

5 March 2002

Smith: My name is Joseph Smith. I'm an oral history interviewer for the Navy Historical Foundation. Today's date is 5 March 2002. It's 13:25 hours. We're on the USS Hornet Museum in Alameda, California, and the subject to be interviewed today is Rear Admiral Thomas F. Brown III. This will cover his career biography. Admiral Brown, go ahead and start.

Brown: Thank you very much Joe. I was born and raised in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Born in 1932, went to local Catholic Schools, as a matter of fact the same school, the same building for twelve years, grade school and high school. When it came time to go to college, I thought that I wanted to be a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, so I went to the Seminary program at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Maryland. At the end of my second year when you were supposed to elect to go into the seminary portion of the program I was confused about my vocation and didn't go into the seminary.

In the meantime, that year my father went bankrupt and our family was experiencing pretty hard financial times so I decided it was probably best for me to quit school until I had a better handle on what I wanted to do with my life. That summer in 1952 I was working as a sheet metal mechanic apprentice for a roofing company in Scranton making a buck an hour. Each Friday we would get a little manila envelope with some bills tucked in there. It felt pretty nice to have some money in my pocket! But my Mom, who had a college degree, talked me out of that plan. She said between us we could get through the last two years; that she would help out with the tuition if I could take care of the rest of my expenses.

So I went back to Mount Saint Mary's, finished up and got my degree in 1954. Because of my pre-seminary curriculum I had a lot of Philosophy, Greek and Latin. The only way I could finish in four years was to stick with an English-Philosophy major, which is what I did. But I took my electives in Math, Science, and Physics, so I would have those skills when I got out of college.

I went to work for IBM when I graduated. While at Mount St. Mary's I decided to explore the possibility of volunteering to join the military right after college rather than waiting to be drafted, as I knew I would be drafted eventually. In those days the draft was a two-year commitment. I had heard that the Marines had a two-year officer program; that is, you served two years after completing Platoon Leaders' training to become an officer. The Navy program at the time was similar, but a three-year commitment after OCS. So a friend of mine and I went down to nearby Washington, D.C. to join the Marines. They said, "We just changed our program from a two-year commitment to a three-year commitment."

So I said, "Well, I'm going to go check with the Navy." I went across the hall and took the mental test and then the physical to join the Navy to go to OCS in a class that was to convene around the 1st of July, soon after graduation. I passed the physical, but I was notified later that I did not quite make the cut in the mental test for the July class. I think you needed a raw score of 60 or above and I got 58 or 59. The next class was in January, so that was six months from then and then sixteen weeks at OCS so I'd be getting out of OCS about a year after I graduated and then I had a three-year commitment to serve. So I said, "Oh the heck with it, I'll just wait to get drafted, serve my two years and get out and return to civilian life." This is what all my high school and college buddies were doing.

So I went to work for IBM and about a month later I got a letter from the Draft Board notifying me to report for a physical and if qualified I would be drafted. As luck would have it, the same week I got a letter from the Navy saying they had decided to have an additional, special class at OCS starting in October and that I qualified this time. So I weighed these two possibilities and finally decided on the Navy. I'd had a brother who was a doctor in the Navy and another who was an Army infantryman, and it seemed like the Navy was a better way to go for me. No reflection on my Army friends! So I went to OCS in Newport, Rhode Island, in October 1954, and graduated in March 1955.

While there I had an experience I think is worth relating. One Saturday night I got stopped for reckless driving, and I was told that I couldn't drive the car anymore that night. I needed to go before the judge at seven o'clock in the morning. So I went down to the court and was asked by the judge how I pleaded to this charge. I didn't know what to do, so I asked the Shore Patrol Officer and he said you might want to plead nolo contendere, which means no contest. So I did that and the judge found me guilty and fined me either \$17 or thirty days in jail. So I checked my pockets and I only had \$16. I told the judge that and I asked the Shore Patrol officer if he could loan me a dollar. He said he didn't have any money. So I asked the judge if he would accept \$16, and he said, "It's either \$17 or thirty days in jail." So I said, "Will you give me a chance to try and get the other dollar outside," and he said, "Yes, I will." I went across the street to the YMCA and looked around in the lobby and there's one old guy who looked like a bum off in the corner sleeping. I woke him up and told him my story. He reached into his pocket, pulled out a roll of bills about as big as a baseball and started flipping through the hundreds, fifties, and twenties and eventually came to some ones and he gave me a one-dollar bill.

I thanked him and promised him I would pay him back. So I went back over to the judge, paid my fine and went up to the hotel where my friends were, got some money and went back and paid the gentleman back with interest and my thanks. But the main reason I'm telling this story is that I went right back to the base and checked in with my Company Chief (Chief Maudsley) and told him what had happened. A few days later I had an Admiral's Mast and received a bunch of demerits, but they didn't kick me out of OCS. The point is, if I hadn't owned up and told my Chief, I would have been kicked out of OCS because the next Monday a report of the incident was in the local newspaper. The lesson learned is if something like that happens to

you, it's better to get it out in the open. Let people know about it, take your punishment like a man, and get on with it.

Other than that, OCS was actually pretty easy for me. I'd come right out of college and was used to studying. Discipline was not a problem, because we had a healthy amount of discipline in my family, in that we had rules, we went by the rules and so on.

While at Newport the powers-to-be encouraged us to go into one of four special programs, which were flight training, submarines, EOD, and UDT. I had no intention to apply for flight training when I went to OCS, but all of a sudden when it was mentioned I thought, "You know, I think I'd like to try flight training." That sounded interesting to me. (I had only been in an airplane one time. It was in a small aircraft that a friend of my father's owned. He took my Dad and me up for a ride when I was about seven or eight years old.) So, I went over and took the physical and qualified for flight training.

I went down to the training command in Pensacola right after OCS. It took about sixteen months to complete the program and I got my wings in July 1956. After I got there I became aware that you had to make a choice along the way as to whether or not to go into one of four different programs. One was the jet program pipeline. Everybody took the same basic training and I believe every student, though I'm not positive about this, got six carrier arrested landings during basic training. We were flying the SNJ, and then we went on to advanced training in single-engine (props or jets), multiengine, or helos. One of those four- you had to make a choice. I chose single-engine and was fortunate to get my first choice – jets. So I went into a jet pipeline at Chase Field in Beeville, Texas, flying the F9F-2 Panther jet. I received my wings in July 1956 and orders to a squadron (VA-153 – the Blue Tail Flies) at NAS Moffett Field, California. When I arrived at Moffett I learned that VA-153 was still deployed to the Western Pacific, so we went to the Fleet Air Support Squadron, FASRON 10, and waited there. Most of our whole new squadron was there at FASRON 10 as we were changing aircraft from the F9F-8 Cougar to the A4D-1 Skyhawk.

I got there in August and the squadron wasn't due back until November. So we had some time to kill, and our new Skipper, who was there with us, started sending us to various schools for training. I volunteered to go to a six-week Air Intelligence School. Many pilots avoided AIO School because they were concerned about getting stuck as an Air Intelligence Officer and not getting to fly as much as everybody else. That didn't seem logical so I went to a good school at NAS Alameda where the Aircraft Carrier *Hornet* is today.

That was in September/October and while I was gone my buddies volunteered me to go to an Air Force Survival School, which was a three-week program up in northeastern California. It was a pretty demanding school. During one of the night exercises I had fallen down and cut my head open pretty badly. Shortly after I got back home I had a fainting spell one evening. The next day, when I went to have the stitches taken out, the doctor determined that I was bleeding internally and anemic; he sent me by ambulance to Oak Knoll Naval Hospital. They took good

care of me there. The reason I tell this story is because I later married the night nurse who was on duty the night that I arrived at Oak Knoll! We met in December 1956, got married in June 1957, and we're coming up on our 45th wedding anniversary this June. I'm very blessed!

About the time I went to the hospital we started getting our A4D-1s. The squadron returned to Moffett Field in November. Most of the old pilots left and the new guys were flying the Cougars. Five of our more experienced pilots went next door to a special squadron (VC-3) to get checked out in A4 Skyhawk - it took them about a month or six weeks. They came back and after the first of the year the rest of the guys started in the A4. I called it "the blind leading the blind" because we sent people over to check out in the A-4 who didn't have much jet time. After five or six hops they were the "experts" and they came back and checked out the rest of us. Great airplane, brand new, those were fun times. A wonderful time to be flying!

But I went to the hospital on the 1st or 2nd of December and it took me a month to get out, even though I felt fine after a couple of days. I suspected they wanted to fill an empty bed but probably they just wanted to make sure I was healthy and completely recovered. When I did get released, the doctors sent me back to a full flying status. But about two months later I got some paperwork from BuMed in Washington, D.C. putting me in Service Group 2, which meant I could not fly by myself. This was a real shocker, as I was in a squadron of single seat aircraft and I couldn't fly by myself, so I felt I was essentially out of business. But the senior flight surgeon at Moffett Field was offended by this BuMed decision because his on-scene flight surgeon had given me an UP chit but the bureaucrats back in Washington had overridden that local flight surgeon and put me in a restricted flying status for six months.

We had a brand new C.O., LCDR Joe Nelson. Our first skipper was killed in an A-4 at in February, 1957. Skipper Nelson was a terrific leader and person and he looked at my situation and said, "Hey, Tom, we'd like to keep you in the squadron anyway. We'll let you go over and get as much cockpit time as you can in the two-seater Cougar aircraft in the squadron next door. That way you can stay current, do your job in the squadron and then in September you'll be back in business. I was grateful for that. But in the meantime, the Captain who was the senior medical officer (SMO) at Moffett Field decided to conduct another medical examination, and return me to Service Group 1 if that was warranted. After an extensive series of tests they couldn't find anything wrong with me, and Moffett Field SMO put me back into a Category 1 flight status. While awaiting the outcome of this process I went to Instrument School and didn't miss out on any flying at all. About six months later I got the paperwork back from BuMed putting me permanently back in Category 1 flight status! So it was a close call, but there is a lot of positive leadership in this tale. First, was how my skipper went to bat for me and made a controversial, gutsy decision to keep me in the squadron even though I wasn't going to be able to be flying single-seat for six months. Second, was the role of the Senior Medical Officer. I remain very grateful to these two gentlemen!

Something that is important to understand about that era is that the Navy introduced a number of different jet aircraft into the fleet in the middle '50s. Among them were the FJ3, the

FJ4, the A-4 Skyhawk, the F4D Skyray, the F8U Crusader, and the F-11 Tiger. Also, we had a whole bunch of pilots that had transitioned from props to jets, from slower to faster airplanes, from straight wing to swept wing, and the accident rate was horrendously high. It was almost off the graph how many accidents we were having in large part because of poor training. In our squadron alone we killed three people in our first year in the Skyhawk.

I previously mentioned our first skipper, named CDR Alex Byers, who was killed on a low-level navigation hop. He was flying wing on LT Sandy Falconer, one of the best and more experienced pilots in the squadron. They came down along the coast north of San Francisco, popped up over Twin Peaks, and descended down over San Francisco Bay. In those days we were allowed to fly at a minimum of fifty feet over water and one hundred feet over land. After crossing over Twin Peaks south of San Francisco, they went on down low over the water by San Francisco International and were going to fly along the Bay, then climb up at the Dumbarton Bridge to enter the break at Moffett Field. The weather was cloudy and rainy that day, and the wind was from the southeast. So instead of landing on runway 32 at Moffett, they were landing on runway 14, and going down the bay set them up just right for runway 14. Anyway, when they leveled out at fifty feet by San Francisco International, the skipper, who was flying wing, accidentally flew into the water. As you can imagine, this was a tremendous shock and loss for the squadron. Then a few months later we lost ENS. Doug Sanford, one of our nugget (first tour) pilots. (We had sixteen ensigns and LTJGs in the squadron, almost half out of OCS, a few from Naval Academy/NROTC, and the rest NAVCADs, all high caliber, well qualified people. All of them had been through the jet program in flight training. We knew more about flying jets and had more jet time per capita than the senior officers in the squadron.) We were training in night carrier landing practice at the Crow's Landing Naval Aviation Facility (NAF) located east of Moffett Field on the other side of the foothills in the Valley. We used to call it MLP, Mirror Landing Practice, because in those days the landing aid was a mirror. Now it's called Field Carrier Landing Practice (FCLP). Doug lost his engine approaching the 180-degree position and ejected. Unfortunately he was below the minimum ejection altitude of the ejection seat we had at that time, which was about eight hundred feet straight and level. His chute didn't have time to open properly and he was killed.

Then later in the year our third fatality occurred at NAF Fallon while deployed there for weapons delivery training. The A-4 was built to carry a nuclear weapon. So we went to Fallon and did conventional and special weapons (i.e. nuclear weapons) delivery training. We were well qualified. Toward the end of 1957 it was decided that we needed to be able to deliver the nukes on actual instruments in bad weather and/or at night. So our Skipper said, "OK, we'll start doing it at night up at Fallon." That was a difficult decision - I'm not sure what I would have done if I had been the C.O. The A4D-1 gyro horizon was not an all-attitude instrument and it was way off in roll and pitch after any overhead maneuver. At any rate one of our pilots was killed there one very dark night. Apparently he became disoriented and he flew into the ground during a night over-the-shoulder maneuver. In this maneuver, the pilot flew in to the target at 100 feet @ 500 knots, pulled up, dropped the bomb and continued on through in a loop, then dove down toward the ground, leveling off at the programmed burst height of the simulated weapon.

That was very high attrition to lose three out of twenty pilots in less than a year! As a comparison, during the follow-on deployment to West Pac we lost none. That deployment commenced in March 1958 on the USS *Hancock* (CVA 19). Though we carrier-qualified at night in the A-4 on the way out in Hawaii, we didn't normally fly at night during the deployment. It was not a routine deployment by today's standards. Not much flying... I think I only got thirty-two landings, about five or six per month, which was hardly enough to stay proficient. So we were fortunate in this respect that we were only doing day flying.

The deployment was a real adventure and I enjoyed it, except for the family separation. In the meantime, we had an XO who was trying to get some of us to stay in the Navy and he talked me into applying for Regular Navy. He said, "If you get selected you don't have to accept it, (i.e. the regular commission) but if you don't apply you'll never know whether you're going to get it." Powerful logic! My intention was still to get out of the Navy and go back to IBM. I did not mention that when I went to flight training, I took on a short additional service obligation. The obligation then was you serve two years after you got your Wings. It took me sixteen months so that added four months to my original commitment. So I was due to get out in July 1958. This was true for most of the junior officers in the squadron. At the Skipper's request we all agreed that we would serve until after the deployment was over. But before we got back I received a letter offering me a regular commission so I had a decision to make. I contacted Marty, my wife. In those days it was not like it is today. You didn't get to talk to your wife very much during the deployment. To call long distance from overseas was very expensive. Anyway, I wrote to my wife and then called her and she said she was doing fine though of course she didn't enjoy the family separation either. Our first child was born while we were deployed. Marty went back to her hometown of Springfield, Missouri and had the baby there. She said she was doing OK and she would support me if I wanted to go Regular Navy and so I did. So that started me off on a Navy career and I ended up serving thirty-one years on active duty. Quite a change for someone who intended to get in and get out just as fast as possible!

