

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
VOICES ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
NOAA HERITAGE AND THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

AN INTERVIEW WITH
CAPT. JOHN K. CALLAHAN, Jr. NOAA

FOR THE
NOAA 50TH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY
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TRANSCRIPT BY
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Molly Graham: This begins an oral history interview with Captain John Callahan for the NOAA 50th Oral History Project. The interview is taking place on Thursday, August 5, 2021. It's a remote interview with Captain Callahan in Coupeville, Washington. The interviewer is Molly Graham. I'm in Scarborough, Maine. I wanted to pick up with your next assignment, which was Commanding Officer [CO] of the NOAA ship *Ferrel*. Can you just give me a little bit of context for this time period? What were you doing at the time? Where were you living? What did you expect for this assignment?

John Callahan: I was in Washington, DC. Let me check my little note here. Yes, I was in Washington, DC. I was working at the Office of the General Counsel in NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration]. I was doing administrative law stuff for the General Counsel, as well as anything having to do with the Commissioned Corps, ship repair contracts, union stuff, equal employment opportunity. We did the whole gamut of administrative stuff. That was when the ship fell over, and I had my infamous case of the *Delaware II*. I guess it was, again, my memory is a little bit cloudy on this, I'd have to go back and check some records. I was active in the Association of Commissioned officers. At some point, we started a – I've always been a very strong supporter of esprit de corps in the NOAA Corps, and so anytime I could concoct some kind of an activity that would have the commissioned officers get together and do stuff, I took advantage of it. I started a softball team and a football team. We played in an intramural league in the Department of Commerce. At times, we actually brought in some ringers for our commissioned officer team. I had a couple of Coast Guard guys playing with us. That was fun. We would all get together after these games and have a barbecue. We would, in that way, develop some esprit de corps. In the Association of Commissioned Officers [ACO], one of the things that I was involved in was establishing the first award for Junior Officer of the Year Award, and a little ribbon that went along with it, and also started – I believe this was the time I started the ACO Scholarship Fund. One of the advantages to being a lawyer, which again I think they started to realize, was I could do stuff like that. I incorporated a corporation in the state of Maryland. I recruited two Admirals, [John] Bossler and [Harley] Nygren, to be my cosigners; you have to have three people when you incorporate. We established the ACO Scholarship Fund, which is still functioning. The idea was to provide scholarships for commissioned officers' children. We found out – actually, this was suggested by one of the officers' wives. I believe it was at one of the barbecues or something. She was concerned about the fact that when kids would go to school or to college if they were going to submit applications for financial aid, they were generally turned down because the officers were making decent wages. They weren't being, obviously, overpaid or anything. But as far as financial assistance is concerned, they were in that netherland, where they weren't poor enough to get financial assistance, and they weren't rich enough that they didn't care. The idea was: why don't we start a scholarship corporation, and we can provide some scholarship assistance to those people, the commissioned officers that would otherwise not be capable or qualified for a lot of financial support activities? That got started. That was a good one, by the way. Like I say, it's still going on. Let's see. What else? Activities within the Association of Commissioned Officers, included starting the first "Dining-in." That was fun. I remember I ended up as the "President of the Mess". I'm trying to think of who "Ms. Vice" was, [it was Susan D. McKay] which is the humorous kind of character. I remember Admiral [Alfred C. "Bud"] Holmes showing up in a cast. He had broken his leg or had an operation on his leg or hip or something like that. He stood up to make a toast and near fell over, which happened a lot at those dining-ins. A lot of

people would end up drinking huge amounts of alcohol, smoking cigars, all sorts of good stuff. It was fun. He recounted how we took the *Discoverer* from the Atlantic Marine Center to the shipyard when it got reactivated. He's a fun guy, by the way. I think he was a World War II fighter pilot.

MG: What was his name again?

JC: Holmes, H-O-L-M-E-S. Admiral "Bud" Holmes. Hell of a nice guy. Anyway, that's what I was doing at the time. All of a sudden, it came time for me to go to sea again. I just want to back up and say that, by the way, when I was at the Office of General Counsel and doing my thing, to my way of thinking, of course, there was a shift in thinking. There were some investigations I did. There were the ship repair contracts, that kind of stuff. All of a sudden, the really, really older guys – a lot of them retired. There was a shift in the thinking of maybe it's not such a bad idea to have a commissioned officer lawyer, which, in a way, was an interesting set of developments because a couple of people applied, and I'm aware of at least two that went to law school, and the organization paid for it. I believe, when it came time to send these guys back to sea, as I had done on the *Peirce*, one of them got out because they didn't want to go back to sea, and the other guy convinced the organization that he could stay ashore and be a lawyer for the organization. They didn't go back to sea, and it [law school] got paid for, which was kind of interesting. Later on, of course, there were a couple of other guys that did go to law school and go back to sea, one of which, by the way, is the present OAR [Oceanic and Atmospheric Research] Acting Director, Craig McLean. Anyway, the powers that be decided it's time [for me] to go back to sea. I got assigned to the *Ferrel*, which was a circulatory research vessel. We did tides and currents up and down the East Coast, as well as the Gulf. The ship was a hundred and thirty-three feet. Let me see. How many crew did we have in there? I have some information here. Probably around sixteen people. [Editor's Note: Capt. Callahan shares a picture of the NOAA Ship *Ferrel*.] There's the *Ferrel*. Sad ending for that ship, by the way. It was sold by the government, ended up in the hands of a family – a man and a woman with two kids – who took it out in a storm from Puerto Rico a couple of years ago. It turned over, trapped the guy inside. The woman and the two kids got up on the turned-turtle ship and were rescued. This ship is now grounded upside down in Puerto Rico. So, a sad ending for the ship. It was a "Louisiana mud boat" that had been converted to a circulatory research vessel. Interestingly enough, I was with Admiral [James C.] Tison as his marine engineer kind of guy when we went down and purchased that ship. We took it out for sea trials. Admiral [Allen L.] Powell – he became Admiral Powell; he was Captain Powell at the time, was in charge of the Ship Facilities Group – and Admiral Tison went down and hobnobbed with the people that built it. I can't remember the name of the shipyard, but it's up in the bayou outside Louisiana [Zigler Shipyard, Jennings, Louisiana]. We negotiated the final acceptance of the vessel, took a little trip on it. I guess at that time – I'm back to when I first came off the ships, so I was and Lieutenant JG [junior grade], something like that. As the Admiral's aide, I was required to stay at the same hotel he did, only I didn't know there was such a thing as orders that can be written to cover the cost of the hotel. I was on per diem for thirty-five dollars, and it was something like forty or fifty dollars [per day] at the Royal Orleans Hotel in New Orleans. I thought I was going to go down there and spend five days doing ship stuff, and then I'd spend the weekend in New Orleans. Well, I had to go home because I couldn't afford it. Anyway, I was there when they purchased

that ship. I was the guy that was in the engine room going over the final tests and stuff. Then years later, *boom*, there I am, in Command of the vessel. Funny how that works. [laughter]

MG: Did you have to get it fitted and equipped for all the tools and things you'd need to study the tides?

