run by people is going to have a problem connected with it.

Paul Stillwell: What was the outcome of the case in which the sailor beat up another one with a beer bottle?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we actually took him to court-martial, and he got convicted, but he didn't go to prison. I forget what sentence he got, but he left the boats. That was another thing about the submarine force. We didn't solve all the Navy's problems, we just sort of threw them back in the pond, and somebody else had a problem. [Chuckle] Instead of completely handling the problem, our method was to send them back to the surface Navy, and that didn't seem to me to be totally fair.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and that happened later a lot with drug cases that got dumped in this pool.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I had a case in the White House when, earlier, a kid came to me, a black kid, and he had bought a car, and in order to charge him more interest the small loan law—I don't remember all the details, but they could loan up to at a very high rate of interest, so they gave him two loans, both under \$1,000. He owned the car a few months and very shortly couldn't make the payments. So they threatened him and said they were going to do this and do that. I was explaining to the kid what the mortgage could do and couldn't do, and I said, "They're going to take your car."

He said, "Well, they can have it. I don't care. It's not that good a car now, and they can have the car."

I said, "But that won't satisfy this loan, and they're going to take your household furniture."

The kid looked at me and said, "No, they won't take that."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He says, "I owe Hecht Company for that. Hecht Company ain't going to let them take that." [Laughter] Well, of course, working for the White House, we did the same thing. We just got rid of the kid back into the regular Navy and let them handle that. Boy, the White House didn't fool around. If anybody stepped on his crank, he was gone in a matter of hours.

But the fact of the matter is that the submarine force was—by Navy standards the disciplinary problems were very small.

Paul Stillwell: There was also a tradition in that era that things were solved at the chief petty officer level or the leading petty officer level.

Admiral Crowe: Well, there was in World War II, but that sort of began to disappear by the time I came into the Navy. Slade Cutter didn't take him out behind the garage and challenge him or anything. There wasn't much of that going on when I was coming up.

Paul Stillwell: Well, but there might be a case: "Well, you'll spend four hours in the bilges instead of being written up or going to the captain."

Admiral Crowe: Yes, or something like that if the captain wasn't aware of it, or something. I'm sure there were some ways of doing that. And the chiefs in the submarine force were just so terrific. There were exceptions, of course, but as a rule, not only were they technically good, they had a deep affection for the submarine force. And most of them, of course, when I was growing, had been in World War II. It was not uncommon at all to have a chief that made eight patrols, etc., etc., and usually your chief of the boat had done that.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and just threatening somebody with disqualification from submarines would get attention.

Admiral Crowe: From submarines. Yes, it was always a good lever you had. We had some minor violations and things, but I never had any real officer problems. I had this one kid that didn't do his job one night, but that was rare.

I can remember when the *Flying Fish* went aground, of course all the officers were under fire. Then that was the one time I saw the Navy wreak its wrath on officers. And also very little sympathy anywhere else in the New London submarine community for the *Flying Fish*. Very little sympathy. The World War II guys were really tough. If

you did something wrong, why, they were more than happy to criticize the hell out of you.

Paul Stillwell: How was the camaraderie in the wardroom? Did they do things together off the ship?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, always did, at least the boats I was on. *Flying Fish*, we had an exec named Nicodemus, and he was great. He made sure everybody was—and then in the *Clamagore* we were in Key West, for God's sakes. What other outlets are there except your own workplace? And in *Wahoo*, in Hawaii, why, it was a very tight wardroom, and they supported each other and took care of each other. And in *Trout*. In those days Shirley and I had enough energy for a lot of social activity, and we had some entertainers in the wardroom. Baker played the banjo or guitar, and Allen played the piano, and we could produce a skit and a play in the matter of an afternoon if we needed it. And *Trout* did that for the annual birthday ball and so forth. Baker and I wrote several skits for shows. And later on, when I was a division commander in San Diego we did the same thing. But, yes, our social life was built completely around the wardroom.

Paul Stillwell: Was there a formal wives' organization to handle things when you were out of port?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, there was. Shirley was president of it in San Diego when I was the DivCom, and she always participated in it. In fact, she's still mixed up in the officers' wives club a little bit.

Paul Stillwell: I would think that would be a great benefit to women who were newly married to sailors in order to get into the culture.

Admiral Crowe: Well, the officer/enlisted thing wives has always been a big problem. So many enlisted wives resent officers that you had a hard time overcoming that.

I've got a story this week that you might appreciate. My son sent an e-mail and asked me to go see a young lieutenant that was grievously wounded in Iraq. Blake had been there when it happened. He's a Naval Academy graduate, second lieutenant, only been out of the Academy two or three years, and Blake said, "Please go see him. I put him on the helicopter, and I thought he was going to die then. He's lost both legs." So the other day I was up there seeing him, and his parents were there. It's sort of interesting, his father's a surgeon. And this young kid, he doesn't look like a Marine. He's not fleshed out. He's slightly built, redheaded, very redheaded, and very optimistic that he's going to overcome this thing. A lot of references to God, and that he's been saved because of God, and so forth, and so forth.

I asked him, "Anything I can do for you?"

He said, "I would like to meet my battalion when it returns."

I said, "When's that?"

He said, "March, down at Lejeune."

I said, "Well, are they going to let you go down there?"

He said, "Well, I think so. I think I'll be well enough, in a wheelchair."

So when I got home I called Lynne, my daughter-in-law, who's in Twentynine Palms.\* She's the head of an organization called "L.I.N.K.S.," which supports Marine families. She called me back a day later and said, "Okay, I got hold of his home town and I found a guy in his home town that's got a lot of money. He said, 'I'll fly the kid. I'll get a special plane for the kid, and if necessary we'll get an ambulance plane, and we're going to make sure he gets there on March [whatever the date is].'" Whether Bethesda will let him do it, I don't know. But anyway, in 24 hours she'd fixed up to get that kid down to meet his battalion.

Paul Stillwell: That would mean so much to him *and* to the battalion. And you got the great news just recently, you told me before we started taping, that Blake is coming home this month.

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\* Twentynine Palms is a desert and mountain area in southeast California. It is the site of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he's coming home. In fact, he gives up his command today. May already have done it. Turns it over to his relief, and should be home on the 27th. But anyway, I thought this was pretty interesting, that Lynne went looking right away and found some way to make this true.

They had a little problem with the family and this guy. When they informed his family that he was wounded it was a Marine sergeant that went out to see them, and, of course, the father being a surgeon he immediately asked, "Well, what are they doing? Did they do this? Did they do that?" The sergeant didn't know; he's not a doctor. And the father got quite upset that he wasn't getting more information. So the Marine Corps flew him up to Bethesda for a meeting with the chief surgeon in Bethesda to go over it, and by the time I saw him there was no resentment. They're very knowledgeable of the Naval Academy, because they'd been visiting there when he was a student, and I didn't detect any bitterness that day, or anything. The parents are young people, a lot younger than I am, and they've got this terrible problem. They said the chief there in charge told me that five times they thought they were going to lose him.

Paul Stillwell: A terrible burden for parents.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Yes. I didn't see his legs. He was really injured, and I didn't mention it or anything. It's hard.

Paul Stillwell: Were your times out of port long enough that you needed to communicate back to the home about what you were doing with family grams or something like that?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we didn't have the problem we would have had on a deployment. Normally we would be going in Key West or Guantánamo and we could call home. We couldn't do what we do today, get on your cell phone or your e-mail, but we had pretty good contact on almost everything we did, except these exercises off the coast, where they would last two or three weeks. But we'd just leave Charleston and come back to Charleston.

Incidentally, the river in Charleston is always an adventure, every time you went in and out. When I came in one night we were in a rainstorm, and we decided to go in. It probably wasn't a good decision, although in the end it was all right. But that night we damn near ran aground. Just as I was going to drop the anchor the cloud went away as quick as it had come, and we could immediately see the lights and see where we were, and we were out of the channel. But we immediately went back in the channel. But that night was as close as I came to really doing something on *Trout* that—and the whole channel system, a very difficult channel. And, of course, coming alongside in the current up there was always a harrowing experience, and so much so that we always used a tug, particularly the nukes. They had to have tugs.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about Charleston as a homeport, both the support facilities and as a place for your family?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was a nice town. On the other hand, they're still living in the Civil War down there. I don't think they understand it's over, at least when we were there.

Paul Stillwell: How was that manifested?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I'll tell you a story about it. [Chuckle] They celebrated the—I guess it was the 100th year of the start of the war when we were in Charleston. We were in Charleston in 1960.

Paul Stillwell: April 1861 was when the war started.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And I was there in the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, Fort Sumter, and they reenacted it. My father visited, and he saw a bunch of newspapers that they had had done for the celebration and were selling. They were replicas of the papers that came out the day the war started. So about a month later he wrote me a letter and said, "We didn't get any of those papers; see if you can find one,



I'd like to have a paper." Well, I couldn't find one anywhere, and I went in this antique store and asked if they had any. And the woman said, "What are you talking about?"

I said, "Well, last month in that celebration they sold these replicas."

She said, "Replicas? We might have an original paper. We wouldn't have any replica." [Laughter] She was indignant that I had even entertained the notion that she might have a replica of a newspaper in there. So I didn't go in any more antique stores, and never did find the damned newspaper. But she was quite upset with me. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: But did you find the southern hospitality and charm in that city?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. Yes, we did. But we didn't live in the city. We lived in an area between the city and the base. Had a nice place. That was where we got our second and third children. It was a marvelous tour for us, socially. We had this friend of mine, Matty Matthews—Charleston was his hometown, so we had a lot of contacts through him with the local people, and saw a lot of Matty, who was a very good friend of mine.

The section of Charleston that's right across the river from Sumter is known as S-O-B, south of Broad. That's where the veranda is with all the guns on it that fired at it, and where you have all the old antebellum houses, and so forth. Of course, now the city has gone farther and farther out in the boondocks, and a lot of modern stuff, but it hasn't had much of an impact on the center.

Now, I have a classmate that lives there, and has since those days, Jerry Nuss, and he's crazy about Charleston. He thinks it's wonderful. He's lived there the last 30 or 40 years.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that was the time of the civil rights movement. Was there any racial tension at the time?

Admiral Crowe: Not on my boats, not ever.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I was thinking in the city.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, in the city. No, we didn't have any in that city. I probably had more racial tension on the *Carmick*, my first ship, than any I ever served on. I never really saw any in the submarine force. Had several black friends that were sailors and never really brushed up directly. On the *Carmick* we did.

Paul Stillwell: What were the problems there?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we had a stealing problem, and we were persuaded that a black boatswain's mate was the cause of our problems on the *Carmick*. He had a lot of supporters that felt that he was being unfairly charged, and we could never prove anything. There was a little bit of a tension problem. But I never had that on the boats.

That's the reason I went into the submarine force. The submarine force had the privilege of not having a lot of ordinary problems. Everybody was a volunteer, and you had to have a certain amount of brains to get in it and to accept the problem and want to be there. And, of course, small crews.

I always thought the U.S. Congress had it completely backwards when they started talking about the race problem. Well, actually they were talking about the homosexual problem, when I saw Senator Nunn and Warner climbing in bunks on a submarine and said, well, all these homosexuals would be sleeping close together and so forth.\* That's not a problem on a small ship. Everybody knows everything that's going on, and nobody draws attention to himself. Now, on a big ship, where you can actually rope off part of the ship, they had both racial and homosexual problems. During that race business there were carriers where there were places on the carrier the captain couldn't go in. It's hard to believe that, but that was sort of—

Paul Stillwell: That really boiled over in the early '70s.<sup>†</sup>

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\* Samuel A. Nunn, a Democrat from Georgia, served in the Senate from 8 November 1972 to 3 January 1997. He was chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee from 1987 to 1994. John W. Warner, a Republican from Virginia, has served in the Senate since 2 January 1979. He had previously been Secretary of the Navy from 4 May 1972 to 9 April 1974.

<sup>†</sup> Racial disturbances broke out in the carrier *Kitty Hawk* (CVA-63) on 12 October 1972; in the oiler *Hassayampa* (AO-145) on 16 October 1972; and in the carrier *Constellation* (CVA-64) on 3 November 1972. See Captain Paul B. Ryan, USN (Ret.), "USS Constellation Flare-up: Was it Mutiny?" *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January 1976, pages 46-53.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That was a terrible problem. Zumwalt really never got his arms around that. And, of course, he got all the blame for it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the thing we'll never know is whether his approach might have exacerbated the problem or kept it from being even worse.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Difficult to say. At least he had the guts to confront it.

Paul Stillwell: Were there many black submariners during your time in the boats?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we always had two or three. Now, on my early boats they were usually stewards. But we had a radioman. I was trying to think. On *Trout* we had some black stewards. We also had some black enginemen. But every ship I was on it was such a small group. There would only be two or three, and two or three men don't lead a protest movement. But on a big base, or in the Army, or something like that, or on a carrier—and then in Vietnam. You could go in a camp in Vietnam and you'd know *immediately* where the blacks lived. There would be banners flying, and graffiti, etc., etc.

Paul Stillwell: But I gather there was no resentment in the boats on the part of the white sailors.

Admiral Crowe: Not that I could see. I'm sure there were some individuals, but no, there never was a problem.

Paul Stillwell: That bonding that comes between shipmates would probably alleviate that.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I think so. I don't think there's any question about it. Now, when you get in a little ship like that [chuckle], we had a Joe—an Italian, Joe Luigi, or something, who loved to stand watch up there in the night, lookout on the bridge, singing up there. But I noticed we got ready for a ship's party and the Irish group showed up

with an Irish flag, the Italian group showed up with an Italian flag, and the yeoman showed up with an American flag and said, “Who are all these other flags around here?” [Laughter] But these racial groups had some pride. But that was not a matter of tension; that was a matter of fun, camaraderie.

Paul Stillwell: This was in the *Trout*?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And we had a group of Greeks, and they were always ribbing and kidding each other. But the yeoman always came with his American flag.

Of course, on a submarine the yeoman is a big man. We only had one, and he was the only one that was familiar with the paperwork and all the personnel records.

Paul Stillwell: Just by the nature of his work, the yeoman knows everybody’s business.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And, you know, the yeoman was a thin line between happiness and unhappiness. You have a good yeoman, the crew’s happy. If the yeoman was grouchy and didn’t want to do things for people, why, the crew would just—but if he was real personable everything was fine. So you wanted a good yeoman. A good yeoman and a good pharmacist’s mate. That also was a little helpful. And then a cook that could keep you happy. That was about it. If you could hit those three guys [chuckle]—

Paul Stillwell: Sonar and torpedomen would take care of themselves?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, it always impressed me that, for example, those kids knew all about that diesel engine. But they would come up and say, “I’ve got a letter from IRS here, and it just is terrible. I don’t know what to do.” And some officer would take it and read it and either make a phone call or whatever, to help him out. They couldn’t handle that letter. They could go back and fix that damn engine that was 10,000 pounds or something, but some of the simplest problems, they just got completely confounded.

Paul Stillwell: We all have our comfort zones.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And that's the secret of being a junior officer. You take care of those things. You accept that and you make it your business to work them out, solve their problem.

Paul Stillwell: That's a division officer's job.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. It's what they do. And the rewards are great. I can remember in the courts-martial and the investigation on the *Flying Fish*, we had two enlisted men that were lookouts when the ship went aground. They didn't remember anything. They would no more testify against somebody on that ship than—it just drove the prosecuting attorney nuts. He knew they were lying [chuckle], and they just, they wouldn't help him. And everybody on that ship didn't help. They didn't want to put their shipmates in a bind.

Paul Stillwell: What do you recall about liberty in the Caribbean for the *Trout*'s crew?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the liberty in Guantánamo was a little circumscribed. There wasn't much going on down there. We had a lot of liberty there, but there was just an enlisted club and an officers' club, and this guy Evan Baker I told you about, he met a bunch of nurses. He solved the wardroom problem by rounding up the nurses' quarters.

We went to Jamaica. They loved that. In fact, we took a trip down there one time, and the seas were so bad we couldn't get alongside and had to go back, or at least that was my decision to go back. I think the crew thought I'd made the wrong decision. [Chuckle] They wanted to go ashore. But we made two or three ports in Jamaica.

And then the best ports we found were in the Bahamas, over in Nassau. That was great liberty there, I thought better than Jamaica. Of course, the British were still in Jamaica. But they had a lot of big hotels there and a lot of tourists, a lot of people. I didn't like Jamaica very well.

Our other liberty ports, though, we never went into Puerto Rico. But we did go to Bermuda when I was on *Trout*. In fact we went two or three times. And later took my family to Bermuda. Bermuda's a very interesting place.

Paul Stillwell: Just marvelous, charming, all the history there.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And unfortunately the last time we went there, with the family, the weather wasn't good. But usually the weather is good, and it's just a charming little place.

When I had *Trout* we never got into Boston or New York or Newport. We did go into New London. Had to go to New London two or three times. We never went up to Philadelphia. Went to Philadelphia on the *Flying Fish* a couple of times, up the river. Also went to New York City on the *Flying Fish*, down the Long Island Sound, inside. And the other day I went through Hell Gate on a yacht, and I hadn't been through it since I was on the *Flying Fish*. They still worry about the current right there at Hell Gate, like they always have.

We did go into Fort Lauderdale on *Trout*. And I had some friends, Vernon Weaver, in Miami, who used to come down to the boat. We never went into Miami, but we did in the *Clamagore*, went into Miami once. But we usually, in *Trout*, went into Fort Lauderdale.

I had another guy in the wardroom that I didn't mention. His name was Jack Martin, and he was a Naval Academy graduate.\* He was the number-three man in the wardroom, a very good guy. He was a swimmer at the Naval Academy. And one time we had a man fall overboard in the channel at Charleston. We were going real slow; it wasn't a big problem, but the waves were sort of going up and down. I sent Jack in to get him, because Jack was a very strong swimmer, and without any hesitation he just went out and grabbed that guy and pulled him into the ship.

Jack left the Navy after *Trout*, went back to medical school and became a dermatologist. He went to medical school in Cleveland, Case Western Reserve, so he settled in Cleveland. But while he settled there to practice medicine he got quite

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\* Lieutenant John Sinclair Martin, Jr., USN, Naval Academy class of 1957.

interested—and I don't know the details—in hospital administration. As computers were coming in, he worked out some system for billing and handling hospital billing, and so forth. He literally just quit medicine, started his own business advising and consulting with hospitals, made a hell of a lot of money. He died not too long ago and turned the whole business over to his children. And I saw his wife in Naples, Florida, a couple of years ago, after he died. She spends the winters down there. But he built on this business and died very wealthy. He was a very interesting man.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: A couple of other things happened on my tour on *Trout*. I was playing volleyball with the crew one time and came down on the wrong side of my foot, and didn't break my ankle but I sprained it very, very badly. So badly that they put it in a cast and put me on crutches for a while. That was a little bit of a problem riding the boat.

Paul Stillwell: I would think it would be a problem getting up and down ladders.

Admiral Crowe: It was, it was a little problem, but I continued to do that. Then secondly, for the first time since I had graduated I had received several invitations, because I was the commanding officer, to speak, and I started speaking again, on *Trout*, quite often.

Paul Stillwell: What kinds of audiences?

Admiral Crowe: Navy Leagues, chambers of commerce, local outfits, etc. I enjoy speaking, and I had been away from it a little while, but that sort of brought me back, when I was the CO.

Then my mother contracted leukemia while I was on *Trout*. I went home once for leave to see her, and got to spend a lot of time with her. Came back and hadn't been back very long when she died. The ship was going to go to Key West. I requested that I go home on leave for my mother's funeral, and a big problem was whether the exec could

take the boat to Key West. My squadron commander then was Beshany, and, oh, we labored over that and wrung our hair and twisted our hands and did all—but he finally decided to let Bob King take the boat down, so I went home for my mother's funeral. Then brought my father back with me, and we rode the boat back up from Key West.

Now, we went down to Key West one time for sort of an extended period. I think we were going to be down there six weeks. I had a classmate by the name of Ely Kirk, a famous Navy name. Admiral Kirk was his uncle, or some distant relative.<sup>\*</sup> Ely had a DE in Key West, which was coming to the yard in Charleston, so we exchanged houses.<sup>†</sup> He moved into our house [chuckle], and we moved into his house in Key West, one of the sort of interesting things. Shirley drove down with the three children in the back seat. On the move down our oldest child, Blake, the Marine, caught the measles, and she arrived in Key West with a kid with the measles, and two dogs. Stayed there for six weeks, and then shifted.

But while we were there, one night at 10:00 o'clock at night I get a call from Ely Kirk [chuckle], and I thought, oh, my God. "What's the matter, Ely? What's wrong?"

He says, "Oh, there's nothing wrong. We just want to play bridge here. Where do you keep your playing cards?" [Laughter]

Two or three days before Shirley was going to start driving back, one of our dogs, by the name of Maximilian, bit a little boy in the neighborhood, so they threw him into the pound, quarantined him, to determine whether he had rabies or not. Oh, huge problem. She went ahead and went back, and I still stayed there for a week before the boat went back.

A very good friend of mine was the chief of staff to the admiral in Key West. His name was Fred Wyse, and he and his wife Esther were both deep southerners.<sup>‡</sup> This dog was supposed to be in the kennel for, I don't know, eight days or something, I forget. I told Esther this story, that I was leaving and the dog was going to be in the kennel. She said, "That's not right. You take better care of your dogs than most people do their children." So she went down and saw the mayor and got him out of the kennel, and shipped him back to Charleston. [Laughter] The father of the kid he bit was a captain in the Navy, a VP aviator. I got under way and went back to Charleston and had no more docked and gone home than the phone rang and it was

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<sup>\*</sup> Rear Admiral Alan G. Kirk, USN, was U.S. naval commander for the invasion of Normandy in 1944.

<sup>†</sup> Lieutenant Commander George Griswold Ely Kirk, USN, in the early 1960s commanded the destroyer escort *John R. Perry* (DE-1034).

<sup>‡</sup> Captain Frederick C. Wyse, Jr., USN.



this guy saying, “I hear you got the dog out of the kennel.” My wardroom said, “You should have said, ‘Oh, didn’t I tell you? That dog died of rabies.’” [Laughter] Anyway, he had a few words to say about that. I assured him the dog was fine, etc., but that was one of the little personal problems we went through getting Maximilian back from Key West.

Another little serendipity, while we were down there Kennedy and Macmillan met in the little White House in Key West.<sup>\*</sup> That was the famous meeting where Macmillan flew over from the Bahamas. All of a sudden they showed up for a day meeting, so we took the children down to stand beside the road as Kennedy came in, standing up in the back seat of a convertible. He waved at the kids, and they never forgot that. And there was some person standing there with a “Harvard” on his T-shirt, and Kennedy pointed that out. Then he went into his meeting with Macmillan.

After they left, Fred Wyse told me a marvelous story. I don’t know if it’s suitable for our oral history or not, but it’s not a bad story. He was in charge of making all these arrangements, and they had very little notice that the President was coming down there. So in one day they mustered their resources and got ready for a presidential blitz. The British ambassador living in Washington flew over, either to Bermuda or the Bahamas, I forget which, met Macmillan, and flew with him down to Key West. And then Kennedy came from Palm Beach to Key West, and they met the airplane and all went in in a big cavalcade. Met for the day, and then left that afternoon, and the plan was for the British ambassador to fly back to Washington with Kennedy.

Well, they got out to the airport, started loading everybody up, and they couldn’t find the British ambassador’s bag. Now, he didn’t know it was missing. But he got on the plane with Kennedy, and somebody told Wyse: “We’ve got a problem; the British ambassador’s bag is gone.” About that time Kennedy’s plane took off. They went to Palm Beach and had dinner that night with his family before they went to Washington. So Wyse’s problem was to find the British ambassador’s bag.

So they looked at in all the pictures taken that morning and they called in kid, a sailor. He said, “Yes, I carried the British ambassador’s bag.”

And they said, “Well, what’d you do with it?”

He said, “Well, I put it in the trunk of that black car in the cavalcade.”

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<sup>\*</sup> Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 10 January 1957 to 18 October 1963. His meeting with President Kennedy at Key West was in March 1961.

Then somebody said, "There wasn't any black car in the cavalcade."

The kid said, "Oh, yes there was."

He said, "Well, there wasn't supposed to be."

The kid said, "Yes there was."

So Fred said, "Get all the photographs that we took this morning." And, sure enough, there's a white car, black car, and white cars." [Laughter] So he said, "Blow up the photograph." They got it blown up, and there was a little sign in the front windshield that says, "Press."

So he called the *Key West Citizen* late in the afternoon, and said, "Did you have a car in the cavalcade?"

The guy said, "Yeah, we were."

"Well, where's the car?"

He said, "We rented it."

He said, "Well, where'd you rent it from?" They gave the address and number, so they rushed down there and the guy was gone for the day, it was all locked up. But there was a little sign that said: "If a problem call so-and-so."

So they called him up and he said, "Yeah, I rented a car to the *Citizen* this morning."

"Well, where is it?"

"It's on the third floor of the garage."

He said, "Well, come down here; we've got to have you." [Chuckle] And the guy came down at 7:00 o'clock at night and opened up the garage. They went up there and opened up the trunk of the black car, and there was the ambassador's bag. They rushed it out to Boca Chica, and there was a fighter waiting on the strip out there. They threw it in, and he flew to Washington and got to Washington just 20 minutes before the British ambassador comes in with Kennedy. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: That's quite a detective story.

Admiral Crowe: And the British ambassador never knew it was missing. Isn't that interesting?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Typical Navy problem and solution.

Paul Stillwell: Ingenuity. That's right.

Admiral Crowe: Fred Wyse was quite proud of that.

Paul Stillwell: Anything more to say about Captain Beshany as your squadron commander?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he was a very fine officer. I always thought he was a very conventional officer. He was always kind to us, and he ran a good ship. I didn't have a lot to do with him, but enough that he and I became friends. I did have a little to do with him at the end. And, of course, the most memorable thing that happened on my tour on the *Trout* was near the end, when I got admitted to graduate school.

Paul Stillwell: Yes, you told that story.

Admiral Crowe: When I applied for graduate school, I can't remember whether Beshany was in on that or not. But when I'd been accepted and was told I could go to any school I could get admitted to, I, of course, took it up and showed it to Beshany. And Beshany said, "I just don't think that's a good idea professionally. You're a submarine officer, and you're going to want to go into the nuclear program."

"Well, if that's true, nobody in the nuclear program seems to be interested in me, so I'm going to do something I'd like to do. I like this. I think it's a good idea, and it's the kind of thing I personally would like to do."

Beshany threw cold water all over it. He was kind about it. He wasn't like Admiral Crawford, who got terribly excited. But he just kept saying, "Well, it's just not going to be good for your career, and will probably end your real time in the Navy."

I said, “Well, I don’t know about that, but in any event I think it’s a hell of a thing for me to acquire, and it can’t hurt my life. Maybe it’s going to change it or something, I don’t know.” But, in any event, Beshany saw fit to see me several times to talk about it.

Then, and I think we’ve talked about this before, I had then applied at a number of schools and been accepted at Princeton.

Paul Stillwell: Right, we discussed that.

Admiral Crowe: Then I had received a call saying that Admiral Rickover was interviewing and that I should come for an interview.

Paul Stillwell: Right, you covered that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And that happened just before I left *Trout*.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else to say about Captain Lytle as the squadron commander?

Admiral Crowe: No. He was a next-door neighbor of mine, so I got to know him not only in the office but personally. He was a very nice man. And I had known him when I was aide to SubLant because he had one of the branch head jobs on SubLant’s staff. But in Charleston I got to know him, and one of his daughters babysat our Brent, and she was absolutely crazy about him. He was about four or five years old, and when we left she sat down and cried. And the Lytles were just kind people. They were very nice, and he was very pleasant and professional. He was very laid back and didn’t get terribly excited, and I always admired him. He and his wife were terrific, a lot of fun, and very kind to their next-door neighbors. And then I never saw him again after we left there until I spoke out in Walnut Creek in California.

Paul Stillwell: You said in your book that your children picked up southern accents when you were in Charleston.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they did [chuckle]. And, of course, our children were growing up down there. We got our third one down there. But they don't remember Charleston very well. They were too small.

My parents both came to my change of command when I took over. And, of course, my mother died before I left, so that was the last Navy thing she had been to. But she rode the boat one day. She came through Charleston and rode the boat in a dependents' cruise, so she could say she had ridden in a submarine.

Paul Stillwell: That had to be a proud moment for you.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. It was extremely proud. She still didn't understand what was going on [chuckle], why I was in the Navy. She wasn't so sure about that idea. But she got to see our newest child. And then, of course, one of the deep regrets of my life is that my parents didn't live long after that. That was the last of my mother; my father lived till I was through at Princeton, and then he died shortly thereafter. So some of the things that happened to us in later life, neither parent got to see, and that was unfortunate.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: And Shirley's mother was an invalid. Her father lived a long time, but he was so consumed by taking care of his wife that he didn't get to really take advantage of some of the places we lived. So that didn't work out too well. We wished it had. But my father was always a strong supporter of the Navy. He thought it was wonderful.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he had been in it himself, so in a way, it was a vicarious reliving.

Admiral Crowe: I think that's right. Absolutely. And I thought about my father when I read your article on the battleships.\* He slept in a hammock. If he'd have been alive later he would have been repulsive after I began the high rank. He would have deadened the world with that. [Laughter] But he didn't live that long.

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\* Paul Stillwell, "Sailors of the Battleship Navy," *Naval History*, February 2007, pages 16-25.

Paul Stillwell: Well, parents love those bragging rights.

Admiral Crowe: They do, that's right. That's what parents do. [Chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: Right. And especially grandparents.

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: You said you were going to tell me about the misfortune that Bill Shaughnessy ran into later.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I'm not real familiar with it, but Bill Shaughnessy had been to Tufts in the Navy's PG program. He had studied international relations in that Tufts program for a year or two. And I kept encouraging him, when he left to go to shore, to not go in a submarine job but to go in some job in the Pentagon that took care of that Tufts business. He didn't do it. He went back to the Pentagon in some submarine post. They finally decided to ask Bill to go into the nuclear program, and he went through the year of the nuclear program, and I don't know what happened. I don't think he had any problem with his academics; he's just too smart. But he did something in the practical that Rickover didn't like. And at the end of the year Rickover didn't accept him into the nuclear program, even after he had finished the year of training. He then took command—I may have this wrong; he may have gone to command before that, I don't know. But anyway, that experience with Rickover just did him in, and he left the Navy.

I see him occasionally at the Naval Academy. He comes to my class every now and then. But I thought it was the Navy's loss, and I blamed Rickover directly. I don't know what he had it in for, but it was the kind of thing that he didn't have to do that. He just did it for meanness or something.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I've exhausted my questions on *Trout*. Anything else you have to say about that boat?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was a marvelous experience, and of course you always regret leaving command, and that was certainly my case. I enjoyed the ship, I enjoyed my command, and I was not eager to leave, although I was looking forward to graduate school. It's always nice to have a set of orders that you can look forward to. I've had a lot of them. But nevertheless I had a real affection for the boat. The command was everything I expected it to be, except I would have liked to have had more operational experience.

I didn't find anything in command that was hard to do, where it was really terribly challenging, except we went through some storms. We had some tough decisions whether to surface and whether to turn around one night on the surface. We had to turn around and go the other way, and the waves were terribly high. I can remember standing on the bridge in the middle of the night and trying to figure out the best way to do that without getting a roll that would jeopardize us in some way. But that was just part of the deal.

Paul Stillwell: What was the doctrine then on how much you would use active sonar versus passive?

Admiral Crowe: We were just getting into the active business. I was still there when they were mainly passive. Submarines weren't supposed to make noises. But some people were fiddling around with it. As I said, our active sonar wasn't very good.

Everything else was good, though. We were still navigating with some older stuff. We were still using celestial navigation some. We took sights all the time. Today I don't think you'd ever bother. But Bill Shaughnessy was doing some of the navigating. He was a great navigator. He was the operations officer for a long time, as well as the exec.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have means of taking sights through the periscope?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, we did. We tried it. We weren't very good at it. It was the kind of thing that, all it did was upset you. [Laughter] "We really there? I don't believe we've gone 300 miles in the last hour." [laughter]. But we had loran also. We had lots of ways to navigate. Some of them were sort of shaky. That's what happened on *Flying Fish*. We had loran that night, but it didn't tell us what we wanted to know. But we had enough redundancy that we could check what the hell we were doing. And, of course, on those fleet exercises, when we were submerged we snorkeled, but we wouldn't come up for three or four days. And that was always a navigational problem. That was almost all dead reckoning.\* Then all of a sudden we'd get a sight at night. We could get up to the bridge at night if we had to and we could take night sights, and they're not too bad if you practiced at it and you've got a good horizon.† I don't remember where I was really worried about our position.

On *Clamagore* I was the operations officer when one time we really *were* worried about where we were. We were in a rainstorm all afternoon off the Keys, and we just didn't have any help. We were transiting the Keys down to Key West, and we actually didn't know where we were. It was tough to decide, particularly with the rain continuing the way it was. Pretty soon we were getting pretty desperate as to where we were; we needed a little more help than we had. But we finally found some landmarks that we thought we identified and gave us enough to at least not worry about it. But we were very concerned for a while.

Paul Stillwell: Did you ever use radar in navigation?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. We used to, particularly in the Keys, in fact, all over the Caribbean. But today they just throw a few numbers in the computer and, whango—

Paul Stillwell: Turn on the SINS.‡

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\* Dead reckoning (short for deduced reckoning) is a method of navigation whereby one plots a direction and amount of progress from the last well-determined position. The result, known as the DR position, amounts to the best estimate of one's actual position at a given time.

† The typical time for taking star sights is twilight, morning and evening.

‡ SINS – Ship's inertial navigation system.



Admiral Crowe: Yes. We lost our gyro once, on *Trout*. But it didn't upset us that much, not on our navigation.

Paul Stillwell: Well, on to Princeton, and how did you get hooked up there with Harold Sprout?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the first thing I did is, I took a trip on *Trout* up through New England. I think the first place I went was Princeton. I didn't meet Sprout, but I met one of his associates, Professor Furness.\* He was an expert on France, but also had written on defense a lot, and was instrumental in getting West Point students to Princeton. He was very encouraging to me. He said he loved having a Navy student here, and he really wanted me to meet Professor Sprout, who was in Britain on a sabbatical. So I didn't meet Sprout on that trip, but Furness was very encouraging. Lord, by the time I got to Princeton Furness had gone. [Chuckle] He went to Ohio State and started that think tank out there. But he showed me all over Princeton and, really, he's the guy that sold us on Princeton. I had a classmate practicing medicine in Princeton, so I spent some time with him about the town, and so forth and so forth. Everything I could see was all encouraging.

Then I went from Princeton to Yale.

Paul Stillwell: You described that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, a ridiculous experience at Yale, Mr. Dahl. My father had discouraged me from going to Harvard. He just had a thing about Harvard [chuckle], so I didn't go there. But then I—it seems to me I went one other place. Maybe I didn't. I think I turned around and went home.

But I wrote letters to Stanford, Duke, and because of my Yale thing I actually applied to Yale, although I didn't expect anything to come of it. That guy [chuckle], it was so depressing. Oh, I think I applied at Georgetown also. Then I got a letter from Yale admitting me, which sort of stunned me. I had to write them back and said no, that

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\* Dr. Edward Furness. See *The Line of Fire*, pages 47-48.

I'd chosen Princeton. But as a result of the trip I really fired one off to Princeton right away.

Then I got an interesting letter from Stanford saying, "Once you're admitted to our graduate school you're always admitted to our graduate school, so you can come here if you want," which I found very tempting because I liked Stanford. On the other hand, the idea of Princeton intrigued me even more, particularly of the small-town living, and the family was in that time. I don't remember about Duke. I think they admitted me, or said that they would accept me. But it was never a question after I visited Furness and he said they'd love to have me. And then, of course, by the time I got there Sprout was back, so the very first guy I met was Sprout. He was ecstatic that the Navy would send somebody.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he and his wife had written about the Navy.\*

Admiral Crowe: Widely. He'd never been on a Navy ship. Never did get on one. I always felt so badly about that.

So then I came back to Charleston and did all that paperwork and sent it off. I guess the other place I went when I was traveling was by BuPers. I came by Washington, and they had no interest in what I was doing at all. [Chuckle]. That's the reason they wrote me the letter: "You take care of it; don't bother us with this stuff, and we'll accept anything you want if you can get in." So I didn't get much out of BuPers on it, which I found sort of strange, because I'd been to graduate school once before on the Navy, and the Navy took care of everything, when we went to Stanford for that course on personnel administration. But in this case the Navy was just sort of opting out.

Then I got mixed up in that Rickover weekend.

Paul Stillwell: Right. We talked about that.

Admiral Crowe: And then, that's about the size of it.

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\* Harold and Margaret Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power: 1776-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939). A subsequent edition was published by the Naval Institute Press in 1980.

Mrs. Crowe: Rickety-over?

Admiral Crowe: Yeah. Rickety-back.

Mrs. Crowe: Mm-hmm. Rickover was not one of my favorite friends.

Admiral Crowe: Where did his name come up the other day?

Mrs. Crowe: Talking to somebody.

Admiral Crowe: Well, maybe we ought to call it for this session.

Paul Stillwell: Okay. So we'll start the next time with you getting into the classes and what have you.

Admiral Crowe: Yes.

Paul Stillwell: All right. Thank you, sir.

Admiral Crowe: That was a new world for me.

Paul Stillwell: Undoubtedly.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. (End of Interview 11)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, we're here on a windy, cold day in February, and you had a very warming experience recently with your son Blake coming home from Iraq. What do you remember about that event?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we just spent the weekend with him. He came back from Iraq three weeks ago, I think, closer to four now, and his regiment is based in Twentynine Palms, California. He had planned—and, in fact, his plan worked out—for his whole staff to come back in two airplanes. There were 320 of them, people that worked for him in a staff capacity of one sort or another. Their plan to come back worked well, except he had anticipated that they would disembark the airplane and then march over in formation to where the wives were. He would give some small remarks, and then they would dismiss the troops for their reunion. When they entered the area where the families were—I don't know what kind of area it was—the whole thing fell apart. The families rushed out of the stands. They never were able to stay in formation [laughter], and he laughed and said he was running around saying, "But I have some remarks to make." But he never got to make them. [Chuckle] They had a glorious reunion.

Then they were escorted by 200 motorcycles of some organization out there, from March Air Force Base back to Twentynine Palms. So it was a glorious evening for them, and they had a huge reception in Twentynine Palm.

He spent the next week or two decompressing, sleeping, mainly, I think. And he and his wife came back to Washington for four days to visit some of his wounded in both Bethesda and Walter Reed, and then to visit his daughter up at the Naval Academy Prep School, and they spent three nights with my wife and me.

But clearly he's wound pretty tight. His mind is still in Iraq, and it will be for some time, I think. But he was very talkative. We had in some friends for dinner and for drinks, and they queried him widely. I had a huge map here of Anbar, which he used to demonstrate where he was. Talking to him was absolutely fascinating.

I was shocked in only one respect. He never got to Baghdad! He lived there for a year and was in Anbar, but his trips in and out would be through Kuwait and he flew directly from Anbar to Kuwait and back, and never went to Baghdad. [Chuckle] It seemed impossible for me to grasp that he had been there that long and been so involved in the hierarchy, that he hadn't. On the other hand, he made the point that he was out on the end of the limb, which is the western part of Anbar clear to the Jordanian and the Saudi and Syrian borders, and that not everybody came out there to see them.

On the other hand, he was fairly optimistic about the progress they had made. He used the word “tribal” liberally. “Tribalism,” and “tribal sheiks,” “tribes.” He used it quite a bit. He had had a lot of contact with the rulers of the individual tribes, sheiks, in an effort to get them to support the American side, so there was a diplomatic facet of his work as well as a military.

He’s very proud of what they achieved over the period, that they had uncovered a couple of arms caches. The first arms cache, a big one, was 72 tons of arms! That’s hard to imagine what it would be. How much space is that? It must be huge.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: They had done that several times. They were leading all the regiments in Iraq in discovering things. Likewise, he had the highest recruitment in the Marine Corps of any regiment, of people staying and reenlisting.

The brutal side of the things, though, he saw several bombings and was in one or two convoys that got hit. The best friend he had in the Iraqi military was a colonel who was his counterpart, in charge of the troops they were training, that Blake was training, and he was in another Hum-Vee.\* The Hum-Vee got hit. Blake was able to drag out a friend of his, a colonel in the Marine Corps, with 12 broken ribs. Couldn’t reach the other colonel and had to sit there and watch him die in a fireball. And was very complimentary to this Iraqi counterpart. He’d spent a lot of time with him and had a pretty high regard for him.

He recreated one of the conversations. The Iraqi said, “You ask me if we’ve got WMD. I’m just a colonel. I never had any idea what they had or didn’t have. I may have been a Baathist, but I was not privy to what was actually going on. I’m a professional army officer.”† And he developed a pretty good regard for some of the Iraqi Army officers he’s met.

He was not as complimentary of the police force. He thinks the police force is a pretty shaky proposition because of the close local ties with each of the groups, and that

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\* The M998 High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV or Hum-Vee) is a military transport motor vehicle that serves the purposes previously carried out by Jeeps and light trucks.

† WMD – weapons of mass destruction.

they never shed their tribal identity. There's no way, he said, they'll ever shed that. That's at the very root of their society, and if we think we can train it out of them we're wrong. But he really was optimistic that, if we continue the course that they've been following for quite some time, that they could succeed. But he was not saying that that could be done quickly. He said that will take five to ten years.

He also was a little irritated at General Petraeus talking like all these ideas they're now instituting are new.\* He says, "We've been doing them for two years out there." And Petraeus never mentions the Marine Corps. The Army did not ingratiate itself into Blake's mind while he was there. He had two or three Army battalions working for him, about two of which he thought were very good, but he said they do things differently than the Marine Corps, and he had a sort of low opinion of the way they pacify. He said they surround villages, check people going in and out, but never go into the village, and if they don't hear any problems, why, they assume it's pacified. He said, "We take over in the village. We go into the village and get shot up. They just didn't bother to go in there." And that upset him.

He also criticized the Army heavily for being vehicle-bound. And likewise in their fascination with vehicles and machines, that they end up with so few foot soldiers out of the total, which irritates the Marines, of course. He got along, evidently, with the Army leadership very well, though.

He did have a couple criticisms of the Marine organization, that they had two organizations there—one for transforming the Iraqi military, and the other for fighting the Marines in the country, and there was some tension and friction between the two groups, which he thought was unnecessary. And naturally he thought they should all be under his command. [Chuckle] He may have succeeded just as he left in engineering that, but he hadn't succeeded beforehand.

It's hard to get in the frame of mind that your son has grown up and really dealing with adult things [chuckle], and in a very serious fashion, but that's exactly what he was doing. In my judgment it's going to be a landmark year in his life. He'll never forget it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, just as you still remember your time in Vietnam.

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\* General David H. Petraeus, USA, was then Commanding General, Multi-National Force – Iraq.

Admiral Crowe: Exactly. Exactly. It's seared into his memory. And I was impressed with the number of times he said, in describing something or other, he said, "It's just like you told me about [so-and-so] in Vietnam." He referred to Vietnam and the stories I'd told him, and he referred many times to stories I didn't even remember. So the idea that it's completely separate from Vietnam is, I think, patently false. It's not identical, but nevertheless a lot is, and we are clearly replicating many of the things that we did in Vietnam. And, of course, many of these new ideas we were practicing wholeheartedly in Vietnam. It took us a while to come to that, but we did it. And maybe we—at least the Army has forgotten it and resurrecting it again.

He, of course, I think characteristically of people that have been there, wants the country to persevere and to see it through and win. But the time estimates he gives are totally out of accord with what I think the public mood is. And we've now talked about that some. I wanted him to understand what the mood was back here, and not be totally surprised what he's stepping into.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I see a parallel in my own experience. When I was in Vietnam I had no sense, just from Armed Forces Radio, and *Stars and Stripes*, how the American people were so against the war.

Admiral Crowe: Of course, you would have it more today in Iraq, because of these gadgets.

Paul Stillwell: That's true. And CNN.

Admiral Crowe: CNN, the Internet, mobile phones, e-mail. And they see the news. They have American television all over the air base Assad.

Paul Stillwell: You said he saw progress. How would you describe that progress?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he saw progress in that they had communities that were, first of all, safe and peace—had peace, and safe, and pro-American, that they had cultivated and had worked hard at. “Now,” he said, “we’re not stupid, and we know that they go to the highest bidder, these sheiks do, and that that can turn around.” And he described a process of it turning around. What they do in Iraq, which he obviously took vigorous exception to, was, in their effort to get more people back where they think all the trouble is in Baghdad, if you’re doing well in your region they say, well, you don’t need the troops, and they pull your troops away to go to Baghdad. But the minute your troops leave—this is a pretty fragile thing you’ve worked out, and that disappears. He said for the first six months—he had that road from Syria and one of the main entry points—he said, “We actually had that road secure, but when we lost troops we couldn’t patrol it. And now the road’s not secure, because we gave up two battalions to Baghdad.”

He said something else that was sort of upsetting, at least to him. It sounds funny, but he said, “I had a wonderful staff. Very imaginative. And we made a lot of suggestions that went down the mill, and then we made a lot of suggestions that somebody else picked up up above and took all the credit for them.” But he said, “In everything we did out there I got a lot of credit. People said, ‘What a good job you’re doing,’ but nobody ever mentioned my staff.” It really upset him, which I can follow.

He did fire a shot at the press, not for what they said, but they didn’t come to Anbar very often. He thought they should come more and more. And also he felt that being out in Anbar was, in terms of local Marine politics, not the best place to be. You’re not very close to the flagpole. [Chuckle] It had its good side, in that people didn’t get in your way, and it had its bad side in that you were the last guy to get your demands satisfied.

Paul Stillwell: Well, what you say about the lack of recognition for his staff certainly suggests loyalty downward on his part.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, yes. In fact, he’s almost fanatic about it. And he’s fighting right now to, for example, his operations officer to get a command that he wants him to



get. He did well to get his sergeant major into a promotional command. And he's working hard to get the people he thinks performed very well.

He had a really tight bond with his sergeant major. They have become extremely close personal friends, and their families have too. And, in fact, the second thing he did—he left here and went home, was there two days, flew back to Washington for a funeral. A sergeant major when he was a regimental commander got killed after he left Iraq. So he was here just two days ago for a funeral, turned right around, and went back to California. But, in any event, he and the sergeant major and his operations officer evidently became sort of a trio there. But he never went anywhere without his sergeant major.

I watched that in Vietnam, not in the Marines but in the Army. And I watched how important that was and how well it worked. That's the only way to run an outfit like that.

Paul Stillwell: You said in a previous interview that your daughter-in-law was trying to arrange for a wounded Marine to get back for—

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's on track.

Paul Stillwell: It is? Good.

Admiral Crowe: Well, when his battalion comes back. That's not till March. But he visited that young man and saw the family as well. He took full days at both Bethesda and Walter Reed. Of course [chuckle], Walter Reed is getting shot at from every direction right now.\* He also noted that the flags on my house were in the wrong order, and corrected those. [Laughter] Put the American flag on the right side. And I forgot—I bought a Marine flag, too—I forgot to put it up when he came, because I got so excited about the whole thing. And he fired a shot at the Navy flag out there.

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\* At the time of the interview, the Army's Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., was getting a great deal of media attention because of sub-standard living conditions and bureaucratic procedures for wounded veterans.

Oh, it was extremely pleasing to see him and to have him back, and to see that he's not changed as much as would be possible. He could have had some real problems. I don't see that happening. He did comment in one respect. When he first went there he had planned to go out on the roads every other day, and a couple of senior officers came to see him and said, "You can't do that. That's too big a risk. You've got to quit that. And it's not just a risk to you; it's a risk to all the people that are guarding you."

So he said, "I sort of understood it intellectually, and before I could implement it I was in a convoy that got hit. Saw one of my best friends burn up, two of my best friends get wounded." And he said, "I backed off of going so often. I had to have a good reason to go. I just couldn't go to satisfy my curiosity and risk their safety."

I asked him about being scared, and he said, "At first I really wasn't scared. But when I watched the Iraqi man burn up, that night I got scared. From then on I was much more sensitive to my personal safety, and deliberate about what I did or didn't do." Not just doing something for the hell of it to stick it in their ear. He said, "I had to have good reasons to do everything I did." It's an interesting comment.

Paul Stillwell: The education of a warrior.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, exactly.

Paul Stillwell: Well, are we ready to move back to your own education?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He's always been very brave, even as a youngster, and he still is, but nevertheless—the one thing I worried the most was that he wouldn't be thinking. That he would react mostly and do something sometime that was silly, that would risk him. But it evidently took care of itself, the self-education process. And I remember the same thing in Vietnam. At first it's sort of liberating. Oh, you're a warrior and you're doing risky things. And then all of a sudden it occurs to you that it's more involved than that. It's not a simple equation. And also that it's not easy for an organization to lose its leader. The leader has some obligation to stay alive.

Paul Stillwell: And a number of the people who go don't live long enough to get that education.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. They used to say, "There are old pilots and there are bold pilots, but there are no old bold pilots." [Chuckle] That's sort of the same thing.

He felt at the end of the year that—he said, "I would have been glad to stay another three months, because we had things that were going that I wanted to see, but also your idea well dries up and you begin to suffer from...." Of course, they worked seven days a week, and fatigue begins to catch up with you, and you're not as imaginative or as energetic as you were originally. He said, "It was probably time for me to go."

Paul Stillwell: Well, thank you for putting that on the record. What do you remember about going into the class work at Princeton and studying under Professor Sprout?

Admiral Crowe: I should say at the outset that—I think I mentioned that from a Navy perspective many people didn't quite understand what I was doing. Didn't think it was a wise thing to do, or at least it was a distraction, and gave it very little credit, and so forth. But from my standpoint I think it lived up to its billing. It lived up to what I wanted it to do, anticipated.

The first thing that you'll run into in a group like that is the recognition that there are a lot of other smart people in the world. [Chuckle] You aren't the only guy on the block, and that there are people smarter than you are, at least in that business. Conceptually, and articulate-wise, and being able to massage concepts, and see things that you don't see, aspects and nuances. And, of course, they spend a great deal of time participating in debate and argument, etc., etc. And a lot of that's just pure pride, trying to show the other guy that they're smart.

Paul Stillwell: That was throwing you into the briar patch.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it really was, in many respects. And over and above that, there were very few that I served with that had military service. I think there were 15 in our group, and my best friend, Dick Wilson, had been in the Navy and also in the reserve for quite some time, but aside from that I think we only had two other people who had served in the service, in the draft. And they had no tendency to stay, but they were not nasty about it or anything; they just had gone in and out of the military. And then the rest of the group had never served.

There were two Canadians in the group. Probably the smartest man there was a Canadian. Never got a degree. He wasn't interested in degrees [chuckle]; he was just interested in being smart. The others that had not served, a few had a very low opinion of the military. And of course I ran into that with professors as well, which in my book is one of the reasons to go there. That's the reason for putting our students in civilian colleges. Because when they see military students perform well and do well, and see their energy and their determination, it changes their view of the military. And the one thing that they do, and I did it myself, that I was better disciplined at work than the others were. I wasn't as smart as some of those guys were, but I had obligations. I had some responsibility to do well there because the Navy had selected me, and because I had been in the Navy and I was proud of the Navy's reputation. I had a sense of responsibility that those younger people didn't have.

Also I had a better work ethic, which is probably what saved me there in my competition with those kids. Some of them could not do anything for three days, and then sit down and in one day do what had taken me four days to do [chuckle], and it was not only a wakeup call but a real pleasure to watch some of them think, how good they were at it.

Paul Stillwell: Were you the oldest student in the group?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, by far. I was the only one with a salary, and they took full advantage of our unfinished basement, for beer parties. I got along with all of them, although one, Israel Rosenbloom, quit talking to me for a while when he discovered I was in the Navy. I'd known him for three months, and he didn't realize I was in the Navy.

[Chuckle] Then one day Sprout called on me and said, “Commander, what do you think of that?” And Israel immediately asked what that meant, and quit talking to me over something we had done in Cuba. I don’t know what it was, but he was upset about that.

Israel was quite a dilettante. He had gone to Columbia for his undergraduate degree and for a medical degree, and discovered that the practice of medicine was crass. So he dropped back out and went back to political science [chuckle], getting a doctorate at Princeton in political science. He also—I never heard him play but once—was a masterful cello player. He looked like an anarchist, carrying this cello around the campus. [Chuckle] You always thought there was a machine gun in there. But he was a man of powerful mind and talent, but very, very liberal. Going to reform the world, and had no regard whatsoever for the military service.

Paul Stillwell: So that one word was like flipping a stereotype switch.

Admiral Crowe: Absolutely. That just came out. By then most of my compadres knew what my background was, and they didn’t take exception to it. They didn’t harass me very much. In fact, the professors were worse than the students were in that regard. Not the professors I was necessarily studying under, but some I met. I can remember one night at a party having furious arguments with a professor who thought that the legislature of New Jersey was closing in on their freedom of education, and that the professor should have complete authority as to what he taught, and so forth, and so forth. I said, “Well, I happen to agree with that. I think, as a military officer, that I should have the last word on who I’m going to shoot and not shoot [laughter] and that it’s up to me whether we’re going to have a war, and whether I should involve you in it, whether I draft you or not. I think that decision should lie with me too.” Oh, God, he got so excited that I thought he was going to have a cardiac arrest.

