

Carl Bowman

March 15, 1988

SG: I found Carl Bowman aboard his sloop, ~~The~~ *Lydia*, covered with paint. But he's cleaned up some for the camera, and I know that Carl has a number of stories to tell, remembrances from many years back, so, Carl, tell us what you recall.

CB: Well, I was just thinking the other day how things have changed going to sea in the Coast Guard since 1926 when I went to the Academy. The old training ship--~~I~~ had a Calvin Deep Sea lead which you dropped, you had to stop the ship to drop the lead, and it had a tube inside which recorded the pressure and that way you could get a sounding.

Only the newest cutters afloat at that time, four of them, had Fathometers. So navigation, at least the aids to navigation, have improved quite a lot in my lifetime. We took ~~SAR~~ *Star* sights, we had to use the right ascension. No, it didn't have it already made for you in the Nautical Almanac. I was up in Alaska a year or so later, <sup>At</sup> ~~at~~ night if we had to make a landfall, we'd run under the lee of an island, whatever we were looking for, and when the motion of the ship changed, we knew we were there. I've heard of young people now who stop the ship when the LORAN quits. So things were a little different.

SG: Which ship were you serving?

CB: At that time I was on the *Tallapoosa*, Jimmy <sup>Hirsch</sup> ~~Hershfield~~. My first ship was the *Champlain*, and the captain was Willy Stromberg, who was then a Commander. He had 26 years of service, 26 of it at sea. And he was proud of it. He was a sort of funny old guy. He had a real high-pitched voice and was sort of fidgety when we were in port. But when we got to sea, he was at home. And the worse the weather got, the better Willy got.

We had some pretty hard times on that ship, and I learned an awful lot from him. He was the best sailor I ever sailed with all the time I was in the Coast Guard. And, of course, at that time most of the officers in the Coast Guard were seamen. Most of the commanding officers had started in the revenue cutter service.

SG: That's prior to 1913.

CB: Yes. So that was a long time ago. Well, the regulations at that time said that request for special duty, which translated to shore duty, officers with less than 14 years service would not be considered. And, with the exception of a couple of future Commandants and people like that, they adhered pretty well to that. So, when it came time for the Coast Guard to take over Merchant Marine inspection, we had a very large group of well-seasoned, or well-salted you might say, officers. Unfortunately, that percentage has radically diminished as you know. My training ship was the old *Alexander Hamilton*, which was one of the last three auxiliary sailing ships built for the Navy and they were built for the China station. Because coal was hard to get, they had full sail power and actually the old *Hamilton* was a pretty good sailor. With a fair breeze, she would sail about 12 knots and with flat calm and the engine wide out, she'd make about 9 or 10. So she was a good training ship, except she was a little old already when we were on her.

SG: Do you recall when she was built?

CB: 1896, I think. This was 1926 when I was first on her, and my class was the last class to make two cruises on her. The next class, \_\_\_\_\_ ~~Company~~ in 1930, made one cruise. They condemned her at that time although they had just spent a lot of money on her, one of our officers who was quite influential with the later Commandant, Captain

Hamlet who came to be the Commanding Officer, the skipper. The old gentleman is dead now. He was a gentleman but he talked a much better game of seamanship that he displayed. He was quite a contrast to old Captain Hickley who was real down \_\_\_\_\_, he pushed. I think with Captain Hamlet at one time we carried \_\_\_\_\_ all night. A jettison made because when I later got to be Commanding Officer of the *Eagle*, I had a very firm resolution we would either sail or motor, we wouldn't do both. That worked out fine. The four trips that I had the *Eagle*, the first trip had been scheduled by some steamboat sailors and we couldn't quite make the schedule on time. Admiral Hall wanted to, and we waited so long for wind that we arrived two days late for \_\_\_\_\_, and the State Department was very upset. The parties were all scheduled, everything else. But the trouble was that previous cruises they had scheduled her for 175 miles a day, and if we started out in New London, if we started in a calm, that's the same speed the French went across the North Atlantic, so she doesn't get to sail. Everybody said she wouldn't sail, but she sure as heck would. I sailed her 327 miles one day in 24 hours, and 303 miles in a 23 hour day. And most of the old retiring Captains and Senior Admirals who were cadets at that time, whenever they see me at least, they have a lot of good stories to tell about the *Eagle*, what a good time they had.

SG: That was 387 in one day? That's a little better than 15.

CB: No, 327.

SG: That's just under 15. That's about what the cutters would make. If they had an urgent call.

CB: Yes, that's about a good cruising speed. But we had the *Unimak* with us that year. Chet Steel was my Exec for two years and he was skipper of the *Unimak*, and after



this 327 mile day, we had an MIT meteorologist aboard, Paul Lewis, and I didn't want to get in trouble in the middle of the night, I was satisfied with a 327 mile run, and the wind was beginning to slack, I said, "Paul, what's it going to do?" "Well, it might do this; it might do that." This went on for . . . , finally I said, "Goddamn it, is the wind going to decrease or increase?" And he said, "Well, all I can see is a little declining frontal activity." "What does that mean?" "That means an easy night." "Yah, okay." So we left everything on her, and we were running along about 11, 12, sometimes 13 knots. The *Unimak* was up ahead of us and Chet had a reserve Ensign there. He said he only did one right thing all the time he was with him, and that was this night because about 10 o'clock down below the Admiral always had to have a cup of tea before he turned in, so we were having our cup of tea and the *Eagle* was very quiet under power, but when she was sailing, the spinning propeller had a bumpety-bump all the time. It was very useful. You divided the r.p.m. by 10 and you had the knots. Ten knots and you hit 100 on the tach. I heard it start to speed up and heel over a little bit, so I started for the deck and ran into the Quartermaster. Got on deck, took one look aft, blacker than the inside of a <sup>farm boy's</sup> ~~nigger's~~ hand. The sea was phosphorescent, it was beginning to blow, and they were beginning to get