JC: Oh, yes. Like I said, it was a Louisiana mud boat. Instead of carrying mud out to the oil rigs, they had converted the spaces inside for crew members, a galley, and then aft working area was converted with shops, so that we could service current meters and tide equipment and take the ship pretty much – it had a very, very shallow draft, so we could pretty much go anywhere with that damn thing. It was very, very maneuverable. It had a bow thruster, twin screws – all controlled by the bridge. You could work both engines with your hands. You could use your foot and your knees to use the bow thruster. You could actually literally “walk” that ship. I can remember “walking” it into a pier, where they had fishing vessels that were two and three abreast, and it was probably a hundred and fifty feet that was available for us. I had to actually “walk” the ship in. It was a hundred-and-thirty-three-foot ship, and I had to walk that in all the way to the pier. It could be done very nicely – very, very maneuverable ship. In fact, it was ideal for the kind of work that it was doing. We would put these current meters in; they'd have to be in for – they would ideally be in for at least two weeks, sometimes a month, so we could get datasets on tides and currents. Once we would plant these things, we would stick around in the area to make sure that we could get out and service them if necessary. We did a survey, for example, in New York Harbor, which was a real interesting survey. When you were out near the Ambrose Channel, it was not that bad. You would put them [the current meters] in the – you'd put these buoys in, usually two or three to an array. Then, we'd dock at Governors Island, and wait and see whether or not anything happened. If the buoys continued to transmit data, not a problem. If they stopped transmitting, it usually meant that something ran into them like a tugboat or something. You'd have to get underway, go out, pull them out, and then replace them. They had a subsurface buoy so that when the surface buoy got knocked off by a tug or some other vessel, we could, theoretically anyway, locate the array, which was being held taut by this subsurface buoy. Every once in a while, though, whatever hit them would hit that buoy as well, in which case the whole array would fall onto the bottom of the ocean floor. Then we'd have to send divers down to see if we could retrieve the meters because they were about, I think – off the top of my head – at least sixty-thousand dollars or so for a meter. That ended up with some very interesting situations – let me talk to you about New York Harbor for a while. It was a very, very interesting project. We were docked at Yankee Pier at Governors Island, which is the Coast Guard base. The first night we were there – we sailed from Norfolk to New York Harbor – we anchored off Grant's Tomb near the George Washington Bridge because the next day we were going to be planting a buoy near the George Washington Bridge to measure current in the Hudson River. I remember going to bed. I had gone up to the bridge, and the bridge watch was noticing the activity on the West Side Highway, a lot of sirens and stuff. Apparently, a car had been pulled over. There were sirens and all sorts of stuff going on. It was New York, right? I went to bed. The next day, I came back to the bridge and saw a notation in the logbook that they had heard shots. When you looked over, back onto the West Side Highway, that car that had been there was totally stripped. Our crew were mostly guys from West Virginia. “Welcome to New York City, guys.” We went down to Governor's Island and surveyed the various areas. What's that place off of New Jersey, where that horrible shooting occurred.

MG: Sandy Hook. [Editor's note: Sandy Hook is a community of Newtown, Connecticut, where a school shooting took place in 2012. Sandy Hook is also a barrier spit off the coast of New Jersey.]

JC: Yes, Sandy Hook. We planted buoys in Sandy Hook, and this was in the summer. The amount of fishing vessels that were in that area – recreational –during that time was astounding. I have a picture of one of the meters that we pulled out of the water. It must have had one hundred and fifty pieces of fishing gear that were stuck on it. These people would just throw their fishing lines off the stern of their vessel, kick back, and have a beer, not watching where they were going. I can't tell you how many times, standing on the bridge with a bullhorn as well as our ship's whistle, warning people to get the hell out of the way. Anyway, we did that. We did the East River, including Hell's Gate, which is notorious for its currents. In order to be able to get a dataset, we actually had to maneuver the ship for twenty-four hours in Hell's Gate. Our engines were [continuously] running, and we would pull over to the side and watch and warn tugboats coming down, either way, to stay away from our gear. We were ready to go at a moment's notice to replace the gear if necessary, so we could get a dataset. We went through an entire day's worth of cycle in Hell's Gate, maneuvering that ship, which I thought was pretty interesting. I remember the chief boatswain coming out, wearing a hard hat. I asked him, "Why are you wearing a hard hat?" He said that people were throwing bottles of beer off the [Triborough] Bridge that went across the area [near] Hell's Gate and were landing on the deck. The entire deck crew was wearing hard hats because they didn't want to get hit with these beer bottles and stuff. The other thing was that, at one point, we had – there's a prison on the East River. Right near it, we put a current meter in, and it got whacked; it got run over by a tugboat, and the current meters were laying on the bottom. We put divers in the water to see if we could locate and retrieve these things. As I said, they were expensive. You don't dive in the East River or that area unless you've got gamma globulin shots, and you're wearing a full wetsuit. Our divers got trained in full – not regular wetsuits – the suit that is self-contained, essentially. We worked with the New York Police Department because they had done a lot of diving, obviously, in that area. For local knowledge, we had some of those guys come over, and they told us, "Don't worry. When you get down there, if you run into some cars, that's okay because people have been driving cars off that embankment for years, including some nefarious people – bodies and stuff in trunks and all that." So, these guys [our divers] went down. They actually found the meters, which was really kind of neat. Visibility was essentially zero. But they managed to do a search by holding hands while attached to a line that they had planted. In that circular search, they found the meters and were able to pull them up. I'm trying to think of other things that happened. One guy over in the Sandy Hook area came whipping by in a speed boat, and got tangled up in our buoy at low tide. When the tide came in, it sank his boat. We went out with him, the owner of the boat, to see what we could do regarding his boat and our meters. According to his story, he was "out for a lovely afternoon cruise, doing a moderate amount of speed in the channel, when this NOAA buoy leaped out, grabbed his ship, and caused it to sink." Now, we latched on to the boat and actually pulled it up and got it on board. This thing was about like sixteen or eighteen feet and had like a three or four-hundred horsepower engine in it. This was a speedboat. Our buoys were planted outside the channel. When I showed him that we had a precise location and that it was, in fact, he who was operating erroneously, did he really want to mess with that? Of course, he was threatening to sue. I, of course, told him I was a

lawyer; that's fine. He decided that based on the evidence that we had presented that no, he wouldn't do that. We brought him and his boat back to the pier, dropped them off, and didn't hear from the guy again. Interesting stuff. One day, the chief engineer, when we were docked at Yankee Pier, came up and informed me that there was a stink coming from the water coming in around the shaft. Generally, water leaks in and around the shaft to lubricate it. It did. I went down there, and it smelled terrible – sewage. It turned out that the World Trade Center, which was operational at the time, had their own sewage treatment plant, and it failed. As a result, they were dumping raw sewage into the East River for an hour or two while they got things squared away. Of course, on the East River, the tide was going out. So we were right in the path of that mess. I didn't know the World Trade Center had its own sewage treatment plant, but apparently, it did. I got to know a lot of the Coast Guard people on the base at Governors Island, many of which became admirals later on one. One guy, in particular, was a Mustang through the Coast [Guard], Jack Linnon, and he ended up commanding that Coast Guard vessel that had the run-in with the Korean vessel after a plane had been down. Jack became an Admiral. Captain [William] Bill Leahy [CO of Gallitin], another one Captain Cueroni, [who] became head of the Coast Guard Academy. All became Admirals. There was this whole bunch of people that were Captains and Commanders when I knew them and ended up being Admirals in the Coast Guard, and they all came from Governors Island. It was a great little base to operate out of. Wow. That's an awful lot of stuff.

MG: Well, I have a number of follow-up questions. First, can you kind of describe the significance of looking at tides and currents? I know a survey had been done thirty years prior in New York Harbor. So I'm curious what changed, what you were looking at, and how it was useful.