Paul Stillwell: Was this whole group in the same classes with you?

Admiral Crowe: Not in the same classes, but we were a group. We entered as a group, but each guy had a specialty, sort of. Like my good friend Dick Wilson, whom I still

see—gave a speech for him just last year, he’s a professor at Rutgers—he went into Chinese. Well, the very idea of learning the Chinese language completely separated him from the group, because it’s quite an endeavor. Oh, my God. And his study hours were different and his subject matter was different. I had two Arabists in the class, and they were studying Arabic. And I was studying French, trying to read it. [Chuckle] I had to. It’s been changed now a lot—but at that time you had to be able to read political science in two foreign languages. Well, I had studied German, not political science German, but I could pick up enough that I could get by in German. But I hadn’t had a word of French, so I literally memorized French for a year, and passed that exam, and then quickly forgot it. Not speak it; read it.

I think now, today, you must speak one foreign language fluently. Many of the doctorates require that, which makes a great deal more sense. I’d have never gotten a doctorate, but it, to me, makes a great deal more sense to do that, to become really involved instead of haphazardly involved. But I learned enough that if I had gone into the academic world I could have continued with it, to read it. But I didn’t, and so I never read it again.

Paul Stillwell: How did you go about setting up the courses in your curriculum?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I was very careful in that regard. As we’ve talked about before, I wanted to make sure that whatever I got my education in, that it didn’t send me down the wrong path in the Navy. For example, I watch my students today at the Naval Academy. Some of them are terribly interested in South America, and they’re getting marvelous experience. The exchange students go on cruises down there, they learn Spanish, but they’re about to go to a Navy that probably will never use them. And I didn’t want that to happen. I wanted my education to look generalist, so that I was still free to be assigned wherever.

Essentially what I gravitated toward was international relations. Not totally, but essentially. And not to be identified as any—not a Russian expert or anything expert. And to get a general political science education. Now, most of them had goals otherwise. They were looking to really do some specific area.

Then I used to advise—when I returned to the Navy I actually ran the doctoral program for a while. I had a lot of students that would do that, would specialize, but I made sure they understood what they were doing before they got involved in it. But nevertheless—in fact, one of my students was sort of famous: Gary Sick. You know Gary Sick?

Paul Stillwell: I've heard the name.

Admiral Crowe: He's become a Middle East specialist, and now he's back at Columbia, where he got his doctorate.\* He's on the faculty there. But he's considered one of the leading Iranian experts in the country. Not everybody agrees with Gary, but he's perfectly capable of defending himself. I see his name quite often in the newspaper.

I was fascinated by my classmates, all of whom were highly selected, all of whom were on full scholarships. The beauty of my class there was every one of them was a full scholarship. I think there were only 15 or 18 of us. And at that point Princeton had the money and the grants, and so forth, that once they could select a kid they'd pay his way right through the doctoral program.

Paul Stillwell: So the Navy didn't pay tuition for you?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. It paid tuition for *me*, but I mean the equivalent to me, those kids. Now, it's interesting you mention that, because Sprout came to me at the end of the my first year and said, "We have some fellowships around here."

I said, "Well, I don't need money, and to give me money would distract from somebody else."

He said, "Yes, but how about your résumé?" Well, academics worry about that sort of thing.

I said, "I don't know what you mean."

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\* Captain Gary G. Sick, USN (Ret.), is an adjunct professor of international affairs at Columbia University's School of International & Public Affairs. He was on the staff of the National Security Council under Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan.

He said, “Well, you should be a fellow of some kind. I’ll make you a Dodds Fellow.”

I said, “Well, what the hell’s that mean?”

He said, “Not much.” [Laughter] But he said, “We’ll keep the money, won’t give you any money, but we’ll put on your academic résumé that....” So we did that, and I was a Harold W. Dodds fellow. It’s a big name at Princeton.\* I think he was a professor. That was Sprout’s way of trying to do something nice for me, but I’m sure the Navy never even looked twice at it.

Paul Stillwell: But it sounds as if you and he developed quite a bond.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, we did, we developed quite a bond. He was a very kind man, a very gentle man, and I’m sure he always worried about whether I had enough steel. He died before I’d done much in the Navy, and I know one of his concerns.† I saw a letter he wrote saying that, “Commander Crowe has the intellect to handle this, but I just don’t know if he is going to have the energy and the backbone for high command.” He would be astounded at what happened to me. [Chuckle] That was always one of my regrets. My first was my father wasn’t alive, my second is that Sprout didn’t live for it. And I got very fond of Sprout.

I told him on the dissertation that I just had to have that thing done before I left, because I had no assurance that once I left that I would have the time to “finish it up.” The world’s full of people that have done everything but the dissertation. He said, “We’ll get it done.” I would throw in a draft and he would correct it, and I’d throw another draft in, and he would do it right away. He wouldn’t mess around with it. He was good at his word. We finished in time.

Paul Stillwell: So the fact that he had written and studied about the Navy had to make a big difference.

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\* Dr. Harold W. Dodds was president of Princeton University from 1933 to 1957.

† Sprout, who was born in 1901, died in 1980.



Admiral Crowe: He was very, very appreciative of the fact we had a naval officer finally come to the program. Now, of course, in the courses I was taking, I was a little surprised by how theoretical political science was. And, of course, that comes from the academics. These schools traditionally produce professors. Now, a lot of those people do other things, like Richard Perle and the columnist George Will are graduates of that place.\* And once they got out they do other things. But the purpose of the school was to produce professors in political science. And most of the courses are highly oriented toward theory, and proving the theory or disproving the theory, and trying to reduce human activity to a theoretical constant. That really stunned me a little bit. I had been two-thirds of the way through law school, which used the case study, which I thought was an extremely interesting way to learn, and political science uses that a lot too. But the law school is not theoretical as political science is, and yet the material they're dealing with is so spongy, how do you ever reduce it to a theory that's working? I'm going to be working on an article right now where I attempt to do that, but we'll discuss that later.

Paul Stillwell: And it's a lot more theoretical than the BuShips Technical Manual. [Laughter].

Admiral Crowe: That's right. And we'll get into that.

I was surprised by how most of the professors, but not all, immediately got into theory and tried to reduce things to—and would tell you how many theories there were where each had a name, and why each probably had an element of truth in it, and things that were not true in practical experience.

Now, Sprout had actually had some practical experience in the government during the war. There were very few people in the faculty that had. The ones that did have were quite liked by the students. It's the old story like anything else, they liked to have a professor say, "I did that." And particularly in the law. They like to have lawyers

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\* Richard N. Perle is a political advisor and lobbyist who was an assistant Secretary of Defense from 1981 to 1987 and in the Reagan Administration a member of the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee from 1987 to 2004. George Will is a syndicated newspaper and magazine columnist and a television commentator.

teaching law school, not professors. But political science is full of people that have no practical experience in the government but are telling you all about the government, and it's sort of irritating and annoying. There were a couple of professors there that had, but the bulk of them had not really worked in the government.

There was a professor named Falk that I didn't get along with very well.\* He was fascinated with the fact I was in the Navy, but he didn't think I was very bright. [Chuckle] And we disagreed on everything. I took one course from Falk and decided I'd better not do that again or I'd never get out of there. I think the grade he gave me was all right, but we were poles apart in our thinking.

The most famous professor they had there when I was there was a man by the name of Eckstein.† He was just generally a political scientist, and had done most of his work on Britain. You know, his mind just worked different. He thought about things, and he wrote a monograph on the British government. It's probably the best I've ever read on how the Brits work. It was a real pleasure to be in Eckstein's class, although I felt I was in the lower reaches. [Chuckle] It was full of big minds in there that semester. But it was sure some experience. And listening to Eckstein talk was just marvelous.

I took some courses in administration and so forth, and on practical problems, that I felt much more comfortable in. And then when you could relate what was going to history, and so forth, I felt more comfortable there.

Then, in my second year in Princeton I did some auditing of some very famous men. I didn't have time to really take their courses, because I was loaded up, but one was a man by the name of Marion Levy, who was sort of a sociologist in the political science business, and I really enjoyed listening to him. But I didn't take his course; I'd just go in and listen to the lectures.

Then the most famous man whose class I ever attended was George Kennan.‡ I audited a course from George Kennan, and that was also equally fascinating.

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\* Professor Richard A. Falk was a member of the Princeton faculty, with a joint appointment in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public International Affairs and the Department of Politics, 1961-2001.

† Professor Harry H. Eckstein, who was Jewish, was born in Germany. He and his parents came to the United States in the 1930s to escape the Nazi regime.

‡ George F. Kennan, who served on the State Department's policy-planning staff in the immediate post-World War II period, is credited with developing the U.S. policy of "containment" toward Communism. That strategy was a key point in U.S. international relations during the Cold War.

Paul Stillwell: Well, in some ways he was the father of the Cold War.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, and I teach it in class. When I went to Russia as Chairman I called up Kennan, who was 89 or 93, I forget what, and asked him to come to lunch and talk to me about Russia before I went. And he came down. He didn't remember me, but that's irrelevant. We talked for about two hours. He was not very military, he doesn't know a lot about military, but he knows a lot about Russia. [Chuckle] And I know a lot more about him than he knew about me, because I've sort of followed Kennan over the years. And I teach him today in class. And to listen to *him* talk in class was, really, just great.

There were a lot of peripheral stuff at Princeton if you could find the time to do it that made the stay really worthwhile. Like we went to all the football games. And Bill Bradley was playing basketball.\* Went to every basketball game to see him play. And from a family standpoint, we lived in the community. We lived in a small house, met a lot of people that were civilians, had absolutely nothing to do with the military, and many of them didn't know I was in the military. It was a great three years for my family. They all remember Princeton. And they all remember the six months they went to Britain when I was doing my dissertation.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember instances of any of these case studies, examples that you looked into? Specific topics that you covered in your discussions?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I remember some of the theoretical stuff about governments—are they run by people or are they run by leaders? Whether the leaders actually lead or just think they're leading, and that sort of thing. And, of course, I took a summer course on British government that particularly appealed to me, because Princeton doesn't have a summer school, or at least they didn't then—of British government. Everything in that course I dug up again when I became ambassador. It was mainly history, was what it was. In fact, the professor that taught it was history; it wasn't political science.

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\* William W. Bradley, a Democrat from New Jersey, served in the Senate from 3 January 1979 to 3 January 1997. In 2000 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic nomination for president. After graduating from Princeton in 1965 he was a Rhodes Scholar and later played professional basketball.

Eckstein had all kinds of theories about group dynamics. And I took a course in comparative government, between parliamentary systems, the French system and the American system. Back then I was a staunch defender of the American system and thought it was immeasurably better than the others, but today I think the British system is the best. I've changed my mind on that, with a little more maturity. But a lot of stuff I don't remember.

One of the first things you learn there is how much you don't know. You're impressed very quickly. Of course, the first thing they do in graduate school is give you a reading list that's impossible. It takes a little while to learn that, that when they say, "Read all this," they don't really mean it [chuckle], because it's impossible to do. How am I going to handle this? The Army had been going to Princeton a long time, and there was an Army officer a year behind me there that almost became dysfunctional because he couldn't read the whole reading list. And I can remember one day having a heart-to-heart talk with him, "They don't know that you haven't read the whole list. [Chuckle] Don't read the whole list. Read what you can and act like you've read it." But you learn first of all how much you don't know. And then in all this stuff that's going on in the world, there are people sitting around that are actually, with scalpels, taking it apart thread by thread and are really studying it.

The second thing you learn is that the people doing the work don't pay any attention to those guys at all. [Laughter] And that really did surprise me. We would get into something like this Arab-Israeli problem, and the people doing the work just don't have the time to follow the guys that are churning out the books on the Arab-Israeli problem. There's a huge gap between the thinkers and the doers, the gatherers and the hunters, or whatever. It's a bridge you would like to see disappear, and you try and make it disappear if you have an education like I did, but you don't succeed at it.

When I became CinCPac—I'm trying to think of his name. Who's the number-one Chinese man in the world? What was his name? An author at the University of California. I immediately made an appointment to see him and spent some time, and he came out to CinCPac with me and talked about China for a long time. And when I went to CinCPac I read all kinds of stuff about the Asian countries, and so forth, and so forth, but that's hard to do, and in the everyday press of business the people doing that

work, they don't pay much attention to the academic world. Now, it would be nice if they could, but I'm sorry, just the reality of life avoids it.

I'm studying the Korean War now in my class, and I've studied it more this semester than I have before, and the gap between the people that knew Korea and the people that were fighting for Korea was huge. And even within the government a very curious thing happened. Our own government was upset by the Communist threat, which had not gone the way they wanted it to go, and how appalled they were about what was happening to them, but they didn't understand it. And along came Kennan with what they call the "long message." I don't know if you're familiar with that or not. It's six or seven or eight pages of a message explaining Russia. And the U.S. government was grateful! It was circulated all over Washington.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and published with the author unidentified.

Admiral Crowe: Later on, as "X," in *Foreign Affairs*.<sup>\*</sup> But the message originally sent, and he put on it "Not due for compression," or something, "No abbreviation." Read the whole bloody message. You know, most people would ignore that, but in this case nobody ignored it; they took him at his word. And all of a sudden we had a strategic rationale for how to deal with the Russians. Well, along came Korea, and the two men that told the government not to cross the 38th Parallel were Kennan and Bohlen, whom they had just finished listening to.<sup>†</sup> In this case the government said, "Well, what do they know?" and went across the 38th Parallel without even thinking twice. It turned out that they knew quite a bit, and they were right, and the whole rest of the government, including Acheson, was wrong.<sup>‡</sup> But when they saw fit, to hell with the theorists. But, boy, they predicted exactly what was going to happen.

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<sup>\*</sup> The "X Article," formally titled "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," was published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine in July 1947. Kennan had written it when he was U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission in the Soviet Union from 1944 to 1946.

<sup>†</sup> The 38th parallel divided North and South Korea at the time. Charles E. Bohlen was a long-time State Department diplomat who had served in the Soviet Union before and during World War II. When U.S. forces did cross into North Korea in 1950, the action drew Communist China into the war.

<sup>‡</sup> Dean G. Acheson served as Secretary of State from 21 January 1949 to 20 January 1953.

The same thing's happening in Iraq. We have all kinds of people predicted what was going to happen, and the government didn't listen to them. To bridge that is extremely difficult. And, of course, to his credit, that's what a guy like Petraeus is trying to do, he's trying to bridge that, and he'll have some tough sledding. No snow [chuckle], but tough sledding in the Army and other places.

Paul Stillwell: And then you lay domestic and international politics on top of that.

Admiral Crowe: Of course, yes. They've got all their emotional baggage they carry around. But you learn that very quickly when you're in school and have come from the government, that, God, people are churning this stuff out by the bushel, but nobody that's responsible for the decisions is reading it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I've heard a similar complaint that people who send in intelligence reports to ONI wonder if anybody reads them, or they just get stuck in a library.\*

Admiral Crowe: And, of course, what happens is the volume just overcomes you. And that's the reason that a lot of stuff gets classified. They feel they'll read classified stuff. [Chuckle] It's not that it's secret; it's just that it'll be more readable if it's secret than it it's not.

And, thirdly, just the plain valley between the thinking world and the doing world. This has been written about quite a bit, not by naval officers but by other people. You discover—this is a little tender, because people that actually do things discount it, but you discover when you return you're working for two masters. Now, that first comes out in the law. A lawyer that's educated in a law school and then goes into the Navy—and the Navy's always wanting to chop a corner off here or abbreviate this, or go a direct route instead of an indirect route—the lawyer's torn, because lawyers, the way they think and the way they do is not the way the Navy thinks and does, but they work for the Navy. So he's always got this. Well, I discovered I had the same problem when I came back from graduate school. I would write a paper and I would say, "Would Professor Sprout like

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\* ONI - Office of Naval Intelligence.

this paper?” And he probably wouldn’t. I wrote things and thought things differently than I did before I went there.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you talked about that in the book, when you got into OP-61.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And you discover you have acquired another monkey on your back, one that the guy you’re working with doesn’t understand. He doesn’t give a damn about what Professor Sprout thinks. [Chuckle] Who in the hell is he? But this paper would never have gotten by Princeton. And I particularly discovered it in the wording.

Now, my father was the same way. My father used to say, “Don’t use the same word two or three times. Put another word in there. That’s the mark of a sophisticated writer. Don’t just keep using the same word.” Well, the Navy uses the same word every damn time. [Laughter] And there’d be many a time I sent a paper up and the guy would cross out my words and write in the plebian Navy way of talking about it. You know, that used to annoy me.

Paul Stillwell: “We didn’t send you to Princeton to learn how to think.” [Laughter].

Admiral Crowe: That’s exactly right; that’s what they were thinking. But you do have this tension between your educational background and everything you write. In our oral history we haven’t gotten to it yet, but it came to a head in the Vietnam War when I wrote a paper on the Geneva Accords.

Paul Stillwell: You did cover that very well in your book, and Champ Blouin’s response to it.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And that was really a direct result of my education. I just couldn’t sign up to a paper like that, like he wanted.

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\* See *The Line of Fire*, pages 61-62. Vice Admiral Francis J. Blouin, USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy) from July 1968 to July 1971.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you said that you and Dick Knott took some pride that you had created a furor in OP-06.\* [Laughter].

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it really did. We had a sort of modest nuclear explosion in 06. But that came from this tension I'm talking about. And when I was at Princeton I didn't recognize it, but as soon as I returned to the Navy it came over me all the time.

Now, we had some professors at Princeton that were pretty good about acknowledging their limits, and that they did not have responsibility, that it was easy to theorize, conceptualize, talk, and criticize people for doing things without being responsible for your criticism. And they would make that clear in class, which I always thought was a pretty mature way to do it, that they understood that having responsibility and not having it is two different things, and that responsibility makes you do things that you don't have to do in the classroom. On the other hand, some of the younger professors didn't acknowledge that at all. "I've got a better idea than the government, and if the government doesn't have my idea the government's wrong."

Paul Stillwell: Were there school solutions on these issues, or kind of a free-play discussion?

Admiral Crowe: Usually, some, some not. Some of the professors were younger than I was when I was in school. I didn't enjoy that very much, didn't appreciate it very much. And I'm sure they didn't appreciate me either. But I'm trying to remember the name of the guy who I did get very friendly with, later headed the Woodrow Wilson School, that he taught me a course in administration of local government. What was his name? He even gave me a real good grade. But he and I became very friendly, and he was a younger fellow.

It was fascinating to meet professors. When I'd first meet them they didn't know I was in the Navy, and then when it would come out—they were nice people, kind people, but they were very cynical about professional military, and how they would react, and immediately their tone would sort of change. Now, Sprout didn't have any of that at

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\* Lieutenant Commander Richard C. Knott, USN.



all. Sprout greatly admired professional military people. He never had anything to do with it, so shooting somebody never occurred to Sprout. [Chuckle] He's sort of like that guy that writes Aubrey, the O'Brian series. I met him. I had him to lunch in London.

Paul Stillwell: Patrick O'Brian.

Admiral Crowe: Patrick O'Brian. He was a very gentle man, but he loved writing about violent things, and he greatly admired people that could do violent things. And Sprout was a little bit that way. I think he was the number-one guy on the staff that liked military. Nobody else really fell head over heels on it.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have any connection with the NROTC unit at Princeton?\*

Admiral Crowe: I was attached to it. And the question is whether they had any connection to me. [Chuckle] I was considered just a guy wandering around the campus there, whom they gave me my paycheck every, whenever. But I was a commander, so occasionally the CO would call me in and ask me questions about the university, and ask for a little help on something or other. I also had a query from CIA to try and get close to some Russian students there. I gave it a go, but we just weren't studying the same things, and it wasn't natural for me to bump into them and become friendly with them, because we just didn't have any common classes or anything else. But they examined whether they wanted me to look into it and see if I could get close to some of those people.

Paul Stillwell: What was the CIA hoping to get?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, turn somebody. They gave me a list of names of people they were interested in.

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\* NROTC – Naval Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

Paul Stillwell: Was any of the discussion in classes flavored by the developing Vietnam situation?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, oh, oh, oh, yes. Of course, these people followed everything, and they not only were students, they were in the real world. And not only the newspapers, but we had somebody that was at every protest movement that ever occurred. And, of course, that's part of education too. I loved to sit in and listen to these people that felt so passionate and so single-minded, and so unappreciative of practical problems. But boy, they get off and they start winging it. And, of course, these people are well educated that when they winged it they were very articulate, and some very persuasive. It was difficult to refute them, and they didn't listen very well to refutation either. [Laughter] Every one of them had a cause of something or other.

But I found my fellow students very likable. Only one or two of those students that I didn't like. I found, in their own personalities, and they were exceptionally bright. I had not been chosen for my brightness; they had been. I just was chosen because the Navy was paying for it and I was in the military, but those kids had undergone a huge winnowing process to get in there. They'd never made less than an A anywhere they'd been. The department didn't use A, B, C, because it was too colored by everybody's background, so they had a completely different system: good, very good, and something or other. To get an excellent in the political science department was damned near impossible. I didn't even attempt it.

Paul Stillwell: Was there any competition among students?

Admiral Crowe: There was among some of them, the really terribly bright ones.

Paul Stillwell: But was there any sense, like at the Naval Academy, where you would all be ranked?

Admiral Crowe: Well, as I say, the number-one guy, he couldn't have cared less what they were ranking him. He was too busy. He was a Fabian socialist of some kind.

[Chuckle] Now, there were a couple of people, there was a kid from Oklahoma, Blair, sort of a farm boy. God Almighty, he had had an intelligence level of 210 or 250, or some damn thing.

Graduate school at Princeton was much more difficult than anyplace I'd gone to school. The biggest difference, which I tell my students currently, many of whom are interested in graduate school, is that the responsibility isn't on anybody but you. There are no deadlines, there are no exams, there are just papers, and if you don't want to do it, a lot of people don't do it. But there's nobody riding herd on you, and that's a transformation you sort of have to make. But I think the military makes it pretty well. Sprout told me that by far the most conscientious students he had were always the military officers. He had a whole string of Army people come through there. They had a sort of relationship with Princeton. And a couple of Air Force. The Navy sent some people in the construction business, CEC, to Princeton for years, but it was somewhere else on the campus and was self-contained.\* The political science department had had nothing to do with the Navy, but they were eager to do it. But I don't think anybody's gone there since I went.

The number-one military graduate of Princeton was always Andrew Goodpaster, and Sprout was his advisor. He used to talk about Andy Goodpaster quite a bit. And Goodpaster, when I met him later, used to talk about Sprout some. Actually, Goodpaster was in the White House when I was there as a lieutenant, but I didn't know him.† He was Eisenhower's right hand. He was literally Eisenhower's national security advisor. They didn't have the title then, but that's what he did.

Paul Stillwell: I interviewed a Navy captain who was General Goodpaster's aide over at SACEur, and he said he was so disciplined, so bright. Not really a warm, outgoing personality, but he knew what had to be done and he did it.

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\* CEC – Civil Engineer Corps.

† From 10 October 1954 to 20 March 1961, under Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, Colonel/Brigadier General Andrew Jackson Goodpaster served on the White House Staff as Defense Liaison Officer and Staff Secretary to the President. Goodpaster eventually became a four-star general as served as NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

Admiral Crowe: I knew him, but I didn't know him that well. In my dealings with him he was always very slow and very deliberate, and very gentlemanly, and talked about Eisenhower a lot. Of course, that was a big part of his life. He really was a satellite of Eisenhower, and then headed the Eisenhower Institute for several years. And then the place we were looking at to possibly retire there in eastern Washington was where he was. He died while I was looking.\* And I went to Goodpaster's funeral. I'm not quite sure why I went, but I went anyway. And several of his classmates, I think three, gave eulogies. And there was a huge crowd there from Knollwood, which was the community he was in.

He was different than most Army officers. That's one of the things that graduate school does for you—it distinguishes you. You did things a little differently than the normal military way. And the other services seem to be a little more receptive to that than the Navy does, although I think the Navy's learning. We now have quite a few people that have done well in the Navy that have had some higher education in the human sciences, but when I went there wasn't anybody.

Paul Stillwell: Do you think that might in any way be related to Goldwater-Nichols and the emphasis on jointness?†

Admiral Crowe: I think it is. Yes, I do. I was intrigued the other day in my own mind by all the puff pieces about Petraeus, and I tried to think if any other Chairman has had a Ph.D, and I don't think there have been. If they have it would be in something technical. But I guess I'm not confident to say; I don't know. I know Moorer didn't, Radford didn't, Bradley didn't, and I don't know about Twining; I wouldn't know about him, or Wheeler. I just don't know. But I don't think Pace has any. I know Colin didn't. Shali didn't, and neither did Shelton. But I can remember when I was Chairman, Carlucci came to see me. He was the national security advisor then, he wasn't SecDef.‡ He

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\* General Goodpaster died 16 May 2005 at age 90.

† The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 went into effect on 1 October of that year. It mandated a good deal more in the way of joint-service relationships than had been the case up to then. For details, see "DoD Reorganization," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, May 1987, pages 136-145.

‡ Frank C. Carlucci III was National Security Advisor to President Ronald Reagan from 2 January 1987 to 23 November 1987. He was later Secretary of Defense from 23 November 1987 to 20 January 1989.

mentioned my degree and said, “We really think that you have a better understanding of politics than we’re used to.” I don’t know why he came to see me, but he came to talk about that.

The obligation goes both ways. I talked about how you have this tension because you’re not satisfying your advisor in your education, but I always felt a strong responsibility when I was there to defend the military. Anytime it came up I just threw reason to the wind and went right into a spirited defense. God, I wish I could remember that professor’s name. One day in class he was talking about the problems—he was really talking about industry, and so forth—where the directions you’re going to go get confused, and contrary orders, and so forth. But nobody had any examples.

I said, “Well, I’ve got a great example, and that is that Admiral Nimitz sent out a message during the war: ‘There will be no more ship collisions.’”<sup>\*</sup> [Chuckle]. He knew damn well there were going to be ship collisions. And while I was a commanding officer we got an order, a policy, that we would not give way to Russian ships when we were privileged. And it would say [chuckle] that neither should we have a collision. I always thought that was a little tough. And the professor really appreciated that. He thought: “There *is* an example of wanting to have it both ways, the best of all worlds.” You’ll do this and do that, but you won’t do this, and get in trouble.

Paul Stillwell: The rock and the hard place.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And there were no apologies for it. Just, you know, said you won’t have a collision. I don’t know how you do that sometimes. But the real world is full of it, and students don’t always have an understanding of that.

I think I mentioned the tremendous advantages of Princeton. While we received a master’s degree there was no program for it. It was just a piece of paper that, as you went by they handed it to you.

Paul Stillwell: No thesis to write.

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<sup>\*</sup> Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, 1941-45.

Admiral Crowe: No thesis to write, no formal certification. They just gave you a master's degree. [Chuckle] But they didn't give you that till you got the doctorate.

In choosing a dissertation topic, of course, that was done in cahoots with Sprout. Most of his Army Ph.Ds had gone to Britain one way or another. One had written a dissertation on the Ministry of Defence. One had written on the hierarchy in the British Army. And then Goodpaster, I forget what he wrote on. And they were all British. And since I didn't speak any foreign languages but I wanted to go overseas, we decided Britain was the only place I could do that, and he encouraged me to write on the Royal Navy. He really wanted me to, and that's what I did.

We actually left in September of about '64, I think, and I spent from September to January in Britain. We lived on Kensington High Street in a flat that had four levels. I don't know why we called it a flat, because it had nothing in it but steps. I think there were 39 steps from the top to the bottom. We had three children with us, very young. We lived there in the center of London. It was one of the most magnificent experiences of our life. We had never been to London. I had read everything I could get my hands on about Britain and about history, and particularly British military history.

I was primarily relying on interviews, but we were not as naïve as we sounded. Sprout was very familiar with Britain, and he said, "They're not going to like somebody doing a dissertation on interviews. That's not their system. And they're not going to like your writing on current events. That's not their system. But it *is* our system. You can go over there and you can interview as many people as you can get your hands on." Then also he gave me a bunch of names of where I could find newspaper clips, and made arrangements for me to get into them, particularly the RUSI, and then a couple of more specialized libraries.\*

Paul Stillwell: Did you tape-record the interviews?

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\* RUSI – The Royal United Services Institute is a British think tank on security and defense issues.

Admiral Crowe: No, I did not. Perhaps I should have, but I don't know that the technology permitted it at the time. I just didn't. I wasn't an experienced interviewer; I'd never done a lot of it.

Paul Stillwell: So did you take notes?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. Sprout wrote some people and a couple of professors for me. Then I went down to see the CNO. I don't think I ever got in to see the CNO, but I got in to see a classmate of mine, Bill St. George, who was in OP-61 at the time, and I told him that I wanted to interview some of the high-level officers of the Royal Navy. And he said, "Well, let's have CNO write a letter."

I had never thought of that but said, "Well, yeah, let's do." [Chuckle] And St. George wrote a letter right there in front of me.

Paul Stillwell: This would be Admiral McDonald at the time.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and St. George pushed this letter single-handedly right up to the top, and it was a letter from the CNO to Mountbatten, who by the time I got to see Mountbatten had been changed. From First Sea Lord he had gone up to be Chief of General Staff, and who was their Chairman.† But, anyway, the letter was from McDonald to Mountbatten asking him to see me. And I always gave St. George credit for that. It was his idea and he shepherded it. He got it through and got it signed.

Then as I would see certain people they almost inevitably were kind enough to say: "Well, maybe you ought to see so-and-so, and I'll call him, or I'll write a note to him." Seeing people in Britain really amazed me. You should have something ahead of you, but if you had something, either a phone call or a note, they would usually see you. And I would make it clear in the first moment I was in there that I was not interested in classified material. And they'd say, "That's fine," and then they'd start talking about

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\* Admiral David L. McDonald, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 August 1963 to 1 August 1967. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

† Admiral of the Fleet The Earl Mountbatten of Burma served as Britain's Chief of Defence Staff from 1959 to 1965.

classified material. [Chuckle] It's the leakiest system in the entire world. They just wouldn't stay off the subject. That's another reason I didn't threaten them with taping and so forth. But it depended on the personality of the guy. If it seemed good, I'd make notes. Sometimes I was a little intimidated and I'd rush out as soon as it was over and make notes, but not in there. And I had a good enough command of the subject, I'd been immersed in it so long, that I could do that pretty well.

Many times, when I'd set up an interview, he'd say, "Why don't we meet at my club?" Well, I was fascinated by that. I had never been in a British gentlemen's club. And so I bought a map of all the clubs in London, and I used to check them off as I got in them. [Laughter]. I must have had 20 interviews in clubs.

Paul Stillwell: These would be the ones with the leather chairs and the portraits and the fireplaces?

Admiral Crowe: The whole ball of wax. Did I tell you about the man with no arm?

Paul Stillwell: I don't think so.

Admiral Crowe: I'm trying to remember his name, the guy who had command in Malaya after Templer.\* I forget his name. Somehow or other Templer and Malaya came up and they said: "You ought to talk to General So-and-so." I guess maybe that was Mountbatten.

I said, "Well, I'm happy to talk to him." So they wrote him a note and I got a nice call saying that the general would like to meet me at the Army Club. He was retired, and he had had command in Malaysia several years, but he'd been out of the military for some time. And when he walked in—he was in civilian kit—he was missing an arm. Well, I assumed that he had lost it in World War II or World War I, or something, in some Zulu attack [chuckle], or cavalry charge. And as we went on he said, in passing conversation, he said, "Oh, yeah. Last year skiing I lost this arm." [Chuckle]. It didn't

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\* General Sir Gerald W. R. Templer, British Army, was known British High Commissioner in Malaya between 1951 and 1954. He was noted for his defeat of guerrilla rebels.



have anything to do with military gallantry or valor. I forget what we talked about. I ended up seeing a lot of people that didn't necessarily add a great deal to my dissertation.

Paul Stillwell: What was your particular focus?

Admiral Crowe: Well, my particular focus was the Royal Navy's fight to stay alive, politically. The postwar years were hard years for the Royal Navy. The name of the dissertation was "Political Roots of the Modern Royal Navy." They were right engaged in the political arena in a heavy way, just as you could say the U.S. Navy, the Revolt of the Admirals and the B-36, and unification, and all the fights we've had, and so forth. And how Korea saved this and saved that. Well, they had the same thing, except in their case the trials were so traumatic that literally their survival was involved. At least, they felt it was.

I had met a man in London, Keith Nash, who was not in the Navy, but he was a civil servant who had spent most of his career in the Ministry of Defence. I frankly don't remember why I met him. Somebody told me to. I went to see him, and he was terribly outgoing about what I was doing, and he not only helped me in his interviews, but he came up with a whole list of names and gave me a lot of information on the various bouts and arguments, and so forth and so forth. He later came to Washington for duty, and so we saw him socially over here for a while. He then returned to Britain and died. Later, when I was the ambassador, I invited his wife to the embassy, but she was so bitter and so inward-looking I think I only saw her twice over there.\* She just didn't enjoy life very much, and didn't seem to be receptive to the invitations. But Keith himself was very instrumental on my dissertation, and he told me a lot of stuff that led me in the right direction. And, curiously enough, my best interviews were not with naval officers, who came in, spent two years, and left. The civil servants were a mine of information, because they had the continuity and they would be there forever. And Nash led me into a whole litany of those.

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\* Admiral Crowe served as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's from 1994 to 1997.

I did meet one Sir Caspar John, who had been a First Sea Lord.\* He was marvelous. He really helped me. I met some others that, it was wonderful to meet them but didn't help me much. Of course, one of those was Mountbatten, and also Fraser, the guy that sank the *Scharnhorst*.† Fraser was very good to me and took us down and toured the House of Lords, but he didn't help me very much. He was sort of dodgy and advanced in years, and wasn't quite sure what I was doing. But that was irrelevant. He was very kind to me. Shirley went with me, and that was the first time I had been to the House of Lords. Didn't realize I was going to see it again.

Mountbatten helped me see a lot of people. Before I walked out of Mountbatten's office he had written several notes to people: "Please see this officer." And I guess I told you the story about Roskill.

Paul Stillwell: That's in your book, yes.

Admiral Crowe: And the little problem I had with Roskill.‡ But Roskill was abnormal, it was unique. Every place I went for interviews people were most forthcoming. I actually discovered the Rickover thing through a guy being very forthcoming. He just assumed I knew all about it, and I didn't know any about it.

Paul Stillwell: What about Rickover?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I met the man who had been the First Lord of the Admiralty right after the *Nautilus* became successful.§ He told me that he and Mountbatten were in Washington for a visit, and at some reception Rickover came up to him and said—well, some background. They were in atomic research, too, but they had a lot of trouble, and they really weren't doing it very well. They were not successful in their first attempt to

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\* Admiral of the Fleet Sir Caspar John served as Great Britain's First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff from 1960 to 1963.

† The British sank the German battle cruiser *Scharnhorst* in the Battle of North Cape in December 1943. Admiral Bruce A. Fraser, Royal Navy, was then Commander in Chief Home Fleet. As admiral of the fleet he was later First Sea Lord from 1948 to 1951.

‡ Captain Stephen Roskill, Royal Navy (Retired), was the official historian for the service. See *The Line of Fire*, pages 55-56. He was initially difficult but later helpful after Fraser paved the way.

§ *Nautilus* (SSN-571), the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, was commissioned 30 September 1954.

build a reactor for a submarine, and Rickover knew that. And Rickover came up at this reception—I think this guy’s name was Selfridge, something like that. That doesn’t sound exactly right. Anyway, he was the first Lord when Mountbatten was First Sea Lord. Out of the clear blue, in a cocktail conversation, Rickover said, “How would you like it if I *gave* you a reactor?”

He said, “That’s against your law; that’s how I like it.”

And Rickover said, “That’s none of your business. I’ll take care of the law. You want a reactor?”

He said, “It’s certainly an interesting proposal.”

Rickover said, “I’ll handle the modality, and I will give you a reactor. There’ll probably be some conditions.” Sort of slid over that. And “Are you interested?”

This is sort of a fascinating story that never got in my book or anywhere. I think it’s time to talk about it, though, because, one, Rickover’s dead, and number two, those events are so far in the past.

That caused a huge ripple in the British bureaucracy. He and Mountbatten stayed up all night long sending messages to Britain about this feeler that they had received on the plant. Well, it all worked out, that Rickover did engineer it. Then he firmed up the proposal, and he said, “I’ll give you one power plant, cores for so many years,” etc., etc. “And you’re in the business. And you’ll see why we’re successful and you’re not. “However,” comma—

Paul Stillwell: The conditions.

Admiral Crowe: That’s right. He said, “Now, we’re looking at a long-term relationship here, and to do that here’s what I want, and will insist on. Number one, you discontinue your research.” Pow. “Number two, I interview all the officers that go into the program.” Pow. “Three, that the big contracts for the propulsion be given to Rolls-Royce.” [Chuckle] They said to me they don’t know why he liked Rolls-Royce, but he liked Rolls-Royce. And then there were some lesser conditions. But those three conditions were very difficult to swallow.

Now, the Royal Navy has a scientific core of people. Well, those scientists rose up in their wrath and said, “We’re not going let that son of a bitch tell us we can’t do atomic research.”

And Rickover said, “Well, I’ll feed you all our research.” Well, that didn’t satisfy anybody. And the idea of him interviewing all Royal Navy officers didn’t sit well either. But it also had an upside, which they were very interested in, and they really labored over it.

Then I talked to Mountbatten, and it came out in some of the things that Mountbatten said, but that was not where I got some of the story. Keith Nash put me onto the civilian civil servant that was handling this, and he gave me some of the story.

And then a funny thing happened. This saga really had a history, I mean, discrete in itself. I was doing some research out at the Royal Navy library, archives, where they had all their logs and so forth. They have logs of all navy ships out there. And he had a letter, this guy whose name was Kemp, a retired naval officer, who had written some on the navy, and he was the librarian. And the letter was from either Mountbatten or the First Sea Lord, and it said, “Please help Commander Crowe in any research he wants.” It didn’t mention classification at all.

He said, “Well, I’ve got a study you’ll really be interested in,” and he came out and threw it in front of me and it said, “Secret.” And it was an official history of the relationship with Rickover. I took this into a room and I started frantically making notes, and I made notes for three days, because I thought at some point he was going to find that I was not interested in classified and he was going to rush in here and take that damned thing. [Chuckle] And this thing went over step by step what had happened.

I still have those notes. I couldn’t write on it when he was alive. He’d have killed me. He would have literally killed me. And also some of the peripheral events that happened. So I took notes on that damned thing and turned it back in with a straight face.

Paul Stillwell: What was the outcome?

Admiral Crowe: Okay, well that was what I was going to tell you about. The decision was they couldn’t do it. He had already committed the plant. He was furious, and he told

them, “Okay, I’ll go through with the plant and the cores, and don’t ever speak to me again; I won’t give you another God-damned thing.” And he was good to his word, with some exceptions. But it made him evidently just bonkers.

Now, a few of the peripheral things really are interesting. The man in charge of the atomic plant in the Royal Navy when they started constructing a boat was—they have a construction corps—he was a Cockney and he had come up with a real fine education. I forget his name. But he grew up in mean circumstances. He was a rough customer himself. And he was in charge of building the first submarine, and he and Rickover would just glare at each other. But one day Rickover came over and asked to see their submarine, and they took him through the submarine. This guy had the foresight to bring a yeoman along [chuckle] and transcribe everything that Rickover said. And as he went through the submarine he was very offensive. “Aw, that’s cheap workmanship. Nothing like ours. Ours is a hell of a lot better.” And “Who put in that shit?”

And this guy put down everything that was in that. And this man put that in his file and said: “I’m going to use that some day.”

Well, sure enough, in building their submarine, I think in putting the first power plant in, they burned up a couple of main water pumps and wanted new ones, but Rickover—that was not part of the deal—Rickover wasn’t going to give them anything. He called up Rickover and said, “I need those coolant pumps.” And Rickover said, “So what?”

He said, “I’ll tell you what. I’ve got the notes of everything that you said when you went through the British submarine, and I’m going to publish that if you don’t give me these coolant pumps.” [Laughter] Rickover gave him the coolant pumps, and had him sign off on that he won’t do that again. You can’t bribe me for the whole thing. Anyway, this rivalry.

Well, along came the Polaris submarine and, of course, we gave them everything. We gave them the back end, the tubes, the missiles, and everything. Rickover wouldn’t give a damned thing for the power plant. And I don’t think the people in power in the U.S. government even knew half of that. And occasionally I would run across a clip about that builder, the Brit, and his problems with Rickover. I’d find in the press

something that was just a hint of what was going on, but I knew enough that I could put it together.

And then later on, when they had a big fight over Polaris, they tried to bust the Rickover ban and they couldn't. And Rickover, boy, he kept a tight hold. He never gave them another thing outside of that. But the gall of Rickover to say, "I'm going to interview your people, I'm going to do this and do that." And I know the U.S. government didn't know he was doing that.

Paul Stillwell: Can you imagine all the complications that would have caused?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, something fierce. And the civilian that I interviewed, that got me started on that, his name used to appear in some little clips. And I have subsequently seen over the years an article occasionally that referred to the Rickover-Royal Navy fight, but I've never seen anything in detail that laid it out.

I actually wrote an article once for the Naval Institute that hinted at a lot of this, and it was turned down. Jim Calvert sat on the board, and said, "Oh, God. We can't publish that. That's got too much about Rickover in it. That would just be dynamite."\* He sent it back to me and said, "Sit on it and swallow it." And I knew that it probably wasn't—I may be dumb, but I'm not stupid. But nevertheless, it was itching in my pocket some time to—and I knew as long as he was alive I couldn't say a damn word about that. Now, to find the notes. They're in there, but finding them's tough.

Paul Stillwell: That would be a fascinating article.

Admiral Crowe: And I guess the classification, it's 25 years, is over, as far as the British are concerned. During those three days I really thought I was sitting on pins and needles. [Chuckle] It was a very detailed report about conversations and the deliberations they had over it. Who objected, who didn't, and the fight, and whether it was worth the gamble or not, and whether they could talk him into doing it and still continue their

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\* Rear Admiral/Vice Admiral James F. Calvert, USN, served as Superintendent of the Naval Academy from 20 July 1968 to 16 June 1972. As such he was an ex officio member of the Naval Institute's board.

research. But it was strictly a matter of pride. They just couldn't accept it, couldn't accept his conditions.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it sounds as if he was trying to extend his control.

Admiral Crowe: He was! The son of a bitch was! I think he was setting a pattern. He was going to have the whole world's navies all reporting to him, interviewing their officers.

Paul Stillwell: But just the logistics of doing that would have been mind-boggling.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. He'd have overcome it, though. What an ego. Anyway, it was one of the most interesting things that happened in my research, and I couldn't publish a word of it. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Did any of the British officers you talked to see your dissertation as an avenue for them to get their viewpoints out on the decline of the Royal Navy?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I used to hear occasionally from a professor at Greenwich that used my dissertation in his class. But I gave copies to several people who professed to read it, and so forth. But no, not exactly what you're talking about. But several First Sea Lords have mentioned it to me. "Oh, yes, I read your dissertation, and I found it very interesting because I learned things about my navy I didn't know," and particularly in their public relations business. I used to get requests for my dissertation from Royal Navy people quite a bit. Not nowadays, but of course it's all been overtaken by events.

The big fault in the dissertation was the primary conclusion, When I submitted it, the Tories were in power, and I concluded that the Tories would not allow the carrier to die, that the carrier future of the Royal Navy was probably pretty good. Wrong. Well, as soon as the Labour Party came in they killed the carrier. [Chuckle] It rose later, again, but my conclusion that the carrier was bright was not a good one, so I was not a good predictor in that regard.

Paul Stillwell: Did you see any foreshadowing of the move that came not long after, to withdraw British forces from east of Suez?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, there was a lot of it. It was in every nook and cranny, yes. And it was clearly going to be a large element of people weren't going to forget the carrier. The Labour Party could kill it, but it would be a fight in progress. They would never stamp it out, which they didn't. They haven't stamped it out yet, of course, but what has killed it is, essentially, is money. That's just a fact. It didn't have anything to do with ideology or anything else; they're just out of money.

Paul Stillwell: But did you see a foreshadowing of their drawing back on their commitments?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, you mean worldwide? Yes, of course. And they hated that. Oh, my, they hated it. At least the civilian politicians had never accommodated to it. I saw that as ambassador as well as when I was writing the dissertation. They still insist they're a great power, and the bloody facts of the matter are, they aren't.

Paul Stillwell: And their navy's being cut in half from what little was left.

Admiral Crowe: It's enough to make you cry, it really is. I developed a deep affection for the Royal Navy.

Now, I ran across a couple of other things in the dissertation that were more public, not under cover as that was, but that I ran across the backroom stuff. When they canceled Skybolt, the Royal Navy's relationship with our Navy was closer than it was with the Royal Air Force.\* [Chuckle] Our Navy discovered that our Air Force was having real trouble with Skybolt, and they told the Royal Navy. They said it was never

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\* Skybolt was canceled in December 1962. It involved a ballistic missile, armed with a nuclear warhead and designed for a range of approximately 1,000 miles, to be fired from planes such as the B-52 bomber.



going to fly, that Skybolt was a problem. The Royal Navy knew before the Royal Air Force knew that that program was going down the tubes.

Now, this was of tremendous interest to the Royal Navy, and not necessarily pro. They were afraid that it was going to thrust them into Polaris. The Royal Navy didn't want in the Polaris business, for the very reasons we're talking about. They were afraid it would kill the conventional navy, and the carriers, and so forth, and they were right. But they insisted, they had already begun to work: What are we going to do when Skybolt goes under? And the very thing that happened they had sort of foreseen, but they were not for it. They knew how expensive Polaris submarines were, they knew how the educational program would have to be, and they also knew they weren't going to get a lot more money for the navy.\*

They did get a promise out of the royal government that: "If we give you the deterrent we will transfer money from the air force to you, and you'll get money for it over and above your appropriation." Sheer horseshit. They never did. They promised to do it, but they just didn't do it. And what the Royal Navy predicted is exactly what happened. They got involved in this hugely expensive program, which they're in, which they've done very well in, and so forth, but it's been a big factor in killing the real Royal Navy. They didn't want to get in that business.

Paul Stillwell: I remember an interesting observation Admiral Train made 25 years ago. He said when the British made their move to pull back from east of Suez, the Argentinians saw that as a failure of British will, and that's what emboldened them to go into the Falklands.† And he said it then cost Britain far more to fight the Falklands war than it would have been to maintain the presence.

Admiral Crowe: That's a hard connection to make. I wonder if it's true, what he said. I've never heard that. That's interesting. It may be true, I don't mean it isn't. It may

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\* For an insider's account of the U.S.-U.K. Polaris program, see I. J. Galantin, "The Resolution of Polaris," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 1985, pages 80-88.

† The event that triggered the 1982 Falklands War was the Argentine occupation of South Georgia Island on 19 March 1982, followed on 2 April by the occupation of the Falklands. The British then mounted a long-range expedition that made an amphibious assault on the islands and recaptured them. Argentina surrendered on 14 June. Admiral Harry D. Train II, USN, was then Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet.

very well be true. However, that wasn't what it was. It wasn't a failure of will. It was a failure of money.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he was talking about the Argentinian perception.

Admiral Crowe: I understand that, yes. And, of course, it cost more money, but it's money that would never have been spent until—in war they do spend more money than they have. Every country does. And of course the British, I guess, are the outstanding example in all world history of a country that spent more money than they had in World War II. The debts that they ended up the war with not only killed their country, but I don't think they ever got paid. It certainly was the number-one feature.

But doing the dissertation was a great experience, absolutely marvelous. I saw a lot of London, I saw a lot of people, I saw behind doors and in front of doors. I walked all over that town. We didn't own a car, and I took public transportation everywhere, either a cab or underground. And Shirley was then vigorous and young, and had these young children, and they went to British school. We were only there for four and a half months [chuckle], but it was a big thing in our life and it was worth every penny of it.

Then I went back the end of January. She came back a little early, and I spent three more weeks in London and came back. And I had the problem getting that dissertation finished by the end of the school year. Sprout didn't think I could do it, but he would help me. And nobody thought I could do it, because people don't write dissertations in a hurry, but I did. I had to. And I developed a severe depression by the time I finished the generals and had my meeting over my dissertation. When I left Princeton I was in depression. That was my first experience. I've not had another; it was my only experience with depression, but I was in depression for about a year.

Paul Stillwell: Would you say that that was because of all the pressure?

Admiral Crowe: I think so. It wasn't clear to me at the time what it was, but it was just sheer pressure. And I discovered [chuckle], about a year later I read an article about a man that had written his dissertation on the problems that come from dissertations.

[Laughter] He said 25 to 30% of people who write dissertations developed depression problems. That made me feel a lot better.

Paul Stillwell: What were the mechanics? Did you write it out by hand?

Admiral Crowe: I wrote it by hand. And I had a very wonderful wife who typed that damned thing five times. Unlike me, she could type. My father said, “Oh, you don’t need to learn to type. You’ll never need it.” My father gave me a lot of good advice, but that’s the worst he ever gave me. But Shirley could type. We had a regular typewriter, and my father had just bought a portable electric one, and out of the clear blue he said, “You’d better—you need this,” and he gave it to Shirley. So she did have an electric typewriter. Now, we had carbons; we didn’t have this word processing business. And also she knew how windy I was, and they do turn dissertations down for being too long, and I knew I was getting into that problem. So we went and bought a little gadget that makes it look double-spaced, but it’s only one and a half spaces. [Chuckle] The whole thing was typed as one and a half spaces.

Shirley typed that thing time and time again. I would do a chapter and I’d give it to Sprout and he’d give it back. I’d redo it and give it to him. And then Shirley would type a final of the thing.

The logistics of a dissertation are often overlooked. You’re advised very quickly to never write anything you don’t have two of, and put one in the safe deposit, because if the other goes up in a fire or something, just boom, you’re out of it. So I did that. I had two copies of that, one in a safe place. And that’s all we did. Our whole life just revolved around that silly dissertation, every day, every night. We didn’t go anywhere, we didn’t have any trips or anything else. And we submitted that damned thing, and then I went back to the Navy.

Paul Stillwell: How long did it wind up being?

Admiral Crowe: It was long, it was long as hell. I guess I don’t have the copy in here. The full-size one my dog actually chewed on for a while, but I have the bound copy in a

box out here somewhere, and I do have some other copies of it. But, you know, I finished that thing and I put it aside, and I haven't had anything to do with it since. And yet my whole life revolved around that silly piece of paper.

Paul Stillwell: Ironic.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. But I look back on Princeton—I mean if you balance the pluses and minuses—it's been very influential in my career. And I look back on it personally as changing my life, the way I view life, the way I lead it, and I think my political instincts are much more liberal now than they were before I went there. And that characterizes my teaching. I am much more inclined to hear both sides of an argument than I would be otherwise, and to put myself in the other guy's shoes when I'm arguing. It made a different person out of me.

Paul Stillwell: How did it change the way you led your life?

Admiral Crowe: Well, in that way. I think particularly my political attitudes. I consider myself a sort of midstream conservative, but I'm not near as conservative as my friends. I'm a maverick in the Navy in political stuff and in dealing with people, and with appreciating—the central lesson of it all, of course, is politics is everywhere. It's everything, every time. It's endemic, and you can't get away. That's a futile effort, to get away from politics.

You know, kids used to come up to me in school and say, "I'm going to be an academic so I can get away from politics." Well, Jesus Christ. [Chuckle] Sprout had all kinds of political stories about academics in the university itself. But you discover very quickly that the world, the people, humankind, revolves around politics in one order or another. I'm sorry; it's just a law of physics.

Paul Stillwell: Did your children have to fend for themselves while you and your wife were so busy?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they did, and it did have an impact on them in that, when we moved to San Diego and I started going back to sea—I'd done most of my work at home, either in a carrel in the library or at home—and my daughter said, "Why did Daddy have to go join the Navy?" [Laughter] "He's never at home anymore." She thought I was going to be there all her life. And just for three years I was in there. And also my weight went up something fierce. Every time I'd come to a hurdle I'd run down and get a sandwich or something out of the refrigerator, and that was a disaster. But nevertheless you can just almost take my life, and it was different after Princeton.

Paul Stillwell: It's been a fascinating chapter today, Admiral. Thank you very much.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I know it's sort of weird, and sort of shameless to talk about it all the time, but it is. I'm eternally indebted to, not only Sprout but the whole—my father believed strongly in education, and in graduate education, and I do too, and I do because of that. And it has done things for me just personally with what I enjoy and don't enjoy. I can stand old age because I read so much, and that's where I get my satisfaction. I'm curious about a lot more things than I would have been before Princeton.

