

Sea Stories

The Life & Times of Curtis Wayne Haney

(Some stories may have been embellished for entertainment value)

(Written on an Apple I-Pad Mini in Baja California 2020)

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For my Daughter Dana

&

My Son Joshua

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NOTE: As I remember and write the account of my life, I have injected stories into it called “**Sea Stories**”, which may interrupt the flow as it is read. I have placed (Continued) at the end of each story, so that the reader knows the story has ended and the account continues. (Basically, this book is just one big continuous story).

Sea Stories, Chapter 1

(The early years, ages 1 - 12)

(1952 - 1964)

My name is Curtis Wayne Haney and this is my life story. I never liked my first name Curtis and have always preferred to be called Curt, but many people want to spell it with a K instead of a C, thinking it is of German descent. I do like my middle name Wayne which I would have preferred was my first name. I also wished my parents had named me John, then I would have been John Haney the 3rd.

I was born on the 17th of September, 1952 at 5:09 AM, at the Watsonville CA. Community Hospital in Santa Cruz county. I weighed seven pounds fifteen ounces, and I was 22 inches long. My parents were John Robert Haney, age 23 and Lois Elizabeth Madewell, age 20. My sister Brenda is one year younger than me, and my brother David is two years younger than me.

The first place I remember living was on Lewis road, which was in the country outside the city limits of Watsonville California. This is as far back that I have any memories.

Lewis road memories:

When I was very young, I was playing on the floor near my mom who was ironing clothes. I had found a bobby pin and I stuck it into the electrical outlet and got my first buzz.

My dad used to stand in front of the mirror and shave with all the white foam on his face that he would make in a mug with a brush. When I saw him shaving, I would say; "I can't wait till I can shave". He would always say, "When you have to someday, you will wish you didn't have to". He was right!

The three of us kids all slept in the same bedroom, sometimes even in the same bed.

Some of my fondest memories are of Christmas mornings. We could hardly sleep the night before because we were anticipating what Santa was bringing us since we had mostly been nice all year. We would run into the living room early on Christmas morning and open presents.

I rode the school bus every day to E.J. Hall Elementary School, located near Los Lomas, CA. with my brother David, and my sister Brenda. I remember in kindergarten taking naps on a pad on the floor and also getting milk every day. On Valentine's Day each student brought in cards to give to other students, which was a big deal. One of the female students took my cards from me and put them through the slot of the big red box everyone was to put them in. I felt sad and I think I cried about it since I was looking forward to putting the cards into the box myself.

My mom used to give haircuts to my dad and us kids in the backyard. She would always give us boys a buzzcut. Brenda got her haircut as well, but not as short as ours.

A friend and I would catch honey bees feeding on clover blooms in the schoolyard. We would remove their stingers and make pets out of them for the day. Other kids would freak out when they saw them crawling on our faces.

My mom would hold great birthday parties for us kids in our back yard and invite all of our friends from school and the neighborhood.

In about the 4th or 5th grade I got in a fight one day at school with a bully and he kicked me in the nuts, I still remember the pain. I think the bully had to see the principal who used a rubber hose to administer punishment.

I was playing baseball at school one day and I collided with the second baseman and dislocated my thumb. My mom had to come to school and take me to the doctor. He put me to sleep and popped it back in place. It was sore for a long time.

I received a BB gun one year for Christmas and I used to shoot wild cotton tail rabbits with it. I also raised white rabbits with pink eyes and I sold the young ones for eating. I only had one breeding pair, but they were constantly having babies.

My brother and I would build freewheeling four-wheel carts out of 2x4's and plywood with a rope to steer with. It's a wonder we did not kill ourselves coming down the big hill on the road we lived on.

One year there was a freak snow storm with enough snow to build a snowman. We had a dog named Rocky and then a dog named Caesar. Caesar got shot by the neighbor, so we had to have one of his eyes taken out. He eventually went blind in old age.

There was a labor camp located next to our property full of Latinos with green cards to work in the fields. We would talk over the barbed wire fence to them and learn a little Spanish, I think they were missing their families back home.

We had some fruit trees, a garden, and some chickens. One-time Brenda was in the chicken coop playing with the chicken feed and the rooster jumped on her and tore her up. When dad got home and saw the damage, we had rooster for dinner.

We played a lot in the dirt during that time. Made cities and roads in the dirt for our Tonka construction toys. On hot days we would make pretend hot cakes out of mud and water.

The worst thing I remember was the three of us kids would run down the black top road barefoot, and sometimes we would stub our big toes tearing back the skin from the end of the toenail.

David and I would go up in the woods behind our house to hunt with my BB gun. We would usually only catch Poison Oak and share it with our mom when she washed our clothes.

We were playing in the garage one day where we were not supposed to play and I gave David something to drink that I had found. It turned out to be paint thinner. Thankfully he did not get very sick, which was good for me.

I would go with my dad sometimes to the county dump in his truck. It was a well-organized dump with a bulldozer and one man who worked there that told you where to dump your stuff. He also had an area set up where you could buy stuff he had salvaged from the dump, items which still had some value, as my dad would say.

Some years we would go on vacation as a family with another family, the Bloeshes. I remember going to Crater Lake Oregon and our whole family slept in one big tent. One night a big bear came around and was sniffing right next to the tent wall and Brenda got scared and threw up in the tent. My dad got up and yelled at the bear, "GET OUTA HERE" and the bear left. Early the next morning David and I ran down to the bathroom, and the bear was inside so we ran back to the tent. We also vacationed in Yosemite back when they still had the fire falls. We went to Yellowstone National Park one summer and had a great time that I still have vivid memories of. One thing I really remember about these vacations was walking around the campgrounds looking for girls

to make out with, and we almost always found some. But of course, they were usually from some other state, so you never saw them again, but I did write some of them for a while.