When we returned from that deployment we had a turnaround of about a year, maybe a little bit less, and then we went back out again on the *Hancock* for another six to seven month deployment.

It was sort of an unremarkable deployment. We didn't lose a pilot during either deployment overseas or between deployments. However, shortly after we got back, and as I was checking out of the squadron, we lost a squadron mate at Moffett Field when his engine failed as he was entering the break. By this time we had an ejection seat that was more capable but still not zero-zero. The pilot, LTJG Neil Blake, ejected outside the seat's envelope and was killed. There was a lady who lived right under the traffic pattern at the ninety-degree position who was killed when the aircraft crashed into her home. She was the wife of a Hungarian Freedom Fighter who had come over from Hungary after the 1956 revolution. By this time it was March 1960.

I got orders to the A-4 training squadron, VA-125, which was also located at Moffett Field. As I mentioned previously, our introduction training into the fleet was marginal. It was decided by the leaders of Naval Aviation that they had to do something better so they created training squadrons for each different type aircraft. They formed VA-125 as the west coast A-4 training squadron and I went over there to be an instructor. I also taught ground school and served there for about sixteen months. I loved every minute of it!

Over the course of the previous decade Moffett Field had been completely encroached upon by suburban homes; it was obvious that it was getting too risky to fly jets out of there. So in 1956 the Navy bought a large parcel of land out in the middle of the San Joaquin Valley south of Fresno and in 1961 NAS Lemoore became operational. It is still there today. Our squadron moved there in July of 1961, but I received orders at that time and went to Postgraduate School at the University of California, Berkeley. I was there for sixteen months while earning a Master's Degree in International Relations.

From there it was back down to NAS Lemoore to the training squadron for a brief refresher and then back to a fleet squadron. While I was at Berkeley I flew A-4s with the Reserves at NAS Alameda. I used to fly test hops on Thursday afternoon and then I'd find somebody on Saturday morning. Very demanding of time, but it kept me sane during that period of time when I was going to school. I felt I actually did better in school, because I was getting away and had a chance to go flying a tad, so I was happy. That was my shore duty, sixteen months each in the training squadron and in Postgraduate school. After refresher training to get requalified again in the A-4 I went to another fleet squadron, VA-164. We deployed twice on the USS *Oriskany* (CVA-19), in 1964, and again in 1965.

I was going to talk a little bit more about leadership, but I think I'll save that for the next session. I'll talk to you then about some of the leaders that I had in the fleet and about strengths and weaknesses and that sort of thing.

I went on to VA-164 and became the Safety/NATOPS Officer and subsequently the Maintenance Officer of the squadron. I made my first combat cruise in Vietnam in 1965 on the *Oriskany*. My CAG was then CDR, now Vice Admiral, Jim Stockdale who's a famous fellow now. I felt Vietnam was the right war, at the right place, at the right time. In the beginning, the majority of the American people and the Congress supported the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Our Air Wing (Air Wing Sixteen) started flying out there in the May of 1965 and it quickly became obvious that our civilian leadership was not very serious about the way they were doing it. We were passing up good targets to go to poor, i.e. non-valuable, targets. We allowed the North Vietnamese to put a very sophisticated defense system in place, which they got from the Soviets. Our military leaders tried to get permission to mine Haiphong harbor and bomb Hanoi but Secretary of Defense McNamara would not authorize either one. So we lost... if we had any initiative, we lost it very, very quickly, and pretty soon we started losing pilots and aircraft due to the effectiveness of their defense system. Also, we would bomb and then pause. We'd have a bombing pause and then we'd bomb and then we'd have areas that we couldn't bomb anymore. It

was ridiculous! Our civilian leaders in Washington put “No Bomb” circles around areas and stuff like that. We went about it with one arm tied behind our back. Well anyway I was out there in 1965 for about five months and then got orders back to the VA-125 as an instructor again because they needed some combat-experienced people as instructors in the training squadron.

I also want to say a word about the Carrier Group staffs. Every six months another staff would come out to make their mark. They would indicate that things were really going well, that their game plan was effective, and that we were without a doubt stopping the flow of supplies into South Vietnam. We know from history, and I think we knew at the time, that this was not the case. Our bombing campaign was not very effective in this regard. They didn't move much during the daytime and it was hard to locate them and do something about the movement of supplies at night. It was quite similar to Korea as a matter of fact.

Anyway I came back from Vietnam after four months in combat, and went back to the training squadron. Since I'd been a Maintenance Officer of VA-164 I became the Quality Assurance (QA) Officer in the Maintenance Department of VA-125, which by now had over a hundred aircraft. It was a huge squadron. I got another year of shore duty and it was a very pleasant tour. By this time Marty and I had four children. To show you what my wife had to deal with, we had four children and the oldest was five and a half, so you can see she had her hands full while I was gone, to say the least! Two of the children were born while I was deployed, one was born six weeks before I made my second cruise, the other was born when I was on shore duty. So there was only one of them whom I saw from infancy on up to eight or nine months of age, for the other three I wasn't around when they were babies. This illustrates some of the sacrifices our families make when one chooses a career in the Tailhook Navy.

Back to VA-125 and my tour as a flight instructor and the QA Officer. As previously alluded to, I had been a division officer for a few years in VA-153 and I had just come back from a department head assignment as a Lieutenant Commander. In the training squadron I started to get additional leadership opportunities. During that year I learned a lot as Officer-in-Charge of Detachments going aboard ship for Carrier Qualification deployments and also up to NAS Fallon for Weapons Deployments. The best assignment for a Lieutenant Commander in the squadron was to be the OinC of a detachment. I very much enjoyed these leadership opportunities. I also cherished the time at home for a year.

Afterwards I got a set of orders back to the fleet. I was headed back to an A-4 squadron, VA-76, but the Operations Officer of VA-125, who was programmed to be the Ops Officer of Air Wing 15, got sent out to replace the XO of VA-76 who had been shot down. (He was subsequently shot down, captured, and died in captivity.) In turn my orders were changed to report as Ops Officer of Air Wing 15. This was to be my second combat deployment. We deployed on the *Coral Sea* (CVA-43). We had two A-4 squadrons, two Phantom Squadrons, and a SPAD squadron. I flew with VA-155, one of the A-4 squadrons. This was the last AD/SPAD squadron deployment in the Navy. By this time it had gotten too hot over land for the SPADs to fly in North Vietnam over the beach. The AAA and SAM threat was too great and they couldn't

survive. We had a good deployment, a fine CAG, and imaginative tactics. These tactics proved to be very effective and as a result we didn't sustain the losses that some other Air Wings did. We did not lose an airplane to AAA in the target area during this deployment! Most of our losses were F-4s to SAMS. The F-4 was a big radar target!

The war continued on with no end in sight. In January 1968 we were in the Gulf of Tonkin getting ready to go home when the North Koreans seized the USS *Pueblo*. The USS *Enterprise* was en route to relieve us. They were actually in port in Japan at the time. The *Enterprise* got underway immediately and went into the Sea of Japan within striking range of North Korea. But, frankly, there wasn't very much that the U.S. could do in response to that crisis because we had five carriers committed to the Vietnam War. The only viable option was to go nuclear and that was not realistic, not a serious option. So instead of going home we went north, relieved the *Enterprise* in the Sea of Japan, and spent some time operating off of North Korea. We ended up with a ten-month deployment on *Coral Sea* in '67-68. We then returned home to NAS Lemoore.

I was combat limited at this time. There was a rule that you could only make two combat deployments so I received orders to the East Coast and went to NAS Cecil Field in Jacksonville, Florida. I had also just made Commander and screened for command of a squadron. I became the Maintenance Officer of VA-44 the A-4 Training Squadron at Cecil Field while waiting in line for command of an A-4 squadron. The A7A Corsair, the replacement airplane for the A-4, was now in the fleet and they were starting to transition squadrons from A-4s to A-7s. I was heading for one A-4 squadron and they decommissioned it and replaced it with an A-7 squadron. Then that happened a second time. The Commander Detailer offered me a "good deal" to go to Armed Forces Staff College up in Norfolk, VA, for six months. When I finished there I would go to NAS Oceana and transition to the A-6 Intruder and then be an XO/CO of an Intruder squadron instead of an A-4 squadron. I protested because I had been one of the first pilots in my year group to be selected for command and was in A-4s my whole career flying single-seat aircraft. The A-6 Intruder is dual seat, which requires a different approach and mindset to flying. I felt I was being treated unfairly. My former CAG, when I was CAG-15 Ops, was in the Bureau and I called him up and asked him for some help. They took a look at this plan, reconsidered and left me at Cecil Field in the A-4/A-7 community.

But A-4 squadrons continued to get decommissioned and by this time I had been waiting for command of a squadron for 18 months and was the XO of VA-44. It was decided to transition me to the A-7. I went to the A-7 training squadron and subsequently served as XO/CO of VA-37. We deployed twice on the USS *Saratoga*. The '71 deployment on *Saratoga* was the first to incorporate the CV concept. This concept was necessary because a decision had been made to eliminate the CVS aircraft carriers (the USS *Hornet* was a CVS at the time). The concept put ASW squadrons aboard CVAs and renamed them CVs. We had an ASW Helo squadron, an S-2 ASW Squadron, a couple of A-7 squadrons, a couple of F-4 Phantom squadrons, an A-5 Vigilante squadron, and an E-2 squadron onboard. Admiral Holloway was our first CARDIV Commander and then VADM Bob Baldwin. Since we had to prove this new ASW concept, this was not a very

exciting cruise for us bomber guys. I took over the squadron right at the beginning of this deployment. We were deployed for only about five and a half months and then returned to Cecil Field.

I had been in command about seven months when my CAG got a call from a member of the Aviation Command Screening Board noting that my record indicated I was competitive for selection as an air wing commander (CAG) and asking how I was doing in command of VA-37? CAG said, "He's doing fine." So I screened for Air Wing command, which was a big deal for me! The detailers needed somebody right away to go to be CAG-19 on the USS *Oriskany* and back into combat. (It was now 1972 and I was no longer combat limited.) I got ripped out of squadron command after only seven and a half months instead of twelve. But no one felt sorry for me because it's great going to be a CAG. We went back out to NAS Lemoore to live and I started an accelerated CAG training program.

CAG-19 had three A-7 Corsair squadrons and two F-8 Crusader squadrons plus three detachments. I was already current in the A-7 so I only needed to get qualified in the F-8. At that time there were only four Crusader squadrons left in the Navy, two on *Oriskany* and two on *Hancock*. Night flying the Crusader from these smaller *Essex* class carriers was an emotional issue. Therefore, it was important to me to get fully qualified in the Crusader. I went to the F-8 RAG and completed an abbreviated syllabus, including day and night carrier qualification. After a brief refresher in the A-7 I was ready to go and assumed command of CAG-19 with a short ceremony in the CarGru spaces on *Oriskany* on 6 June 1972. We got underway that day for Vietnam.

We were on that deployment about eight months. Operations were not unlike I experienced in '67-68 – the war dragged on. One of my main motivations was to do all I could to get our POWs back. I wanted to be able to look them in the eye when they came back knowing that I did all I could to get them back. In December '72, President Nixon decided to utilize the B-52s to bomb Hanoi, a very courageous political decision and the right thing to do. This brought the North Vietnamese back to the negotiating table and they agreed to release the POWs. They started coming out in February/March of 1973. We were still in the Gulf of Tonkin when the second group flew out of Hanoi. That was a big deal for us! We went back home and felt pretty good about that part of it. We had a good deployment. We lost only one pilot in combat and we had two operational losses. Good squadrons and terrific people up and down the chain-of-command.

By this time I was starting to get burnt out and tired, having made three deployments in three years. I was fortunate to have had all of my shore duty, except for Postgraduate School, in squadrons. (I was also able to fly at PG school.) Anyway, I felt in need of a year or so to recharge my batteries. When asked by ADM Holloway, the Seventh Fleet Commander, where I would like to go I told him I felt I needed some shore duty. He must have worked some magic as I soon received orders to the National War College at Fort McNair in Washington D.C. That was one great year there because I was home every night with my family. I taught religion in my church,

coached Little League basketball, and got to do the things that dads are supposed to do, at least for that one year. Then I got orders to be the Aviation Commander Detailer in the Bureau of Naval Personnel. While there I made Captain, screened for a deep draft ship command and, after one year there, received orders to the USS *Caloosahatchee*, home ported in Norfolk, VA. I elected to leave my family behind in Bowie, MD because our kids now were senior, junior, and sophomore in high school, and the youngest was in seventh grade. At this time Marty's mother came to live with us and stayed with us about ten years. So they all stayed behind in Bowie.

I went down to Norfolk to command *Caloosahatchee*, a real challenging command to say the least. The day I took command twenty-eight crewmembers were unauthorized absentees, twenty-eight out of two hundred eighty-five! This was a result of a difficult command climate, challenging times transitioning to the All-volunteer Force, and a lot of drug abuse in the fleet. But on the other hand the ship was a good operator. Those that weren't UA did their jobs pretty well and we met all our operation commitments.

It is worth noting here that while I was on the *Caloosahatchee* we had a collision with another ship. When you're CO of a ship, there are two main things you want to avoid, one is going aground; the other is colliding with another ship. There are no good excuses for going aground, but if you have a collision, you can survive to fight again if you and your ship have your stuff together. In other words, if you've done things right; if your people are all properly qualified, according to the Personnel Qualification System (PQS); if your equipment is properly maintained in accordance with the Preventive Maintenance System (PMS); if you have done your drills regularly, and all your paper work and documentation are done properly and current; and if you respond properly when you have an emergency, you can survive. A former C.O. had warned me about this and I had tried to be as diligent and professional as I could - we were doing things right. The cause of the collision was a failure on our ship where a pin in the steering gear sheared and we lost control of one of the rudders, which was stuck about 15 degrees to the left. We had about 45 knots of wind over the deck coming from dead ahead and when we started falling off to the left, we could not correct it with the one good rudder we still had. When we first noted the casualty we initiated an emergency breakaway. We had ships on either side of us refueling. The ship on the right side escaped unharmed but the ship on the left didn't quite make it. The left side of our bow collided with her starboard side. We lost our port anchor but otherwise our damage was minimal, mostly cosmetic. Thankfully nobody was injured on either ship. It wasn't very much fun, our pride was hurt and I learned a lot about the "Loneliness of Command". But an investigating team came aboard, gave us a clean bill of health, and absolved us of any responsibility for the collision. As coincidence would have it, the Major Command Screen Board was meeting that week to select people for command of aircraft carriers. When they learned I had a collision they had to find out who was responsible. Word got back to them that we were OK, so I screened for command of an aircraft carrier at that time.