JC: Okay. The guy that did that prior survey was a guy named [Isidor Edward] Rittenburg. I actually got to meet him. He was a retired guy in the DC area. Great, great guy. He's now buried at Arlington National Cemetery, by the way. At any rate, there are changes that occur over time. The way the Coast and Geodetic Survey works is that they will re-survey stuff to see what changes are made based on the geographic area and what kind of changes they would expect. In addition to that, you have advances in technology. So, for example, if you can predict the tide levels and the currents with any degree of accuracy, that means that you can then schedule ships in and out of the harbor – that draft within just a few feet between their bottom and the bottom of the ocean. At one point, I believe NOAA was looking at real-time tide gauges, which would give the mariners real-time tides so that when you bring large vessels in like that, you know exactly what the currents are doing and also what the tide is doing because that's going to determine how much water you have under your keel. As technology goes up in terms of shipbuilding and sizes of ships and where to bring them and to offload stuff like that, the need for accurate data in a major port goes up. That's primarily what the tide and current surveys were for, to make sure that the data was accurate and that it's the best possible.

MG: Can you say a little bit about how it relates to safety? There was a write-up of your time on the *Ferrel*, and there's a quote in there that said, "You and the *Ferrel* are doing more to ensure safe navigation for professional and amateur seamen in New York Harbor than any other single source." So I was curious if you could just explain how.

JC: If you don't have accurate tidal data and you don't have accurate current data, and you are operating any kind of a vessel in that area, particularly – I was just mentioning Hell's Gate, where you have some really stiff tides. There are other areas that have very pronounced effects by tide and current. Around Staten Island, for example, over into the Meadowlands in New Jersey, as well as New York Harbor – if data is not accurate, the mariners have just got to rely on their local knowledge and looking at what they think is going on in the water. When you're maneuvering – as I said, when you're maneuvering some of these larger vessels around, this information becomes very critical. The more data you can give people and the more accurately it can be portrayed so that it's useful to them, you're going to contribute to the safety of marine operations. I don't know if that answers your question.

MG: Yes, it does. The other thing I read about was – and you mentioned this, too – that you were doing circulatory and meteorological data for ecological studies, was what I read. I didn't know what those studies were. Do you remember what studies you were looking at, in particular?

JC: Not meteorological. We always took weather observations, so that information went into a net. I'm trying to think. Let's see. The current meters themselves measured salinity, speed, and we also did some water sampling. I'm trying to think of what the third thing was we were looking at – salinity, depth, speed. The quality of the water through the water sampling we did, as well as the salinity and speed data that we were taking, contributed to a small part of a much larger picture as to what was going on in New York. For example, there is a guy named Larry Swanson. He was a NOAA commissioned officer who ended up working for Stony Brook. He made his name looking at what happened to the garbage that was being dumped off Long Island and the New York area. I don't know if you've ever seen this, but these big barges would just load up with garbage and go out and just drop it outside the channels and stuff, a couple of specific locations. That stuff just sat on the bottom, and it used up all the oxygen, and it just created this mess. He got this New York BIGHT project, which was supposed to be studying what the effects of this sewage were. To some extent, information on currents and where this stuff would go based on currents would be useful.

MG: The other thing I read was that you and three other members of *Ferrel's* crew received a silver medal for rescuing a woman, a sightseer who fell overboard. Does this ring a bell?

JC: Yes, yes. We were in back of – I think it was a Circle Line boat. All of a sudden, it started to veer. Something was not right. They put out a call about somebody being overboard. I maneuvered, and we ended up launching our small boat in minutes – I mean, literally minutes – and raced over and actually pulled this person out of the water, and then dropped them off at – I forget where the facility was, but we dropped them off, so they could get transported for medical treatment. The crew was just amazing on that ship. We put that boat in and out of the water every day. When it came time to launch these boats – in fact, at one point, I was in a little bit of a contest with a Coast Guard vessel at Governors Island. They claimed that they could get underway faster than we could. [laughter] We got underway very quickly one time to go service one of our buoys that had been hit. We clearly won that contest. What I'm getting at is these guys knew what they were doing. They could act very, very quickly. We were in the right place at the right time. I was able to maneuver the ship very quickly and get that boat off. These guys

got that person out of the water. I never did find out whatever happened to that person. Do you know?

MG: No, I don't. I was hoping you did.

JC: I understand that they received medical attention. I have no idea what the result was. You hear rumors about stuff, but I have no facts.

MG: Were you working alongside other NOAA ships? I think I read that the *Whiting* was a ship you worked in conjunction with.

JC: There were different times when we were working in the same area. The *Peirce* and the *Whiting* both were doing the Delmarva Peninsula work. We did the inland waterways stuff throughout Georgia and in Florida. We did surveys all the way through to the Atchafalaya River in the Gulf. There were other NOAA ships that were doing hydrographic work in those areas. But we were never working in tandem with them at all on a project that involved hydrography. They would be doing that, and we were doing the tides and current work. Again, the *Ferrel* was just ideally suited for that kind of stuff. When we were in the inland waterway, you could actually turn that ship, put its bow into the mud, and just have the engines slowly turning while you're servicing a buoy that was located right next to the edge of the inland waterway. That's what that boat was built for.

MG: It was really neat to read that write-up about your time on the *Ferrel*. There was a nice picture of you. Do you remember when that article was written? Do you know which one I'm talking about?

JC: I think so. In one of the New York Pilot Association magazines?

MG: Yes.

JC: Yes. It was like, "Wow, I didn't know I did all that stuff." [laughter] It was nice. By the way, I'm all for getting good publicity for the agency. Whenever I was involved in a ship and there was an opportunity to do some good publicity, I certainly was not averse to that at all. We would have open houses. For example, I took the *Ferrel* in one time. [laughter] I took the *Ferrel* into Baltimore, and we had an open house. When I actually transferred off the ship, it was in Baltimore. We had gone in, had an open house, and the Washington Scottish Pipe Band, of which I was a member, came to the ship and marched me off. I walked off the *Ferrel* in uniform, fell right into ranks with the pipe band; they handed me my drum, and off we went down the pier.

MG: I was under the impression that you got involved in the pipe band more towards retirement. So is this something you had done earlier in your life?

JC: It was that during a period of time after I had gotten off the *Peirce* and was working in the Office of General Counsel that I discovered my Irish roots, if you will, in an Irish bar one night. The pipe band came in and was playing. I thought, "This is really cool." I asked them if they

