California Maritime Academy Library

Interview with Terence Purdom

Oral History Project

Interviewee: Terence Purdom
Interviewer: Ryan Ham and Ben Harmon
Date: October 6, 2012

Place: Cal Maritime Library
Transcriber: Rev.com

Preface

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Terence Purdom conducted by Ryan Ham and Ben Harmon on October 6, 2012. This interview is part of the Cal Maritime Oral History Project.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Terence Purdom is a graduate of the class of 1962, Engine

Abbreviation

TP: Terence Purdom
RH: Ryan Ham
BH: Ben Harmon

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Interview

[00:00:42]

RH: Today is October 6th, 2012. I'm with Terence M. Purdom. He was born May 30th, 1941. My name is Ryan Ham, and Ben Harmon is recording. We are at the California Maritime Academy Library, and Terence Purdom was the class of 1962. I guess, just to start off, what made you choose to attend CMA?

TP: I got out of high school and my father wanted to know what I was gonna do for the summer, and I said the usual thing. Drive around, have fun, and all that. Well, he took me over to San Francisco to Chevron Oil, and he knew the personnel manager there and he got me a berth on a Chevron tanker for the summer, as a wiper. So, I did that for a summer, then I went to St Mary's College in Moraga, and I was gonna be a philosopher, and a historian, and I looked at what they made, and I said, "I want to be an engineer 'cause all they do "is stand under a blower all the time and keep cool." So, I took a test for the maritime school and was accepted, so that summer I went out on another ship called AME Lombardy, another Chevron tanker. Made the run to Tahiti, and Samoa, and Makati, and Johnson Island on those things, and got off in Portland, Oregon and reported to school.

RH: Wow.

TP: I just thought it looked like a good way to, you know, you get a room and food, and you get to see things.

[00:01:42]

RH: So, you had sea experience before coming to--

TP: Yeah, I was a wiper. I mean, an engine room cleanup boy, you know.

RH: Where did you live?

TP: I live in Battleground, Washington.

[00:01:53]

RH: Oh, okay. During your time at CMA, you lived on campus?

TP: Well, my home was in Richmond, back then.

RH: Oh, okay.

TP: The only time I lived here was during the week, or if I was restricted on Saturday and Sunday for some reason.

[00:02:18]

RH: Hmm. What were some of the more challenging courses you took at CMA?

TP: Chemistry. Let's see. Chemistry, for me, was the toughest one, and nuclear engineering was a little bit on the hard side. And the rest of them didn't bother me that much.

[00:02:41]

RH: How was your first cruise? How was it going on that compared to your time before Cal Maritime, your sea time?

TP: As a wiper?

RH: No, your first cruise through Cal Maritime.

TP: Oh, it was fun. I thought it was fun, anyway. It was sorta crowded. We had berthing areas three high in the front end of the ship, but it didn't bother me any. I thought it was great. I was with a bunch of my pals, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, to be quiet frank. I had a great time. All the bad things you forget over the years, you know. I can't remember the bad ones much anymore, but the good ones are still stuck in my memory.

RH: Right.

TP: You'll get that most out of our classmates. They'd feel the same way.

[00:03:26]

RH: On the phone, when I called you, you talked about the two-week induction.

TP: Yeah, indoctrination?

RH: Indoctrination, yeah. Can you tell me anything about that?

TP: It was you take a bunch of kids out of high school, or one year of college and you get 'em up here, and back then, it was a semi-military establishment. You had a uniform, you walked around, and you marched everywhere. And you gotta get these guys attuned to what they are gettin' into because they start immediately off going to school and learning, and so in order to get the military side of it, the discipline side of it, you have this two

week indoctrination. Most of it was get up, hurry up, get shaved, get clean, get in formation, make your bunks, all of that stuff, and they'd come around with a quarter and throw it on the bunk, and if it didn't bounce, they'd tear the bunk up and you'd have to do it again. Or if your shirt was tucked in right, they'd pull it all out and you'd have to remove the shirt. You know, there was no physical, any of that kind of stuff, but it was just getting to where when the guy said to this and do that, you would do this and do that without a lot of questioning, and things of that sort. Some guys didn't like it and left, and the rest of us stayed. But it was mostly like that. It was the hardcore, get up, run out here, run in there, go eat, get out, formation, go back in, run around. That type of stuff. All it did was give us a sense of what the flavor of the school was at that time, and it was a semi-military sort of an establishment.

[00:04:44]

RH: Did those same events that happened that first two weeks continue on through your first year at CMA?

TP: Well, as a third classmen, it eased up. It wasn't sort of a, not such a desperate thing to get you in tune with everything, but we were first in formation, the last out, last to eat, the first back in formation. You might get an occasional cold egg, or something like that, but we had to stand up at the table some time and recite marine poems, and stuff like that before we could sit down and eat. It didn't bother me any. I just thought it was part of the show here, and you get through it, and before you know it, I'll be a second classmen, and I won't have to do any more. Yeah.

[00:05:29]

RH: Right. Did you join any clubs?

TP: What did we have? I think we had Propeller Club, and oh, what else? Newman Club, I think, was the religious thing. What else?

RH: On your yearbook, it said the Hawsepipe Staff.

TP: Yeah, Hawsepipe Staff. I was on that. We'd go around and solicit ads from some of the outfits for the yearbook. Yeah.

RH: This is because you were a part of the Binnacle Staff, have you read this year's Binnacle at all?

TP: I don't know if I ever got it. No, I get the CMA quarterly magazine, but no, I haven't seen the Binnacle, no.

BH: It's different.

TP: Is it?

RH: Yeah.

TP: I'll have to see if I can get one.

[00:06:19]

RH: I think Kevin Sweeney was passing out some. Can you tell me about your experience as the master of ceremonies at the Ring Dance?

TP: Yeah. Well, they chose me to get up there and introduce the Ring Dance thing. I mean, it was just you gave a short speech. Welcome everybody to the class of '62 Second Class Ring Dance, you know? And you introduce various people in the audience there that had something to do with putting it together, and it was a short thing.

RH: Right.

TP: It was a fairly easy thing to get through. Yeah.

[00:06:51]

RH: What is the Ring Dance? When I was researching--

TP: You guys don't have Ring Dances anymore?

RH: No.

TP: Well when you get to be second classmen, you get rings, or you buy 'em. Like these, eh? Any kind of stone you want in 'em, and it has all of the stuff on there, and then 1962. That ring, back then, you could also buy smaller rings for your date, your girlfriend, and then you presented the rings and they tied 'em around their neck. It was quite a lovely ceremony. Everybody went under this flower-shaped thing and put the rings around their ladies' necks, and it was called the Ring Dance. It was formal, and it was quite delightful. It would be at the Jack Tar Hotel, or someplace like that in San Francisco, with a real orchestra. A pretty nice tradition. I'm surprised you guys don't have it anymore.

RH: Yeah, that probably would be nice.

TP: Yeah.