Our *Caloosahatchee* tour ended on schedule in Feb 1977 but I had to attend a 14-week long ship's maintenance and engineering school in Idaho (SOSMRC). I was slated to go to the USS *America* next but while I was at SOSMRC I was given the option of going to USS *Midway*

(CV-41) instead. I leaped on that opportunity since most of my operational experience was in the Pacific Fleet anyway. I finished up the school and served a four-month assignment in OPNAV as OP-50W.

In early 1978, my wife, mother-in-law, and our youngest son, Don, left to join *Midway*, which was home ported in Yokosuka, Japan. We left three kids behind, two in college (Tom and Stephanie) and one in her senior year in high school (Deidre). *Midway* had been home ported in Japan since 1973. In the beginning there were a lot of protests against the stationing of *Midway* there. Some Japanese citizens didn't want the ship there; one of the big issues was nuclear weapons. They didn't want nuclear weapons in their country. The Navy's position regarding this issue was that the Navy would neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons on any of our ships. So that was the way that issue was resolved. After that things settled down. In 1978 we still had an occasional demonstration, but they were half-hearted. By this time the Japanese had embraced the home porting concept and the *Midway* itself and felt very much attached to her.

When I first got to Yokosuka a friend advised me that I had a very valuable tool available to me as the CO of *Midway*. He pointed out that the Japanese people were really very interested in her and would welcome the opportunity to visit the ship. It was suggested to me that I make as many opportunities as possible for Japanese nationals to come to see the ship, come aboard, look around and have a tour. That was very sound advice and whenever we were in port we tried to have as many tours as possible where Japanese nationals could come aboard the base and visit the ship. It was my belief that next to climbing Mt. Fuji, which most if not all Japanese have as a goal sometime during their life, the next most popular thing that the average Japanese would like to do would be to come aboard to visit the *Midway*. So we took advantage of that and we had terrific relations with the Japanese. The U.S. Navy did in general and we on *Midway* certainly did as well.

One of the big pluses of that tour, and there were many, was that we were maintained by the Ship Repair Facility (SRF), Yokosuka. Most of the shipyard workers were Japanese and, as most people are aware, when the Japanese build something it is usually of excellent quality and lasts a long time, e.g. things like watches, electronic gear, and automobiles. The quality assurance is very high in the things that they build, and the same was true for the equipment on *Midway* that were maintained by SRF, Yokosuka. Another aspect was that by 1978, we had Japanese Nationals that had been maintaining the same shipboard equipment for five years. So if this motor or generator crapped out or a pump failed and caused the *Midway* to miss an operational commitment, the person maintaining this piece of equipment would have lost a lot of face. As a result they took a lot of pride in their work and the *Midway* was in top form for a 33 year-old ship. Thirty-three, going on thirty-four years and the ship was in as good shape as any carrier in the fleet.

There was a lot of redundancy and safety built into the power plant of the *Midway*. We had four shafts, four main machinery rooms, eight boilers, one boiler per fire room - a lot of redundancy - the ship never missed a commitment and things worked as designed. We did have

one major disadvantage in that we were the only carrier in the Navy that did not have a waist catapult. A waist CAT is one that is on the angle deck. We had only two catapults and they were both bow Cats. This gave us two significant limitations. One was that launching on the port catapult fouled the landing area so we couldn't recover aircraft and launch from the port cat simultaneously. The other was when the deck got packed forward on the bow during the final recovery we could not launch another tanker in case of emergency.

When I went to *Midway* I was concerned about catapult maintenance. But the only time that we ever had both CATS down at the same time was during our Operational Readiness Inspection, which was one of the worst times of all to have that happen. But we stopped everything and got one CAT up the next day. We did the rest of the inspection on one CAT and got everything accomplished. We essentially won the Battle E while operating with one CAT! Not only that but most of the squadrons and departments earned E's as well. We also won the Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Award for most improved readiness that year, as well as the Golden Anchor award for top retention. We were all pretty proud of that. It was a great ship with a fantastic crew! This is what *Midway* Magic was all about!

There was a mindset out there among the crew that I called a Foreign Legion mentality. Most of the people who went to *Midway* were not volunteers. Orders to *Midway* meant two moves. You had to move to Japan and then when you finished your tour you had to move back. It would be a lot easier and nicer for most folks to go to a squadron say at Miramar and just stay there in CONUS and have no moves. Also, since you couldn't buy a house in Japan, and property values in the States were going up and up, many felt they were being priced out of the housing market by a tour in Japan. But when people got out there, even with this Foreign Legion mentality, they performed very, very well. The advantage for us was that we never got low on readiness. The *Midway* was out there for nineteen years and the readiness just remained high all the way. We'd get down a tad in readiness when in the yard for a couple months but then we'd come out and get our readiness back very quickly,

Back to our status in Japan, although some people were protesting in the beginning, relations between our countries were solid. We had/have a Security Treaty dating back to 1950 which was enormously beneficial to both of our countries and resulted in peace and stability in the region for almost three decades. The other interesting thing was the relationship between the United States Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF). In those days joint operations were very restrictive, due to political considerations. Also, the JMSDF capabilities were very limited as far as communication equipment and operational experience were concerned. But we started operating together, simple, basic stuff, and whatever they did, they did well. Over the years we have added to that simple start and things evolved so we can now operate very effectively together. Recently when we went to war in Afghanistan, three Japanese ships went to the Indian Ocean in support of our operations there. That was about as far as they could stretch their Constitution. Their military is a self-defense force and supposedly just geared to defend Japan. So I would say this is a big success story as far as relations between our countries is concerned, as well as between JMSDF and USN.

I want to pause here and go back to something I forgot to mention earlier when I was talking about safety and readiness in the fifties. I mentioned how many losses we had in our squadron that first year, and also how the training was marginal for our pilots checking out in a new aircraft. A number of things started to change in 1959/1960. We just could not accept/afford the aircraft and pilot loss rate that we were experiencing at that time. I already told you about the replacement training squadrons that were formed, one for each different type aircraft. Naval Aviation made three other significant improvements in SOP as well, a level readiness concept, NATOPS, and improved XO/CO selection and utilization.

First, the level-readiness concept. Recall what I said before about what it was like when I joined my first squadron. We had a whole new team waiting at FASRON 10 and when the squadron, VA-153, returned from deployment all the “old” guys left and the “new” guys took over. The only pilot who remained was a Lieutenant, the Air Group LSO. All of the top leadership was ordered elsewhere. The squadron went from high readiness to not ready virtually over night. The Naval Aviation leadership scrapped that procedure and replaced it with the level-readiness concept. In this new plan, the training squadrons would send two new pilots to the fleet squadrons about every six weeks or so. For example, we would send two pilots to a squadron in early January, and then the first of March we’d send two more, and then in the latter part of April two more and so on. When the squadron was ready to deploy they would be at full complement with high readiness. During the deployment we would slow the replacement process down somewhat, sending two pilots out every three months or so. This way when the squadron returned from deployment only a few pilots would have to be replaced. If the squadron was needed to deploy again right away it was ready. This way you didn’t have the wholesale departure of all of your experience at the same time, thus the term, level-readiness. Obviously, this contributed to increased combat readiness and helped to improve our safety record as well.

The next improvement that Naval Aviation introduced at that time was a standardization program called NATOPS (Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures Standardization). Prior to this program, which has been institutionalized now for decades, each squadron had its own standard operating procedures (SOP). Most were brought up-to-date for the ADMAT inspection every 18 months or so but otherwise were usually not kept current. When new leadership arrived, new SOP was often introduced.

The Air Force was better standardized than Naval Aviation so we borrowed some good ideas from them. It wasn’t easy, in fact it was difficult to get this new program instituted and accepted in the Fleet. Many aviators felt they knew better ways of doing things than the NATOPS way. Some of them may have been right but Naval Aviation’s poor safety record demanded change and improved standardization was part of the fix.

The final improvement introduced then into Naval Aviation was a different process to select squadron XOs and COs. At the time there was virtually little or no screening for XO. It was

not unusual for the XO to fail to select for command of a squadron. This was the case in my first squadron with regard to all three XOs. Not a healthy situation! So they changed the process and started screening for XOs as well as COs. At the same time they started the fleet-up program where you were XO for a year and then you would remain in the squadron and “fleet-up” to be CO for a year and the next screened XO/CO would come in to be your XO. Later on the tour lengths went to fifteen months each. By now it may be 18 months each or a three-year tour. This is about as long as you want to extend that assignment given the amount of family separation involved.

In conclusion, these are four very positive things that happened around 1960 and resulted in vastly improved safety and combat readiness in Naval Aviation.

Next I would like to tell one other anecdote about my CO tour on *Midway* in Japan. I guess there were a lot of different things about the *Midway* tour to relate but one that comes to mind is that as *Midway* CO I was working with/for about nine Admirals, many of whom acted as though they were my Boss. This caused numerous challenges especially when it came to my real Boss, who was a terrific leader and role model and, thankfully, pretty understanding about the situation. He was ComCarGru Five/CTF-77 home ported down at Subic Bay in the Republic of the Philippines. In the Yokosuka area, there were three Flags, the Seventh Fleet Commander, ComFairWestPac, and ComFairJapan. Another, sort of, real boss was ComNavAirPac located in San Diego. He was responsible to provide training and logistic support for the ship and Air Wing. He monitored our readiness very closely. He had three Functional Wing Commander Admirals reporting to him who owned a piece on the action in our Air Wing Five. They were the Fighter, Medium attack, and Light attack wing commanders. Then we had another CarGru Commander who was embarked who naturally felt he was our boss too because he was right there on *Midway*. Every six months that rotating CarGru would leave and another would come in. So I used to joke that it's not too difficult on our crew to go from “unsat”, when a new CarGru came in, to “outstanding” six months later when that CarGru departed to go back to the CONUS. But what was real hard was going from “outstanding” to “unsat” in a week when the next CarGru came onboard! They would then work with us and take us from their “unsat” to “outstanding” in six months. Pretty hard on people whose performance and readiness was actually pretty steady through the whole period. Anyway that's the story of the nine Admirals who watched what we were doing very closely and added to the spice of our lives! They were all good guys and we couldn't have succeeded as we did without the tremendous support of each of them and their staffs.

Speaking of staffs reminds of another *Midway* anecdote! In early 1979, about a year or so after I went to *Midway* we were in port in Yokosuka and the USS *Ranger* had a collision en route to the Indian Ocean near Singapore. It was a serious collision and they had to go back to Subic Bay for repairs. The national leadership wanted a carrier battle group in the North Arabian Sea as the Shah of Iran had been deposed and things were very unsettled in Iran, Afghanistan, and the Middle East in general. We were ordered to get underway in 48 hours, pick up the *Ranger*'s staff at Subic Bay and proceed to the Indian Ocean to relieve the battle group that was there at the

time. We did that and proceeded through the Strait of Malacca, then to Diego Garcia, and on up to the Northern Arabia Sea. On the way, we were flying one night about 500 miles off the west coast of India. We were flying in Blue Water conditions, i.e. no bingo field available. The weather was tolerable, but we were in and out of rain showers. During one of our launches, an F-4 experienced a complete hydraulic failure right after the catapult launch. AirOps called and told me about the problem and asked me "What do you want to do, Captain?" I said, "Well, we're going to have to land him aboard, we don't have any other option." The nearest airfield was in India, five hundred and fifty miles away. Our diplomatic relations with India were not good and we didn't have a landing-rights agreement with them. We didn't have enough tanker fuel available to send the F-4 back to Diego Garcia or anywhere else. This was not an attractive option anyway given the circumstances. We cancelled the rest of the launch to concentrate on getting the eleven aircraft we now had airborne back onboard safely. In the interim, AirOps called again to inform me that we would have to take the F-4 into the barricade due to the fact that the speed required in this hydraulic emergency situation was too high for a normal arrested landing. The next thing I hear from AirOps is that the F-4 is set-up to be the first plane to land and requesting permission to rig the barricade. I said, "Hey, we're not going to land the F-4 now. We've got to get the other aircraft back aboard first and then we'll take the F-4 into the barricade." I felt it was imprudent to take the F-4 into the barricade when we still had ten other aircraft airborne and we weren't sure what would happen to it after landing. Unfortunately, the F-4 had already been told to blow his gear and flaps down utilizing the one-shot compressed air bottles. So he was ordered to circle, conserve fuel and that he would land last at the end of the recovery. We recovered the other ten aircraft but during this time the flaps on the F-4 blew up enough that his approach speed was now too high for a barricade landing. So now we had some additional difficult decisions to make. I remember going to the Flag Bridge to discuss the situation with the Admiral hoping he would have some bright ideas, but he said, "You know, Tom, whatever you want to do is OK with me. We'll back you up." The "Loneliness of Command" once again!

The NATOPS manual guidance was that in a controlled ejection it should be done at or above 10,000 feet. I felt that was too high as we couldn't be certain what would happen to the aircraft after the pilot ejected. I talked to CAG and the CO of the squadron and we finally decided on 5,000 feet. By this time the weather was pretty decent. We got through the rain showers and were in a clear area. That was nice! Next the F-4 pilot flies by the ship on our course and the RIO ejects from the rear seat, his chute opens perfectly, he lands in the water and is picked up by the plane guard helo. The pilot was directed to fly over the ship on a heading 90 degrees to the left of our course, at 250 knots, 5,000 feet, trimmed up wings level, slightly nose down, and at about 5 miles from the ship, to shut the engines down and eject. That's what he did and guess what happened after that? I could not believe it, as soon as the pilot ejected, the airplane flew on for a little bit and then went into a slow, descending right turn, back towards the ship. At first only its white taillight was visible. Then the taillight and the starboard wingtip light (green) were visible as it continued down and right, gradually getting closer to the ship, with very little change in relative bearing! I'm thinking, "Oh shucks! What should I do now?" (By the way, by this time there are about 2,000 crewmembers on the flight deck watching the show!) I decided to increase

speed and turn right. The pilotless aircraft continues around and pretty soon we could see both the green AND red wingtip lights indicating it was head-on to the ship! I never saw 2,000 folks move so fast in my life and soon the flight deck was empty of visitors! Fortunately, it kept turning right and a short time later crashed into the sea about one mile on our port beam, too close for comfort! That's an experience I'll never forget. What would I have done differently I really don't know. We could debate the pros and cons of different courses of action. I'll leave that for another day. The pilot was picked up by the helo and returned to the ship safe and sound. Great work by the helo crew! I accepted supervisory responsibility for the mishap and that was the last we ever heard about it.