~~Sails~~ off, and we had to take ~~him~~ off the topsail, thank goodness. You know you get this ~~Sail~~ <sup>then I</sup> off, went and looked at the radar, biggest, blackest squall I've ever seen. And I think maybe that night was when my hair started to get a little white because as I say it was very black, the sea was phosphorescent, we finally got over 50 knots on our

~~anemometer~~ <sup>ANEMOMETER</sup> running before the wind. We didn't dare touch anything, because if we touched anything, we'd have lost a sail and we had a cadet on the wheel who I hadn't thought too much of before that, but I remember his name ever since. He did a beautiful

job of steering the ship. And Chet's Ensign did the right thing. He saw us coming up. He turned hard right and Chet got up and they watched us on radar, and we were making just a little over 18. And Chet says you could add a half a knot to that for the leeway that the *Unimak* was making. So anybody <sup>who</sup> asked me how fast the *Eagle* would go, I tell them 18-1/2 tops. After that, I never worried about her, and when I decided that she was going to be all right, hold her course, why it was wonderful. That was the most thrilling night I've ever spent because as I say, the seas were breaking, you could all most see by the light of the breaking seas. The ship was really roaring. That was one night that was really my fondest memory of the time of my commands. And I was fairly lucky. I had four commands. I had a little 75-footer when I was a kid. We were the experimental boat, and all I had to do was run 50 hours, turn in the oil at the Naval Experimental Station and take a different kind of oil out and run another 50 hours. I was all the way from Maine to Georgia with that little pickle boat. <sup>Picket</sup>

SG: When was this?

CB: 1932. And we determined . . . the object of this particular series of runs was to get some factor they could put in when they had to take the lowest bid, and we found that most of the oils that were available ran pretty well at 25, 30 hours. At 50 hours, some of them began to break down. Anyhow, we determined that the best oil you could buy was Gulf. Gulf probably lasted well for 200 hours. Sinclair broke down at 30. There were others in between, so I used that in my automobile for a long time. And from there I went to aviation. The best year's vacation I ever had. You probably remember in those days when I was on the *Champlain*, we had the Captain, the Exec, the two watch officers, me and Georgie Miller, this was a first class cutter. The pride of the fleet, and

SG: A chief engineer and . . .

CB: We had an old purple stripe engineer, and a student engineer, Rookie Collins, but he wasn't allowed to do anything on deck. We had another officer assigned, but he had gone to the hospital for an appendix and he got a phlebitis and was missing for the rest of the time we were in the ship. Things, as I say, were a little different.

SG: George Miller was not in your class, but the class behind?

CB: No, Georgie and I were classmates and roommates. We went to the *Champlain* together as Ensigns.

SG: The *Champlain* then would have been a new ship just out of the yard.

CB: Yes. About two years out. <sup>Lake</sup> ~~Light~~ class. They were very good ships. They were turboelectric. We got those because the Navy was building the *Saratoga* and the *Lexington*. And we were the first synchronous drive, synchronous motor turboelectric ship. We were sort of models of the larger machinery they were designing for those big babies. And as you know, it's hard to beat a turboelectric for a maneuverable reciprocating engine. Maneuverability, you get your full power ahead <sup>and astern</sup> ~~in the stern~~ providing your engineer doesn't miss. I think they tell the story about the *Haida* when she was new. Commander Hamlet was Captain, the same one I was speaking of, and they had made an around the world cruise as a shakedown. And they had some Congressman<sup>e</sup>, people like that on board. They wanted to see some icebergs. So they were up in the Bering Sea and the last thing Commander Hamlet wanted to get near was an iceberg. But the Congressman kept urging him on, and they had the old chief Boatswain from the Nome Lifeboat Station aboard as ice pilot, and he was an old square rig sailor. He was up in the crow's nest. And those ships had a tremendously high ~~mask~~ <sup>mast</sup>



because they were the first ship that they tried to get antennae on one mast. And so Anderson was up there and they came up and nudged a little piece of flow ice, and the Captain backed the ship <sup>full</sup> flow and she went out of step. Of course, when they went out of step, the ship (makes gesture of shaking hands). So he goes, "What the hell is wrong?" They said, "Don't worry, she's just out of step. It'll be all right." And the only step he knew was the mast step. He took some of the paint off the rigging <sup>sliding</sup> ~~slacking~~ down the backstay. That must have been quite a trip. The *Champlain* class was not so prone to going out of step. The engineer really teed off when you messed with them, but they did once in a while and it was always sort of interesting.

Aviation, as I started to say, was great because in 1932 and 1933 when I was learning to be an aviator, Pensacola was almost closed down. They only had four classes that year and one of them, the one behind me, was almost all Coast Guard, and there were six Coast Guard in my class out of about 30 some that started. So WPA was in style then, so Wednesday afternoons were off for all the civilians.

SG: What year was this again?

CB: 1932 and 1933. So Captain McCurry who was one of the two or three war stripe aviators in the Navy said if the blankety blank civilians were going to be off, the officers and enlisted men were going to be off, too. So, Saturday was a holiday. Wednesday afternoons were off. And, I think, for awhile we had Friday off, too. That's one the civilians got off, so they were on a four day week. And we used to go to work at 6:30 or 7:00 in the morning so we could do our flying before the thunderheads built up down in Pensacola. So we were off at noon everyday, worked four mornings a week for a year. That was great. And we got 50% extra pay for doing it. I remember that.

SG: Times have changed.