[00:07:37]

RH: So, did you have a significant other during your time at CMA?

TP: Yeah, same woman I've been married to for 50 years.

RH: Oh, wow.

TP: Yeah.

RH: Well, where did you meet her?

TP: Oh, I met her 1956 at a party, and then I never saw her again for, oh, two or three years, and then I was at church one day, and she walked by and I said, "Well, that's for me, that one." So, we just got together, and I dated her all through school, and then made one trip to sea when I got out of school, came back and married her.

RH: Wow.

TP: Yeah, knockout gal, boy. Hmm, yeah.

[00:08:17]

RH: Well, when I was looking through the 1962 yearbook, what is the picture on your yearbook? What does that represent?

TP: Me playing the guitar?

RH: Oh, I mean the cartoon.

TP: Everybody called me a pirate all the time. I don't know why, but I sort of stuck with it, so everybody, all you need is one guy to mention some dumb word about you and it sticks like glue. So, they called me a pirate, and I'm not really a pirate, but that's what ended up on my yearbook.

[00:08:53]

RH: So, what did you do like on the weekends for fun?

TP: Well, if we didn't have duty, I'd go home. I'd go visit my girlfriend; you know. And then my father would make me stay home once in a while and mow the lawn.

BH: Same stuff--

TP: For fun, some of my buddies used to come over. The guys that I went to school with would run out of town, and come over to my parent's house and stay, and we'd just got

out and have a good time. Hit some of the taverns and listen to music. The usual stuff you do when your 18 or 19 years old, huh?

[00:09:23]

RH: Do you still keep in contact with some friends that you made at CMA?

TP: Yeah, most of them are here today.

RH: Right.

TP: Yeah, we do. Everybody sort of fell out of touch for a long time, and then some of us got ill or something, and then started sending emails back and forth, and then everybody gradually got in touch with each other again. So, we had a successfully 45th, and a really successful 50th with our get together here.

[00:09:46]

RH: So, there's each summer, as a student at CMA, you went on a summer cruise. Does that occur?

TP: We had three weeks in between trimesters, or something. Two or three weeks. I can't remember. I'd just take it off, and a bunch of my buddy and I would ramble around, have fun. Berkeley, and all these places, and go to a few dances here and there, Holy Name's, and whoever would have us. We did the same thing you guys did, you know. It hasn't changed.

RH: So, you only went on two cruises through CMA on the Golden Bear?

TP: Yeah, we had three cruises.

RH: Oh, okay.

TP: Yeah, third-class year, second-class year and first-class year.

RH: Oh, okay.

BH: Where did each one go?

TP: First one went Panama, and New Orleans, back through Panama, San Diego, LA, and home. Second one was Tahiti, Hawaii, San Diego, back up. Third one was Galapagos Islands.

RH: Wow.

TP: Calia, Peru, Buenaventura, Colombia, Panama, I think we stopped in, and then up to San Diego. Oh, we stopped in... What's the big Mexican? One of the big tourist ports in Mexico, and then San Diego. We always stopped at San Diego, LA, and then home.

[00:11:13]

RH: Right. Can you take me through a single day on cruise? Like what would you do when you were--

TP: Depended which watch you had. If you had a four to eight watch, you'd do the four to eight. You'll get cleaned up a little bit, eat breakfast. Muster 08:00, get a work assignment.

RH: Right.

TP: And then you'd work, then'd you go eat lunch. Muster get another work assignment, and you worked 'til 3:30 p.m., clean up, and go on watch, so you had a 16-hour day if you had the four to eight. The rest of the time, you had eight to 12s. You'd do the eight to 12, then you'd muster after lunch, and have a work assignment, and then at 4:30 you'd knock off for the rest of the evening until your 8 o'clock watch came around. Same with the mid to four. So, the bad one was the four to eight because you got stuck with 16-hour days. But you know, it's just the way it was. We were all in a whole tub together, you know. We all watched out after each other. It was just an old steam ship and had a lot of fun on it.

[00:12:10]

RH: What were some of the jobs?

TP: Oh, well, you were assigned to different things. Sometimes they'd assign you to the welding guy, and you'd go help him weld things, and you're welding stuff. Sometimes you'd do insulation work. You make flange blankets and things, sew 'em all up, and then have all this insulation. Sometimes you'd get piping job assignments, rerunning piping and stuff for the bilge, and other places. Sometimes you'd be working on the steering gear. It all depended what the requirement was. Sometimes you'd be working on the emergency diesel. It was a big, old, superior emergency diesel generator. And whatever the ship took, a lot of times you'd be chipping scale on the bills when you're a third classmen. When you were a second classmen, you didn't really have to do that much, and when you were a first classmen, you watched all those guys chip all the stuff on the bilge. It was typical. It was a full workday. I remember most of the time we were all tired all the time.

RH: Oh, okay.

TP: And we had these little bunks that you slept in that were three high. It wasn't very comfortable, but man, when you hit the sack, you were out like a light.

[00:13:18]

RH: How many days would you guys usually spend at port?

TP: Sometimes three days, sometimes four days. I think in Tahiti we stayed five days.

RH: What would you do for fun? You just walked around?

TP: Yeah, yeah. We drank a lot of beer. Run around the island on these little motor scooter things, and check out the scenery, and did other things. Most of the time, that's what we'd do. We just went out around the countryside there and had a great, old time, you know? Looking at the scenery and having a swell time. Same with Samoa, and those places. Johnson Island was nothing to do there. Just an atoll. And then you stood your watches.

RH: Right.

TP: Same thing you guys do when you get liberty. You get as far away from the ship as you can and have a good time.

[00:14:09]

RH: Yeah. So, the train crash that happened in 1962.

TP: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I was on that one. Yeah. The previous group went up to Cali, a city up in Colombia, up in the mountains there, and they came back and then it was our turn, and we got on the train early in the morning, and a bunch of us went to the front of the engine. We were up where the engineers were driving the train. We thought that was great, and we were up in the front drinking beer and having a great time, and it was really, really a lot of fun. You come out of a tunnel up there and you could look up the railroad track the other way and looked up and say, "Holy mackerel." It was one of those oscillating lights like they have on 'em. There's a train on the same track we are coming our way. "No, it can't be," and we look, it sure the hell was.

RH: Wow.

TP: We looked at it coming at us, and a bunch of us jumped off right before they hit. One guy caught on it and got all busted up. Paul Murphy, he was a lower engineer in a class below us, and then I hit the ground and broke my ankle. Ended up in a cactus patch and saw them coming together. Boom, up in the air. There was fuel all over the place, and wooden

cars all buckled up, and people all hurt and damaged. So, they took some of the guys up to Cali, and the rest of us they took back down to Buenaventura. So, I spent three days in the hospital, and the guy worked on my foot, and then we got everybody gathered back, and left there, and went on our way.

RH: You were able to still stay on cruise?

TP: Yeah, but I couldn't work.