And I'm going to say this anyway, although I probably shouldn't. I noted that I was different than most naval officers after Princeton. Now, I'm not saying that in a derogatory or in a positive way. I don't know exactly what it means. But I am different, because I don't share a lot of the collective views of my compatriots. I don't hold them so tightly that I would leave the Navy or do something stupid like that, but nevertheless it warped my mind. [Chuckle] Princeton brainwashed me in a way that I think a lot differently than a lot of people I worked with.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we could also say it opened your mind.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's the way I would look at it. I'm not so sure they look at it that way. I used to laugh. I'd go to class and Israel Rosenbloom would tell me how liberal I was, and my classmates at the Naval Academy would come by and spend the night and then drive away saying, "What a Communist that guy is!" [Laughter] Israel

thought I was a conservative and they thought I was a liberal. I figured I must have it about right if both sides were sniping at me.

But, you know, that's what education does. It opens up your mind. We used to have a minister, a chaplain, in Pearl Harbor, and I use his line in commencement speeches. He says, "Your mind's a lot like a parachute. It won't help you if it won't open when you need it." I have seen naval officer after naval officer whose mind doesn't open when we need it, and that's the biggest thing I left the Navy with, is the biggest thing wrong with the high level in the Navy is that these guys train in certain ways, live in certain ways, practice in certain ways, and it captures them and they don't want to do it any other way.

Paul Stillwell: That will be the benediction for today. Thank you.

Admiral Crowe: I do labor under the illusion that one of my benign influences on the Navy is I've been a big supporter of getting more people to graduate school. I ran that graduate program for a while, and I worked hard to get more there and to get more and more schools. Don't send them all to one school, because I believe so strongly, for better or for worse.

Paul Stillwell: I think for the better. Thank you. (End of Interview 12)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, we're in a sunny but cool afternoon here as we approach the end of winter, and you had just a little footnote about your Princeton experience to start with, please, about your orders.

Admiral Crowe: Just one other thing I wanted to include, that I tried to convince the Navy that they should give me orders to London to do research on my Ph.D, but they weren't amenable to that. They gave me permissive orders, and all expenses going to and fro were mine, not theirs. It was sort of a command decision in the family whether to do that or not, but we did it, because we had never been to Britain.

Paul Stillwell: And I deduce that you've been eternally grateful that you made that decision.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I have been. It was a great decision.

Paul Stillwell: One thing that you alluded last time to was the depression you felt after finishing up your dissertation.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I did go through a period of depression. I felt that if I left the dissertation undone and would complete it later, it would never get done, so I really genuinely felt that I had to finish before I left Princeton. And that required several things, not the least of which to my wife to do more typing than normal, and to type almost two or three copies of that dissertation in the last few weeks. And it also required the cooperation of my adviser, who was very kind about it and was very helpful, Professor Sprout. But the pressure of doing that and then going through the oral exam afterwards, and so forth, pretty well did me in.

I got hyperventilating one day, and I thought I was having a heart attack. Really, that was all I was doing, was hyperventilating, but I had never had any experience of that. I had a classmate in Princeton who had left the Navy and went to medical school and was practicing medicine there. He was a good friend and submarine officer, and took care of my family the whole time we were there at no charge.

Paul Stillwell: Who was he?

Admiral Crowe: His name was Howard Unangst, a very colorful character.\* While we were there he got married. He's subsequently died, I think from drug usage. He had a very sad life. Later on his marriage fell apart. But he was very kind to us, and I immediately called him, and he came over and looked at me and said, "No, you're hyperventilating." My pulse was way up, and he said, "I think you're a victim of stress."

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\* Howard S. Unangst, Naval Academy class of 1947, resigned his Navy commission in 1953 and became a physician. He died in 1979.

He treated me for about a week, and at the end of the week he said, “I’ll keep you glued together until you get out of here, but then you’ve got to get over this on your own.” [Chuckle] He said, “I can’t continue on the medicine I’m giving you, but I’ll keep you glued together till you’ve passed this place.” And that’s exactly what we did.

Paul Stillwell: Would your condition fit that term “burnout” that we hear now?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I’m not familiar with burnout. Clearly, the expression would describe some of the things I was going through. But when I went home after Princeton I consulted a man I’d gone to high school with and roomed with at OU. He was a very well known authority in the country on diabetes. He was a research doctor, and I went to see him. He said: “You’re in depression.” His office was in the second floor on this busy street, and he took me to the window and he said, “Look out there.” And there were a bunch of people walking. And he said, “Probably about 25% of all the people that we see are in depression.”

He told me two or three things that were comforting. He said that you can continue to function in depression. People do. Some have depression all their lives. He said if you really have serious depression that may be suicidal and you don’t do that, but a lot of people continue their normal lives in depression. Don’t say you can’t work during that time—you can, he said. He prescribed some medicine which was just pills that relax you and so forth, and the only real manifestation of it, besides my attitude that the world was bad and nothing was good, I had a very high pulse rate. Curiously enough, my blood pressure didn’t come up, but my pulse rate went up to about 110.

He sent me back to the Navy. I was reluctant to tell the Navy doctors about my condition, but I’d been in San Diego about a month when it didn’t seem to me I was improving. I was very depressed and pessimistic, so I did go see the Navy doctor, and he said, “Oh, yeah, you’re in depression.” He gave me a thing called Elevil, which I carried in a little bottle for a couple of years. I took a lot of it that year. And one day about a year later I discovered I was out of depression, and I took out that little bottle of Elevil, and it was sort of a Linus blanket. I had rubbed it so much you couldn’t even read what it was. The prescription was all over. I used to take the bottle out and rub it [chuckle], and



if I felt, I'd take some of it. But I didn't realize, when it left it just all of a sudden—and he told me that would be the case. He said, “You don't just all of a sudden get well; you just work your way out of it.” It was about a year after I graduated before I felt really comfortable.

Paul Stillwell: So that really put a wet blanket on the satisfaction and the pleasure you should have felt from finishing the doctorate.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it did do a little of that. I used to sit down and make lists of everything right about my life, and then everything wrong with it, and the list that was right was very long. But, being in depression, I'd say, “Well, that doesn't matter. It's these things that are not right that are . . .” And you get in a frame of mind where nobody can change it, that you're just under a dark cloud and the world is treating you badly. But I continued to work, just like Feely advised me.

Paul Stillwell: Did you see any effect on your ability to do the job?

Admiral Crowe: Not really. I was a little worried, because when you drink you would feel better, and I thought, “Oh, that's worse.” I guess some people turn to drink doing this. So I worried the whole year about drinking—keep it moderate, keep it away, and not use it as a crutch. But curiously enough it just sort of very, very gradually disappeared, and I've never been back into it. I've been into what I thought maybe was temporary depression; I just didn't feel good. And a couple of times I went to Bethesda and said: “Maybe I'm back in depression.”

The doctor I talked to said, “No, you're not.” But I've never felt like I did then. I was really down.

When I was home my father just didn't understand that. He couldn't imagine what was going through my mind. But my mother used to complain about her nerves. She never used the word depression, but she'd say, “My nerves are bothering me.” And she took some medicine, which I didn't know what it was, and I think in retrospect she was in depression at times.

There are not many upsides to depression, but one of the upsides is that you have some sympathy for people. In the first place, you get an ability to recognize it, and secondly, you have sympathy for people that go in depression. And one of our best friends did. It was Sybil Stockdale, and I recognized immediately what was happening.\* You not only are sympathetic, but you can help some by encouraging them and telling them: “I’ve been through it, and I know how it feels, and I know how real it is.” And I have noticed that throughout the rest of my life I’ve had several brushes with people that had depression, some of whom didn’t realize it.

Paul Stillwell: Was this when her husband was a prisoner?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. In the end of it, just before he came home. I say before he came home—he didn’t come home till we came back to Washington, but she’d been in it a long time, and all of a sudden she just went into depression.

Paul Stillwell: She really expended a lot of emotional energy while he was gone.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And that’s when she laid down the reins there, at the very end, and began to worry about herself and the children a little more than she had. But she was in depression for a while.

Paul Stillwell: Did the depression in any way affect your relationship with your wife and children during that year?

Admiral Crowe: No, Shirley was very sympathetic and very understanding, and the children were too young to really understand what we were doing. I shared with Shirley all the doctor was telling me. But my father never understood it. I was only with him a couple of weeks there on leave. You do have a tendency to sleep a lot during that. The best place you feel safe is in bed with the covers over you. [Chuckle]. He just didn’t

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\* Sybil Stockdale was the wife of Commander James B. Stockdale, USN, Crowe’s Naval Academy classmate and good friend who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

understand, and he didn't make much attempt to understand it. He just didn't think it was real.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I think there was more of a stigma attached to it earlier.

Admiral Crowe: May have been. But, as I say, it really has helped me understand people. Although I thought I would lapse back into it occasionally, because my mother did. She would go in and out. But I never did. I never went back to it. I thought when I had some of these big jobs, maybe the stress would get into me, but it never did again.

Paul Stillwell: So there may have been a genetic component to it.

Admiral Crowe: Might have been. Very well might have been. But in many respects, though, the pressure—[chuckle] my contemporaries would just throw up at this—but the pressure, the self-discipline that a dissertation requires, is in many respects greater than the average daily decision-making. At least you're in the fray, and you're making decisions, and you're moving on, and there are other pressures that make you do that. But, boy, when you're doing that dissertation, there isn't any pressure in the world except your own.

Paul Stillwell: You talked about the advantage of the Navy work ethic while you were doing that process.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It's amazing what you own id, or whatever, drives. Right now my son-in-law has just retired from the Navy.\* His wife says, "Oh boy, you'll be home more now, there'll be more time together."

Shirley and I laughed about it and said, "No, he'll work long hours in this job. He's a Naval Academy graduate, and they teach you to work long hours." [Chuckle] And, sure enough, that's exactly what he's doing. Okay, he's changed jobs, but he hasn't changed *him*. It's amazing what that pattern does to you. It makes you competitive, it

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\* Captain Brian S. Coval, USN (Ret.).

makes you work hard, and it makes you think hard work's just a normal part of life. That may be bad or it may be good, I don't know. But I see it every day, and among the Naval Academy graduates.

Paul Stillwell: There was a cute story your daughter had when you went back to the submarine Navy in San Diego. "Why did Daddy have to join the Navy?" [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It's interesting.

Paul Stillwell: Well, let's talk about that job, please. You said Captain Bennett introduced you as a doctor but not somebody to trust with a Band-Aid.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and he used to kid about my doctoral degree quite a bit. I went back to be a chief of staff to a squadron commander whom I had never met before. He was quite an interesting man. His home was California, and he and his wife were sort of typical Californians. He was very outgoing, and I thought at first sort of demanding, but he really wasn't too demanding. He was very tolerant and easy to live with, and had a good sense of humor. We got along pretty well.

I tried to keep the depression from him. I never bothered him with it. I never mentioned a word about it to him. I had some close friends there that I used to discuss it with occasionally, but I didn't take it to my workplace. But sometimes, in the course of the day, my depression would really begin to make me nervous. And that damned pulse stayed up for a long time. Through that year, most of that year, I was in depression.

The work was not terribly hard, except that I'd been away for a while from the submarine force, and we had, for the first time I'd ever seen, a nuclear submarine. [Chuckle] I began to ride nuclears and try and acquaint myself with what was going on. We did have come into the squadron in the course of the year, we had the *Permit* and the *Snook*—three nukes, maybe four, in the squadron. We were charged with beginning to develop tactics for the nukes, and that was one of the most interesting things we got into.

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\* Crowe became chief staff officer to Captain Jack W. Bennett, USN, Commander Submarine Squadron Three. See *The Line of Fire*, page 57.

We would plan exercises between diesels and the nukes, and between surface ships and nukes, and I got an opportunity to ride quite a bit while that was going on. Also, SubRoc came in, and we had the experimental responsibility for SubRoc for a while.\* Also, deep submergence came in, and for that time it was under Squadron Three. It then went out subsequently into its own command. I never rode a bathysphere. I always wanted to do that and never got to do it.

Paul Stillwell: What was the role of the bathysphere in that time?

Admiral Crowe: Well, they were beginning to examine what deep submergence could do for the submarine force. And immediately, the first thing was, of course, just to build a vehicle that could go down for rescue work if the submarine was still intact and still alive, and they did a lot of experiments in the course of the year on that. We were not directly in the research, but they reported in the chain of command to us. The squadron commander spent a lot of time with the head of the deep submergence group. All of these things were quite exciting to me.

Paul Stillwell: Was there any divide during that time in cultures between the nukes and the diesels?

Admiral Crowe: It was beginning to develop, but it was nothing like it subsequently became. For example, in Squadron Three we had two divisions that didn't have any nukes, and we had one division that had the two nukes. Obviously, they considered themselves superior and on the cutting edge. On the other hand, the reason it didn't bother me so much is one of them was usually deployed, and while I was there only one nuke would be around. Our life was not revolving around nukes. There'd only be one operating there in San Diego, and it would go away and the other one would come in.

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\* SubRoc was a submarine-launched ballistic rocket, fired from underwater and guided to its target by an inertial system. Development began in June 1958, and it was approved for service in 1966. It had a range of about 35-40 nautical miles.

Then when I got orders to a division they were in my division. \* I used to kid Jim Watkins about: “How come you made admiral, given those fitness reports I handed in on you?”† [Chuckle]

He said, “When I was chief of BuPers I destroyed them.” [Chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: Yes, you put that in your book. Now, what can you say about the truth of Jim Watkins in that era?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, the truth is he got very good fitness reports. And not only that. He got fitness reports that said, “This man’s destined for high command in the Navy.”

Paul Stillwell: What qualities did you see in him at that time that led you to that conclusion?

Admiral Crowe: Well, mainly his mind. And he had lots of energy, a hard driver, very demanding man. And capable of handling a lot of balls in the air at once, and was just all over his ship. He knew everything that was going on in that ship. Irrespective of whether it was nuke or diesel, he was a good commanding officer in a submarine, and a very thorough and uncompromising one. And on top of that he had this nuclear background, which distinguished him very early in the game. He was very articulate and he wrote well. You were impressed that, God willing and the creek don’t rise, that here’s an officer that we’re going to see a lot of before we’re through.

Paul Stillwell: After that he was exec of the *Long Beach*, which was one of the very few nuclear-powered surface ships.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and he’s the only one of that crowd that really went into the surface combatant thing. We all ended up with surface ships for a while, maybe, but he

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\* In 1966-67 Commander Crowe served as Commander Submarine Division 31.

† Commander James D. Watkins, USN, commanded the nuclear attack submarine *Snook* (SSN-592) from November 1964 to September 1966. As a vice admiral he was Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel from 10 April 1975 to 21 July 1978 and later CNO from 1982 to 1986.

was the only nuclear-trained guy in the submarine force that went the surface way at the time.

He also was not only confident, he was arrogant, and that impressed you. But it was pretty hard to grade a man down for that. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Well, maybe he'd earned it.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. He had a lot to back it up. But he was. And, of course, I've known him very well since then in a lot of ways and a lot of places. In the Navy his friends used to refer to him as the "cardinal." And later on, in high positions, his ego failed him at times, made him do things he shouldn't have done.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any examples?

Admiral Crowe: Well, there is, and I think I may have mentioned it in my book, on the Goldwater-Nichols.\* He was CNO and I was Chairman. I was there when he retired. And we had sort of a tense relationship, because at least the conventional wisdom was that he and I had competed for the Chairman's job. Now, he would deny that, but that's another story. He opposed Goldwater-Nichols in many ways and was supported by Lehman to do so. As the year drew to a close and it was clear that something was going to pass, whether we liked it or not, as they were getting ready to vote I called the chiefs individually and said, "I will invite Congressman Nichols over [he was the guy giving us the most trouble] for breakfast this week, and this will be your last shot at Congressman Nichols before they go to a vote, and I recommend that you be judicious. I know you have things you feel very strongly about, but it's not a time to give him the full load. It's the time to pick out what your priorities and what is *the* most important issue to you, and it will probably be your last shot at him."

So they all agreed, and he came in for breakfast, and we went around the table as to what they thought. John Wickham and the Air Force had very little objections.† They

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\* See *The Line of Fire*, pages 158-159.

† General John A. Wickham, Jr., USA, served as Army Chief of Staff from 23 July 1983 to 23 June 1987.

were prepared to live with it. The Marines were against it, but I think primarily just because the Navy was. They didn't feel they were terribly impacted by it. Wickham had some problems. And we all had problems with what we called Title 4, the requirement for joint experience. Most of us didn't object to a requirement for joint experience, but to get into the nitty-gritty of how we structured our personnel system to permit that, we thought that Title 4 was way too much guidance, and so did I. I didn't think that part of it was a good piece of legislation. And Wickham spoke to that pretty eloquently.

Then we got to Watkins, and Watkins had a strong tendency to wax eloquent and get so enchanted with his own voice that he would say extreme things that he shouldn't have said. He started talking about Goldwater-Nichols, and he really got sort of mean about it. And then he fired a shot just out of the clear blue that said, "This bill is un-American." Are you aware of Congressman Nichols's background?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: He was in the Army in World War II and lost part of a leg. He was missing a leg. He had a prosthetic on. He was very active in the Army Reserves. And then he came into the Congress, and he was the number-one guy in the House, he and the guy from Mississippi, a National Guard man—I forget his name—but he was the Army spokesman in the House Armed Services Committee. Felt very strongly about the Army, the country, his sacrifice. He was very proud of the fact that he was still a functioning adult. And when Watkins said that, boy, you just saw the blood rise in Nichols's face right there.

I don't think Jim ever noticed it. Then he went on a while and he sat down, and Congressman Nichols stood up and said, "Well, I've had enough breakfast. Thanks very much, Chairman. I appreciate your inviting me," and walked out. And Jim said, "Well, why did he leave?" Well, if you listen to what the hell you were saying you'd know why he left. It took me about six weeks to get Nichols to talk to us again. [Chuckle] Jim really offended Nichols, very deeply.

Paul Stillwell: So the breakfast was counterproductive.



Admiral Crowe: Well, it was going pretty well there until Jim threw it off track. And then he retired a week later.<sup>\*</sup> In fact, as Goldwater-Nichols came in Jim went away, and he didn't have to pay the price, but *we* paid the price for what he'd done. That's all right down when the chiefs are meeting and you're offending some lieutenant colonel or something, but we were not dealing with lieutenant colonels. We were dealing with a very powerful congressman. Boy, he was mad. He didn't think it was un-American.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Well, you can understand why he would be angry.

Admiral Crowe: Absolutely. It was just a gaffe; it was a terrible gaffe. And that's what I meant by Jim's ego occasionally. He'd do that in the Tank. He'd get carried away with his advocacy [chuckle], and then he'd get on a roll, and he'd just keep talking, and get very impassioned, and colorful language, and blah, blah, blah. And we all understood. [Chuckle] He'd made his point after about three or four minutes; he didn't need to go on for another 10 or 20.

Paul Stillwell: I had a boss once who said, "You don't keep running after you've caught the bus." [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I heard an expression today. [Chuckle]. I was talking about my dog barking, and this guy said, "Yeah, I've got a barking dog. You know, if a gnat scratches its ass he starts barking." [Laughter] And I also heard another one, which I'll use, get some mileage out of. This man and I were talking about where I live, and he said, "My friend lives in a retirement community. I said, 'How do you like it?' He said, 'It's like taking a cruise on the River Styx.'" [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Now, that's a depressing thought.

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<sup>\*</sup> Admiral Watkins's tour as Chief of Naval Operations ended 30 June 1986.

<sup>†</sup> William F. Nichols, a Democrat from Alabama, served in the House of Representatives from 3 January 1967 until his death in Washington, D.C., on 13 December 1988.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. [Chuckles] I thought it was a depressing way to look at it.

But Jim Watkins was competent. He did a couple of things when he was Chief of BuPers that I thought really were quite brilliant. I forget exactly what he was defending, but he worked out a scheme to put it to the Congress and then defend it that was brilliant. He would have been a good lawyer. He had the ability to think about things.

Now, he had a lot of faith in setting up systems to achieve things that I used to have some questions about, that the world wasn't quite as eager to get into regimentation as that. But nevertheless he had reasons for doing things and he was willing to—he was very good at writing and expressing himself. Articulate.

Paul Stillwell: Would that establishment of systems perhaps be part of the nuclear mindset?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. And I think, of course—let's face it; Rickover affected all those people. They all came away in, maybe not an identical mold, but everybody that came out of the nuclear program and who was proud of being in the nuclear program either had been changed or was accepting change because it was in their professional interest, and they all had a pretty harsh way of looking at the lesser-gifted people in the world. And, of course, let's also face that fact that they had a disproportionate share of the gifted people. That's what did the Rickover program in, and that was the great injustice of the Rickover program. It was fine to have all those people that were so good and so smart, and it certainly helped the development of his program, but the Navy wasn't going to make admirals out of all those people. Surely Rickover understood that; he just didn't give a damn. But we passed over some really competent people because the nuclear program was not going to be given the sole route for promotion in the Navy. It just wasn't going to happen.

Paul Stillwell: There were essentially quotas for the different communities.

Admiral Crowe: Essentially. Nobody would admit that, but if you're going to have 18% of the Navy you're going to get close to 18% of the admirals. And when they first started

they weren't 18%; they were six or seven, and for a while the Navy was willing to overlook that. Under the old system a lot of submariners, as long as it was small, made the successful transition to other things, or just because of their competence got promoted. But when you get up to being a quarter of the Navy you can't tell the three-quarters that—you can be mischievous and you can influence, but you cannot say, "We're going to run the Navy, and all the rest of you guys step aside." The other guys are not going to let you do that. And it didn't matter to Rickover, but it sure mattered to a lot of those people that worked for him. Most of them thought when they jumped in the program that it would be a path to a higher command, and they were very disillusioned when it turned out that it didn't quite work that way.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the administrative part of your job when you were chief of staff?

Admiral Crowe: It was a bureaucratic job. The squadron commander had had a deep-draft command, and this was his major command, the submarine command. But his deep command was a very large, new oiler, and he'd had a lot of experience in working with surface ships and the fleet. It made a big impression on him, as it should have, and the command was very successful, the one he had. But he did the representation with the other elements outside the Navy, and the exercises and so forth. As chief of staff I was just doing the nitty-gritty and the hard work on operations, plans, and so forth, and then all the stuff that goes with administering the Navy, and even one or two courts-martial.

Administrative-wise our biggest problem was the tender itself. They had a little different quality of crew than the boats did, but they were part of his command, and he was quite light on his feet occasionally. [Chuckle] I'm trying to think of the name of the other squadron commander. In any event, the only time I was ever with the other squadron commander was a short period. He was a sort of distant fellow and straight arrow. Didn't get down and roll in the grass with the rest of us very much. Now, Bennett did. Bennett would go to happy hours, and so forth and so forth.

We had a little officers' club called the Ballast Tank on the peninsula there at Point Loma in San Diego. Now I think it's enlisted and everything else. I'm not even

sure it exists. But, anyway, we had an officers' club there, which was the center of our social life. Fluckey was SubPac [chuckle], and he came back one week to see us.<sup>\*</sup> He was walking around at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon in the middle of the week, Wednesday or something. He went by the Ballast Tank, and there were some officers in there drinking. That sort of surprised him. And I guess he did some more looking around, and the officers' club was open all afternoon.

So they had a squadron commanders' conference out in Hawaii that the two squadron commanders went to, and at one point Fluckey said, "What are the working hours there at that Ballast Point, you've got it open? I ran into some people at the bar at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, and some going in and out at 3:00 o'clock." And he said, "What *are* the hours at that place?"

Before they could answer, Bennett turned to the other squadron commander and said, "Well, I don't know, but George [or whatever his name was], you spend a lot of time over there." [Laughter] The other squadron commander got mad as hell.

Paul Stillwell: Suggesting that George was more likely to know?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. And it was completely misleading, because I don't know that the guy ever went in the Ballast Tank. [Chuckle] But, anyway, that was typical of Bennett. He'd wade in right away and protect himself.

Paul Stillwell: What was the outcome of this inquiry?

Admiral Crowe: I don't think anything. And another thing that was interesting, though, is it was my only experience with Fluckey, and I really wasn't very impressed by him. Now, I'm aware of his war record and, of course, I've read his book, and what he did was just fabulous.<sup>†</sup> But he came down there, and he was sort of arrogant. And then we had a big party, and he was the main speaker, and he got up and told a filthy joke in the speech

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<sup>\*</sup> Rear Admiral Eugene B. Fluckey, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet from 1964 to 1966.

<sup>†</sup> Eugene B. Fluckey, *Thunder Below! the USS Barb Revolutionizes Submarine Warfare in World War II* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

that I was stunned at. And he wasn't a very good speaker. That's not unusual. I shouldn't complain about that. I've seen a lot of naval officers who were not very good speakers. But he did some untoward things in that speech that, I thought, that's not right. And then he didn't impress me very much going around.

Then I had one other experience with him that I told as amusement, but I guess it wasn't an amusing story. When we were in Hawaii, I happened to go up to SubPac, and it was fitness-report time of the year, and right outside the admiral's office was a big board with the pictures of all his commanding officers on it, and all his staff. And he was out there with a big sheaf of fitness reports, looking to see who they were. [Chuckle] I thought: "If he's got to go out here and look at a picture before he knows who he's writing the fitness report on, that doesn't impress me very much." But, in any event, that's what he was doing.

And I never could make small talk with Fluckey. He was hard to deal with.

Paul Stillwell: Any assessment of him as the type commander?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I think Fluckey was very distinctive.

My year as chief of staff was not nearly as interesting as my year as division commander.

Paul Stillwell: That's understandable.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. Then I rode the nukes a lot, and I rode the diesels quite a bit. Had a diesel—I can't recall the name of it—come alongside the tender one day and got out of control and rammed into the submarine next to it and caused quite a bit of damage. I ran the investigation on it, which was a very interesting exercise, and spent a lot of time trying to decide who was at fault.

I also did an investigation that year on the death of a diver. It was my first real association with the diving community. They're crazy. [Laughter] They are. They're literally crazy. Now, they had a whole bunch of sensible rules that they had learned from experience to keep divers alive. A lot of them are very inconvenient. They make diving

tougher. And I was stunned at how many of them ignored those rules because it would be easier to be on the bottom. They would do things they shouldn't, even though it was increasing the risk of their life. It didn't bother them at all. They cut a lot of corners and didn't do what they were supposed to. They were very brave people, but the old story, they were very informal, and they didn't have a high regard for being administered or being disciplined. And if somebody was killed diving, they just wrote it off: "You know, that's a hazard of our profession; that's what we do!"

Paul Stillwell: Sort of like a plane crash to an aviator.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, exactly. And to get them to think seriously about what they do and to change their ways, they weren't very interested. [Chuckle] And I ran into some colorful characters in the diving community when I was doing it, a lot who had been alive a long time. I wasn't sure how long they were going to be alive. And, of course, what they do is very dangerous work.

Paul Stillwell: Well, they must have acquired some sense of what rules they could break and still survive.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I guess they did. But this diver didn't have the right weight on his feet. And he didn't want to do it, because it was hard to walk with. He inverted, and when he surfaced they rushed him into the compression thing and he died in the tank. But that was an interesting part of my life. I got both a respect and a disrespect for divers. That first of all they were very brave, and secondly they sort of had a disrespect for life. They liked to take the pickings of being brave but not pay the price of being thorough and comprehensive.

Now, once this kid was in trouble, man, they jumped off, they were in the water, they got him out, they ripped that suit off. They knew exactly what to do and they did it, and they got him out, but it was too late; he died.

Paul Stillwell: How adequate or good was the Point Loma base and the tender in supporting your squadron?

Admiral Crowe: I thought it was very good.

Paul Stillwell: The tender must have been converted to take nukes at some point.

Admiral Crowe: It was in the process of converting. They had a lot of problems in the nukes because of that. They hadn't got all the equipment for doing it yet. We were feeling our way all the way on nukes. But on the other hand everybody had gotten the message, and it was creeping into everybody's soul that there was going to be only one Navy when it was over, and that was the nuke Navy, and that the diesel submariners were second-class citizens. It was becoming very obvious. And, of course, of the three division commanders—we were there at the time, there was Bob Thompson and Bob Thomas and myself—none of us got in the nuclear program. And then Sam Packer came in as a division commander later, and he didn't get in the nuclear program. We were smart enough to read the tealeaves that we were being thrown away, and not a hell of a lot you could do about it.

Junior officers that I had worked with on the *Wahoo* and then later on in the *Trout* were all going nuclear, and being accepted. It was a hard time for diesel submarine people.

Paul Stillwell: Well, in reading the tealeaves, had you mentally prepared yourself for topping out a captain and going on to something else?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. I don't think there's any question about it. But I now had my Princeton degree, and my plan was to rely on that. If that helped me in the Navy, fine. But I obviously could not depend on the submarine force to get me promoted. I had to do it some other way. It didn't occur to me what the other way was, at the time, and I assumed then that I probably would leave the Navy if I could make captain, and I would go to something that would use my degree.

Now, one of the things we did when I was division commander was, we fired quite a few SubRocs, which were brand new, and we did that from the *Permit*, a nuke. I had quite a bit of experience with the missile and how it worked and what it was supposed to do. It didn't give me a real close feeling of confidence in it, because what we were trying to do was fire a missile nearly nine or ten miles at a submerged submarine, and somehow hit it, where the only data we had was passive listening from that distance ourselves. We knew something about the other guy, but we didn't know a hell of a lot about him, but we were hoping that the characteristics of the missile would make up for our inaccuracy. And then always was the idea that, well, if we want to we can put a nuclear warhead on this damned thing and lob it in there, and that will get him. It may get us, too, while it's at it. But in any event that was the first really submarine missile and we did a lot of that. Maurer was SubPac, and he had some questions about the missile too, I think.\* He wasn't absolutely confident that missile was going to help us very much.

Paul Stillwell: What were the ways of identifying friend from foe at that distance?

Admiral Crowe: There weren't any. You had the area to yourself, and anything else out there was free-fire. That was the logic behind the missile. But no, we had not solved that problem in any event.

It's a little tough being a diesel submariner in command of a division with a couple of nukes in it who felt they were much better than you were, much better educated, and they were in the cutting edge of the Navy, and you weren't gonna be. [Chuckle] That's hard.

Paul Stillwell: But you were senior.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. I was senior, but—

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\* Rear Admiral John H. Maurer, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Pacific Fleet from 1966 to 1968.



Paul Stillwell: Was there any animosity?

Admiral Crowe: No. There was some under the skin a little bit. The skipper of the *Permit* had his own ego that I watched with some interest.

Paul Stillwell: Who was that?

Admiral Crowe: David Boyd.\* And he had a good tour as skipper of the *Permit*. And, of course, Jim Watkins had a really good deployment on the *Snook*. He got the Legion of Merit out of it. I'll tell you a story about that too. This was mainly electronic intercepting when it first came into submarines. They put a suite of gear on the *Permit* that was the best that we had at the time and sent him out, and they really succeeded in going in pretty close and picking up an awful lot of data.

Well, he came back and they awarded him a Legion of Merit, and by then the flotilla commander had changed. He had a big ceremony to give Jim his Legion of Merit. [Chuckle]. I guess this happened before I was division commander. I was the chief of staff, and we were arrayed on the dock there all in whites and swords. The flotilla commander made his speech and turned around to get the medal, and nobody had the medal! [Laughter] And they had quite a crowd of guests. He walked over to Jim and whispered in his ear, "We'll give you the medal up in the club," and did some fiddling around like this, and turned around. [Chuckle]. There was all hell to pay when it was over—Who has the damned medal? [Laughter] That's so typical of a Navy story. And Jim got his medal without a medal. So we finally located it, and I thought I was going to get hammered there, but it turned out I didn't have much to do with it. The people putting up the ceremony and so forth were from Jim's submarine. Somehow or other we got our wires crossed, and nobody carried the medal to the ceremony. We look back at that as being very, very funny, but at the time it was a major crisis!

Paul Stillwell: There are many instances of that.

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\* Commander David S. Boyd, USN.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have liaison with the submarine development group in New London while you were doing these things?

Admiral Crowe: Not much. No, we really didn't. And now I labor under the illusion that all that has changed, that there is considerable now, but it was amazing to me how little the Pacific and Atlantic talked. There was a lot of tension between Atlantic and the Pacific, and nobody'd give an inch on it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, as I understand the system now, it's somewhat comparable to what existed before World War II, with one type commander per type.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I think it is now. But even that, they had trouble putting SubPac out of business. The original idea was to get rid of SubPac, but they never succeeded at that. My son-in-law was in on that before he retired from the Navy. He had personnel billet on SubForce's staff at Norfolk, and they had the damndest time getting SubPac to give up. [Chuckle] SubPac was not going to give up, and they're still in business out there, although they have an inferior place on the ladder. But those guys [chuckle], they fight hard for their sovereignty and their territory.

I ran into that when I was CinCSouth and convinced the Navy they should transfer the command of Naval Forces Europe down to Naples. Oh, boy. That's something I wished I hadn't started, but once we started it we had to see it through.\*

San Diego's a wonderful place to live, and the social life out there was, I thought, some of the best that we had had in the Navy. It was just a nice environment. We had a lot of people that had been a lot of time in San Diego, but they were all great. And we had a lot of submariners. Lew Neeb was sort of the mayor of San Diego. He spent most of his life in San Diego. He was a captain in the Navy and didn't make admiral because

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\* On 1 January 1983, in a realignment of command structure, the position of Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe was assumed by Admiral Crowe, the four-star officer serving as Commander in Chief Allied Force Southern Europe, based in Naples. Effective that date, Vice Admiral Ronald J. Hays, USN, assumed the title of Deputy Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe, based in London.

he didn't go to Washington.\* He had a low opinion of people in Washington. He did one tour, but it was as a junior rank there. He thought that was enough, and it *wasn't* enough. The Navy's not like that. But he sort of ran the social community in San Diego with an iron hand.

As for quarters, the situation on Ballast Point was ideal for a submarine base. We just had a few, and it was near to getting to sea. It was not much trouble getting out of the channel in deep water.

Paul Stillwell: It's kind of an enclave there.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I know the character of it has changed a great deal. I'm not quite familiar with it now. But it's not the same as when I was out there. It was a little town when I was out there, a small community and very tightly tied together, and the people were wonderful, and the people I served with out there still live there. They're retired and there's a whole group of them, and several of my classmates have held up the San Diego banner now for years. The last time Shirley and I were there we had a big dinner for all our friends. We had quite a few friends that we hadn't seen in years, two of whom just died last month.

Paul Stillwell: Captain Peniston was telling me about one of your classmates out there—Shaky Matthews, he called him.†

Admiral Crowe: Matty Matthews, yes, a very dear friend of mine. I didn't know him that well at the Naval Academy, but I roomed with him in the BOQ at New London. He and I were in Submarine School together. At the Naval Academy he was a cheerleader and also a boxer. His father had been the boxing coach at The Citadel, and Matty had learned to box from his father. He and I roomed together up at New London when he got married, so I was engaged and involved in their wedding and became very close friends.

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\* Captain Lewis H. Neeb, USN, had entered the Navy in World War II as a reservist; he eventually retired in 1969.

† Captain Robert C Peniston, USN (Ret.), was a Naval Academy classmate of Crowe. Captain Howard L. Matthews, Jr., USN (Ret.).

But they've lived in San Diego for years, and she died just last month. They've had a very sad saga. Their second son died of AIDS, and Matty went into deep depression, I mean *real* depression. He was in rehab when his wife died, and came to the funeral—he didn't even know what it was about.

He had nicknames names for all his children. His first son, whom he called "Tiger," was very, very successful. He's a business consultant now and, I think, very, very wealthy. But Matty and his wife had some real tough times. He was a great storyteller. All of us would like to tell stories out of a whole library of Matty Matthews stories. [Chuckle]. And the second son, who died of AIDS, became very close to my family. We saw a lot of him in Europe. We didn't realize he was having some of these problems. We saw him a lot in Italy and back here, and then all of a sudden he developed AIDS and went downhill very fast. And Matty's going to die here shortly, I'm sure, himself. But that seems to be part of the overall plan.

Paul Stillwell: In your book you suggested in a footnote that one of the nuclear submarines might have been lost from high-speed maneuvering and change in depth. Was that the *Thresher* you were referring to?

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't think I was referring to the *Thresher*.<sup>\*</sup> The *Thresher* went down deliberately, at test depth. They were doing a test dive after the yard. They were going down in increments, telling the guy on the surface what they were doing. And they got down and a pipe burst.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the *Scorpion* was the only other one that was lost. Is that the one you were referring to?<sup>†</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I think they probably know something about the *Scorpion* now. They've put a lot of detective work in it. They know where she is.

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<sup>\*</sup> The nuclear-powered attack submarine *Thresher* (SSN-593) was lost with all hands on 10 April 1963 while operating east of Cape Cod. The presumed cause was a reactor shutdown during a dive.

<sup>†</sup> The submarine *Scorpion* (SSN-589) was lost with all hands while en route from the Mediterranean to Norfolk. She was last heard from on 21 May 1968. On 27 May she was reported overdue and on 5 June presumed lost with her entire crew of 99 officers and men. The wreckage was located on 30 October of that year. No definitive conclusion has been published as to cause.

Paul Stillwell: There's been a great deal of speculation on that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, but they don't know why she—the conventional witness is that maybe a torpedo exploded on them and that sealed their fate right away. There were a couple of kids on the *Scorpion*, in the forward torpedo room, that I had been with on the *Wahoo*, and they lost their lives on the *Scorpion*.

As I say, I rode a lot of nukes, and that was always a danger when you were at high speed. Because, man, if you had a problem with ship control, that thing could really go deep fast. A diesel, you had some control over speed and things happened at a much slower pace, but in the nukes, something would go wrong, wowee.

Paul Stillwell: What specific at-sea experiences do you remember from your time as division commander?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I can remember one of the humorous ones. [Chuckle] I went out after the *Snook* came back. It was not under Jim Watkins; it was the guy that succeeded him.\* They had deployed, and I met it in Hawaii and rode home from Hawaii to San Diego on it. And my yeoman, when the crowd was gathered on the deck welcoming everybody home, had a huge sign: “Welcome Home SubDiv 31.” Well, I'd only been gone five days. [Laughter] These guys had been gone six months. That got a lot of laughs, that I was welcomed on the dock there by all my friends that had missed me for five days.

That was a nice cruise on the *Snook* coming back, to watch it for a period of time. And we did a lot of submarine-on-submarine—well, we *were* at high speed. That's where I watched that.

I didn't go that deep on any of those. Those boats were not made for that. When I was CinCSouth the *Sunfish* came in, and I went out with them, and they went to 1,200 feet. I'd never been to 1,200 feet. That was new for me. Now, they did it occasionally.

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\* Commander Avery K. Lopusser, Jr., USN, commanded the nuclear attack submarine *Snook* (SSN-592) from September 1966 to August 1969.

It was not new for them, but it was new for me, and that's pretty deep. And that boat just sailed down there tighter than a drum. Amazing.

Paul Stillwell: Just a world of difference from the old diesel boats of World War II.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Everything was different. And everything is so well made and so high-tech. I think there's more technology, cubic foot for cubic foot, in a nuclear submarine than there is anywhere in the world. They pack it in there. There's a computer everywhere you go. [Chuckle] It's much like flying the stealth fighter; you cannot run them without a computer. Well, they can't run a nuclear submarine today without a computer. Whenever the country has to fight a real war—they may be in for some cold-water shocks when they start lobbing depth charges at each other, as to what's going to happen on a nuclear submarine.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I hope we never find out.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I hope so. But you've got to count on it. You've got to think about it. And they do, they think very hard about where their vulnerabilities are and what they can do and not do. But still, the only certainty of war is that there'll be some uncertainties you didn't know about or think of. In fact, the other day someone asked me: "When the White House was making the decision to go to war in Iraq, do you suppose anyone ever mentioned treating the wounded?" I said I doubt if the word ever came up. They made the decision to go to war without a single thought about medical treatment. Now, somebody down the line may have been thinking about it, but at the top I'll bet it was never even whispered.

Paul Stillwell: Well, there may have been more medical facility in place in the theater for the 1991 war, because we had the hospital ships at that time, and field hospitals.

Admiral Crowe: I don't know if you're right about that. It would be interesting to see. I know we had hospital ships, but the troops—Desert Storm from a medical standpoint was an amazing event. You know, we didn't lose a single man to disease.

Paul Stillwell: I didn't know that.

Admiral Crowe: It's very unusual. And when the guy that ran the logistics came back and briefed us—I heard him; I was out of the Navy then, but I heard a briefing, and the things of which he was proudest was the way they had sanitation arrangements for the hundreds of thousands of troops they had. They shipped them into the desert, and they had no disease problems. They had a lot of other problems, but not that.

In fact, the amazing thing about Desert Storm was not the fighting. It was the fact of getting the people over there and supporting them. And I assume the same thing's true today. The amazing thing about it is the logistics effort we have to make every day. But, of course, logistics is also making us extremely vulnerable, as my son pointed out. Many of the convoys they have to protect are just the logistics convoys keeping their troops alive. They're not having anything to do with the fighting. And yet those convoys are the only way they can do it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the Walter Reed scandal has united both political parties in criticism.

Admiral Crowe: That's no mean achievement, is it? [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Right.

Admiral Crowe: Well, my own comment is I think it's way overdone. There are some modifying factors, and you don't hear much of that. There's too much noise being made about this. Nevertheless, it's a terrible mistake. Should not have happened. It was almost bound to happen once they announced the closure of Walter Reed. You think that

commanding officer is going to spend a lot of money on stuff that he isn't going to use? No, of course he isn't.

Also, the medical facilities have been underfunded for years—I knew that as Chairman—because the hospitals are funded on battle casualty figures. And then the Congress said: “Oh, by the way, we'll give you the money for a hospital to do this, and to be ready for battle casualties; we don't have any more money, but we want you to treat the retired community. Well, Lord, they were not originally sized for that, and as far as I know they still aren't. But they were told they had no choice, that they had to treat them. So that meant that we were short of funds medically for years.

There was a very good editorial in *The New York Times* this week that put the thing in perspective, which nobody paid any attention to because they don't want to be in perspective. They want to be mad, and they are, and with some justification. But this article talked about funding. And I called Bob Woodward and said, “What you're saying there is all well and good, but you ought to do some more pieces on the funding. That the Congress can stand there with a straight face and say they're not part of the problem, that's wrong. You ought to get into the funding of this business over the long term, and the Congress had not funded the kind of treatments you need.”\*

Paul Stillwell: You're right. That part of the perspective has not been brought into it.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we'll see.

Paul Stillwell: Back to the submarine division. What was the role of the diesels at that point?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were fodder for the nuclear training, to begin with, and we were still doing all the training with ASW air, which we worked with and for and about, under, etc., at the time. We worked with the diesels in full appreciation they were going to disappear. There was nobody contending that we were going to come across some

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\* Robert U. Woodward, who became famous in the 1970s for his reporting on the Watergate scandal for *The Washington Post*, was for many years a friend of Admiral Crowe.



magic formula or anything that would secure the future of the diesels. We were just presiding over the evaporation of the diesels.

Paul Stillwell: Were they still deploying to WestPac?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, yes. They deployed it all.

Paul Stillwell: What was their mission there?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the same as it always had been. It was an intelligence mission. Oh, we used them right up as long as we had them. And we didn't cut back on deployments, we didn't cut back on working with surface ships or anything else, on the theory that even if we fight today we still won't have nuclears; it's still going to be a long time before we had a full quiver of nuclears. Now we've worked our way through that, and the diesels are gone and dead.

Paul Stillwell: So part of your job was probably training them for the deployments.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, we always were. That was part of the job. The ships that we deployed were always up to full crew, full training schedule, fully supplied. And that was the beauty of the deployment. The best feeling you could get about your submarine was on deployment. That was when it was a real submarine. When it was operating out of the United States on training you understood the value of it, but the fact remained you never felt that you were truly on a wartime submarine till you deployed.

Paul Stillwell: Any of the diesel skippers from that time you particularly remember?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I mentioned Matty Matthews. When I was in Charleston and had the *Trout*, he had the *Clamagore*. Charleston was his home, and that's how we sort of met the local community, was through Matty. But Sam Packer had another boat down there.

Paul Stillwell: No, but I mean when you were at Point Loma.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I knew Sam a long time ago, but he came to Point Loma as a division commander when I was there. He had been the operations officer on SubPac's staff.

In the *Trout*, when I was in Charleston, I don't remember many of those skippers again, seeing very much of them. And at Point Loma, Jim Watkins, of course. The next skipper of the *Snook* and the skipper of the *Permit*, I didn't see them again. Now, the guy that relieved Dave Boyd was a golden boy, took command of *Permit*. I did run into him later, a very fine guy.

Paul Stillwell: Who was he?

Admiral Crowe: Logan Malone.<sup>\*</sup> I got along with him real well. Later, not while I was there, he went to the Mediterranean and commanded the submarine business in the Mediterranean as a captain.

We had an officer in La Maddalena, Italy. The commanding officer, I think, of the tender, his wife and Malone had an affair. He left his wife and married this woman, and the Navy did him in. Bob Long, who was a good friend of his, did him in.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: I think Bob Long would fit the description of straight arrow.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes, in many respects. I remember Bob Long saying to me, "When a guy gets 45 they ought to cut his balls off. [Chuckle] It keeps getting in the way of professional advancements." Malone was a good officer. But, boy, when he went in trouble he really went big.

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<sup>\*</sup> Commander Thomas Logan Malone, Jr., USN.

<sup>†</sup> Vice Admiral Robert L. J. Long, USN, served as Commander Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet from 28 June 1972 to 27 September 1974. The oral history of Long, who retired as a four-star admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that conjures up an interesting image of a generation of eunuchs as submarine hierarchy. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: I don't think it would be a popular idea.

But from the San Diego experience I don't remember any of my friends out there. Only the nukes had any future. Everybody else didn't, although the Polaris submarine came in, and Lew Neeb got in the first squadron of the Polaris submarines, working for the squadron commander. Bob Bouchet, Lew Neeb, Bob Thomas, they finished out their time in the Navy and stayed in San Diego. None of them were nukes.

When they went into the nuclear commanders, Jim Watkins was the only one of the San Diego nuclear community that was promoted to admiral. The rest all made captain.

We always wanted to go back to San Diego. We never did. The man we rented our house from—we had lived in two houses and at the end of the first year we rented another house. The owner was a general in the Marine Corps named Carney, and he was Admiral Carney's son.\* We never saw him, but we rented his house for a year. And then I bought a book the other day, a biography of Carney, and there's a picture of his son in there and his family.

Paul Stillwell: He was over in Vietnam in the late '60s as a one-star.

Admiral Crowe: As I say, I never met him, but I knew who he was.

I didn't have much to do with Hawaii when I was in San Diego. I had to go out there for a division commanders' conference, and that was about it. And I flew out to come back with the *Snook*.

Paul Stillwell: Anything else to wrap up the submarine division?

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, this is a very personal perspective, but it was interesting that, here I come back to the Navy, and I'd been away for three years, and the

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\* Colonel Robert B. Carney, Jr., USMC. His father was Chief of Naval Operations from 1953 to 1955.

fact that I'd been in graduate school, how it was received by various people. Now, my friend Lew Neeb, was very proud of the fact, and we used to talk about it a lot. He said, "Well, it must be dull out here talking about these things after some of the things you've been writing and thinking about." He was not derisive at all. But they didn't quite know what to do with me out there in that regard. They thought: "Well, he's sort of weird."

Paul Stillwell: Like real men don't go to grad school?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was something like that. [Chuckle]. No, you're absolutely right. And Bennett sort of made capital out of making humor out of it. But they seemed to not know how to deal with it or what to do about it, and what it meant. They didn't really know what the hell it meant. It certainly didn't mean to anybody there, these people, that it was going to have anything to do with my future in the Navy. I'd just taken three years off to do something else that must have been sort of fun, and it just isn't of significance to anybody. But there were a few that didn't agree with that, and they thought what I had done was sort of interesting, and that there was maybe a future in the Navy in it. I was very sensitive to that, almost defensive about it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, it certainly was unusual.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I can remember one day something Jim Watkins said. I had written, as you know, my dissertation on the Royal Navy, and I was telling some of the Royal Navy's experience, and Jim just said, "What the Royal Navy does of no concern to us whatsoever. That's a loser. Why should the American Navy be worried about anything they've got to tell us?" Of course, an aviator would never have said that, given all the developments that we have on our carriers that are British-originated. There again, Jim gets carried away with his eloquence. I don't think he realized that I considered that a sort of silly comment. He just talked through it—surely the world agrees with me about this—and went on to the next subject, but I picked it up right away. That's a hell of a way to look at another navy, particularly the navy that we have so emulated over the decades.

Paul Stillwell: Well, but what you told last time sort of indicated that Admiral Rickover took a condescending attitude toward the British.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, he did. Well, anyway, I think the issue we were talking about, the substantive issue, was the Royal Navy—and I told you when they had Polaris forced on them they were promised more money, to take it out of the Royal Air Force and give it to them, which they never did. I was talking about the history of this, and Jim just dismissed it. He said, “Who gives a damn about that? That’s their navy and it’s not a very good navy, and we don’t need to worry about them.”

Paul Stillwell: And then ironically years later there were reports linking Watkins’s daughter with Prince Charles.\*

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. [Chuckle] I went through a reception line when I first met Prince Charles. He was the guest at the British Embassy, and I was in the Pentagon. I forget what I did; I was probably 06. As I came through, I was in uniform, he said, “Oh, I’ve got a friend in your Navy, Admiral Watkins. I knew his daughter.” [Chuckle]

And I said, “Yes, I’m aware of that. The whole U.S. Navy knew about that.”

In fact, we used to joke a lot about if she married him that Watkins could say, “Well, I’ve got a son in the priesthood, I’ve got a son that lives in a tree in Monterey, and, by the way, my daughter’s the Queen of England.” [Laughter] But Charles brought it up, and I thought that was sort of interesting. And when I was in London they never brought it up. I never heard Charles say anything about the girl in San Diego.

Paul Stillwell: Things had changed by then.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I think they had, a little bit.

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\* Laura Jo Watkins, then 20 years old, met Britain’s Prince Charles at an official reception in March 1974 when his ship, HMS *Jupiter*, visited San Diego. Subsequently he invited her to be his guest in June of that year when he made his first speech in the House of Lords in London.

I think that's about it. To step back for a moment to look at the whole submarine force—it was a tough time, because of the nukes. It's the very situation that the professionals don't want to get in. I mean, some of it's dying and some of it's thriving, and yet they're both in, and it was clear that the billets that diesel people, while they were around, were going to get were not going to be the top billets. That was very depressing when people actually got down, to be frank about it. They were literally in a dinosaur navy that was going to go away.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you always like to have hope, and they didn't have much.

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, that attitude permeated me completely, and when I came back to Washington after that tour I didn't look for another submarine job. I was not interested in being a squadron commander of submarines. I was looking hard for something else. And, of course, along came Vietnam, with Zumwalt's backing, which was ideal from my standpoint. A lot of people thought I was nutty to go to Vietnam, but from a professional standpoint, making a transition away from the community whose death was imminent, it was really interesting. So my major command was in Vietnam. Nobody thought that was a major command except Zumwalt, but it wasn't necessary for anybody else to think it. [Chuckle] The guy that mattered thought it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, up to this time that had not been career enhancing.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, no, it had not. But he declared it was going to be career enhancing, and he was serious about it.

Paul Stillwell: And he had the power to make it so.

Admiral Crowe: And to make it go, and to make it fly, yes, absolutely.

Paul Stillwell: In the meantime, how did the job in OP-06 come about in 1967?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was my payback for my education. I don't know if somebody insisted on it or not, but the general attitude in those things was that you had to pay back the Navy for your education, and that it should be done fairly shortly afterwards in some fashion.

Paul Stillwell: Was that an opportunity you welcomed?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, very much. I welcomed that job. I never resisted that job. I was afraid the submarine force would try and put me in some dumb shore job somewhere to fill a billet, and I *really* didn't want that. I wrote some letters, including some to Jim Calvert, who was OP-61 for a while, saying, "I hope that I will now get an opportunity to use my education somewhere along the line."\*

Paul Stillwell: Who was your immediate boss that you referred to in the book, that said to you that you weren't sent to Princeton to learn how to think?†

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was actually Hank Ries, who was deputy, 61B, and was a very fine guy.‡ [Chuckle]. He'd had about seven or eight ship commands; he was a surface sailor. He meant it when he said, "We didn't send you there to tell us how to do these things; sent you there to be able to help us with our arguments." I don't think he ever realized how much that upset me. He might be proud of the fact I'm still quoting him. [Chuckle] He was a nice guy, and so was his wife. But, boy, he was narrow-minded on that.

Paul Stillwell: Was that an obstacle you then had to overcome?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I felt I did, after people had said it. I got along with him very well, but I think he expressed what was the view of a lot of the senior officers. Who the

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\* Rear Admiral James F. Calvert, USN.

† See *The Line of Fire*, page 61.

‡ Captain Herbert H. Ries, USN.

hell is some guy go away to school three years and come back and tell us how to do our business? I don't think they're qualified to do that.