While I was on *Midway* in early 1979 I got selected for promotion to Rear Admiral! This was somewhat unusual, as normally they preferred not to do that, because if something bad happened, e.g. a grounding or a collision, they would have to deal with a possible deselection for promotion to Flag rank. Anyway it was a wonderful happening and Marty and I were thrilled and honored by it. We left *Midway* and Japan in September 1979 after one of the finest tours one can have in the Navy. We certainly had mixed emotions. To this day we cherish the wonderful memories of our tour on *Midway* in Japan.

Since I had not had a joint tour I had to go that route for my first Flag assignment. I went to command the Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) at Fort Sheridan, IL. MEPCOM was a new Command; I was the third Commander and the first as a stand-alone command, having broken away from the U.S. Army Recruiting Command a few days prior. MEPCOM's mission is to process/qualify applicants, mentally and physically, into one of the Armed Services. This qualification process is done through about 64 stations, called MEPS, located in CONUS, Alaska and Guam. It was a great assignment, joint command of Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard, officers, enlisted and civilians. Fort Sheridan was located about ten miles south of Great Lakes training base. We were there for a year. Good shore duty. By this time, we had only two of our four young adults with us at home, Don was a junior in high school, and Deidre a freshman enrolled in a local college. Tom and Stephanie were attending college elsewhere. I was afraid we were headed to the poor house! I lost my flight pay that year after 25 years on active duty so things were pretty tight financially. We were at MEPCOM from September '79 to August '80 and then received orders to be Commander, Carrier Group One, home ported at NAS, North Island.

One of my bosses as ComCarGru One was the Third Fleet Commander, VADM Ed Waller. At this time he introduced the concept of Battle Group Integrity to the Pacific Fleet. His idea was to identify the various units in each Battle Group early on so that each of the Warfare Commanders (AAW, ASW, ASUW, etc.) could start training his units together very early in the training cycle. We were chosen to be the first battle group, Battle Group Charlie, with the USS *Coral Sea* as our Flagship, to test this new concept. We had ten months to train together and we were really ready to deploy when our turn came in 1981. We had an outstanding deployment, most of it spent in the Indian Ocean and the North Arabian Sea.

At the end of this tour I got selected to be the Seventh Fleet Battle Force Commander, ComCarGruFive/CTF-77, home ported at Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines. Our staff was in charge of all of the carrier battle groups that were deployed in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean, usually there were three. We embarked on one of them, normally the USS *Midway*. We also spent some time on the USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70). So I was back to the *Midway* only this time as the Battle Group Commander instead of the CO and I had to be sensitive to that. As the BG Commander I had to be concerned about the ship, the readiness, the safety and so on but I didn't want to get into the Commanding Officer's business so I tried to be very careful and sensitive to this issue. *Midway* was in good hands with CAPT Rupe Owens as CO. Shortly though, CAPT Chuck McGrail, who was CO for the next 18 months, relieved him. He was an absolutely superb Commanding Officer. I was in complete agreement with his command philosophy and the way he did things on the ship. So there was neither conflict nor any difficulty with the fact that I had been CO of the ship a few years earlier. Unfortunately Chuck passed away a number of years ago.

Once again we were out there forward deployed and the Staff and I spent a lot of time at sea. It was a terrific tour! On the home front, Marty and I had a marvelous, comfortable home to live in at Subic Bay but, frankly, I didn't get to spend a lot of time there.

I should mention as an aside, that in 1975 my wife's mother (Alberta "Granny" Bramer) came to live with us and she was with us until 1985 when I retired from active duty. During this ten year period she lived with us in DC during the *Caloosahatchee* tour, then Japan, Fort Sheridan, North Island, the Philippines and finally in Washington, D.C. in the Navy Yard. This was a healthy arrangement for our entire family, because while I was gone so much on the road and at sea, the children had Granny there to do things with in addition to Marty. Granny helped to look out after them and they in turn provided companionship and comfort for her.

So anyway Marty and I were in CarGru Five in the Philippines and I again spent a lot of time in the Indian Ocean. There was a rule out there that if you were underway for sixty days straight without a port visit, everybody on the ship got two cans of beer to consume. So twice we were out there for more than a hundred and twenty days and we got two cans of beer and then two more cans of beer. (It's only 45 days now to qualify for that perk.) Our staff got to be real experts on the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. We did a lot of operating and interface with the French, the Brits, the Australians, and local countries like Oman. When I was out there we didn't operate with either Pakistan or India but we tried to maintain a balanced relationship with both countries. We enjoyed these sorts of operations with the other countries. Occasionally we'd have the French and the Brits both with us but we had to be very careful and that there was nothing in writing. We accomplished a lot of groundwork for the future and these naval ties continue to serve our countries well, for example in Afghanistan as we speak. Things were pretty unremarkable out there in the Indian Ocean during this tour. There were no major incidents or unusual events that come to mind.

I finished up a two-year tour and then went back to the Pentagon for a year. This was June 1984. I'd been on active duty for 30 years, and went back to an important job in the Pentagon as the Director of Strike & Amphibious Warfare in the Navy Requirements section. We determined or verified requirements for various things, like strike weapons e.g. missiles, bombs, mines, etc., and we were also responsible for amphibious support for the Marines. We were involved with the development of a lot of different weapons. We also had a lot of "black" programs that were very highly classified and required special clearances. Things like remotely piloted vehicles, which you've seen a lot about in Afghanistan, precision guided weapons, laser guided bombs, JDAMS, Tomahawk missiles and others. Tomahawk was one of our major challenges, a lot of development problems here. But it turned out to be a good weapon. We were also responsible for the management and development of chemical weapons in our shop as well. I found the Pentagon to be a relatively unrewarding place to work because you don't see a lot of progress from day to day. At the end of the tour you can look back and say well I accomplished something but it's a very frustrating venue. And that was in the '80s when there was a lot of money in the Reagan budgets! Anyway, I served there for a year and then retired from active duty in September 1985. Marty and I moved to San Francisco; Granny returned to Springfield, Missouri.

Smith: I have some questions about some of the areas we covered. We were talking about *Midway* in Japan and you mentioned you had gotten some advice about opening the ship up to let the Japanese people visit. Could you elaborate on that a bit? What you did and how you think that really impacted your relationship with the country.

Brown: What we did was to schedule guided tours of the ship on weekends or whenever it would not interfere with maintenance. If it were going to be unsafe to bring people aboard the hanger deck and/or the flight deck then we wouldn't do it. We would extend invitations to specific individuals and groups, and sometimes we'd have open house. Just open up the ship and we'd have five hundred or a thousand people standing in line just to come aboard. Other times we would have particular groups of people, e.g. school teachers, policemen, firemen, prosecutors, dependents of the JMSDF, or some of the JMSDF officers themselves. We would coordinate a lot of this with ComNavForJapan (CNFJ) so he could enhance his relationships with the Japanese Nationals and the military as well. In addition to that, we would often have specific groups of important people aboard for lunch in the in-port cabin. I might have ten or twelve Mayors of different nearby cities. Or the Presidents of the local Chambers of Commerce would come, or police chiefs or prosecutors. Then sometimes at night I would have dinner parties. We would use the gig and we would cruise around the harbor and have cocktails or other refreshments for about an hour, then come alongside the *Midway*, go aboard and have dinner. Obviously that would be a small group. We might be able to have five couples or something like that plus Marty and me. Then we would also fly people out to visit the ship while underway. We would utilize a COD aircraft, put ten to fifteen people on board and bring them out to land on the ship to spend the day. Then we'd fly them back at the end of the day.

Everybody was so impressed whenever they got aboard the ship!

The most impressive thing was the crew and watching them doing their jobs. The impact on our relationship with each of these visitors was spectacular. They gained a deeper appreciation for what we did to help preserve the security of their country. Also, they became very supportive of our troops in many ways. Does that answer your question?

Smith: Yes, some, but you also brought out too that you had very specific groups you targeted to bring this in, did you decide that? Did your staff decide that? How did these people find these groups to do this?

Brown: All of the above. And CNFJ provided a lot of liaison and support for us.

Smith: AH, OK.

Brown: CNFJ had a JMSDF Liaison Officer permanently assigned who provided terrific liaison support to us as well.

Smith: That's what I thought.

Brown: We were accommodating with regard to ship visits because, frankly, it was the right thing to do. Apparently people were cautious when the ship first came out in 1973, as there were a lot of non-supportive demonstrations outside the gate. Probably some of the COs may have been reluctant to have open house visiting onboard, afraid that someone would bring a bomb onboard or something like that. I'm not saying anything negative against the people who came before me because I don't know what the policy was then. I do know that this friend, who was a CO of a destroyer, who spoke fluent Japanese and had attended the Japanese Imperial War College, gave me the heads-up on this. So I presume that he had observed that not enough of this type of hospitality was being extended and we needed to do more of it.

Smith: Interesting. So it was actually a Navy officer, the CO of a DD that had school experience in Japan and knew the culture.

Brown: That's right. His name is CDR Jim Auer. At that time he was the CO of the *USS Francis Hammond*, which was another ship home ported at Yokosuka. He wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the JMSDF. He is now a professor at Vanderbilt University and his specialty is the Far East and Japan. After he retired from the Navy in the 80s he worked for Rick Armitage, in the Navy I believe. (Armitage is now the Assistant Secretary of the State.) Jim is a very knowledgeable, well-qualified expert on Japan/US relations.

There is another very important aspect of this situation that I should bring up at this time. Right after I took command of Midway, Commander Auer introduced me to a Japanese man named Ichiro Masuoka (Masuoka-san). Masuoka-san was the Executive Assistant (they called him the Secretary) for the Vice President of the Liberal Democratic Party, which is the party that has been the most powerful political party in Japan for decades. The Vice President was Mr. Naka

Funada. Mr. Funada was very pro-Navy. He and Masuoka-san are the two persons that should receive the most credit for getting approval to homeport *Midway* in Japan. When Mr. Funada died in 1979, Masuoka-san inherited this role of looking out after JMSDF, and also relations between the JMSDF and USN, even though he was only a Secretary and not high up in the governmental pecking order. He became known as “Mr. Navy”. As I said, one of the first things that CDR Jim Auer did was to arrange a meeting between Masuoka-san and me. Subsequently Marty and I went out to dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Masuoka. We all became close friends. I flew back to Japan in 1997 to visit with Masuoka-san on his deathbed and we remain very close to Mrs. Masuoka (Yoko-san) today.

Masuoka-san was the first Japanese person to fly out to *Midway* when it was about to arrive in Japan in 1973. Then he was the last Japanese person onboard nineteen years later in 1992 when the ship got underway from Yokosuka to return to the U.S. to be decommissioned. He was a special friend and loyal supporter through thick and thin, whether things were going well or poorly. He was a unique individual and it was my privilege to get to know him early on in my tour as *Midway* CO. I invited him aboard many times, both in port and while underway, during the period 1978-1984 on the *Midway*, *Coral Sea*, and *Carl Vinson*.

Whenever there was a special challenge we could call him on the phone and say, “Sir, we need some help”. I remember one time Secretary of Defense Weinberger was en route to Japan and his staff had planned to land at the old airport, Haneda, about two o’clock in the morning. But they were unaware that Haneda closed at midnight. So here they are between Hawaii and Japan when they were informed that they could not land at Haneda because the airport was going to be closed when they got there. Secretary Weinberger’s staff called Mr. Masuoka who was already in bed and Mr. Masuoka in turn called the Secretary of Transportation who arranged to keep the airport open so SecDef and his party could land there as planned. That’s an example of the kind of friend and loyal supporter Masuoka-san was. This whole thing was a very unique situation. Of additional interest is the fact that the Japanese are now building another carrier pier at Yokosuka and I am told it will be named Masuoka Pier!

Smith: That’s interesting that he so deeply cared for the US Navy. I don’t know how old he was but he must have been of that age group that was alive during the war.

Brown: If he were alive today he would be about 85. His dad had been a Captain in the Japanese Imperial Navy and I believe served during WW II. Masuoka-san was sick as a child, I think he had Rheumatic Fever, and was therefore not physically qualified to serve in the military. But, though he never served in the Navy, he served his country very well indeed.

Smith: So he grew up with the love of the naval service.

Brown: Yes, exactly. I guess I should tell one other anecdote that just came to mind about the *Midway* and our relations with the Japanese, because I think it illustrates something important

that might be helpful to somebody, somewhere, someday. When we were in port at Yokosuka in 1979, having recently returned from the emergency deployment to the Indian Ocean, one of our crewmen was in town visiting at the apartment of a married division mate. While there he got drunk and wandered off into the shopping district by himself. He staggered into a local shop and molested a little twelve or thirteen year old girl by touching her on the breast. Word got back quickly to me on the ship and I said, "Oh boy, this is a major problem". I jumped into my car and went out in town to see my good friend, Kosano-san, the President of the Yokosuka Chamber of Commerce. In Yokosuka, the Chamber of Commerce President was the most powerful person in town, even more powerful than the Mayor. I had gotten to know Kosano-san well; in fact he was like a grandfather to me. We had a very wonderful and close personal relationship. He had been to our house for dinner and hosted us at events in town many times. So I went to his office and told him what had happened and he said, "Well, that's not good. Here's what I want you to do. You need to go and make a "gomenesai" call on Mayor Yokoyama and say, "I'm sorry this happened". So he set this up and Kosano-san's interpreter and I went to the Mayor's office. We spoke to the Mayor through his interpreter. The Mayor kind of understood English but I believe he was embarrassed to speak it. The Mayor was a member of the Socialist Party and had not been an ardent supporter of the *Midway* home porting. But we also had a pretty good personal relationship with him, except we just couldn't trust him. His wife and Marty were friends. He accepted my call, the gesture, and everything went well. The next day there was this little piece in the paper about what had happened downtown and that Captain Brown had made a gomenesai call to Mayor Yokoyama. And that was the end of it! So here was something that could have been a near disaster for the *Midway* and the Navy with regard to our relations with the local populace in Japan. But due to the personal relationships we had established and nurtured in the community this distasteful event was handled without a lot of negative publicity. I don't know what if anything was done for the family, but if it happened here in the U. S. we would have a major lawsuit on our hands right away. Though Japan is not a litigious country it is possible that something was done for the family.

Smith: Some sort of compensation.

Brown: Possibly some sort of compensation for the family. But that is just speculation on my part.