CB: Yah. Pensacola, the panhandle of Florida, the sand on the beaches looked like salt it was so white and clean. It was a very fine year. Ann and I were newly married and we had a lovely time down there.

SG: You spoke of the hurricane here on this coast.

CB: That was facetious. In other words, the wind got up to where it actually blew 40 or 50 knots. Not a hurricane. If it had been in San Diego, it would pass.

SG: Would that have been in July of 1939?

CB: Yes, I think so. You were probably up . . . were you on one of the . . .

SG: I was on the *Northland* being ferried around to Boston. And we were caught in a blow down off . . . *Sabo San Lucas.*

CB: That was a hurricane. It scared Willie *Kanner* out of a year's growth.

SG: It should have. We rolled 67 degrees, and we lost all our boats. We lost all of our dry vegetables, potatoes and onions that were up topside. They were just like bullets.

CB: I heard about that trip. You know the *Northland* was something because old Commander *Perrum* was a naval architect, but we had civilian architects, so Pop never got to work as a naval architect in the Coast Guard but he had definite opinions. All the old line officers said you can't take a vessel to Alaska without some sail. The *Bear* is the only one suitable. You've got to have some sail. And the engineers didn't want sail. So the engineers kept a record of all these things that the line officers said they wanted. And *Perrum* told us when we were cadets, he said, "They really fixed them. They kept all the worst features of the *Bear* and put them in the *Northland*. And to please them they put a sailing rig in her, but she wouldn't sail. And even Captain Parker who was one of our



early Commanders and was a really good sailor couldn't make her sail. She was sort of a grade A-11, but she lasted quite a long time.

SG: As I recall, correct me if I am in error, when she came out in 1927, she had a coal burning galley stove because among other features, someplace just above Nome in the Bering Strait, a seam of coal came almost down to the beach and it would be easy to put a landing party in there and get a year's supply of coal, no cost to the Coast Guard.

CB: Well, that's the way we ran in those days. I don't remember that feature, but speaking of \_\_\_\_\_, their first skipper was Captain Ontell, and Captain Ontell was another one of those fine old sailors that had trained in the, what was the name of that little training ship they had? The *Chase*. He was out of the class of about 1907 or 1908, and she really scared him. He said that's when his hair got white because on their trial trip, she rolled—damn near capsized. Rolled 60 or 70 degrees. And they got her home, put an awful lot of ballast in her, but apparently she still could use some more ballast.

SG: Well, she had a good reason on that. The anometer was pegged 90 knots, but from the time it was pegged, the barometer went down one full inch and came right back up again, and oh my, that was an experience. If others had their hair turn white, maybe that's when I started losing mine.

CB: Well, the little *Tallapoosa* was little 165-foot steamer and she was taken to the yard in 1929 and completely rebuilt and given a modern Babcock and Wilcox boiler, oil burning, and Jimmy Hershfield, he's dead now so I guess we can speak honestly.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dench was a notorious dodger of sea duty in the Coast Guard. And he had gotten out of going on the *Unalga* the year before on some thing, so they sent him to be the Captain. Bev Moody was in trouble, he had made two stripes while he was on a

destroyer and he wrote a letter to Headquarters, said he was not too senior to be on a destroyer as a watch officer and he wanted to be a navigator somewhere. So he was in the doghouse and they sent him to the *Tallapoosa*. Red French had been in some other trouble so they sent him to the *Tallapoosa*. The Captain says, well \_\_\_\_\_ Chief of Personnel, to his son Bill, my classmate. He sent Jimmy Hershfield to the ship to try to keep some order. And I was caught on a destroyer going out of commission in Philadelphia. And they needed an Ensign, and Bill Cheswell asked his dad if he could go and his dad said absolutely no, not on that wagon. So I went to the *Tallapoosa* as junior officer. And it was interesting because . . .

SG: What was her station?

CB: We took her out of Baltimore and took her to Juneau to replace the old *Unalga*. We had a very nice cruise around. We stopped in Jamaica and we stopped in Panama. And it was interesting because this officer who wanted to be a navigator exec was one of the temporary officers and it turned out he couldn't navigate. So there were three of us, French, Moody, and myself. But as navigator he stood on his rights and only stood the morning watch and the second dog watch. And I had been a year with Captain Stromberg who didn't bother him with keeping a junior officer's notebook, all he wanted of his Ensigns was a book with a full day's navigation work in it every day we were there. So I could navigate pretty well. We had gone to Europe with the Cadets, replacing, took two cutters to replace the old *Hamilton*. So I had a lot of practice at navigating and being a Stromberg-trained man I automatically grabbed a sextant when I came on at 8 o'clock, shot the sun, put a line on the chart, and about that time the navigator came up, he said, "Um, didn't get any stars this morning, that's a sun line." I

said, "Yah." "Well," he says, "that's pretty near where I was so we'll just use your line." And this went on, but honestly I must say that by the time we got to Panama he could navigate by the sun. By the time we got to Alaska he could navigate by the sun and stars. It was sort of interesting there at first, a junior officer was the only one who knew what to do with a sextant. At the Academy, we were taught to navigate with the old Mark \_\_\_\_\_ formula. We were not allowed to. . . we asked Lieutenant, later Admiral Hall, he was the navigation instructor, "What about this new H0208?" He says, "Well, that's all right, but you can learn about that after you graduate." Which we did because it was a much easier way to \_\_\_\_\_.

SG: 208 and then 211 was the next.

CB: They came out about the same time. \_\_\_\_\_ was the 208; \_\_\_\_\_ was 211. I guess \_\_\_\_\_ was a good system because you could put the book in your pocket. It was one of these \_\_\_\_\_ you didn't have to go through all the things that you did with . . .