We had two vehicles at that time. A pickup truck and a big Buick with some holes in each side of the hood which made it look cool to me.

We lived on Lewis road until I finished 5th grade. I think I got set back a year in 5th grade, but got caught up later on. We moved to Hillcrest road, still in the country and on the same road as my grandparents. John, (Sam), and Nola Madewell, renamed Papa and Pickey by me. They were my mom's parents. This was the first property my parents had ever bought, and they had a new house built on it. On our property we had some sheep and a horse. We also lived next to the Pajaro Valley Golf Course. I still rode the bus to school, but this time it was to the Moss Landing elementary school. I went there for one year and finished 6th grade.

Sea Stories, Chapter 2

(The teen age years, ages 13 - 20)

(1965 - 1972)

In 1966 I got transferred to the Pajaro Valley Elementary School located right next to Watsonville where I finished 8th grade in 1968, just missing Woodstock.

My first girlfriend was in 8th grade, a Latina named Mary Lou. Girls wore skirts back then and we used to play a game at lunch time called chicken. Where I put my hand on her knee and push back the skirt until she said chicken, I never got it pushed all the way back.

I was a road crossing guard in 7th and 8th grade. There were two of us and we wore a yellow safety vest and carried a long pole with a stop sign on the end of it. One of the female school custodians were in charge of us, she would blow a whistle which meant we would stick our stop signs out so the traffic would stop, then students could cross the street safely to school. The cross walk was right in front of the school where we would be out there before and after school. I know we did not get paid for it, but I am sure there was some sort of reward.

I also got interested in sports at this time and started some track & field training in school. I was very interested in science, and the science class with Mr. Janke was my favorite. My favorite things to do at recess were dodge ball, tether ball, and hop scotch.

I was sitting in English class with the prettiest teacher in school when the Principal came over the PA system and told everybody that John F Kennedy had just been assassinated and had died. Everyone was sad, but we all stayed at school and finished up the day.

I used to go walking around the edges of the golf course we lived next to with my brother and the Hennegar brothers, Bobby & Robert who were my best friends and neighbors. We would find lost golf balls and sell them back to golfers at a good price, we spent the money on candy and soda at the corner bar/market on the main road.

At the end of the road in a thick forest we had a fort with a maze of trails and hideouts. There was also a treehouse my dad built for us up in a big pine tree

located in a dirt field behind my grandparents' house. We called ourselves the Fantastic-4.

Our little gang raised a lot of hell. Late one day we went out onto the golf course and poured gasoline on the pond and set it on fire. No damage to speak of, but there were lots of questions from the golf course people, parents, and neighbors.

Another thing we did was sneak onto the golf course late in the day and shoot bull frogs that lived in the water hazards with our BB guns and take them to my grandmother Pickey who would fry the legs up for us. My mom would not even let us bring them in the house.

About this time in my life, I started getting injured. One time I kind of borrowed my grandfather's pocket knife to cut a golf ball open to see what was inside. While doing that I cut my left ring finger wide open and put a Band-Aid on it to hide the cut. However, my mom saw the Band-Aid and wanted to see my finger. When she did, she said we need to go to the hospital and have it stitched up, then I started crying.

Another time I was mowing the lawn with a gas-powered rotary blade lawn mower. I tried to raise the wheels while it was still running and cut the end of my middle finger on my left hand. I had to get a bunch of stitches for that one.

Another time while camping I was chopping firewood with my dad's double bladed short handled axe when I came down with a blow it caught me on the top of my head. There was lots of blood, more stitches, and a bald spot on my head for a while.

My uncle Larry Haney lived the next street over, he was my coolest uncle. He had a cute wife, and a cool go cart he would let us ride. He also had a Triumph Bonneville 650 motorcycle he would take me on rides on.

When I lived on Hillcrest Road my best friend, Kieth Dazelle lived about a quarter of a mile behind where I lived, just basically over the fence. I was at my dad's work one Saturday and they were sorting through a huge pile of stuff that was salvaged from the inside of a submarine. Sorting the wire for copper scrap metal etc. I found a set of sound powered telephones with the headsets, and the microphone that rests on your chest with a button you pushed to speak. I got a bunch of the wire and we strung a line between our bedrooms so we could have private conversations for free. It worked great!

In 8th grade I got my first record player which only played 45's. The first two records I bought were "The Monkeys, Daydream Believer" and "The Beatles, I want to hold your hand".

Just before I started High School, we moved to a new home on Carpinteria St. in Aromas California in 1968. A little further out into the country about seven miles east of Watsonville, population about 750 not counting all the horses.

Soon after moving to Aromas my brother David got a horse and I got a Honda 50 cc mini bike. David got a lot more girls with that horse than I did with the bike. One morning we got up and looked out into the field next to the house and we could not see the horse. We walked out into the field and discovered the horse had fallen into an old wooden septic tank that was half full of water. We had to get a tow truck to come out and lift him out with slings. The vet looked him over, gave him a shot and he was fine.

I used to ride that mini bike all over the place. I rode it one time all the way to the beach from Aromas on the river Levy carrying an extra gallon of gas in a back pack. It was about a 30-mile round trip. I got caught one time on the street in Aromas by a California Highway Patrol officer and I got a ticket for no license or registration.

I would listen to KDON radio station in Salinas a lot, (Rock & Roll). So much so that I won a 20-pound turkey for Thanksgiving one year. You had to be the first to call in when you heard the turkey gobble on the radio. I would sit there with all the numbers on the rotary dial phone dialed except the last number, and I would have that number half dialed, then let go at the gobble sound.