Another anecdote comes to mind relating to when we were ordered to replace the *Ranger* in the Indian Ocean after she had a collision approaching the Malacca Strait. While we were gone, there was a headline and an accompanying editorial in the main Tokyo newspaper. The headline read, "Where is the USS *Midway*?" The thrust of the article was that *Midway* should remain in the vicinity of Japan in West Pac to provide security in the area IAW our bilateral Security Pact of 1950. "We have a bilateral security pact and therefore the *Midway* should remain close-by, in the Western Pacific, providing security and defense capability in this area. But here she is way over in the Northern Arabian Sea." After learning of this sentiment, when we returned to Yokosuka I decided to brief some key people in the local area. First, we went to Mr. Kosano, then to the Mayor, and then to a couple of local groups, and gave each of them a briefing. I

showed them where the Strait of Hormuz is and the route that the oil tankers travel to deliver the crucial oil, which is required by Japan. Of course this route passes right through the Strait of Hormuz. I explained to them that our presence was a key element in keeping the Strait open; therefore the *Midway* Battle Group was in fact contributing significantly to the security of Japan.

Smith: Right.

Brown: It was pretty basic but it really drove home the importance of what we had been doing during our extended deployment to support the economic security of Japan, even though we were thousands of miles away. I seem to have gone off on a couple of tangents. I can't recall now the other thing I was going to say to you.

Smith: Well, my question was just about the tours, just in general how that helped the relationship, but you've gone into that.

Brown: Fine. A lot of this relates to the fact that we were trying to strengthen and even improve relations between our countries and our navies for our mutual benefit.

Smith: Facilitate understanding and let them see what's going on, that sort of thing.

Brown: Yes, exactly. One of the things I believe about many people, and it's especially true of the Japanese, is if you meet a person and you don't really care about them or you may be wishing you were someplace else, they are going to recognize that.

Smith: Hum, very sensitive to things.

Brown: Yes, they are. That's the word, sensitive, and they can tell whether you're sincere or whether you're a phony, whether you really care about them and are warm towards them or, to the contrary, you'd rather be someplace else. Probably most of us can do that too, you can tell it when you're talking to someone. Sometimes people aren't even listening and you can tell.

Smith: You can tell when people zone out on you.

Brown: That's correct, and maybe it's not because they don't like or respect you but they have something else on their mind, they're preoccupied. I like to think that Marty and I are concerned, caring individuals. I don't mean to sound conceited but we are sincere. Most people will know if we care or not, especially the Japanese. We're not going to fake it... it's hard to fake anyway. So we were, and still are, sincere. We were appreciative of where we were and the warm hospitality and kindness we were receiving. The Japanese knew that and as a result I'm pleased to say we were well received and accepted over there. There were a lot of social events, a lot of things going on. The Japanese are forever throwing parties. They would coordinate and do things together with the Chamber of Commerce people and the JMSDF. They were appreciative of who

and what we were, what we brought to the table, and of the security we were providing with our carrier and other ships there and as well as our other armed forces that were in Japan.

Smith: Sure, but it sounds like there's a lot more needed than just providing the security. It took a lot of effort on your part and your wife's part.

Brown: It did. Marty did a spectacular job in this regard!

Smith: To go out there and to have to basically socialize, spend a lot of time cultivating the Japanese and developing a relationship with them.

Brown: That's correct. Time was the problem. There was more to do than you had time available. You have the various department parties and they would often invite Marty and I to attend. Then you have officer's social events and individual functions in people's homes. Also you have all this stuff going on out in the community with the civilians and with the JMSDF. Plus we were part of a community too, as we lived on the base. There were our neighbors from the Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, the hospital, and the repair facility, and other tenant commands. There was an air station nearby at Atsugi Naval Air Facility where the Air Wing aircraft operated out of while we were in port. Then there was our family! What I decided to do was to X-out Sunday and Wednesday nights on my calendar and those evenings we spent with our family. At this time, as I said before, we had Marty's Mom living with us, plus two of our four children, Don and Deidre. The other two, Tom and Stephanie, were attending college in the states. Deidre decided to postpone college for a year and stay with us there in Yokosuka. She worked as the secretary for the manager of the enlisted men's club. She had a terrific year, soaking up the culture, coupled with some travel to other countries. Our youngest son, Don, arrived in Japan halfway through his freshman year in high school and completed his sophomore year there before we left Japan. We moved to Fort Sheridan, IL for his junior year and then to Coronado, CA for his senior year. It was tough on Don to move three times in high school and have to attend four different schools in four years! In my view, that's cruel and unusual punishment for a high school student. However, there were certain advantages for the family, including getting to experience the Japanese culture and to travel to some other countries in the Far East. All in all, we consider it a very positive experience.

Smith: That in itself would be a whole subject of oral history as far as what the role of the family plays in these things. It's one thing for an officer to do his job, but you can't do it unless you have that support, too.

Brown: That's for sure, Joe! You cannot over-emphasize the importance of the role of the Navy wife or the military wife for that matter. That reminds me of another anecdote though it is a tad off the subject. In 1968, after my second combat deployment, we were ordered to VA-44 at NAS Cecil Field, FL. I had just made Commander and had been selected for squadron command. One day Marty asked me to get out of the Navy. She didn't want to be in the Navy anymore. I'm not sure why, but I think she was apprehensive regarding the responsibility that she felt went along

with being the wife of an XO and CO. I told her, "I can't do that, Honey. I can't get out now. I've wanted to command a squadron ever since we decided to stay in the Navy about ten year's ago and I'm getting close". But I said, "I will promise you this, I'll retire after I finish the XO/CO tour and complete 20 years of active duty in 1974. Is that OK?" She said, "OK". So that's what we planned to do. Well, as it turned out she was an absolute super star as a wife in my next two command tours that ended in 1973. My Air Wing tour as CAG was particularly challenging for her. We made a ten-month combat deployment during which she was back at NAS, Lemoore working with the rest of the wives to keep morale up amongst the families. But in 1968, when I made this promise to her to get out in 1974, I asked her, "Where do you want to live when we get out? Maybe we ought to start planning." Well, she didn't want to live either in her hometown or mine. We had met here in the Bay Area, so she decided she wanted to live in San Francisco. I had a brother that was a doctor in S.F. so we had some roots here. We were married in the chapel at Moffett Field in 1957. We had \$5,000 in the bank and in 1968 we invested in a piece of property in San Francisco near Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill. So that's how come we can afford to live here now.

We traded for a nicer place in the early '70s but when 1974 came along Marty changed her mind. She had been so successful as a CO's and CAG's wife that she was confident and comfortable about future assignments. She also said she had a parking place in the front of the Commissary so she wasn't pressing to get out anymore. We therefore changed our plans and I didn't get out. We went on as I described above to five more commands, two of them overseas, and a life that just kept getting better and better. We kept our place in San Francisco and traded it one more time before settling down near Fishermen's Wharf after retiring from the Navy in 1985. So that goes back to what I was saying about how important the wife is in the partnership of marriage. I really think she was just as good, just as productive, and just as effective, if not more so, in her role as a Navy wife in these various assignments, as I was in command. I give her tremendous credit for the success that we enjoyed in our Navy career.

Smith: Oh yes because she has an important role to play. Not just with the naval officers.

Brown: Plus the kids, she raised the kids. She essentially raised the kids almost by herself and had to make a ton of tough decisions when I was gone. You know, situations in school, appliances and cars breaking down, and dealing with the myriad of difficult things that kids experience as they are growing up. In addition, she kept me alive even though I wasn't there. She'd talk about "what's your Dad doing now?" She'd say, "Well he's in (wherever)... he's here, or he's there or another place." When I got home I fit in quickly as she had kept my space alive!

Smith; It's a difficult journey. A couple of other questions I want to bring up, this one kind of touches on leadership, but since you've kind of talked about it I want to bring it up here. You were talking about your role as the Flag on *Midway* and you knew the temptation there to do something. What was the biggest change as far as being a leader, moving from Captain to Rear Admiral?

Brown: One of the things about leadership is that the more senior you get the further it seems like you are from the troops. And the best part of being in the Navy, except for the flying, is your association with the people at all levels. That's why being a Division Officer is one of the very best jobs in the Navy, there's nothing like it in civilian life, absolutely nothing like it at all. You have a lot of control over the lives of the people in your division and with that control comes tremendous responsibility. You are way more concerned about behavior and personal problems, e.g. illness in the family, financial difficulties, marital difficulties, and so on. Again, there is nothing like it in civilian life. If someone is sick in your corporation or business office, well that's the way it is, not something people tend to get personally involved in. In subsequent squadron assignments as you progress to Department Head and XO/CO you are working through the chain-of-command for sure but you are still very close to the troops. When you get to be a CAG you know the people on your staff, but you're not that close to the rest of the troops, because each squadron has a Commanding Officer who's responsible for his sailors. So that's one thing that happens, as you get higher up in the chain-of-command. But one of the things I tried to do is to maintain contact with the troops anyway. One way I was able to do it was to stay flying. So when I was the CO of *Midway* I got permission to fly from the *Midway*.

Smith: While you were CO?

Brown: Yes, while I was the CO. The first time I got ready to leave the bridge in flight gear and told the OOD I was going flying and would be back in about three hours, the OOD's eyes got about as big as saucers! That's understandable, with all the standing orders, etc. it's comforting to the OOD if the Captain is on or near the bridge. The XO came up and covered for me while I was gone and that worked fine. But it was a big deal in my view. It was a positive morale factor and not only for the Captain! I learned a lot about our team's performance and readiness while flying these flights. The OODs stayed sharp, the flight deck folks loved it ... I like to think they put a little extra into their maintenance! I only flew in the daytime and tried to avoid the real bad weather conditions, as I couldn't afford a bingo to the beach!! I also flew from the ship when I was the Battle Group and Battle Force Commanders, but that wasn't as potentially risky in my view. I just had to worry about what my Bosses would think if I had to bingo and got stranded ashore someplace. But my bosses had given me permission to fly. I wasn't doing anything illegal or anything like that. I controlled it very carefully so the odds were small that I would ever have to go some place else to land. Anyway, that's one idea I used to remain connected further down the chain-of-command as I got more senior.

Another thing that relates to your question is span of control. As the Captain of the ship, you've got the department heads and you're working down through them through the chain-of-command to the troops. Now you are onboard but you're the Admiral, the Battle Group/Force Commander. You have other warfare Commanders and COs working for you, but many of them are off on different ships. So there's a big difference in span of control. The first thing that struck me when I walked on the Flag Bridge as a BG CDR was that there was no equipment there to make the ship go left or right or faster/slower. There's no engine order telegraph, no wheel for a helmsman to steer. So you're there and the Captain's making the ship go from up on the

navigation bridge. You can order him to go right or left or head back into port or whatever but you cannot make the ship go yourself from the Flag Bridge. So that's another thing that's different about being "The Admiral". You definitely have a higher vantage point and a bigger-picture view. But at the same time you are further from the action as far as everyday events and the troops are concerned.

One additional thought -- as the BG CDR you are a tenant aboard the CV and not the CO, that's obvious. But I always felt responsible to be aware of the readiness, material condition, professional performance, morale and so on of the ships on which we were embarked. So on the one hand I felt this responsibility to make sure that we maintained our readiness, safety of operations, etc., but on the other hand I didn't want to get too far into the CO's business. What I'm trying to describe is a delicate balance, a delicate line that you try to follow. Now, as I said to you before, it was easy for me because the Captain on *Midway* was so talented, so professional, and so well qualified for his assignment. Let me give you a specific example. Let's say the CV on which you are embarked as BG CDR has a collision. Who is responsible for the collision - you, as the Senior Officer onboard, or the CO? I researched this question thoroughly, by reading Navy Regs and talking to my bosses and others, and determined that in most cases the correct answer is that the CO of the ship is responsible, not the embarked Flag. Nevertheless I was on board and I felt a good deal of responsibility to help ensure that we didn't have a collision.

Smith: Right.

Brown: So, when I first embarked on a CV I always met with the CO and asked him to discuss his policy concerning the handling of surface contacts when underway. Specifically, I wanted to know what his intentions were with regard to what minimum CPA (closest point of approach) he planned to always be on the bridge in order to personally monitor the situation from there. (The Standing Orders of most ship's I have been on state that if a surface contact pops up that is going to have a CPA of less than 10,000 yards (five miles), you must contact the Captain immediately.) So I would say, "You're the Captain, you are asleep in bed, very tired, and you get a call from the OOD informing you of the pertinent details of a surface contact that just popped up on the radar screen. You have to decide what you are going to do right now. Are you going to say "aye, aye" and go back to sleep? Or are you going to get up and go to the bridge?" It's a judgment call that goes with the territory.

Smith: Right.

Brown: My more specific question to the Captain was, "do you have a minimum CPA distance when you are always going to go to the bridge?" The answers would vary but, on the average, the CO would decide on about 2500 yards. Now the Flag Watch Officer was also notified when the CV had a surface contact that had a CPA of less than five miles. If the CPA was 2500 yards or less and the CO was not on the bridge the Flag Watch Officer would give me a call. Then I would decide whether I wanted to go up to the Flag Bridge or not. If it seemed worrisome I would go up for sure. Either way I would monitor the situation until the CO was on the bridge and I felt

confident about the situation. Then the next day I would get-together with the CO to determine why he didn't act IAW the gentlemen's agreement we had, as described above. (That only happened once.) You can call this what you want, micro-management or something else, but we never had a collision during my four years as a Battle Group Commander and there were at least four collisions with CVs in other BGs in that time frame.

So in answer to your good question, Joe, these are a few things that relate to what was different in leadership from Captain to Admiral. The basics are the same but there are differences. Frankly, both the CO and the embarked Flag are concerned with similar things, as I alluded to before, i.e. readiness, safety, professionalism, and so on, but the perspective and vantage points are quite different.

But you know, when underway, you have a meeting everyday with your staff and a number of key people from the Flagship, and they brief you on how things are going, readiness, what sort of challenges are paramount, what equipment is malfunctioning or out of service, and so on. You also have various written reports available to you, plus you can walk around the ship and learn a lot. Of course you have to be careful; there's no room for disloyalty here or anywhere else.

Smith: Difficult situation... it could be at times though. And I think the other thing too or at least I would assume because –

Brown: Especially when there's a personality conflict, then it can really be difficult.

Smith: Oh yes, that makes it even worse, at least if you can get along with the person it makes it a little bit easier.