SG: Mark \_\_\_\_\_.

CB: Mark \_\_\_\_\_.

SG: That's the one they taught us.

CB: Coast Guard didn't change too much. And as a matter of fact later as I went back as instructor, I think learning the old methods has a lot of advantages because the cadets are real quick to learn new methods. The year we took the *Champlain* to Europe we also had the *Mendota*, and we got to New London first. We were waiting for the *Mendota*. She was supposed to be in about noon, and she didn't come and she didn't come, and there was thick fog, really thick like it gets up there sometimes. So pretty soon she got in



and tied up and I went over to see my classmate, Joe Shibo, who was a junior officer there and the Exec greeted me, he said, "No, you can't see Bill, he's in hack. "What's the matter with Bill? He's a very quiet, well-mannered young man. What did he do?"

"Well, he was the O.D. this morning and we passed \_\_\_\_\_ (sounds like Montok) headed for Race Point. We should have made Race Point, but we hadn't yet, so pretty soon we heard a whistle, and Bill announced. "Race Point, Sir. Right ahead." And the old man listened and said, "Race Point? Like Hell, that's Montok." The gyro had quit on him and Bill had not bothered to check with the magnetic compass every 15 minutes which you were supposed to do. So he spent the time in New London in his state room. Which shows there are some advantages in having some respect for the old methods. And that was quite a lesson to me.

The war started and the Coast Guard, instead of turning the aviators over to the Navy, we had about 30 officers who were flyers by that time, and they were all pretty good pilots and a lot of big boat pilots. The Navy needed us, but the Coast Guard kept us at our own air stations. Then, I went to Biloxi in '42 or so. I had seven Lieutenant Commanders under me. And we were flying these little peanut planes, and Bill Harnen was over at Pensacola. And he would have been about the fourth in seniority with my Lieutenant Commanders, and he was Commanding Officer of the instrument training squadron and had 600 men. So, all at once the Coast Guard decided that everybody with three stripes, with the exception of a couple of gentleman who happened to be stationed in Washington, were more needed at sea than aviation, which I couldn't help but agree. But since we were aviators, I couldn't be the skipper of a frigate where my classmates and junior people were. I had to go be reindoctrinated into the ocean going fleet as

navigator on one of the C4 transports. All of us Commanders, all of the four or five Commanders that went to sea, went not even Exec that first sea duty. And that was a very interesting thing. We made one cruise to New Guinea and back on that ship. Then I was transferred to a sister ship which had gotten in the Atlantic.

SG: Do you remember which one?

CB: The *General Black*.

SG: Was that APAs or AKAs?

CB: APs. And we had a very interesting skipper on there. He was a New England prude. He was the most prudish type when he was sober, but he was seldom sober when he was ashore. So we had a lot of adventures on that ship. I was Exec and one good thing I will say about him, he always just made the ship before we sailed. And we were under two commands, the Navy Port Director, \_\_\_\_\_, and the Coast Guard was still logistics for us. So Jake would get leave. He'd have leave papers signed by the Coast Guard District and he would just disappear when he got into port, and he would arrive just when we sailed, particularly from \_\_\_\_\_ port. He knew he wasn't real sharp, so for about the first two days he would nurse his hangover, and then his conscience got him. He'd run around trying to make up for all the things he hadn't done for four or five days. You can imagine what a hell ship that was for the Exec. We were coming out of Naples one time, and the Navy had loaded us up with 50 ambulance mental cases. We had a sick bay that carried about 500 and so I looked at this thing and said, "What the hell is an ambulance mental case?" Anyhow we sailed. And we had three padded cells on the ship and ten cells where they were restrained, the rooms I guess in sick bay. The Army doped these guys up so they could walk them on board, and about

the time we got around to them, they began going wild, and our poor doctors were shifting through the confined quarters as fast as they could, sorting out the ones that they didn't have to do anything. There was one guy, he was a Ph.D., a very nice guy, very erudite, very intelligent. Only thing was he wouldn't wear clothes. As soon as you put clothes on him, he went nuts. Wild. So we take him up and let him strip. He was happy, intelligent. He could recite most of Shakespeare and all sorts of other things like that. And did no harm to anybody. So I said, well that's fairly easy. Never mind the clothes. There are no women on this ship, so he'd walk around that way. So the column was settled until about three days when Jake came out and went walking down the deck and saw this naked guy walking. He gave me a fast call, "What's that guy doing with no clothes on?" I tried to tell him, he says, "By God, we're not allowing anyone like that on my ship. Put him back." Well, he didn't have a cell, so I put the poor guy in the brig which was in the stern of the ship under a ten deck. He had to go all the way to New York that way. Another time, the last trip I made on her, no not the last trip, but anyhow, we were going across the ocean \_\_\_\_\_ and we were just one jump ahead of a hurricane. It was right behind us all the way. Those ships could roll—like your *Northland*. They ballasted for four compartments. It was supposed to draw 26 feet. Anyhow, we only drew about 15 to 16 feet forward, not much more aft. So with all that ballast, she had a 13 second rolling period. Our ward room was up on the upper deck. I was in there having breakfast. We were blowing 40, 50 knots. The old ship was rolling along, going 30, 35 degrees. About the time I picked up my eggs, we took a deep roll and I heard this horrible crash. I thought, My God, one of the escorts has slammed into us. I went out on deck. No excitement. Nothing was hurt. No sinking ships alongside