ever needed drummers. Apparently, they did really need drummers. They were in short supply. These guys were really kind of clever. They winked at each other when I didn't see them, and they said, "Well, you'd have to audition. There may be some kind of initiation fee or something." They told me to meet them at some function that weekend in Maryland someplace. So, I showed up with a pair of [drum] sticks. I told the Pipe Major, "I'm here to audition." He said, "What are you, crazy? I don't even remember you." Anyway, I played a little *rat-tat-tat* on the sticks. He said, "Yeah, fine. Come to rehearsal." I ended up becoming part of that band. It was a very interesting band. We had four different names. We were the Northern Virginia Gaelic, the Band for the Clan MacGregor, the Band for the National Cathedral, and the Washington Scottish Pipe Band. Whoever paid us, we'd change the name on the heads on the drums, and we became that group. The guys in the pipe band were guys in various national security agencies – CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] and other government agencies, and we even had a bank janitor. One of the drummers that I recruited, later on, was a PhD oceanographer from NOAA, who, by the way, was involved in tides. It was just a great fun group to hang out with. I got to meet all sorts of people. I had a security clearance, so I got to play with the Pipe Major who was with the CIA at CIA parties. We got to play for President Bush; I met him personally. I played a party for Jackie Kennedy. It was just a great entree into a lot of different things in the Washington DC area. So, when I came back from the *Ferrel* assignment, I just hopped right back into the Washington Scottish Pipe Band. When I came out to Seattle and finished my tour out here [Seattle] on the ship, I ended up joining the Keith Highlanders Pipe Band. I found out about that because one of the Washington Scottish Pipe Band members used to live in Seattle and was part of that band. So, I joined that band. During that period of time, I tried to learn how to actually play the drums. I had never had lessons before. In that process, I met some really interesting, to say the least, characters in the piping world – world masters. Then I ended up starting a school for piping, dancing, and drumming around 1998 or so. Within a year, it [Mastery of Scottish Arts] became the world's best piping, dancing, and drumming school in the world. It wasn't anything other than the fact that the faculty we had were all world champions. It was kind of like – this one guy in particular, who I had become friends with, agreed to do this [instruct]. Once he did, the other champion pipers said – "Oh, if he's doing it, then we want to do it." We had the most incredible instructors. Anybody, from kids on up, could go to this school, which was different than most of the schools. We did a concert in Seattle, which ended up going into Benaroya Hall, which is one of the premier concert halls in the country. That organization is still going. So, that was the pipe band stuff. Two different iterations – one was playing in the pipe band, and then later on, when I retired, starting this school for piping, dancing, and drumming. Back to the *Ferrel*. There we were, doing surveys up and down the coast, through the inland waterways. I mentioned we started out – I reported to the ship on the Atchafalaya River. We were just docked, literally tied up to a tree on the river. When I walked on board, I thought that somebody had left a big rope near the gangway. When I reported it to the boatswain, he pointed out to me, "No, it was a big snake." [laughter] Well, there I am in Louisiana, watching the Atchafalaya River flow right on by the ship with all sorts of trees and dead horses and all sorts of stuff going by. Then we came around to Florida. We docked, at one point, in Fernandina Beach. That was really interesting. We docked at a guy's pier. I understand that he was arrested for gun running. The rumor was that the Army Corps of Engineers bailed him out to work on a work-release program because he was the only guy that could get these guys to work on this bridge project they had going on. He was a diver, and he said that he had the statue from the *Andrea Doria*'s main dining salon of

Admiral Doria and laughed. This NOAA diver/oceanographer guy, PhD Hank Frey, was with me at the time. He said, "I'm a diver, and I've written books on it. If you've got that, that had to be incredible." The guy said, "Well, come over to the house, and I'll show it to you." And he did. [laughter] My friend Hank looked at it and said, "Yeah, I think that's it." [laughter] You could see where Admiral Doria's legs had been. They had blown them off or something so he could get this statute out. Every once in a while, you'd meet these kinds of characters, which was fun, really. Then we went up the coast, as I said, through the inland waterway. We did work in the Delmarva Peninsula. We did New York Harbor. It was fun. Now, when I got on the ship, there was zero data production. There were problems with the current meters and how things were being handled, and so I tried to address that with improved communications between the people in Rockville and the people on the ship; each one had been claiming it was the other that was causing the problems. It took quite an effort, actually, and a lot of resistance, but when I got off, we were turning out about ninety-five percent of data. That was a very difficult time, if you will, in terms of getting the crew to respond. Sometimes, I found that crews have different personalities. Sometimes you find a crew that is very much interested in getting the job done and being very proud of it. Then you find other crews that are more interested in being part of the crew. It's like the ship exists for them. Sometimes you have to overcome that. I don't know if that's still the case, but I found that in those days. What else?

MG: The *Ferrel* was undergoing this multi-year study of tides. Did you stay on throughout the study? Or did you hop off before the study had concluded?

JC: I hopped off before it had concluded. I was on there for – I forget what I was on there for – a couple of years. Then, the tide and current survey work continued. I don't remember the names of the various projects that we were on. But we would get project instructions to go here and measure these currents, etcetera. We'd do that, and then we'd get the next one. Like I said, I do remember a big effort to find out whether or not you could automate tidal records so that they would be instantly available to mariners in large ports, like New York and New Orleans. That was just starting at that time.

MG: Your next assignment was with the National Weather Service. Is that correct?

JC: No, I was never with the Weather Service. Let me see.

MG: I have in my notes that you were on the staff of the National Weather Service study for the National Academy Committee on Ocean and Atmosphere.

JC: Yes. They was a National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmospheres, and they needed a lawyer. The Office of General Counsel suggested I go down and be their lawyer. I helped with the development of a special report that that group did. It was a bunch of highflyers. When I say highflyers, I'm talking about – one of the ladies was one of the first aquanauts. Boy, I'm really searching my mind. I think she was an astronaut, to begin with. But they had very high-level people studying what should happen to the National Weather Service. I helped generate that report, provided some advice, and helped them write it. After that, I got put out to – I got assigned to the National [Marine] Fisheries Service. I was put in charge of the Debt Collection Task Force. Apparently, under the Magnuson-[Stevens] Act, a lot of fishermen had

been fined different amounts of money, and they weren't paying. The backlog of debt was becoming staggering. So, the General Counsel wanted to put an effort [into] collecting these debts, in particular, showing the fishermen that we were serious about enforcing the laws involving National Marine Fisheries [NMFS]. I got sent to the Fisheries office, and it was down in Georgetown. I had assigned to me, part-time, two attorneys. I can't remember their names right now. I just came across them the other day. At any rate, they were available to me part-time. I had a secretary, if you will, that was also available to me most of the time. We created a task force so that if you called into the Debt Collection Task Force, we had a separate line. She would answer, "Debt Collection Task Force," and to anybody on the outside, it looked like we were a big organization, and we were going to go after them. I generated a Debt Collection Handbook for distribution throughout the General Counsel's regional offices. Also, we sent out a "demand" letter, identifying the debts and telling these people that they need to pay up. Just the mere fact that we were able to send this letter out, we probably collected thirty, forty percent of the debt just from that. A lot of people either didn't realize that they owed the money, or they were waiting for something to happen. It wasn't necessarily that they were purposely delinquent. In fact, I can remember going to a meeting one time in Gloucester, I believe it was, and at lunchtime, walking down along the pier, and I happened to notice the name of one of the fishing vessels was one of the vessels that we had sent a letter saying, "You owe us so much money." So, I was in uniform; I decided to go pay him a visit. "We'll show him that the Debt Collection Task Force really means business." [laughter] I went up and introduced myself. "Hi, I'm Commander Callahan, and we sent you a letter regarding a debt. I wonder what the situation is." This poor woman: her husband had died, and she barely spoke English. All these demands for the debt as well the fine that he was actually assessed, were all buried in mail that hadn't been opened. She was willing to pay right then and there. She was willing to pay me whatever money she had and make arrangements to pay the rest of it. So, it wasn't like these people were bad people or anything. There were some people that were just trying to skate by and not pay their debts. But a lot of them, it was just communications. By sending them these letters and being in communication with these people, we cleaned up a really, really good portion of the debts. Like I said, we put into place a debt collection process and made sure that everybody was aware of it. So, that problem was greatly reduced. I'm sure there are still people that get fined and don't pay their debts. But there's a way to handle it now.