I attended Watsonville High School from 1968 to 1971. The first year I rode the bus to school or rode with friends who had cars. In my sophomore year my dad found my first car for me through a coworker at the lumber yard where he was the foreman. It was a chocolate brown 1954 Chevy two door Bel-Air hardtop coupe with an in-line six-cylinder engine. It was all stock and had been owned by a little old lady in Watsonville, and was in excellent condition. I paid \$400.00 for it with my own money. Later in auto shop at school, I jacked up the back with shackles and put bigger tires on, and converted the column three speed shifter to a floor mounted shifter. I also changed the oil bath air filter to a paper type, and put a glass pack muffler on it. I had a lot of good times in that old car, especially in the back seat.

To make money during my high school years I worked many different jobs. The first year of school my dad got all us kids a job picking strawberries, we could also eat all we wanted. That was back breaking work and we only lasted a couple of weeks. Right after that my dad got us a job picking pole beans at 35 cents a bushel basket, and we lasted all summer at that job. We were the only white kids working in that field, and the song playing on all the radios in the field was "Tip Toe Through the Tulips" by, Tiny Tim. After the summer my dad got me, a job stacking and binding together on pallets all the bean poles in that same field. I would get off the school bus at that location on Riverside road and work for a couple of hours then my dad would pick me up on his way home. Sometimes on the way home dad would stop the truck, grab a big butcher knife from the glove compartment and walk out into a field and pick a head of lettuce, broccoli, or celery to take home. When my dad first came to Watsonville California as a single young man, he worked disking fields and still knew most of the owners of the vegetable fields. The rule was that if they had picked the fields at least once it was ok to take a little for your own use.

The second summer I had a job working at George Bassi Distributing Co. where my dad worked. I worked with the owner's son Mike making pallets. We hand nailed the pallets together using two-inch drive screw nails and shingling hatchets. Later on, we got air nail guns which made the job quicker, but more dangerous. One-time Mike hit a knot in a board and a nail bounced off and hit me just below the lower lip. I ran into the bathroom and washed away the blood, luckily the only damage was a free piercing before they became cool. I filled my mouth with water and held my finger over the hole and went back to work. When I saw Mike, I removed my finger and shot a blast of water in his face. I continued working at the lumber yard over the next few years during the summers, and after school most days.

Two interesting things about the lumber yard was that there was an old dump adjacent to the property where we dug up antique bottles to sell. Also, there was a guard dog, a big black lab that would catch rocks that were thrown up into the air, he never missed one, and he had almost no teeth to prove it.

One summer night, I got caught by the police siphoning gas out of one of the work trucks at the lumber yard where my dad worked. Five gallons that cost 35 cents a gallon that I was getting for my 54 Chevy. The cops took me down to the station and called my dad. Somehow my dad talked them into letting me go, but I was in trouble for a while and I got grounded for two weeks, no car.

Sea Story #1, (Dog Food Sandwiches)

One summer I was working at the lumber yard, and someone was stealing one of my sandwiches from my bag lunch in the break room every so often. My dad said we could catch whoever was doing it. He had me make two lunches every day, one regular lunch which I hid, and another one with two sandwiches made out of spreadable Skippy dog food. After about a week of keeping our eyes open, we saw who was stealing and eating one of the sandwiches. It was a Mexican guy named Manuel, one of many who worked there and spoke little English. The next day at mid-morning, the food truck came into the yard and sounded a musical horn signaling break time. While we were all sitting around during the break I started barking at Manuel. After a few times of me barking, he asked in Spanish why I was barking at him. His coworker translated the question into English, and I told him I figured Manuel would be barking by now since he was stealing and eating my Skippy dog food sandwiches. He translated my answer, and Manuel got mad and started chasing me around the yard. He was too old to catch me and my dad finally yelled at all of us to knock it off and get back to work. No one ever messed with my lunch any more after that.

(Continued)

There was this one guy who worked at the lumber yard named "Wild Bill". He was always playing practical jokes on his/co-workers. One day after he had played one on me, the repair shop foreman named Joe Ramey asked me if I would like to get back at Wild Bill, I said sure. Wild Bill worked with another guy on the big noisy automatic pallet nailing machine, and he was always afraid it was going to blow up when he would push the start button on it. Joe helped me make a dirty bomb to use to scare Bill with. We took a plastic gallon milk jug and put a cup of flower in it, then filled the rest of it with acetylene gas. Then we made a small hole in the cap and inserted a camera flash bulb attached to two small wires that were 100 feet long. Then we sealed around the hole with some grease to keep the gas from leaking out. We hid the bomb up in the canvas above the machine and I hid behind the air compressor a short distance away. When Bill returned from lunch and pushed the start button on the machine, I touched the two wires to a six-volt battery. There was a big boom, and white flower flying all over the area. Bill came flying out into the yard scared to death, and everyone who was in on the joke busted out laughing. After that, Bill did not play as many practical jokes on his co-workers.

Another job my dad got for me one summer was working for a one-man fence building operation, called Shedler Fencing. It was located next to where my dad worked so I could ride to work with him. That was a good paying job, and all I had to do was help dig holes and build wooden fences with the owner.

When I was younger, I went to church at the First Christian Church in Watsonville. If you brought a new friend to Sunday School the minister would give you a real silver dollar. I tried to bring as many friends as I could find, at least once. When I was older, I attended the youth bible study group each week, it was a good place to meet girls.

My first two years in High School I was interested in Track and Field sports. I competed in the Varsity 220, 440, and 880 yard runs as well as high jump, triple jump, high & low hurdles, and the long jump. I worked hard but both years I fell short of attaining a block W school sweater. I always hoped that my mom or dad would come watch me compete at a track meet but they never did, they always had to work.