Paul Stillwell: So this was a variation on the reception you got when you went back to submarines.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, a little bit. And, of course, it used to upset me very much there when—incidentally, I'd been taught by my father, not the Navy or graduate school, that when you express yourself, to not use the same word over and over. And I would throw in these synonyms and the Navy would scratch them out and put back in the Navy term for it [chuckle], and load up the letter or the memorandum with the same word. It used to annoy the hell out of me.

Paul Stillwell: There's also that awkward use of the passive voice.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. [Chuckle] Of course, the Marines are the worst in that regard. But I had served as 06's aide, so I knew something about 06, and what 60 and 61 meant. I wasn't totally ignorant. But when I had been the aide the shop that intrigued me the most was 61, because they did what they call the political-military business, and they did a lot of outreach outside the Pentagon. I liked that. What I was worried about at first was that I'd done my dissertation on Europe, and I went to the section of 61 that was dealing with Asia. On the other hand, God knows I was as qualified if not more so than anybody to do it, whether I had studied that or not, because it's politics, and that's what it's all about.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I got a laugh from your book. You dismissed that by saying, well, it's close enough for government work.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. [Chuckle]. That's about right.

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\* *The Line of Fire*, page 59.



Paul Stillwell: You talked about outreach from the Pentagon. Did you do much traveling in that job?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I traveled a lot before I took the job. I talked the Navy into letting me take a trip through Asia, with OpNav funds, before I came back. So I took a long trip by myself. I went to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Philippines. I'd never been to Taiwan, and I got there only one more time. I've only been to Taiwan twice. I went down to Indonesia and Singapore and Malaysia and I came back to Hawaii, and then I went to Washington to take over this job.

Paul Stillwell: But not Vietnam in that trip?

Admiral Crowe: No, I didn't go to Vietnam on that trip. It was most amazing. I was a commander; I didn't get promoted to captain till I got back. I think I'd been in 61 about a week when I got promoted to captain. But I was a commander, and I wasn't out there to achieve anything, I was just out there to learn about it. People sort of looked at me and asked, "Well, why are you here?" Okay, and they would assign me some underling that didn't know why I was there and didn't care. [Chuckle] But in the places I got a pretty good feel for some of the things going on, and I saw things I had never seen before.

Paul Stillwell: Would you go to the embassy in each country?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes, I would. And usually the defense attaché would take care of me in some fashion. It varied and mixed, how much attention they paid to me or how much they helped me. But they knew why I was coming, because I was going to be the guy on East Asia back in the Pentagon. But I usually would be assigned to somebody in intelligence work on the defense attaché side, and it was a long trip. The trip out there was really a great trip, one of the greatest I made in my life.

Paul Stillwell: What highlights do you remember?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was all new to me. I'd been in Japan before. I hadn't been in Korea. I'd been in the Philippines, I mean operationally. I was trying to think. I had been in Japan early in my career, and then when the *Wahoo* went to Japan. I was in the Philippines on the *Wahoo*, and we went to Hong Kong. But that was about it. Everything else was pretty new to me. And since I was visiting the embassies, that was all new to me, really, about embassy organization and so forth, and the dovetailing of Washington as well as CinCPac with the various embassies. But I was there to learn what was going on, what their issues were, and what they felt was important or not important and what they had felt that OpNav wasn't doing for them and where we were.

In Korea I got an opportunity to go up to the DMZ.<sup>\*</sup> I'd never seen that. I never thought I *would* see that. Of course, we didn't go to China, but in the Philippines I went to Sangley. In the Philippines he handled me, not the embassy, but the guy at Sangley Point, the air base there.<sup>†</sup> I'm trying to remember the name of the admiral. In any event he took quite an interest in me, the man in Sangley Point. Getting out there was a hell of a problem, in a car with a driver that didn't speak very good English [chuckle] and I didn't know where we were going. But after I got there, then he took care of my travel and put me up in Subic and some other places.

I was treated really well in the Philippines, and I was treated very well in Indonesia. The defense attaché took good care of me in Indonesia. Other places were just sort of, "Oh, it's nice to have you here; I hope you can survive on your own, or something." But I felt that I'd gone back with, that was the best I could do. I mean, I'd gone back with a lot more preparation for the job than I thought I would, because I'd at least been to these places and knew who was who, how to meet and not meet, etc., etc.

Paul Stillwell: Any insights that you remember from that trip?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I can remember we were beginning to talk about whether we should go out of Japan or not. Should we stick out Japan no matter what was going on? We were quite concerned about our presence in Korea, whether we would get to continue

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<sup>\*</sup> DMZ – demilitarized zone.

<sup>†</sup> Sangley Point Naval Station, eight miles southwest of Manila on a peninsula that extended into Manila Bay.

our presence. In the Philippines, of course, we were talking about Baguio. We were going to give up the big recreation center. Hell, I never thought I'd get to Baguio. Went up there to take a look at it. And I'd never been to Clark.\* I was subsequently there quite a bit when I became CinCPac. But I saw those places, and that alone has a lot to recommend it. I was amazed at our presence in Manila itself. I didn't realize how large it was. We had quite a construction capability; one of my friends in the CEC was there.† Of course, I shouldn't have been amazed, because we'd been in the Philippines for so long the residual presence was bound to be high.

Paul Stillwell: That was the height of support for the Vietnam War.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was. And that was the first time I brushed up against that. And everybody there had some opinions on the Vietnam War.

The most fascinating, really, from a learning standpoint, was Indonesia. I'd never been there. I'd been into Singapore on a ship, so I couldn't say it was the first time in Singapore. But the air attaché in Singapore took care of me, and he was very good.

I didn't go to Australia, I don't think. But I can remember I was riding in an aircraft from Taiwan to the Philippines [chuckle], and the man sitting beside me was British, and he was in the airline insurance business. The more we talked, he started saying, "Well, you know, this airline we're on right now is the second most dangerous airline in the world." [Laughter] Garuda, an Indonesian outfit. Then he laughed and said, "Really it's not the international flights; it's their outer island flights that are so dangerous and they have a lot of accidents." Well, when we landed in Manila we hit before the runway started, bounced and came onto the runway [chuckle], and I thought, "Yeah, this *is* the most dangerous airline, isn't it?" But I didn't have a lot of faith after he told me that, because I had to ride the same airline on down to Indonesia. I could have done without that information. He didn't need to tell me that.

Paul Stillwell: So you went commercial the whole time?

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\* Clark Air Force Base, on the island of Luzon in the Philippines.

† CEC – the Navy's Civil Engineer Corps.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I did. It was commercial.

Of course, I always had a personal soft spot for Singapore, which we'll talk about later. I almost got the U.S. Navy into Singapore, a U.S. Navy base. I always wanted to do that. I was so sorry we didn't succeed at that.

Paul Stillwell: Did the people in any of these places have agenda items they were trying to have you carry back?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, one or two did. But I wasn't knowledgeable enough to say more than, "Okay, well, I'll think about it and I'll mention it, but I've never been to my job in OpNav; I'm just out here nosing around, and I don't know how they'll feel about it, etc., etc." And, of course, you've already mentioned that I missed Vietnam. And when I got back there the world was mesmerized by Vietnam. Although it wasn't a 61 problem so much, it was a 60 problem. But nevertheless we were all mesmerized by Vietnam, and most of the work in OP-06 was directed toward Vietnam in one fashion or another, and I hadn't visited Vietnam.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you talked in your book about the brouhaha over your paper on the Geneva Accords.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and we'll talk about that later. So my indoctrination trip didn't sensitize me to any of that, and I didn't know much about what we were doing down there or fighting down there. I can remember I, like most people, thought it was a good idea. And when I got back there, why, then I realized that a lot of my time was going to be spent on Vietnam whether I liked it or not; I'd better get knowledgeable on it.

I relieved a man by the name of Dave Cummins, who was a captain in the Navy.<sup>†</sup> I was a commander, and then, as I say, my promotion came through in about a week or

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\* See *The Line of Fire*, pages 61-62.

<sup>†</sup> Captain David E. Cummins II, USN.

two after I got there. There was a man in the office by the name of Jim Elster.\* He was sort of the number-two guy in the office, and he had a really fine mind. My learning in OP-61 originally was mostly around Jim Elster, because he really understood what OpNav was doing, and he just had a good mind for politics, foreign politics. He was good at figuring what questions should be asked and not asked, etc., etc. And it became obvious to me right away that he was a very valuable asset, and sure enough he was. And then I brought him on there when I was Chairman as a sort of special adviser to me, years later. He was a naval aviator but had spent most of the time in ASW, but it had been carrier flights, not ground flights. And was married to an admiral's daughter, and not a very happy marriage. But he was wonderful.

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any specific things that he counseled you on?

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, what I was mainly interested in first of all was the local picture, not all this high-falutin' politics, as: Who runs 61, and how do we get in the act, and what other shops are competing with us, and who's kingpin around here? And, of course, European section was. Everybody sort of deferred to NATO and the European section, although Vietnam helped us fight that a little bit. And I was very busy in learning the ropes.

The first 61 I worked for was a guy by the name of O'Brien, who had been the defense attaché in London when I was doing my dissertation, so we knew each other, but not well.† He didn't follow what I did over there [chuckle], and he didn't follow much of what I did in OP-61. He wasn't exactly inspiring. On the other hand, he never got in our way, either.

He was relieved by a guy whose name escapes me, and probably purposely, because I didn't admire him very much, and the whole shop had a lot of problems with him. Then his deputy was Duke Bayne, OP-61B, who was a nuclear submariner and was destined for flag, and went to Bahrain for many years.‡ I reason I went to Bahrain was because of Duke Bayne. I was a big admirer of Duke Bayne's. He was a wonderful man.

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\* Lieutenant Commander James M. Elster, USN.

† Rear Admiral Leslie J. O'Brien, USN.

‡ Captain Marmaduke G. Bayne, USN.

Then the man in OP-61 that I didn't like very well was relieved by Blackie Weinell.\* Then he became a big factor in my life.

Paul Stillwell: I've heard a lot of admiration for him.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, he was a wonderful man. He was a marvelous man. He was very informal, and he used to get right to the heart of the matter. He didn't know a hell of a lot about foreign affairs or anything, but if you demonstrated you knew something about it he would listen and he would support you and do things. And, of course, he's the guy that sent me to the Micronesian Status Negotiations. And then because of his guilt over that [chuckle] he helped me get promoted to admiral. He had a big role in it.

Paul Stillwell: That was when you did that instead of commanding the *Newport News*.

Admiral Crowe: That's right, and he really felt badly when he discovered that he had done me in on a cruiser. We both felt badly about that. But OP-61 was just a huge conglomeration of little problems. In Japan, of course, the outstanding problem was nuclear submarines going into Japan, and the government, what they would tolerate and not tolerate, and what compromises we had to make in order to keep our ships going in there and demonstrating that we were not a danger. So I found myself headlong into the nuclear business right away, although I was not a nuke. We had a nuke in the shop. We had a nuke in the European section, George Steele.†

[Interruption]

Perhaps we ought to cut it off here and then go into some of these 61 problems. I had some really interesting things happen to me in OP-61. One we just mentioned, the Singapore navy base was about to disappear. I latched onto that immediately.

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\* Rear Admiral John P. Weinell, USN.

† Captain George P. Steele II, USN.

Far and away the biggest thing that happened when I was OP-612 was *Pueblo*. I spent an entire year on *Pueblo*.<sup>\*</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Well, you really covered that pretty thoroughly in your book.

Admiral Crowe: I'm sure I did.

Paul Stillwell: I don't know that we need to duplicate that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, maybe we don't, but it consumed me, the *Pueblo* did. Then the problems with the Philippines, Mr. Marcos.<sup>†</sup> And then the nuclear problem in Japan never went away. Never, never, never went away. And, of course, I inherited all the islands in the Pacific. That's how I ultimately ended up in the damned Micronesian Status Negotiations. I was on the island problems, and Weinert didn't know much about that, but we brought him up to speed on that. We had some Australian problems, but not really earth-shaking.

But I did a lot of backup for Congress. This was another thing that happened. The Congress was investigating all the base expenditures for a period there in the Far East, and we handled that from the investigation to the congressional testimony and to the bringing back of all the commanding officers of the various places in Japan, Taiwan, Philippines. They testified, and we had to oversee their testimony in the Congress, and so forth. Learned a lot about what flies and what doesn't fly. [Chuckle] I was in 61 for three years.

Paul Stillwell: We talked about Vietnam—that was really the specific period when the mood of the country changed dramatically against the war.

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<sup>\*</sup> USS *Pueblo* (AGER-2), an electronic intelligence ship, was seized on 23 January 1968 in the Sea of Japan by North Korean naval forces. The ship's crew members were held as prisoners until 23 December of that year. Of the 83 officers and men on board, 28 were intelligence specialists. Her commanding officer was Commander Lloyd R. Bucher, USN.

<sup>†</sup> Ferdinand Marcos served as President of the Philippine Islands from 30 December 1965 to 25 February 1986.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did. And curiously enough, I was not in the front tier of the Vietnam effort in OpNav. We were in the second tier. The front tier was handled by 60, and consumed the—one of the reasons that *Pueblo* was so important and so influential in my career is: Nobody else was in it. Nobody wanted any part of it.

Paul Stillwell: That's understandable.

Admiral Crowe: And even the JCS didn't want a damned thing to do with it, so the Navy handled it. And there wasn't anybody in the Navy that wanted to handle it. And I didn't either, but it was assigned to us.

Paul Stillwell: So you got it by default.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we got it by default. But all of a sudden a small issue that nobody else was in became relatively important. But what I'm saying is, if you were in the Vietnam business you were one of 60 officers. In the *Pueblo* business there wasn't anybody but us, and it wasn't the most important thing in the world, but it was important enough the CNO was involved. And that's where I began to see the CNO a lot, and the VCNO.\* We had some traumatic things which I'll tell you about happen in that business. But *Pueblo* was distinguished in that it wasn't handled in the normal channels. [Chuckle] There wasn't anybody dealing with *Pueblo* except my shop.

Paul Stillwell: Admiral Michaelis in his oral history talked about being in OP-06, and he described it like a barbershop.<sup>†</sup> He said, "A problem would come in the door, and depended on whose chair was empty at the time."

Admiral Crowe: Admiral Hyland was CinCPacFlt. He had been 60B, and he said it was like being at the end of a big water chute, just seemed like the pipe was open all the

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\* Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 August 1967 to 1 July 1970. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection. Admiral Bernard A. Clarey, USN, served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from 17 January 1968 to 30 October 1970. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>†</sup> See the Naval Institute oral history of Admiral Frederick H. Michaelis, USN (Ret.).



time.\* He said he was immersed in papers going across his desk, most of which he didn't know anything about.

I almost made a sworn enemy out of Hyland before I was through with *Pueblo*, but when I became CinCPac Hyland was retired out in Hawaii, and he and I became very good friends. [Chuckle] But, boy, I remember the conversations I had with Hyland. Here was a captain telling him what to do, and he didn't like it. And I wasn't telling him what to do because I enjoyed it; I was doing it because Clarey made me do it. But Hyland was a pretty squared away and pretty nice guy.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I interviewed him and he said that in his role as a fleet CinC he was just almost a messenger, because things would just get passed down to carry on.

Admiral Crowe: And that's the big lesson of going to Washington. You find out where a lot of things are run from Washington. I'm sorry, you may not like it, but that's the way it is.

Paul Stillwell: And he did not like it.

Admiral Crowe: I'm sure he didn't. But modern communications have just sunk the principle the Navy that was built on: The guy on the scene handles it. That just isn't the situation any more. It's sort of bitter medicine, but that's the way it is.

Really the first time you go back to OpNav, what consumes you the most is how to operate in OpNav, and who's got the most clout. And who's got clout and who doesn't have clout. You can see from whom the CNO and the other admirals depend on, you can tell very quickly who's influential. It doesn't have a damned thing to do with the line diagram. It's just that somebody is obviously very skillful and they need him and they rely on him. And that was what *Pueblo* did for us. And the reason it became important was—we didn't want it to become important, but the outside world wouldn't let us step aside.

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\* Admiral John J. Hyland, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet from 30 November 1967 to 5 December 1970. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

Paul Stillwell: There was a great media focus on it.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. Tell me about it. So it was an issue whether we liked it or not. We didn't make it an issue. We wanted it to go away, but it just kept hanging around. I must have been in the CNO's office that year 40 or 50 times. We'll talk about the real details of that.

But the first year was a learning year. I can remember one night we—Dean Axene was in the European section, a name I'm sure you're familiar with.\*

Paul Stillwell: He was the first exec of the *Nautilus*.

Admiral Crowe: The first time I'd ever met Dean Axene. He was deputy in Europe. And on this weekend—I was trying to remember, I guess it was Sunday—there was a destroyer that went in Yokosuka, and we got a call from Yokosuka saying that some Japanese workmen had come on the base to do things and we escorted them, and one of the Japanese workmen had a really, I don't even know what you call it, but an instrument that detects radiation.

Paul Stillwell: Dosimeter?

Admiral Crowe: I guess you'd call it that. And this warrant officer had been with them to escort them, and as they walked by this ship their dosimeter pegged. No problem had come up, but the warrant officer had noticed this thing, but this instrument pegged, and that the people carrying didn't pay—that wasn't what they were there for, but they had noticed it, so they called us to say—we were not supposed to have any nuclear weapons in Yokosuka, but we thought we had shielded it. So Axene and I went in on a Sunday, and we said, "Well, there are no instruments that are that sensitive."

Japan said: "Oh, yes there are."

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\* Captain Dean L. Axene, USN.

And somebody said, “Well, if there are, where are they? Where did they find them?”

He said, “They’re for sale out here in Yokosuka.”

“Well, for Christ’s sakes, go out and buy one. Buy one and *see* if it pegs.”

So they rushed out and bought one and went down there and it pegged! They came back and said, “You may not think they are that sensitive, but I’ve got one in my hand, and sure enough, they’re pegged!” So then we went to battle stations.

Paul Stillwell: Was this ASROC it was detecting?\*

Admiral Crowe: Ah, yes, it was. And [chuckle] in the middle of this Dog Smith who was ComNavForJapan, got on the phone, and he was clearly drunk: “You tell the CNO not to worry about a thing [slurred]. I’ve got this all under control.”† And the more he talked the more I realized he didn’t have it under control at all. [Chuckle]. Depending on him was a pretty slender reed, I’ll tell you. And he was drunker than hell. That alarmed us too. And for the next three days we were at battle stations. We finally got the ship out of there and transferred the nuclear weapons at sea, and let the ship come back in. The Japanese never called us on it, but we were very worried about what that would do if they had marched down there and submitted a formal complaint that we were obviously violating the accord, or the agreement.

Paul Stillwell: Well, they had the ritual protests even to the nuclear-powered ships. I remember seeing those.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that was typical of the kind of thing we’d get into. And they always happened Friday afternoon, when everybody went home from work for the weekend. [Chuckle] We would get this problem laid on our desk just before we left and, oh God, then the world would—I worked harder at that job than any job I ever had in the

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\* ASROC – antisubmarine rocket. It entered the fleet in the early 1960s in new-construction ships and in FRAM I destroyer conversions.

† Rear Admiral Daniel F. Smith, Jr., USN, served as Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan from June 1968 to August 1970.

Navy. I was down there till 8:00, 8:30 every night. Just a bunch of nonsense going across the desk.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds like a fire-drill kind of job.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was, it was a fire drill. But it was a great job, and I met every admiral in OpNav. Some were impressed with me and some weren't. [Chuckle] I got in fights with some and not with others. The beauty of that is, they *know* you. Then you became a person, not just a name that nobody knows who the hell that is.

Paul Stillwell: As long as things are going well, that's the beauty of it.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, you take your risks. I mean, there's risk in that too. But we were so busy that we didn't think about it, because we didn't have any choice. We'd have to deal with these damned things. And I discovered early on that, once you get in mind the problems in Japan and Singapore, and then somebody calls up and says, "I've got to know about Singapore," the genius of the job was having it in your mind immediately so you could walk right down there and tell him what the hell's going on in Singapore. You didn't have to get a bunch of volumes out, because we didn't have that kind of time. And when you were briefing, why, when you went out you'd know whether you impressed him or whether you didn't. More than often we impressed him, because they didn't know anything about it. They didn't know anything about the politics in Singapore.

I can remember Burke was going to go out to ComNavForJapan.\* He's from the family that owns the Burke and Herbert bank. I've got an account there. He called me up and said, "I've only got a few minutes, but I understand I'm going to be going to Japan. Tell me about Japan." Well, he knew me, but he didn't know me well. So I spent 30 minutes with him, and the rest of my life we've been friendly because of those 30 minutes. He told me when I got promoted, "I knew the day you briefed me that you were going to do something in this Navy. I'd never had a briefing like that in OpNav before." And it was a simple thing, just sitting there at his desk talking to him about Japan.

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\* Rear Admiral Julian T. Burke, Jr., USN, served as Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan from August 1970 to January 1973.

Paul Stillwell: That's a happy memory.

Admiral Crowe: It is a happy memory. And I had the same thing happen with Bob Long.\* When I was 06, he was a tough man, and I made him mad at a couple of things when I first got there. In fact, my aide said, "You're going to be fired before the weekend." Then, all of a sudden, I had to brief Long on things, and that just turned around. And when he went to CinCPac I gave him a whole list of names of people he should see before he went out there. And then called some of my friends in the academic world to talk to him. He really liked that, and he came through when the Chairmanship was up he said, "I'm running hard for you to get the Chairmanship." And that was interesting for a nuke to say that about a diesel submariner.

In fact, the other day Rempt, the superintendent of the Naval Academy, showed up in my office over there, and he asked me, "Oh, do you know Fallon?"†

I said, "No, I don't know Fallon very well, but I read a lot in the paper about him and it sounds wonderful."‡

Rempt said, "He's really a smart guy," but says, "He's got this curious...." and he started talking about Fallon and he said, "He's a lot like you are." [Chuckle] He said, "You know, he knows a hell of a lot." And he said, "It's a good detail, where they're sending him." Although he's surprised by it. But I thought that was interesting when he said, "He's a lot like you are." [Chuckle] So those things do matter.

Paul Stillwell: And that's why he got sent to the Central Command.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I'm sure it is. You know, he's not a pilot.\* That really shocked me, because they've got such a lock on that community. And so he must be a smart guy, and everything I read about him is, he's really good.

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\* Admiral Robert L. J. Long, USN, served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from July 1977 to September 1979. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

† Vice Admiral Rodney P. Rempt, USN, served as Superintendent of the Naval Academy from 1 August 2003 to 8 June 2007.

‡ Admiral William J. Fallon, USN, served as Commander Central Command from 16 March 2007 to 28 March 2008.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the papers have praised his diplomatic skills.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Okay, I'd better go, Paul.

Paul Stillwell: Well, thank you, Admiral. (End of Interview 13)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, today we're going to resume the discussion of your time in OP-61 in the late 1960s. One of the topics that you had listed that you were involved in during that time was the Philippine base agreements. What do you remember about those?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I don't remember much about the agreements per se. I know we were in the process of redoing them. Bohlen was representative at that time, and I'd really gotten fascinated, in fact intrigued, with Bohlen's messages.<sup>†</sup> He would write these long messages with the content of a talk with a Philippine representative. He really reported everything, and they were beautiful messages, about all that went on in the talks and all the nuances to be considered and not considered. He conducted the negotiations in the Philippines.

But what I got mixed up in, in that regard, that at the time I was very proud of it, but unfortunately nothing ever came of it. We were clearly looking at a possibility of having to draw down bases in the Far East. That's when they brought everybody back to testify. I hadn't been there very long when the base issue popped up, and the negotiations with the Philippines were protracted and lengthy. But in the end they came out all right. We got just about everything we wanted.

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\* Fallon qualified as a naval flight officer rather than a naval aviator.

<sup>†</sup> Charles E. Bohlen.

But in the process the British announced that, under the Labour Party, that they were going to withdraw from Singapore. So I wrote a long memorandum suggesting that we try and take over the base in Singapore. It was well received. I actually made a couple of trips out there, and the British were not too upset by the idea. They said they were leaving, so we started talking to the British about it, and when we mentioned it to the Singapore government they were very receptive. So we had gotten quite far along on a proposal for us to take over the shipyard in Singapore, which would have dovetailed very nicely with if we had to withdraw from the Philippines. In fact, what actually happened was a dovetail.

But, hell, two weeks before we were supposed to do it the Tories came into power and wiped everything out, and said: "We're not leaving Singapore." Which I was very disappointed with, because I thought for us to get a toehold in Singapore would be, from where I sat, well advised. We had gone quite far on it. We had mentioned it to the Australian government, and they were strong supporters of it. They wanted to see the base survive, and the British weren't going to be able to fund it too well, and we could. So as far as I could see all the signs in Asia were positive. But the whole scheme slipped away from us when the Tories came in.

Paul Stillwell: It's interesting how timing works out.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it is. Sometimes it worked well and sometimes it defeats you. That was quite involved. First of all, selling it to the U.S. Government, and second was selling it to Singapore and to our friends in the region. But everybody was positive. And everybody also, I believe, thought for the Tories to stay was not a very good move. They just weren't well positioned enough to do so; they just couldn't afford a long-time major presence there.

Paul Stillwell: And ultimately the Royal Navy has shrunk and shrunk since then.

Admiral Crowe: And I guess you can't blame it all on that, but you can blame a lot of it because they got in the Polaris business. That was just a terrible shame from the British Navy's standpoint.

Paul Stillwell: Well, one more consideration is that the British involvement in the Iraq War has sucked up a lot of funds that might have gone to the Navy.

Admiral Crowe: It's hard for the British to do the right thing, because they're so reluctant to give up at least appearance of a world leadership role, and they just can't afford it. Their bank account's not—that's what World War II did to them. It just destroyed their reserves and changed the world and ruled them out of the contest.

I was about to take a trip around the world when I was in OP-61. I had a long trip planned. It wasn't necessary to go around the world. But it turned out that Malaysia and Singapore were exactly halfway around the world, so I figured while I was doing it I would go one way and come back the other [chuckle], just to say that you'd made a trip around the world. It was in January, and just before the trip started *Pueblo* was captured and I couldn't go.

We were just terribly consumed by the *Pueblo* problem. And, as the book mentions, the primary, unique feature, at least from where we sat, was that the JCS didn't want anything to do with it.\* They said, "The Navy got in trouble; let the Navy get out of trouble." They just refused to touch it. I really didn't think when it happened that my shop was going to be terribly involved, but naturally because it happened in our region we would be in the negotiations to get the crew back, or something like that. But I didn't foresee the huge role we played eventually.

I knew Clarey from a long time. Before I went to work for Admiral Austin I had a locker down in the athletic center right next door to Clarey. Clarey exercised every day. He exercised his whole life, even out in Hawaii when I knew him. Played tennis every day. And he's the guy that told me that, when I went to work for Admiral Austin, that Admiral Austin is very kind to everybody except the people that work for him. So I

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\* See *The Line of Fire*, pages 63-74.



knew Clarey, but I didn't know him well, and I'd never worked with him. And all of a sudden the *Pueblo* popped up on the screen. Moorer was CNO and Clarey was VCNO.

The day that the *Pueblo* was captured, I'm not even sure I'm capable of rehashing that, because so many things happened out there I didn't know about. But in general our performance that day was very poor. The combatant commanders in the region really didn't know that much about *Pueblo*. In fact, on the *Enterprise*, the story that I was told was, the captain called for the *Jane's Fighting Ships*, and "Let's see what it looks like."\* He not only didn't know it was there, he didn't even know what the hell class of ship it was or anything else. And curiously enough, through an oversight, the *Enterprise* was steaming away, not toward the crisis at the time, and while they messed around trying to figure out what was going on, they continued to steam away, so they extended the distance. They should have used that time going toward it.

Paul Stillwell: Admiral Epes was the cardiv commander on board.<sup>†</sup>

Admiral Crowe: That's right, that's right. He was. And I actually had known him in OpNav, not well, but knew who he was. But obviously they didn't want to touch it. ComNavForJapan, who did know about what was going on, didn't do very well either.

Paul Stillwell: Frank Johnson.

Admiral Crowe: Frank Johnson.<sup>‡</sup> Well, of course, he felt inferior to Seventh Fleet, and he just didn't do very much. And the performance on the *Pueblo* itself, at least from everything we could learn, it wasn't very good. And I think most of that was confirmed when they came out.

From the very outset the State Department was involved, because Rusk immediately made some public statements, that the ship had stayed outside of the

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\* Captain Kent L. Lee, USN, commanded the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* (CVAN-65) from 11 July 1967 to 8 July 1969. The oral history of Lee, who became a vice admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>†</sup> Rear Admiral Horace H. Epes, Jr., USN, Commander Carrier Division One.

<sup>‡</sup> Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson, USN, served as Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan from July 1965 to June 1968.

authorized inshore limit of 12 miles, or something like that.\* But he made some emphatic statements that we were not in close, without really knowing what the hell he was talking about. We didn't know what was going on either, but we knew enough to know we didn't know. But Rusk went right out public and defied the North Korean government and everybody else, and we lived to those statements for the next year, really wondering what was going to happen when the truth came out—whether they were right or wrong, or how we would handle it.

The way I got involved is described in the book pretty well. I used to attend these sort of coordinating committee sessions, and right away Clarey said we were going to have to build a plan for getting the crew back, and how we'd treat them, and so forth. As I recall, the original assignment was to BuPers. And BuPers came back with a quick outline which [chuckle] the lawyers and the intelligence people and the medical people all disagreed with. I attended a session that had just huge arguments, just furious arguments, with Clarey presiding. And he was a man of some patience; he didn't get too excited about things. But obviously the people that were involved in the planning were very excited, and they just couldn't reach agreement.

I had made the mistake of going to that meeting. I'd have been better off if I hadn't been there. Out of the clear blue Clarey turned to me and said, "Bill, you're going to have to write this plan. You're the only guy in the room that doesn't have a vested interest in how the plan looks." Who, me? I didn't think at the time that it would be such an obstreperous task. I didn't think it would be too complicated. We'd build a plan, and it wouldn't be fun, it would be miserable, but so what? Those are things we have to do occasionally. Well, it turned out to be the most contentious thing I ever got mixed up in in the U.S. Government.

The upside was that we were involved in a major issue that nobody else was in it but us, and I had a pipeline right to the CNO. Man, we were in it from the get-go. And from then on for the next year I was consumed by *Pueblo*.

Paul Stillwell: What observations do you have on Admiral Moorer from your dealings with him?

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\* Dean Rusk served as Secretary of State from 21 January 1961 to 20 January 1969.

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, as advertised, the reason he was in the job, he had a better understanding of the whole Navy, probably, than any CNO we'd ever had. He'd had a succession of jobs, including CinCPacFlt and then CinCLant, and then came up to be the CNO, and he knew OpNav very well. He had been in OpNav quite a bit, and particularly as a younger admiral. He knew his business. He was not as articulate as many of the people he had to deal with, and that was one of his disadvantages, for example, he dealt with Henry Kissinger, and you can imagine Admiral Moorer debating Henry Kissinger.\*

Moorer was a very straightforward man and spoke right to the point, whatever the thing was. Very confident and very comfortable in being the CNO. And, of course, he later became the Chairman. And, by the way, our Chairman made some news this week.†

Paul Stillwell: I read about that. His position that gays are immoral.

Admiral Crowe: He's got to live with it now. Someone said to me, "I don't mind him making a mistake; on a major issue you're going to cause enemies. But why do that on a small issue that didn't matter very much?" That's going to be around a while.

Paul Stillwell: Did you see the editorial cartoon in *The Post* yesterday, an open letter from the cartoonist to Pace? He said something like, "You've gotten rid of people who are doing a good job for our country just because you consider them immoral."

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I can imagine. I don't think I saw it. Maybe I did. It's a big mistake. He shouldn't have said that. You live in that environment all the time, and that's the reason [chuckle] extemporaneous remarks are not really wise. And that issue is so emotional. Now, I'm sure Moorer, on that issue, would have been dead set against homosexuals, and you'd have known it in one minute. He would have told you.

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\* Henry A. Kissinger was the President's national security adviser, 1969-73 and later served as Secretary of State, 1973-77.

† General Peter Pace, USMC, served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1 October 2005 to 1 October 2007.

Paul Stillwell: Times have changed a great deal since then.

Admiral Crowe: I had a lot to do with Moorer that year. I was really stunned how much time I spent with him, and I will describe some things that aren't in the book, with Moorer. In the first place, you like Moorer. He's the kind of guy you like, because he's what he is. I mean, you know what he is.

Paul Stillwell: Direct.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He's not hiding anything. I mean, he was not a deceiver. And he didn't slice baloney real thin. He let you know where he stood, and that got him in trouble sometimes. At the higher reaches of the government you've got to be able to dissemble and jump around and not answer the question. And not—like Pace should have done that day—not express yourself on issues.

Paul Stillwell: Would you say that Admiral Moorer was not a man of subtlety?

Admiral Crowe: No, I wouldn't think he was. He was southern, sort of a racist. Didn't like Zumwalt. I sat beside Admiral Moorer at the Zumwalt funeral, and all these eulogies started talking about how Zumwalt saved the Navy. And I thought, "God, I can't look at Moorer. He's madder and madder and madder." Had a pretty good temper when he got mad.

Paul Stillwell: I've heard he was quite offended by the remarks at that funeral.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he should have been. The remarks at that funeral were terrible. And, of course, they were not true. The Navy wasn't going away. Okay, we had some problems, but I've never been in the Navy when we didn't have problems. But the Zumwalt cult just couldn't bring themselves to shut up. And Zumwalt sort of encouraged

that. He liked for his kitchen cabinet to speak up and tell the Navy everything that was wrong with it.

Blackie Weinell talked to me about that. My classmate Stan Turner came here and spoke the other night. He was a member of the Zumwalt group. Stan went to the War College and began to change everything.\* He announced in his relief-of-command speech that he was going to change a lot of stuff. I was working for Blackie Weinell, and he discovered that Stan was a classmate of mine, so we were discussing him. Weinell said, "He's doing it all wrong."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "He should come in and say, 'This institution's doing beautifully. I like it and I'm not going to change anything.' Then start changing. And it will be about six months before the guys that oppose you find out you really are changing things. And by the time they can muster their forces and their arguments, a year's going by, and the changes have taken place and it's all done, and the opposition's behind the curve. When you say it in your relief-of-command speech they start organizing right away." Well, that was the Zumwalt school. Throw it out there and let them have it. Stick it in their ear.

Moorer was fairly conventional, and he subscribed to the mores of his age. He had good people working for him, and he was a pretty good judge of men. And, of course, when I worked for Austin, well, Moorer was in OpNav. I think Moorer was very much a Burke man, and Burke had a lot of confidence in Moorer. But Moorer's reaction to the *Pueblo* was that, first of all, we screwed it up out there, and his people didn't perform very well. He was irritated at that. But he didn't advocate anything dramatic. Editorials were across the board: Don't do anything; Let's attack North Korea; "We've got to go get them," or something like that; or "We've got to retaliate."

Moorer actually met with the President, and the President made it clear: "I ain't gonna do dramatic things."<sup>†</sup> And I think Moorer accommodated to that very well. He didn't come back swearing about the President.

Now, the one thing that did happen, that we later had to live with, was President Johnson said, "If they maltreat that crew we're going to find out about it and we're going

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\* Vice Admiral Stansfield Turner, USN, served as president of the Naval War College from 30 June 1972 to 9 August 1974.

<sup>†</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson served as President of the United States from 22 November 1963 to 20 January 1969.

to hold them accountable,” which is a pretty hollow. When you’re young, like I was, it made sense to me. But now you discover that every President that’s ever said that never was able to grab an individual by the neck and wring his neck. They’re out of reach. You just can’t get at them. We knew whom to get too.

Paul Stillwell: I suppose one exception to that would be the war crimes trials after World War II.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes.

Paul Stillwell: Literally there were some necks wrung.

Admiral Crowe: Even those I thought were—the downside to that is that if we ever lose a war, why, your own people are in jeopardy. My father was a lawyer, and he didn’t think the trials were a good idea. But anyway.

Paul Stillwell: Well, also another problem with trying to take any military action is that the forces were so heavily committed to Vietnam there wasn’t much else available.

Admiral Crowe: Just like today. It was very limited in options. Our options just weren’t good. Under pressure Admiral Moorer was very cool. With things like this going wrong he never blew his top, because he’d seen a lot of things go wrong [chuckle] in his life, and he was very good about, “Well, let’s talk about what we want to do.” I wouldn’t say he was bold or a risk-taker, but he was willing to discuss everything, and even if he might have been emotional at first, he would calm down.

Well, anyway, I ended up with the *Pueblo* repatriation plan, and we started writing this silly thing. We were very naïve at first. But I’d seen from these discussions I’d sat in on how divided the Navy was on all these various elements that we had to bring together in this plan. And then it began to dawn on me that this would be neither easy nor quick. Fortunately the half-life of it was, as a major thing—I think they held a quick hearing over there or something, and then it pretty well drifted to the second or third

page. It didn't go away, but it still wasn't on the front page, unless certain things had happened.

One time we had to go over and testify before the Pike committee, and I went to sit behind Moorer.\* There was where I saw Moorer not at his best. He was not quick in sophisticated arguments. He thought they were just what they were, a lot of hot air. He didn't feel guilty about it, but he wasn't a good participant in it. I can remember at one point in the discussion Pike asked a question about communications or something, and Moorer answered it in a very superficial way, and all the committee did was stare at him. He got uncomfortable and said, "Well, what I should say..." and started elaborating, and then he got in trouble. Now, they didn't know what to ask, and if he'd have sat there like Admiral Chew did, who came back from Taiwan and said, "If they want to ask me something let them ask it; I ain't gonna help them," he'd have been all right [chuckle], because they didn't know what to ask.† But when he started elaborating it turned to jelly.

Paul Stillwell: What did he say in the elaboration?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he pointed out where our communications system wasn't very good, and that it hadn't been used correctly, and so forth. He just got into a little trouble he didn't need to get into, because *they* didn't know that. They didn't know anything. And if they ask dumb questions, give them dumb answers. Now, that's a hard lesson to learn, and it's sometimes hard to do over there. Weinberger was masterful at it. But I wouldn't say that Moorer was masterful at testimony, unless it was really on military, something that just nobody knew anything about but him. But Moorer was a good guy to work for. Moorer was very good to me. I'm an admiral because of Moorer. I didn't know that then.

We dove into the plan, and everything we wrote was just rejected. A and B would be for it, but C and D were against it. So we started in a long series of compromises as to how do we do this silly thing that we can get everybody aboard, and that nobody's ox is

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\* Otis G. Pike, a Democrat from New York, served in the House of Representatives from 3 January 1961 to 3 January 1979.

† Vice Admiral John L. Chew, USN, served as Commander U.S. Taiwan Defense Command from July 1967 to July 1970. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

really gored? And it was very, very difficult. It took about eight or nine months of consultation, and so forth. We worked out a plan where the crew would be repatriated and, hopefully, a short space with their relatives and so forth would suffice, and then we would immediately take them into isolation for an intelligence debrief, and we would try and separate the intelligence debrief from any judicial proceedings. And we had all kinds of reservations built into it, promises that we would make to them that I wasn't sure we could keep, but at least we were going to try. And then when the intelligence debrief was over we would submit them to a court of inquiry—and our plan stopped. As I said in the book, we assumed that five admirals could handle it from then on. Dead wrong.

Paul Stillwell: You explained that very well in your book and the role that Bucher's lawyer played in that.

Admiral Crowe: That was critical, but not everything is in there that happened. We got the plan approved, but the plan was classified secret. The plan was about 40 pages. I forget exactly how long the plan was, but it was thin, it wasn't big. On a Friday afternoon we printed up 40 copies of it and distributed them in secret. Now, one of the problems I had is, we had planned a pretty big welcome-home in Hawaii and then back in San Diego. But because the plan was secret, I couldn't go out and do anything. I couldn't arrange anything. We felt if the details of the plan got out it might hurt the people in captivity, so we classified it secret.

On Friday afternoon—this was about nine months through the year—we distributed the 40 copies. I had a list of them and I had a signature for every copy. On Monday morning in the *Los Angeles Times* a guy by the name of Robert Donovan wrote an article on the plan and quoted directly from it.

Paul Stillwell: He's the guy who wrote *PT-109*.

Admiral Crowe: He is? Well, in any event he made my life pretty miserable.

Paul Stillwell: But you don't know how he got it.



Admiral Crowe: No. But we had the 40 people, we knew who they were. Somebody leaked it. Obviously, he had a copy of it. He hadn't just been told some things about it; he had a copy of it. Well, on Monday morning Blouin called me in and just ripped me up for leaking the plan.\* [Chuckle]. And I finally convinced him, I said, "I didn't leak the plan, Admiral. What the hell are you talking about? My shop's not in the business of leaking the plan." And I took with me the list up there. I said, "This plan has been distributed to these people; it all happened last Friday. All 40 of them, we delivered by hand. Somebody on there leaked it."

He said, "Well, we've got to go see the CNO about this. We may lose our jobs." He was always saying that to me [chuckle], "We may lose our jobs." At this point I was about ready to lose my job. Who in the hell wanted to keep it? Moorer was much more philosophical about it. And one of the beauties of that is, obviously it was public now, so I could go out and make hotel reservations and do all kinds of things that I couldn't do before.

But on Tuesday, after that terrible weekend, a guy showed up in the office and said, "I'm from the NIS, and I'm in charge of the investigation into the leak, and I would like a desk to sit right alongside yours."† So we put a desk in there, and that guy sat down, and I was the first person he interviewed. And he was there for about six weeks, and he never found anything. Of course, I turned over the list, and every time he had a question I could just turn to him and answer it. I don't even remember his name. I hated him. I've hated the NIS ever since. Had a lot of problems with the NIS in Bahrain. Anyway, they investigated the hell out of it and they never found who leaked the plan.

But some interesting things happened. They didn't take retaliation on the crew. It didn't change a thing in North Korea. Okay, they've got a plan; so what? But the fact that it leaked made my life really complicated.

Then after we had the plan and distributed it, I briefed it all over town. I went in the White House and briefed the White House staff on it. I met everybody in that town, from all over the State Department and—the man in the State Department who was in

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\* Vice Admiral Francis J. Blouin, USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy) from July 1968 to July 1971.

† NIS – Naval Investigative Service.

charge of negotiation was Ambassador Leonard.\* He and I became very friendly. He used to live here, but he died. He was really a nice fellow.

One of the things that coursed through my mind as I was doing that is what a great example of political science this is. And so I saved all the stuff of that period on the theory that I could build a course on *Pueblo*. Well, in two weeks I'm going to have one session in my class in Annapolis on *Pueblo*. But it's just a great example of how you get something done in the U.S. Government in something that's very controversial but has all kinds of options, and everybody's got an interest and the only thing they care about is their interest. They're not out to help you; they're out to further their interest. And to get the lawyers, who wanted to prosecute these guys, to agree to anything was terribly hard. It just fouled it up.

The first thing where I had to make a terrible decision was, Fryklund, who was the PA guy that went out for the release of the crew, asked me to go with him.† I had spent a whole year on it. I deserved to go with him. But Weinell advised me not to go. I didn't go, and I think it was a big mistake.

Paul Stillwell: Why did he advise you not to go?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he just had a suspicion of PA people. He said if anything goes wrong, why, they'll hold you responsible, not somebody else. You don't need to get mixed up in it out there. But it was a moment in history. I should have been out there, and I always regretted that I didn't go. And particularly in the light of what subsequently happened to me. I had to meet the whole crew. I'm sorry I wasn't there when they were released. It would have been a historic moment.

But, in any event, after we got over the leak, and then it began to look like the negotiations were stymied, and they came up with this scheme that had been shelved before, to lie—and I described that pretty well in the book. You tell your people what you want and we won't disagree with it, and once you get the crew we're going to tell our people what we want. The Koreans didn't even flinch. They bought that scheme just

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\* James F. Leonard.

† Richard Fryklund, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs).

lock, stock, and barrel, which, to an American, seemed so incredible. Why would anybody agree to that, when the two stories were contrary?

Paul Stillwell: Apparently it was acceptable in their culture.

Admiral Crowe: It was. And, of course, I guess, when you understand the nature of face-saving in their culture and the importance of it, and when you do things like that to help save face, why, that's the way you get off the ground. They bought it lock, stock, and barrel.

Now, the critical part, which we really labored with, was how do we handle this, whether he went into territorial waters? The lawyers ensured us that if we had to probe it out of him, that all ability to prosecute him would evaporate. That if he volunteered the information, okay, but you had to be very, very careful not to twist his arm. And it's amazing how much energy we put on that simple single question. And the scheme we arrived at is that Fryklund would meet him, and Fryklund would ride with him, and somehow between the release and getting to the press conference Fryklund was going to get an answer to that question.

Paul Stillwell: Without asking it. [Chuckle].

Admiral Crowe: Yes, without asking it. And that was one of the reasons I think I should have gone, because I was probably the only naval officer that agreed with that. Naval officers all wanted to *ask* him, for God's sake; what's wrong with asking him? And that would be Moorer too. Moorer—all these nuances I'm going to tell you about in a minute really got Moorer into hot water.

We did have one thing going for us—and we knew ahead of time—Bucher likes to talk. Of course, I had never met Bucher. I didn't know who Bucher was, didn't know his family. George Wilson, the defense correspondent of *The Washington Post*, followed this thing pretty carefully. He wrote on it several times. But he wrote one article on it, that Bucher was a self-educated man. It was true that if Bucher was going to get educated it had to be self- [chuckle], because he didn't have much schooling. Wilson

wrote that every time before Bucher went to sea for a long period, he would get a bunch of the classics and put it in a bookshelf over his bunk, and read that at sea all the time. *Odysseus*, and *Ulysses*, and *Dante's Inferno*, or some dumb thing like that. That wasn't true at all. When the intelligence debrief came out—and I sat in on some of that—Bucher had just paperback porn stuff up there, and the Koreans got ahold of it and they were constantly, in their interrogations, asking the crew: "What does this mean?" [Chuckle] And they were just cheap sex stuff, that's the only thing Bucher was reading. He wasn't reading the classics or anything else. I never went public on that, but I wanted to shoot George Wilson right in the ass. He missed it by a million miles.

Paul Stillwell: Did you ever meet Bucher?

Admiral Crowe: Well, no, I didn't. I've never met Bucher. We'll get into that in a minute. I came very close. Met his wife, just in passing, that's all. Never had anything to do with her.

Then I described how Fryklund just shut up, and Bucher came right out. So they submitted him immediately to a press conference, and they weren't too worried about what he was going to say, because he had already said: "I did not go into territorial waters." And we don't think he did. We had really gotten hold of some analysis on that, and our study of it was pretty good. We thought it was a decent gamble, but Rusk didn't know that when he first opened his mouth. We think that he never was in territorial waters, and that certainly is what he said, so everything he was saying to the press was okay.

Then they brought the crew back to Hawaii. Well, they went through a base in the Philippines, I think, then to Hawaii. I'm a little shaky on the time. But the first reaction was just euphoria—we got them back. They came out of Korea and they went to, I think, the air base in the Philippines, Clark, for a day or two. And about then the President called on Moorer and said, "Do you remember on the official announcement of the *Pueblo* I said that I would immediately find out about the maltreatment of the crew? How's that investigation going?"

Well, there wasn't any investigation. That happened on Saturday morning, and I guess the crew that day was on its way to San Diego. Of course, during that crisis, Shirley knows, I worked every Saturday, and I was in the office, unfortunately [chuckle], about 8:00 o'clock in the morning. I got a call from the CNO's office, "You'd better get up here."

I walked in to see Moorer. He said, "Are we investigating the maltreatment of the crew?"

I said, "Well, we plan to, Admiral, but no, we haven't done anything on it."

"Well, we're going to do something now!"

I said, "What's the problem?"

He told me about his call from the President. "I told the President I would look into the status of this thing. That's all I told him. I've got to answer the question." He said, "I want you to go to San Diego today, and if you can't get on today, tomorrow, and I want you to find out about the maltreatment of the crew. And I want you to be back in my office next Friday morning with a full report of it."

Paul Stillwell: You covered that pretty well in the book.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I did a little bit, but there were a couple of things that I didn't get into. It was a very interesting experience for me. In the first place, I wasn't even sure it was possible. And I told him that. I said, "I'm not sure I can do all that in one week."

He said, "Well, you haven't got a choice. Now, I'll give you any man in OpNav. You can have any man, or combination of people, to help." And this was the old story; I wasn't sure it was numbers I needed. But I had a great lawyer in 61, Bill Lynch, and a young guy in intelligence, Hackett, that was the guy that did the study of whether they went into territorial waters or not and had sort of concluded they didn't. \* And then I took two yeomen from OpNav that worked in the front office that were very good.

We were on a plane the next morning. And oh, by the way, this was over Christmas and New Year's. It was right after Christmas. I worked through all the football games on New Year's Day, out at San Diego. All the way out Lynch and I

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\* Captain William C. Lynch, Judge Advocate General's Corps, USN; Lieutenant Donald E. Hackett, USN.

talked about what problems we were going to run into. We had no idea. All we knew was we had a crew out there, but we didn't know what the environment would be or not.

We met with them first thing Monday morning. By the way, Bucher was in the hospital, so Bucher was not there, but his exec was there, who was sort of a hero.\* His exec was pretty good. In the interim since they had arrived in San Diego every one of them had been assigned a lawyer by the district over there in San Diego. The crew listened and was sort of unresponsive to me. I mean, I didn't get a plus or a minus signal. But we then busted up, and every guy we interviewed wouldn't talk. The day was a complete failure. The lawyers were sitting there beside them and said, "My man has nothing to say."

I called CNO's office and got Julien LeBourgeois.† I said, "This whole business is falling on its face out here. Nobody will talk. I've assured them that it would not be used judicially against them," and so forth, and so forth.

LeBourgeois said, "I'll be back to you." Within the hour he called back and said, "We've fired the whole bunch of lawyers. We've got new lawyers."

I said, "You've got new ones?"

He said, "We've not only got new ones. They have their instructions." And, sure enough, by noon they each had a new lawyer [chuckle], and they were advising them to talk. Now, I'm not quite sure how that all worked, but it worked. It changed everything.

So I had another meeting with them that afternoon to repeat what I'd said in the morning and to assure them that I'd consulted with the lawyers, and it was possible to do these sorts of things without any fear of retribution, etc., etc. And the oldest man in the crew—and I can't remember his name—the things I said were irrelevant, but what he said was powerful. He stood up and said, "Look, I was harassed and tortured and everything else, and if the captain there is going to help us get even with those guys, I am more than happy to cooperate, and I don't give a damn about what it does to me judicially or not." When he did that the whole crew, practically to a man, stood up, and then we started interviewing, and people were answering our questions.

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\* The executive officer was Lieutenant Edward R. Murphy, USN. He later wrote a book: *Second in Command: the Uncensored Account of the Capture of the Spy Ship Pueblo* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

† Captain Julien J. Le Bourgeois, USN, was executive assistant to Admiral Moorer.

There were some exceptions. Not many, but a couple of officers, whose conduct was very suspect. Their lawyers, even the new ones [chuckle], told them they didn't think they should be talking. I've got a funny story about one of those guys, a young man, a Harvard graduate, who was the communicator. And they did a terrible—in fact, they did no job on destroying the codes and so forth. And he was really under the gun. That went on for a long time. And in the midst of it we get a letter from his mother when I was back in Washington. I had to answer the letter in OpNav. And the letter said that she understood her son was in some trouble with the Navy, and she didn't understand it at all because his great-great-grandfather had fought in the American Revolutionary War and his great-grandfather had fought in the War of 1812 and he had a colonel in the Civil War, and his father had fought in World War blah-blah. How could they possibly think my son had done anything wrong? She never mentioned what he had done or his performance, or anything. And that letter we answered with was very carefully crafted, etc. But I thought it was a magnificent defense of him. [Chuckle].

I was on a program years later with this O'Neill guy that attacked Kerry in the election when he was running against Bush.\* When we got in an argument on TV all he could say about it was “My father was in the Army and my grandfather was in the Civil War.”

I said, “Well, I don't really care about that. What were *you* doing?”

Paul Stillwell: That was the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, the guy that wrote the book. But in any event, I thought that was interesting.

We spent the week interviewing people all day long. The three of us, Hackett and Lynch and I, would interview. Now, the name of the man is in here that was really the hero in the case. What was his name?

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\* John E. O'Neill was author of the 2004 book *Unfit for Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak Out Against John Kerry*.

Paul Stillwell: Oh, Quartermaster Law.\*

Admiral Crowe: Law, Law, Law. Law was a quartermaster, and he was a big man, very physical, and he was marvelous. I didn't interview him; Lynch interviewed him. And to give you an idea of how screwy the week was, when Lynch came out of the interview I said, "How'd it go?"

He says, "It was magnificent. It was wonderful."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "They tortured the hell out of him." [Chuckle] What was magnificent about it? We had a guy that was really tortured, you know? That's what we were looking for. But the way Lynch said it, like "Oh, yeah, they damned near killed him. This is great." [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Kind of a perverse celebration.

Admiral Crowe: That's what I thought at the time. I thought, boy, we're mixed up here somehow or other. We're not supposed to be ecstatic when some guy's getting tortured, but that's what we were. We were looking for torture. He was very candid, but everybody mentioned Law. Every member of the crew mentioned Law, and how staunch he was. And couple of times he actually took punishment for other people. Claimed something he had done that they had done; he took it on himself. And they hit him with a two-by-four over the shoulders time and time again.