Brown: I just realized that I didn't finish telling you the story about the number of Admirals I worked for and supported when I was CO of *Midway*. Here's a rundown:

We had three admirals in Yokosuka, which I already covered. We had three admirals back in the States that were in charge of the medium attack wing, the light attack wing and the fighter/AEW wing. They "owned" the airplanes that were aboard ship, so they felt they also owned a piece of the action on board ship. Then there was my real boss, CTF-77, home ported down in the Philippines. At that time he normally embarked on the rotating carrier. There was COMNAVAIRPAC and finally there was the embarked ComCarGru. That's nine different admirals, each of whom owned a piece of the action relating to our Ship/Air Wing team. Since the spotlight was always shining brightly on *Midway* as the only overseas home ported CV, there was always keen interest in how each of the parts was doing. As I said above, one of them was my real boss and another was embarked on *Midway*. The latter was my Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) for a six-month period. Another was a three-star in charge of both of those gents plus he was very concerned about the readiness of each of the CVs in the Pacific Fleet. These were some of the facts of life for the CO of *Midway*.

While I was the CO for 19 months in 1978/9, we had four different admirals embarked. The first one had previously been CO on an aircraft carrier that had a collision and he was pretty nervous. Our next embarked Flag was a thing of beauty! He was very, very self-confident, he went on to three-stars and should have been a four-star except that he crossed swords with Secretary of the Navy Lehman over an integrity issue. And so everything was near perfect with him on board. He was the first Flag who permitted me to fly from the *Midway*. ☺ We had two more CarGrus embark and again things went just fine. Did I cover all of your questions, Joe?

Smith: Yes, basically you covered everything.

Brown: This is probably a good place and time to take a break then.

Smith: All right, we'll stop here for the day.

24 March 2002

Aircraft and Leadership Interview

Smith: Hey, my name is Joseph Smith, I'm a world history interviewer with the Naval Historical Foundation and today is 24 March 2002. It's about 14:10 hours, Sunday, and I'm here today interviewing Rear Admiral Thomas F. Brown III at his residence in San Francisco. This is continuation of the previous interview. The previous interview was covering career biographical. Today's interview will be covering aircraft that Admiral Brown flew and also a discussion on leadership, Naval leadership and leadership in general. Admiral Brown if you would go ahead and just discuss the aircraft.

Brown: Thank you very much. What I am going to address today with regard to aviation is mainly about the A-4 Skyhawk and the A-7 Corsair II. I got my Wings of Gold in July of 1956 and came out to the West Coast to NAS, Moffett Field to join my new squadron, VA-153. The squadron was deployed, flying the F9F-8 Cougar aircraft, but was scheduled to transition to the A4D-1 upon return from deployment. That is what occurred and I flew the A-4 for the first time early in 1957. I flew the aircraft in numerous squadrons for about 13 years until 1970 and amassed a total of something over three thousand hours in it. I made five deployments to West Pac in 1958, '59, '64, '65, and '67. I also served three tours as an instructor in two A-4 training squadrons, two tours on the west coast and one on the east coast.

The A-4 came off the drawing board in the early 50's and flew its first flight in 1954. The designer, the person who conceived it and drew up the plans, was a fellow by the name of Ed Heinemann; he did one fantastic job. The aircraft flew its first flight in 1954 and it is still operational today in 2002, 48 years later. Operational, not only in the Navy in one VC squadron down at Roosevelt Roads, PR, but also in the Brazilian Air Force as well. The New Zealand Air Force recently gave up their A-4s due to budget considerations. There are also some civilian-owned A-4s flying missions in support of EW and other military training down in Arizona. Operational for about fifty years, that is almost unheard of in the airplane business, although there are others like the C-130 and the B-52 that have been around a long time as well.

The aircraft was originally conceived and designed to be able to carry and deliver a nuclear weapon. The particular nuclear weapon at the time was the Mark 7; it weighed a couple of thousand pounds. It was large in diameter and length, as big or bigger than a three hundred pound drop tank. Therefore, the aircraft needed to be designed so that the bottom of the wing was high enough off the ground to accommodate this particular weapon; that was one of the key factors that went into the design. As a result it had long landing gear for the size of airplane that it was, and also a fairly high center of gravity. As a result of these particular characteristics, it was not the most comfortable aircraft to handle on the ground after landing, especially with a crosswind.

I should note that the A4D-1 Skyhawk was a light jet attack aircraft with a single engine and single cockpit. These latter two aspects were defining as far as I am concerned. In the case of the single engine aircraft, if you lose your engine you obviously have no engines so you're going to have to land it "dead stick" pretty quickly, or else eject and lose the aircraft. The A-4's lift-to-drag ratio is relatively low, about 9 to 1. This means for every mile of altitude you have, the plane can glide nine miles. So you couldn't glide very far in the A-4. If you were at thirty thousand feet, i.e. five miles up, you could glide about forty-five miles. But normally you would not be that high, so if you lost your engine, in order to land the aircraft dead stick you needed to be within thirty-five miles of a suitable landing field. The bottom line was that if you lost your engine the odds were pretty high that you were probably going to lose the airplane.

I believe that this dynamic fact of life created an attitude in the people in single engine squadrons that reflected a mindset that you had to do things right. There was no second engine as a backup. I further believe that this attitude permeated throughout the maintenance department and the rest of the squadron. It affected not only the people maintaining the engines but the ejection seat mechanics and everybody else; things had to be done right as people's lives were at stake.

As far as single cockpit is concerned that also had a mental aspect to it with regard to the pilot. If you did something dumb or made a mistake or an error that cost you your life, at least it was just your life. You weren't taking somebody else in the airplane with you. Well anyway, that was the way I was trained and that's what I did all my life, so I was comfortable with it; that's one of the things I particularly liked about being involved with the A-4 and A-7 aircraft.

I flew the A-4 in combat on two deployments. Most people I know who flew the Skyhawk in combat and flew other aircraft as well, are partial to the A-4. It was a good, stable bomber, it had a small radar signature, it was survivable, it was relatively easy to land aboard ship, and, though it had some ground handling deficiencies, it was a pretty forgiving aircraft. One of the things about the A-4 that was different from most other jets at the time, and different from all jets that we have now, is it had the capability to disconnect the hydraulic flight controls. This back-up control system was called the hydraulic boost disconnect system. If you took a hit in combat and lost your hydraulic pressure, you could disconnect your hydraulic controls and fly manually by direct mechanical input to the flight controls. A lot of people flying in the A-4 in Vietnam, who got hit by AAA or a SAM, were able to disconnect their controls and get out to "feet wet", i.e. over water, or maybe even back to land on the carrier. After they made it feet wet, if necessary, they could eject near the SAR destroyer or the CV. In most of these cases, we didn't lose the pilot, and we didn't have another POW.

The system was difficult to maintain and prior to Vietnam it seemed like it was a disadvantage due to the extra maintenance hours that were required to maintain the system. But once we got into combat it quickly became obvious how valuable this particular capability was.

I previously mentioned that the A-4 had limitations in design that limited its crosswind landing capability and also made it difficult to stop in certain landing conditions. Eventually, because of this problem, spoilers were added to later models of the airplane. Spoilers were devices installed on the top of the wing to dump some of the lift from the wing after landing, when the throttle was retarded. So when you landed with the spoilers engaged in a crosswind situation the aircraft was a lot easier to control. In subsequent models of the A-4 we went to larger wheels and tires and a heavier brake system. So some of the ground-handling weaknesses that I mentioned before were overcome by redesign.

The original A-4 was called the A4D-1, followed by the A4D-2, and then the A4D-2N. After that, they renamed all the models. So, the A4D-1 became the A-4A, the A4D-2 was now the A-4B, and the A4D2-N was the A-4C. Subsequently we added an A-4E and an A-4F in the Navy. The USMC and other countries that bought the aircraft had different models. Each model became a little bit more capable, had more modern technology built into it. So, all in all, it was a terrific airplane. As you can tell I'm real high on the A-4 Skyhawk!

In the middle 1960's it was decided that a replacement was needed for the A-4 and a process was initiated to determine which company could produce the best aircraft to meet the Navy's needs. The decision was made to modify the F-8 Crusader, which was produced by Chance-Vought Corporation, which later became LingTemcoVought (LTV). They shortened the Crusader and made a smaller airplane and developed an attack version of the aircraft that became the A-7, Corsair II. This aircraft was chosen over the A-4 as Naval Aviation's next light-jet attack aircraft. It was no coincidence that the A-7 was built in Texas, the home state of then President Lyndon B. Johnson! In my opinion this was a mistake. At that time in then (1966) dollars, the cost of one A-7 was about equal to the cost of four A-4s! It just didn't seem to make sense.

What was the justification? Well the A-7 carried more fuel and consequently had greater range. It also had stronger landing gear. It therefore could land aboard ship with a lot more fuel than the A-4. You could come back aboard in the A-7 at the max trap weight with about fifty-two hundred pounds of fuel. That was a lot of fuel! So, if for some reason you had trouble getting aboard, you had enough fuel to relax for a while and come back in an hour and a half and try again! A couple of reasons for that are:

1. The engine in the A-7 was a fan engine that was more efficient than the A-4. It didn't burn that much more fuel at low altitude than at medium altitudes. Therefore, there wasn't a large fuel penalty for flying down at low altitude; this was not true for the A-4. In the A-4 you burned a lot more fuel in the landing pattern because of the type engine that it had.
2. The A-4 max landing fuel weight was around three thousand pounds as opposed to fifty-two hundred for the A-7.

Another improvement in the A-7 was that it had a larger max gross launch weight and could carry a lot more ordnance than the A-4. It had five stations where you could hang ordnance or fuel tanks and the outer stations were stronger and could accommodate a heavier load of bombs. The problem here though was that the A-7 was underpowered and when you carried all this extra ordnance on it, it was really a dog and not responsive when you had to maneuver to evade a SAM or another threat in combat. So you usually didn't want to hang all these extra bombs on board anyway.

Now as things developed we evolved to where we were using bombing computers and smart bombs, like Walleye and Bullpup and eventually laser guided bombs (LGBs), which were/are very accurate and so there was no longer a need to carry lots of bombs on each aircraft. If you're going to drop ten bombs on a bridge, only one or two of them at best are going to do any damage to the bridge anyway; the other eight are either long or short. The way we went with technology was to have fewer bombs and make them very accurate. Of course, this trend has continued and today, as you can observe in Afghanistan, we can deal with multiple targets per sortie because of the accuracy of the weapons that we have available.

Two additional advantages of the A-7 were that you could trim it up wings level and it also had a real good autopilot capability. Neither of these things was true for the A-4.

These are my thoughts about the A-4 and the A-7. Do you want to go right into leadership now?

Smith: Yes.

Brown: All right, let's talk about leadership for a while. I organized my thoughts into three sections for today. I will talk a little bit about character and some of the basic characteristics that go into a leader, then secondly how one becomes a leader, and finally, some attributes which I think are important for a good leader.

With regard to character, I don't want or intend to get too far into politics here, but this was a much-debated issue when President Clinton was first running for President, i.e. does character really matter in a leader? There were character issues raised over his behavior as a husband, his truthfulness and so on. There was a lot of debate about whether character makes a difference, whether it was important for the President of the United States to have good character. My opinion is that character is very important in a leader.

What makes up character? Well one thing is a solid set of moral values. If you are going to be leading people, acting as a role model, etc. you should have a good set of moral values. Now where do moral values come from? It starts with the parents and the family. And if you're lucky you have parents that have a good set of moral values and they instill that moral code into you as their offspring. And not only the parents, the rest of the family contribute as well, the grandparents, the uncles, the aunts, and others.

When I was growing up and where I lived in Scranton, PA, the Judeo-Christian morality was predominant, it was apparent across society. There were a lot of positive role models in this regard in the surrounding society. These moral values then started with the parents and were reinforced by the surrounding family, neighbors, community leaders, etc. before you even started in to school. Hopefully, your school reinforced those values, reinforced the family discipline and the idea of always doing your best, doing what is right, and so on. That was the case in my school. I went to a neighborhood Catholic School; the same school for 12 years, grade and high school, and the church was right nearby also. There were many positive role models among the teachers, who were nuns, and the parish priests. There was no doubt that our parents' moral values were reinforced in the local schools.

Another part of the reinforcement process was the coaches that you had if you played sports, either team or individual sports. In my case, I had some real positive role models among my coaches. I already mentioned the surrounding society, the way the doctors and other professional people were, the way the judges and politicians conducted themselves; everyone seemed to reinforce this moral code.

Another important factor is the media. When I was a boy and young adult, the media was the radio, newspapers, magazines, other periodicals, and the movies. It seems to me that there was a moral code present in the media as well in those days. As an example, there were pretty rigid controls over the movies that could be shown in the theaters back then. (Remember, I was born in 1932 and went to school in Scranton until I graduated from high school in 1950 and then went away to college.) Television was introduced after WW II, when I was a teenager. Today we have an entirely different media than we had back then, especially as for as reinforcing moral values is concerned. The media has even more of an effect today upon morality and the prevailing code of values, through TV, the movies, as well as printed matter and now the Internet. Unfortunately the influence is not very positive. This is a major problem for us in our society today.

Some other important ingredients of good character are trust, integrity, and truthfulness, and these, coupled with the moral values I discussed above, are what I believe make up character. People need to be able to trust their leaders. They need to know that they are persons of integrity and honesty. Also, and I'll discuss this a tad more later, loyalty is another attribute which is an important part of character. Finally, I think that implied in the above is that you need to set the example as a leader of good character. You should, in fact must, be a positive role model in this regard.

Now on to Section 2, how does one become a leader? To start with, I believe that it helps to have some innate leadership capabilities and qualities. Potential leaders are often recognized early on by their parents, teachers, peers, and others. Often these folks are aware that "this person is going to be a leader". So that helps, but it is not necessarily mandatory. Many of our better leaders were "late bloomers".

I believe you can also learn to be a leader. Even though it may not show up in the early stages, leadership is something that can be cultivated. In this regard, it helps to have positive role models. But you can learn from negative experiences as well. I remember thinking, “I am not going to do that when I become a Department Head, an XO, or a CO”.

So just who are the positive role models? Well, again it starts at home. If you’re fortunate you have positive role models with your parents, with your mom and dad. Then there are other family members, e.g. siblings, aunts and uncles, grandparents etc. I worked on a farm when I was growing up. My grandfather was a medical doctor, a surgeon. He came down from Scotland, through Canada, down to Scranton, Pennsylvania, built and administered his own private hospital and had farming as a hobby. So my brother and I spent our time during the late spring, summer, and early fall on the farm. I learned a lot about people from working on the farm in my formative years. I learned from my uncles and also Joe Demski, the person from Eastern Europe whom my Granddad hired back around WWI to run the farm. All were very positive role models. During WWII, my brother Bruce, Joe Demski, and I ran the farm because my uncles were serving in the war. Of course, as I touched on before, there were coaches, teachers, priests and others in the school environment.