RH: You couldn't walk, yeah.

TP: Foot in a cast. It wasn't that much fun. I had to limp around Acapulco with a cast and a couple of crutches, and that was really no fun. You'd get sand down your leg, and it would drive you nuts, But you compensate with a lot of beer. It's fine and dandy. That's what that was all about. Couple of us guys got injured fairly badly, and one guys back got all banged up, but he got over all of that. And then, Paul Murphy just ended up with a wrecked-up arm, and he ended up with a long career. Ended up being a port engineer for Coastal Transportation, or one of those. They had two tankers. Good guy. But yeah, it was a hell of a train wreck.

RH: Yeah.

TP: And the middies, when all that was going on, all the guys that didn't get hurt were all out there helping all the people, and making tourniquets, and bandaging up people, and doing all that kind of stuff. Then we were the all, "We're the heroes of the trainwreck," they called us. Helping everybody stopping from people bleeding to death. It was pretty exciting. We got a big spread in the Buenaventura paper, and all that kind of stuff. El heroes of Los Trajos. All this kind of stuff. It was different, you know. I mean, what a hell of a way to end the cruise, all banged up. Big responsibility for the school, you know? A bunch of kids getting all banged up. It was a notable cruise that year, I'm here to tell ya.

[00:17:05]

RH: So, how did your time at CMA prepare you for your future careers?

TP: Well, I'll tell you what it did. It instilled in you a sense of self-reliability, cleverness, self-sustaining attitude, a capacity, if thrown in a bad situation, to work your way out of it and come out on the good side of it. I think most of all, self-reliability, and the cunningness to respond to any situation, given back then on the school ship, and to work your way out of any kind of a problem. It gave you a sense of camaraderie, 'cause we're all on the same boat on that thing. Deckies and mates. You all relied on each other in the engine room, watching everything to keep things going. I don't think I could have received that kind of training, not only from the technical side, but the self-reliability, just going to a regular

college. You're a loner in college. Not this way here. You got guys that are in the same pocket as you are, and you gotta rely on each other. We ended up with a really good class. A lot of good comrades, yeah.

[00:18:19]

RH: So, can you tell me about the first job you held after graduating from--

TP: Third assistant engineer on an MSTS ship. Sgt. Jack Pendleton, carrying ammunition to, where'd we go? Hawaii, Guam, Okinawa, Indonesia, Japan, different ports in Japan, in the Philippines.

RH: Wow.

TP: Four-month trip.

RH: How did you get the job? Did you apply?

TP: Oh, I went over to MSTS. It's MSC now, but MSTS. Yeah, MSC morphed into that. At San Francisco there, down in the marina, they had a building there and I just went in, and they said, "What you want to do?" I said, "Well, I have third engineer's license." "Oh, we just happen to have a position open "on the Sgt. Jack Pendleton, leaving tomorrow." "Oh, tomorrow. "Wait a minute." I wanted to party a little bit before I go to sea, but I took the job, and four months, made a bunch of money. Back then it was a bunch of money. Sailed around, had a great time, and then I got off after that. That was my first job.

[00:19:29]

RH: But you've held a lot of jobs afterwards, though?

TP: Yeah, a lot of different jobs. Not all on ships, either.

RH: Yeah, some onshore jobs?

TP: Yeah. What I do after that? Oh yeah, I got hired by Aerojet-General, as some of my classmates did. I tested rocket engines at Aerojet up in Sacramento.

[00:19:48]

RH: How was it working with some graduates from CMA?

TP: That was great, you know? I mean, they were peppered all over the facility, but there was one, Carl Noblitt, was in the same division I was, and John Tobiasson, and we tested rocket engines. It was a lot of fun. A bunch of money, and a big rocket engine. This is

great, but they liked us. Aerojet-General really, really liked to scarf up CMA graduates, especially the engineers, you know?

RH: Yeah.

TP: The technical background, and all that. There was a lot of us there, a lot of 'em. There must've been 20 CMA guys working in that facility in various parts of it, yeah.

[00:20:22]

RH: So, did you think that going to CMA definitely helped you?

TP: Well, I mean, you understood systems, and piping, and things of that sort, you know? I mean, rocket engine's a little different. You're dealing with horrible propellants, and oxidizers, and all that kind of stuff. Electric things, but it's just all engineering stuff.

[00:20:51]

RH: So, on your yearbook page, you were the first-class president?

TP: Yeah.

RH: What made you run for first-class president?

TP: My classmates.

RH: Oh, really?

TP: Yeah. I mean, I didn't look for the job. They all wanted me to be their president, so I accepted the duty.

RH: How did you like it? What were some of your duties, I guess?

TP: Oh, to go see Commander Heron. Do you remember his name? Oh, well he was our Commandant of Midshipmen.

BH: Oh.

TP: They'd always say, "Hey, you gotta go in, "and we want this, and we want that, "and you go tell the commander that we want more time "to do this, and we want extra leave," so I'd go in there and he'd throw me out. Then I had to go face them. They'd go, "What'd he say?" "I don't know, he said get out of my office." But I just represented the first-class needs, and things of that sort with the school staff. Sometimes we got some concessions,

but not very often, 'cause some of them were ridiculous, and we knew we would never get 'em.

RH: Like what?

TP: Oh, like multiple church liberties on Sunday. I mean, you're either a Catholic, or you're a Lutheran, or whatever, but you're not all three of 'em at the same time so you couldn't go off for half the morning. You couldn't get four hours' worth of religious leave. That kinda stuff, you know? Those silly things. Yeah, it was fun, I enjoyed it.

RH: That's great.

TP: Yeah.

RH: Sorry.

TP: Yeah, no problem.

RH: There's just a lot of stuff to go through.

TP: Yeah, I bounced around a lot. Never made a good company man, you know. I had two, three years here, two, three years there, and then I'd...

[00:22:32]

RH: But then, after working with some companies, you decided to work for yourself?

TP: Yeah, I was a senior vice president with this marine construction company. We had jobs going on from South America to Alaska. As a matter of fact, our outfit built the marine terminal up at Valdez, the docks.

RH: Yeah.

TP: I was the equipment manager there. Yeah, I mean... I did a lot of things, and at some point, in the game there, I decided, "Maybe I oughta try "going on my own here," you know? "Why not?" So, I got into a little bit of a altercation with the president of the company one time over much of nothing, so I just said, "Ah, hell with it, I quit." Hung my shingle up as a marine surveyor and consultant, and starved it out the first year, and after that it was really good, you know? Self-employment, I like it. But I've done port engineering, special projects. I was I was a derrick barge captain out in Australia, and all this other stuff that it says on there, your thing there, but that's a typical example of how resilient and clever you guys can be, is to get some of these jobs and know that you may not know everything about it, but you know that you'll learn how to do it, and that's what this school gives to you. Nowhere else is it like that. Maybe it is in the Marines, and

things of that sort, but for merchant marine experience, it gives you great basics to go out there and do just about anything.