MG: Were you looking at debt collection nationally or focused on a particular region?

JC: Nationally. When I say nationally, fisheries efforts, mostly on the West Coast – you're looking at California and Alaska and Washington, too. Then, on the East Coast, it was New England, and then some of the stuff in the South, but mostly the New England area. To that extent, the bulk of the work was concentrated – and our initial effort was definitely with the New England people. The Office of General Counsel in Seattle was – I met with them and gave them the debt collection handbook. Once they had that information, they could assign their own resources. We already had a letter that we had sent out on the East Coast saying, "You owe this money. Please pay it, or within thirty days, something is going to happen." So, the ball got rolling, and the problem got reduced, so my job ended.

MG: Were you getting a sense through this process of what stakeholder relationships were like with NMFS and fishermen?

JC: Yes. Now, this is strictly just my opinion, right? When you say stakeholders, what I interpret that to mean is you've got NOAA, and then you've got the fishermen, and then you've got the state authorities. There was always some – I don't want to say friction. But between state and [the US] government, there's always some stuff that has to be ironed out. Who's going to have jurisdiction of this? Who's going to pay for that? All that kind of stuff. I think that was to be expected. The fishermen themselves were – I don't think they liked the regulation. They didn't like being regulated. That was more of an acrimonious relationship. By the way, [laughter] I just remembered something. When I was on the *Ferrel*, we were doing the New York project, right? We put a current array near the Verrazano Bridge, and what we would normally do – we also, by the way, did a bunch of stuff near Casco Bay, Maine. We would always go to the local fishermen and tell them ahead of time that we're coming into the area; we're going to have these particular buoys with meters on them; they'll be there for a couple of weeks. Please stay away from them so that we can get our data, particularly the lobstermen up in New England. We realize we're in your territory. But the federal government does have the rights of navigation to do this. But we want to work with you. So, if you can move your gear over here, we'll do this area, and then you can move this way, and we'll go do this area. We'll work with you. That always worked very well. We did the same thing in New York. We told these people we're going to be there, please don't put your gear there. We went out to service the buoy [near the Verrazano Bridge], and we pull up an array of lobster pots. There must have been eight of them or so. Somebody had put their lobster pots down there. They were lobstering under the Verrazano Bridge, which is interesting. We had them on the fantail, and the next time we went out to change out the meters and stuff, I noticed this guy with lobster pots. He was tending them. So, we pulled over. That's the great thing about the *Ferrel*; it's so maneuverable. We just pulled over and yelled down to the guy, "Are you missing any lobster pots?" He said, "Yes, I am." I said, "Well, I think we've got them. Can you describe them?" Which he did. I said, "Fine. Pull alongside, and we'll give you your lobster pots. Please stay out of the way." I went through the whole thing about what we're trying to do and how it helps, and "Please help us." "Okay, Captain. Not a problem." We came back out the following week. All of a sudden, this guy comes back alongside. I'm on the bridge – "What's going on down there?" All of a sudden, I get word from the boatswain that the guy just threw up a case of lobster for the crew in appreciation for getting his lobster pots back. I said, "Are you kidding me?" He said, "What do I do with these, Captain?" I said, "Tell me about it." He said, "Well, first of all, they're 'shorts'. They're not the right size that you can eat, number one. Number two, this whole crew is from West Virginia. Who wants to eat lobster coming out from under the Verrazano Bridge?" So, this guy is going away. I'm thinking to myself – first of all, I told the boatswain, "As soon as he pulls away, dump them off the other side. Put them back in the water." I'm thinking to myself, "This guy has just given a pot full of illegal lobsters to a NOAA ship with 'NOAA' in huge letters written on the side of it. How stupid can you be?" Anyway, the relationship between the fishermen and the National Marine Fisheries Service, I don't think, was that good. Like I said, they didn't want to be regulated. Now, when I got there – this I remember a lot. Because the first time I was down at Fisheries, I helped Herb Blatt [with] the Magnuson Act implementation. He was the only lawyer down there. He was with Fisheries at the time. He needed some help. I went down, and I helped him out a little bit. Then, they assigned a bunch of lawyers to Fisheries [in] Georgetown at that time. Meanwhile, when I went to the Debt Collection Task Force, etcetera, I was there in those offices. They had probably four or five

attorneys now, in addition to Herb. In fact, Herb, I think, eventually retired, and I think Maggie took over. At any rate, they had a number of lawyers. I noticed that whereas the Fisheries regulations years and years ago were like this small, now it was like this –[large]. The average fisherman was having to go through these regulations and figure out what to do, and how to do it, and who you are writing to appeal to, and all that sort of stuff was becoming really, really amazing. It wasn't something simple. You have to understand that a lot of these people that are out there fishing – and I don't mean this in any disrespectful way whatsoever – they're not that well-educated. A lot of them are just working men and women, and a lot of them, English is not their primary language. You start publishing all these wonderful rules and procedures and committees that you can go to and appeal stuff to and – *whoosh*, right over their heads. Anyway, my opinion.

MG: When you finished that handbook and the work with the Debt Collection Task Force, what was your next step?

JC: Back to the office of the National Ocean Survey, I think. Hold on. Yes, I went to the – oh, yes. I remember that. I went to the office of the Director of the National Ocean Service, who at the time was a guy named Admiral Bossler.

MG: What year was this?

JC: This was probably 1984, 1985. I'm pretty sure that he was the guy at the time. I know he was. One of the things I did was I did a – let's see. Let me go back. I'm trying to recall. I'll have to look at this. Could I just back up to the *Ferrel* again?

MG: Sure, sure.

JC: During the New York Harbor thing, we had a problem with garbage getting caught in the propellers of the current meters. I invented something, which I called the Callahan Flotsam Shedder, which essentially was an umbrella. If you take a regular umbrella, and you take the covering off, you're left with the wires. You would attach that at a length of at least seven or eight diameters from the hub of the propeller in front of it. Any garbage that was coming down the Hudson River or the East River would get deflected off of this thing, and the propeller would continue to operate. It worked. I figured, "Oh, this is going to be really cool. My claim to fame. I'll get a patent on this thing and all that." It turns out that somebody invented a screen that went around a propeller back in the 1800s, and the patent office thought that this was close enough to what I was doing that the Department of Commerce was not going to go for a patent, but I was free to do it if I wanted and pay the money to do that. I didn't. But I wanted to tell you about my Flotsam Shedder, which I still have, by the way.

MG: Maybe the name was why it didn't catch on.