us. We were rolling and rolling, 40, 45 degrees now. I hung on. Fortunately having been raised on Coast Guard cutters, we could stand that. And went back to finish my breakfast and another slam. I thought, something is wrong here. That's a little too much noise. So I went out and I watched her awhile. And pretty soon she took a good roll and our boats were \_\_\_\_\_ which you run up and put the prevent-a-bar under them, and they have about maybe 18 inches of slack up above. She was rolling the boats out, up, off, up, off the bars and back down. So we lashed them down and that was a class modification for it. It shifted beautifully in the Pacific, but they were not happy in the Atlantic. They had a very sharp, straight bow and when it came to the main deck they had a hell of a flare up there. So we were coming out of South Hampton and the skipper again was on his good behavior. He knew his duty, and he stood against the back of the bulkhead, but he never said anything or interfered in any way. So we put the pilot off. I rang her ahead, and it was blowing again pretty briskly, 35, 40 knots. A nasty sea. Right ahead. So about time she got up to speed, she stuck her nose under one, water came up over the deck and with the water came the bulwarks, forward of the mast. Laid right down flat on the deck. I rang the ship engine, but she couldn't slow down fast enough. She went under again and another wave came over, and backed off the \_\_\_\_\_. And old Jake looked at it. He didn't believe what he saw. He didn't say anything. He just turned around and went down in his cabin. So we got the damn thing shored up, went slowly until the convoy made up. Another class modification for the C4s. I will never forget his horrified expression. He knew that couldn't happen, but he saw it and he wasn't going to stand around and discuss it.

SG: It was kind of disconcerting to see your ship break up in front of you.

CB: My first \_\_\_\_\_ General \_\_\_\_\_ was Lee Baker. And he was not too seaworthy either. I was navigator on this ship, and I insisted on towing a log. We had one and \_\_\_\_\_ was old. \_\_\_\_\_ big ships like this you don't use a tow log, but okay we'll do it. So we were going up the coast to pick up our first load at New Guinea. We got into quite a gale going up from Port Sur to above Point Sur. We were always routed out of sight of land because somebody might see us and report us to the Japs, so we were down. We had to slow down, and we were only making about 2 to 3 knots by the log, so I lost my faith in the log. We had to be doing more than that. Finally came morning or landfall or something, we got a position and the log was right. The turns were wrong. I had lacked the courage of my own convictions so it didn't do me any good. After that I was really convinced.

SG: Were you on rum patrols?

CB: Yes. One of the other interesting things about these C4s, they were 522 feet or something like that, so on the upper deck they had expansion joints. And there was one right by the C cabin. It drove Lee Baker crazy. He would look at this thing and it would move. I had one guy who came up every so often and oiled it so he wouldn't hear it squeak. Yes, the *Champlain* when I first joined was still on rum patrols and that was interesting, too. We were out there one day and Roger Armor was the Exec. He was in temporary command. We were chasing this one rummy, and the great thing was these little fellows would, the rummys, they had been built for the trade, and they were about the size of the bigger old schooners but no masts. And they were pretty maneuverable. So they would \_\_\_\_\_ until the middle of the night or sometime, when a little fog came in, then all at once they would light off and try to get in front of you or behind you.

And the *Champlain* was maneuvering pretty well, too. I was all by myself on \_\_\_\_\_. This guy got under way and he went charging across our bow and he didn't make it. We hit him a hell of a whack. So he stopped maneuvering then and Roger came up and said, "I just relieved you before you hit him." That was a damn good thing. But anyhow no great problem ever came out of it, but it began to blow, and this poor guy was damaged enough forward that he had to turn and run. So we went with him. The only trouble was that they wouldn't let us release him and we were on I think five days out and ten in at that time, and this was now day six and we were still chasing him. Finally, we got permission to come home. (Oh, there's the practicing boat. America's Cup, a French catamaran, Dennis is out running around in it.) We had some other experiences on that rum patrol but it was a pretty rough thing. They had a lot of ships. When I had this engineering experimental boat, we ran out of oil so they turned me over to work for \_\_\_\_\_ O'Neill who had the old *Apache* at that time in Baltimore. I was going out and we had had this one rummy who had given everybody a bad time and he would make about, he had four big liberties. He could go like hell, but we had standing orders to board him anytime you saw him. So I was going down Baltimore Harbor, here comes the phantom making about six knots. In accordance with our orders, I told him to heel to and boarded him. He fouled one of the buoys on the way out that morning and he lost one shaft and he was just limping home. But he hadn't had enough sense to throw overboard the cargo he had because he had a full cargo of spuds and food and everything else that he was taking out to the offshore rummy, and he was working on a yacht license. So we grabbed him and that was the end of the phantom. He became a Coast Guard cutter. All because he didn't know enough to unload his illicit cargo. We didn't get him with rum,



we got him with spuds of all things. But we were getting toward the end of the rum chasing then. We did get to the end of the rum chasing because Roosevelt had come in and they made beer legal and they were downgrading the Coast Guard. We were laying up all these little six footers, most of them, and I was taking convoys of them from Baltimore up to Philadelphia where they were outfitting the, which one of the big cruisers was it that Roosevelt rode around in? *Indianapolis* to be the presidential vessel/

SG: Yes, and he also got the Coast Guard cutter and named it *Potomack*.

CB: In the meantime, every time we got to Philadelphia with these little \_\_\_\_\_ buckets, here was the Boatswain mates from the *Indianapolis* taking all our spare paint, everything that we had, because the Navy had been on mighty hard times and they had no money at all. They were just beginning to move. But that's a good story, too, because one of the *Champlain's* sisters was the \_\_\_\_\_ (sounds like "Kiyuga") I think it was, Mobile or Galveston. Anyhow, the president saw her and he says, "Gee, that would make a good presidential yacht. We don't have a presidential yacht." So his Naval aide called the Navy, they called the Coast Guard, and they said, "We want the *Kiahoga*. By the way, we are going to use her for the President." Well, the *Kiahoga* was one of the little dollar and a quarter boats, and they had the name slightly wrong. So I guess when they got it in the Navy yard, they wondered why the president wanted this, but they fixed it up real pretty. And he came down to see it and said, "Where did you get that thing?" So this was very embarrassing. They had the name mixed up in communication so, "Well, that's not big enough for what we need." So they compromised and they took one of the 165 footers, I forget which one it was, and made . . .