[00:24:03]

RH: I don't know how to phrase this question, but in the past with CMA, you would go straight into the merchant marines.

TP: Yeah.

RH: Could you have done that, or did you choose not to?

TP: Well, you could go anywhere you want once you've got your license. You graduated; it didn't guarantee you were gonna get a license yet. You go to the Coast Guard and sit in examination, but most of us were trained to be sailors, engineers, or mates, and I'd say 98% of us went right into, some of them went only one trip and went somewhere else, but most of us, I mean jobs were all over the place then. We could pick and choose, and most of us went to sea. Some stayed on for 30 years. Chiefs, captains. Others did one or two trips, and said, "To hell with this," and they went to work ashore. GE, Westinghouse, Aerojet-General, you name it. Like I say, it gave you the basis for flexibility, and you could do dame near anything, really.

[00:25:03]

RH: So, can you take me through like just an average day at CMA?

TP: As what, third classmen, second classmen?

RH: Well, as a second classmen, I guess.

TP: Oh, you get up at 6:30 a.m., I think it is, and then you go down. If you were living in the barracks you'd muster in the barracks, you know? And they take a roll call, and then you'd go up and you get cleaned up, and then 08:00 a.m. you muster on the tarmac. Well, it used to be a whole tarmac with an anchor.

RH: Yeah.

TP: We'd muster out there, go and eat breakfast. Give you half an hour to eat breakfast, and then you'd go to your engineering classes, and you'd do that for four hours, whatever the classes may be for that day. Then you ate lunch, cleaned up a little bit. You had about 40 minutes for lunch, or so. And then we'd gather up, and there were eight divisions. Four deck, four engine. Then we'd all march down to the old TSGB, and then you'd spend the afternoon doing engineering or deck work, or whatever may be the assignment. Fixing

leaks, fixing pipes, cleaning this, welding, all of that. Just getting your manual skills, huh?

RH: Yeah.

TP: So, when you went to sea you could do these things. And then at, what was it? 4 o'clock we'd gather up, march back, and go up to the barracks, and clean up, and then get ready for supper at 5 o'clock. After that, you'd have some leisure time, and most of us would just sorta wander around. You'd go up to the pistol range and shoot pistols, or play some basketball, or whatever. Those of us that lived on the ship, and I tried to transfer to every division that lived on the ship because I liked it better down there. It was a little more casual, huh?

RH: Yeah.

TP: And we stayed on the ship, or at the barracks. Lights out at 10, I think it was. You could get late study. They'd give you an extra half an hour. Most of us just studied 'til 11. You'd have a flashlight underneath the covers, trying to get in your head how to light off a solo shell evaporator, and that would be the normal day.

RH: Right.

TP: It was great, and it was consistent, and it was orderly, and everybody knew where they had to go, what they had to do. I don't know how it is now, but I mean, it was pretty regimented back when we were there.

RH: Yeah, it's a little different.

TP: Yeah, so I see.

[00:27:23]

RH: How was living on the barracks?

TP: It was fine. We had two guys to a room. We lived, let's see. Well, what is there, three floors on that thing, or two? The old barracks up there.

RH: I believe there's three.

BH: Oh, there is three, yeah.

TP: Yeah, we lived in all three floors.

RH: Okay.

TP: I think each trimester you got a different roommate, I think, or no. You had the same roommate for fall and spring trimester, was it? And then the trimester at sea, then when you came back you got a different roommate up there. They were comfortable, you know. Yeah, I mean, there's nothing wrong with it. I understand you guys have three to a room now up there, huh?

RH: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, it's growing.

TP: A little tight, huh?

RH: Well, yeah. I don't live in that anymore--

TP: Oh, okay.

BH: I only have another roommate. There was two when I was--

TP: Ah.

RH: Yeah, I think it's only this year there's been three.

TP: Oh, okay.

[00:28:22]

RH: But you said you enjoyed living on the ship more?

TP: Yeah, I did.

RH: What floor?

TP: Well, because you could sorta be a little more casual about things, you know? I mean, you could take all the time you want. We had different places where a few of us guys would go down, and there are all sorts of cubbyholes where you could go down and study. In the old barber shop, Bosun's Locker. I mean, places all over that thing. It was an old Navy ship. You could find all sorts of places you could hide out and read, and then we lived up in the fore of the ship and slept in the bunks. There was a deck and an engine division down there every trimester, and I sort of enjoyed it down there. It was a lot easier than being regimented up on the hill there. So, I tried to stay down there as much as I could. You'd lose every once in a while, and have to stay in the barracks.

[00:29:06]

RH: Did you stand watch?

TP: Yeah, we had donkey boiler watch.

RH: What's donkey boiler--

TP: Steam heat. We had to heat the quarters with steam, so we had a small, little boiler, and at the same time we had a little triple expansion Westinghouse engine down there. Like 1/8th's model of a liberty ship, and we use to run that all the time off the boiler just for kicks and giggles. You take pressures, and figure out--

BH: Oh, that's cool.

TP: Yeah, it was really cool. Then you had the gate watch up there, but it used to be just a sliver of a shack, you know? And the heater never worked, but it'd keep you awake--

BH: It still doesn't.

TP: If you got caught sleeping, you'd get nailed, you know?

RH: Wow.

TP: And there were other watches they had. The security watches, things of that sort, you know. Made it a little tough, four to eight in the morning, then gotta go to classes, and all that.

RH: Oh wow, yeah.

TP: Pretty beat.

[00:30:02]

BH: Sorry, I had a question about the berthing on the ship.

TP: Yeah.

BH: On the current Golden Bear, there's the lower berthing where it's the three racks. It's just a big, old room of eight of them.

TP: Yeah.

BH: And then, there's the other accommodations are, it's a room, and you're still triple bunked, but you have dressers, and lockers, and a bathroom. What was it? Was it kind of a room of bunks on yours?

TP: Yeah, it was a cargo hold originally, you know? And then what they had was they decked it all off and then you had this big, there was a fore berthing area and after berthing area, you know? They all had rows of bunks in 'em three high. And then around some of the corners here and there, you had lockers where you kept your stuff, and you had to keep it rolled up, you know? So, everything could fit, and they'd have locker inspections, and all that kind of stuff. The head was forward, believe it or not. Just like a real head, you know. The forward part of the ship, and it consisted of a row of toilets sort of along the rim like that at forward, and then a whole bunch of common showers. And then on cruise we'd go wet down with salt water, and soap up, and all that, and then wash off with fresh water. You had two minutes to use fresh water, and that was it. And then they made you as a third classmen, you had to keep all the portholes. You were assigned a porthole to keep shining, shined up. If they ever found a speck of green on it, why they'd pour saltwater all over it and make you do the whole thing all over again. I mean, I was one of those unfortunate ones that had a porthole right next to the saltwater connection, and everybody was always spraying my porthole, so I spent a lot of time shining it up all the time. But everybody took a shower up there together. It was a big, common shower. We'd be in there showering away.