My last two years in school I concentrated on shop classes, wood, metal, and auto shops. I was good with my hands and I could fix almost anything with the right tools. However, I struggled in math & government classes and ended up having to repeat them in my senior year in order to graduate. I ended up with a D in Government and a D- in Math. I still struggle with math to this day.

Growing up I had lots of Aunts and Uncles in my life, both my parents had lots of brothers & sisters; my dad's family had 10 children. I remember going Quail, Rabbit, Chucker, and Pheasant hunting with my dad, brother, and uncle Larry many times. I started out with a single shot Savage 12 gauge shot gun and later got a Remington 12-gauge pump shotgun. When I got the 12-gauge pump I passed on the Savage to my brother David. I remember one time my dad, uncle Larry, David, and I were all spread out side by side crossing a maze field hunting Pheasants. One popped up in front of us and it sounded like WW-3 with my dad and Larry firing several times in a row with automatic shotguns, and me doing the same with the pump shotgun. We all missed, and then David shot with that single shot Savage with the long barrel and hit it. We were all amazed, and started re-thinking what guns we were using.

I started smoking cigarettes and weed in my Junior year of high school, not a lot but a decent amount. I mainly smoked cigarettes, (Marlboro's) to fit in with the crowd I hung out with. Weed was cheap back then but not as potent as it

is now. You could get a three-finger lid for \$10.00 but you had to smoke a joint or two with friends to get a good buzz.

For a while I grew pot from seeds in the back yard in Aromas until my dad started asking questions, so I told him they were hybrid tomato plants. I didn't think he bought it, so I moved them into the woods nearby but the deer ate them.

One morning I was cleaning the interior of my 54 Chevy in the driveway in Aromas, I was in the back seat cleaning out the weed roaches from the ashtrays. I looked up and there was my mom looking at me. She said, what are you doing? I said cleaning out the hand rolled cigarette butts my friends left in the ash trays from the night before. She said; "Let me see them, these are not regular cigarette butts, they're pot!" Mom had a keen sense of smell. She took them and then said; you just wait till your dad gets home. I thought I was dead for sure; dad could get violent when he got mad. He got home after work and talked to me and told me I was grounded for two weeks, no car. I think maybe he had smoked some pot in the past when he was younger, but he never admitted it to me.

Also, in my Senior year of high school I started saving my money for a surfboard and a wet suit. I was also really into riding road bikes, multi speed racing type bikes. My parents came to me one day when I was getting ready to buy the gear and become a surfer. They told me they did not want me to surf, and if I agreed not to, they would buy me a brand new 10 speed Schwinn bike. I agreed and they bought me the new bike, it was great. A short time later I signed up for a NAUI scuba diving certification class at Cabrillo College in Santa Cruz, California and got certified as a basic scuba diver. I just could not stay away from the water. In hindsight, I should have signed up for the swim team instead of Track & Field in high school.

Our house in Aromas was a small two bedroom with another exterior bedroom attached to the garage. The house and garage were at the end of the driveway that sloped down a little hill, both the house and the garage were a little bit off the Main Street. I shared the bedroom with my brother but we had plenty of room with our own bathroom.

I chased girls a lot with one of my best friends, Jeff Holland. We would go out to parties that would be at a friend's house when their parents were away, or in a barn or field, etc. One Friday night we were at a party in a drained reservoir where I met a girl and I had to stay late to see if I might get lucky. So, I stayed past my curfew; I knew if I did not get home and back in bed

soon, I would be in big trouble. I had been warned previously after I had broken curfew a few weeks before that I should call if I was going to be late, I think I was 16. But remember this was before cell phones and we lived in the country. I think I got home about 1 AM and thought I could sneak in. I drove fast up the hill on Carpentaria Street then shut off the engine and coasted down the driveway. Then I closed the car door quietly and opened the bedroom door the same way. Cool, I think I made it without waking up my parents. When I turned on the bathroom light, there laying on my bed was my dad. I got in big trouble. He grounded me, but I think it was the last time I ever got my ass kicked by dad.

I sold the 54 Chevy and bought a green 1968 VW bug with a sun roof. I turned it into a hot rod bug with chrome wheels, big rear tires, loud exhaust, and a fine-tuned engine. At the time I also belonged to a VW bug club and we all hung out together and had a lot of fun with our cars. I ended up getting into an accident one day with one of my girlfriends in the car. I was trying to outrun one of my friends, (Wally Clock) I turned sharp into an alley and I did not realize he was trying to pass me because I had slowed to turn left. He hit me and the bug slid into the curb and flipped over onto its roof. Good thing we had seat belts on and the sun roof was closed or it could have been much worse. Neither me or my girlfriend had any injuries, but the bug was totaled. I ended up buying it back from the insurance company and parting it out, recovering more money than I had into it.

Sometimes my friends and I, usually four of us would head to Santa Cruz in my bug to look for girls and cruise the boardwalk, which was a famous cruising loop. We would pick up a case of Boones Farm Strawberry Hill Wine and head North on Highway One passing around a bottle until it was empty then tossing it out the sun roof. Added to that was some good weed and we were set. On the cruise along the boardwalk the girls would sit on their parked cars hoods and flirt with the boys until we eventually hooked up with some of them.

I had several girl friends in high school but not a steady one until I was a senior, her name was Jane and she was a Junior. She was Portuguese and a virgin when we met. I think we went together for about a year and then we broke up shortly after I graduated from High School. We went on a lot of double dates with friends when we were together.

I was an A+ student in auto shop, and my shop instructor, Mr. Sunderland suggested I apply for a scholarship that was available. So, I applied for it and was awarded the Firefighters scholarship which paid for one year to attend Hartnell Junior College in Salinas. I took a four-hour half day morning class in

Auto Technology for one year, and worked the other half of each day. I learned all aspects of auto repair. But this was before computers, whole new ball game now.