SG: It was one of the two stackers, which would be the latest model out.

CB: Yes. It was a nice little, I've forgotten the name of it now, but anyhow they got that and they modified that, and that became his Potomack River yacht. And the little *Kiahoga* trailed along behind and carried the press. All the press people had to ride on her every place they went. I imagine somebody in the Navy really got a large bite out of his posterior on crossing those names. A story about the *Apache*. When she was on patrol out of \_\_\_\_\_ when she was new and she was there checking all the big ships in, and this big sailing ship came roaring in with the wind behind her and the *Apache* went over and hailed her. "What ship is that?" "*Glory of the Seas*, 121 days from San Francisco. What ship are that?" "Revenue cutter *Apache*. Out all night from Baltimore." That was a standing joke in those days. Hadley Evans was Exec with Merlin on that ship. "Out all night from Baltimore." Well, at the end of the war, I had the *Taney*, brought her home, and the \_\_\_\_\_ class, otherwise known as the WASCO class was new at that time. So we were in San Francisco and we had been ordered to Kodiak which I really wanted to go to. I thought this was going to be wonderful being in Alaska with radar—all those modern conveniences. But then we got the weather patrol deal, so we didn't get beyond San Francisco. We were on a 10 and 20 schedule.

SG: Ten out, twenty in?

CB: Theoretically. So, I was supposed to run opposite the, I forget which, two of those cutters, John Stanley was in one of them and Henry Stolte had the other. Then Carlson came by with the third one en route to Seattle, something broke down so he had to stop there, too. So I came in from patrol, and we'll say Stolte relieved me, and it was time for the next one to go out and Stolte called me. "Well, can you get under way, Carl?"

Whatever her name is won't run." I said, "I knew it. We'll be under way tomorrow morning." I made 13 patrols in 18 months.

SG: Was that on station November?"

CB: Yes. And we were supposed to save fuel, but I always ran her home at 21 knots and Steve would growl "You're supposed to save fuel." I said, "I'm going to save a little time, I want to get in port some with this ship." \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Forget it, Steve. Let him go." And I did various things. I towed two of the 165 footers and one of the 125 footers to Seattle to be laid up, they had been laid up. And I had 65 men attached to that ship. Not on board, but attached. And I had 17 Ensigns. And no Exec.

SG: On the *Taney*?

CB: On the *Taney*. So I made a terrible error. I went over to Steve and said, "Now, Goddamn it. I either want a Chief Yeoman or an Exec if I'm going to take this ship to sea again." So he found Sheratowski, Sheri, Exec. I kicked myself from here to there on that. But anyhow this one trip I didn't have, I guess I had Sheri and 17 Ensigns. I didn't have enough men. We had to have somebody on these things to steer so I put three Ensigns on each ship and one Boatswain Mate and started for Seattle. They had not proper engineers and they had not properly secured the shafts. So sure enough about the time I got out past the Golden Gate, one of the shafts started to turn. So we stopped and sent our own working party over and secured the shafts so \_\_\_\_\_ that trip. And we finally did that three times. Then we got going and we made a fairly good passage until we got up to Tatoosh, and as we turned around the sea changed and the tow \_\_\_\_\_ the right length. So part of the \_\_\_\_\_. Then we go around and set that one. And we were going to be in Seattle at something like sunset, we'll say, on this

day when they started \_\_\_\_\_. We played tag with them. Every Goddamned one of them broke. We had to pick them up and give them more chain. So finally I ended, we got around Port Townsend. Everyone had out his \_\_\_\_\_ chain and the chain was shackled to the ship. We got to Seattle about 3 o'clock in the morning. That was one of the more annoying trips.

Well, getting back to the *Tallapoosa*. We all wanted to shoot a bear. And these wise young guys were from the East—Jerry, Moody, French, and me. Fortunately, Captain Dench wanted to find gold and his idea of where gold was was in a place that was fairly bear free. So we didn't see any bears. And we got into \_\_\_\_\_, one of those inlets up in the Kenai Peninsula. And we all went ashore to hunt bear, and we had our service rifles with us, and we walked and walked and walked, and we didn't find any bear—fortunately. And we finally got back and here was a little lake and three ducks in the lake. Jerry said, "I bet you can't hit one of those, so I bang like that and the duck went about a foot up in the air, came back down again. We got down, I got the poor duck, I cut his throat with the rifle so I didn't shoot anymore. I rested on my laurels. So anyhow we got back with one duck and no bears. And the old man got no gold and not too long after that we went into Kodiak. On the side of a barn there, they had the skin of a bear that had just been shot. Sixteen feet from corner to corner. And we all looked at that and no more bear hunts for me. I said if I could get in one of those 125 footers, I'll shoot a bear with a gun on the boat somewhere. I'm not going to shore after a bear. We were sure lucky. We went out along the Kenai Peninsula for the Bering Sea patrol and we went into \_\_\_\_\_ I think. I always took the doctor ashore because I was the biggest \_\_\_\_\_, go through the surf with the boats. So we went ashore with the doctor, then



brought down the Chief. Well, the Chief was pretty well healed up. There was nothing the doctor could do for him. But one leg was quite a lot shorter than the other, and it turned out that he had been going up the mountain, not hunting a bear—just going up the mountain for some other reason and something spooked one of these big bears up above and he didn't attack him, he just ran over him and broke his leg. Made a hell of a mess out of him.