[00:31:50]

BH: So, it was just one head in the forward--

TP: On head up in the forward portion of the ship, and if you had a problem when you were back in the steering gear, you had to run like hell, you know, to get to where you needed to go.

RH: Wow.

TP: That was a roly-poly ship, too. Boy, on a seaway, that thing was rolling all over the place, you know.

BH: Wow.

TP: You're hanging on, you know? I don't know what kind of watches you guys these days have, but we used to have water tender watch up at the top of the boiler v-check valve. We had condenser level watch, and the most boring watch you've ever had, where you watch the level in a condenser. When you're at sea, it never varies. It's always like that. When you maneuver, it goes up and down.

BH: Right.

TP: But that was just all part of trying to understand the whole complex system of the plant, you know? When you're a first classmen while you were in charge of a watch, and you had an instructor that was your division instructor, he had to stand and watch with you

guys. And he taught us a lot, you know? Taught us how to fire the thing up and get it underway. It was turbo electric, you know. It was a big turbo generator. 3,000 horsepower turbo generator running a synchronous motor on one shaft. The same in the aft engine room. Then they had an auxiliary space that had these big solo shell evaporators in there. We made water, either distilled for the boilers, or just drinking water. And you stood watch back there, and you made water, and we had competitions on who could make the most drinking water at one time, or who could make the most water without it getting salty where it couldn't be used in the boiler. There was a lot of competition. Who could change the burner fastest? We had competitions, who could change it without spraying oil all over the engine room. We had a lot of competition, but it was something that made the watch go by fast, but we're a pretty ragged-looking bunch down there. Oily, old boiler suits, and raggedy-looking denims. We looked pretty tough; you know what I mean? Bet you'd send girls down there, and say, "Look at these guys, they look like prisoners," but I mean, it taught us a lot of stuff, you know? We had some great cruises, and the old training ship was great, but this one here is really nice.

BH: Yeah.

TP: Yeah, and that was back. Katrina, this company, sent me back to Castine, the Maine Maritime Academy. They got the sister ship back there, but they've got a big 9 or 11-cylinder mac engine on one pinion, and a synchronous motor on the other one. I don't think it makes but about nine knots, or something. I don't know how fast you guys move with this one out here.

BH: I think our normal cruising speed was 11.

TP: Yeah.

BH: It was nine to 11, I think--

TP: Yeah, for economy, you know?

BH: Yeah.

TP: Don't want to burn up a lot of fuel just to get somewhere a day ahead of time, you know? Back then, when you got out, you usually sailed old maritime commissioned ships. Victories, 8,500 horse victories, 6,000 horse victories. C1s, C2s, C3s, C4s, and then all the modern ships started coming out. Sea racers, master mariners. All those, you know, and all I ever sailed was old buckets, and I sailed a T2 tanker for a while, as a second engineer. Yeah, it was fun.

RH: Yeah.

TP: It was great. I'd like to do it again. You guys want to trade places?

[0035:06]

BH: The second engineer, was that when you went back to--

TP: Yeah, yeah.

BH: How was that experience going back at 60?

TP: Oh no, I worked at North American Aviation down there, and then I got tired of that, so I just went back to sea and sailed 'til I got a second engineer's license, and then I spent a few months on a T2 tanker.

BH: Oh, okay.

TP: Then went ashore again, but to your first question, how was it sailing? When did I go back out there? 2001, I had a little slack time, so I just wondering, I wonder what it's like to go out there now, so I caught a Tonsina, a big super tanker, and they flew me to Ulsan, Korea, and I didn't relieve the second because he'd quit a week before, you know? So, I went out there and got on the thing, but it's a young man's life out there. I mean, that was a workhouse. 16 hours a day. They'd worked you more if the law allowed. The engine room was 138 degrees, I mean, all the time. It was horrible, you know. The second engineer, you got all the boiler stuff, huh? So, you're working on top of the boilers fixing sit blowers all the time way up at the top of the fiddly. Hard work. Like I tell everybody, I got on the thing, I was 234 pounds. When I got off in three months, I was 190 pounds.

BH: Wow.

TP: Oh, man, they work you to death. It's a young man's job, I'm telling you, fellas. Do it while you're young. Don't try to go back when you're 60. Oh, man, it's tough. Yeah.

[00:36:39]

RH: So, I mean I guess this is going back to your time at CMA, but on your yearbook page you were a part of the Spiffy Club and Laugh Incorporated. I was asked by--

TP: Yeah, well, I was sort of a jokester--

RH: A joke club--

TP: Pulling pranks on on guys all the time, and mostly on deckies, you know? You know how it goes. The Spiffy Club, I don't know how I got that pin. I wasn't any more spiffier than anybody else, you know? But I always tried to have khakis. When I'd get 'em, I'd have to

put extra starch, so when you put your foot in it, you'd have a knife edge sticking up like that. You would stand in formation, and they'd look at you, and go, "What's this?" "I want to be spiffy," you know? And get a good grade for spiffiness. I got that term Mr. Spiffy, or whatever they call me there. I don't know.

BH: Sorry, so Spiffy Club was just your uniform was excellent, basically? Or something like that?

TP: Well, it wasn't really that great. It was just as good as the rest of the guys, but I always liked to have these sharp, little edges on the pants, so they called me the guy at the head of the Spiffy Club. I was the only member.

BH: Oh, okay.

RH: Oh.

TP: It was a joke name.

RH: Yeah.

BH: Okay, gotcha.

TP: It was a joke name.

[00:37:42]

RH: So, was there much competition or rivalry between deck and engine, back then?

TP: There was... A friendly rivalry, maybe, but I mean, nothing malicious, or anything like that. I mean, the rivalries between the deck divisions and the engineer divisions, mostly, in sports competitions, and stuff like that, but it was all friendly stuff. We were all in the same boiling pot, you know.

RH: Yeah, yeah.

TP: Whatever rivalry there was, it was friendly rivalry, between divisions at intramural sports, and stuff like that. I mean, division seven would play division six. They were both engineering divisions, and there was that competitions there, and then we were extra aggressive when we played a deck division, you know? Trying to win.

RH: Yeah.

TP: I say, you gotta remember it was just all a bunch of 18-year-old kids.

RH: Yeah, yeah.

TP: Yeah.

[00:38:35]

RH: What were some of the sports you played?

TP: I didn't play intramural sports.

RH: Oh.

TP: No.

BH: Okay.

TP: I didn't.

RH: Oh, okay. So, you were the water polo manager?

TP: Yeah, yup. I watched after the water polo team, and we had a good one. Had a guy named Glenn Petty. We'd call him the Fish Man. He couldn't attend. The poor guy is sick, but when that guy swam he left a wake behind him like a destroyer. Man, that kid could swim. That guy was unbelievable. He had a little pot belly, too, but that guy could blow through that water. Just unbelievable how that guy could go through water. Nobody could catch him. He was great. Yeah, old Fish Man, yeah.