The next car I bought was my first brand new car. It was a Yellow with black and chrome trim 1972 Lincoln Mercury Capri. I think it cost me about \$5,500.00 and I ordered it with the options I wanted on it. It was a fast-little sporty car with a V-6 engine and a 5-speed transmission. However, the small transmission could not hold up to the bigger engine and I kept blowing out second gear. I soon got very good at rebuilding the transmission, I did this several times.

During college, I worked several other jobs during the afternoons and evenings. I got a job with my best friend Rick Silvera at Harris Pine Mills in Watsonville. It was a production Company that made wooden patio furniture. We worked on ban saws cutting the same shape for hours, or we worked the dip tanks that stained the wood red. We worked from 5:00 PM till Midnight and used Bennies (Amphetamines) to stay awake. After work every night we went to a little diner in town that was open all night. We would listen to our favorite song on the juke box, "Horse with No Name" by America. That job did not last very long, too rough on the body.

Sea Story #2, (Nevada Trip)

At about the same time I started working at two different ARCO gas stations in Watsonville. Pumping gas, fixing flat tires and some mechanic work at the one Bert Holland owned on East Lake Ave. The other gas station was located on the corner of Main Street and Highway 152. Jeff Holland and I worked together at both of them. Jeff and I both ended up getting stiffed by the owners of both the Gas stations. The one we worked at on Main Street went bankrupt owing us two weeks of wages which we never saw again. And Bert would always pay us late and it looked like he was going out of business soon, the same way the other gas station did. One Friday night at closing time we took the \$50.00 from the unlocked till. It was right next to the front glass door, we closed up and left the front door unlocked. Then a half hour later we drove by the door and threw a brick threw it and headed to Carson City Nevada for the weekend with another friend Dell Jamora in my new car. Dell had a friend who lived just outside Carson City that was close to the brothels. The second night we were there we picked up three high school girls and took them back to the house and had a party. The next night we went to the Kit Kat Ranch brothel, a

first for all of us. We were all young and the ladies were all in their 20's or 30's and very experienced. We all indulged and were there for about an hour. The next day we headed home and I got sick and could not stop throwing up. We stopped and got some medicine and I let Jeff drive. Somewhere in Nevada we were driving along and my mom and dad drove up behind us and honked their horn. We were all surprised, and we explained we had been to Dell's friend's house near Carson City for the weekend and we were headed home when I got sick.

(Continued)

The big hang out joint in Watsonville was the bowling alley. It had a restaurant, bar, pool tables, and the lanes, it was a big place. Most every Friday or Saturday night someone would say their car was faster than someone else's then everyone would head out to San Juan road for a drag race. We had a nice long straight away that was marked off with white stripes for the start and finish lines. It was just like the Fast & the Furious movies with a hot chick starting the races by waving her bra. There would be a lot of people there and usually about 25 cars. It would last about half an hour with several races, usually a half dozen or so. Every so often it would get broken up early by the California Highway Patrol. I don't remember anyone ever getting busted, since we knew all the back and farm roads in order to get away. One time I raced Gary Hart in his Datsun 240Z, his dad was the Datsun dealer in town. He beat me big time plus I blew my transmission and had to limp home in first gear.

I had a short one-month job my dad found for me to do after going to college in the morning and having the afternoons free. There was an old steel train bridge that spanned the Salinas River that was going to be demolished. They actually blew it up, quite a sight to see. Me and several other guys were hired to cut up the bridge with Oxy-Acetylene torches into manageable pieces to be loaded onto semi-trucks and hauled away.

My first true love was Deborah "Debbie" Camperud Gaither who was in my high school graduating class of 1971, but I did not know her until later. She drove a yellow VW bug and a bunch of us were out one-night running around town in our hot rod bugs and I was in the lead of about four bugs. She pulled up next to me at a red light, looked over at me, winked and said "if you catch me, you can have me". A chase ensued by all of us for about 20 minutes, but we never did catch her. A few days later I saw her and followed her to a store in town and asked her out on a date. She told me her name and that she was divorced and had a little three-year-old girl. I said that was cool and we started

dating. I knew Her ex-husband Dwayne Camperud, he graduated high school a year before Debbie and I. I got along with Dwane ok even though he was a little jealous of Debbie and I being together.

Debbie lived just outside of town in a trailer park and her dad was the manager at the Watsonville Chevy dealership. She had another car her dad had given her for her birthday that year, it was a 1973 Chevy Z-28 Camaro with all the bells and whistles. It was a very fast car and she could drive too! She still is the best female driver I have ever known. About once a month we would go to the Fremont Drag Strip and she would see how fast she could get it to go in the quarter mile against the clock and other Z-28's. One time she slammed the Hurst shifter too hard into second gear, she broke it off in her hand. It was designed that way so you would not break the transmission. The bad part was having to drive home in second gear. I still think about her often till this day.

While working one day at Bert's ARCO gas station, a guy who was in the Army at Fort Ord and lived next door in an apartment came over to hang out and talk about cars. He had a sharp, Oldsmobile Cutlass 442. He told me that the Army was hiring for one-year temporary GS-5 civilian positions and that I should go over and apply and take the test. I told one of my best friends, Rick Silvera and my brother-in-law Ken Mahler about it and we all went over together. We took the test and we were hired very quickly.

For the next year we took turns driving/commuting together to work at the big Fort Ord Army base, next to Monterey, CA. We were assigned to work for the Army Corps of Engineers in the Roads & Grounds division, sort of at the bottom. We worked out of a small old building right next to the sand dunes on the west side of highway one, with a bunch of old retired Army Sergeants. One of them was named Harris and he would always rub the back of my neck and tell me if I would cut that long hair, he would give me a nice kiss on the neck. The old timers were always messing with us, but in a fun way. We all had to buy a pair of white carpenter's overalls, which was what everyone wore to protect their clothes.