The exec was good. He kept the crew in spirits and so forth. Their opinion of Bucher was mixed. He did some things they liked in prison camp, but they didn't like his performance the day of the capture, of course.

We were under a terrible time gun on this thing, and every day after the end of the day, about 7:00 or 8:00 at night, we would then quit interviewing and spend the night writing on the report. It was just a horrible week. And occasionally we would get a guy that wouldn't tell us anything, but not many. I met the whole crew, but no Bucher. His wife was in town, but I didn't see her.

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\* Quartermaster First Class Charles Law, USN.



Now, that week, which had not been planned, there were no families or anything. They were isolated for that week, so we could talk to them. We got on that airplane. I asked for permission to come back first class so we could set up business in first class, and LeBourgeois said, "I'll take care of it. I'll handle it," which he did. We climbed on that airplane with a portable typewriter and a yeoman, and Lynch and I sat in one seat and across from us was the yeoman with his typewriter. This was back when we used typewriters. And we would write and hand sheets across the aisle, and the stewardess sitting there looking at all this, feeding us drinks. [Chuckle] We were up all night getting that thing out.

Paul Stillwell: Was there any concern that you'd be overheard by other passengers?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, there was, but we didn't talk out loud. In fact, I don't even think first class was filled. Because he had an empty seat, the yeoman did, with all kinds of stuff over there. And the stewardess was quite interested in what the hell we were doing. [Chuckle] I forget, we told her some fantastic wild story.

Bill Lynch was terrific. Young man, good Catholic boy, Irish, and very irreverent. A hell of a sense of humor. We had a lot of fun during the week on humor, if it wasn't such a tragic thing.

We went from Dulles right to my office, 6:00 o'clock in the morning, and I remember we went to sleep in my office sitting in our chairs, waiting to see the CNO. Got in to him, gave him the report. He distributed it immediately. It caused quite a furor at the time, but that's all. Nothing ever came of it. There was a lot of torturing the crew, but no deaths in prison. There had been a couple of serious things happened, but not from the North Koreans. Even from all that torture, I don't know that anybody was maimed for life, or it certainly wasn't obvious.

Paul Stillwell: One man was killed in the initial attack.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and another was very seriously wounded. Then, after a while, they laid off of the crew, after about a few months, and they just sort of existed or survived

over there. They came back with a tremendous guilt complex, the whole crew did. You could see it; it was manifestly obvious. And they were very confused by the reception they got. They didn't expect that at all. They expected to go to jail, and the reception they received was the opposite. They were hailed as heroes, and so forth.

We made several recommendations for medals, all of which were adopted. Bucher was not recommended for a medal. There was palpable tension between Bucher and the exec throughout the whole cruise, and then particularly when they got imprisoned.

There were several things they didn't do the day of the capture that were really very bad. They made no attempt to resist, or even to protract the—the very first thing they should have done if they were going to give up was destroy the engines. They didn't do any of that. Didn't even try. And Bucher got sort of panicky and he sent that message that he had been hit in the anus, I remember; I'll never forget that.

We each picked out people in the crew that we liked and were impressed with. Most of the crew, the bulk of the crew, was moderately tortured, and neither at blame or not at blame. They hadn't done anything particularly valiant, and they hadn't done anything particularly wrong. We learned a lot about the Korean interrogation techniques. And we did know all the papers that they found and didn't find. That all came out quickly. It was an intelligence disaster. It was just a plain bad deal.

Paul Stillwell: Well, they got all the crypto systems, didn't they?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I briefed the report quickly to the State Department and some other people, and all reacted with shock and awe. But it went away, and there was no way we were going to—we had a list of the guys that did this work. I mean, we knew who the bad guys were, but so what? There was nothing we could do about it. And even the President said, "Oh, this is horrible and terrible," but that was the end of it.

Now, the real trouble started, of course, after that was over. Then they had this reception in San Diego which was elaborate. I was not out there for that. I was back in Washington. Their families were well taken care of. BuPers had laid on elaborate stuff, and it was all well done. But then we isolated the crew again for the intelligence debrief,

an in-depth interrogation. Again, under the proviso that nothing in there would be used in the judicial proceedings. That worked pretty well. Everything in the repatriation plan worked. It just stopped too quickly, was the problem.

Then they started for the court of inquiry, and we just didn't anticipate that the court of inquiry would be a circus. Harvey made it a circus right away, and succeeded at getting what he wanted.\* The court had been in session about a day or two when Rivers, who was the head of the Armed Services Committee, called Moorer and said, "How'd it go out there today?"†

Moorer, who had been very carefully briefed by his lawyers, said, "Well, I don't know, Mr. Chairman, but I think it went all right. But, of course, you know I can't intervene. I can't follow this. I'm limited by statute."

Rivers said, "Bullshit, Admiral, I don't accept that at all. I want you to tell me every day what the hell is going on out there, and I want to know in detail and in specifics. I don't want any of this crap about 'I can't interfere or intervene.'"

Moorer was pretty upset. He was sort of shaken by that. I got a call to come to the front office, and he said, "What are we going to do about this?" Well, [chuckle] what do you mean "we," Admiral?

And incidentally, Moorer had a sense of humor. He was not a humorless man. He sort of liked dirty jokes.

Then he came up with this startling idea. He said, "I want you to go out there as an adviser to the chief of the court of inquiry," whatever he's called. I don't even know what the title is, for the guy that—chairman, I guess.

Paul Stillwell: Vice Admiral Bowen was that individual.‡

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He said, "I want you to sit on his right hand and impress on him"—they were always telling me to impress on admirals [chuckle]; I didn't cotton to this very well—"the political background here in Washington. This is a political thing.

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\* Captain Miles Harvey, USNR, was a San Diego trial lawyer who served as Bucher's counsel.

† L. Mendel Rivers, a Democrat from South Carolina, served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1940 until he died in 1970. He was chairman of the House Armed Services Committee from 1965 until his death.

‡ Vice Admiral Harold G. Bowen, Jr., USN, was president of the court of inquiry.

It's not just a matter of justice out there. There's a lot in this back here," he says. "You're to go out there and tell him...."

I said, "Whoa, hold on, Admiral. Hold on. Number one, I'm not even sure that's legal. And number two, I'm not sure it's a good idea." Now, I had a relationship with Moorer where I could say things like that. He didn't mind that. I said, "Aaah, I think a better idea would be to bring him back here. Recess the court for a week. Bring him back here and let him see and meet everybody that's got an interest in this thing, so he'll get some idea that this isn't just another court of inquiry."

Moorer said, "Well, that sounds pretty good."

I said, "It's a hell of a lot better than sending me out there to tell this vice admiral everything he should be doing." I said, "I'm not even sure he'll listen to me."

Moorer looked, as if: I'm not sure he will either. He said, "I've been on the phone with Bowen, and he isn't too bright." He didn't mean that he wasn't bright; what he meant was he didn't understand what I was talking about, the sensitivity of this thing.

Paul Stillwell: The broader implications.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and how many people were following it, and what it had to do with a lot of other things in the general Navy. He said, "He didn't get it." So what they did was recess the court and they brought Bowen back. His first briefing was in my office, and I went with him a couple of places around town. And, boy, Moorer was absolutely right. He did not understand what the hell was going on.

The problem was that Harvey had already done what he needed to do, procedurally. Harvey had already got what he wanted. It was too late to walk the cat back on any of that stuff. And so the way it was presented, the way Bucher was allowed to tell his story in open court—Harvey had outflanked us from the very beginning, and what we were doing was damage control, essentially, to keep this from imploding on us. It was too late, actually, to have any really substantive impact, but what we were talking about now was PR.

Bowen spent the whole week, and he was suitably—I guess politically correct at being flabbergasted at how superficial things are in Washington, and how terrible this is

that people in Washington were not letting justice run its course. And I didn't say it to him, but my response was: "You ought to have more time in Washington, friend, and we should have taken that into account when we put you at this court." Because he was not sensitive, and, of course, he ruined his career. He had no more career after that.

Paul Stillwell: I asked him several times to do an interview about that, and he never would.

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't think he would. It was a painful week, it really was. Moorer kept saying [chuckle], "I think you ought to go out there."

I kept saying, "No, Admiral, I don't think I ought to go out there. I'm just going to be in the way if I am, and people are going to ask: Why are you here?" And I wanted to know why I was there, too.

The court, of course, recommended a court-martial for Bucher. And the reviewing authority was Hyland, CinCPacFlt. What Hyland really wanted was some guidance on what the hell to do about the endorsement. Well, then a big glitch happened. Hyland drafted an endorsement, which he obviously worried about. But he didn't know anything about the politics in Washington either. He sent by courier his endorsement back to Washington. And I don't know how many days, but it came in, not on time but we got it, not too badly. It was very close-hold. I met the courier, but I didn't see it. It went in Clarey's in-box, and Clarey didn't open it or pay any attention to it for—God knows, I don't know, I forget—one, two, three weeks. And the Secretary of the Navy was getting quite antsy.\* He said, "When am I going to hear from Hyland?" And he told Moorer, "I'm going to go ahead without you if I don't hear. I can't keep waiting on this. We've got to act on this goddamn thing." Now, Moorer didn't know any of this. And I didn't know Clarey hadn't looked at it. So the next office I was in was Clarey's office, and he said, "The Secretary of the Navy says he's going to act on this tomorrow." And he said, "I've just found it in my in-basket." [Chuckle]

I said, "Oh?"

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\* John H. Chafee served as Secretary of the Navy from 31 January 1969 to 4 May 1972.

So he said, “You’ve got to have a look at this and see what you think.” Well, he was recommending a court-martial. I got Lynch in there, and we spent the morning on it, and we thought it was terrible. We thought it was the wrong endorsement. And obviously a lot of the details escape me now.

Paul Stillwell: But you thought this from a political point of view?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes, yes. Not from a judicial. There wasn’t anything judicial about any of this damned crap. It was all beyond us. The train had gone on without us. And the Secretary of the Navy wasn’t going to approve a court-martial. It was clear as rain that he wasn’t going to approve it. So I went back to Clarey. He’d said, “You’ve got to be back in here in an hour,” or two hours, I forget. Just a matter of minutes. “You’re not going to have time to dwell on this.” I came back in and said, “We’ve gone over it carefully and we recommend A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J.” It was a long—we had a lot of corrections.

Then he said [chuckle], I’ll never forget it, “Get Hyland on the phone.”

I said, “That’s interesting. You going to tell him all this?”

He said, “No, you are.”

I said, “I’m going to what?”

And he said, “Hello, this is Chick. I’ve got a couple of officers from 61 in here, and I’m going to put them on the phone, and they’re going to tell you our views on this endorsement. And I want you to hold your temper out there now, damn it.” And, of course, the fault was Clarey’s. It wasn’t anybody else’s. He had sat on this damned thing. And I’d never met Hyland.

So I was on the phone with Hyland and I was going through it. “We think we ought to change this.”

“Why?”

“Well,” this, this, this, and this back here, and this thing’s going...” For a while Clarey listened, and he finally quit. He just left us to it. I talked on that phone for an hour and a half. My arm was sore, and Hyland was mad, and the way he sounded on the phone he wasn’t going to do any of this stuff. He did it all. And later, when I was

CinCPac, he and I became very good friends. But he was sort of annoyed at Clarey. Number one, that he hadn't seen it, and secondly he'd put a captain on there to tell him what to do. And I felt very uncomfortable with the whole thing. But, boy, we went through it all, line by line. And Hyland said, "Well, I don't know about all this crap," and grumbling and dragging his heels.

Paul Stillwell: He was very much a traditionalist.

Admiral Crowe: All I knew when I hung up was, number one, he got our views. What he was going to do about it I didn't know. And number two, it was clear that he was upset, and I had not soothed his personality at all. I just had no choice but to go through this. And it had to be in tomorrow. So he made the changes, handed it to a guy, put him on an airplane, hand-delivered, on the redeye back that night, so we got it in to the Secretary the day he was going to act. But, boy, as you can see, we were talking about seconds here. We weren't talking about hours or anything else. And I assumed that I had made an enemy for life out of Hyland. Now, of course, Clarey was the head of the board that promoted me. I had done Clarey a hell of a big favor, that we were able to do this.

Hyland accepted every change. I told him, "Admiral, I know this is uncomfortable and distasteful, but I'm telling you what's going on back here. And if you don't want to put the CNO in a bad position, these changes are important. But if you don't care about that, that's another matter. That's not my business." Hyland made every one of those changes. Moorer handed in that report, and it was: "I do not recommend court-martial."

The CNO said to me, "Do you feel comfortable with this?"

I said, "No, I don't like it. But I'm writing you a memorandum telling you why we've got to do this." I said that to Moorer. The best memorandum I ever wrote for the U.S. Government. I had written it personally, and it was about three pages. It went down the court of inquiry and said the train has passed us by. We are in accord with American public's view. There's no way we could win by court-martialing this man; it would be a terrible mistake, Admiral. On the other hand, he's paid a lot of time himself. He spent a

year in prison, and it's perfectly legitimate to say that he's been punished already for any malfeasance. Now, I told him privately—and I'll tell you that in a minute.

Then I went into what problems we would have by doing this. I said we would have a serious problem here, and that was with the other commanding officers in the Navy, that we were going to let Bucher off without a court-martial. And Congress doesn't give us any—that's not their problem. Neither does Rivers or anybody else give a damn about that. But we as the Navy should give a damn about it. And it's sending the wrong signal, and we've got to do something about getting the right signal out to the Navy, that we expect commanding officers to do blah, blah, blah. And that, despite what happened on *Pueblo*, you do things right we'll support you, you do things wrong—we expect so-and-so from the U.S. Navy. And Moorer told me one time, he said, "That's the best memorandum I ever read."

But then I told him privately, "You've gotten even."

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Well, while Bucher was in prison, his wife made a contract for several books, but they were for both of them. Now, he wanted to divorce his wife, and their divorce proceedings were in train before he went on this cruise. But he's back now, and if he's going to get that money for the books he can't divorce her." And I said, "So we're getting even with this guy."

Paul Stillwell: I never heard that story.

Admiral Crowe: Moorer thought that was terrific. I said, "Yeah, he's got to keep this wife, at least a few years. Otherwise he won't have anything on this. So we win, he doesn't." And, sure enough, I think it was five years before they got a divorce.\* But it was true. That was not in the memorandum. [Chuckle]

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\* Bucher was still married to his original wife Rose at the time of his death in 2004. The resulting book was Lloyd M. Bucher, with Mark Rascovich, *Bucher: My Story* (Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1970).



Paul Stillwell: Did you ever look at the levels above Commander Bucher, in that there had obviously been a misassessment of the risk, and there were no contingency plans to protect him.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. I didn't handle that. OP-03, whoever was operations then—I forget how the—operations was not in 06 then, but that was being handled in our own councils, as to how we didn't react better. And the operations part of OpNav, I think, did an in-house critique of it, and then Moorer sent them on the road to tell these people that I expect better performance than this on these. But I didn't get into that. My only interest here was Bucher, and Hyland's recommendation, and so forth, and so forth.

The Secretary of the Navy was quite upset that we were so late getting it, but I don't think the Secretary of the Navy ever knew that Clarey had sat on it. Somehow we just didn't talk about that.

Paul Stillwell: You weren't asked the question, and you didn't volunteer.

Admiral Crowe: That's absolutely right. It was quite an embarrassment at the time. It was a big, a big mistake for Clarey. He shouldn't have sat on it. But, you know, the VCNO is so bloody busy. He just plain overlooked it. And then all of a sudden the world descended on him. "You've got to have something by tomorrow morning."

But two things have always amazed me about the U.S. Government. One is how hard and how long it is to get something done. But in an emergency, how quickly you can get something done. If it's got a high enough priority, man, it can really move out. Just like that. We didn't mess with the mail system. We did that on telephone, and then a guy was handed it and said, "Get on an airplane." And his sole purpose flying back was to get this piece of paper on CNO's desk.

Paul Stillwell: Didn't have e-mail then.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we didn't have a lot of time-savers. But, boy, when you really had the priority, you could move. People had to get out of your way, but—when Moorer told

me, “Pick anybody in OpNav you want.” He told them that in a meeting, and they were afraid to death I was going to come in and grab a captain or something. But I didn’t know any captains that knew about the subject like these two people did.

Then Moorer had to testify, later on, where some of these subjects came up, and what does this say to the rest of the Navy. Now, we went to elaborate lengths, and then it got out of my hands. After that he really went to some effort through his senior officers to get the word out, that this was not to be the typical pattern for Navy performance, and that we still expected certain things of our commanding officers.

And that impressed me very, very much, because I ran into exactly the same problem with the *Vincennes* when I was Chairman.\* I recommended that Rogers not be—it was a little different—I recommended that Rogers not be punished, because whether the information he was given was right or wrong the fact remains that he had acted in the spirit of the guidance we gave him, which was: “Your first responsibility is the crew and the ship. If you’re wrong but if in your mind you’re acting in the crew’s behalf or the ship’s behalf, we’ll support you even no matter what happens.”† And, of course, we had a tragedy happen. We brought down a civilian airliner. But he thought he was under threat. Now, granted, he had the wrong information, and it got fouled up.

Paul Stillwell: And he also had the precedent of the *Stark* earlier.‡

Admiral Crowe: Yes. That’s exactly right. And I told him, I made a trip to the Persian Gulf when I was Chairman, and I met with commanding officers, a bunch of them. I said, “We’ve got these new rules of engagement primarily because of the *Stark*. And we’ve had years of effort to get these rules of engagement. The politicians have never let us live with this before. And you may make mistakes, but we’ll support you if you act

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\* On 3 July 1988, Iran Air flight 655, an A300 airbus en route from Bandar Abbas Airport to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, was destroyed by two SM-2 Standard missiles launched at a range of nine miles by the Aegis cruiser *Vincennes* (CG-49). All 290 persons on board the civilian airliner died.

† Captain William C. Rogers III, USN, was commanding officer of the *Vincennes*.

‡ On 17 May 1987, while she was operating in the Persian Gulf, the guided missile frigate *Stark* (FFG-31) was hit by two Exocet air-to-surface missiles fired by an Iraqi Mirage F1 fighter. One of the two missiles exploded, resulting in heavy damage and fires. Of the *Stark*’s crew, 37 men were killed and 21 injured. For details, see Jeffrey L. Levinson and Randy L. Edwards, *Missile Inbound* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997).

within the spirit of it.” So that was what my endorsement on *Vincennes* was. That some people weren’t going to like it, but we’ve got the whole Navy to think about, the commanding officers, and we’re not going to punish commanding officers that were acting what they thought was on behalf of the safety of their ship—and they had some evidence for it. I mean, not just imagining. He really had reason to believe that his ship was under threat.

Now, that lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps hung around for years castigating me for that. Carlucci bought it, and I’ve always felt it was the right answer.\* Right or wrong, I felt strongly that we could not scapegoat this officer, even though he had brought down an airliner. And that’s still an open controversy, of course. Not everybody agrees with that. But it sort of came from my participation in the *Pueblo*.

Paul Stillwell: Interesting tie-in.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And we were worried about what that signal would be. On the other hand, the wave of emotion in the electorate was such that I didn’t think we could—we would just reaffirm their opinion of the brass again doing something that’s out of tune with the country. A lot of naval officers thought it was the wrong decision to not court-martial him. But I think the hue and cry would have been—no political appointee could approve that.

[Interruption for change of tape]

Paul Stillwell: We just took a little break to change tapes, and you were talking about the connection between Mrs. Bucher and the Vietnam POWs.

Admiral Crowe: I don’t know that it was a direct connection, but Sybil Stockdale and I talked about it some. The Vietnam wives, when their husbands were in prison, were originally being counseled by the government and by the Navy that they should be quiet because any activism might hurt their spouses in prison, that there might be retaliation

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\* Frank C. Carlucci served as U.S. Secretary of Defense from 23 November 1987 to 20 January 1989.

that we couldn't control. And Sybil said, "You know, when Mrs. Bucher started actively energizing the public on the *Pueblo*, well, she spoke out, and as far as we could determine that worked. So it was our model for saying we're not going to listen to the U.S. Government; we're going to start doing things." And they did, of course. They became very active, and they became organized. I don't know how much credit, but they gave some credit to Commander Bucher's wife because of her activism. Of course, she wanted to get at the book contracts. [Chuckle]

As I say, I met her once but I didn't talk to her. I just met her. Never have met him. It's sort of a gap in my experience. I always thought I should meet him, but I never have. In any event, it was some year for me and the *Pueblo*.

And then after the year was over and the dust settled, my job seemed sort of unexciting then. I went back to the regular business of OP-61, of dealing with little problems every day, and my heart wasn't quite in it as much as it had been in *Pueblo*, because it involved a lot of unusual things. I think it had a great deal to do with my being known in the Navy, and certainly my reputation in OpNav. I met every senior officer in OpNav as a result of one time or another having something to do with *Pueblo* on it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, just to play the devil's advocate on Bucher, he was a man who had not screened for command of a submarine. He was given sort of a second-string job, but it turned out he had to face challenges that were greater than the submariners did.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, I think that's true. A very perceptive comment. One of the things that's always intrigued me about the Navy—it's a little bit like I saw the same thing on corporations. If you're a golden boy and get fine fitness reports they give you the best ship and the best people. The ships that are having trouble get the worst people. And the biggest challenges are not on the ships that have all these good people; they're on these other ships that are amphibious ships, or an oiler, or something like that, where the crew is second-tier and the skipper—really the challenges of leadership are very great. On the other hand, the top tier seems to feed on itself. If all you get is good ships and good men it's sort of like quarterbacking Notre Dame. Anybody can do that, because they've got a

lot of help. But they don't have a lot of help on the poorer ships. I always thought it sort of should be the other way around.

And when I was sitting on corporate boards it always intrigued me about the salary of the CEO. And the way they determine the salary is they convene a study group. [Chuckle] Well, actually they hire an outside outfit to come in and look at your CEO's salary. The outside outfit looks at that segment—like if you're an oil company they look at the segment of all the CEOs of oil companies, and they determine an average wage and what the maximum is and the minimum is, and then they take you CEO and say: He's below average; it should be more, because the average of the other CEOs' salary is more. It's not about performance or anything. It's that he has a reputation to uphold and he ought to make as much as the other CEOs make. He gets his salary raised, and then the other guy performs a study group and hires the same outfit, and all they're doing is just pushing the ladder up. Well, that's sort of the way we do with officers. The better the fitness report, the better the ship they get.

Paul Stillwell: But essentially the court of inquiry and Admiral Hyland were expecting him to perform as well as the golden boys.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, of course. Oh, yes. There are two or three things about investigations. That's one of them. The other one is, when they start looking at you for an incident, they look at other things too. They don't just look at the incident. They look at all kinds of performance, and they find lots of things they can complain about which had nothing to do with the incident. That always upset me. If you had a ship collision, boy, you had to have everything right, whether it had anything to do with the collision or not.

We had an officer in the Navy named Morgan who was from the J. P. Morgan family, and he had command of a submarine that had a little bump with another submarine, and they had an investigation of some kind. And the joke in the Navy was, he said, "Look, this is not a big deal. If you want to, I'll buy you another submarine." [Laughter] He's married to McCain's sister.\*

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\* Jean Alexandra "Sandy" McCain Morgan is the wife of Commander David E. Morgan, USN (Ret.).

Paul Stillwell: Oh, okay.

Admiral Crowe: He's big in sailing at the Naval Academy, sort of runs the outside outfit that helps sailing at the Naval Academy.

Another way the system I thought was always a little foul is, for years if you didn't get a ship command they let you have a base command, which was second in priority. Actually, having a base command is probably much better preparation for an admiral than having a ship command, because big bases, in this day and age, run right into the kinds of problems that admirals run into.

Paul Stillwell: And you have a much more diverse constituency.

Admiral Crowe: Absolutely. And you have much more to do with the civilian world, and with labor unions, and with protests, and with the local community, and with the Congress. The Congress is much more interested in bases than it is in ships. So a man that can run a big base has a huge budget. And I think that that's changed a little bit. Our big bases are in every respect major commands. But they *should* be. Yet when a man gets a base he thinks, "Oh, my, I'm not on the first team."

Paul Stillwell: Well, Admiral Zumwalt really changed that philosophy for promotion purposes.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it helped me, because my major command was not in a ship, it was in Vietnam. That was the only place they could find a major command for me. [Chuckle] No community was going to have me.

Paul Stillwell: What do you remember about the dealings with Okinawa when you were in OP-61?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I'm glad you brought that up. I thought about it last night some. I also had a career crisis there, and Admiral Weinel was mixed up in that too. I forget the man that was in charge of the return of Okinawa. Who held those negotiations? It wasn't a military officer.

Paul Stillwell: I don't know.

Admiral Crowe: State Department.

Paul Stillwell: Alexis Johnson was the ambassador in Japan at that time.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I met Alexis Johnson. I had some business with him. But, in any event, the decision was made to return Okinawa, and we wrote several papers on it. We actually thought—and I wrote a long paper on it—that it might be a good idea to give up our bases in Japan instead of waiting to be thrown out. Well, it turned out I was wrong. We stayed, and some of the things I was worried about never materialized. But we made a strong case for, okay, let's give back political control of Okinawa, but we've got to have those military bases, much more than in Japan.

Well, in the middle of that, a guy was appointed to hold the negotiations. And he called up to OpNav and said that he would need a military officer to work with on this. And Weinel said, "Oh, I've got the right guy. I've got the guy you want. Captain Crowe. He's head of our East Asia section." And he went up to see Moorer and said, "I think we ought to send Crowe to this job. He'd be good at this, because he has got the right credentials."

I don't know who said or who didn't, but somebody said, "Well, wait a minute, you ought to think about it a little bit."

So Weinel came to see me and tell me about it and said, "You would have an apartment in Tokyo, take your family with you. It will be a terribly interesting two years of your life, participating in the negotiating and the design of getting out of Okinawa."

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\* U. Alexis Johnson, a Foreign Service Officer, was Deputy Under Secretary of State from 1961 to 1964. He later served as Under Secretary, 1965-66, and as ambassador to Japan, 1966-69. He was again Under Secretary of State, 1969-73.

Then he said, “But since it first came up I’ve changed my mind. I don’t advise you to do his. If you do this, that will be the end of your Navy advancement. It’s got a lot of appeal.” And it did; I always wanted to live in Tokyo. And he said, “The life you will have in Tokyo will be rather nice. Going to be plush living, and you’ll get to know the Japanese people,” which I thought had a lot of appeal. And he said, “This guy will rely on you heavily. I’ve talked to him, and he needs you. But I don’t think from the Navy standpoint you ought to do it.” So I turned it down.

Paul Stillwell: Who wound up getting the job?

Admiral Crowe: I don’t remember. They did give it, and I don’t recall. In those days you just made decisions and then you’d wipe it out. You don’t look back, and live with what you’ve got.

One of the things I did in OP-61 before I left was escort the Minister of Defense of Korea around the country, which was just an aide’s job; I’ve done a lot of that. But it was sort of interesting getting to know the Koreans better. I met a lot of them. I didn’t like the minister too well. Didn’t dislike him, but he was sort of formal and strange. But I met a lot of his aides, people I would ultimately do business with in Korea.

My job got sort of mundane then. I remember I wrote a couple of papers on Vietnam. We weren’t directly in the Vietnam business; we were in the political side of it. But after my all-hands meeting in OP-06 [chuckle] on the Geneva Accords I didn’t do any more on Vietnam than I could help. But I had to write a couple of papers on the politics of Vietnam, which helped me when I got to Vietnam in thinking about their political problems.

But the last six months in OP-612 were sort of an anticlimax. I had been sort of spoiled by my face-to-face contact with the upper reaches, and none of our issues again brought me to that. Then we changed OP-61s, two or three of them, one of whom I didn’t like at all, but he was only there—he was a drinker and they got rid of him very quickly.



But what distinguished it is, Zumwalt came in.<sup>\*</sup> And that was really a big—wowie, everybody had to make a personal decision: How do I deal with this? And he brought in his own kitchen cabinet, who were really the lords of the manor. Not only was Zumwalt taking a firm hold, he was empowering a small group of people that, number one, had a lot of power, and number two, weren't afraid to use it. And they made enemies very quickly. Everybody wanted to get identified with Zumwalt, but nobody wanted to do it the way they were doing it. I mean, in the outer crowd, and I was one of them. I didn't know Zumwalt. I'd never had anything to do with him. And I didn't like the way his people—

But one of his people that was very instrumental and very helpful to Zumwalt, who Zumwalt trusted implicitly, but I had a connection with; it was very interesting. His name was Emmett Tidd.<sup>†</sup> Do you know Emmett?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Well, Emmett and I were in the NROTC at Oklahoma University together, in the same class. At the end of our freshman year I was number one, and he was number two.

Paul Stillwell: I saw him around Christmas time over at the CNO's house.

Admiral Crowe: Did you?

Paul Stillwell: He's a nice man.

Admiral Crowe: Emmett and I were friendly then. And then I went to the Naval Academy, and I didn't run into Emmett again until I was OP-61. I guess he was a captain in the Navy then, because he was senior to me. He worked on Vietnam and we did a lot

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<sup>\*</sup> Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 July 1970 to 29 June 1974. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>†</sup> Captain Emmett H. Tidd, USN, later a vice admiral.

of business together. Now, when Zumwalt came in, Emmett was one of his favorite people.

Paul Stillwell: He'd been his chief of staff out in Vietnam.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And Emmett immediately assumed lots of responsibility. We were all a little leery of those guys. We didn't want any more than we could help to do with them, because they were handpicking people to do jobs. But in that same period of time Zumwalt changed the—which we mentioned a moment ago—guidelines for major command in the Navy. I saw that immediately as an opportunity for me to get a major command that would do two or three things. I thought I should go to war. Having been a warrior it was sort of time that I saw a war somewhere. And I also thought that if I leave the Navy I will probably end up in the political science business, and if I'm going to talk about Vietnam it sort of helps to have been there instead of just pontificate from 6,000 miles away, or something.

Paul Stillwell: I wonder if we could go back a year before, one incident we didn't talk about. The North Koreans shot down an EC-121 intelligence plane in April '69.\* Did that involve your ship at all? All the people on board were killed.

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't think so. I'm sure it involved us, but—now, I remember one issue that tickled me. I'm not even sure that happened when I was 61. We had a P2V shot up off the Russian coast.† He lost an engine and he was coming back to Atsugi, and the flight back was four or five hours. So we knew for five hours this guy was struggling. And as long as it worked he was going to get to Atsugi. So we rushed through a Bronze Star for his arrival. [Chuckle] If he made it, he was going to get a Bronze Star.

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\* A U.S. Navy EC-121 reconnaissance plane was shot down 14 April 1969 by North Korean aircraft.

† The incident that most closely matches this description was on 16 June 1959, when MiGs shot at and damaged a P4M Mercator in international waters off Korea. The pilot made an emergency landing at Miho, Japan. At the time Crowe was serving in OP-06 under Vice Admiral Bernard L. Austin.

Well, a funny thing happened. And this was all done telegraphically. Man, he gets a Bronze Star; have it ready for him when he lands. When he landed the first thing he said to the press was—let me see if I get this straight—“We never went inside their territorial waters. We stayed outside the 12-mile limit all the time.” Burke said, “We’re not supporting a 12-mile limit. We’re the 3-mile people,” and fired off a barn-burner to this kid, saying: Get straight with the cause here, friend, we don’t acknowledge 12 miles. Burke chewed him out. On the same day he got a Bronze Star and a message from the CNO! [Laughter] Telling him to get squared away on the limits of territorial sea. I always thought that was marvelous. It was a personal message from Burke to this young pilot. [Chuckle].

But I then immediately could see the tealeaves when Zumwalt started stressing Vietnam. He was trying very hard to get people to go to Vietnam. The aviators were not a part of this argument. It was really the surface warfare. I wasn’t in any community, and I was willing to grab any lifeline I could get.

Paul Stillwell: Your book discusses in some detail the negotiations you had with your wife on going over there.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And that’s one of the landmarks of my marriage. I’ve never forgotten that. I read that again last night. And I’ve been eternally indebted to her for her attitude about that.

Paul Stillwell: And you made the point it wasn’t just Vietnam. It was your seagoing experiences prior to that as well.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, but Vietnam was a watershed. That was going to be tough. And it’s like this year we’ve gone through with Blake. Blake spent a year in Iraq, and the whole family’s been sort of sitting on a knife edge while he’s there. Well, that’s the way Vietnam was when I was there.

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\* *The Line of Fire*, page 76.

It intrigues me that 25 years after I was in Vietnam Blake was the same rank with the same war, same sort of war. Had more responsibility than I did; he had a regiment. Twenty-five years later he's essentially doing the same thing I was doing, in a foreign country.

Paul Stillwell: In a way, it's harder on those back behind than the person doing it.

Admiral Crowe: In many ways it is. And he understands that now. He's in the process of decompressing, and it's hard. It's hard to get your mind away from it. And, you know, to this day I think about Vietnam all the time. Vietnam has never been very far from my thinking. But to me Vietnam was an opportunity, a personal opportunity. I convinced myself that it was important for me to go. Not everybody agreed with me. I had all kinds of people tell me I was out of my mind. And, in fact, the guys I worked with in 61 didn't understand why I needed to go to Vietnam. But I was worked up that it was. I felt that I should go. And when she gave me the okay, then I started jogging at night and doing all kinds of silly things.

Going to Vietnam was hard. It was hard on the family before I left. Shirley went out to San Francisco with me, and we said goodbye in San Francisco, not in Washington. I had to go down to San Diego for a few days for training, and then I went up to the base outside of San Francisco where they had small boats. I spent a couple of days up there with a guy named Tom Booker.\* Ever meet him?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: He had been in Vietnam, one of the commanders, and had come back and was in charge of that training unit out in the canals in California, where they pretty well replicated the kind of warfare that was going on in Vietnam. My outstanding memory of Tom—I had known him at the Naval Academy, he was a year ahead of me. When I went to meet with him that morning I spent half a day with him and he kept talking about, well, we've got to be at lunch at 11:30 at the club. So we got over to the

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\* Captain Thomas F. Booker, USN.

club at 11:30 and started drinking, and about 1:00 o'clock he said, "Well, they've closed the mess now. We're all set." Hell, we didn't get to lunch at all. All we did was go over there and drink for a hour and a half. [Chuckle] In any event, that was the last training I had before I left.

Paul Stillwell: There was none of the survival training for you?

Admiral Crowe: No, I didn't go through survival training, and that was probably a mistake. I didn't have time. Because I did a couple of things in Vietnam that my counterpart told me that I'd made a big mistake. He said they could have grabbed you and hauled you off, and we'd have never known about it. I think if I'd been through survival training I'd have been more sensitive to what I could do and couldn't do. I used to get in those small villages occasionally and it intrigued me, how they lived. And I'd wander around and up and down paths. That turned out to be insanity.

But in any event Shirley met me out there, and we said goodbye in San Francisco. It was tough; it was hard. And, of course, I was going into an environment in Vietnam that I didn't know a hell of a lot about.

Paul Stillwell: Well, and you said you allowed for the possibility that you might never see each other again.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. It was truly going to war. I think we'd better put that the next time around.

Paul Stillwell: All right.

Admiral Crowe: Because the biggest thing that happened in my life in the military was probably—well, I've had a lot of things that obviously share my interest. But nevertheless Vietnam was a big thing in my life. And wars are. When men go to war. Blake will never forget this year.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that's the real basis of the profession.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Curiously enough, I think my time in Vietnam not only told me a lot about the military, but about interventions. I learned some things about American culture that I didn't expect to learn. You think you'd come to America to learn about that. Not necessarily. You learn a lot about it when you live overseas. And I saw it in Vietnam and then I saw it again in Bahrain, as an admiral. And then as ambassador. You learn a lot about your own culture, because people are always asking you: Why do the Americans do that? [Chuckle] Say, "Because they're nuts." [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Well, I look forward to seeing you next week. Thank you very much.  
(End of Interview 14)

Paul Stillwell: Good afternoon, Admiral. We're here on the second day of spring.

Admiral Crowe: Beautiful out. Isn't it nice, though?

Paul Stillwell: It's a welcome change. We talked last time about the preliminaries that went into your assignment to Vietnam. Please move it forward with the mechanics of getting there and getting into the job.

Admiral Crowe: I didn't get to do everything I wanted to do before I went. In other words, as we talked about, I didn't go through survival training, which I would like to. I talked to people about it, but I didn't go through it. I did go through a course at San Francisco in small boats. Near Sacramento they have marshland and replicated the Vietnamese topography. And I went to amphibious warfare school down in San Diego for a few days. Also heard some lectures down there about Vietnam, etc., etc. I read everything I could get my hands on.

I was trying to remember whether I went to Hawaii. I guess I did. I guess I spent a day or two in Hawaii talking to the CinCPac staff about what I was doing and where I was going.

Paul Stillwell: This would be Admiral McCain at the time.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And I think I went down and saw Admiral Clarey when I was there. He was CinCPacFlt.

Paul Stillwell: What sort of guidance did you get during those visits?

Admiral Crowe: Not much. But, of course, everything they told me was based on the assumption I was going to be the senior adviser in Vietnam, and that never materialized, one of the luckier things that ever happened in my life. [Chuckle] It didn't seem that way at the time.

But then I went right straight into Vietnam from Hawaii. I was met by several people from the Vietnam staff in Saigon. The admiral was Admiral King.<sup>†</sup> I was put up there in a hotel for a few days. The man I was presumably going to relieve was Gene Finke, who was the senior adviser to the Vietnamese Navy.<sup>‡</sup> He was a captain, surface type. But the first thing I discovered when I got there was that there was some idea of changing the plan. King was relatively new, and there was some negotiation to keep Finke on, and that I would be looking for another job and not really Finke's.

There was a captain there by the name of Bruce Stone, who was well known at the time and was sort of a big name in Vietnam, who was also on the staff.<sup>§</sup> I think he was the deputy senior adviser. I had never met him before. I did a lot of business with him the whole year. I knew a few people in Vietnam, not many. But I didn't know anybody in positions of branch head, etc., etc.

Paul Stillwell: Why do you say you were lucky not to take over as the adviser?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I was going to get to that.

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\* Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific from 31 July 1968 to 1 September 1972. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>†</sup> Vice Admiral Jerome H. King, Jr., USN, served as Commander Naval Forces Vietnam/Chief of Naval Advisory Group Vietnam from 14 May 1970 to 5 April 1971. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

<sup>‡</sup> Captain Eugene I. Finke, USN.

<sup>§</sup> Captain Bruce G. Stone, USN.

Paul Stillwell: Okay.

Admiral Crowe: I did have a very good friend who was over in the Civil Engineer Corps. He was the deputy to the admiral running the Seabees and the civil engineers in Vietnam, and his name was Ken Sears.<sup>\*</sup> He's still probably my best Navy friend in Washington. I saw a lot of him and then I went and stayed with him some. And then when Shirley visited Vietnam she stayed up there. He moved out of his quarters and gave us his apartment, where he lived, when Shirley was in Vietnam.

And then I knew the operations officer, whose name was Strong.<sup>†</sup> He was a submariner, a year behind me at the Naval Academy, whom I had met in New London, but never served with. He was Jerry King's operations officer.

Now, at the time that I was looking for a job I knew very little about who did what, who was considered real competent and not competent, and nothing about Admiral King's *modus operandi*. And I had never met Admiral King till then. I was very disappointed when I was told I would not be the senior adviser, because I had sort of planned on that. But I would be sent to the U Minh Forest to be the senior adviser to the 21st Division down there, and to the Vietnamese Navy that was supporting the 21st Division. One of the reasons I didn't have survival training is they didn't think I'd be in the field very much.

Well, [chuckle] that all went out the window right away, because that's right where I went. I went right into the field, down in the U Minh Forest. I would live in Camau in an old foreign legion post. And we had quite a group of Americans down there, primarily Army advisers. And the Army adviser group was headed by a colonel by the name of Ross Franklin, who gained some notoriety in his testimony on the Calley trial.<sup>‡</sup> He had been the chief of staff to the division that commanded Calley, and he kept running back and forth to testify and have his name in the paper and so forth in

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<sup>\*</sup> Captain Kenneth P. Sears, CEC, USN, later a rear admiral. He was Crowe's Naval Academy classmate.

<sup>†</sup> Captain James T. Strong, USN.

<sup>‡</sup> On 29 March 1971 a court-martial convicted Army First Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., of premeditated murder of 22 South Vietnamese as the result of his unit's massacre of civilians in the village of My Lai on 16 March 1968. On 31 March Calley was sentenced to life imprisonment; his sentence was subsequently reduced, and ultimately he served only three and a half years of house arrest at Fort Benning, Georgia. Colonel J. Ross Franklin, USA, testified at Calley's court-martial.



connection with the My Lai incident. He kept going in and out of Camau to deal with My Lai. But he was also a helicopter pilot and very active, very aggressive, and a combat veteran. He knew quite a bit about combat. I really got fascinated with the man. He was very outgoing and loud, very confident, and he sort of took me under his wing because I was brand new. And his business was with the division commander. My business was with the division commander's navy counterpart, who was a man by the name of Thong.\*

The learning cycle I was in was, frankly, from Thong. There's where I was going to learn about Vietnam. He was a captain in the Vietnamese Navy, a little man, tough, tougher than nails, and very aggressive, and very good to me. It took us a while to become friends, but he treated me fine, and worried about my safety a lot and taught me a lot about what I was supposed to be doing. [Chuckle] But mostly about riverine warfare. He was in charge of all the boats in the southern U Minh. He'd been at it a long time. Essentially his mature life had been at war. He had never done anything else.

Paul Stillwell: It sounds as if you, by billet, were the adviser, but you were getting most of the advice.

Admiral Crowe: That's exactly right. Thong understood the position well enough to know that there were things he wanted from the Americans, and I had control of that. Our main job, of course, with little boats, was maintenance, and the Vietnamese just weren't trained that well on maintenance, and so forth. So the main thing we were doing was keeping those boats running. Now, the main thing *I* worried about was the fighting, but I had a big staff. I may have been an adviser, but I had a pretty good-sized staff. Of course, Zumwalt characterized it as a major command. It was my major command. And I had a really good-sized staff right there in Dong Tam and Binh Thuy, but first down in Camau.

Paul Stillwell: How large a staff was it?

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\* Captain Nguyen Thong, South Vietnamese Navy.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I misled you a little bit. When I first went to Camau as the commander of the 21st Division I had a small staff. I had about six or seven people working for me. I had an engineer, a mustang, lieutenant commander, who headed our whole maintenance effort, who was very, very energetic. If he'd had an education he'd have been a world-beater. But he'd had a lot of problems in his life, mainly with marriage and some conduct and so forth, but he was great in the field, and lots of, as I say, energy. And he knew a lot about engines and boats.

Now, when I went from 21st I went back up to Binh Thuy as the senior adviser to the riverine force.

Paul Stillwell: That was in the spring of '71.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that was after Christmas. Finke, in Saigon, was senior adviser to the Vietnamese Navy. Now, a lot of the Vietnamese Navy I didn't have anything to do with. But the part in my part of the world, in Camau, I just was the adviser to Thong, which was really the learning curve.

About this time it became obvious to me that [chuckle] Jerry King was terribly hard on his people, the ones in Saigon. He literally destroyed Strong, and everybody up there working on his staff was grumbling and chafing. He was a very, very hard man to work for.

Paul Stillwell: In the sense of being demanding?

Admiral Crowe: I don't really know. He had a sort of abrasive personality. He would have staff briefings and criticize each briefer in front of everybody. And when he got on a person he evidently just rode them right into the dirt, with everybody watching. I think that was the main criticism of him. He almost made Strong have a nervous breakdown. He may have, I don't know. Strong left after two or three months. Finke did not succeed either. Finke had a lot of experience and was kept on because he'd been out there for a while. He didn't do well by Finke either, the guy that he intentionally kept on. That's the reason I said it turned out to be the luckiest thing that ever happened to me. The

farther away from King you were the better you did, evidently. Because he would come down to see me, and he was in *my* world down there; I wasn't in his world. I was always prepared for him, and I had some things that I wanted to do.

I hadn't been there very long when I said, "We need more help down here than Thong. We need a commodore down here somewhere. Thong's a captain, and we need a senior captain that can really administrate. Thong can fight, but Thong can't administrate." King liked that suggestion and, boy, he got me one right away. Got a guy by the name of Minh, who was really good. These names all kept wandering in and out of my life for about the next three or four years, because they all came to the United States.

Paul Stillwell: In what way did it help once Minh got there?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it freed up Thong. Minh sort of took charge and did all the liaisoning with the 21st Division, running the personnel, the administration. Thong didn't like paperwork. He liked to go shoot somebody. [Chuckle] Although Thong was very physical with his own men. Boy, when they didn't do what he said to do—I saw him slap people time and time again.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned that in your book.

Admiral Crowe: I was sort of stunned by that. It's not in our lexicon, not in our agenda.

Paul Stillwell: Was your main role as a resource provider?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was both. I was a jack of all trades. If they didn't have enough resources, I helped. Down there I worked for Admiral Matthews, who was Deputy ComNavForV, and he operated out of Binh Thuy.\* So essentially, day to day, I worked for Matthews. He was very responsive, and he and I got along pretty well, so much so that I relieved him in his job when he left there.

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\* Rear Admiral Herbert Spencer Matthews, USN, Deputy Commander U.S. Naval Forces Vietnam.

I was a resource provider, but I was also a tactical guy, and I had control of my advisers. I controlled the advisers throughout the force. Each boat unit had advisers, and they worked for me. They didn't work for Thong. Thong understood that very well. And I had helicopters. Now, the helicopter unit per se was based in Binh Thuy, but every day I would put a requirement in and get one or two, or whatever, and they would send them. And I controlled the helicopter, which is how Thong got around.

On a typical day he and I would jump in a helicopter and spend the day traveling to his units, and we would do that three to four days a week. I spent a lot of time in a helicopter. And I went to some really long places, even to islands offshore, and down to Sea Float, the base that we built on the tip of the peninsula.\* And flew over a lot of jungle and a lot of places I wondered if we had any business being there.

Also, of course, I learned about the Vietnamese helicopter support, which was run by the Vietnamese Air Force and was not reliable. Was scared to death as I climbed in one. I did ride in some, but I didn't have much faith or confidence in them. I rode in a Vietnamese helicopter once where I was the only man in the helicopter that knew where we were going. And we never found the place where they were going, and so I just went back to where I started and got out. I was alone then and that was bad, because I didn't have Thong to square away the Vietnamese. They didn't work for me.

Of course, the whole problem as an adviser was that I was responsible to do whatever Matthews wanted me to do, but I wasn't in command. And Thong had an adviser who was just that—he was an adviser. He didn't work for me. And I could suggest that he do something, and he could do it or not do it. Now, there were ups and down sides to that. He had the same problem I had, that he had to treat me right or I'd quit providing this or providing that, and I had to be careful not to offend Thong too much, because if he got really sick of me, why, Matthews would fire me. I mean, I had to have a line into the guy I was advising. That's great training for Washington. I think it's one of the most difficult jobs in the world. Certainly in my military experience it was the most difficult job I ever had.

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\* Sea Float, which was set up in mid-1969, involved setting up an afloat tactical support base in the Cua Lon River near the village of Nam Can. It consisted of pontoon barges that were linked together and then moored in the river.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that chapter in your book is called “Persuader-in-Chief.”

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I say the most difficult, but when you get into NATO, where you have two or three hats, that’s difficult too. You work for three people instead of one. But in the advisory business, when your U.S. commander says, “Don’t let them do that,” he meant don’t let them do it, and he expected you to produce. But you didn’t have command. And that’s where I, in the book, describe I developed a theory it’s like having a bank account. You put money in the bank and then you take so much out. You just don’t want to take out more than you’ve got in the bank. Because the day your adviser walks away from you and says, “I don’t want to talk to you anymore,” then you—and that happened all over the damned Delta.

Paul Stillwell: You compared the bank account to a solid personal relationship.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that’s right. And that’s what’s such good training in Washington. [Chuckle] That’s exactly the way I treated the SecDef. I had a bank account with him when I was Chairman, and I tried not to draw out more than I had. But if you’ve got a good relationship you pick your fights, and when you have one and you want to win it and you’ve got enough money in the bank, you can do it. But you’d better reverse course real quick and start putting more money in the bank.

Paul Stillwell: Do you have examples of any of those fights?

Admiral Crowe: Well, you mentioned resources. I would suggest that we do so-and-so tactically, and he would be reluctant because he had so much experience. And I’d say, “Well, we just won’t repair the boats next week,” or something like that. Or, “Those boats won’t be ready yet, it doesn’t matter. I don’t think we can get them out of the yard in time.” He’d want them, and he’d say, “Well....”

But on technical things, and on machinery, Thong *wanted* advice. He didn’t know much about that, and he’d like to have our gunner’s mates there to keep their guns going. Not fire them—the Vietnamese would fire them. Vietnamese were good in battle,

but they weren't worth a damn in getting ready for battle, and the discipline it took to make them work. Thong was lazy, too, at times. You know, all those guys had been fighting so long that it was hard for them to—Okay, we're going into the U Minh on Tuesday. "Well, what's different from before? I've been going into the U Minh every Tuesday now for—what's big about that?" And that's really hard to fight, because I'm there a year and they're there for 20. But he taught me a lot of things you do when you're worried about your safety all the time, your personal safety.

Paul Stillwell: What were some of those things?

Admiral Crowe: Well, you never go the same route. You don't advertise the time we leave. You shift boats that you're going to be on; you're constantly shifting boats. You go in a restaurant and you go to the back wall with the wall behind you, where you can see the front door and you have your gun on your hip, and you have it loaded, ready. And when you go in the street and there's nobody in the street, you get off the street too. That means something's afoot, if there's not a lot of—they don't tell you that; you just notice they all disappear. When they disappear, you disappear too. And about how you drive and where you drive.

One day in a small village after they had mined one of our convoys, they killed several people—I think I read something, there were only four colonels killed in Vietnam. I don't think that's right, because one of them was my—an Army colonel that day. But, in any event, we were in this small village where these boats that had been mined, diving and recovering bodies. It was a picturesque little village, and I wasn't doing anything, so I started wandering around. Here's a little path out in a great big cornfield and I went down that. It was really quite lovely. When Thong found out I'd been down there he was furious. He said, "They could have captured you in microseconds down that path. You had no business going down there alone. In fact, you had no business going down there at all!" He was really mad. Oh, and he got so excited about me never doing that.

That was also the time, in that small village, that we found two Viet Cong that had evidently been in on the attack on the boats. I don't know why they'd stayed in the

village, but they were hidden in the back of one of the homes there. We didn't go in the village without a platoon. We had a platoon of Army with us, and they found these two guys while the Navy was recovering bodies and so forth, and there was quite a bit of excitement in the village. They took these two men to the center, sort of square, a very small square in the village, and I remember they were kneeling there being interrogated. They weren't doing too much talking. They were getting slapped around a little bit. But they didn't like to do it in front of me, so Thong detailed somebody to escort me out of there. Then they didn't get the answers they want, so when we flew out they put them on one helicopter and put me on another helicopter, and they pushed a guy out when we were in the air, so the one left did a lot of talking. But they went to some effort to make sure I didn't see that, which I thought was sort of interesting.

Paul Stillwell: Did you converse with the Vietnamese in English?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. It was quite an interesting day for me. We'd been in and out of that village before, because it was right on the main canal. I don't think the bad guys weren't the people who lived there. The Viet Cong had come in. But they got the information that a convoy was coming, and the Viet Cong lined up in a little trench alongside the canal there, and when the convoy got right opposite the village they opened fire and sank three boats.

Paul Stillwell: Was this when Admiral Matthews got very unhappy with you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, no, it was another case where they didn't do something I advised, and Matthews got unhappy with me. You know, you got unhappy with people a lot down there in war. The time this had happened I'd actually been at Qui Nhon, which was at the north end of the canal, the day when the convoy departed. And then I had to fly somewhere else, and got the word that they had run into this problem and had been sunk down there the same day, the convoy I'd said goodbye to the night before. We lost several people, and I had to write a lot of letters over it. Thong said they got the

information of who did it, for what little that was worth, and that's the way they got the information—by pushing a man out of the helicopter.

Paul Stillwell: What was the substance of these visits, when you flew around to various places in helos?

Admiral Crowe: Well, wherever he had units. He would map out the day that we would go see so many units a day, and we would always eat with the Vietnamese. That's where I learned to use chopsticks. I always ate Vietnamese food, because he ate with the Vietnamese mess, so I ate with him. On one of these, where one of the battalion headquarters, I went with the officers and ate and discovered I was eating a rat. Not only discovered that, I got a severe case of dysentery. I guess it hadn't gone into dysentery, but it damned near had, and I was quite sick for over a week. My engineer kept me alive. I can remember I was taking Lomotil to stop the diarrhea, but one night I went to sleep and accidentally, without knowing about it, tipped over the bottle of Lomotil, and when I woke up the next morning there were ants all over. Joe came in and looked at it and said, "There are going to be a lot of constipated ants around here." [Laughter] That really wiped me out, but when it was over the doctor said, "You can eat anything you want now in Vietnam, and it won't bother you."