SG: I think the record bear was taken out at Admiralty Island, though. That's just out of Juneau there.

CB: Well they weren't so big as the Kodiak. They got big, they had the black bears out of Juneau.

SG: Well, on Admiralty, that's brown bear. And I think I'm correct in saying that the world record bear was shot on Admiralty. I always thought that the Kodiak bears being up on the Alaskan coast in that area, but there they are right there.

CB: Juneau was quite a station for these greenhorns. They used to tell us all sorts of stories which we sometimes believed and sometimes we didn't. They had one doctor, a big guy, I've forgotten his name now, but he used to go hunt bears with bows and arrows. But he did \_\_\_\_\_. I remember him because he had two daughters about the age of \_\_\_\_\_. Alaska was a territory in those days. They had the Elks club and Meese, and what's the other one, anyhow they had a monthly dance at the Elks Club which was the high class one. Everybody from the Governor of Alaska to the Junior Officer of the *Tallapoosa* would be there. And civilians of similar rank. And that was always a pretty nice party. Then the Meese had a party, and that would pick up where the other one left off. And there would be a lot of fishermen there. No, it was the Masons,

the Elks, and the Meese—that's what it was. The Masons was the high class one, the Elks was the middle class one, and we and Alex could go to both of those, and then they had the Meese and all the fishermen there. Boy when that music would get going and a bunch of square heads doing the schottische, that building would shake as much as \_\_\_\_\_ to be in it.

SG: \_\_\_\_\_ taught me to do the Schootish before we went ashore in Unalaska. Teague and I neither had any idea what the Schottische was, and Huey said, "I'll show you."

CB: That was a good dance. I never got very good at it.

SG: Well, I didn't either. Of course, \_\_\_\_\_ version. There was a NOAH Officer's wife at Unalaska, Mary something or other. She was a big woman, and when she was your partner you did the Schottische properly. She turned you . . .

CB: Well, there were no women in Unalaska when we were there, 1930, '31, '32. I guess the Alaska Commercial Company had his wife there but she was an elderly lady. But it was a pretty barren scene. And our skipper was not popular with the Bering Sea Force Commander. So it was like the old story of our Captain. He only went to Command School. What does he want? Mingle over and find out what does he want. Tell him he can't have it.

SG: Do you know when Rosenthal was up there as Exec on one of the ships?

CB: On the *Northland*. That was this year because we were the Bering Sea Force Commander on the *Tahoe*, and we had an old gentleman, I've forgotten his name now, very dignified old gentleman. He did have his wife up there. And he deplored the condition of the beach. So he sent word down to the *Northland* that they would put a

working party ashore. I guess maybe this was the year I was on the *Talley*, we were only allowed to look \_\_\_\_\_. Anyhow, the working party was supposed to clean up the beach.

SG: They had one main street.

CB: Yes. So Rosenthal got the crew in whites. He put on whites himself but without the insignia. They made up a bunch of harpoons, pieces of towel about four feet long with a spike in the end. The whole crew cleaned up the strip. The Bering Sea Force Commander looked out and saw it and became very indignant. I forget who his skipper was, but he was a pretty tough one of those that didn't kneel too quickly with the Bering Sea Force Commander got after him. That was quite a sight.

SG: I understand that Rosie had his dress sword and he was using his sword and that's what creamed us.

CB: We had this same year, I forget the old Captain's name, but anyhow he didn't approve of gambling, and we had a very happy five and ten cent poker game on the *Tahoe*. And our own Captain Tole was a nice old fellow. He loved to play poker, too.

SG: Would that have been Phil Roach on the *Tahoe* at that time.

CB: No. Bill Tole, Willie. Best skipper in the Coast Guard at port, but pretty miserable to take on the sea. He was very nervous. I was the navigator on there. Well, in the first place, all of us on the *Tallapoosa* got court martialed except Moody for a party that happened in Kodiak. And I had relieved French because I knew they were going to have a lot of beer and I wasn't interested. I hadn't learned to like beer at that time. So I took the watch. And Moody came home early. He was brought home early, and he was turned in so he didn't get court martialed. But everybody else did for one thing or

another. Captain Dench found out about this business that had gone on. He came back early, too. So anyhow I was the O.D. and I was checked, then \_\_\_\_\_ and Jimmy came aboard and we got him turned in and Moody was already in. French was missing. And so the doctor came down. "Where's French?" Well last he saw him, French was having a big argument with some guy who had a cue and was going to work him over. Now about midnight, still daylight. I thought I'd better go ashore and rescue French while he is still alive. I got the big old Chief Boatswain Mate, two of us went ashore. There was no use waking Jimmy up or anything. The ship was tied up peaceful. We found French; he was quite happy, but pretty drunk. So we got him in tow and brought him back. This didn't come out for quite awhile. We had a Boatswain Mate on there who was a real bum, and he got drunk and Jimmy brought him the mast and the Captain gave him appropriate sentence and he rebelled. He said he didn't see why he had to suffer for being drunk when all the officers could get drunk and nobody ever did anything about it. Well, that started inquiring, and Jimmy was trying to keep peace and he helped with the inquiry at first. But pretty soon it got out of hand and Jimmy would come up and relieve me on the bridge and I would go down and talk to the Captain, inquiring of me, "Was Mr. French drunk?" "Well, I don't know." I was stalling furiously. So the Captain would define drunk. "Well, if he had even one drink in 24 hours, he was under the influence of liquor." "Well, yes obviously he was under the influence of the liquor with that definition. But he would leave out the definition. And then Jimmy would go down and be questioned. We were meeting each other on the bridge. And this got to be quite a mess. And we thought this will be all right. He kept threatening me. He said, "Well you're the O.D. You will be charged with leaving your station without permission