Our jobs included, a three-month period when we would go out every morning and fill the pot holes on Imjin Road with decomposed granite. The road was used only twice a day for commuting through a gate that was closed during the day. We did this every day until they finally had it resurfaced and then that job went away for good. Our other jobs included moving portable latrines, repairing bathrooms, wooden bleachers, and the wooden frames that held the targets at the firing range. We did all these jobs while riding around in

the back of two-and-a-half-ton big old army truck with benches in the back and covered with a big green tarp, just like in the war movies.

The old guys we worked with were a hoot. When we were in between jobs each day or had a little spare time they would take us into old buildings which were soon to be demolished and search for copper, aluminum, and brass scrap metal. Then they would stash it somewhere on base and take a little home each day in their lunch boxes. After a while their take would add up to quite a good sum. At Christmas time the whole Division, maybe a hundred guys or so would meet on a Friday afternoon, at another shop's work shop location way out on the edge of the base for a big party with good food and booze. I suspected that some of that scrap metal money went towards the party every year.

After we had been there about nine months, a new guy got hired to work with us who was just a little older. He had just got out of the army after returning from fighting in Vietnam. He was a nice guy and was always smoking pot at work. He told us we would probably be losing our jobs soon to guys like him returning from Vietnam who had hiring preference for government civilian jobs. Sure enough, three months later that's exactly what happened.

I went back to working at the Arco gas station, and I was still with my girlfriend Debbie. We hung out with each other a lot and did a lot of stuff together, but we never lived together.



Sea Stories, Chapter 3

(The US Navy Years, ages 21 - 43)

(1973 - 1995)

(Boot Camp, Naval Training Center, (NTC) San Diego, CA.)

Not long after I finished working at Fort Ord my number came up for the draft, so I knew it was only a matter of time until I would get my draft notice and probably end up going to Vietnam. I decided to join the Navy, see the world, and learn a skill. Debbie did not want me to go, and pleaded for me to stay with her, but my mind was set, and I told her I would come back to her as soon as I could.

I enlisted at the Salinas CA. Recruiting office with my best friend Jeff Holland under the buddy system. They guaranteed we would be together until the end of boot camp. I signed up under a program called the OP program, which guaranteed me one of six ratings, (job classifications), (Machinist mate, (MM), Boiler Technician, (BT), Engine-man, (EN), Steel Worker, (SW), Construction Mechanic, (CM), and Utilities-man, (UT). The first three listed are fleet ratings where you normally get sent to a ship, and the last three are Seabee ratings that do not go on ships. Seabees contain seven different ratings which are all construction related so you do jobs where you build a lot of stuff on land, such as airports, buildings, plus the infrastructure, etc. And you fly all over the world in battalions or you may be stationed at an overseas or stateside base if not assigned to a big mobile construction battalion. Also, a basic (A) school was guaranteed in the rating I was selected for, and there was a six-year enlistment obligation.

When I joined the Navy, I wanted to go on a ship and sail the world. I did not know what a Seabee was at that time. The recruiters for the Army, Marine Corps, and the Air Force all told me if I sign up with them, I would wear a green uniform, combat boots, a combat helmet, carry a rifle, and most likely go to Vietnam. Also, the Coast Guard was not hiring at that point.

Sea Story #3, (Hookers & Weed)

Jeff and I were put on a bus that took us to Oakland, CA. to the induction center, (AFES). They put us up in a hotel for the night with other potential recruits. Jeff and I met another young guy and we all decided to go out into town on our last night of freedom. We found a black lady who was a street walker and she agreed to take all three of us to her hotel room for a good time, and at a good price. Afterwards, we found a black guy on the street who said he could get us some weed. We gave him some money and he said wait here, I will be right back. We waited for about 15 minutes and he never came back so we got ripped off. While we were waiting, two cops in a black and white patrol car pulled up in front of us and wanted to know what we were doing in that neighborhood, which was not a good one. We told them we were enlisting the next day in the Navy and it was our last night of freedom. They told us to get back to the hotel, or we may never see tomorrow if we stayed in that neighborhood much longer, so we did as we were told.

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The next morning at the induction center they lined us all up to swear us into the Navy and at the last-minute Jeff said, I can't do it and backed out. Then the next day they put me on a plane to San Diego, CA. Then onto another bus to the recruit training command, also known as boot camp.

I was assigned to a rifle company of about 50 men. There was a lot of marching, training classes, drills, painting, (the rule was if it moves, salute it, and if it doesn't, then paint it) and making new friends. In our company there were people from all over the country. There was this one guy from Boston and we all thought he was from a foreign country because of the way he talked. About three weeks into boot camp, I got a letter from my buddy Jeff back home. It had something inside it so I had to open it in front of the company commander. It turned out to be a rubber, along with a note reminding me about all the pussy I was getting living with a bunch of other single dudes. The company commander made me blow it up like a balloon and wear it tied to the back of my pants all day, I was so mad at Jeff.

Boot camp was supposed to last eight weeks, I was there for 17 weeks. At about four weeks in, someone stepped on my foot when we were marching and I developed cellulitis and could not walk. I was put into the hospital to get better. However, in the hospital I got pneumonia and then double pneumonia, so I was really sick. Many weeks later I was finally released and sent back to a different company to finish up my training.