RH: So, what'd you do as water polo manager?

TP: Just made sure that there was all sorts of towels, and stuff like that, and that they had all the training equipment there, and the balls weren't flat, so they could play. Make sure that everything they needed to put on a good game was afforded to 'em.

RH: Yeah.

TP: Pretty easy job.

[00:39:51]

RH: Oh, I meant to ask this about the two-week indoctrination. Did it frighten you at all?

TP: No.

RH: It didn't? Oh, but it just--

TP:

RH: Yeah.

TP: I had been in the merchant marine as a wiper just for two summers. It was nothing like what these guys were presenting to us, you know?

RH: Mm-hmm.

TP: But you gotta get the attention of a bunch of young kids somehow or another, so you say we're gonna do this, and then say we're gonna do that, that, that, that, and you'll stand at attention, and then you'll salute. All this kinda stuff. No, it didn't scare me. Some guys, it intimidated. I remember we had two or three quit, 'cause they didn't figure this was what I signed up for. But I think we started with 109, or 110 guys, and we graduated about 51 three years later. They had pretty good attrition.

RH: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, still is.

TP: Is it?

BH: Yeah.

TP: Oh, we had some guys walk right up the hill as soon as this one guy asked if everybody was paid up, and then yeah, and that's a yes sir, stand at attention, hit a brace, and this guy, "I didn't come here "to be a soldier," and picked their bags up and went up the hill.

RH: Wow.

TP: Some guys were so seasick on the first trip, that they never wanted to see a ship again. I mean, these guys three months just green. Poor buggers. I mean, they were horrible. I mean, just awful, then they quit. And others flunked out.

RH: Oh.

TP: Some were kicked out for conduct.

RH: Mm-hmm.

TP: I almost was, but not quite. I don't know what kinda duty they do. I worked a lot of extra duty just to keep my conduct grade above 64 1/2, you know. I didn't want to get kicked out. My old man woulda killed me, you know?

[00:41:30]

RH: Yeah. Wow. You mentioned that some people would fail out. Was it difficult?

TP: I wasn't a super great student. 2.930 type of a guy, but sort of maybe a lazy student, but I didn't find it that intimidating. I found hobbling up the machine shop more intimidating than the actual academic studies. But shit, back then all we had were slide rules. We didn't have calculators, or anything like that. We only had a big, old library slide rule.

RH: Oh, wow.

TP: Oh yeah, the good ol' days, huh? Yeah, and I never felt comfortable with chemistry that much. It just seemed to baffle me some, but electricity, and steam, all that stuff, the motor ship, motor stuff, that wasn't too horrible to get through. Yeah.

[00:42:22]

RH: Oh, you were a port engineer in maritime administration ships during both Gulf Wars?

TP: Yeah.

RH: How was that working--

BH: Yeah, you said it was the most fun job?

TP: Yeah, it was great. I'm been doing it now, I'm still watching one of 'em, but I'm a project manager. I just converted one of them into a missile tracker up in Portland, Oregon, and it's off Kwajalein right now. But anyway, a guy I went to school with, John West, was one grade up from me. Called me up one day, he says, "Hey, I gotta go to Algibea. "We blew an engine down the Cape." Whatever, Ducato, or something. "How about watching these two ships?" That was the end of 1990, and then it went on forever after that, you know? What I do, is I'm self-employed, and I'm self-employed as a marine surveyor and consultant, but I do whatever there is, but this particular 22 years, as a superintendent port engineer type thing. You write specifications to dry dock a ship, repair it, or top side repairs. You negotiate contracts with companies, you know? You procure funding, and then you go put the ship on dry dock, and then you watch it all the way through dry dock, all the repairs, 'cause you have to sign off on all the repairs, and then you track all the costs and all the extra work is negotiated, and you negotiate bills. Stuff like that, and then the last thing you do is you put it out in the water, you take it out on a three-day sea trial. That's a lot of fun. Take it out, and run 'em up hard, you know, for 20 hours. Stop engines, hard reverse, all that kinda stuff.

BH: Do you go out on the ship itself?

TP: Yeah, I go out. I go out on the ships, and go down and plague the chief engineer, you know? "Come on, chief, give it a little more pressure there. "Come on, chief, get that fuel header up "a couple more pounds, come on." That kind of stuff, you know. I've been doing that for years and years. It's just this last go around here I've been a project manager for a $4 million dollar conversion, and I got another one to do next year when it comes back in January. Gotta move all the telemetry stuff down inside the ship. Ship's an old, converted British survey ship. Yeah, it's got aluminum bulk heads, and corrugated things, and all sorts of funny looking stuff in it, you know? It's got a couple of railroad engine in it, Alco's. Yeah, 16-cylinder Alco's. Drive it into one single--

BH: One screw, yeah.

TP: Controllable pitched propeller, yeah. So, that's what I'm currently doing. Been doing that, and I keep trying to get retired, but they keep giving you a call all the time. "Can you spare a month?? "Yeah," and it turns into a year.

RH: Oh, wow.

TP: Yeah, so it's a lot of fun. I enjoy the heck out of it. Best time I've ever had in my life, professionally. You guys can do that, too, you know?

BH: Yeah.

TP: Yeah.

[00:45:21]

BH: So, what was it like when you were doing the offshore derrick barges in all these different countries? Was that--

TP: I got hired by an outfit, Santa Fe International, and they wanted me to go to the Netherlands, and they were building this big, it was a 1,000-ton revolving crane and a semi-submersible derrick barge. Had eight 20,000-pound anchors out, and laid pipelines. We had a tension shoe on deck and pull out from under. Anyway, I was the unlicensed barge captain, they'd call me, you know? But I was responsible for stability control and movement of the barge, and we had two, big Dutch towboats that worked with us out there all the time. That was basically what I did. We had to hand calculate stability all the time, 'cause you studied stability. You know what GM, and all that stuff is, and BCGs, and vertical center of gravities--

RH: Yeah.

TP: Metacentric centers, and all that kind of stuff, because it was a barge on two big pontoons, and it had a 62-foot GM, and then when you pumped it down on the column

stabilization, your stability dropped to about 18 feet. And when you boomed the crane up and it dropped another 10 feet to eight feet, if you had a big deck cargo on there, like big, 400-ton packages to stick out on these platforms, well, pretty tricky. You'd pick a load off the deck, and all of a sudden, the center of gravity at 400 tons is not on deck anymore, it's at the tip of the boom up there, huh? So, you had to figure out all this stuff by hand all the time, and then you'd have to arrange to move the barge, and you'd get it in a location where you were going. That's what I did, and I was responsible for stability control, and the movement of the barge, and 108 Australians, you know? And seven unions.

RH: Seven.

BH: That's--

TP: That's tough, yeah. Tough. But it's just another thing. And then I built a barge, another derrick barge up in Singapore, and a few years later I built another barge for the Indonesians.