Another category of potential role models is heroes. In addition to the aforementioned leaders, when I was growing up we had World War II heroes that influenced how I perceived and thought about things, and still do today. Professional athletes were another group of potential role models/heroes. One who comes to mind is Ted Williams who was a baseball player with the Boston Red Sox. He was my number one baseball player role model! He was the American League Most Valuable Player twice and batted 406 during one season, a record that still stands. In addition he hit a homerun in his last at-bat as a major league player! His baseball career was interrupted twice when he served as a Marine Corps Aviator in combat in World War II and Korea.

Now let me turn to the U.S. Navy. When you finally get to your first squadron or ship you usually start out as a Division Officer. As a Division Officer you are working for one of the three or four department heads. Your department head is your boss. So you continue to learn about leadership from your department head. You learn how to do some things and how not to do other things. You will likely make some mistakes and you can learn from them. Your department head will help you out. You also learn a lot about leadership from Chief Petty Officers. I remember the first time I went out to talk to the troops in the Line Division in VA-153. My Chief, Chief Kammins, told me what to say and when we got back he critiqued what I said and gave me some positive feedback. I’m a big believer in Chief Petty Officers; I think the Chiefs run the Navy and if they don’t, they should. One of the primary things they do is to train Division Officers. When I was a junior officer I was the beneficiary of a couple of great CPOs. Then it goes right on up the line from there. In addition to your Department Head, you have an Executive Officer and a Commanding Officer. You are learning about leadership from them as well. If you perform well,

in due course you become a department head. Then you are working very closely with the XO and the CO. Again, you can learn both positive and negative things from them.

When I became a department head as a LCDR I had two extremely positive leaders in my squadron that I learned a lot from. I tried to emulate them later on when I became an XO and CO. The same goes for certain Air Wing Commanders and aircraft carrier CO's that I served with. I was extremely fortunate to have a lot of positive role models as I went along from department head all the way up the chain-of-command to Flag officer. I alluded before to the fact that you can also learn things, positive things, in a negative environment. Let's say you have a CO who is not doing things right and he's not very successful and morale is low. You can file that away and say, "Hey, I'm not going to do that when I get to be a CO, a CAG, or a ship's captain".

I also think that you learn a lot from the experience of leading. When you have opportunities early on to lead then you obviously get a taste of leadership. As an example, I think being the President of your class or the Student Council, in high school or college, provides unique opportunities, not only to learn more about and practice leadership but also to determine your comfort level and effectiveness as a leader. If you are good at it, you will more than likely seek and be given more responsible leadership roles as time goes on. So I would say getting involved with various activities will often provide opportunities for you to be a leader. Then it can take off from there; when you start to learn to be a leader and you are comfortable with the additional responsibility and you enjoy it, you will most likely aspire to lead more. You find out what works, what doesn't work. If people like the way you're leading, they'll give you positive feedback. That will satisfy you, and then hopefully you'll want to have more responsibility and lead even more. So these are some of the options. Maybe you will be the Captain of your team in a sport in high school or college. Or make opportunities to get involved with younger people. You can be involved with little league teams or Pop Warner football, or scouting, or the like, and once again you will have opportunities to hone your leadership skills.

Back to the Navy, when I became an instructor in the A-4 training squadron, the most responsible assignment available to a Lieutenant or a Lieutenant Commander, was to be the Officer-in-Charge of a weapons detachment that went to NAS Fallon or MCAS Yuma. Or OinC of a carrier detachment that went aboard ship for carrier qualifications. I used to love doing that; I liked getting off on my own. I had the responsibility of having some aircraft to maintain and people to train. I remember wanting to do that very much and finding it very satisfying. As I said before you find out what works, what doesn't work and hopefully you learn from your experience.

The final thing that I would mention in this section is the importance of communications. This spills over to the next section but as you start into leadership roles in grade school or high school or wherever, you learn how best to treat people. To start with, you know how you like to be treated yourself so you should be able to extrapolate that to how you should treat other people. But you've got to learn how to communicate effectively. I learned the hard way many times that when you inaccurately communicate something to a person or to a group of persons, and then

have to go back to try to correct the damage, it is very time consuming, difficult, and often painful. After I made enough mistakes, I tried harder to communicate clearly and effectively the first time so that I don't have to go back later to pick up the pieces.

Now to my third and final section, I will discuss some attributes or factors that I think are important to being a good leader. I will discuss 14 of these attributes/factors, not in any particular order of importance.

1) Caring. If you're going to be a leader you've got to care about what you're doing and about your troops. You have to have a sincere interest in the welfare of the crew, the welfare of the people that you are leading. (I'm a leader now as the Principal of a school and the same thing applies in education as it does in the Navy. Caring about the teachers, the kids and the parents.) The fact of the matter is that, if you don't care, the troops are going to know it pretty quickly. This is vulgar but "You can't shit the troops!" The troops can recognize a phony across the room, so you've got to care! If you are a phony, they're going to know it and you are not going to be a very effective leader.

2) Beware of too much personal ambition. That is, too much personal ambition to get ahead. What is your motivation to do what you are doing? We all want to get ahead, there's nothing wrong with that, but my advice is if you're a Division Officer strive to be the best Division Officer in the Navy. Keep focused on that goal and you will be successful. Promotion will come and you will rise to be a department head. The same goes from there on up the chain of command. When you get to be a department head you should work and strive to be the best department head you can be. The odds are good you will get selected to be an XO/CO. Again, if you continue to do that, the chances are good you will get promoted and go on to follow-on command as a Captain. Don't let yourself get to the point where the troops have reason to suspect that the real reason you are doing what you are doing is simply because you want to get promoted; or that you don't really care all that much about them or about your basic responsibility to look out after the crew. Allow me to illustrate by example. In 1961-63 I was attending postgraduate school at Berkeley, CA. I was a Lieutenant and there was also another Lieutenant there in our group. When I got to know him I learned that he was focused on becoming an Admiral. This flabbergasted me because that goal had never even entered my mind. He was a Naval Academy graduate and this was his primary objective, i.e. to be an Admiral in the U.S. Navy some day. Unfortunately, a few years later as a LCDR he had a nervous breakdown while serving as the XO of the commissioning crew of a brand new ship. I can't help but feel that his motivation was misdirected. Therefore I want to caution folks not to be looking too far down stream as for as promotion is concerned. Rather, one should do the very best he or she can do everyday at whatever it is they are doing. Couple that with the character values I discussed in section one above and I am quite confident that success in life will follow. In fact, "I guarantee it"!

3) Leaders need to be fair and consistent. When I used to welcome the troops aboard when I was in command I would say, "when I die, if I have a headstone, I'd be honored if they put the words

‘He was fair and consistent’ on it.” These attributes are crucial, in fact mandatory, particularly when you’re dealing with a crew that’s diverse. Everyone has a right to a fair shake and to be treated equally with others. That’s all most people want in this area. They don’t want special treatment; they just want to be treated fairly and consistently. One of the unique things about the military is that as a CO you are responsible for disciplining people when they violate the Universal Code of Military Justice. When I was on the *Midway* I had a guest say to me one time, “Being the CO on an aircraft carrier is sort of like being a Mayor of a city isn’t it?” And I said, “Yes, it is, but it’s a lot more.

You are also the judge and the jury.” That’s heavy-duty responsibility. When you are CO and someone comes to Captain’s Mast this responsibility weighs very heavily on the CO; it certainly did on me. So, again you want to be fair and consistent, you want to ensure that the troops perceive you that way. If they don’t, stand by for trouble as a leader.

4) Communications. I covered communications fairly thoroughly above. Effective leaders need good communication skills. They must be able to communicate clearly!

5) Positive Attitude/Feedback. I am very high on these two attributes! There is so much negativism in the world today; we are constantly bombarded with negative news and stories from the media, especially TV, and the newspapers. People are in the habit of looking at things negatively. In 1952 Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote a book called *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Positive thinking really works and I’ve found as time goes by I have less patience and time for negative stuff and prefer to accentuate the positive. Relative to this is, that over the years people would come in and tell me that we couldn’t do this or that or the other thing that we needed or wanted to do. And I would say to them, “Hey, don’t tell us the reasons why we can’t get this done. Please give us a different approach; how can we make this happen? What do we have to do to accomplish this thing that we need to accomplish?”

Here’s an example. One time in 1976 when I was CO of *Caloosahatchee*, we had been visiting Naples, Italy from the first to the fifth of the month and then got underway to replenish some ships. Most of the troops were out of money or close to it, having spent their last paycheck in Naples. We were going in to Palma de Majorca, one of the best and most popular liberty ports in the Med on the 13th and they weren’t going to have money to spend when we got there. The supply officer and I discussed this and I requested him to, “see what he could do to get the troops some money to spend when we get into port.” He talked to the Disbursing Officer who indicated there was nothing he could do, as he couldn’t pay the troops early, we had to wait until the fifteenth.

When the supply officer came by and told me this I said, “Hey that’s not good enough. You’ve got to figure out how we are going to get some money to the troops when we get into port.” That night when the Disbursing Officer came to see me he had a stack of books about two feet high with him. He brought them up to show me the regulations and explain why we weren’t going to be able to pay on the 13th. So I told him right off, “I don’t want to see the books, just tell

me what your plan is.” But he didn’t really have a plan, so I said, “Okay, let me offer you a couple of options here. One is you can pay the troops for thirteen days on the morning of the thirteenth when we get into port. Then two days later you can pay them for two days. Or you can pay them for fifteen days on the thirteenth and if somebody dies on the fourteenth or the fifteenth you may take that overpayment out of my paycheck. Which do you want to do?” The Disbursing Officer said, “Well let me think about it.” He left and later decided he would pay once, a full payday on the thirteenth. That’s what we did that was the last I ever heard about it. The troops really appreciated the fact that they had some money to spend when they got into Palma. It was a positive morale factor! This example is to illustrate what I am attempting to highlight here, that is figuring out solutions to challenges that are positive rather than dwelling on the reasons why that we can’t get things done.

Another facet of positive attitude is positive feedback. I believe that one of the weaknesses that some leaders have is that they are reluctant to give positive feedback. I don’t know why. Maybe it’s because positive feedback is viewed as somewhat risky. Let’s say you tell someone that they’re doing a great job and the next week they mess up and you need to take some disciplinary action or give them a poor performance report. In due course they might say, “you just told me two weeks ago what a great job I was doing. How did I get so bad in such a short period of time?” So you’re committing yourself in a way when you give positive feedback. But frankly, I never saw it as a risk at all.

Let me say here that *Midway* had a sterling reputation in the years I was able to closely observe and/or lead her during the period 1978-1984. I relieved RADM Linn Felt in February 1978 and inherited a wonderful ship. CAPT Jim Dorsey was the XO then, followed by CAPT Denny Strole, both terrific XOs. In 1979 the ship won the AirPac Battle “E” and many ship’s departmental “E”s. In addition, most of the squadrons in Air Wing Five earned “E”s as well. We also received the Golden Anchor Award for the top retention in AirPac. We won the Safety Award in 1978 but not in ’79. We also received another award called the Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Award for improved readiness. Somebody asked me one time, “What is your explanation for why things went so well for *Midway* when you were out there as the CO?” I said, “I really don’t know.” But one thing I tried hard to do was to **not** pass up an opportunity for positive feedback whenever it was warranted. I tried not to pass up any opportunity to tell some individual, division, or department that they had done a good job at something. For example, a good unrep, recovery, or maintenance, a good engineering job, a special meal in Supply, etc. The bottom line here is – look for opportunities and do not be afraid to give positive feedback when it is due.

6) Lead by Example. You cannot be successful as a leader if you don’t lead by example. This starts at home. You cannot expect your children to do something, or avoid something, if you are not doing it yourself, e.g. tell the truth, do not smoke, etc. It’s the same wherever you are as a leader. Remember, leaders are role models! It’s true in the Navy as well. If you’re expecting people to have integrity and to be honest you have to set the example. If you want people to be loyal to you, you must be loyal to them.

Please allow me to digress here on the subject of loyalty. Loyalty up the chain-of-command comes with the territory when you assume command. When you become the CO the troops transfer their loyalty to you. As a new CO the troops are loyal to you. Of course, you can mess it up, but to start with almost all the troops are loyal to their new CO. It's built into our culture. But the culture of loyalty is not just loyalty up; it's loyalty down and loyalty across as well. If the loyalty down is not there then the loyalty up is going to erode.

Anyway you need to lead by example. When you are faced with doing difficult things you need to do the difficult things first. For example, if in combat as a CAG you are assigned a difficult mission tonight or tomorrow, you should go first. If there are numerous missions, as the CAG you should lead one of the most difficult ones and assign the less difficult to others. Not always, not forever, but I believe at least in the beginning you have to set the example in this regard. In other words you've got to walk the walk not just talk the talk.

7) Take Care of your people. This certainly is implied in a lot of the above but it is imperative that you take care of your people. How do you take care of your people? To start with you've got to know your people in order to be able to take care of them properly. For example, as a division officer you've got to know whom the married people are and if they have children or not. You must know about their kids, are they OK, are they having medical problems, and so on. The same also applies to Department Heads, XOs, COs and on up the chain of command, though of course to a different degree. What sort of medical care are the troops getting from the hospital on the base? Is there a problem in this regard? If they do have a problem are you willing to help alleviate it? Are you willing to take some of your time and go to the Senior Medical Officer to determine why the medical treatment doesn't seem to be up to par? Or to the commissary, if the commissary is not adequate? In other words the quality of life of your crew and their dependents should be matters of concern to each leader.

You need to be aware of what's going on. One of the things I used to do as a CO or CAG was to go to the hospital with one of our kids who was sick at night. I'd go in old clothes and see how I was treated. This gave me a clue as to how our sailors were being treated. This is the kind of thing I'm talking about with regard to taking care of your people in the Navy. You've got to know what their needs are and you've got to check some things out yourself in order to know what is really going on.

What else is important to the troops? Well, one thing is pay. You need to know how things are going, are your people getting paid the right amount of money, are their allotments right, and this sort of thing. Another thing is the food they get. You need to check out the mess hall every once and awhile. Or eat on the mess decks, get a tray of food and sit down and talk to the troops. Again, what I'm saying is you've got to take care of your people and you must be and stay informed in order to do that.