While I was in Boot Camp, I got a letter from home that said I had received a notice from the Army that I was eligible to be rehired at Fort Ord as a civilian on a career conditional full-time basis. My brother-in-law Ken Mahler, and my best friend Rick Silvera had also got the same notice. I was stuck in the Navy and I had lost out on a great career opportunity. Ken and Rick got hired back, and spent a career working for the Army.



Graduation day finally arrived. The day before, the company commander passed out our stripes for us to sew on the left shoulder of our uniform. There were red, white, and green stripes which indicated you were receiving a fleet rating and you were going to a ship. Everyone who received these fleet rating stripes were told they were going to sail the seven seas, visit lots of foreign ports, meet lots of beautiful foreign women, and drink lots of good foreign beer. I was the only person in the company to get a blue stripe. I asked, what does a blue stripe mean? The company commander told me I was going to be a Seabee, wear a green uniform, combat boots, a combat helmet, carry a rifle, and probably end up going to Vietnam. I was floored, felt betrayed, and wanted out of the Navy right then. I did not serve on a ship for the next six years. However, I was happy to see my mom and dad, plus two of my aunts who had come to be there for my graduation.

The next day I was able to leave boot camp to go back home on leave for a week before my next assignment. But before that was liberty in town the night before. I had turned 21 in boot camp and I was the only person in my company who was legal to drink. I bought everybody some beer at a store, and I was the most popular guy that night.

When I left boot camp, I still had walking pneumonia until I got back home to Aromas on leave. I went to see my old doctor; Dr. Depew and he gave me medicine that cured me within 10 days. When I got back home, I reunited with family and friends, and especially with Debbie.

Seabee Base, Port Hueneme, CA. (UT-A School), (Student)

After going back home on leave after boot camp I reported to Utilities-man "A" school in Port Hueneme, CA. Located just south of Santa Barbara. I was able to drive my car, the Capri, which was nice. The school was 12 weeks in

length and taught all the basics of the (UT) rating which included, plumbing, air conditioning, refrigeration, water treatment, shore boilers, and fuel handling and storage. There were about 24 students in my class, all just out of boot camp like me. (A) school was a little laxer than boot camp, but not a whole lot. We still marched in formation, and we did not have a lot of privileges.

The first day of class we were all sitting in the class room when our head instructor walked into the room. He was a short wiry black man, his rank was First Class Petty Officer, and we were all young white kids. The first thing he did was walk up to the chalk board and write in big bold letters, HNIC and asked us if we knew what that meant. None of us knew so he told us it stood for "Head Nigger in Charge" which was him. He then challenged any one of us to a ditch digging contest. If the challenger won, they could have the rest of the day off, but if he won, they owed him a case of beer. One guy took him up on the challenge. We went outside to the ditch digging practice area, (remember we are being trained to be plumbers). The instructor marked off 10 feet in the dirt and each of them had a square bladed shovel. The contest was to see who could dig a ditch 10 feet long, 12 inches deep, and 12 inches wide the fastest. The instructor was finished in half the time as the challenger. From then on, we knew he was the HNIC.

There was not a whole lot to do on the base, or in town, so most of the time during the week you went to class and studied at night, (homework). I made a really good friend at school named Dan Smith who lived near Los Angeles. Almost every weekend, we would drive together to either LA or Aromas. We would use my car to drive to Aromas, and his car to drive to LA. I was still with Debbie, and one weekend when I went home, she let me take her Z-28 Camaro back to school for a week and she kept my car. That Camaro was really fast, it could do 130 mph top end.

Sea Story #4, (Jail Bait)

One weekend when I stayed at the base, me and two buddies went out in town, bar hopping. We were driving back to the base and there was this young girl, maybe 19 hitch hiking, so we stopped and gave her a ride. She was cute and asked us if we were Seabees in a battalion? We said yes, we are Seabees, but we are in "A" school. She said she wanted to screw a whole battalion at once, that's over 300 guys. But then she said she would settle for our entire "A" school class. So, we sneaked her on base and took her back to our barracks. She took over one room, and about 20 sailors lined up outside

the door. Each person was in the room with her for no more than about 5 to 10 minutes, and no one was using condoms at that time. It got a little loud at one point in the hallway, and our head instructor who had duty in the barracks that night came down to see what was going on. When he found out he said he was next, and cut the line.

A few days later we had all just reported in the morning for class when one student told the instructor he needed to go to sick bay for morning sick call. The instructor asked why, and he told him he thought he might have VD from that girl in the barracks. Well, the instructor marched us all over to sick bay. When we all got there the head nurse was freaking out when she found out why we were there, and it had been the same girl we had all been with. So, the nurse only had the one student who originally complained and the instructor tested. A couple of days later the results came back clean for the two of them and it was announced by the instructor in class. The student who originally complained was sort of a jokester, and he started laughing out loud. The instructor asked him why he was laughing, and he said he never did have any symptoms and that he was just joking all along. From then on, he got all the dirty jobs, and almost didn't graduate from school.

Sea Story #5, (Free Shave)

One Saturday four of us planned a trip to Hearst Castle, just up the coast on Highway One. The Friday night before there was a big party at a friend's house in town where I got really drunk and passed out. The next day I felt pretty bad, but luckily, I was not the one driving up to Hearst Castle. During the tour of the castle, I kept getting strange looks from total strangers who were also on the tour, and my buddies kept laughing at me. Finally, I asked one of them why they were laughing, and was told I should look in a mirror. The first chance I had I jumped into a bathroom with a mirror. I looked at myself and then noticed I only had one sideburn, and half a mustache on one side of my face. The night before when I was passed out, the prankster student first put my hand in warm water hoping I would pee my pants, but I didn't. Then he shaved off one sideburn and half of my mustache on the exposed side of my face. I was really pissed, but what could I do? When I got back to barracks, I shaved off the other sideburn, and the other half of the mustache. Well, I got even with the jokester just before we all left on the last day of school. Let's just say his car broke down sometime later.