and going ashore.” So, anyhow this went on and we didn’t get anywhere and we thought that when Hinkley was the District Commander saw this thing, he ordered the ship down and had an investigation. But when he saw the thing, it was in bits and pieces, it wasn’t the whole thing. So he forwarded the thing to Headquarters and we were ordered down to be court martialed. Even the machinists. So, we got to the court martial, and Bill Tole was ordered up. He fancied himself as a lawyer, although he wasn’t. He was the prosecutor. And, of course, when the thing hit the fan and they tried me first I guess because my charge was going ashore without permission. Well, the lawyer got me off very easily because regulations at that time said that the Executive Officer assumed the duty at 10 o’clock. So Jimmy had the duty. So I was acquitted. Jimmy was acquitted. And everybody was acquitted. Jimmy, when the thing first started, he had written \_\_\_\_\_ and asked if \_\_\_\_\_ could be his counsel, and Mike said, “No, I think I’ll be somewhere where I can be more useful.” It turned out he was on the court martial \_\_\_\_\_. So we all got acquitted and of course Tole’s nose was very much out of joint. And Jimmy and French were taken off the ship, and I was left on. And we had an old four stripe engineer, I’ve forgotten his name now, Jimmy and I were talking about it the other day. And he and Captain Hinkley were the whole District, and he hated Dench with a passion, too. So we were getting the ship ready to go back to Alaska and Morrison had joined to replace French . . .

SG: Is this Don Morrison?

CB: Yes. So, we knew \_\_\_\_\_, old captain, he was older than I was. He was one of the Senior Engineers, 1931. Anyhow, Sy Perkins had relieved Jimmy, and I was the only one of the bad boys still there. And so we knew that we were going to go out

and relieve the *Haida* on rum patrol which the Captain didn't know. So he was packing and getting the ship ready to go, so he got there in the union shipyard and he went to shore to telephone there which we could all hear what was going on, "Yes, Captain, she's all ready. No. No reason we can't sail. Yes we are ready to go. Everything is fine."

"What? Where?" We got orders to go out and relieve the *Haida* tailing this rummy off Tattoosh. In the meantime, Perry Lions was on the *Haida*, and Perry had two tickets and a date and another one for me to go to, Jack Dempsey was boxing somewhere. But anyhow, \_\_\_\_\_ and I had stood a lot of duties for Moody who was the only married officer up in Juneau, and he had relieved me and so we were all set to go see the show and I was down below shaving and Dench sent for me. You were damned either way. If you didn't get there quick you were damned. If you went in in improper uniform you were damned. So I went in half shaved and no shirt. "What are you shaving for?"

"Well, I'm going ashore." "Why? You're the O.D.?" "No, Sir. Mr. Moody's relieved me." "Did he have my permission?" "No." "You cannot go." I don't know what I said to him. It wasn't real polite, but anyhow I went down and finished shaving and stood the rest of my watch. The next day we went to sea and it was a miserable patrol but we were all laughing because he was so much more miserable than we were. And we had to come back into Seattle and we were going through the lock up at Lake Union and I was in charge of the lines on the quarterdeck. This might have been before we went to sea, but anyhow, whoever was handling the ship was going a little too fast and back, single screw, she started walking over the wrong way. Well, I was able to lasso the dock with a stern line and snub her in so she didn't do any damage. So we got in and he sent for me.

"When the order was given to get out a stern line, you didn't reply properly, you said,

'Aye, Aye,' but you didn't say, Sir, and that's not the proper way to do it." I blew my top. I said, "Well, you tried to court martial me for some other stuff. I was going to be in hack for ten days for not saying, 'Sir,' and now you're trying this one on me." So I went steaming out and I was in hack and he forwarded more charges to Washington for me for insolence, insubordination, Christ knows what else. Washington answered with telegraphic orders for me to go to the *Tahoe*. So that was the end of that. I thought, Oh boy, this *Tahoe* is going to be a hot seat, because Bill Tole is not very happy about what happened on here. So we got there, he was very nice, very polite. After I had been there about a week, here came my fitness reports from Dench which was a real stinger. So I sat down and wrote an answer to it which was a real stinger too. The Captain said, "Now, Bow, you are not going to do any good with this. Let me write it for you." So he wrote a very placating thing and sent it off and so that was the beginning of a very happy year on the *Tahoe*.

SG: Let me interrupt here. Do you recall that in Oakland there was a garbage scow named the *Tahoe*? Before the *Duane* was in commission, Phil Roach had the *Tahoe*, and when we spotted this *Tahoe* coming, someone said, "My God, there is the *Tahoe* there. And Phil says, "That's pronounced 'Tayhoe'."

CB: There was an old engineer named Roach. \_\_\_\_\_ Roach. He said, "You can call me cockroach, you can call me this, you can call me that. But don't call me Phil Roach."

SG: I can appreciate his sentiment.

CB: He was a miserable little bastard. He was in close running with Dench for the most miserable officer I ever was near.

going wham, wham. So something had to be done about this. Well, fortunately we had a little \_\_\_\_\_ on there, another old-fashioned square rig sailor, so he went around the stack with the ship rolling hand over hand; he got the damn block off. We knew he didn't like noise. So, when we were in Seattle, he was somewhere. Jimmy Hershfield and I, Jimmy denies that he was part of this, but we drilled a half-inch hole in the stantion in the cabin and put a ball bearing in it. We plugged the hole and painted it over so the rest of the time he had the shift, every time she rolled, click, click. He never could find this.

SG: Oh, dirty pool.

CB: He deserved it. We were coming up off the \_\_\_\_\_.