JC: [laughter] Right. So, I got assigned to the Coast Guard. I became the first commissioned officer who was assigned as a liaison to the United States Coast Guard at their headquarters. I was assigned to Admiral [Theodore] Wojnar at the Aids to Navigation Branch. What I was supposed to [do] – my job was to figure out how the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the National

Ocean Survey could more easily interface with the United States Coast Guard, particularly the aids to navigation area, in terms of transmitting data, communications, and getting information back and forth, and things that we could do for the Coast Guard, and what they could do in providing information to us. I had another job. The other job was to actually look at whether or not the NOAA Commissioned Corps should be married up with the United States Coast Guard – in fact, National Ocean Service. That one was kind of – I was supposed to do that and make my observations to Admiral Bossler, which I did. But I wasn't supposed to let anybody know that we're doing that because we didn't want to start rumors about what we're trying to do. It was just – what are the pros and cons of doing something like that. In doing that, I found something very interesting. I found out that before the Department of Commerce was founded back in the '30s, the Coast and Geodetic Survey and Coast Guard both operated in the Treasury, and they shared the same ships. There were a lot of connections with the lighthouse service and other stuff. When the Coast and Geodetic Survey decided they'd probably be better off with the Department of Commerce, they had to make some choices. We [the Coast Survey] were going to have our own ships, not going to have to worry about that – I mean, if you think back from an organizational standpoint, Department of Treasury has ships, period, just like the Department of Commerce has ships, not necessarily Coast Survey ships and Coast Guard ships; they're just ships that can be used for whatever they need it to be used for. Again, the Lighthouse Service went with the Coast Guard. I think the Director of the Coast and Geodetic Survey still retained a position on that board of governance, etcetera. So, there was a split. A lot of things got broken up. But initially, they were together, and it made sense. It made a lot of sense. After looking at where we were at that time, my conclusion was, yes, that should be done. The ships and the aircraft that we were operating at NOAA could very easily be amalgamated into the Coast Guard. It would [have] a lot of advantages. First of all, you wouldn't have to have a separate Commissioned Corps. You could have the a separate NOAA Commissioned Corps within the Coast Guard. Then, as time went on, just integrate them throughout the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard had an oceanographic program that they were teaching at the Coast Guard Academy, and they also had a program down at Virginia, a Coast Guard base down there – the training base for enlisted people [Yorktown, VA] – they did oceanography stuff. The Coast Guard had a couple of vessels that were doing oceanography at one point. They did weather observations at one point. So, the science was there as well as the ability to train officers [at] the Coast Guard Academy. You could have enlisted people that were oceanographically trained, hydrographically trained, etcetera – just all sorts of wonderful little things. All the ships bases that the Coast Guard has could be utilized by NOAA ships. The Coast Guard had its own huge area to handle maintenance and repairs and contracting and all that, all stuff that's being duplicated over in the Department of Commerce. By the way, I don't think, at that time, we had any kind of political support for the Commissioned Corps within NOAA. In fact, there were efforts to do away with, and these efforts continued for years, even after I left, and for all I know, could be going on now. I don't know – but to do away with the Commissioned Corps. “Why are these guys in uniform here? We don't need this.” My recommendation was, “Yes, we should do this.” My understanding is there was some discussion about it. At one point, it was a high enough discussion, such that the Coast Guard said, “Yeah, we can take your ships and stuff, but you've got to give us the money.” The Department of Commerce didn't want to do that; they wanted to get rid of the ships and stuff, but they didn't want to do anything about putting [in] money; that whole thing died. I am very encouraged right now to see that our officers are being trained at the Coast Guard Academy and actually go on *Eagle*. They're taught to wear uniforms

right at the beginning and all that sort of good stuff. I just saw a Coast Guard officer being assigned to some kind of a NOAA vessel to do some stuff. We are paid right now by the Coast Guard pay center. I still think it's a good idea that the Coast Guard, and the NOAA Corps, and the ships, and the aircraft get combined. Maybe someday it'll happen. It'll be full circle to where it used to be before 1930 when they formed the Department of Commerce. Anyway, I actually received a commendation from the Coast Guard for my work down there. After that, I was assigned to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. That was quite a feather, I thought, to be assigned there because they only take so many people out of each of the services and the Department of Commerce; I think they had two slots that they had allocated if they [Department of Commerce] were going to have anybody there. I got nominated and was assigned to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. That was really cool.

MG: I want to ask you more about that. I have a couple of things in my notes that I want to make sure we don't miss. Was there anything else you wanted to say about working under John Bossler and your working relationship?

JC: I would consider John a personal friend. He and I have worked together a lot. At some point, I was in charge of a task force to look at [charging] user fees for nautical charts. I remember one of the first meetings that we had – previous to that, I'd done a lot of research into user fees and all that sort of stuff. Everybody at that meeting, the charting people – John was, at the time, the head of the National Geodetic Service. These were high-ranking guys. They had no idea about user fees and what it was all about. John had incredibly wonderful questions. He had done research. He knew about it. It was like, "Wow, what a breath of fresh air." This guy comes prepared, and he knows what the hell he's talking about. Then, I ended up working for him, which I just loved. I had the office next to his when he was the Director of the Coast and Geodetic Survey. He would leave every day at five o'clock. If you wanted something to be done and signed off on, you better get there before five because he's leaving at five o'clock. Me, on the other hand, I would work until all hours if I had a project that I thought needed to be done, or I didn't feel like I had done enough that day. I wasn't married. I didn't have to be home at a particular time. For me to stay late and work until six o'clock, let the traffic die down or whatever – not a big deal. My office was – I knew where everything was, but the piles of papers were just astounding. I'd walk into his office to get a signature on something. I looked at his desk: perfectly clean, not a piece of paper on it, except in the inbox and the outbox – just a couple in the outbox, nothing in the inbox. At that point, I was getting crazy with, "Why am I here? Everybody else is going home. I'm the guy that's working late." I said, "Admiral, I don't understand how you do it. You leave here at five o'clock every day. My place is a mess. I can't get this stuff done. How do you do this?" He said, "John, if you can't get your work done in eight hours, you're doing something wrong." [laughter] Wow. That was inspirational, for sure. Absolutely.

MG: A few times, you said you were the first lawyer for the Corps, the first liaison to the Coast Guard. So, I'm wondering if you can reflect on all these firsts? Was this something you took pride in? Or was it intimidating to be paving the way in some of these areas?

JC: I took pride in it. I just saw opportunities to get things done. Nobody else had done it. Why can't it be done? For example, I asked John one time – John Bossler – I said, "I've really

enjoyed working with you. It's been such a pleasure." He was a phenomenal supervisor, I thought. He said, "John, it's very simple with you." He said, "Most people try to put square people in a round hole. They try to mold them to the way they want you to be. With you, just turn you loose and tell you what it is that you want to get done, and it's done. You don't need my supervision or anything." I thought to myself, "That is absolutely an amazing observation for me because that's exactly the way I operate." I want to do stuff. I see something, and I will figure out in my way what the best way is to handle that. That may not be the way anybody else has done it before or likes to see it done. So, they will say – "Well, maybe you shouldn't do this," or they try and direct me. There's resistance there, and it cuts off your creativity as well as your self-expression. If the person is a self-starter and can produce the results, then just let them go. It's exactly what John did. I think that's the way he managed most people. He just essentially told them what the goal was, what we were trying to do, and then let them do their job, which was a lot different than a lot of other people that were very much micromanagers.

MG: It seemed like you were using your skills as an engineer to sort of engineer your career, figure out problems, solve them, and build the tools to create the thing you wanted to happen.

JC: Yes, I did the Briggs Myers test when I was in the Industrial College of the Armed Forces; they went through a whole battery of stuff. ENTP [Extraverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Prospecting] is what my thing was. It's possibilities. I am very creative, and I create possibilities. I have a hard time sometimes honing in on a specific one; I will just keep creating more and more possibilities instead of getting down to actually doing something. But that creativity and that ability to look at things a little differently and come up with solutions and not necessarily worry about whether or not somebody says they're not going to work, but actually, just to do it. I do credit the engineering education that I got, being able to slice through a lot of garbage just to get to the essential facts needed to solve the problem. Yes, it was a good education.

MG: I think you mentioned last time that you were doing some guest lecturing at the NOAA Corps Officer Training Center. Can you tell me more about that experience? I was curious how that came up. What kinds of talks were you giving and on what subjects?