Paul Stillwell: How did the engineer help you?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he just brought my breakfast every morning and made sure that somebody worried about me. He was sort of my chief of staff down there.

Now, I haven't mentioned, of course, the biggest single problem we had. What was really chopping us up were mines. It was not attacks on the boats, because we had ways of dealing with them. If we really had a big convoy and we were really worried about it we would give it helicopter cover, and we would put troops in the field along the canals. But the mines we were having a lot of problem with. And the mines were usually our artillery shells. They'd recover an unexploded artillery shell, they'd wire it up, and



they were controlled mines, with wires leading from the mine to 50 yards off the canal, and so forth. Had a lot of problem with that.

We developed some minesweeping methods for cutting the wires. We gave out rewards. I can remember flying into a village and a really old woman said she knew where a mine was. And she took us through these jungle paths down to the canal, and, sure enough, there was a wire. And before anybody could do anything she started pulling on the wire and pulled it out of the thing to show us it was a mine. Well, then we didn't know where it was out there. If she'd left it in we would have traced the wire to the mine. [Chuckle] Then we had to go look for it. I didn't have any way of stopping her. She didn't understand English.

I was going to one of those sites one day, and here came an Army patrol, our guys, and they were carrying a lieutenant colonel who had lost both legs on a land mine, not a sea mine.

I heard about these radio-controlled boats they had. They had sent six to Vietnam. They hadn't sent them to me or anything; they were up on the main bases near Saigon. I finally tracked down where they were and persuaded Matthews to give them to us, because the way I planned to use them, and we did use them till they broke, we would put them in the front part of the convoy and put a minesweep wire on them. It wouldn't sweep the mine, but it would cut the wire to the mine. The Vietnamese had the problem—do they sink the first boat? Or they let it go by, the mine's cut. And the first boat didn't have any people on it. It was radio controlled.

The problem with these things was that they were very high-tech, and they were very fragile. We got all six of them, and we worked the hell out of them, but then there wasn't any repair parts, and getting anything for them was very difficult, and nobody understood them but the Americans. We finally just ran them into the ground, where they didn't work anymore.

We handed out thousands of leaflets offering rewards and all kinds of things for people that would help us, and we got a lot of information on mines, but we never really completely cleared it up. But by the time I was out of Vietnam there was a lot of traffic in the Delta. And I spent an awful lot of time on the mining problem.

We also had not only American boats. The Vietnamese Navy had seven or eight French patrol boats that they had inherited from the French. They were sort of interesting. They were primitive. We used them, though.

And we were engaged, of course, as advisers in training the Vietnamese Navy. We did that constantly. I can remember going aboard a boat near Camau one day where I met a man by the name of Chris Glutting, who later became my aide.\* It was on a Sunday afternoon, and I went aboard this patrol boat, and the Vietnamese sailors were all lying around sleeping, and there was an American sailor cleaning this gun. I said, “Why are you cleaning it?”

He said, “Well, we’re going in the U Minh tomorrow.”

I said, “Why aren’t they cleaning it?”

He says, “They know as long as I’m here I’ll do it.” Well, the next week I took the advisers off the boats. Put them ashore, and said we’d help maintain the boats, but the advisers wouldn’t ride the boats when they went in. Which made them, if they were going to have guns that worked, *they* had to start cleaning the damned guns. That’s when I learned a very fundamental step of advising people in doing things like that.

And on the mining, you really had a lot of trouble getting them to respect the problem. They had been with it so long their problem was, well, the guy throws the mine off, then it’s no longer any good. Okay, he killed a boat, but he hasn’t got a mine now. Well, that’s a hell of a way to sweep mines. [Chuckle] And particularly when we had Americans on them. And some of these boats, we ran the whole boat.

But during this time we were Vietnamizing. We were turning everything over to the Vietnamese Navy.

Paul Stillwell: Which was the broad strategy.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, the broad thing. And the Americans there were getting less and less.

Well, I forget the details, but then Matthews was going to leave, and he recommended that I relieve him. I guess he was leaving because we were having fewer

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\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Joseph Christopher Glutting, USN, who later retired as a commander.

and fewer Americans. But the man that technically relieved him stayed up in Saigon, a deputy ComNavFor to King. So I went from Camau to Binh Thuy and relieved Matthews. I had two hats. I was the senior adviser to the riverine force, and I was the American in command of the units that were left. We had SEAL units, we had fixed-wing aircraft with double engines, the OV-10.\* I had helicopters, American fixed-wing squadron, some medical people, all the medical people, and the SEALs, still under American command. And in Binh Thuy we had an American compound. I lived in a trailer up there, sort of like Dong Tam, but we didn't go back to Dong Tam very much. The original base at Dong Tam was a big base of Americans, Army and everything, and it was pretty well depleted of people because the Americans had left. And we had some American artillery left. I had command of some of that.

I was the senior commander in the Delta, but I worked for the regional commander in Binh Thuy, General Cushman.† He lives at Knollwood now, but he lived in Annapolis quite a while. He comes to my class occasionally. He was a major general in the U.S. Army, and he was the senior adviser to the Vietnamese general for the region. In my advisor role, I worked for Cushman in the Delta then, after Matthews had disappeared. Again, it was two-hatted. I worked for King's staff, and then I worked through Cushman. Had to put up with Cushman everywhere I went. He was always showing up, and had very little to give [chuckle], and not much appreciation of sailors.

But we had a little base at the north end of that canal where we recovered bodies that day, called Qui Nhon, which was a Vietnamese base, but we had quite a large American unit there. And I had a young man by the name of Dibble, lieutenant (j.g.), who is a lawyer in Washington down here, our very close friends.‡ He was in charge in Qui Nhon. And we had about a hundred sailors up there, American sailors, and a bunch of Vietnamese sailors, and the base would come under attack a lot in the middle of the night. And we turned our sailors into Marines. I mean they registered mortars, they all

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\* SEALs are Navy personnel trained for sea, air, and land operations. In previous years similar individuals were designated as part of underwater demolition teams (UDTs). In addition to that specialty, the SEALs have a broader mission that includes commando-type operations ashore.

The North American Rockwell OV-10A Bronco was a counter-insurgency combat aircraft used in Vietnam for light armed reconnaissance, helicopter escort, and forward air control. It was armed with .30-caliber machine guns and could also carry bombs and missiles.

† Major General John H. Cushman, USA.

‡ Lieutenant (junior grade) John C. Dibble, USNR.

had small arms, they all had machine guns, and when they were attacked they fought back. And one night the Viet Cong penetrated the perimeter and got inside the base, but they didn't win. We killed them all.

I used to go to Qui Nhon quite often. I was up there three or four times when they were under attack. But mainly the attacks were just lobbing mortars in, and we knew where they were coming from. We had every likely spot in that place registered. We had a lot of vocal sensors. We would map a spot and put a sensor on it. We knew where it was. We'd register a mortar for that, and when we would hear the Vietnamese in that area talking we'd lob mortars in on that thing. [Chuckle] And you could hear them getting wounded, and so forth, screaming and hollering. We did that all around the base in depth.

And we mined. You hear so much about land mines today. We had the periphery of our base mined with land mines. But it was the starting place for our convoys in the 21st Division, so it was a very important base. I think I have a Qui Nhon plaque on the wall in there somewhere.

Paul Stillwell: You said you had a larger staff when you got there. How large?

Admiral Crowe: Well, when I got to Binh Thuy I had a regular staff. I must have had 30 or 40. And we had a whole shipyard there, for small boats, sort of. When I went to Binh Thuy I lived in a trailer with Bob Spruit, the commander of the fixed-wing aircraft, the OV-10.\* It was an attack aircraft, propeller driven, had two people, a pilot and a back-seater, and it was for just ground support, that's all it did. I flew in those a couple times. Got sick once. Oh, God, I got sick. He'd do that wing-over, my stomach would go with him. [Chuckle] That's why I wasn't in aviation. And then I had all the helicopters in the Delta. So I had aviators working for me.

Then I met the guy I sponsored here. My opposite number in the riverine force was, first of all, Minh, this guy I'd brought up. But Minh got promoted to admiral, and he went up to the big staff, and Hung came in.† That was my friend. Minh was the first

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\* Captain Robert E. Spruit, USN.

† Captain Dinh Manh Hung, Republic of Vietnam Navy. See *The Line of Fire*, page 80.

one, but Hung came in as head of the riverine force, and he and I were in a big building and our offices were right close to each other. He had his staff, and I had my staff, and I met with him every day in the morning. He was a wonderful guy. He was very low key, not excitable, very smart, sort of talked slow but spoke good English. And so did Thong. Thong spoke good English. Minh did, too. They all spoke it. They'd been to school in the United States.

But later on, when they started coming out, I got hold of Hung, and his family came to live with us, seven of them. I really admired him. He was a wonderful man to work with. But I was his senior adviser, and we were in Binh Thuy. He was North Vietnamese originally, and he had also spent his whole life fighting. All those guys had. He was a commodore in the Vietnamese Navy. He could get mad. He didn't like to get mad, but he could. And when Shirley came out to visit, his wife came down from Saigon with a prepared dinner and had a dinner for her. Brought it all the way from Saigon. And four years later they were living in our house. We never knew it that night that we were going to host them.

We had a few things happen. One night in Binh Thuy—there was a village across the canal from us that had gotten attacked by the Viet Cong and was on fire. We put stuff in the air to drive off the Viet Cong, and then rushed over there with the Marines in a couple of trucks in the middle of the night, 2:00 o'clock in the morning. I thought, "What am I doing here?" We were rushing through the night to this little village. And there were children in some of these burning buildings, and these Marines were trying to help the Vietnamese get them out. They got a lot of them out, but they were pretty badly burned.

So we then put them in the truck, rushed down to the middle of Binh Thuy, the town, and went to the hospital, and the guy that ran the hospital came out and said, "We're full up. I can't help you."

I said, "What do you want to do? We have burned Vietnamese children."

He said, "I can't help you." Well, we had rules against us taking on the job, but my staff was livid at this man, and we had all these children here. I called the helicopter people.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned in your book how you had burned flesh on your uniform.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I called the helicopter people, and they said, “Well, it’s against the rules, Captain.”

I said, “I don’t give a damn about the rules. We’ve got to do something about these children. I want them evacuated, and I’ll be glad to take responsibility for it. But I want them evacuated.”

Sure enough, they flew two helicopters down there in the dark of night. Landed on a field with lots of strung wires. I can remember them having a little trouble getting in, but they got in. And the families of these children were all there. Well, they didn’t have room for their families. These American nurses were something. There was a nurse in each helicopter. They jumped out, put the families over here, put the children over here. Then they said to the families, “I’ll take one parent. You elect who’s the one.” And then she started tending to the children. And those two nurses organized that outfit in a matter of seconds. They put those children in there and flew them away, and took them in the American hospital. There was some grumbling about how I had busted the rules, and so forth, but nobody of any importance did anything. There wasn’t any fallout from it.

Paul Stillwell: Did you hear an outcome? Did they survive?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I think they did. At least most of them did. And that’s when we got back to the command center and we had this flesh all over us. And the Marines were very brave. I mean, they rushed into that village not knowing whether the Viet Cong were still there or not. And, of course, going through the night to get there. An ideal place to ambush us.

But we found the Viet Cong weren’t real good at taking advantage of unintended or unplanned opportunities. They pretty well planned what they were going to do, and then something came up on the radar scope they just shied away from, not knowing what they were getting into. But they were great on planned ambushes.

Then I went down, of course, in a helicopter on the first of January, flying over the U Minh at 1,500 feet. Thong was with me, right beside me. And I can remember all of a sudden the helicopter started doing this.

Paul Stillwell: Shaking.

Admiral Crowe: Shaking. Clearly, nobody knew exactly what was wrong. I've always remembered the young man's name. The pilot was Spence Robbins.\* And he immediately said to his copilot, "I don't know if it will hold together." I've got my helmet that I wore in the other room, and I always wired into the circuit when I was in the helicopter. I always had a map, besides all the artillery I carried. I found I knew more about the Delta than the helicopter people did, because I went every day. So I always had a chart, and I was always on the circuit with the pilot. Spence and his copilot didn't know what had happened. And they immediately auto-rotated into a swamp. We went down in about three feet of water, so our landing was cushioned. We just were in this swamp, and we just climbed out of the helicopter, sat on the top of it for a few seconds till we got our wits about us.

A Vietnamese helicopter had seen us come in, so he landed on a dry piece of ground over there and we all climbed in. There was too many of us in that helicopter, and I thought, "I don't think he can lift off." He had a hell of a problem doing it, but he did lift off. Took us to the helicopter base. We left Spence and his copilot in the helicopter, and I rushed out and got two American helicopters, and I went back with them to the scene. They patrolled the scene until we could get a big helicopter in to lift out the one that went into the swamp. And I later flew in that helicopter.

There was a two-blade helicopter rotor on an axis, and then there was a balance bar with weights on each end to make rotation more feasible, viable. And half of it was gone. They really didn't know whether it was a mechanical failure or it was shot off. It was hard to tell, because we took a lot of fire when we were there. At 1,500 feet it didn't bother you much, but you knew you were being shot at. And that's what it was. The pilot said, "You know, when that usually happens we invert."

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\* Lieutenant (junior grade) Spencer E. Robbins II, USN.

I said, “Oh, that’s nice to know. I’m glad you waited to tell me. I’d have really been worried if I’d known that.” [Chuckle] I always had a healthy suspicion of helicopters, and that didn’t help. But I continued to ride them; you didn’t have much choice. I got all kinds of air medals for doing nothing but riding a helicopter.

Paul Stillwell: What kind of messing and berthing arrangements did you have in Camau?

Admiral Crowe: Well, in Camau I had a room! In this whole monastery-like place. It was a foreign legion place. We had a common head, and then we had a huge Army mess. That’s where the mess sergeant weighed about 250 pounds. He was gaining weight, and I was losing weight, and I thought: “That guy’s eating something different than I’m eating. I don’t know what they’re eating in that kitchen, but he’s getting heavier and I’m getting lighter.” [Laughter] It was a lot like *M\*A\*S\*H* down there.\*

Then in Binh Thuy we were in a more civilized setup. Binh Thuy was basically an air base and also a small-boat base. They had a lot of facilities and a lot of people. Safer. Camau got attacked quite a bit. And then Bob Spruit and I had a trailer that was really very nice. Our living arrangements were very good. Matthews had a house down there, which he some was in and sometimes he wasn’t in.

He also went down in a helicopter while I was there. He was flying. He never got off the ground, really. Took it off just enough to get in the water [chuckle], and came right back down. I think it was personnel error, but it never came out. Matthews covered everything up. But there were three of them in the helicopter. It was a very small helicopter. The one I was in was a bigger one.

Paul Stillwell: Any other observations on Admiral Matthews? I remember him as a very energetic individual.

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\* *M\*A\*S\*H* was a 1970 comedy movie about a U.S. Army medical outfit in Korea during the Korean War. A spinoff program by the same name later became a long-running television series.



Admiral Crowe: He was. Very energetic. He was from Arkansas. He was a country boy, loved country music, loud talking, a lot of Southern accent. Hail-fellow-well-met with everybody.

Paul Stillwell: Very loquacious.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, very loquacious. And a picture of confidence. [Chuckle] Originally a carrier aviator, and he'd flown all his life, and so forth. But he was [chuckle] a little too much of an optimist for me. I wasn't quite as optimistic about things as he was. But he had lot of guts, and he never got in anything he wouldn't fly. He'd fly everything he was in. Helicopter or otherwise, he wanted to fly. But he was very good to me. Later, when I became Chairman, he lived right outside Washington. Used to bust in to see me every now and then. But he was a stereotype aviator. Here he ended up in the jungles of Vietnam flying back and forth down there.

Also he was quite a womanizer. I think he was divorced while he was in Vietnam. We never knew who was going to show up with him. Of course, he worked for Zumwalt, and I don't know what Zumwalt knew or didn't know, but Matthews was far enough away that it didn't matter much. King would show up, and he would listen and take advice and go away. Then I discovered that I was just lucky not to be in his staff.

Then he got relieved by Salzer, whom I had never met.\* But Salzer not only relieved, he came down to see me right away. Well, I was one of the two or three senior captains. I think there was one up in Cam Ranh Bay. Then I had the Delta—the small U.S. commands that were left. And his chief of staff, who was Captain Moore. Then he had a whole bunch of captains in Saigon on his staff. But outside of Saigon—as Blake said to his daughter when he was in Iraq, “Caitlin, I know this is hard for you, but I’m sort of a big deal over here.” [Laughter] Well, I was sort of a big deal down in the Delta, because I was the senior Naval officer in the Delta. Granted, most of the American

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\* Rear Admiral Robert S. Salzer, USN, served as Commander Naval Forces Vietnam/Chief of Naval Advisory Group Vietnam from 5 April 1971 to 30 June 1972. The oral history of Salzer, who retired as a vice admiral, is in the Naval Institute collection.

forces had gone, but what little was left was mine, and that was Salzer's great interest. And, of course, the Vietnamese were there.

We were doing pretty well in the Delta. Traffic was back on the rivers, on the canals. You'd have an occasional attack, but still, commerce was going and you could drive places. I drove from Binh Thuy to Saigon many times. When I'd go to Saigon, either flying or driving, I would stay with Ken Sears in the CEC. A semblance of real life had returned to the Delta. It hadn't in the central highlands.

I also met Paul Vann, who was a very good friend of Matthews.\* Matthews really worshipped Vann. They were very close. And, of course, I'd heard a lot about Vann. He was a little condescending with us people that thought we knew the Vietnamese, because nobody knew them as well as he did, and I guess that's basically right. His mistress was a Vietnamese woman he lived with for years. He was very energetic, and he had lots of ideas, but he was mainly interested in the Army, and Vann would come in and out, so I didn't do a lot of working with him.

The commander of the 21st Division was a Vietnamese whom I didn't like at all. Very pompous, very distant, etc. But Ross Franklin was his adviser, and Ross Franklin never met a man that he wouldn't [chuckle] talk down. This guy didn't bother Ross at all. But, of course, the reason we were there was this guy's division, in Camau. His name was—I remember a picture of him in *Time* magazine with all his medals, a little guy. God, he had so many medals they were taking his shirt off. But he survived that whole thing. I'd read somewhere he was killed when the North came in, but it turned out not to be true. But I had a hard time convincing that general that the Navy had any problems at all. Naturally, I was on Thong's side, and I'd go to Matthews when I couldn't get the general to listen. I don't think the general appreciated that. We really were doing pretty well down there.

Paul Stillwell: How would you articulate the mission that you were performing in the Delta?

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\* John Paul Vann was involved in the Vietnam War from 1962 until his death there in 1972. His first service was as an Army lieutenant colonel, and he was later there as a civilian official with the Agency for International Development. Neil Sheehan's book *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* received the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction in 1989.

Admiral Crowe: Well, we were behind the Army. The Army had been trying to train Vietnamese to be army people a lot longer than we were training Navy people. So the Army was doing better, but we were training the Vietnamese people to fight, and to protect each other and support each other. And the basic problem that we had was that these were mainly city boys. Not real cities, but town boys. And the whole society is family oriented. You'd say to Dinh: "Here's Thong over here, and when somebody shoots at Thong you've got to shoot back."

He'd say, "Why? If he shoots at Thong it isn't my problem. He's not my brother, he's not my uncle, not my father. Why would I invite somebody to shoot at me?" So to get over that family loyalty and to actually cooperate and risk your life for the guy alongside of you is a fairly foreign concept to the Vietnamese people.

The Communists had already overcome it, and they did it on nationalism. They persuaded their people that the country was sufficient to make those kinds of risks. But South Vietnam, in my judgment, was the fallacy in the whole thing, the South Vietnamese Government. They didn't like Communists, but they didn't like their own government either. Their own government was corrupt as hell, shot through. Everything was done on personal relationships. And until we got rid of Westmoreland and got Thieu in office, why, you had a new president every year.\* And these people down there in the Delta had the attitude, "Okay, we don't like the Communists, but why bother? Just don't shoot me, and if the other guys, the Communists, want to come in and run it, that's fine, because I don't like the other guys either."

And down in the U Minh Forest, down on the Sea Float, they were what we would call hillbillies, and they were against all outsiders. They didn't know what we were doing down there, and they didn't like us because we were foreign. They had no concept of Communism. They just didn't like outsiders. Like that famous southern story in the Civil War. The Yankee asked the Confederate soldier, "Why are you so mad at us? Why are you so upset about all this?" He says, "Because you're here." Well, it was the same way. Because we were here.

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\* General William C. Westmoreland, USA, served as Commander U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam from 20 June 1964 to 2 July 1968. President Nguyen Van Thieu led South Vietnam from 1965 until its collapse in 1975.

But even after you gave them a government, what did they have? Even if we'd won, they'd have had a government they didn't like very much. It wasn't very good at governing. We were trying to change that. We were working hard at it with the civil program.

I became convinced that the corruption of the South Vietnamese government was really the biggest problem of all, that we just were supporting a government that wasn't liked by its people. It wasn't worth shooting. And we were going to solve the problem, but not easily and not quickly. [Under breath] Just like Iraq today.

Sorley said this morning in the lecture, "The last four years in Vietnam is what we're doing in Iraq today, and in Vietnam we just got at it too late."\* We lost the war in the United States, not in Vietnam. And the same thing may have happened in Iraq. I asked him the question, "Have we lost our faith in the President so it's too late to do all this stuff in Iraq?" And his answer is he didn't know that, he didn't know. We just have to see, I guess.

Paul Stillwell: What might have been done earlier in Vietnam to produce a better outcome?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we didn't have a lot of options. The main one you've got is to run the country. Now, that may be the *only* one you've got. Now, there's something intellectually wrong with that, is, you're coming in because you're telling the North, "I don't want you running the country, and the way I'm going to keep you out is, I'll run it." In other words, us doing the same thing they were doing. That's a pretty hard rut to get over.

Paul Stillwell: It's essentially an occupation.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Essentially? Occupation, period. It would be pretty hard to justify that to the American people, that in order to keep the government out [chuckle]

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\* Dr. Lewis R. Sorley had spoken that day at the Naval Academy. He has written widely on Vietnam, including biographies of General Harold K. Johnson and General Creighton Abrams. The context for his talk was the U.S. troop surge in Iraq, which had recently been announced by President George W. Bush.

we're autocratically making democrats out of them. I've never understood how we could have done that without our conscience or something hurting. But I don't think the American people would have tolerated it. The American people will tolerate anything if you're defending our core culture, our core country. But to go to Vietnam and to do something as extreme as: "We're here now and we're running your country; we're saving you from yourselves." Well, what American is going to vote for that?

So we tried to stay out of doing that. We tried under the table to run the country, like I was doing advising Thong to do this. But to do that with a corrupt government—you can't trust them, some of them are on the North Vietnamese payroll. And suppose you win; what have you got? You've got a government that isn't worth shooting.

He told a story today, the joke about the dominoes followed. He said, "Yeah, the domino theory was accurate. The only domino that fell was LBJ." [Chuckle] That's sort of a sick joke, isn't it?

Paul Stillwell: Well, did you perceive the war as unwinnable when you were there in Vietnam?

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. I'd sort of come to the conclusion that—I don't know if it was unwinnable; whether it was worth winning. To win it, of course, we would have had to do things that were unacceptable to the American people. We'd have had to attack North Vietnam, and also destroy North Vietnam with this bombing, continue to bomb them. Which I didn't object to. That was fine with me. But that was a price the American people didn't want to pay.

I'm trying to develop a theory now. I don't know if it's viable or not. But the evidence suggests that if you're going to mess around overseas and it's not a survival problem, like World War II, you've got about four or five years to do it, baby. Three or four. And that's about it. The American people aren't going to—unless you've got some fantastic rationale. Maybe WMD would have kept them in there. But you've got to do better than that. You've got to *have* WMD. Like right now, our patience—four years and [kissing sound]. And once you lose the trust of the government, even though you

may win, even though the surge works, it may be too late. Who's going to trust George Bush now?

Paul Stillwell: Well, we just passed the four-year mark.

Admiral Crowe: So you've lost the war here. And Sorley said that. He said, "We have produced too many people in this country that are willing to lose the war in Iraq in order to get rid of the Republicans." That's a sad commentary. But it's a little bit like a law of physics. That's what bothers me. I keep toying with it in the class. The only person in this whole outfit that did it right was George Bush the elder, when he didn't go to Baghdad.\* Now, at the time I thought he *should* go to Baghdad, but I've changed my mind. He may be smart as hell not to have gone to Baghdad.

You've got two options. Go in and get rid of whatever you want to and steel your mind against everything else and come home. Or stay five years. And then in five years if you're still there [chuckle] the American people aren't going to let you stay.

Paul Stillwell: Well, when we talked last time you said Blake had that same view, that it would take a number of more years.

Admiral Crowe: But we could do it. And, of course, that editorial the other day on Abizaid, he was saying that the trouble with their culture is that the most precious asset is time, and they've got to give us time, they've got to be patient.† Well, he wants to change the culture in order to make his fighting easier. And you don't change cultures in five years. That takes 50 years. We do change, but it isn't easy. You can make a war in five years, but a culture change, that's big stuff. And, as Abrams said, "It's not our business to change the culture; it's our business to protect the culture and to fight the war on the limitations the culture gives us, and that's what we have to do."‡ Well, if that's true, then every President that commits ought to know in his mind, he ought to have a

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\* George H. W. Bush served as President of the United States from 20 January 1989 to 20 January 1993.

† General John P. Abizaid, USA, served as Commander U.S. Central Command from 7 July 2003 to 16 March 2007.

‡ General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr., USA, served as Commander U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam from 1968 to 1972.

historian, and somebody's got to tell him: "I don't care what it looks like, you're probably going to have a window of [so many years]. And I'm sorry, but that's a fact of life. And if you don't like that, don't go in."

Now, Jim Holloway says you tell a politician he's got the leverage of fire and power and he'll use them. He doesn't give a damn about history or anything else; he enjoys using them. But I'm developing a theory that, to help Presidents—I don't know if it's a good theory or not, but I'm now toying with—of course, the main thing we should do is have a different structure of government, but it's very unlikely we'll do that.

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: But I think one thing you can do is get himself a Harry Hopkins. You remember Harry Hopkins?

Paul Stillwell: Well, I've certainly read about him.

Admiral Crowe: He was Roosevelt's hit man, I guess you'd say.

Paul Stillwell: Adviser? Troubleshooter?

Admiral Crowe: Troubleshooter. And say to him, "Harry [or whatever his name is in a given situation], we're going to war, and I want you to make this war your full-time occupation. And you work for me, just like you and I are talking right now, personally. And your point of view is to be my point of view. And I'm going to get advice from the Chairman, from soldiers, services, from the SecDef, but I've got a lot of questions I want answered and I've got to know more than they're telling me, and I've got to get it from somebody that doesn't have the vested interest they've got. And so I want you to consume yourself in this war." And one of the questions I would ask is—I'd bring him in and say, "Now, I don't like academics, but a lot of academics are telling me I'm screwed up. I want you to get ahold of them, find out what they're saying, and are they right or wrong? Tell me what they think. And come back and tell me. Don't have Rumsfeld tell

me, because he isn't President, and you're going to be President. I want you, from the President's viewpoint—and if I'm screwed up somebody's got to tell me.”\*

And there's another example. That was Admiral Leahy in World War II with Roosevelt.<sup>†</sup> Leahy was the World War II guy for Roosevelt. That's what he did. He didn't do anything but World War II.

And it is true that the SecDef has two hats. He works for the President, but he also works for the military. Secretary of State, he works for the President, but he also works for the Foreign Service. He's got a department he wants to see thrive and build, and it may not be the same as the President. And Kennedy brought in Taylor as security adviser, in the White House.<sup>‡</sup> I think he was retired from the military then.

Paul Stillwell: I think he was. And then he became Chairman.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. He went back into the military.

Paul Stillwell: And then he became ambassador to South Vietnam.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, this would be one of my first suggestions, is that the President has got to—first of all, and I know the reasons against this, but if you're going to go to war, even a little war, and you want to be successful, which I assume Presidents do want to be, he's got to involve himself. Now, the trouble with that is, the President's busy. Okay, he's busy. Stay busy, and lose the war. He's got to involve himself. He's got to know more about what's going on, and he's got to take more heavily the responsibility for the rationale for the war. His job is to carry the American public and to develop something that enduringly will allow him to do that. If he can't do that, he has two options. Go in and shoot the dictator, or whoever you're getting rid of, and walk away. Or plan to be there a while.

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\* Donald H. Rumsfeld served as Secretary of Defense from 20 January 2001 to 18 December 2006. He left the post a few months before this interview.

<sup>†</sup> Admiral William D. Leahy, USN, served as chief of staff to the President (in his capacity as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces) from July 1942 to March 1949. Leahy was promoted to the five-star rank of fleet admiral in December 1944.

<sup>‡</sup> General Maxwell D. Taylor, USA, served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1 October 1962 to 3 July 1964.



And today, when Sorley was talking about Vietnam, it was the best talk I've heard on Vietnam. He did a time diagram on the blackboard. The Westmoreland period we didn't train Vietnamese at all. His theory was: "We win militarily, we win. And you give me 500,000 troops and I'm going to win." It wasn't until Abrams got there that we started training Vietnamese people. Now, that's something I'll bet never even came up in the discussions, the pre-war, in Iraq. Nobody thought we'd ever have to train anybody. But our history tells us. In Korea, we had to train the Korean army. In Vietnam we had to train the Vietnam army. And the only guy that got out in time to avoid that was George Bush in Desert Storm. I'm really developing more and more of an opinion on how George Bush did it right. And now we're saddled with the problem. We're doing now in Iraq the same thing that Abrams came into office and started doing, but unfortunately we're both doing it too late.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I think Abrams did it out of political necessity.

Admiral Crowe: Well, partially. But it was also his theory. He went into the Army politics today. There was Harold Johnson, which, incidentally, Sorley has written a book of.<sup>\*</sup> And there was Abrams, which he's written a biography of. Big admirer of Abrams and big admirer of Harold Johnson's. Not everybody is; I was surprised at that. And Bruce Palmer.<sup>†</sup> He said there were four people considered for the Vietnamese command—those three and Westmoreland. He said the only one that believed in Westmoreland's theory was Westmoreland, and they chose Westmoreland. But those other three didn't agree with that, and until they got Abrams in power they didn't get that going. And it had a lot to do with LBJ's stubbornness.

Paul Stillwell: Because Westmoreland fit into what he wanted to hear.

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<sup>\*</sup> General Harold K. Johnson, USA, served as Army Chief of staff from 3 July 1964 to 2 July 1968.

<sup>†</sup> Major General Bruce Palmer, Jr., USA, served as the Army's Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for plans and Operations, 1963–1964, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, 1964–1965. He was promoted to lieutenant general in July 1964. He was later Acting Chief of Staff, July–October 1972.

Admiral Crowe: And he was his man. He had chosen Westmoreland, so he had to live with him a long time. He lived with him for 14 months. Abrams went over there with an agreement that he would take over. He didn't take over for 14 months, because of Johnson's obstinacy. I swear to God, if you're going to fight a war we ought to get a new President that studies history. The only President I know of that studied history is Harry Truman. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Well, you're right. And, interestingly, he's the last one who didn't have a college degree.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And yet I'm told, at least what you read, that he knew more about the history of the presidency than anybody. It wasn't that he wasn't educated. He was self-educated.

Paul Stillwell: That's right. Moving down to another level, what was the purpose that these riverine patrols in Camau were to accomplish?

Admiral Crowe: Well, our main purpose, of course, was to defeat the Viet Cong. That problem became less after Tet, but it was still around.\* But we *were* defeating it in the U Minh. We finally were defeating it in the U Minh. And to make the communications and the trade routes safe, the roads safe. Now, I wasn't there when the North Vietnamese intervention, although we killed some North Vietnamese soldiers when I was there, but they were in very small groups.

Paul Stillwell: The big offensive was in the spring of '72.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and I'd gone after that. But our problem was to pacify the country, and we were slowly doing it. Of course, the Delta was the farthest away from North Vietnam.

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\* On 31 January 1968 the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong launched a massive coordinated attack that came to be known as the Tet offensive because it occurred in conjunction with the lunar new year, a traditional Vietnamese holiday.

I told you one of the reasons I went was on the assumption that, if I had to leave the Navy I would probably be involved in the political science world, and that it would be foolish to be talking about Vietnam for the next ten years, a career military man with 40 years in the service, and say, “No, I never went.” And I always felt very rewarded by Vietnam. Not that the lessons I was learning were so pleasant or sweet, but that I thought I was seeing what insurgencies were all about.

I always felt that the year was one of the most profitable years of my life, personally, and in my thinking. And I really came away from Vietnam thinking we shouldn’t be there.

Paul Stillwell: Did that make it frustrating to operate on a day-to-day basis?

Admiral Crowe: Not particularly. People find that hard to believe, but—for example, I had advisers that didn’t like the Vietnamese. Some of those were damned good advisers, but they didn’t like the Vietnamese. And it’s the old story—they did their jobs, and some of them did pretty well. Some even spoke Vietnamese. Why did they do that? Well, they do it because of the unit they’re in. They do it for personal pride. And they do it for the guy that’s standing next to them. That’s the reason they fight. I’m persuaded of that. And the fact that, okay, I don’t think we should be here.

Where I saw the problem was not among the fighting forces; it was among the support—the big logistics depots in Saigon, where people didn’t have enough to do and they had a lot of time to take drugs and sleep with girls and think about it. But out where the fighting was going on I never saw—I know the Army had a fragging problem, etc., but we didn’t have one in the Navy, and we didn’t have one in the Army I saw in the Delta.\* They can compartmentalize their mind.

There’s a beautiful passage in Sorley’s book about somebody asking Abrams: “Doesn’t all this protest movement back in the United States undermine your morale?”

He said, “Are you suggesting that I lie to my people about what’s going on? You undersell my people. They know what the hell’s going on. They get letters from home.

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\* “Fragging” was a practice in which U.S. military personnel used fragmentation hand grenades to kill officers who were unpopular in their own units.

They read the newspaper. And I'm not about to lie to my soldiers in order to do whatever you're talking about, keep their morale up. What kind of morale is that? We're going to fight this war with all the limitations that go with a pluralist society, and that's one of them. And it's not my purpose to change the society. It's my purpose to protect the society and our ideals." I thought it was really moving. He just cast that right out the window.

Paul Stillwell: I've heard so much admiration for General Abrams.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, and this guy this morning, he's written a biography on Abrams. Sorley revered him. And you know that from the book. You can tell that from the book. It's just a shame that he wasted that 14 months that they didn't put him—that's another thing Presidents have got to—if you think things are not going right, change. People say, "Well, that's discontinuity in the middle of all—" Change. If the commander's not doing what you want, if it isn't working, change. And don't wait. We had that problem in Korea. We had that problem in World War II. And, you know, nobody thought Schwarzkopf was doing a good job, except the American public!\* You've got to get guys that are—it's a fallacy that it hurts you more to change than it helps you. You can't linger in the wrong strategy.

Now, one of the things that it seems to me—you've got to pay more attention to who's doing the jobs. When I say "you," I'm talking about the President. Eisenhower discovered that in North Africa, of course. He didn't want to change. But he decided, Jesus, he finally did change. But the fact you've got a line diagram that says—it goes through the SecDef, through the Chairman to the unified commands, and all my information will come up—

Somebody told me a story this week that they asked Peter Pace if they could see the President and he said, "You don't need to see the President. Tell me. I'll represent you there." The President shouldn't let that happen. The President, as the commander, has every right to talk to anybody in the military he wants to. And you do it on your

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\* General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, served as Commander in Chief Central Command from 23 November 1988 to 9 August 1991.

own—you know, I'd do it all the time. "Don't tell me that, get the action officer up here. What the hell do you know about it?" Some admiral. "Get the action officer up here." The President should talk to the Chairman, but he shouldn't stop there. He should get the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Air Force, the Navy, the Marine Corps, and he should get the unified commander of the area he's going into before he ever makes a decision. And he should sort of junk that line diagram while he's there. And if he feels like it he can say to Rumsfeld, "I want to see him alone." That's his privilege. That would have made Rumsfeld mad. So what?

I can remember as Chairman I was always talking to the action officer. I don't think Presidents realize that that's okay. And, now, it takes time. But the guys who are going to do your work are in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and Marines. To talk to their commanders before you ask them to commit is nothing wrong with that at all. And just because we now have a system that's not corporate anymore, where the Chairman has an independent opinion, doesn't mean you don't talk to everybody else. In fact, he ought to throw his net very wide before he goes to war. Now, I'm told that the first Bush decided to go into Kuwait without ever mentioning it to the military.\*

Paul Stillwell: Interesting.

Admiral Crowe: I just think that's a terrible mistake. Talking to a wider circle of people has three or four advantages. Number one, they'll probably tell you something you didn't know.

[Interruption for change of tape]

Paul Stillwell: You were just talking about the advantages of the President's casting a wide net.

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\* On 2 August 1990, at the direction of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, Iraq launched an invasion of neighboring Kuwait with two armored divisions, a mechanized division, and a special forces division—a total of 100,000 soldiers with 350 tanks and around 100 artillery pieces.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I think there are several advantages. Incidentally, if you use my suggestion of Harry Hopkins, *he* can do this. Rumsfeld would really object to that, but the President would just have to tell him, “I’m sorry, Rummy. This is the way I’m going to do business, and Harry Hopkins has got a free lease.” If he talks to these guys alone he’ll discover, first, that there are differences in the military, and that each one of these guys has got some ideas—Marine, Army, Air Force—and you’ll learn something. Secondly, if you talk to them alone, you’ll discover what kind of job your SecDef’s doing. Are they all really on the same page, or are they not on the same page? And that’s something that’s important for a President to know.

Thirdly, these guys are highly educated. They’ve spent their whole lives in the military. They’ve spent their whole lives trying to learn, trying to sharpen, refine. They think they ought to be listened to, that they ought to have a voice. You’re the boss, but they think they ought to be listened to, at least solicited for their view. And their chances of supporting you are a lot greater if you do that. And then they represent, of course, all the people that are going to be in the grass doing the fighting. And if there are some of these consideration, like: “Mr. President, we’ve got a problem, maybe, on wounded; we’re not ready for this yet, to handle a lot of wounded.” Or, if you like, I saw this morning: “Mr. President, our experience every time is that we end up training. We don’t have enough money right now; we’re not sufficiently trained as trainers.” And we’re not. And yet every war we get into we end up as trainers.

They would alert him to things that don’t come up in high-level discussions. You understand what I’m saying?

Paul Stillwell: Yes, I do.

Admiral Crowe: They’ve got to get across that, while little wars are little wars, that they have a very close relationship to big wars. You do the same sorts of things in lots of ways. And, of course, they also should be telling the President that in limited wars our objectives are limited; but, believe me, the guy we’re fighting, his objectives are not limited. To him, it is survival, and he doesn’t play by our rules.

But there are all kinds of things. These independent people have views that don't get anywhere. And that's the reason I say the President's got to get more involved. And he's got to make sure he has a SecDef that can manage the place and not get him in too much trouble in the process. And, as I say, I would tell him: "You go look at the people that are criticizing us and have meetings with these academics, and tell me what you think. Are their reasons good or bad? And I don't want your personal biases here. I want you to listen to them, and if they've got good reasons, tell me if they're good."

And, if necessary, go read some books, damn it. When George Mitchell was appointed the negotiator with Ireland he read 23 books on Ireland.\*

Paul Stillwell: I hadn't heard that.

Admiral Crowe: Well, that isn't bad advice. Now, I know that listening to various viewpoints that takes time Presidents don't like to spend. But, damn, it's better than losing a war. And he is the Commander in Chief. Once we start shooting, the SecDef is all right, but the SecDef doesn't make the big decisions. The President does. I've always had trouble with some of the Army's detailing. God, they end up with people that I just don't understand why they detail them. I would second-guess the hell out of that. I guess the Navy can be criticized the same way. We detail people that probably should—

That's another thing I've noticed in studying these wars. We end up with a lot of people doing the fighting that we don't have any confidence in, and we're reluctant to change them.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned Admiral Salzer earlier, just in passing. What do you recall of his role and your relationship with him?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I recall first of all that I was doing better with him than I ever realized I was. He used to come down and consult me quite a bit, and some of the best fitness reports I ever got were from Salzer. I was rated number two of the captains in

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\* Former U.S. Senator George G. Mitchell served in the 1990s as special envoy to Northern Ireland. In the process he participated in negotiations that led to the Belfast Peace Agreement of 1998.

Vietnam. Moore, his chief of staff, was rated one, which I just assumed was the normal way things should be. I didn't object to that at all.

But then it became very crucial in my career [chuckle], when Salzer sat on my selection board. The submarine community wouldn't give me a place, and the surface community wouldn't give me a place. Salzer said, "Well, I am the senior surface guy, and I'll give him a place." And that came from Vietnam.

Paul Stillwell: Luck and circumstance play so big a role.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, if you have to make a choice I'd take luck every time. [Laughter] You can have all the capability in the world, but if you ain't lucky—and I had a skipper, Chuck Griffiths, who used to say, "You know, if I'm playing penny-ante poker or small gambling I lose all the time, but I win on big things." And he was right. He won on big things, and I think I'm a little the same way. I lose all kinds of small stuff, but I sure have won some big things, and more through luck than anything else.

Paul Stillwell: Did the atmosphere change when Admiral Salzer came?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it did a lot. He's a different guy.

Paul Stillwell: Could you see that at your level as well?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, I could.

Paul Stillwell: How did it manifest itself?

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was easier to talk to him. It was easier to see him. And if you said, "I want to see him; I've got something to say," why, he'd see you. And he was friendly when he was there, and he really wanted to know. He'd say, "What do you need? I'll try to get it for you."



Paul Stillwell: What did you need? Did you have good logistics support?

Admiral Crowe: Well, in certain respects we did, but, well, you always need more. [Laughter]. Everybody in command wants more. It's sort of like that kid in *Oliver*: "Sir, I want more." Well, he needs more men, he needs more of this, he needs more of that. We needed more small boats. We needed more efficient supply arrangements for spare parts. And we often needed to keep some people longer than their year, but that was pretty hard to buck. You could try that, and I did try it, but I failed. We had told them they only were going to be there a year, and they took them out. And that does bite into your efficiency; there's absolutely no question about it.

Paul Stillwell: The learning curve has to start over.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, yes. Twelve years' experience, or one year's experience 12 times, is sort of what we had in Vietnam.

But the commander in Vietnam had the same problem every commander has. He had so many resources, and he was never going to give any individual commander everything the guy wanted. They were going too many ways. And, of course, after we made the decision to go home, why, then it really got tough, because we had to scale down. Just on an academic diagram we were going to scale down so fast—today the airplanes leave, tomorrow the helicopters leave, and nobody asked were we winning or losing the war, or would keeping them two weeks help? Why, we've got a schedule, man. And it's like the guy that drew the line between Pakistan and India; it had no relationship to the real world, but you couldn't break it.

And Sorley said today, "I don't think Nixon realized we were winning when he signed the Paris Accords."<sup>\*</sup> Now, that's a hell of a comment to make. Now, he didn't say, "I can prove that." He said, "That's my intuitive feeling, that Nixon didn't know, but I don't know that." He said, "I don't know the truth."

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<sup>\*</sup> The Paris Peace Accords (or Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam) were signed on 27 January 1973 by the governments of North Vietnam, South Vietnam, the United States, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, which represented indigenous South Vietnamese revolutionaries. The results were an immediate cease-fire and the later repatriation of prisoners of war.

Paul Stillwell: But even if we were winning, what then?

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's right. That's another question. But certainly, if you're winning, he had more leverage in the Paris Accords than we realized. But to make the leverage work you couldn't just walk out. You had to say: "I'm going to stay." But he might have been more willing to stay if he thought we were truly winning. Yet you read Sorley's book about the history of those battles at the end, and just before we pulled everything out we had a hell of a big battle and we won it! Now, the Paris Accords say if it happens again we'll come back, which the Congress wouldn't give us the money for. It was two years after the Paris Accords it was two years before the North Vietnamese could recover enough to mount another major attack. That tells you something right there.

Paul Stillwell: But the North Vietnamese had a substantial bargaining chip in the POWs.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, although I don't think that we put much weight in the big picture on that. Maybe we did, I don't know.

Paul Stillwell: Well, we talked about Mrs. Stockdale, and she was building the agitation.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. But I mean, whether those wives agitating really drove the Paris Accords or not, I don't know that.

Paul Stillwell: And you had the Watergate hanging over it as well.\*

Admiral Crowe: Well, that's something else again. It was just obviously politically to his advantage to get out. But Sorley may be right, though, that he didn't have the—there have been very few books written like Sorley's about the end there, that we did win; we

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\* In June 1972 operatives working indirectly for the Committee to Re-elect the President broke into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C. The resulting coverup led to the August 1974 resignation of President Richard Nixon.

won here and we won there. And people that opposed the war still don't admit that we did win in those battles. And the two years, that's sort of evidence that, okay, we signed the Paris Accords and left, and it was two years before the North Vietnamese could heal sufficiently to go down and really clean their clocks.

The last time they did it, it wasn't that we had many people there, but we were still there, and we had air and we had artillery, and we used that in those big victories, we used American support. But it wasn't ground support so much as it was air support. And, of course, in the final battles in Vietnam they didn't have any of that.

Paul Stillwell: Well, there was a congressional prohibition against U.S. forces getting involved.

How much did you get down into the boats during operations?

Admiral Crowe: Quite a bit.

Paul Stillwell: Any specific memories you have from those?

Admiral Crowe: Well, first of all, it wasn't on the boats. I went up to Qui Nhon and spent several nights there. I spent nights in a lot of the bases—Camau, I'd lived in Camau. And I went up on the Cambodian border and stayed up there a while. But I only rode the boats at night, I think, half a dozen times, maybe, I spent the night on a boat. Of course, really, what I was doing—I had command of our people, but these were Vietnamese boats, and these were operations that the Vietnamese commander was doing. What he did and where he went, I went. Now, I could change the agenda, ask him if he'd change it, but I didn't have a lot of independent—I'd have to strike out on my own occasionally, but it was tough. Whatever he was doing that day I went with him, to make sure he didn't make some bad decisions.

He and I had some real knock-downs about letting the convoy go when we had some evidence they shouldn't have sailed it then, and we should have cleared the path a little more, and we should have done this; otherwise we wouldn't have lost a boat. And, oh, he got furious. I say, though, I had a little bit more sensitivity to losing boats than he

did. He was quite used to losing boats. It always annoyed the hell out of me to lose a boat. Of course, he thought we'd replace the boat. But then after we started turning over, that wasn't true. They only had so many of them, and that was what they were going to have to fight with.

Paul Stillwell: Now, were these mostly Swift boats?

Admiral Crowe: In our area, we had a vast number of PBRs.\* We had some Swift boats, and had a bunch of LCMs and that sort of thing.† But they weren't used as much when I was there. They used to use those for napalm, for some artillery support. Firing then from those things, a 105 from an LCM, man alive, must have been quite exciting on that LCM when that thing fired. Those big armored boats that we built for actually forcing our way ashore, we weren't doing much of that when I was there. We did a little, but not much.

What they did do was fight in and along the rivers. And, of course, we had Bill Dannheim as an officer down in the Delta. He was down south of Camau, and he had a detachment of boats down there. Well, they got overrun, but they got in the boats quick enough to survive. They got out on the river on the boats before their base got overrun. He got a Navy Cross out of that that night.‡ It was a near thing, my God. They were really fighting.

Paul Stillwell: Were you in boats that got fired on?

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\* The Mark I river patrol boat (PBR) was built for use in Vietnamese waters by United Boat Builders of Bellingham, Washington. The PBR was 31 feet long, 11 feet in the beam, and drew 2 feet of water. It was armed with three .50-caliber machine guns, one 40-millimeter grenade launcher, and had a design speed of 25 knots.

† The Mark I PCF (patrol craft fast), known as the Swift boat, was built by Sewart Seacraft of Berwick, Louisiana, adapted from the design of Gulf of Mexico oil rig boats. The PCF was 50 feet long, 13 1/2 feet in the beam, and drew 5 feet. It was armed with three .50-caliber machine guns, one 81-millimeter mortar, and had a top speed of 25 knots. LCMs were large landing craft that were armored and armed for riverine warfare.

‡ Lieutenant William T. Dannheim, USN, was senior advisor to River Patrol Division 62, based at Song Ong Doc, South Vietnam. On 20 October 1970 he spearheaded the resistance to a heavy enemy attack on the base and subsequently received the Navy Cross for his achievement.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, occasionally, but not really. I didn't see any heavy firefights; those little boats could really move. It was pretty hard to hit them.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I've heard that speed equated to armor.

Admiral Crowe: That's right. And, of course, we had several big rivers that, once you got in a big river you had a lot of maneuver space. Where you could really get hammered was in those canals. Once you got hit in a canal you had to fight. We drove that canal right through the U Minh Forest, and I went on that a couple times, the canal from top to bottom. That was really hairy. But, again, it was a case where they didn't expect us. They weren't good at irregular operations. They needed to know something about when you were coming.

You'd get radio transmissions, kids under fire, and you could tell from the kid's voice how he was trying to keep control of himself. It was really fascinating. Some of them would go very slowly. "We\_\_\_are\_\_\_taking\_\_\_fire." Others would say, "We're taking fire here!" One of the things I see on TV, everybody's always hollering. You know, in combat lots of time there's not a holler. In fact, hollering draws fire. [Chuckle] I could tell you some Franklin stories. I was with Franklin one night when we were flying over, an Army unit came up, and the American adviser said, "We're under fire, we're under fire."

Franklin said, "Let's go over there." I don't know that I was so hot to go over there. I didn't know what was going on over there. Anyway, we veered the helicopter and we got above all this and Franklin said, "Now, just take it easy, son. Who's shooting at whom down there?" [Chuckle] And this kid said, "Colonel, it seems to me like they're all shooting at me." [Laughter]

And one night—that damned Franklin—we detected a huge supply operation on the west coast, 300 or 400 hundred sampans over there in the middle of the night supplying the Viet Cong. So he said, "Let's go up there." I got in the air and discovered I was in houseshoes, sandals. I hadn't put on my boots. And I was in cammies, but I hadn't done anything except jump in that helicopter. And I thought, "If we go down up here and me slogging around the—this is madness. Why am I up here with this man?"

Well, we got up there in time to see a little lights flashing and searchlights, and shooting searchlights, but there weren't a lot of sampans down there. But by then they were dispersing. But I thought all the way, "God, I hope they don't go down, because I ain't equipped for it." That taught me a lesson. I never did that again. In fact, I never went into house shoes. I kept my boots on. I didn't want to be walking around there without boots.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I'm sure you hoped not to go down at all, whether you had boots or not.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that's right. Well, I was always worried about that. And then Franklin—the accepted tactic in certain places was we'd fly about 100 feet off the ground and, hopefully, if you ran into opposition you'd surprise them so quickly and gone that you were gone. That was the theory of it. And I thought, "That guy Franklin's about as old as I am. He's 39 or something, and he's flying this helicopter. What the hell is he doing flying a helicopter 100 feet off the ground? We've got plenty of 22-year-old kids that ought to be doing that. And here I am in a helicopter with this madman." [Chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: He liked the action, apparently.

Admiral Crowe: He did, he really loved it. Oh, he loved it.

Paul Stillwell: I once heard a submariner who said, "I'm addicted to adrenaline."

Admiral Crowe: Well, certain people are. You know, I was thinking of Slade Cutter. After the war we had all kinds of people that were not suitable for peace. War was their element.

Paul Stillwell: He told me that.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I'm sure that was true. That's where they belonged. They were natural-born warriors. Peace was just too damned dull.

Paul Stillwell: He told me that everything after the war was anticlimactic.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I'm sure it's true. Absolutely. I think Matthews was a lot that way. He tried to make it exciting, and he succeeded occasionally [chuckle], but he was a carrier aviator sitting out there in the middle of nowhere. But that's hard. And, of course, even the little stuff. Once shooting starts and the adrenaline's flowing, there for a few seconds you've got a problem. You're still talking life and death, even though you're talking about two or three people instead of 500. When those mortars started dropping into Qui Nhon, that was always sort of lively.

Paul Stillwell: When you planned these operations, was it essentially a negotiation with the Vietnamese, since you didn't have command?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was always a negotiation. Of course, the Vietnamese did one thing right. They'd have their families, like in Qui Nhon, the families were in the compound with them. We had a whole section of the base that was Vietnamese families. Then everybody fought harder. I mean, if you wanted to attack that base you took your chances, because they knew their families would be slaughtered. And the Vietnamese were fighters. It wasn't fighting that bothered them. It was all the other dull stuff that you've got to do to wage a war.

And that's the trouble with civilian leadership. They think the whole war is that little fighting point of the spear out there. That really is very little of the overall calculus. When Rumsfeld starts advising people how to win wars, you just know there's not much going through his mind, like there would be with the professionals. He thinks about a lot of things besides that last—when they let the bullets go.

Paul Stillwell: You talked about the graduate education as a watershed period in your life. Vietnam had to be that also.