RH: Wow.

TP: Down in Singapore, and then we took it out there to the Sinda Straits and did some stuff with it there. It's just all part of the, you guys knew that too, you know. You get further on down your career; you get a lot of knowledge.

RH: Yeah.

TP: You could go do those things.

[00:47:29]

RH: Do people just contact you?

TP: Yeah, they just contact. You get a rep after a while in the business. It's a tight business, the maritime business. You know who the slackers are and who the performers are.

RH: Wow.

TP: After a while you hear names, like, "Yeah, I remember that guy," or else, "Oh, that guy's a good hand," you know? It gets out word by mouth, and you do all of this stuff. Now I just stay local in Portland. I don't accept any positions at any other shipyards anywhere 'cause I just want to stay home, you know?

RH: Right.

TP: Fly airplanes all over the place.

BH: Right.

TP: Yeah. Like I say, it's been fun. I want to do it again, you know.

BH: Yeah.

RH: Yeah.

[00:48:15]

BH: So basically, currently, you have your own kind of business, and they just kinda contract you out for like when a ship comes in, they'll be like, "Hey, can you lead this project?"

TP: Yeah. I mean, I'll get a set of specs. They'll send it to me over the email, and I'll open it up. I say, "When's the ship coming in?" They go, "Tomorrow." "Oh," you need to run down there, and set up an office, and get the programs all put in there for the cost, tracking costs, and stuff like that. The ship comes in, you dry dock the thing, and then you start watching after the work. Sandblasting, painting, all that. Pulling the propeller off and drawing the tail shaft, all of that stuff. Taking all the sea valves out, and overhauling 'em, sticking them in. Just depends what the specification has. Sometimes they'll send you a spec, it's a terrible spec, and the job's hard because the guy didn't really write it well. You gotta be pretty specific. That's why they call it a specification, I guess, huh? You have to tell 'em what you want done. You never tell 'em how to do it. Then it's your fault if they do it that way and it doesn't work right, you know?

[00:49:16]

RH: So, how is dealing with the, I guess the technology of ships compared to--

TP: Back then?

RH: Back then and now. Is it difficult?

TP: No. You have a dossier of technicians up in the Portland area wherever you go that do that stuff for ya.

RH: Oh, okay.

TP: And in most of the chiefs, most of the engineers now, both the American Marine Officers and the MEBA, which I used to be a member of, have schools, and you could sign up and go back for their automation schools and all that kinda stuff, or electronic school, and they pretty well give you what you need to get a basics for changing a diode in somethin', or pullin' a card out, sticking another one in.

[00:50:00]

BH: Oh, okay. So, they provide the means for you to keep up with the changes?

TP: Yeah, the unions. Yeah, they have schools that teach you all that technical stuff, but I mean, there's a raft of good outside contractors, you know. I mean, like Radio Holland, and people like that. Sperry, and all of these technical marine services that can take care of all these technical things that the guys on the ship are just not, little too deep to understand, like programmable operators for boilers, and stuff like that. You can't get into one of those things. You don't know enough about 'em, so we just hire whatever technical help we need from the industry to help us out.

[00:50:47]

RH: Hmm, wow. So, on the [illegible]. Oh, your resume, you were part of the Society of Naval Architects?

TP: Yeah, I belonged to 'em for years, and years, and years.

RH: Since 1980.

TP: Yeah.

RH: How has that benefited you?

TP: Oh, not really. I mean, I got to go to some great meetings up in Victoria, BC, and other places, and meet old pals, and shipyard people, and things of that sort. But most of the quarterly book you get from SNAME is deep technical things on hull stresses, and things of that sort, and then the modernization of propulsion systems. You sorta read over that stuff, and go, "Yeah, okay." But I mean it always looked good on a resume to belong to the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers for 100 bucks a year.

RH: Right.

TP: You know?

[00:51:43]

RH: So, you were part of the Propeller Club?

TP: Not anymore. No, I've gotten away from all that stuff. The marine base up in Portland, we used to have port engineers, dances once a year. There were 300 people there, and then everything starts. Marine industry starts sort of dying up in the Portland area there, and the next thing you know, the dances got people you don't even know anymore. Paint

peddlers, and guys like that, you know? All the old port engineers aren't going to it, and there's only one shipyard up there now. Used to be three or four shipyards, and they'd just have a big, old, it was a great dance once a year. A lot of fun. So, that industry sort of died off and we don't even have a dance anymore. We have a crab feed a couple of times a year, but it's not as big as it used to be.

RH: Right.

TP: Yeah.

RH: Well, during your time at CMA, did you go on any trips during your winter break, or something, through the Propeller Club?

TP: No, just went home and hung out, you know?

[00:52:46]

RH: So, how did you think about, I guess, the uniform, coming from, you went to St. Mary's for first year, then having to wear a uniform?

TP: Oh, it was sorta novel for me, because I wore an old boiler suit when I was a wiper, or a T-shirt and a pair of shorts when I went ashore, you know?

RH: Yeah.

TP: Then all of a sudden you have to wear a uniform. I go, "Oh, this is sorta strange," you know? But actually, hey, I looked pretty sharp, you know?

RH: Yeah.

TP: I looked pretty cool in that; you know? And then you had to keep the belt buckles polished all the time. That got to be a little pain in the neck. Shoes polished, all that stuff. But as far as wearing the uniform, it didn't bother me.

RH: Yeah.

TP: Everybody else had to wear it, too, so--

RH: Right, right.

TP: Just something you did.

[00:53:38]

BH: Were there any classmates that were really against it, or anything? Or everyone kinda signed up for it, so they did it?

TP: Yeah, there was a couple of my classmates there who said, "Oh, what a bunch of hogwash having to wear a uniform," or something, but they did it because you want to get through school you're gonna wear the uniform, and they got over all that stuff, you know? Then when you got to pull your tie out when you were a second classmen or something like that, was it second class? Yeah, in third class you had to keep the tie tucked in.

RH: Uh-huh.

TP: In second class. No, first class you get to wear it outside. So, when you're a first classmen you got to wear your tie outside, huh? That's a big step. So, I mean, that was a big thing when you got through a year and you got to the next step. So, all of a sudden you weren't the low end of the dog pole anymore. You got a bunch of fresh, new guys in there, and you could get them, you know?

RH: Yeah.

TP: And then when you became first classmen, your whole energy went towards making sure you graduated and got a third assistant engineer's license for steam or motor. That was what you worked for, strived for. You could get out and have a degree, but if you don't pass the examination with the Coast Guard, you got nothing but a BSME, huh?

[00:54:48]

BH: Yeah. Was there any big crossing the equator?

TP: Oh yeah, yeah.

BH: Yeah?

TP: See, I was fortunate. I'd been across the equator on a Chevron tanker, you know.