JC: Yes. We had a problem. Women had been introduced to the ship, and there were some bumps along the way. One of the relationships that had developed on a ship had gone haywire and caused some problems. There was consternation afoot at the higher levels. We had a number of meetings, and one of the suggestions was that I go up as an attorney and lecture these people on what it means to be an officer. In other words, Conduct Unbecoming an Officer – "Don't do this kind of stuff." I went up and developed a lecture having to do with Conduct Unbecoming an Officer. What I did was I started out with the oath of office, and I said, "You guys are going to take this oath of office, and you need to know what that means, so that when you raise your hand and say, 'I do,' it is from a knowledgeable base. In here, it talks about following the orders of your superiors and all that sort of stuff and defending the Constitution. Do you understand what that means? That's not just the Constitution, but everything that comes out of it, including the laws, and the regulations, and the direct orders of your superiors." Then I would go through examples of why you're wearing a uniform in the first place. "Did you ever notice, by the way, that bus drivers wear uniforms, and airplane pilots wear uniforms? There's a

reason for the uniform. In a crisis situation, people turn around and they look for the person in the uniform to give them directions. You're assuming that position right now. That little rank thing that you have ...” I'd asked them, “How would you promote somebody if you had a business?” They'd [say], “Well, they are going to have so much education, and then they are going to have so much experience and that kind of stuff.” I'd say, “Well, how do you know that the person has that?” “Resumes or whatever.” I said, “Well, yeah, okay. We do it with a rank. So, if you're going to be a Lieutenant or Lieutenant, Junior Grade or whatever, we know that you've done these kinds of courses, you've been evaluated by a bunch of people [while your] doing a job, and you've been successful. The more you get – you get up to a Captain or an Admiral or whatever, you've gone through these processes, and therefore, this is a person that's to be listened to.” Anyway, I'd go through the whole gamut and essentially tell them, “You've got to think about how any relationship that you have with people on a ship is going to be perceived, not only by your superiors and other officers but how about the crew? How about relationships between you and other officers?” This is an example. Let's say that a Commander has a relationship with an Ensign. It comes time to write a fitness report on the Ensign, and they give them a glowing report. Is that because they're having a relationship, or is the Ensign really good? Conversely, if the senior person says, “I got to write bad stuff on you,” is that because they're having a relationship and they're having a fight, or has the [junior] person really done something wrong? That's what the lecture was about: how to be an officer, why we have the disciplinary structure we have, and essentially how to use your head and not put yourself in compromising positions. I had a lot of fun with the lecture, and the students loved it. They thought it was one of the best lectures of the entire program because when I teach, I'm very animated, and I use that same creative process that we were talking about before. I apply that to my teaching. [For] example, I would start off by having the officer who's in charge of the training verbally tell me in front of the class that I now was in charge. Then, when he said that, he turned around, and I would then say to everybody, “Get down on the floor and put your nose six inches off the off the ground.” Everybody would look at each other like, “What the hell is he talking about?” I said, “Did you hear me? I said, ‘Get off your ass, get down on the floor, and put your nose six inches off the floor.’” Everybody would start [imitates mumbling], and finally, one or two people would start to get out of their chairs to get down. “Stop”. I'd then say, “Suppose I told you that from where I'm standing right now, I can look at the construction site going on on the next building and tell that they have just released a poisonous gas, and I've got to get you out of here in a lickety-split time. You've got to be crawling because the gas is” – and I would tell them what the actual gas was; I can't remember the name of it now. “The only way you can breathe is to breathe the air twelve inches above the [floor],” I said. “So, why didn't you do that? You did hear the guy say that I was in charge, right? I am a Captain. Why didn't you do that?” “Well, we didn't think you were serious.” I said, “Oh? So, whether or not my order is to be obeyed is whether you think it's serious?” I said, “Suppose I screamed at you,” and then I would scream at them, “Get on the floor. Is that what I have to do to get an order obeyed?” Then we'd talk about giving orders and all that and illegal orders like “My Lai [massacre]” and stuff like that. They enjoyed it.

MG: How long did you do that for? Did you see things improve in terms of relationships and behavior onboard?

JC: I did that pretty much almost until the time I retired, on and off. When I was at sea, obviously, I couldn't do it. Although I think I might have come down once in awhile during an import period and lectured. Yes, there was no question; I don't know that it was my lecture that did it or not, and I'm thinking that was probably a combination of awareness on the part of officers as to what their duties were, but also the fact that more and more women came on board vessels [and it] became less and less of an issue. Society moved on essentially.

MG: Around this time, you earned your MBA [Master of Business Administration]. Is that correct?

JC: Yes, when I went to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Remember me going to school at night while working full-time? I did the same thing with the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. I went there full [time] during the day, and then I went to Marymount University, [which] which accepted some of the ICAF courses and give me credit for them, and I got an MBA.

MG: Do you want to talk about those two things? I'm curious why you were interested in pursuing an MBA.

JC: I thought to round out my education – I already had an engineering degree, and I had a law degree – something in the line of business management would give me better credentials for my future and round out my ability to do whatever it is I want to do in the future. So, I took the opportunity to earn it while I was at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. In my mind, I figured that if I had an engineering degree, I had a law degree, I was a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and an MBA that I would be in really good shape to compete with anybody in the organization.

MG: I'm not clear on what you were doing at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Were you both a student there and at Marymount?

JC: Yes. I was assigned to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces full-time. At the time, they did not have a degree that they offered; you just became a graduate. [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower was a huge supporter of the school. Did he found it? He was involved and went there prior to World War II. At any rate, the idea was to be able to put the country on a war footing economically, if necessary. Obviously, the military would be involved in that. You had Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and then you had other parts of the government that would have to be involved in putting the country on a wartime footing. Now, I'm thinking in terms of any other emergencies like pandemics. The Department of State, Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation including the Coast Guard –had slots that they would allocate to people within the Department so that if the Department was ever involved in that kind of an effort, they had people that were familiar with it and could address it. So, I got selected.

MG: Was your focus on ship construction, or is that just one of the things that you were learning about?