Here's another sea story. One time I was talking to the Chaplains on *Midway* and I said, "I checked out a Chaplain's Manual and read it. I was hoping it would say in there that the

Chaplains are here to help me do my job, i.e. to maximize the readiness of the ship. But, that's not what it said. It said that the Chaplains are here to serve the religious needs of the crew." So I continued, "I now know what the manual says but I would really appreciate it if somehow you could help me maximize the readiness of the ship." They indicated they were interested in doing that. So I said, "Well if you're going to do that you've got to get out and around the ship. You can't sit in your office and wait for somebody to knock on the door. Because a lot of the sailors here who have problems are not going to go look you up to tell you about them. But if they get used to you walking through the ship and/or their workspace occasionally, there's a chance they might say something like, 'Chaplain, can I talk to you about something? I've got a problem at home. I received a letter today from home and I'm really worried about my wife'. Then, hopefully, you can help them out in some way. If warranted, you can come to the XO or me for assistance and we can provide support as appropriate". This is an example of how leaders can stay informed so as to be able to take care of their people. The moral here is that others can keep you informed and help you to know what's going on in your command.

An experienced, three-star black shoe gave me some great advice one time, just before I took command of my first ship, the USS *Caloosahatchee*. He told me, "You know Tom, I've seen a lot people come and go in this business. If I were to wrap it up in one statement why some people didn't do well in command of a ship, it was because they got stuck on the bridge and didn't know what was going on around their ship." He was right on the mark! You should not just rely on the Department Heads and the XO to tell you what's going on around ship. You've got to get out and find out some things for yourself.

Of course, you have to be careful how you use what you learn. If one of the troops talks to you and says, "I have a lousy Division Officer, he doesn't care about us." You don't go running after that Division Officer but that input gives you a place to look. You can gather your own information in other ways and if there is a problem you can deal with it through the chain-of-command.

As a related matter, I requested and received permission to fly from USS *Midway* when I was the CO. It was/is controversial but I'll tell you, the first time I walked off the bridge in my flight gear, after telling the OOD I'd be back in about three hours, the eyes of the bridge team were as big as saucers! Actually, the XO came up and filled in for me while I was gone and loved it. I think it helped for them to realize, "Hey you know I got to have my stuff together, the Captain's not always going to be around." Also it was a good morale factor. I also was able to do the same thing as a Battle Group Commander later on. It's a little risky but I believe it's the right thing to do. I never had any difficulty of any sort and there were a lot of positives. I mention it here, as it is another way to learn more about what's going on in your ship or Battle Group.

8) Trust Your Gut Feelings. One thing I believe in, which will help you out as a leader is to trust your gut feelings. If your gut is telling you something, you had better pay attention to it. If you do, you will normally be glad that you did, if you don't you will often be sorry later on. This is just as true today at my age as it ever was, though I am no longer dealing with life or death issues.

Be aware that you might not be able to justify why you want to do this or that... just a gut feeling!

9) Delegating Authority. I believe in delegating as much as you can. I tried to do that on *Midway*. As you know the CO of an aircraft carrier is a big, very responsible job. There is a lot to be concerned about. There are a lot of departments – Operations, Air, Engineering, AIMD, Supply, Weapons, Deck, Medical, Dental, and so on, all working for you through the XO. What I learned was that most of the department heads needed little or no daily supervision. You just had to ensure that they kept you informed. You could monitor the communications traffic but a good department head will let you know when something occurs in their department that you should be aware of. But there were one or two who weren't like that and I tended to micromanage these department heads to ensure that they didn't get themselves or our team in trouble such that we couldn't carry out our mission. So on the one hand you delegate, but on the other hand you have to watch out to ensure you know what's going on in the departments in your squadron or ship. In other words, you have to do what you have to do.

As a rule, I do not believe in firing people. I feel that BuPers gives you your share of talent and you should be able to get the job done with the hand you are dealt. Also, when you fire somebody there's no guarantee that a top notch, properly qualified replacement will be available in the short term, especially when home ported overseas. I'm proud to say that in seven commands I never relieved anyone for cause, not even one time. I gave some poor fitness reports for unsatisfactory to marginal performance but I didn't relieve anyone for cause. We carried on the best we could with the talent we had.

Relative to delegation, I think that when you tell somebody you want something done you should not turn around and tell him or her how to do it. To me it's a fundamental leadership thing. When you keep telling folks the "how", what's likely to happen is pretty soon they will just start waiting to be told how to do things. They don't use their ingenuity and initiative; in effect, you limit their performance and their capabilities.

10) Show a passion for your profession. This is somewhat relative to positive attitude but I think you should show a passion for your profession and for your mission. When you really get with it, this can be infectious to the rest of your teammates. As I've said, you should really care about what you are doing and want to be the best you can be. You want to be number one and when you are you feel good about it; you are going to want to experience that feeling again. When your troops are number one, they're going to feel good about it and they are going to want more of it. It can become a mind set and motivator for life. Usually they will continue to excel, whether in or out of the Navy. That's one of the reasons why the majority of the folks who get out of the Navy and the other Military services are in such demand in the civilian world and are usually hired readily. Another reason is the Puritan Work Ethic. We introduce our sailors in the Navy to this mode of operation. They learn to work until the job is done rather than just watch the clock. This can be infectious too. These are the kind of employees that businesses want, i.e. those with attributes like passion for their profession and the Puritan Work Ethic.

11) Strive to always do what's right as well as the best that you can. Of course this relates to subjects I previously touched on, like moral values and “be fair and consistent”. But it deserves highlighting here. Your troops will appreciate it and many will strive to emulate your example.

12) Types of Leadership. I have observed different categories or types of leadership over the years. One is leadership by leadership-ability; another is leadership by terror. I recommend utilizing the former and avoiding the latter. If you have leadership ability, leading by terror is unnecessary. I didn't appreciate being on the receiving end of leadership by terror and find it hard to imagine why anyone would want to lead that way. I formed the conclusion that if someone was leading by terror it was because they didn't know how to lead with leadership ability, in a positive way, using the attributes and characteristics I've been discussing. I realize there are leaders who get ahead leading by terror, both in the military and civilian world. But there are a lot fewer of them than there are competent, charismatic, positive leaders.

13) Loyalty versus Truth. Earlier I discussed the fact that leaders need to be loyal and also truthful. But sometimes these things come into conflict. The question I pose here is: what do you do when there is a conflict between loyalty and truth?

About eight years ago, a Professor at the Naval Academy got fired for writing a controversial article, which was published in a DC newspaper. In the article he alleged that some things had gotten mixed up back there. He charged that at the Academy they were essentially teaching loyalty over truth. Specifically, he cited the Midshipmen's code that you don't ever bilge another cadet. It follows then that, if you don't ever bilge another cadet, you eventually are going to have to lie about something. Now I didn't go to the Naval Academy and I don't know if that's the way it actually is back there, but when I read the article a light came on as to what happened in the investigation of the 1991 Tailhook incident. During the initial phases of the investigation some junior officers were not telling the truth about what happened, apparently in order to protect the perpetrators of the incident. It is my belief that truth lost out to loyalty in this instance. **I want to make it crystal clear that in my book truth has got to take priority over loyalty.** I'm aware that meeting this standard can sometimes be difficult. I cannot lie without others being able to tell. But some people can. And by the way, I believe that though lying may give a person a short-term advantage, it's usually a long-term disadvantage when you're not telling the truth.

There might be a time, an occasional time, where you can justify not telling the truth. But it would be very exceptional and I don't recommend going down that path.

14) Decision Making. Good leaders must be able to make difficult decisions. They are not always going to be able to be the “good guy”. One should not make important decisions based upon being the good guy anyway. When it came to naval aviation, I seemed to be the hard-nosed guy more often than not.

When I was in my first squadron we had a pilot who had two major mishaps, both caused by pilot error. A Field Naval Aviator Evaluation Board (FNAEB), during which I recommended that he not be allowed to continue to fly, evaluated him. However, the Board allowed him to keep his wings and to continue flying in the squadron. On the next deployment he had a third pilot error mishap. At the end of a night tanker flight, he forgot to dump his buddy store, hit the ramp during landing and was killed. I guess that's when I became hardnosed about this sort of life-or-death situation.

I attended Aviation Safety Officer's School at USC in 1963 and this was another defining event in my life as a pilot and a leader. I tried to motivate people to live and fly by the rules and to perform like a professional, on the ground and in the air. I was also motivated to preserve the lives of those pilots who earned their Wings of Gold but were not able to perform safely in the fleet.

One time on the *Midway* in 1979, we had a situation develop which required the launching of a tanker aircraft ASAP. The Flight Director on deck kept trying to get a KA6 tanker, who was started up, to follow his signals so that he could pull the chocks and taxi him forward and onto the catapult for an immediate launch. The Director was not successful in getting him to move and eventually the pilot shut the aircraft down and exited the cockpit. I asked CAG to find out what the heck was going on with the pilot of the KA6. The Commander of the squadron went up and intercepted the pilot who was on the way to his ready room after he left the plane. When he got there the pilot was crying! When questioned by his CO the pilot said, "Skipper I just couldn't launch tonight. I got thinking about the KA6 tanker crew that was killed on the USS *Enterprise* a couple of weeks ago." In that mishap the tanker caught on fire and exploded when an F-14 plugged into the refueling drogue. The KA6 and the crew were lost. Due to the nature of this incident with our pilot it was decided to convene an FNAEB. The Board met and gave the pilot an UP! When I heard that, I told CAG to ensure that the Board's report was routed to my level for review and endorsement. I recall telling CAG that based on what I knew then about the incident I was going to give him a down and send his case on to BuPers for a final decision. I guess I was guilty of "command influence"! Ultimately, we gave him a down with a recommendation that he retain the right to wear the insignia, i.e. his "Wings". I believe he got BuPers to let him continue to fly ashore and he probably ended up flying with the airlines. Anyway I was the hardnosed guy that way. It wasn't an enjoyable task but I believe you have to have the courage to make the difficult, maybe even unpopular, decisions when it is the right thing to do. When you do that though, you should tell the necessary people about the decision; people who have a right and a need to know. Why you did what you did, even though they may not agree with you. At least they'll appreciate having your perspective and knowing why you did what you did.

This is the end of my thoughts on leadership, Joe. Good to have a chance to talk to you today. I appreciate you giving your time to this and providing the opportunity for me to complete this oral history.

Smith: Great, well thank you very much Admiral. I would like to ask one question. It came to mind when you were talking about leadership, in talking about being an example, a role model and so on in the Navy. Who were your role models and why?

Brown: Good question! Let me talk about some role models from my family and then from the U.S. Navy. During the World War II most of the men in our family served in the military. They either got drafted or enlisted. I had a cousin, Bobby McCann, who joined the Marine Corps right out of high school. Bobby was one of the most handsome young men you'll ever see; he looked like he stepped right out of a recruiting poster. Sadly, he was killed at the Battle of Tarawa. Even though I didn't know him that well, the fact that he did what he did, that he joined up and gave his life for his country definitely made a lasting impression on me. I should add here that his parents, John and Frances McCann, never got over the loss of their only child. They died of broken hearts about ten years later. And then, I had an Uncle who was a surgeon, who died at age thirty-seven when I was about five and a half years old. I remember one day him telling me about how important education was. He said of all the education he had, the most valuable and meaningful to him came from his time on the farm. That really made an impression upon me and I made the most of my time on the farm and other similar educational experiences that were to follow.

I want to tell you next about Joe Demski. Joe came over to the United States from Eastern Europe in 1917, at age seventeen, to work on the family farm. He was an unforgettable character and was in many ways a positive role model for me. He spoke English with an accent, had limited formal education, but it seemed like he could do almost anything around the farm. He built a sawmill, harvested trees from the forest part of the farm, and then built a barn and the other farm buildings. He could fix almost anything. I was nine years old when the war started and I worked on the farm every summer until my uncles returned from the war. During that time Joe, my brother Bruce, and I did all the farm work. Later, when my brother got drafted it was just Joe and I most of the time. One big job was harvesting the hay, which was the main food for the cows and horses. Joe would cut it down, let it dry and then rake it up into rows. We had two horses, a wagon, and a hay loader to pick up the hay and get it into the barn. Before we got the hay loader it required pitch forking all the hay up on the wagon... hard work! The hay loader would pick it up and dump it on the wagon. I drove the horses and Joe spread the hay out on the wagon. One fond memory was the first day Joe let me drive the horses all the way from the field into the barn. After I got the hang of it, one day he got off the wagon and let me drive it all the way into the barn by myself. That was a big deal, my first solo drive! I can see now how he was bringing me along with more responsibility and helping to create a leader right there. He showed confidence in me to allow me to handle this responsibility by myself. One day, though I wasn't aware of it, I made an error when I cut it too sharp turning into the barn and cracked the whippetree, which is like the keel of the wagon. Joe didn't let on but I noticed later that he replaced the whippetree. But he didn't make a big deal of it. Quite a guy!

So those people in the family, and my Mom and Dad, were special role models for me. Unfortunately, my father was an alcoholic and lost his business when I was in college, but he was

a great dad; and my mother was a Saint on earth, a very spiritual person. These are not exactly the kind of role models that you might have had in mind, but they were all part of it. I had positive role models all the way along in my formative years.

Let's now turn to the Navy. In 1964 I had a CO and XO that were an absolutely outstanding combination. Our CO was named CDR Dutch Netherland; the XO was CDR Jack Shaw. They had everything going for them as far as positive leadership was concerned. They were the kind of people you want to emulate. I often thought about them later on when challenges would come up and I'd wonder how Jack Shaw and/or Dutch would handle this particular challenge. In 1966, when I was back in the training squadron, Commander Netherland came aboard as a prospective CAG. And I said, "Hey, Skipper how are you doing? I thought you were going to an East Coast CAG." He said, "Well I was, but I requested the West Coast." "How come?" I said. He said, "Well I haven't been to Vietnam... it's my turn." He went on to say, "I believe when you sign on as a coop scraper and it comes time to scrape coops, you've got to scrape coops." A coop refers to a chicken coop.

He became a CAG and while leading one of his first Alfa Strikes his aircraft was hit by a SAM and he was killed. Both he and Jack Shaw were killed in 1966. CDR Netherland's words still ring in my ears!

When I was CAG Nineteen on *Oriskany*, our CO was CAPT John Barrow. He was the kind of leader you'd follow anywhere. He was a natural and virtually everyone loved and admired him. The CAG and the CO of the ship have a very special relationship. We were in combat and I knew he was worried that I was going to get shot down. I was sort of like a son to him. So I used to go up to the bridge before difficult missions and say, "Don't worry, Captain, everything is going to be all right. It just another strike, we've got everything covered," just to try to put him at ease. It was obviously harder for him than it was for me as I was going out doing it. If I had to pick out just three positive leaders and role models, these would be the top three. One of my CAG's was Vice Admiral Stockdale, whom I also hold in very high esteem. Mainly because of what he did as a POW, but also he was a fine CAG and somebody whom you could emulate, who had the right kind of attributes. All these role models had the character, moral values, and most of the attributes that I have talked about in these oral interviews.

Smith: Okay. Oh great. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Brown: No. That's it.

Smith: Okay, great.