BH: Oh, so--

TP: I called 'em up and said, and we never, a commercial ship, you don't have all that stuff, you know? So, I called Chevron up and asked if they could send me a shellback certificate. So, they looked at the records of the ship when it crossed for that particular year and sent me a big shellback certificate. "Terence M. Purdom crossed the equator, "rides the King Neptune," and blah-blah. "He's now a qualified shellback," and all that, so I didn't have to do that. I was probably one of the few people that we crossed the equator, I could inflict damage on the pollywogs, you know.

BH: Right.

TP: Yeah, and it was a pretty elaborate thing when we were in school. I mean, we had a pool made on deck out of canvas, and then we had a chair on a hinge. And then we had one of the was a big guy, and everybody had to stand in line and go up there, and they'd have like olive oil and peanut butter in his bellybutton, and they had to get it all out of there. Lick it all out, and then we'd stick him up in the chair, put a hood over him, and then knock him over into the water, then we'd knock him around a little bit in the water. It wasn't anything malicious or anything, but a couple of guys we got even with, but you'd knock him around in the water a little bit, and then they'd have to get on deck. Then we had a 30-foot-long canvas chute full of garbage and old cruddy-smelling waste, and stuff, and they had to crawl through that. And then we'd knock him around a little bit, you know? Shove on him, and kick him, and things of that sort 'til he came out the other end. That lasted about maybe, it was pretty well observed and controlled by the officers. They didn't want anybody getting really even with somebody, so if things got outta hand, and I never saw it get outta hand at all, or they'd step in. That's what we did, you know? In case if we hit a squall that lasted more than 10 minutes everybody would run up there with nothing on and soap up. Fresh water coming from the sky, you know? We'd wash off, and sometimes you just get soaped up and the squall would pass by, and you're standing in all this soap.

BH: All soapy.

TP: You run down and wash off with saltwater, you know? Oh man, and you're all itchy the rest of the day.

RH: Yeah.

TP: Yeah, it was a different environment than you guys have, you know? It's--

BH: Yeah, we definitely didn't do that much when we crossed the equator.

TP: Yeah, we made a big deal out of it, you know? But then the guys got their certificates and it was something to hang on a wall, you know? "I'm a shellback," you know?

RH: Right.

TP: It was great, yeah. A lot of fun, a lot of fun.

RH: Well, I mean, I've pretty much asked all that I've prepared, unless you have any more questions, Ben?

[00:57:23]

BH: I don't know. Oh, the one thing I did want to ask was, did you have a favorite port stop?

TP: Tahiti.

BH: Tahiti?

TP: Yeah, it was wild and wooly back then. I'd been there once as a kid on a Chevron tanker. It was pretty south sea-ish back then. I mean, there wasn't a lot of things that called in there. The Mariposa and Monterey, the old mass and passer ships called in every 40 days, and it was a French freighter that came every three months. And then there were two Norwegian ships, the Thor I and the Thor Zial that alternated every three or four months. They came in there. Then there was a big seaplane that come in from Suva, and the Fijis, and Pago Pago, the American Samoa twice a week with mail and stuff like that, you know? And the rest of the time, it was, there was nothing in there, you know? So, I mean, the ship comes in like us full of young guys, and oh boy, you know? It was paradise. We just had a great time. I mean, you go in the bar there, and I mean, there was never not a beer in front of you even if you didn't have any money. There was always a Hinano beer sitting there from somebody or another, and we just had the greatest time. I mean, it was wild and wooly. That's before they had an airport, or any of that stuff down there. It was a lot of fun, a lot of fun.

RH: Yeah. Wow.

TP: I had the stamina for that stuff back then, you know? Yeah, boy, we used to drink a lot of beer. Holy crappola.

RH: Wow. I kinda wish, 'cause I'm a global major, so we don't get to go on cruise.

TP: Oh, man!

RH: Yeah.

BH: I was the last one that got to.

TP: Oh, man!

RH: Yeah.

TP: That's tough. You miss out on a lot of fun, man. Get shy of the ship with some of your buddies, your old mates, you know? Oh, man.

RH: Yeah.

TP: Adventure, fun. Hell.

RH: Yeah.

TP: Yeah, well, you just do five years in classes, or?

RH: Well, I'm doing three 'cause I was a transfer, but we were able to take three weeks in Korea and Japan.

TP: Whereabouts in Korea did you go?

RH: Busan, and then Seoul.

TP: Seoul, okay. Never been to either of those. I went to Pusan and... Incheon, Pusan, and Ulsan.

RH: Oh, wow.

TP: They're all shipyard places, you know? But when I was there in '62, was it? In Incheon, why, there was no docks, you know? Everything came on lighter barges, so you're anchored out all the time.

BH: Oh, really?

TP: Yeah.

RH: Wow.

TP: Cold, middle of goddam December. It was freezing cold up there.

RH: Korea, yeah.

TP: Mother jumper it was cold. You're all beered up, trying to get back to the ship. You only came to shore in a T-shirt. Oh, man. Oh, God.

RH: Yeah.

BH: All right, well--

TP: Big town, Seoul. Yeah.

RH: Oh yeah.

TP: Yeah, big town. Ulsan all belongs to Hyundai, you know.

RH: Oh, yeah, yeah.

TP: There's a big Hyundai ship. We had a lot of heavy marine industries there. Big, big shipyard. Nice hotel. But it's not America, you know?

BH: Yeah.

TP: Yeah. They want you stay away from that. What's that stuff they drink over there, soju?

RH: Oh, soju.

TP: Man, puh-wee. Man, that stuff's tough. Huh?

RH: I think it's gotten a little bit better.

TP: Woo. I don't know what kinda bottle you got, but man, that stuff I had was bloody horrible.

RH: They flavor it now.

TP: Oh, do they?

RH: Yeah.

TP: Thank God. it was pretty awful.

RH: Yeah.

TP: Like drinking Drano, you know? Oh man, that stuff was bad. Ooh.

RH: Yeah. Well--

TP: Man, you don't get to go on the cruises. Oh, man. Can't you work a deal?

RH: Well.

BH: I was the last group that got to go on the cruise, so I had a great time.

TP: Yeah?

RH: I think with space limitations, and stuff.

TP: Oh yeah, probably.

RH: Cost.

BH: Budget, that's--

TP: Budget.

BH: That's what it is.

TP: Price of fuel.

BH: Yeah. They cut it down from two summer cruises to one even now.

TP: What do you guys burn on there, MGO, or what, for fuel? Marine gas oil?

BH: I think so, yeah.

TP: You probably do in those medium speed. They're medium speed engines.

BH: Yeah.

TP: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, and the bad thing is, is that since it's government money, they can't buy fuel ahead of time 'cause then it's speculating with government money.

TP: Yeah.

BH: So, they had to fuel up at the beginning of the summer with whatever the price is.

TP: Yeah, man. That sucks.

BH: Yeah. Oh, I think I'll hit end, then we can continue. Thank you very much.

TP: My pleasure, boys.

[End of interview]