JC: Once you got there, you had some basic courses that you had to take. For example, there was a whole battery of management courses. Sometimes people refer to this as one of the armed services' finishing schools. The people that go there normally are being tracked for higher things, and so they want to make sure that these people get trained. They had a lot of management courses, physical activity, psychological evaluations, economics, that kind of stuff. You then looked at various sectors of the economy and became familiar with them. So, some guys were looking at the industrial base. Other people were looking at the sectors that manufactured the weapons, the computer areas - shipbuilding was one of them. I chose shipbuilding because, number one, I had some background in it, and number two, I thought that would be most relevant to NOAA and the recapitalization of its fleet because don't forget, the fleet that we had at the time was twenty-five years or so old, and that was pretty much what they initially had designed those ships for anyway was a twenty-five-year span. Coast Guard and NOAA always take their ships and run them way past their expiration date, if you will, through good maintenance, and that's good. But initially, when they're designing our ships, they say twenty-five-year life. Anyway, I thought that we would probably end up having to recapitalize the fleet. So, shipbuilding was the one that I chose. As a result, I studied shipbuilding - my group studied shipbuilding. Then, at the end of the year, all of the groups made reports on what the condition was around the world in these particular areas. I got to see a lot of stuff. We took a trip to Korea, and I visited Korean shipyards and how they were building ships; we went to Japan and [saw] how they were doing ships. Very interesting, by the way. In our country, there was a downturn in shipping, and so most of the shipbuilders fell back on the old World War II management scheme of [killing] off the competition. In Japan, they did something else; they said, "Look, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll all take a fifteen percent reduction." So, Mitsubishi Industries took fifteen percent of its shipyard workers and put them into heavy machinery or something. "Then, when the shipbuilding turns around, we'll have the base to do it, and they did." When it [shipbuilding] did turn around, Japan, Korea, Germany all had the shipbuilding base to continue to build ships, whereas we lost the ability to do it. We have very little ability to build ships in this country right now. The ships that are being built are for the Navy; essentially, that's it. In fact, I just saw - at that time, we lost our ability to make anchor chains for aircraft carriers; we had to rely on foreign sources to do that. Now I understand that the other chain that we manufacture, a few months ago - I saw something in a newspaper article. They were changing specifications, and now we may lose the ability to make a four-inch anchor chain, something like that. In other words, our methodology and how we handle things over here is totally different than how it's handled in Europe and other places. Quite frankly, I think they're doing a better job, as evidenced by the fact that they're building ships now, and we don't. In addition to that, we got to see what was going on around the world, how national security issues play into all of this stuff. We went to Central America, and we got briefed by the people down in CENTCOM [United States Central Command] about what was going on with the drug war and all that kind of good stuff. There were very interesting things occurring. They took us on a bus ride, and the guy that was driving the bus made a wrong turn and pretty much freaked out everybody on the bus because you're looking at a bunch of Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels, and we're operating in [Manuel] Noriega country. Then we went to Korea, to the demilitarized zone. We went down to see that bridge where the [USS] *Pueblo* guys were released. [Editor's Note: On January 23, 1968, the USS *Pueblo* was captured by North Korean forces. In December 1968, the eighty-three-man crew was released back to the United States.] As we drove down there on the bus - that was a very, very strange place, by the way. These

people were just sitting there, looking at each other – North Korean and South Korean soldiers just staring at each other in the demilitarized zone. When we approached the bridge on the bus – it was like a school bus kind of thing – there were a couple of guys sitting in dump trucks. I asked one of the guys next to me, “What are those guys for?” He said, “That’s for your protection. If anybody comes across that bridge and tries to get at the bus that you’re on, you and all these Colonels and stuff, these guys are supposed to take those dump trucks and make sure that they can’t get to you while you get out and the armed guys show up and do whatever they’re supposed to do.” Pretty strange stuff. [laughter] That was a great experience. ICAF is where I got promoted to captain. I was promoted in front of the General Assembly. The Admiral, who was the head of the NOAA Corps at the time – can’t remember his name right now [RADM. Kelly Taggart] – and the General in charge [Major General Wheeler] both pinned on my stripes. I got promoted to Captain while I was at the Industrial College. That was very nice. What else?

MG: I wanted to ask if you were starting to see some of the technology change to digital technology and more computer technology with the things you were working on in the field and in school?

JC: Yes, we had access to – in a very strange way, we had access to the – this is going to sound very strange – the A/V [audiovisual] equipment that was there [ICAF] was state of the art. I mean, unbelievable stuff. We had computers that we were supposed to become facile with. Then we saw the technology that was being used throughout the world. We visited Japan – I think it was Japan – a factory in which they were making stuff with robotics. It was robots making robots, and the only human intervention in that was a guy that would replace the parts in these various bins, so when a robot broke down and needed a part, it would send another little robot out to the storage area; it would pick up a part, bring it back, and replace it in the big robot. The only human was the person putting the spare parts into that spare parts area. It was amazing, absolutely amazing. We saw that stuff. It was like, “Gee, I haven’t seen anything like that over here.” So yes, we saw the latest technology, which is part of the reason, I think, that they have you go around and visit these places, so you bring that stuff back when you go back to your own job. I’m sure the guys from the Navy and stuff that were involved in shipbuilding, and Coast Guard, and some of the other people that were in my class, all brought that technology – not the actual technology, but the fact that – “Hey, you know what they’re doing over there? Let’s take a look at that.”

MG: Was there anything you wanted to say about your MBA experience at Marymount, something that stands out to you about that time?

JC: Yes. My finance guy was brilliant, the most brilliant guy I’ve had the pleasure of taking a course with. He’s one of these guys who was so proud of his profession. “It’s the finance guy that runs the company, not the president. It’s the finance guy.” He had all of these ways of evaluating what the company was worth and all sorts of stuff. He advised somebody about something-no- he was taking money, and he was depositing some of this money that he got in an account someplace that was offshore. He didn’t think he had to pay taxes on it, and the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] went after him. He was telling us in class what was going on. I remember going up to him after the class was over. I said, “Are you sure you really want to do

this?” He said, “Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.” What was going on was he wanted to go to trial. He was convinced that he could prove [to the jury] that according to the IRS regulation, this and that, that he was right in what he did. I said to him, “But you understand, of course, that you’re going to be doing this in a courtroom in Washington, DC, with a jury that is primarily going to be people that are not rich. You’re telling them why I am taking my money, my thousands and thousands of dollars, and putting it in an offshore account. You’re not going to get a sympathetic ear. Are you sure you want to do that?” “Oh, I can convince them.” He figured that he could be very convincing. He was found guilty. Later on, on an appeal, he won. But meanwhile he lost his job at the university and was never hired back. As soon as he was indicted for the first trial, he was no longer the professor. He lost his job. That was kind of interesting that somebody that smart would practically not be that smart. What else do I remember about Marymount? The only other thing that I remember immediately is the fact that we were put into groups. You had three or four people that you worked with on projects and papers. It was my first experience being in a group like that, where your grade depended on the group. I found out that there were a couple of people that worked very hard, including myself, and there are a couple of people that were just, “I’ve got a regular job to do. I can’t spend a lot of time doing this.” They were living off the work the other people [in the group] were doing, and it really offended me that my grade was going to be dependent on some of these other people that were going to get the same grade and were not doing the work. I’ve heard this from so many other people now that have various master’s degrees, where they get put in groups, and their grade is going to be determined by the group. If they have a great group, it’s wonderful. If they have a couple of slackers, it’s just a disgusting turn of events. That’s it.

MG: I have in my notes that you took some computer classes at the University of Maryland. Was that later in your career?

JC: Yes, it was. I don’t remember what the actual dates were. But we were getting involved in computers. One of the guys in the pipe band was a computer professor at the University of Maryland. He suggested that they had a number of computer courses at the University of Maryland that you could do. If you wanted to learn something about computers, you can start off by doing some programming and stuff like that. So, that’s what I did. I decided I would find out a little bit about computers. I took a couple of programming courses. I remember one of the projects was to be able to play blackjack. *Karel the Robot: [A Gentle Introduction to the Art of Programming]* by Richard E. Pattis was one of the books. It was interesting. I don’t think I learned a lot about computers. I think what I was really probably looking for, and what I would ask for now would be operational stuff. What buttons do you push? What do they do? How do you troubleshoot it? Not programming.

MG: We’ve been talking for two hours now. Do you want to take a break for today or keep going?

JC: Why don’t we do that? Why don’t we schedule again for next Thursday?

MG: Let’s look at our calendars.

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Reviewed by Molly Graham 12/13/2021

Reviewed by John K. Callahan, Jr. 3/6/2022
Reviewed by Molly Graham 3/6/2022