Admiral Crowe: Oh, yes. It was probably more. I still think about Vietnam every day. And I think about my son going to Iraq, the same time I did, same rank, same sort of situation, 25 years later and he was over in Iraq doing somewhat—not the same, because I was on boats, but he was a Marine, doing the same idea that I was doing in Vietnam. I find that quite something. I don't know what I find it. There's just something wrong with that. [Chuckle] I don't know what it is. And I met British couples, the father had been in Ireland, and then 25 years later his son was in Ireland doing the same patrolling, shooting the same guys. Something's out of whack on that business.

But I always looked at Vietnam as an educational experience too. And what does it tell you about political science, etc. The main lesson I came away with, which I'm now trying to refine, is: I don't care how noble your cause or anything else; when you intervene in another country you pay a price. Now, it may be different in different places. It may be a different kind of price. It may be a price worth it, or it may not be worth it. But you pay a price. There's no way to get in and out without giving something.

Paul Stillwell: Well, the 1991 Gulf War was an aberration in that sense, in that the price was not that high.

Admiral Crowe: Well, okay, maybe the price wasn't as high. But still, it's like the very idea that the reason we didn't go to Baghdad is the Saudis didn't want us to, or those Middle Eastern powers, and you paid a price with them. And we paid a price even in George Bush's war. We did get some reimbursement out of the coalition. That was the amazing thing about it. But nevertheless, to transport 500,000 people to the scene of the fight and have a fight—

Paul Stillwell: That certainly was costly.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, that was costly. Of course, the terrible thing about Iraq, which George Bush the elder avoided, is we paid a price in terms of our image, in terms of our



alliances, our friends, and our relationship with the Muslim world. We've paid more than we're spending. We're just paying a terrible price. Now we've got all these casualties. I just don't see how anybody can say what's going to happen in Iraq is worth that. And yet Wellington said the hardest thing for a general to do is to retreat.\* He knew a lot about retreating too. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: What was the situation with your family when you were in Vietnam?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I didn't mention—Shirley came over. Well, I had two things happen in that regard. Matthews was very good about it. He called me up one time and said, "You know, I've got a big report." I forget what it was. And he said, "You want to go back to the United States for leave?"

I said, "Yeah, I do."

He said, "Well, I'll send this back with you, and you'll have about ten days in the United States." So in the middle of March he sent me back, and I delivered it. And, by God, it snowed while I was back! I thought there was no justice in that.

Then I returned to—the big highlight was—I returned to Vietnam and I was saving all my money to bring Shirley over, and she was looking forward to it. And, sure enough, we set up this trip where she went to Japan and then changed planes, and flew into Hong Kong. Then I would meet her in Hong Kong, R&R.† We spent three days in Hong Kong. Then we flew to Vietnam and put her on a helicopter. She knew she had gone to war when the first place we stopped was at an officers' club up near Saigon and filled the plane with beer. And then went on down to Binh Thuy, and she spent three days in Binh Thuy. And Hung, this guy's wife, came down and had a dinner for us, and my officers all had a big party for her. I took her into some fire bases where they had never seen a white woman. Then we flew back up to Saigon and went to Bangkok. Had three days in Bangkok. It was a marvelous time.

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\* The Duke of Wellington, a British Army officer, was the victor in the 1815 defeat of French forces under Napoleon at Waterloo.

† R&R – rest and recreation.

She flew home, and I forget the exact time. It was just coming into the fall, and she'd been home, I don't know, less than a month. And she got a call saying, "Your husband may be coming home."

Then I got a call saying: "Did you ever hear of Micronesia?" [Chuckle]

I said, "Well, I happen to know where it is, but not much more than that."

"Well, we've got a thing back here called the Micronesian Status Negotiations, and Admiral Moorer thinks that he doesn't have adequate military representation on the negotiating group, and your name has come up."\*

I said, "Well, I don't want to go."

Paul Stillwell: Was this when you were slated to get command of the *Newport News*?†

Admiral Crowe: Well, I didn't know that then. But I didn't want to go. I said, "I've got a great job and I'm enjoying this and that's just it; I don't want to go."

So the next call I got was, "Well, it's gone a little further than that; it looks like you're going to have to go."

"Well, why?"

They said, "Well, Admiral Moorer and Admiral Zumwalt want to bring you back to participate in the Micronesian Status Negotiations."

I said, "Well, you've got lots of people back there. Why in the hell am I being...?"

"Well, they think you know more about it," blah, blah, blah, blah.

I said, "Well, I don't want to go. Make it absolutely clear that I do not want to go."

Then I got back: "Stick it in your ear, you're going." And I had the problem of then pulling up stops.

I had a long shopping list I wanted. There's one of the pieces right there, that eggshell painting. I wanted to get an eggshell painting before I left Vietnam. And all kinds of things I wanted to do. So I arranged my schedule down at Binh Thuy to give me

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\* Moorer was by this time Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

† The heavy cruiser *Newport News* (CA-148) was then the only all-gun cruiser in the fleet.

two days in Vietnam. But I had to take a drug test, so instead of going to Saigon I gave a urine test and sent it up there. Then the time came, I left, Bob Spruit took command, and I left Binh Thuy. I flew to Saigon, and I was going to shop that day. And I got a call the first thing in the morning, about 7:00 o'clock in the morning. "Captain Crowe?"

I said, "Yes." Said, "We've gotten your drug test back and you've been positive on two of the tests. We think maybe you ought to take another test, but you're in real trouble."

Paul Stillwell: Positive for what?

Admiral Crowe: I didn't know what the test was. I didn't know positive was bad, but evidently it was. And I said, "Well, I'm sorry, but I'm leaving Vietnam tomorrow."

Then this voice said, "Oh, I'm not so sure you are." This voice was really nasty. I don't even know who it was. A captain in the Medical Corps or a doctor or something.

And I said, "Well, I suspect...."

"Okay," he said. "I don't know."

I rushed in to see Salzer. I was staying on the compound there, and I just went right in to see Salzer. And Salzer said, "I don't give a shit what they say, you're leaving. "We've had this fight now for a whole month, and I'm not going to tell anybody you're not coming." He said, "You're leaving."

I said, "Well, I think I'd better go get another test." So I rushed out there and found this snotty doctor and corpsman and so forth, and I gave them a test. And I didn't hear for about three or four hours what came out of the test. And finally I got a call that said, "Well, you're negative on all the tests. But our question now is, who got out of here on your test, on your urine?"

I said, "Well, I don't know anything about that. I'm sorry, I've been a drug addict here for three hours," [chuckle] "and I'm going back to shopping, so please don't bother me anymore."

But Salzer told the doctor at that hospital, "I don't care what you're doing out there. Captain Crowe is leaving, and he's going right back to Washington where he's

going to work for Admiral Moorer. Quit this nonsense.” He really picked up the phone and really went after the doctor, which I got some enjoyment out of.

Paul Stillwell: Of course.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I said I was a drug addict for about three or four hours. [Chuckle] I jumped on a plane with all my—I’ve got an elephant in there I had to ship back. Even brought a bottle of nuoc mam back.\*

Paul Stillwell: Well, I avoided nuoc mam. I smelled it but didn’t taste it.

Admiral Crowe: Well, I didn’t understand it, and it tasted terrible. Well, finally I had a Vietnamese in the house and he said, “Well, you’re supposed to cut it with water six to one, you idiot.” I didn’t know that. I had fed it to all the children and they said, “That’s horrible.” Well, we cut it six to one and it tasted much better. Shirley used it for cooking for a long time.

Paul Stillwell: We had a Vietnamese officer come aboard our ship, and he put that on whatever the American food was.

Admiral Crowe: Well, when I got back the first guy I had to see was Blackie Weinel, and Blackie Weinel said, “I’m afraid I’m the culprit in all this.” He said, “I’m the guy that recommended you for coming back. I discovered that you were slated for a cruiser. I really felt badly when I found that out.” And he said, “They were going to give you a cruiser command.” And he said, “I’ve gone to Admiral Moorer, and I said, man, when we’re done, this guy begged his service and we’ve got to take care of him.”

Well, in a sense they did take care of me. I got a fitness report [chuckle] from Zumwalt, whom I didn’t even know, really, and it said—I can’t remember exactly what it said, but the tenor of it was: “There are about 1,500 captains in the Navy that can command a cruiser, but there’s only one with the political-military training that allows us

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\* Nuoc mam is a Vietnamese condiment, fermented fish sauce.

to do this, and that, and that.” And it rated me as one in 22 million, or something outrageous thing. [Chuckle] Which Zumwalt was prone to do when he waxed eloquent and wanted to throw the weight of the CNO around. It was the damndest fitness report. But, of course, it didn’t make an admiral out of me that year. But that’s when Blackie told me that. Then I was really annoyed, when Blackie told me that. But he kept hounding Zumwalt, and more fitness reports on me, several. And they got a fitness report out of the Deputy Secretary of State. Haydn Williams gave me a glowing fitness report.\* But I was in those negotiations for over a year before the selection board that took me. And I’ve told you the Clarey story.

It was sort of a dark moment when I came back from Vietnam and discovered that, well, if I’d gotten a cruiser, the *Newport News* had a turret explosion on it in about a year.<sup>†</sup> I thought, “My God. If I was there I’d probably have had it just like everybody else.” In any event— [Chuckle].

Paul Stillwell: Luck again.

Admiral Crowe: Luck. Wowee.

Paul Stillwell: I had four weeks in that ship in 1974, and they had never repaired the turret. You could see the damage inside, because the explosion sent a chain of fire down the powder train.

Admiral Crowe: Anyway, Blackie Weinel was always very good to me. And when I was on the Micronesian Status Negotiations I had access to Moorer. Of course, I had seen a lot of Moorer as CNO. I had access to him immediately on anything to do with Micronesia. But I didn’t know that at the time, and Weinel was feeling bad about it, and my friends all said, well, it was too bad. “You’re going to Micronesian Status; I guess

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\* Ambassador Haydn Williams was the chief negotiator on the Micronesian issue.

<sup>†</sup> At 1:10 A.M. on 1 October 1972, while the heavy cruiser *Newport News* (CA-148) was on a firing mission off the coast of Vietnam, a faulty 8-inch projectile detonated prematurely in the center gun of turret two. The shells in the powder train leading up from the magazine burned rapidly, and consumed the air supply. All told, 20 men were killed as a result of the incident.

you'd better start looking for a job.” And who in the hell knows where Micronesia is?”  
[Chuckle]

And Haydn Williams was even, at first, very suspicious of me. It took a while before that ended. But it was a terrible time in my career. And then I got a Distinguished Service Medal out of Vietnam.

Paul Stillwell: That's fairly rare for a captain, isn't it?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it is, a little bit. So I have a picture. I don't know where it is. I'll show you a picture, if I can find it. (End of Interview 15)

Paul Stillwell: Admiral, today we're ready to talk about your Micronesia involvement.

Admiral Crowe: I think we've mentioned it previously, but I learned about it in a phone call to Vietnam, that I was being considered to be called back. The first phone calls were rather vague; I didn't understand why. Then all of a sudden I got hold of someone who explained to me that they had formed what they called the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations, and it was going to be headed by a man that I did not know, a civilian, Haydn Williams, who was the head of the Asia Foundation in San Francisco, but an old hand in the Defense Department. He had been a civilian in McNamara's setup for a while, in ISA.\* He was an educator by trade, and a graduate of Tufts, Ph.D, and served in the government for several years there in the Defense Department and at the higher levels during that administration. Then had left and taught at several universities, but he became the Asia Foundation, which was deployed all over Asia with offices, and was nonprofit and working on educational programs, aid programs, and ways to introduce American know-how, etc., in these societies that could use it.

Paul Stillwell: Who funded it?

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\* ISA – International Security Affairs.

Admiral Crowe: Well, it was funded, as most nonprofits are, by private donations. He got some money out of the government, and came back to Washington every summer to testify to get money. But the bulk of his money came from wealthy families. And San Francisco was full of them. There's a man named Shorenstein there who was a big man in the Democratic Party, but gave an awful lot of money to the Asia Foundation. Haydn was the boss in that outfit, and was essentially the CEO of this rather important organization, which was in a sense global. It wasn't global, because it was interested only in Asia, but nevertheless it was a big organization and very well known in San Francisco.

He was respected in academic circles, which is interesting. He was a Republican, I think, by trade and by heritage. He has subsequently become a fierce opponent of the Republican Party. [Chuckle] But, anyway, I didn't know Haydn before, and I didn't quite know what I was getting into.

I came straight back. There was no leave or anything. I immediately went to work. The offices were in the Department of the Interior. And the people they had assembled in his staff were a few—there was no other military there. Haydn was made an ambassador in order to head this organization, the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations. His deputy was a man by the name of Art Hummel, who was a Foreign Service Officer, also had a rather interesting background.\* He originally came from—I'm trying to remember the exact name of the organization spread around the world, that oversaw our radio broadcasts and so forth? What's the name of that?

Paul Stillwell: Voice of America?

Admiral Crowe: Yes.<sup>†</sup> It was part of the overall organization, which was called USIA.<sup>‡</sup> Now, he spoke fluent Chinese. His parents were missionaries in China. He was born in China, he grew up in China to about 14, when he came back to the United States to go to school. Then he returned just before the war started, to China. He was interned by the

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\* Arthur W. Hummel, Jr., was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 1971 to 1975.

<sup>†</sup> Hummel was Deputy Director of the Voice of America from 1961 to 1963.

<sup>‡</sup> U.S. Information Agency.

Japanese, escaped from Japanese imprisonment, and went into the hills with the Chinese guerrillas for three years. And so his background was Chinese, he understood Chinese. He hated the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations. He didn't want to be there. [Chuckle] It was killing him, and he was very dissatisfied. And initially he had a suspicion of me and the whole U.S. military.

Paul Stillwell: Was your own attitude one of resignation at that point? You didn't want to be there either.

Admiral Crowe: No, I didn't want to be there either. But I was a little stunned at Art Hummel's attitude. He was sort of a distant man. He and I became friends [chuckle], but it took a lot of work.

There were two or three Foreign Service Officers on the staff: John Dorentz, Frank Johnson, a couple of people from the Department of Interior who oversaw the islands. That's the reason we were in the Department of Interior, is because they had the responsibility for administering the Micronesian islands.

Paul Stillwell: Had that been laid out in some treaty or something?

Admiral Crowe: Well, no, that had not been. But we had chosen to assign it there because we were the trustees. There was a regular office in the Department of Interior that dealt with Micronesia.

We had two people, including John Whittington, from that office, who had both been in the Peace Corps as younger people in Micronesia. We had a lawyer from the State Department who was our lawyer. And that was about the size of it initially. Several secretaries. All State Department secretaries. It was my first real personal direct brush with the State Department. Haydn was not a Foreign Service officer. He had the title of ambassador, but he had never served in the State Department. But he was favorably disposed toward the State Department. He didn't carry a chip on his shoulder at all.



Haydn Williams had tremendous energy, a very dedicated patriot. Felt strongly about the United States. Had fought in World War II, had been in the Navy during the war, and was on Midway when the war started. He had a wonderful story that they assumed they were going to be overrun, so he took all his diaries and personal papers—he was a young ensign, I think, or lieutenant—and buried them in the ground on Midway. And later on he went back there to look for it and there was a big airstrip over his papers. [Laughter] They'd paved over where he'd buried his stuff, so it's still there.

Haydn had his own set of convictions. His father was an Episcopalian minister. The whole family were graduates of the University of California at Berkeley. But he was very disposed toward the Navy. He was very pro-Navy, unlike Hummel, and he was very pleased to have me there. I was sent there by Admiral Moorer, and I think Haydn didn't request me, but he requested a military person. He thought there should be some on the negotiating team, and, of course, Moorer and his crowd got quite excited about the subject matter of the severing of the trust, whether they were going to have any view of how it was done, etc., etc. We then acquired another military officer, an Army officer, who also was with us for the rest of the time.

It was patch and paste from the beginning. This organization had just been carved out of the blue, and Haydn reported directly to the President on this matter, which meant that he reported to the National Security Council, not to the President. And Kissinger, of course, was running the National Security Council. And there was a section there of two men who handled our affairs. One was John Holdridge, who later became an ambassador to Indonesia and was high up in the Foreign Service and an Asian expert.\*

Paul Stillwell: Did Admiral Moorer give you any items that he wanted put into the agenda?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did. I met with Moorer and his assistant, Admiral Weinel, who got me into all the trouble, and we went over pretty carefully what we wanted to preserve. And, of course, our ambitions were greater than we were going to get, but that's all right. Our problem really wasn't with the Micronesians; it was with the rest of the U.S.

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\* John H. Holdridge was U.S. ambassador to Indonesia from 1983 to 1986.

government, as to how much they were willing to defer to the military. And, of course, on the group I was just one voice. We had two Foreign Service officers, one by the name of Lindsey Graham, and then Frank Johnson, both of whom had spent a lifetime negotiating and diplomacy, and were not too concerned about how the military made out or didn't make out. If we could sever the trust and do it well, why, we'll do it, and the military will just have to stand aside. Now, Haydn Williams didn't agree with that. Haydn Williams was very pro-military.

Haydn's leadership style, because he was such a hard worker and a big believer in the power of the written word, meant he could wax eloquently with very little effort, or he would write long papers and long speeches. That upset Hummel some. And, of course, the State Department people really felt that Williams should defer to their views, that he was not a professional, and he was sort of a figurehead. Well, Haydn Williams didn't agree with that at all.

I was fit into this, not knowing any of these people and them not knowing me. We didn't have a lot of votes in caucus, but I never felt at a disadvantage. And with the working people, like Frank Johnson and so forth, we became very, very close friends as we suffered through this ordeal.

The first problem, of course, was to sort of focus on what we were supposed to do. The second was to become familiar with Micronesia, which many of us were not. Now, I had done some work on Micronesia when I was in the Navy staff, but all at a distance. I had been to Saipan and Guam, but I had never been to the rest of Micronesia. One of the first things Haydn did was send me on a trip throughout Micronesia. The guy that ran the Micronesian trust on the scene was the high commissioner. I think his name was Johnston, a political appointee, who was living in Saipan and was the high commissioner for the Trust Territories.\*

His deputy was a man by the name of Peter Coleman, a very interesting man. Peter Coleman was Samoan and had come up through the political side of Samoa and had been the governor of Samoa, a Republican appointee. Peter had become the deputy high

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\* Edward Elliott Johnston served as High Commissioner for the Trust Territories from 1 May 1969 to 1 July 1976.

commissioner, as a political appointee, although he had been the governor of Samoa. Haydn Williams asked him to escort me around Micronesia.

It was a marvelous trip. And, of course, Peter Coleman knew everybody, and he was one of them, really, although Samoa was not in question here. But he was a big man, as most Samoans are. And Samoan feet are about that long.

Paul Stillwell: A big man physically.

Admiral Crowe: A big man, a huge man, physically. And when you go down there—they're all barefooted, and their feet get huge. And he told me a wonderful story that, when he was, I think, 12 or maybe 13 or maybe 14 his parents sent him to high school in Hawaii. And before he got on the boat, just as he was getting on, his mother handed him a big package, a gift to go to school when he got on. The ship left and he opened it up. It was a pair of shoes, the first ones he'd ever had. [Chuckle] Very interesting, you grow up for that many years and never have a pair of shoes.

But he knew everything there was to know about Micronesia and about the people. It was just fantastic being with him. We traveled on Micronesian Airlines, which was an adventure in itself, run by Continental Airlines. When you got on, there was lots of livestock, and all kinds of things happened. The first time we landed at Truk, as we were taxiing the stewardess said, "Please stay seated till we stop in front of the terminal." And the terminal was a card table sitting out there on the concrete with a guy behind the card table. [Laughter].

That was the terminal, and that was the first time I was exposed to the betel nuts they chew. And in those places where they waited for airplanes the concrete would be red in a great big patch where they'd spat betel nut. And Yap mainly was betel nut. Not all of Micronesians use betel nut, but Yap and some in Palau. In Yap everybody chews betel nut. And I started chewing it just to see what it was like. It wasn't very appetizing. [Chuckle] It didn't addict me, but it does addict them. It's not a terrible addiction; it's sort of a light buzz, and they like it and they chew it constantly all their life.

And then I have a piece of Yapese money out there on the porch that we lifted out of Yap, Haydn and I did.

Paul Stillwell: Like a stone?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Stone money. Have you seen it out there?

Paul Stillwell: I didn't notice it.

Admiral Crowe: Go look at it when we go out there.

Paul Stillwell: All right.

Admiral Crowe: And unfortunately, in getting shipped his got shattered. He's never let me forget it. Mine came through fine.

Paul Stillwell: What insights did you get from the tour?

Admiral Crowe: Well, two or three. First of all, some of the islands are beautiful. There are different kinds of islands. Archipelagos and discrete islands and, of course, Palau is mountainous, but I don't mean huge mountains. Not like Hawaii. But it's hilly. And Palau is quite forested, and a lot of jungle on Palau.

The most impressive thing from our perspective was that Americans are not very good colonizers. Those islands had been ruled after World War I by the Japanese. The spoils of war in World War I gave those islands to Japan.

Paul Stillwell: The Mandated Islands.

Admiral Crowe: Mandated Islands. And, of course, one of our aims in the United Nations right after the war was that Japan was not going to have them anymore. We took those islands away from them and formed a trust and assigned the trust to America. We had essentially made Micronesia into a dole economy. About 50% of the people worked for the United States government, or the local government, or *the* government, whatever

you want to put it. We highly subsidized the islands and taught them to expect that and to live with that, and to assume that it will always be that way and that they deserve it.

They're not a very energetic people. They do what they like. For example, they like to fish, so they spend a lot of time fishing. Micronesian people were fun, festive, they love to sing, to dance, and to enjoy their islands. I can remember landing in Kwajalein and one of our friends there, a local politician, met Haydn at the airplane and said, "We're having an election Tuesday, and it looks like I may get the feeling that it's going to be a very close race."

And Haydn said, "Well, what have you been doing about it?"

He said, "Well, I've been fishing the last three weeks. I just came back." And that was sort of the attitude. "Well, it's just an election; I'll give it a couple of shots here over Monday and Tuesday, and if that doesn't do it, that's it."

Each culture was in a certain sense distinct. And also in language. We'll work our way through the islands. The easternmost island, of course, was Truk, which I found extremely interesting because that had been the Japanese Gibraltar of the Pacific, and the archipelago was lined with sunken ships, still, when I was there. It was one of the great underwater diving locations in the whole world because of that. People came from all over. And now they had passed laws that you couldn't take anything off those ships. But nevertheless the island was overrun by people in scuba diving, because it's a beautiful archipelago, and also it's littered with all kinds of Japanese trash, and ships completely loaded that were sunk by our attacks. Now, that's probably by now been cleaned up a lot, but a lot of it they didn't intend to clean up, because it was sort of a tourist attraction.

This only industry in Micronesia was tourism. U.S. government was one, and tourism was two, and what everybody else did seemed to be not a hell of a lot. They had a peasant cunning, though. I mean, we discovered to our dismay that we were not dealing with totally unsophisticated people, and that they were very good at negotiating, and they played to their strengths.

Then you go right through the islands. For years I've had a psychological block about this next set of islands; I can never remember the name. But down where the ruins are, the ancient ruins. Well, it's in the book.

Then you work right on up to Saipan, Tinian, south of Guam, which were part of the islands. Then as you go west you have Yap, which was by far to me the most fascinating, and then Palau, the last set of islands. Palau was the object of some of our attacks in World War II, and the battle of the island of Peleliu, probably while it was unnecessary it's still a very famous battle.

Paul Stillwell: It's still debated on whether it was useful.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I went all over the battle of Peleliu when I was there. I've continued to have some contacts with Palau, which we will talk about later. But nevertheless Palau was even greater than Truk for underwater diving, because it's several thousand very small islands, and the underwater attractions are really superb. It was run by two tribes and paramount chiefs of each of the tribes, and most of the negotiating for Palau came through the tribes.

Palau by far had the closest connections to Japan. Still. And there was Japanese business in Palau, and a lot of the commerce was controlled by Japan into Palau. And the Palauans—I think of the whole outfit they were the toughest to negotiate with. But as Micronesians go, fairly energetic islands. But they were turning their islands into a tourist paradise.

Incidentally, one of the things that happened in Palau, this was on Peleliu. There was a—I'm trying to describe it—a large yacht there. Motor yacht, not sailing yacht, that used to be MacArthur's yacht up in Japan. And some enterprising politician—it came on auction and he went up to Japan and said: "Well, we can use those for offices on Peleliu," and he bought it. Took it to Peleliu, and they didn't use it for anything. It just sank. And I went aboard that ship, which was half sunk, and saw it, and learned a little bit about its history. And it had a beautiful ship's wheel there. I said, "What's going to happen to this?"

He said, "Oh, nothing. We're not doing anything with it." So they gave it to me, and we still have it in the family. Blake has it. But it's the wheel off of MacArthur's yacht in Japan, and the wreck is still in Peleliu.

Yap, I'd say, was the most interesting, because in many respects it was the most—you've got to be careful here—it was the most backward, in the regard that there

were still people living there the way they had in the 1800s, in the outer islands. And they really, literally, lived that way. On the other hand, when I say “backward,” that’s the wrong word, because it turns out socially the Yapese had the most complicated culture of all the islands. It was very complicated, and stone money is part of it. Complicated in the sense that it was a class society. There were very definite rules about who was boss, who was not, who could assume authority, who could not.

Every village had—there was a whole sign language in Yap. And the ritual you had to go through as you approached the village to signal that you were not fearful or not harmful, etc. The culture was all over the place. And they made the Army look like a piece of cake, with all their rules. But none of that’s written down. That’s all internalized by word of mouth.

They have a thing, which I had several of, but I’ve given them all to my children. Story boards were big in Micronesia. They were wood carvings that kept alive either a legend or some principal thing that had happened, and I bought several story boards because I was quite fascinated by that. My children have taken them; I never threw them away.

Stone money. Really interesting. The stones are hard. You can’t transport it around. Some of the stone money is six or seven feet in diameter, so it sits in the same place all the time, but it changes hands. And everybody on that island knows when it changes hands. They all know who the owner of all the stone money was. Fascinating.

Now, why did they have stone money? I’m not absolutely sure, but the way they got it was they rowed 600 miles to a quarry in Palau. And the reason it has holes in it is, they would transport it by drilling a hole in it, putting a pole through it, and put it between two canoes and row it back to Yap. It did have a value. In fact, when I was there the American Express value for stone money was \$2.50 a square inch. Now, the laws wouldn’t allow any piece of that money to go off the island. There are some exceptions, obviously, because I’ve got a piece of it. But that gives you some idea of the society. They could keep that straight in their minds, the minute there was a transaction. Sure, you could use stone money; you just didn’t move the money. Does that make any sense?

Paul Stillwell: Yes.

Admiral Crowe: Incidentally, the money went from that size to taller than you are. I found the whole idea of Yap fascinating. Haydn made several speeches to the legislature of Yap, which was a new idea for them. [Chuckle]

Those islands live and die on outside supplies. And, of course, for example, a big occasion in the year is Christmas, and you order all your Christmas and it has to come by ship from somewhere. Well, these shipping companies, at least then, were not very reliable organizations. They were sort of sloppy. And the Christmas shipping always came in late. [Chuckle] So one of the legislatures proposed to move Christmas to April so that the Christmas presents would get there on time. [Laughter] I thought that was a marvelous idea. But that was a kind of thing we were dealing with.

Each one of those places had a representative, two representatives, on the negotiating commission that we dealt with. And after my tour through the islands you really come away with a low opinion of the United States as an administrator for that sort of thing. Our sole way of doing it was to just sort of sit back and, if they needed money give them money, and we would solve everything with money. There was no accountability, no oversight. There was quite a little civil service that grew up out there, made up mainly of locals, but some Americans from Washington. But once you live on the islands apathy very soon grasps you, and there wasn't anybody moving at a very fast pace. And accountability was just practically nil.

Paul Stillwell: What was the incentive to work?

Admiral Crowe: None. But you would run into peculiar things. Like, oh, what's the fruit you eat out there?

Paul Stillwell: Papayas, mango?



Admiral Crowe: Papayas. Papayas. You would go into the hotel, and there were three or four papaya trees in the front yard. You'd order papaya, and the guy'd say, "We're out."

And I'd say, "Well, I just went by a whole tree full."

"Oh, we don't use those. Everything we get comes in by cans, and we've run out." [Laughter]

I said, "Would you ever go out there and pick one?"

He said, "We don't do that." Yet there were papayas all over the front yard.

They had now learned to eat everything out of a can, which didn't require any cooking or anything, which appealed to them. No work. The only real work I could see they did for food was fishing. And, of course, they're the world's best fishermen. They were a nautical society and their legends, of course, go back centuries. And there were still people alive when I was there that could go in a canoe and watch the waves for a few hours and tell you, first of all, what direction to go, and secondly, what the weather was going to be for the next week. They were marvelous navigators, and totally at home on the sea and in the water, etc., etc.

But each of the islands was different. The Palauans were the fiercest. People that are familiar with the society say that Palauans are the only race in the world that can sit down and say, "I'm going to think about nothing," and actually do it. And you'll see two Palauans having a beer, looking at each other for an hour and never saying a word, just drinking their beer.

The Yapese were very gentle people. And on the outer islands all the women go bare-busted. And the society's rules, for example: The men never eat with the women; the men eat alone. Women serve them. Once the men are fed then the women can go be fed. The women wear a skirt at the waist, and nothing above. Some are attractive and some aren't. They had no real desire to change their way of life. In the main island there was civilization as we know it, a hotel or two, but in the outer islands they were perfectly happy doing exactly what they were doing, and they didn't see any reason to—they just didn't want any part of—

Now, Saipan and Tinian, they're in the real world, the American world. They also had strong commercial relationships with Japan. Our military interests—

Oh, incidentally, in Yap they still had, on the airstrip there, Japanese fighters that had been damaged. They saved them, preserved them, sort of one of their attractions, these Japanese fighters sitting all around the airstrip.

But from our interest militarily, we were interested in Palau. There were a couple of harbors in Palau that took care of the whole Japanese fleet. They just drove in there and put the anchors down, and it was big enough and deep enough to handle it. We had never really used Palau. But the thinking in Washington was: We'd better preserve our rights there, because it's just got too much attraction from the Navy's standpoint. Now, I think we did preserve, but we've still not chosen to do anything with it.

And, of course, Peleliu was a complete waste of time. Okay, we conquered it, but as far as I know we never even used Peleliu for anything.

We were interested in Saipan, but even more so in Tinian, because Tinian was sparsely populated, and it still had the ruins of those great airstrips that we built during the war to bomb Japan.\* Huge airstrips. It's a small island, flat, but with a very small native population. So we wanted to have the rights to use that for exercises and so forth preserved. We wanted, whatever agreement we came to.

Also we wanted access to Saipan, because we had actually built a port in Saipan, and the military didn't want its access inhibited in any way. Then you have Guam, which was sort of part of Micronesia but not part of Micronesia. It was a U. S. territory, and it's in close proximity, so when we went out there we always went first to Guam, and then we would fly over to Tinian or Saipan, etc.

Paul Stillwell: Guam for many years had a U.S. Navy captain as the governor.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. As did Samoa too. I got sort of fascinated with Guam, because we had a Navy base there, and now we're building up Guam again, right this moment. And we actually put some Polaris submarines in Guam. And there was a shipyard there. It wasn't used very much, but I understand now it is being used some.

People that went to Guam for duty sort of enjoyed it. I think it had a pretty nice reputation. On the other hand, there was some tension between the Navy and Guam, and

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\* The U.S. B-29 bombers that dropped atomic bombs on Japan in August 1945 flew from Tinian.

when I was there we had an admiral there, a rear admiral in charge of—and before I'm through I'll tell you something about that.

Paul Stillwell: Was this ComNavMarianas?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. So we always checked in with him before we went into the Marianas. And then we would fly to wherever we were going, either Yap or Palau or over to Tinian. We'd usually fly to Saipan and then go over to Tinian by boat. It's just a small channel there.

We became quite familiar with the World War II history, and met a lot of people who had been alive then. The most fascinating stories. I've sat around at dinner and listened to people tell about the first American soldier or Marine they ever met—they were scared to death of them. They'd been told that we would kill them all. That's what the Japanese said.

Some of the most interesting stories were men telling about living on the outer islands and surviving a typhoon, how they did that. Tied themselves to a tree, and their children with them. The water would come clear over the island, and they would hope they didn't get drowned in the process. But everybody was tied, and they just rode it out. Very interesting.

And then they would tell about—on Truk I had several friends who had seen their parents beheaded by the Japanese. Terrible stories. The number-one senator from Truk, who was on the negotiations, had to endure that. He was also probably the hardest man in the whole negotiation to deal with. He didn't like Americans very well, but he hated the Japanese.

On the other hand, many of them didn't hate the Japanese. Many would have preferred an arrangement where they went back working with Japan instead of America. But it was too late. Number one, we wouldn't tolerate it. And, number two, the Japanese worked the heads off those people, and we didn't. The Japanese actually raised crops on those islands with slave labor, which were the Micronesians. We did nothing like that. And as far as I know when we were there they didn't raise a single thing on the island. I'm sure that's an exaggeration, but anyway, there was nothing for commercial use.

There just wasn't any real business out there except tourism, renting of boats, and an occasional license to sell Maytag sewing machines or something. And you didn't need to do that. You got paid by the U.S. Government. And the hotels were all very sparse, very primitive, not very comfortable.

Kwajalein had a thriving place in a certain respect. Everybody there liked to play tennis. We always played tennis when we were at Kwajalein, which I enjoyed. I've been all over Bikini, where the test was, and flown over all those craters, and so forth, where we blew the hell out of the place.\* We kept declaring Bikini safe and then discovering it wasn't safe, and starting all over again.

Then we, of course, had our own U.S. military base on Kwajalein, which we continued to use for missile research. It was fascinating the communications they had there. It was run by the U.S. Army, and it was like you had an office in San Francisco. You could pick up the phone and dial anywhere in the United States. They just had fantastic—as does Diego Garcia, the same kind of communications, very sophisticated. After the initial orientations of everybody, including Haydn and Art and myself, we had to start negotiating sometime. [Chuckle] We couldn't spend forever educating ourselves.

Paul Stillwell: What were you trying to obtain by the negotiations?

Admiral Crowe: Well, we sort of set it up on our own. Number one, we wanted to get rid of the trust responsibility. We felt that was a time that passed; it was no longer appropriate. So we should sever the trust in some fashion. Now, the question that arises is what happens to the people on the individual islands?

Paul Stillwell: Especially if they're used to the dole.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, nobody realized that at first. You never heard the word "dole" mentioned, but did they want to be independent? Did they want to continue some

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\* In July 1946 a joint Army-Navy task force conducted tests at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands to determine the effects of atomic bombs on moored warships. Along with an array of U.S. ships were captured German and Japanese warships.

relationship with the United States? And, of course, the opinion varied widely throughout Micronesia on that question.

However, comma, no matter where you came down on that question, they all wanted to continue to get money from the United States. And we had a few islands over south of there that were in the Australian business—what's the guano island, the island that's going away?

Paul Stillwell: I don't know.

Admiral Crowe: Well, they had a thing called "free association" that they worked out. This appealed to the Micronesians, and their idea was they wanted to be independent but with free association with the U.S. Treasury. [Laughter] They'd write a check and the U.S. treasury would honor it, whatever it was.

Incidentally, this island, the reason I referred to it, is all made up of bird guano and it's mined. The problem is, the island is very rich because they're selling this stuff, but the island's going away. So they've worked out a transfer to another island, and they're saving their money through this program; they're going to survive as a society, but their original island's going to disappear. Fascinating. But that was not part of our problem.

Most of the places wanted to be independent. Saipan did not. Saipan wanted to stay hooked up with the United States. Now, that presented a problem of its own. Their idea of hooking up and our idea of hooking up were not always the same. They liked the arrangement they had before. And, of course, today Saipan is very prosperous. As you probably know, it was part of Abramoff's business.\*

Paul Stillwell: I had forgotten that.

Admiral Crowe: He successfully lobbied to keep the restrictions and so forth on textiles away from Micronesia. And so Saipan has become a huge center for making things overseas without any tariffs or anything else that came in. They paid Abramoff a lot of

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\* Jack A. Abramoff is a former lobbyist and businessman who was involved in bribery scandals. In 2006 he pled guilty to three felony counts and was sentenced to incarceration in federal prison.

money to engineer that. I don't know much more about it than that. Anyway, it was close connections with Abramoff.

But, in any event, we did work out an arrangement for—they didn't work it out before I left, but they were close—where Saipan has become “a commonwealth” of the United States. I'm not quite sure what that means. But that includes both Tinian and Saipan. And they are still a part of the United States. Palau went independent. Kwajalein went independent, and the other islands there did, as well as Truk. They're each an independent little nation. They still get American help, and I'm not familiar or privy to those details.

The negotiations themselves were very frustrating. We had the first meeting—the first meeting, at least, that I attended, was in Palau. [Chuckle] I'm laughing because Haydn Williams had a fetish about romanticizing and eloquence. We were there on Easter, and he wrote his first remarks to open the session. And his first statements [chuckle], he said, “On this beautiful, sunny Easter morning it's appropriate” blah, blah, blah. Well, the day of the negotiations it was raining like hell. [Laughter]

I said, “Haydn, we can't say that. It's not a beautiful, sunny day out there. It's terrible out there.” [Chuckle]

He said, “Well, nobody will know the damned difference.” [Laughter] He put it in, and he said it. It went in the record. And it was raining cats and dogs. That was typical of Haydn, though. He'd get captured by his own eloquence there, and once it got in the speech, it stayed in.

He and Hummel used to have these knock-down drag-outs. Hummel was much more straightforward, cryptic. He didn't want to deal with a lot of nonsense, and Haydn wanted to flourish everything. Haydn was very idealistic. He wanted a nice, comfortable arrangement with these beautiful people.

Well, the second negotiation was in Hawaii. We should have learned our lesson there, but we did learn it the next time. We had one in Washington. And every time you take a Micronesian and put him near nightlife he isn't interested in negotiations. [Laughter] They discovered 14th Street in Washington, and we could never find them. We had to round them up for the negotiations. And I'd go up there and visit their hotel suite, and there were girls everywhere. There were women of questionable character all

over the place. So Haydn gave some thought to that, and the next set of negotiations was in Hana, Maui. Do you know where Hana is?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: The San Francisco Seals used to train there, in spring training.<sup>\*</sup> It's in the very southern part of Maui. They didn't even have a paved road going down there. You had to fly in or go over a gravel road. And there was no nightlife. That way we got them to the negotiations.

I can remember one night [chuckle], after three or four—Haydn would work all night long on these speeches, and we'd all be up feeding him stuff, and we got sick of this staying up all night. We'd been there about four days. It really is the end of the world, although there's a nice tourist hotel there. We were in it. And Hummel said, "There must be something going on around this place." And he and I walked over to the main desk and said, "What's open at night?"

The guy said, "Well, the general store across the street, there. It closes at 6:00, and there isn't anything open at night." And then he said, "Well, just let me know your personal desires and maybe I can help out." Well, we walked away [chuckle], and then Hummel said, "I'm not about to express my personal desires." [Laughter] But there was nothing went on at night.

There were a couple of interesting features there. That's where Lindbergh is buried. Lindbergh had a home there, in Hana, Maui, and he's buried on that home, he and his wife both.<sup>†</sup> And a couple of other famous people have lived on Hana, Maui. There's a marvelous little Episcopal church there built by missionaries many years ago, with a graveyard. And it's a beautiful place. It's just not the most stimulating place in the world, and the negotiating team had to make do with each other. Besides drinking and negotiating, there wasn't much else to do.

Paul Stillwell: Well, that gives you some motion to get it done there.

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<sup>\*</sup> For many years the San Francisco Seals were a minor league baseball team.

<sup>†</sup> Famed aviator Charles A. Lindbergh died of lymphoma on the Hawaiian island of Maui on 26 August 1974. He was buried on the grounds of the Palapala Ho'omau Church in Kipahulu, Mau.

Admiral Crowe: It does, absolutely. And then we went back to Hawaii for a session, and we did a couple of sessions on Saipan.

When I left it was clear the Saipan was going to go with the United States. It was not clear what was going to happen to the rest of the place, and how tight our connection would be. But it was pretty clear that everybody was getting tired of it and that the trust did have to be severed, and so there was going to be some movement on it.

Then Art Hummel got sick, and I sort of became the deputy to Haydn, and Haydn and I became very, very close friends. We still are. I talk to Haydn about once a month, and the other day he was in Washington, and we went in and had dinner with him.

He's very frustrated right now. He became interested, when I was Chairman, in joining the Battle Monuments Commission, so I got him on the Battle Monuments Commission. He's always been disgusted with the fact that we don't recognize World War II enough. Haydn Williams was the main spark for the World War II Memorial, and on the Battle Monuments Commission he started that. And this administration gave him no credit for it at all. It's one of the Grecian tragedies. But Haydn Williams, it was his idea, he drove it through the bureaucracy and through the architects, and that thing is there because of Haydn Williams. He's writing a book about it now, but he's been maltreated by this administration something fierce. This administration can't imagine anything in the world going to be good that isn't done under their aegis. And the idea that Dole was important in this—Dole didn't even know what it was.\* But he and P. X. Kelley have just stolen the whole thing.† And the guys that really drove it through, Haydn and the group he put together, have gotten very little credit for the World War II Memorial. He's a very bitter man about it.

But he was tireless on this Micronesian thing, and he's considered today as probably our number-one Micronesian expert. He was back here to testify on Saipan and some of the Abramoff stuff just a few weeks ago. The negotiations would have driven a less energetic man out of his mind, because it's just difficult for a Micronesian to think

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\* Robert J. Dole, a Republican from Kansas, served in the House of Representatives from 3 January 1961 to 3 January 1969; he served in the Senate from 3 January 1969 to 11 June 1996, when he resigned to devote his efforts to his presidential campaign, which proved unsuccessful. He was badly wounded while serving as a soldier in World War II.

† General Paul X. Kelley, USMC, served as Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1983 to 1987.



anything is urgent. It's beyond their ken, because in Micronesia there *is* nothing urgent. [Chuckle] And it springs out right away.

Paul Stillwell: Did Congress have to ratify your work?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, they did. But Haydn ultimately got it through. And, of course, the main achievement was we retained our rights on Saipan and Tinian. Now, later on, after I made flag, I was in OP-60 and I got a call one day from Haydn saying: "I need a survey of Palau; can you get away for a month to go to Palau and survey it for military purposes?"

Well, I went and talked to Admiral Holloway about it, and I think he thought I was out of my mind. He didn't know me very well and I didn't know him very well. But he said, "Okay, if you really think this is important." So I took a month off, took a group to Palau with an Army helicopter, and we spent three weeks. We saw Palau from one end to the other, and we essentially mapped it and looked at it, and also interviewed everybody politically as to the suitability to the military, and then filed a long report on it. So I became sort of an authority for a while on Palau. Then I went back to my regular job. But we've never had the money to exploit Palau. It would be a wonderful place to exploit from a military standpoint. But it doesn't have a labor force. We'd have to get that from Guam, someplace like that, or from Singapore, if you're really going to repair ships there or anything. On the other hand the harbors are just marvelous.

The negotiations were always frustrating, and with the exception of Saipan we very seldom would come to a tight conclusion and get agreement, and really get our teeth into something. But Haydn was indefatigable and fought it through, and ultimately did prevail. While I was there it was a frustrating business, I mean commission-wise; as education it was wonderful. I saw things I never would have seen and became familiar with the character of the islands and what drives them, what doesn't drive them, and where they fit into the whole eco-pattern, in particular vis-à-vis the island mountains and then the Tahitian mountains, later, and the other parts of the ocean. And they're a fascinating place from just an intellectual standpoint.

But I assumed that it had ruined my career. On the other hand, let's talk about that a minute. As he was in so many things, Haydn was very energetic, and he said, "I don't want this to ruin your career, and we're going to do something about it." Now, he had a good friend, a man by the name of Irwin, who was the Deputy Secretary of State.\* He and Haydn had been together for years and went to school together, personal friends. So Haydn went out and talked Irwin into giving me a whole series of fitness reports because of my work on Micronesia. Then Haydn wrote a number of letters, really embellished letters, and he went to see everybody—Moorer, CNO, to laud my work, etc., etc. And it turned out he was instrumental in my making flag.

I don't think Haydn Williams made me an admiral, but he didn't let them forget me, and he really needled them. He was very generous in his praise, and he worked hard at it. When he'd write a letter, he'd really give it a lot of thought, and he bombarded them. My record was replete with endorsements from all kinds of people in the Micronesian business. As I say, that was not probably the most crucial item, but it sure was helpful. And he was absolutely ecstatic when I was selected for flag rank. And then I had to leave the negotiations.

Now, something interesting did happen in the middle of all this. It never came to fruition. But the admiral in Guam was retiring, I forget whether he had orders—I don't even remember. But, anyway, they were getting a new guy for Guam. So Zumwalt, in his fresh approach to things, said, "Why don't we send this Captain Crowe I keep hearing about out there and let him run Guam? He knows more about Micronesia than anybody we've got." Well, McCain, the admiral in Hawaii, wanted an admiral. And Zumwalt and he had quite a go at it. Zumwalt said, "Well, he's not an admiral, but hell, he knows all about it." Well, that didn't impress McCain; he wanted an admiral. He didn't care whether the guy knew a damned thing or not. But, anyway, evidently I was very seriously considered to go out and be ComNavMarianas. And Haydn thought that was a good idea. He liked that whole idea, but they couldn't get over McCain.

Paul Stillwell: That probably would have derailed you, though, getting you even more out of the mainstream.

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\* John N. Irwin II served as Deputy Secretary of State from 13 July 1972 to 1 February 1973.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, more specialized. I'd had pretty much my fill of Micronesia. It could be awfully frustrating. However, in all fairness, I came away with a real admiration for the State Department people I worked with, and their ability to compose, and compose quickly, and grasp of concepts and deal with them. I was really impressed. I wasn't put off at all by the State Department. In fact, the other guy in the military, I was more disgusted with him than I was with anything the State Department was doing. There were really helping us. They were working hard at this damned thing, and they were very good. And they have a lot more patience than we do, of course.

Paul Stillwell: Were the Gilbert Islands any part of this?

Admiral Crowe: No, they weren't. Never been there. I'd like to have gone to the Gilberts.

We did have a lot of contact, which we sought, with Australians who had done some dealing with the islands, and their arrangements for free association, whatever in the hell that was. Nobody could define it. [Chuckle] And we looked at a lot of examples around the world of these various—and when we came up with this sort of commonwealth. Of course, Virginia's a commonwealth. Kentucky's a commonwealth. But that seemed to satisfy people. There was a lot of room for imagination. We had a lot of innovative ideas. And then Haydn was pretty good about taking them.

Really, the sourest note in the whole thing was Hummel. He never came back after that sickness; he didn't want any part of Micronesia. He ultimately became our ambassador to China, and that's where I met him again when I was CinCPac and he was the ambassador to China.\* I stayed with him a lot in Peking when I went there.

Paul Stillwell: Did you have any liaison with the United Nations organization?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, we did. We had to testify. As trustee you make an annual report to the United Nations and, yes, we got heavily involved in that. And we went up when

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\* Arthur W. Hummel, Jr., served as U.S. ambassador to China from 1981 to 1985.

the annual report was made, Haydn and I did, and gave some supporting testimony of what the United States was doing to sever the trust, that we were working seriously to try and get rid of it. But yes, we had to keep them informed of what we were doing. And Haydn wanted to do that. He never resisted that, and, of course, we enjoyed going to the United Nations. And he felt they were very helpful in what our designs were.

On the other hand, the Micronesians were very canny. They weren't about to be easily swayed by other things. They knew exactly what they wanted, and they were stubborn. They kept their eye on the ball. They didn't get easily distracted from it. So they may have been primitive, but they were damned good negotiators; there wasn't any question about that. And I think that final result came out pretty good for them, really. And they're still a dole economy. [Chuckle] I don't think that there's much hope they'll become—tourism saves them. They sink or succeed with tourism, and that's about it.

On the other hand, we spoiled them. They can live with very little. But because of our giving them money everybody has to have an outboard motor, and everybody has to have a brand-new canoe and a brand-new boat, and lots of food. And they consider it their right.

It's sort of interesting. I met several Micronesians I liked, like Peter Coleman was essentially one. And they were fun and they were friendly. But they weren't very admirable, by our lights. That may be because we're at fault, not them. I mean, they probably have a better appreciation for life than we do. But they were not willing to work hard or do some of the things that we seem to treasure. On the other hand, their spirit of freedom and enjoyment and singing and dancing, I guess that was fine. I just felt they ought to take life a little more seriously, maybe. It was hard to keep their minds on the negotiating business. They never changed their positions, but they had trouble—they were as bored as we were at those meetings. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: It sounds as if there were no great momentous changes out of this whole process.

Admiral Crowe: No, there weren't. I don't think so. There have been now, though. The final outcome was momentous for them, because it did change the basic relationship.

Now, I was talking the Haydn the other day about it, and he's concerned that ultimately Palau is going to go back to Japan. Just through sheer weight of commerce and local sympathy, and so forth, that there just may not be a way we can keep them out of the Japanese—they're already in the Japanese commercial orbit, and we haven't done enough for Palau to get them headed toward us. All their ties—and, of course, a lot of them have Japanese blood, too. I don't think the other islands you can say that about but Palau. And Yap is, he said, just about the way it always was.

He said Saipan has changed terrifically in character, because of their affluence and because of these special dispensations that we have allowed trade to come in through Saipan that you can't do through San Francisco and so forth. That, incidentally, has some security implications as well. It's evidently easier to get into the United States through Saipan than it is through our regular immigration setup. But Haydn was trying to do something about that. And that was one of the things he was testifying on back here. I don't think there's a tremendous load coming through Saipan, because it's all too small and you'd notice immediately, but nevertheless it's a concern. But Saipan has become quite prosperous, and that means high-rise buildings and things they never had before.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I've heard that Guam has become a popular wedding and honeymoon site since Okinawa reverted to Japan.

Admiral Crowe: Very much. I was there one night in the airport in Guam when three—now, we didn't have 747s then, but what was the biggest plane? Three honeymoon planes arrived at midnight on the same airstrip at the same time, and the place was full of young brides and grooms. I mean, hundreds of them, all getting off these airplanes. And, of course, there are huge hotels on Guam. In Guam you can make a hell of a life.

They've had one disturbing thing happen. They never had any snakes. They do now. And it's not a poisonous snake, but it's some kind of green snake that got in through Singapore, and the damned thing evidently is one of the world's great breeders. And evidently the island's overrun with these dumb snakes. That's sort of a shame, because originally they didn't have any when I was there.

And the beach where we went ashore in Guam was still fairly well preserved, as the one in Saipan was. There were a lot of war mementos and signs of World War II in Saipan and Tinian when I was there. And, of course, we were in the islands in Kwajalein that had been overrun. I got to Tarawa once. I got to see Tarawa. Now, that *is* a Gilbert Island. That's not a Micronesian, but I did get to go down and see Tarawa on a special trip, just to satisfy my own curiosity. But those craters out there at Bikini, they are something. You can see them from the air. Just knocked the coral right in a huge bowl.\*

Paul Stillwell: From nuclear weapons tests.

Admiral Crowe: Atomic weapons. And that's a discrete problem in itself, the Bikini community. And that will never be sorted out.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I heard that the island gave its name to the bathing suit, and the idea was that the new two-piece suit was a real blast. [Laughter]

Admiral Crowe: Ah, yes. I was glad to remove myself from Micronesia, and I was stunned that I was actually selected for flag, and that was while I was in the Micronesian business. I was sort of surprised.

Paul Stillwell: A happy kind of stunned.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Well, I've discovered the easiest thing to get used to is a promotion. But I had had several classmates that had already made flag. I had never been selected early for any rank. And I assumed because of the character of my career that—on the other hand, I did have something happen the year before. Did I tell you about that, in the selection?

Paul Stillwell: I don't recall.

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\* In July 1946 a joint Army-Navy task force conducted tests at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands to determine the effects of atomic bombs on moored warships. Along with an array of U.S. ships were captured German and Japanese warships.

Admiral Crowe: The first year I was considered, I guess I was still in OP-61. I'll have to think about this; this is not in the book. I don't quite remember the sequence of events. I guess I was in the Micronesian business, because I got a call from Tom Bigley.\* He was the executive assistant to VCNO, a guy by the name of Russell.† And the flag board, the year before I made it, had just completed, and Bigley was selected on that flag board. But Tom asked me to come and see the VCNO. So I went to see him. Didn't know him very well. And he said, "I asked you to come because I headed this board, and you were the last man to drop out before we selected flag. I think your prospects for next year are very good." He didn't have to do that. He called me in and talked about it a few minutes. And he said, "You've got a sort of unusual record, but you've got a great record, and we came within a hair's breadth of selecting you. So," he said, "I think you should—don't do anything dramatic, here. You may make it yet." That was nice of him to do that.

Then it turned out that it wasn't that good [chuckle], according to Clarey.‡ I had to do a little adjusting. I didn't do as well that year as I'd done before. But, in any event, I always appreciated the fact that he had gone to the difficulty—and he didn't even know me, really. And an ironic thing happened, that one of the people that was selected got sick and died before he made his number. I thought his timing was terrible. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: Who was that?

Admiral Crowe: I think his name was Boyd, or something like that. I didn't know him. He was an aviator. But if he'd died a little earlier I might have made it before. [Chuckle] I had enough luck. I didn't need that. In the end luck played a huge part in my career; I had a lot of it. I was very lucky. [Chuckle]

But I was glad to leave the Micronesian business. I've had two things happen in my life that I got identified with that I didn't really ask for, and they both plagued me for

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\* Captain Thomas J. Bigley, USN.

† Admiral James S. Russell, USN, served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from 1 August 1958 to 1 November 1961. The individual Admiral Crowe was probably thinking of was Admiral Ralph W. Cousins, USN, who served as VCNO from 30 October 1970 to 1 September 1972.

‡ See *The Line of Fire*, page 86.

a long time. One was Micronesia, and the other was the Bahrain School. I had to worry about the Bahrain School for years after I left. I mentioned the new book, “*Amirs, Admirals, and—*”

Paul Stillwell: Dave Winkler’s book.\*

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I haven’t read it, but I’ve thumbed it.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you went from Micronesia to OP-60B. What did that involve?

Admiral Crowe: I was quite worried about where I was going to go. I didn’t know. A brand-new selection. I couldn’t complain or couldn’t control it, but I stayed on in the Micronesian Status Negotiations for several months. Then I got orders to 60B, which I was thrilled with, because I knew what it was about, and that brought me back into the mainstream of the Navy. I’d already had three years in 61, so to go back to 60, for me that was very—I was more than pleased with that. And Harry Train was there when I got there. He was shortly transferred. But he had been on the board. And he made admiral quite a bit ahead of me.† He was a golden boy. Out of my class I had a bunch of admirals ahead of me, but Train was behind me, and he was already an admiral.

Paul Stillwell: I think he got selected in 1971.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, and it was ’73 when I was selected. Train said, “I sat on the board,” and he said—he was on the board with Clarey. He said, “A little problem getting you selected, but,” he said, “once you got selected you’ve got a great—your experience is great for being an admiral. You’ve got real good prospects, because you’ve got things that they need in the admiral rank.” The problem was getting selected. Well, somebody told me, he said, “The hardest part is getting selected. After that, the competition’s not

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\* David F. Winkler, *Amirs, Admirals & Desert Sailors: Bahrain, the U.S. Navy, and the Arabian Gulf* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007).

† Rear Admiral Harry D. Train II, USN, was in the Naval Academy class of 1949.



that tough.” [Laughter] And there’s some truth in that. Anyway, Harry went to the trouble to tell me that he was surprised at the experience I’d had with some of the things.

But I was thrilled with coming back to 60B. I stepped into a really weird situation, though. I’m sorry I didn’t look at the book last night. I forget his name, who was 60. But he had had a lot of sickness in his family, and his mind was on getting out of the Navy, and he really wasn’t too enamored with the job. I think he felt he wasn’t going to get promoted, and it was time to leave. And things were always jumping around, and he wasn’t there, and he was there, and he didn’t take it very seriously. He knew that he was not fooling anybody. So in 60B I did a lot of things that I probably wouldn’t have done normally, as soon as I got my feet on the ground. I even went one day to the JCS as 06, I remember, because everybody was gone. I didn’t feel very comfortable. But 60B truly is a paperwork job, man alive. He handles all the paper for 60, and there’s a lot of it.

Then, also, as I became 60 I headed a board picking people for graduate education, junior people. I got mixed up in that and filed a big report. Had to go see the CNO about it, I remember. I went in to see him, and he thought it was a great report, but he never did anything about it. Of course, I’ve always been a supporter of graduate education, and I felt the nuclear people were doing themselves a disservice by keeping their people out of it, and that’s what I was saying in there. Of course, the CNO was Holloway, and he was nuclear-trained, and he wasn’t sure if that was right or wrong, but he at least listened.

But I did a whole series of weird things. Anything that was a ceremony that somebody had to go to that nobody wanted to go and was busy, I went, in 60B.

Paul Stillwell: What other weird things did you do?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I went to a lot of funerals as the Navy’s representative. But one of the things I did that was really helpful to me, I began to speak again. And, of course, OP-06, 60, they get a lot of invitations to speak, and they don’t accept but just a small number of them. And I would often go and give one of their speeches. And then I got in the speechwriting business for OP-06, when I was 60B. In fact, Talley wanted me to

write all his speeches.<sup>\*</sup> He needed help, I'll tell you, particularly on humor. I wasn't in a good place to judge him, but I really didn't think he was a very good 06. But that may have been too harsh. I'm not sure I was in a position where I could really judge.

It was weird. It seemed to me that 06—they had trouble finding people that were equipped to do the job, but it was still an important job and 06 seemed to get promoted a lot, from where I stood. So it was an important job with significance, but every time they started looking for an 06 they had trouble finding people that were equipped for it, and they still are having problems. They've had some people in 06 that really—well, one of the problems, of course, is the CNOs pick people they personally like, and in some of those communities they don't have people with either the kind of experience or the background they should have to do the job. But that's just a limitation that the Navy has to live with. But in my own experience—I'm trying to think of people who have been 06. I thought Admiral Griffin—well, he was 60; I don't think he was 06. Wendt was 06, and he was promoted.<sup>†</sup> Well, Griffin was, too, but for a different reason. There was no real effort to prepare a group of people to be 06. It was sort of hit and miss. There were some around that might be selected or might not.

Now, when I was selected for 06, all my competitors, funny things happened to them. But there were a group of them that could be 06. There were three or four that would have been more than qualified by their background and so forth by then. It just so happens that some peculiar things prevented it. So this whole business is really a crapshoot, and luck does have a lot to do with it. Timing has got everything, standing in the right place at the right time.

Now, I wanted to get out of 60B. It wasn't that I was dissatisfied with being 60B so much as that I felt that I had never had, really, a joint job. For example, I had never been an executive assistant to a big shot. I had never been in SecDef. I was considered to go to the NSC when they sent Jonathan Howe instead of me to work for Kissinger.<sup>‡</sup> When I was 60B I was considered for going over there, to the White House, and that

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<sup>\*</sup> Vice Admiral George C. Talley, Jr., USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy) from February 1973 to February 1975.

<sup>†</sup> Vice Admiral Waldemar F. A. Wendt, USN, served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Plans and Policy) from April 1967 to June 1968.

<sup>‡</sup> Rear Admiral Jonathan T. Howe, USN. Henry A. Kissinger was the President's national security adviser, 1969-73 and later served as Secretary of State, 1973-77.

made me do some more thinking about it, that it sure would be good to get some jobs like that. But I didn't have a lot in my portfolio, and I was looking for something to widen it.

Paul Stillwell: What were some of the issues that you dealt with during this paperwork jungle in 60B?

Admiral Crowe: Well, of course, we were in the plans business. That's what we were doing. And it was just a constant stream of plans being reworked, and particularly being reworked in conjunction with the JCS. And that just seemed to require all kinds of reading and trying to refine, and check what we were doing or not doing. An awful lot of nuclear business came up when I was in 60B, and that was the first time I really began to get into that area. We had a section in 60 that was nuclear weapons.

Paul Stillwell: Was this dealing with the JSTPS at Omaha?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, it was.\* It was dealing in two or three things. It was dealing with the JSTPS, it was dealing with arms control. I had never had anything to do with arms control before. And in 60—it was really a 60's job, but as I say he didn't—

And then oh, by the way, while I was there this man left and a real hotshot came in; Jack Shanahan became 60.† And, man, he enlivened the whole place. It was different under Jack, because he had a terribly active mind. Jesus, if he'd have had an education he'd have really been something. But his mind was always working, and he was big on contacts. Spent a lot of time on the telephone holding contacts and selling our shop. He was a good 60. He was great. He was not deep. It was fascinating to watch his mind work, because when a problem would come up Jack Shanahan could usually come through with a pretty good solution, or at least a good idea of what we do about it right now, and he could do it pretty quickly. But once he did that, that solved that problem. He'd never go back to it. And that may have been a short-term fix that wasn't good for a

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\* JSTPS – Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff.

† Rear Admiral John J. Shanahan, Jr., USN, Director, Strategic Plans, Policy, and Nuclear Systems Division. The predecessor whom Admiral Crowe was probably referring to was Rear Admiral Billy D. Holder, USN.

long-term problem. He didn't want to deal with it. Once he'd made the decision, "Get it off my desk, let's don't hear any more about it."

Paul Stillwell: Do you remember any examples?

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't. I'm trying desperately to think, but I do remember that comment on Jack. He was not big on nuances. And once he made a decision, he just didn't want to deal with it anymore. Of course, the reason I don't remember is that we just had so damn much stuff coming through there every day. It was just huge, cataclysmic.

Paul Stillwell: How long was a workday?

Admiral Crowe: Oh, very long. I never had a job in OpNav that had short workdays. I'd get out of there at 7:00-7:30 at night. But I felt that of all the things we were doing the nuclear and the arms control was probably the most important. And that's when I first got mixed up in our nuclear plans, and also what a vast inventory we had. It's incredible. And how that was targeted, and the inflexibility of the SIOP.\* I can remember huge arguments over the SIOP. And, of course, we had a vested interest in all this because we were afraid of Omaha and what the Air Force would like to do to us. We really assumed the Air Force's goal in life was to knock us out of the nuclear business. And I suspect there's a lot of truth in that. We didn't like the way the Air Force was treating us.

As 60B I had to make a trip out to Omaha. My friend Jack Nicholson was in Omaha.† He wasn't having much luck, though, protecting our participation in the targeting. I was supposed to go out there and convince that guy at SAC that we should be more listened to. Well, they sent the wrong man. Anybody with just two stars didn't impress him very much. I don't know what he'd have listened to, but he wasn't about to listen to me as 60B. And I remember Nicholson wasn't any help. But we had a running battle.

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\* SIOP – Single Integrated Operational Plan, which specified the targeting for U.S. nuclear weapons.

† Captain John H. Nicholson, USN.

The Air Force literally did the targeting for everybody. It's changed now, and I had something to do with that when I was Chairman. I changed it. But boy, back when I was 60B it was terrible. From our standpoint it was really bad. We just didn't have a voice. And they weren't satisfied with that. They thought we had too much voice. We thought we had too little.

Paul Stillwell: Well, Admiral Burke had really forced the Navy contingent into that planning staff.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Burke was scared that would happen, but even that didn't open up the planning staff. It was 80% Air Force and about 10% Army and 10% Navy. Of course, just the sheer numbers the Air Force had working on that stuff and their intelligence. Of course, the real villain of the piece was LeMay. LeMay established for so long that it wasn't anybody's business but his, and it was hard to break that even after he left. Because I'm sure what the staff was telling SAC, "Well, LeMay did it this way, and if you give up on this you're breaking the mold that LeMay set." I ran into that all my life in various places. So that SAC himself was under great pressure. But we finally got stuff changed a little bit with the JCS actually taking an active role in it. But as 60B we were just fighting a tidal wave, it seemed to me. And, of course at that point in our lives we really weren't very active or very welcome in arms control. It was something we had to do, because the politicians seemed to be interested in it, but it didn't seem like, first of all, a very good idea and, secondly, it didn't seem particularly productive for a military officer to be talking about how we were going to destroy weapons. That's not what we do; we *build* weapons.

But that's when I first ran into the arms control versus Polaris argument. I remember the first day that it really dawned on me what the hell we were talking about. It wasn't my idea; somebody had to explain it to me—how the seaborne deterrent actually helps arms control, while the land-based deterrent didn't. As I say, I ran into that as 60B. I did quite a bit of work with the nuclear people, and sort of enjoyed it. But once we got that argument, using that argument around the Pentagon was—in fact, it was interesting to convince the CNO about that business.

Paul Stillwell: How would you explain that usefulness, about the sea-based deterrent?

Admiral Crowe: Well, the point is that if you've got a submarine full of missiles—well, let's start the other way around. If you're land based you build half a dozen missiles. The other guy says, "Well, it takes three missiles to knock out one; we'll build 18." And you say, "Oh my God, the guy built 18," so we go build 25 more. Then he goes and gets 75 more. But that doesn't work with a submarine you can't find. You can build all you want to and you don't know where to shoot them. There are no incentives to keep doing that. It's throw your money out the—and yet they're not on U.S. soil; they're out in the middle of the ocean. And they threaten you. I mean, they can fire them at me, and I can't shoot them at him, because I don't know where he is. This doesn't drive an arms race like the land-based type.

Now, we went around for years without argument. Nobody ever looked at it that way. And then, when we came up with that argument, it made so much sense. But, of course, by then we had so many vested interests in the business that didn't want to change. No matter how much sense our argument made, it was immaterial to them. We're for land based and you're for sea based. To hell with the arguments.

But that was when we first began to win the battle, when we came up with that argument. People that were neutral could see the wisdom of what we were saying.

Paul Stillwell: Had Admiral La Rocque's organization become a factor by that time?\*

Admiral Crowe: No. I was working with LaRocque then. La Rocque had 64.<sup>†</sup> He was head of the foreign assistance branch, and 60 did a lot of work with La Rocque. He worked for 06, but nevertheless I worked with La Rocque's people quite a bit. And I can remember doing things with LaRocque. He drove me over to BuPers one day and was

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\* Rear Admiral Gene R. La Rocque, USN, retired from active duty in 1972 and subsequently became the head of the Center for Defense Information in Washington, D.C. The organization is noted for having views different from those of the Defense Department.

<sup>†</sup> Admiral Crowe apparently is here referring to a previous tour of duty in the late 1960s, because Admiral La Rocque had already retired before Crowe was selected for rear admiral and reported for this tour of duty in 1973.

giving me all this advice on my career. But then he left that job for reasons that—I think he made Moorer mad, I don't know what. Then he left the Navy immediately and became a thorn in our side. Moorer detested him.

Paul Stillwell: I can understand that.

Admiral Crowe: And it's curious that years later Shanahan took over LaRocque's outfit. I was surprised that Shanahan did that. But I think he changed the character of it quite a bit.

Paul Stillwell: And Gene Carroll was involved in that too.\*

Admiral Crowe: Gene Carroll, yes. Gene Carroll was my 06B when I was 06. And incidentally, a very smart man. He wasn't the world's most tactful man, and sometimes it was difficult to frame his arguments, but he was a very bright guy. I tried hard to get him further promoted, but I failed.

It was also when I first met Powell Carter, 60B.<sup>†</sup> Then I later had Powell Carter when I was Chairman.<sup>‡</sup> There's a man I really admire, Powell Carter. But I ran across him when I was 60B. He ran the nuclear section down there as a captain. Boy, he was something else. You talk about cold-hearted. The only thing that impressed him was the merits or demerits of the argument. He didn't like to get into this stuff: "Well, the Air Force is doing so-and-so." He was not into that. He was into: Is the argument right or wrong?

And when he did his homework, he did his homework. He'd come in with a plan that he had read and, you know, it would be a lot of gibberish, and 45 pages of this and 50 pages of that. And Powell could narrow it down into a very small window very quickly. He was really good. [Chuckle] But he was very humble. He was not an ego—he wasn't into that. In fact it hurt him a little bit. He would defer sometimes when he shouldn't have. He'd say, "Well, I've told you the facts. If you don't believe them, do what you want." But he wouldn't sometimes force his argument. But I always thought his arguments were so well reasoned that he usually won because of that. He didn't have to force it much. But anyway, you could depend on him. Jim Holloway is a big believer in Powell Carter. But that's when I first met

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\* Rear Admiral Eugene J. Carroll, Jr., USN (Ret.).

<sup>†</sup> Captain Powell F. Carter, Jr., USN.

<sup>‡</sup> As a vice admiral Carter served as Director of the Joint Staff from June 1985 to August 1987.

him, in the nuclear business there. And it was unusual, because up until then we'd never had a nuclear submariner. They didn't have time to do that kind of thing. And there was Powell in that business, and he was very good.

The arms control business was just getting off the ground when I was 60B, and I began to meet people that had participated in it. They felt a little about their careers the way I felt about mine, that they had been sidetracked into the arms-control business and it would never go any further. I guess there's probably a lot of truth in it. But it impressed me enough that when I was 06 I tried very hard to structure things so that it didn't kill their careers, and give them some career pattern for the arms control business.

There's where you really need patience, in the arms control. Unlike most negotiations—you know, usually you settle on the principle and then tell the underlings to work it out. It's the exact opposite in the arms control business. You've got to settle on the nitty-gritty—how much am I going to see or not see?—before you begin to build the rest of the infrastructure. But everybody in arms control thought they'd been thrown away. I don't think it was that way when I left the Navy, but it sure was for a few years there. And to get anybody to volunteer for it was—eh! Couldn't find them.

Paul Stillwell: People want to go where the promotions have been.

Admiral Crowe: That's right, exactly. I can remember when Goldwater-Nichols was being argued, that the nuclear submariners—Kin McKee was running Rickover's old shop, and he came over and explained to me in great detail that this jointness just wouldn't work in the submarine business.\* They didn't have time for it. Career patterns were filled up. There was no slot for jointness. And that the nuclear submariners didn't want it, they couldn't cooperate, and they would have to veto the whole thing. And while he was doing that, every junior officer in the nuclear submarine business was calling, and asking, "How I can get a joint billet?" [Laughter] Everything McKee was saying, the junior officers didn't believe for a minute. And they didn't believe it, and they were

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\* Admiral Kinnaird R. McKee, USN, served as Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion, 1982-88. Goldwater-Nichols was enacted in 1986.



right. Junior officers and mid-range officers, they see where the promotions are, and they divine it very quickly.

That's the reason I liked 60B. I felt that 60B is in the mainstream of stuff. You know, I knew the CNO, and so forth. And 60B was new, and not like I knew more because of *Pueblo*, but anyway I was part of the main bloodstream in OpNav, and that made 60B bearable.

But then along came the opportunity to go to OSD. I relieved Bigley twice. I relieved him in OSD and then later on as Middle East Force. But, of course, he was trying like hell to get out of OSD [chuckle], and they didn't want to let him go until he could find a relief. So he came down and talked to people to get me to go up to OSD, which I was fairly amenable to doing. Shanahan and I talked about it at some length. He said he could handle it down there, and he thought it would be a better—to have that experience would be worth my career. Shanahan was very good about that. He was not a selfish man. He immediately said, "If you want to go, and you think it's wise, go ahead. I'll take care of it; I can handle it."

Paul Stillwell: So your tour in 60B was about 15 months.

Admiral Crowe: Well, yes. I was going to say 18, but it probably was a little short of 18. And then I had the same problem when I got up there. Just like Bigley, I wanted to leave. [Laughter] And I had trouble finding a relief.

Paul Stillwell: Why did you want to get out of it?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I wanted to go to sea. Well, let's talk about it; we'll get to that.

In any event, Shanahan was very helpful. I'd never met Mort Abramowitz, who was the boss up there in OSD, so I went up and interviewed with him.\* He agreed to take me if the Navy would let me go. He was a deputy assistant secretary, and I think my term was "director," or something, of the East Asia branch of ISA. I forget my title. But

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\* Morton I. Abramowitz, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American, East Asian, and Pacific Affairs, 1974-78.

it was a whole new world for me. Now we *were* into the civilian staff business, and I'd never been in OSD. I'd never worked for an assistant secretary of anything that was a civilian. But I had the experience and training. Oh, I say never—I'd worked for Haydn Williams. But not in the defense establishment.

Paul Stillwell: Well, you'd also had the Asia section back in the late '60s.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And that was what qualified me for going with Abramowitz. That's what he paid a lot of attention to. I don't think he paid much attention to the degree, because he felt he was as well educated as any Ph.D, and he was justified in thinking that, he's such a bright guy.

It was a little tough getting used to it at first. But some terribly interesting things happened to me up there working for Mort Abramowitz. First of all, Mort himself was interesting to watch. He's one of these people that is not only energetic and smart, but genuinely interested in changing the world. I mean, his world, whatever it is. He thought deeply about things, and if he thought it was in the best interest of the country he was willing to fight for it. And he was willing to tell anybody what he thought; he didn't give a damn who they were. The SecDef then was Schlesinger, the first time I ever met Schlesinger, and I went with Abramowitz up to see Schlesinger, whom I did not know.\* And I was suitably impressed by being in SecDef's office, etc. And he was getting ready to take a trip out to Asia. And Abramowitz called him by his first name; I thought that was interesting. He said, "Now, Jim, you've got to realize what these people think of you out there. They think you've got a whole pocketful of nuclear weapons and are ready to throw them at anybody. They really don't have a very high opinion of you." [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Your jaw dropped?

Admiral Crowe: Yes. I thought, "Wow, this was an interesting way to talk about it." But that's the way Abramowitz was. He would analyze the situation, and he felt, and rightfully so, that these were land mines that Schlesinger ought to watch out for, and he

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\* James R. Schlesinger served as Secretary of Defense from 2 July 1973 to 19 November 1975.

was going to make sure Schlesinger knew. And it didn't bother Schlesinger at all. He'd sit there smoking his cigarette, dripping it all over his tie. [Chuckle] That was one of the first things that happened to me up there, and that tone colored everything from then on: that Mort wanted a good analysis of what the hell was going on, and, "I'll pass it up the line, and if there's something we can do we'll go see the Secretary of Defense about it." And Schlesinger really liked Mort. He took a lot of nonsense from Mort. Schlesinger was like that himself, and he appreciated Mort. He appreciated Mort's ability. That was all very interesting to me.

I later got mixed up with the deputy secretary, who was Clements, whom I didn't think was a very—he was sort of a wild man.\* Clements took a trip, which was his honeymoon. [Chuckle] Mort was supposed to go, but Mort had another deal on that he thought was more important, so he backed out and sent me. I forget this woman's name.† She was from Texas, a very wealthy family. She'd been married before; so had he. And, of course, he was an oilman, a developer at Citgo. And they got married, and the next day we started on this trip, taking a defense trip. Of course, he'd been living with her for—there wasn't anything unique about climbing in her bed. But still, we were all off all together on his honeymoon. [Laughter] And I didn't even know him. There were about seven or eight of us on the trip, including the State Department people and some more working people.

Paul Stillwell: Where did you go?

Admiral Crowe: It turned out to be a rather interesting trip. I subsequently had some things to do with Clements later on, in Bahrain. But we went through Hawaii, and then we went to the Philippines. And then we went down to Australia, to Northwest Cape. Now, that was the most interesting part. I didn't think I'd ever get to Northwest Cape. Went to Northwest Cape, went to Alice Springs, went to Canberra. We took a hell of a trip through Australia, following Clements and his bride around, and then flew back to Hawaii and home.

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\* William P. Clements, Jr., served as Deputy Secretary of Defense from 1973 to 1977.

† Rita Crocker Bass, whose first marriage ended in divorce in 1974, married Clements on 5 May 1975.

Paul Stillwell: Did you do any business on the trip?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he did, but he wasn't very much interested. Well, in the first place he had a short attention span, and he didn't like a lot of hoopla. He'd go in and these people, and he'd have an agenda and he'd bring it up, and that was it, and let's get the hell out of here, and let's keep going. It wasn't a long trip. I think it was less than two weeks, maybe a week and a half. We were moving pretty fast. I forget what energized him to do it, but I think it was strictly indoctrination. I don't remember us trying to achieve anything of great moment.

On the other hand, we did go to Northwest Cape for a specific reason. They were going to be renewing antennas down there, and there was a big fight over, number one, whether Australia would let us do it, and, number two, whether it was justifiable to fight over it. He wanted to know more about: What the hell do they do, and is this thing worth taking money out of the bank on? And I appreciated that he wanted to actually see it. Incidentally, the highest radio towers in the Southern Hemisphere.

Paul Stillwell: I did not know that.

Admiral Crowe: Huge. And they have to change those antennas on those things. And they go up in the air about 1,500 feet [chuckle], or something like that. And they were our whole strategic submarine communications for that part of the world. And you talk about out on the end of the limb, Northwest Cape really is in the boondocks. I think the nearest town is 800 miles away [Chuckle] That's an exaggeration. Anyway, it's very remote. And we had quite a contingent of Americans there to take care of this communications station. And then it was still under Australia, so there were Australian officers there that ran the place, and we worked with them on our towers. One of the greatest fishing places in the world. I mean, they just throw the line over and pull it in and there's some big fish on the damned thing. They even had a racetrack there, I remember. But still, it was the end of the world.

Then we went to Perth, and then we went to Alice Springs. Saw that big rock from the air. Never got on it. Now, I subsequently went to Australia quite a bit, but that was my first trip. That's when I collected that hat right there.

Paul Stillwell: I see.

Admiral Crowe: Can see that one hat. It was on that trip.

Paul Stillwell: Like a bush hat.

Admiral Crowe: Yes, well, that's what they call a cobberneggars (phonetic), and that's an Australian Army hat. A general gave me that. That's when I said, "You know, I'm going to be traveling a lot. It would be sort of nice to collect hats." That's the first hat I collected, and it was on that trip.

Paul Stillwell: The first of thousands?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, over 1,000, which I gave to the museum in Oklahoma.

Alice Springs was absolutely fascinating. I'd heard of Alice Springs all my life, and I knew about our unusual communications situation in Alice Springs, and we got to visit all that. For me it was terribly educational. I had been to Australia on the *Wahoo*. Perth, the only place I'd been. But Alice Springs is, of course, unique. All of Australia is two roads, one north-south, the other east-west, and Alice Springs is right there, 500 or 600 miles from anything else. And it's still one of the hubs of aborigines. The place is full of aborigines. They do weird things there, but it's a weird place. The environment is totally clear. There isn't a puff of pollution around Alice Springs, at least as it was then. And I remember standing there at night watching the Southern Cross, all those stars, absolutely marvelous. And the people that live there, at least visited for short periods, they really loved it. But it is isolated. But not as isolated as Northwest Cape. [Chuckle] Ooee.

Northwest Cape, are you familiar with it from the World War II standpoint?

Paul Stillwell: No.

Admiral Crowe: The Australians and the British mounted small submarine attacks on Singapore that started at Northwest Cape. Our submarines coming out of Brisbane and Perth would drop by there and fuel just before they went in to cross Indonesia up to Japan. So Northwest Cape has been around for a while, and it's been in the American lexicon for a while, because it did have some World War II history. But that didn't do much to build it up. It just was very small. And, of course, Australia is a great big place with just a few people in it. I think there are less than 40 million people live there, and that place is as big as our country, and they're spread out pretty—I don't know what it is now, but it's all on the coast. Crocodile Dundee is the only guy inland [chuckle], fighting crocodiles and screwing beautiful women. I remember that from the movie.\*

Australia for me was the best part of the trip. We went to the opera house; I can remember that night, in our short stay in Sydney.

Paul Stillwell: I just read in the paper this week that the lights in Sydney were turned off, as a symbol for Greenpeace.

Admiral Crowe: I read that too. To save energy. That's something they do.

Now, we actually have friend in Sydney. I don't know, maybe he's not a friend now, because the friend we had was an Oklahoma City girl that married him. Now they're divorced. But he's a very successful man in Sydney. His name was Coote, and he owns a chain of jewelry stores in Sydney and in Australia. And when I was Chairman every time we went by Australia we had a lot to do with them, because his wife was friends of my uncle and my aunt in Oklahoma, and the Cootes would entertain us and take care of us. A very interesting man. But evidently they had enough trouble in their marriage they got divorced afterwards.

And when there was a little hubbub a year or two ago on the price of something that we were going to raise—we were going to put a tariff on something coming out of Australia—I got a call from Tony Coote, asking me if there was anything I could do

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\* Crocodile Dundee was the title character in a comedy-adventure movie released in 1986.

about defeating that thing. There wasn't much I could do. [Chuckle] But, in any event, this trip with Clements was the first time I got to Australia.

We also went to New Zealand. And that was the first time I'd ever been briefed by our Antarctic people, who had a regular station there to support the Antarctic.

Paul Stillwell: Christchurch.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. And I found that for me it was just an educational trip, the whole damned thing. And, of course, Clements was his own dynamo. He didn't listen to briefings very long, and he would come to snap judgments on what should be our policy. "We don't need to hear any more about that." So I don't think I was much help to him on the trip. But I found the trip very interesting.

Paul Stillwell: Well, he had his own agenda for that trip.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. Exactly. Exactly. And he was everything you expect from an oilman. You know what I mean? A man of action, a Texan, very successful, full of shit. [Laughter] And talked like it. He had that Texas accent. And he had a good sense of humor. He was a fun guy too.

Paul Stillwell: Well, I got the impression he was more interested in the business side of the Defense Department than strategy.

Admiral Crowe: That's his job, yes. But he kept sticking his nose into places where it didn't belong, I thought. [Chuckle] It was interesting that he and Schlesinger worked together, because they are nothing alike, absolutely nothing. Clements may have a condescending attitude, but he was a piker alongside Schlesinger, who didn't think anybody in the world was as smart as he was. [Laughter]

Then when I got back one of my interesting experiences is I was a note taker one day when Schlesinger met with Lee Kuan Yew, the ruler of Singapore, who thought he

was the smartest man in the world too.\* And those two guys, bumping off on each other, it was fascinating. All I was doing was taking notes. But neither one of them was giving an inch to the other. Of course, they are who they are. They convinced me they may be the smartest men in the world. But Lee Kwan Yew was terribly bright. But it was the first time I ever met him. Now, I met him some more when I was CinCPac, but the first time I ever met him was there working for Schlesinger.

I don't know if Schlesinger ever spoke to me. I don't remember once Schlesinger speaking to me. But now, today, we're friendly, very friendly. But then I just was an appurtenance, and I would go in there and listen and take these notes. And if Abramowitz was there he'd do it.

We got quite mixed up in the Korean thing, and Abramowitz got in all kinds of trouble, because he wanted to pull out of Korea altogether, and that ran against everybody else. Here we were fighting, and that later was held against Abramowitz when he had confirmation hearings for being an ambassador. He was criticized heavily for wanting to come out of Korea.

I made several trips to Korea and attended the annual meetings that the United States had with the Koreans. And I became quite well known in the military in Korea, which helped me a great deal when I was CinCPac. I hardly met anybody I hadn't already known, when I was CinCPac.

Paul Stillwell: What was Abramowitz's rationale for trying to pull out?

Admiral Crowe: Well, he felt strongly that—now, when I say “pull out,” we're just talking about the troops. He felt strongly that, first of all, it was a big problem for us. And, secondly, that we had now built up South Korea to the point where they could defend themselves. They would never admit it, but that didn't mean they couldn't. And particularly that we would continue to give them air and naval support, and that the country was not in jeopardy. And all we were doing was risking our people up there. And to have, you know, the “trip-wire” argument. To put 30,000 men in a country just to be a trip wire, he didn't feel it was worth it. Now, he'd actually written a lot on Korea.

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\* Lee Kuan Yew was the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, from 1956 to 1990.



He knows Korea very well, although he never was the ambassador to Korea. And he just felt strongly.

One of the problems with that damned thing is, once you do what we've done in Korea, put a division there, in the first place, Korea thinks they own the division. And in a sense they do. There's a term for, when you hire people into your organization from Korea. In any event, that division had homesteaded in Korea, and it really was very worthless to us anywhere else. They depended so much on Korean labor and Korean organizations to support them, if they went anywhere else they were almost dysfunctional. And so what we had done is, we were essentially devoting a division to Korea that was not a division in the U.S. Army. [Chuckle] And that's true. Abramowitz was right about that. And we still do that. And he's right about: They can defend themselves. And I got so tired of Korea saying: "Now, look, we understand what you want, and in five years it will be all set." And the next year: "In five years we'll be all set." And the next year: "Just give us five more years." They had no intention of ever letting us come out of there.

Now, it had some risks, and it took some leadership. And we couldn't find anybody else that was willing to do it. And I think keeping a division there now, given what we're dealing with, it may have some relevance now that we've got North Korea acting up. But for years that division—

And, of course, one of the problems was: Where would the division go if it came home? Now, that was a genuine objection. And the Army was scared to death that if they did it and they came home and didn't have a place to go, they would be mustered out of the inventory. Now, that wasn't the kind of consideration that made much weight with Abramowitz. But that was an Army consideration.

Paul Stillwell: Did he envision that South Korea should have a status sort of like Japan?

Admiral Crowe: No, I don't think so. He wanted South Korea to be an independent country, and let's slowly wean our way out. Let's get out of there. Now, that attitude is quite prevalent in the State Department in many ways. But I've always felt that way, sort of, about Japan. Now, Japan wasn't willing to spend on a military like South Korea. But,

on the other hand, when you get in these places you say it's for your own self-interest, and if that's true, okay, stay there. But oh, boy, these other guys are not interested in your self-interest. They're interested in other things. You know, the carrier we've got home-ported in Japan, they think they own that.

Paul Stillwell: I thought it was ironic when that carrier was named *Midway*, and the Japanese lavished great attention on it.\* [Chuckle]

Admiral Crowe: Yes, strange things happen.

Well, in a sense, Mort Abramowitz really influenced me more than he even realizes. I had lunch with him the other day, and we talked about it a little bit. He didn't realize what a watershed that was to me. I mean, just to see how OSD operates, and to see how a big-time State Department guy operates, and a man with some courage. And Abramowitz did have courage. He still does. He says what he damned well thinks. And he's proved to be a hell of a good ambassador. He was ambassador in Thailand, ambassador in Turkey. I don't think he was ambassador anywhere else, was he?

Paul Stillwell: I don't know.

Admiral Crowe: He ran INR in State for a while.<sup>†</sup> Boy, he shocked everybody there. He was a hell of a good INR guy. He told it like it was. They'd have had a hell of a time getting him to roll over on WMD, I'll tell you, if he'd been running it.<sup>‡</sup> But they made him a career ambassador before he retired. He's got a think tank of his own, which is very high grade. Or did; I don't know if he's in it now.

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\* The U.S. Navy defeated the Japanese Navy in the June 1942 Battle of Midway. The namesake aircraft carrier *Midway* (CV-41) and her escorts arrived in Yokosuka, Japan, on 5 October 1973 to begin the first overseas home-porting of a complete carrier task group. The forward deployment was the result of an accord arrived at on 31 August 1972 between the United States and Japan. In August 1991, after nearly 18 years of service out of the Japanese port, the *Midway* left Yokosuka for the last time and was replaced by the *Independence* (CV-62) as the forward-deployed carrier.

<sup>†</sup> INR - The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

<sup>‡</sup> WMD – weapons of mass destruction.

But my admiration for him steadily increased. At first I thought maybe he was scamming us all, but he wasn't. And he was a member of the school: "You tell it like it is, and you get away with it." Not everybody can get away with it.

Then, of course, before that tour ended, Rumsfeld came in, and I met Rumsfeld.\* I did not like him. We had a Navy guy that was on his kitchen cabinet, Staser Holcomb.† And Rumsfeld, I think, trusted Staser Holcomb and made him a part of his decision-making process. Rumsfeld wasn't there very long, and it became obvious to me that Rumsfeld's a very strong ego—and to Abramowitz, too; they didn't get along very well. He just shut out the rest of OSD. He wasn't seeking advice anywhere. I made a trip with him to Hawaii for one of those annual meetings with the Japanese, but I was a useless appendage. I mean, he wasn't interested in what I had to say. He was very imperious with the Japanese leaders.

I did sit in on the meetings, and he would say, "Well, I don't suffer fools lightly." But when you're talking to the Foreign Minister or the Defense Minister of Japan you still treat him with some care and realize you're messing around here. But Rumsfeld was curt, and he enjoyed more than anything else upsetting the traditions of the military. As far as I could see, he had very little regard for career military. And I didn't particularly like him.

Also in 60B was when—let me think about this a minute. Some other things happened in my life. I think that's when Vietnam fell. Is that about right?

Paul Stillwell: Yes. It was in the spring of '75.

Admiral Crowe: That affected me two or three ways. First of all, I got mixed up in the thing because we sponsored a Vietnamese family, and I was pretty well positioned to track him and to contact him and so forth, because I was in the East Asia section of OSD. I got hold of my opposite number there and found this family in the Philippines and offered to sponsor him. Then they came through Arkansas, and then to Alexandria, and lived with us for four or five months, in our house, all seven of them.

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\* Donald H. Rumsfeld served as Secretary of Defense from 20 November 1975 to 20 January 1977. He later held the same post again from 2001 to 2006.

† Captain M Staser Holcomb, USN.

Paul Stillwell: What was the name of that family?

Admiral Crowe: Dinh Manh Hung. I always called him Hung, and what a great man. He was a commodore in the Vietnamese Navy. And he was my opposite number when I was senior advisor to the riverine force. And he was the riverine force. We were good friends, and then, I say, he actually ended up in our home with his mother, his wife, and four children.

The second thing was, of course, when Vietnam stopped Stockdale came home.<sup>\*</sup> That was my good friend, and I had a lot to do with Jim Stockdale then. Of course, that was a big deal that he was released. And then I had some opportunities to talk to him and see him. On the day he got his Congressional Medal—I didn't go to the service, because they didn't invite anybody, but Shirley and I had dinner that night with him and his family, the day of the medal-giving. I made lots of effort and opportunities to try and see Jim, to get his impressions of how he was doing.

He went directly to San Diego, after the leave and everything. He and I talked about that, whether it was a good idea. He had charge of the carrier-borne ASW, I guess, I think is what he had. He wasn't very satisfied with the job. He really wasn't very interested, though, in Navy jobs, to be frank about it. But we reestablished our relationship. And also some worries we had with Sybil. Sybil was sort of coming back from a period of depression.

Then I was there when the huge exit from Saigon took place, and I can remember being down in the command center the night that we evacuated Saigon.<sup>†</sup> Schlesinger was there. Holloway was the acting Chairman that night. Brown was someplace out, I don't know where.<sup>‡</sup> But it was quite a crowd in the command center there, listening to Gayler.<sup>§</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> Captain James B. Stockdale, USN, Crowe's classmate, was released from prison in North Vietnam in February 1973.

<sup>†</sup> On 29-30 April 1975, as Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, was being overrun by the North Vietnamese, U.S. Navy and Marine Corps helicopters evacuated almost 9,000 people. Included were 1,373 Americans, 6,422 of other nationalities, plus 989 Marines inserted to cover the operation. Graham Martin, U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, was among the last to leave from the rooftop of the American embassy.

<sup>‡</sup> General George S. Brown, USAF, served as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1 July 1974 to 20 June 1978.

<sup>§</sup> Admiral Noel A. M. Gayler, USN, served as Commander in Chief Pacific from 1 September 1972 to 30 August 1976. His oral history is in the Naval Institute collection.

What was the name of the guy in Vietnam, Army general? They all used first names that night. But I can remember—

Paul Stillwell: The ambassador was Graham Martin.

Admiral Crowe: Yes. He wasn't on the circuit, though. The circuit to the command center was all military. I think the guy's name was Hugo, or something like that. I may have it wrong. He was a major general in the Army.

A funny thing happened that night. I've always remembered it. He was on the circuit, talking, and he said, "I have to leave now." There were several people in the room, Army people, that knew where he was talking from. Evidently it was six floors below the surface. I didn't know that, but they did. And he said, "We're evacuating people from the airport now." This was at the airport. And he said that, "We're under fire now. I'm going up to oversee the evacuation." He got off the circuit. Gayler came on. "Hugo!"—something like that. I don't know what he called him. And another voice came on and said, "I'm sorry; the general's not here, Admiral. He just went up to see the helicopters that are doing some of the last-minute evacuation." And he said, "I'll get the general." And one of the Army officers said, "The general is six floors up, for Chrissakes." We wait and we wait and we wait, and finally Hugo came on. And he says—you won't believe this, but Gayler said, "Tell those people to keep their heads down, Hugo." [Laughter] Hugo could have shot Admiral Gayler. And if he didn't, several people in that command center would have. [Laughter] So bad. The temptation to butt in is so great when things like that are happening.

In any event, we sat there all evening as they successfully got out of the airport, and then they started evacuating them out of the embassy. And then Schlesinger was fired after that.

Also, I was there in the Cambodian thing, when they seized the *Mayaguez*.<sup>\*</sup> I didn't have a hell of a lot to do with it. I did a little bit, but not a hell of a lot. That was handled by the JCS pretty well. Or, I shouldn't say well [chuckle] but handled.

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<sup>\*</sup> On 12 May 1975 a gunboat of the Cambodian Communist regime, the Khmer Rouge, fired upon and seized the American containership *Mayaguez* while she was en route from Hong Kong to Sattahip,

Also, my first doing business in a heavy way with the Philippines. We were quite hooked up. That's when I first met Eddie Ramos.\* And because of his West Point connection we became very friendly, and we've been friends ever since. He even came by. I came by and saw him in London when he was head of the Philippine Government and came through London. I went down and had dinner with him and so forth. And then I had a lot to do with him when I was CinCPac later on.

We were even then talking very seriously about what were we going to do about Subic Bay.† Is it possible for us to stay there forever? Of course, Mort didn't have a fixed view. He just wanted to look at the problem, and should we be talking about leaving Subic? And, of course, I was always still looking, futilely, but still looking at Singapore. I never got over my Singapore bias. I always thought we should be in Singapore. But we didn't do much, except I made several trips to the Philippines. And we did get rid of Sangley while I was there, much to the—some people didn't like that, but the Navy was getting too small. We just can't handle all that. And we did have Subic, so we chose to give up Sangley and hang in in Subic.‡

I thought it was appropriate that the job I was in was a Navy job, because in East Asia the kind of problems that came up were mainly Navy. Not all Navy. Korea's always an exception, because they had a four-star general sitting in the middle of Korea.

I then began to do a lot of business with the Air Force in that job, primarily because of Korea. I got to visit the DMZ for the first time that I'd ever done that.

Something I hadn't mentioned earlier. When I was in the Micronesian business with Haydn Williams I actually met McCain and Gayler. As we went through we always called on CinCPac. I met them both in the Micronesian business. Haydn always called

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Thailand. On 15 May U.S. military forces executed a crew rescue operation directed at Koh Tang Island, 34 miles off the Cambodian mainland. In the meantime, the Cambodians had released the *Mayaguez* crew and left the ship herself unguarded. In the rescue attack on Koh Tang, a number of U.S. servicemen were killed or wounded. For details, see *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, November 1976, pages 93-111.

\* Fidel V. Ramos, a 1950 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, served as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, 1986-88; Secretary of National Defense, 1988-91, and President of the Philippines, 1992-98.

† Subic Bay is a protected anchorage on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. It borders the Bataan province and is about 35 miles north of the entrance to Manila Bay. During the Vietnam War, Subic had a strong role as a support base for the U.S. Navy. Included were a naval air station, piers, ship repair facility, supply depot, and recreational outlets for ships' crews.

‡ Because of the Philippine Government's unwillingness to extend basing rights, the U.S. Air Force vacated Clark Air Force Base in November 1991, and the U.S. Navy left Subic Bay in the autumn of 1992.

on them. They had an interest, but they never really bothered us very much. But they did want to keep track of what was going on.

Now, when I was 60B I went out there, and so I called on Gayler on my way west, as a personal. And I was invited to a dinner party they were having, in the house I subsequently lived in. But their custom was, after dinner, to roll all the rugs up and dance, and who was there but Arthur and Kathryn Murray?<sup>\*</sup> (Laughter). And I actually danced with Kathryn Murray. [Chuckle] Not very well, but using the same step I used in high school. And I thought, that poor woman; she's talking about that dumb admiral. [Laughter] I still can't dance in all these years. I'm sure she's talking as much about it as I was. Anyway, it was quite a privilege to dance with Kathryn Murray.

And the Gaylers loved to dance. Of course, Mrs. Gayler was a hot ticket. She loved life. And then he split with her, and she became a friend of Shirley's and used to always talk about this young wife Gayler had. But I always liked Mrs. Gayler. I don't even remember her first name. I didn't know her that well. But she gave good parties. And Kathryn Murray probably never forgot it. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: I haven't heard from Admiral Gayler in a long time.

Admiral Crowe: Well, he makes a noise every now and then. But it's interesting, when I was in Micronesia I really got in the offices that I later inhabited. I got in CinCPac's office, and I got in the Chairman's office. That's when I'd go to keep track of things, and then later on in my life I was in both of those offices for business. Sort of interesting.

I was talking about the Philippines. I never met Marcos when I was 60B.<sup>†</sup> I did meet him when I was CinCPac. But I did a lot of business directly with the military in the Philippines. And there was a politician in Olongapo whose father was a Marine with Dewey.<sup>‡</sup> Anyway, I used to see that guy every time I went out. And I met him when I was 60B. Made several trips there, and also made my first trip down into the southern

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<sup>\*</sup> The Murrays founded a chain of dance studios.

<sup>†</sup> Ferdinand Marcos served as President of the Philippine Islands from 30 December 1965 until 25 February 1986.

<sup>‡</sup> Olongapo, the town right outside the U.S. naval base at Subic Bay in the Philippines, was noted for its raunchiness during the Vietnam War period and later. James Leonard T. Gordon was the first elected mayor of Olongapo City, from 30 December 1963 to 20 February 1967. He was born on January 17, 1917 of an American father, John Jacob Gordon, and a Filipina mother, Veronica Tagle Gordon.

part of the Philippines. They asked me if there was anything I wanted to do, and I said I wanted to go down and see where the guerilla war was. They were a little bit reluctant, but they took me down.

I got some real idea of how bitched up the Philippine military was, and how political it was. How futile some of the things they were doing. Although I liked Manila. I always thought Manila was a great place, exciting city. But all the years we spent there we still couldn't prevent corruption. We're just not very good colonizers, and that really came through in the Micronesian business and my experience, what dealings I had with the Philippines.

Paul Stillwell: You mentioned Staser Holcomb in passing. Did you have any dealings with him?

Admiral Crowe: Well, I had some, because he was Rumsfeld's guy when I was there. But later on I became 06 when Staser was in OpNav.<sup>\*</sup> So I had to do some business with him there. Used to play tennis with him quite a bit. I didn't know Staser well, and I don't think we were the kinds that, for some reason we would never have been real friendly. We were pseudo-friends, but not real friendly. But he got hooked up first of all with Rumsfeld, and then Zumwalt. And when those two were gone, then Staser left. I guess part of the purge.<sup>†</sup>

Paul Stillwell: Well, he was thought of highly by Admiral Hayward as well.<sup>‡</sup>

Admiral Crowe: Yes, he was, you're right. And that's when I actually knew him. But I don't know what happened to all that. We were under the impression that—the buzz—that he had expected to be promoted some more and that he was very bitter about not being promoted, but I don't know if that's true or not. I don't know anything about it.

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<sup>\*</sup> Vice Admiral M. Staser Holcomb, USN, served as the Navy's Director of Program Planning, OP-090, from June 1979 to August 1981.

<sup>†</sup> Vice Admiral Holcomb's final active duty billet was as Commander Seventh Fleet from 1981 to 1983.

<sup>‡</sup> Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, USN, served as Chief of Naval Operations from 1 July 1978 to 30 June 1982.



Paul Stillwell: Well, it's been a while since I interviewed him. I don't remember bitterness. I'm certain there was disappointment.

Admiral Crowe: I don't know Staser that well.

Paul Stillwell: From what you say, then, Abramowitz didn't have near the influence once Rumsfeld came in that he'd had before.

Admiral Crowe: No. I don't think he did. No, Rumsfeld would not have appreciated him the way Schlesinger did. My relief was Bob Hilton.\* I also had to search for a guy to take my place. [Chuckle] Finally found one. And he and Mort worked about a year, and then I think Mort left. Bob died last year. I lived close to Bob over in Alexandria, and he and I were pretty good friends. Incidentally, he was a fanatic tennis player until he got sick, and then he couldn't play anymore. I met him the first time in 06B, and then later as 06 he worked for me. I became very friendly with him.

I got the impression Staser wasn't interested in becoming real friendly. [Chuckle] But that whole Zumwalt crowd was sort of condescending. Well, enough said.

Paul Stillwell: Anything more on that tour of duty?

Admiral Crowe: I don't think so, no. I wanted to get out of there. I will talk about the reason I wanted to get out. I was desperately searching for: How do I, as a rear admiral, do something besides this stuff I'm doing? How do I get a command? Well, clearly I'm not going to get a carrier group, and clearly the submariners are not going to make me a squadron commander. And so I focused on ComMidEastFor. When I relieved Bigley he went to ComMidEastFor.† He didn't want to go there. He thought it was a terrible job. He wanted to go to sea, but he didn't like it from the standpoint—he'd had a surface command, and he wanted to get a big surface command, and he wasn't going to get it. So he was sort of upset, and he didn't know much about Bahrain. He was disappointed, I

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\* Rear Admiral Robert P. Hilton, USN.

† Rear Admiral Thomas J. Bigley, USN, served as Commander Middle East Force from 20 February 1975 to 30 June 1976.

think, a little bit, in where he was going. I thought it was great. Well, he went away, and later on when I relieved him out there he said, “My wife hates this place.” And Bigley’s made a career out of Bahrain ever since. [Laughter]

But putting that aside, I got to thinking about it and I thought, “My argument for getting that job is it’s a political-military job.” It’s not just a bunch of ships out there running around in echelon formation, throwing signals in the air. It calls on prime ministers. It used to be the ambassador to the Gulf until we got ambassadors. And so my argument was that it’s a perfect job for me because it’s political-military.

Well, the VCNO was Worth Bagley, a classmate of mine, who, at one time, he and I were pretty good friends.\* So I called him up and asked him if I could go see him. Holloway was the CNO and Worth Bagley was the VCNO. And I said, “Worth, I’m desperate and I’m looking for a job, and ComMidEastFor is out in the middle of nowhere. And if you can give me that job I will start right now learning the Arabic language. And I’ll tell you that when I go there I can speak Arabic.”

He said, “We’ve never had anybody speak Arabic in that job.” [Laughter]. And he said, “That’s a great idea.”

Holloway vetoed it. Holloway said, “Well, I’d love to be able to tell him that, but I can’t tell him that. In the first place we don’t even know if ComMidEastFor is going to be there.”

Worth said, “We just can’t make that kind of commitment to you, Bill.”

I said, “Well, put me on the list. I am interested in going. Unlike some people, I would like to go to Bahrain.” I didn’t know a damn thing about Bahrain, but I knew that it was a peculiar kind of command. It is a sea command and, okay, throw my hat in the ring.

So then I went back, and everything I kept hearing was: “We’re leaving Bahrain; we’re going to be out in 30 June, and so forth and so forth. And so the idea you’re going to Bahrain—it isn’t even going to be there.” Well, all of a sudden, out of the clear blue, they decided to promote Bigley and make him a vice admiral and send him to Deputy

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\* Admiral Worth H. Bagley, USN, served as Vice Chief of Naval Operations from 5 June 1974 to 30 June 1975.

CinCPacFlt. And we were still in Bahrain, although we were supposed to leave, but there he was, he was leaving. So I called the detailer and said, "I'm here."

And the detailer said, "Well, you're at the top of the list. You're on the list as a possibility."

I said, "I want it, I like it, I think it's great. I'll be happy to go there. And if we've got to leave, we'll leave. But I'll be happy to go."

I talked to Mort about it and he was, "No, you can't go. You can't go."

I said, "Well, I've got to go, Mort. I've got to go." So find a relief, and so forth.

I got a call from the detailer, and he said, "You're going to go to Bahrain."

I said, "When?"

He said, "In 30 days."

I called Shirley and I said, "Shirley, can you hear me? Sit down. Be comfortable." [Chuckle]

"What's happened?"

"We're going to Bahrain, and we're going to do it in 30 days." It was the damndest 30 days of our life.

Paul Stillwell: Had she been party to any of your previous discussions?

Admiral Crowe: Yes, she knew I was maneuvering on it, but the 30 days had never come up before. And essentially we were talking about three weeks. Blake was graduating from high school, going to college in his first year. Our second son was in high school, and not doing very well. We were going to have to put in a private high school, because we couldn't leave him. He just had to do it; he wasn't doing well where he was. And then we had to move out of this place, and we had to go to a strange place. We had a Great Dane dog that was going to go with us. All this stuff had to be done in four weeks. And Shirley was just busier than a one-armed paperhanger. [Chuckle] Anyway, that was the damndest period of our lives. We had people going in all directions.

Anyway, we got the dog. And our gear wouldn't come by sea for six weeks or something, so I got permission to check 21 bags on the airplane. We had 21 bags [chuckle] and two children and flew to Rome. Saw Rome in six hours and went on and

flew into Bahrain, and the first thing we saw in Bahrain at 7:00 o'clock in the morning was a dead camel sitting beside the road there. [Chuckle]

Paul Stillwell: I take it you didn't have time to learn Arabic.

Admiral Crowe: No, I didn't. I didn't. I did study it, but I've studied more languages and speak fewer than any man alive. [Laughter]

Paul Stillwell: Well, thank you for another interesting interview, Admiral.

Admiral Crowe: We'll talk about Bahrain. That'll be even more interesting.\*

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\* Unfortunately, Admiral Crowe was taken to a hospital on the morning of the next scheduled interview. He died in October 2007 before any more interviews could be accomplished.