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On the day we all graduated from "A" school we were lined up in formation to receive our new stripes, and our deployment orders. Now we were all E-2 in pay grade with two blue stripes. More money and increased responsibilities, but not much. The top Chief Petty Officer at the school read out and handed us our orders. Most everybody got assigned to a battalion, but three of us got orders overseas to the Midway Islands. The Chief told us we were going to love it there, and that the biggest island was two miles long, one and a half miles wide, and the highest point on the island was 38 inches above sea level. In addition, he said there was a girl behind every tree on the island and all the trees were about three feet tall. As soon as we were released from graduation, the three of us went to the base library to find out where in the hell the Midway Islands were. We found out they were part of the Hawaiian Islands chain, but in almost the center of the Pacific Ocean, 1200 miles and a three-hour flight from Honolulu, HI. We also learned that the Battle of Midway was the turning point of WW-2 in the Pacific.

I really enjoyed my time as a Seabee. Many years after I retired from the Navy, I returned to the Seabee base in Port Hueneme on my way to Baja. A new Seabee museum had been built, and I purchased one of the bricks that were used to form the entrance to the museum. The brick says: CWO2 Curtis W Haney UT-HT-DC 1973-1995 Always a Seabee.

Naval Station Midway Island, (First Tour, 18 months)

I went home on a short leave after "A" school to visit family and be with Debbie. She said she would wait for me to return, and I could leave my car with her and she would take care of it for me.

The Navy flew me and my two buddies from "A" school on a commercial airline from SFO to Honolulu. Then we flew from Hickam AFB to Midway on a commercial military contract airline called Saturn Airlines which was owned by Lady Bird Johnson, the American Presidents wife. The Saturn plane was set up to carry half cargo and half passengers. On the flight were active duty military personnel either reporting to Midway for the first time or returning from leave. Also, on the flight were dependent wives and children returning from the states or Honolulu. There was a wife and two young children sitting in front of the three of us new guys going to Midway for the first time. We were talking to the kids asking them what Midway was like and what there was to do there. They just kept telling us there were horses to ride and a lot of people went fish balling. When we got there, we found out they called bicycles horses and

searching the beaches for Japanese glass fishing net floats was called fish balling. There were about 2000 people on the island; Navy personnel, wives, children, and a few civilians assigned to the AT&T Transpacific Cable Company, (remember no cell phones yet), and the Pacific Missile Range Detachment. There were very few vehicles on the island, one black Sedan for the CO and working vehicles. Everybody had a horse, (bicycle), and we hung horse thieves.

After we landed on the island that first morning we got checked in and then went for a walk around the island. We saw the whole place in just a few hours and said to ourselves; “well only 18 more months to go”.

All three of us were assigned to the Public Works Water and Steam shop. Our job was to make fresh water from rain water, maintain the fresh and brackish water systems, the islands sewage disposal system, and the four boilers on the island that provided steam for various needs.

But before I could start learning my new skills, I was assigned to the galley for mess cooking duties for my first 90 days on the Island. Everyone who was lower than a Petty Officer coming onto the island had to do this duty first. I actually enjoyed working in the galley.

My first job was in the scullery washing dishes using a big machine or working in the deep sink cleaning greasy pots with very hot steam heated water. Very heavy-duty rubber gloves were a must. After 30 days in the galley I became the best worker, called the Scullery King, and I was promoted to the night graveyard shift. There was only one cook on the graveyard shift so we got to work on our own a lot. We were mostly prep cooks for the regular day cooks. We would crack open hundreds of eggs for the next mornings scrambled eggs, peel lots of potatoes, etc. After 30 days of this I was promoted to short order cook for Mid-Rats, (this was a special meal served at midnight for people who worked nights and for drunks who got hungry after the enlisted men’s club closed.) and flight crews flying through Midway in the middle of the night.

Midway was a vital refueling stop for the Navy and Air Force plus it was also an important communications hub in the middle of the Pacific. There were two different commands on the Island, Nav-Sta, and Nav-Fac. I was under the Naval Station, Nav-Sta) which included 90 percent of the people on the island. The other 10 percent worked at the Naval Facility, (Nav-Fac) which was isolated on one end of the island and was under high security. Later I found out these were the people in charge of listening for Russian submarines all

over the planet. After the Cold War ended, a lot of their equipment was shared with NOAA to listen for whales instead.

Midway was also a bird sanctuary. There were lots of exotic birds on Midway, including; three different species of Laysan Albatross, (Gooney birds), Frigates, Boobies, and many different kinds of terns. We arrived on Midway in the middle of breeding season. I did not sleep very well for the first three days due to the Gooney birds making love in the hundreds just outside our barracks windows.

When I got done with mess cooking, I went back to the Water and Steam shop. We did a lot of maintenance on the water system and the boilers just trying to keep everything working. Every night one of us had the duty of driving our duty truck around the island checking for any water waste or leaks. We spent the night sleeping at the shop, and waiting for the low water pressure alarm to go off which could be heard all over the island. That meant we had a water break somewhere and we needed to isolate it and repair it quickly. Also, if it started raining, we had to go out to the runway and open valves and turn on pumps to save the rain water so we could treat it later for drinking water.

The islands sewage disposal system consisted of several underground tanks, covered by a wooden structure with one big door. The tanks were open on the top and there was a pump which automatically pumped the sewage through a pipe to a location outside the lagoon just past the reef. Sometimes the switch that told the pump to turn on would get stuck because of a thick layer of shit that hardened up on the surface inside the tank. That meant that someone would need to go down into the tank and break up the surface into pieces that could be put into a bucket and removed from the tank. This person was called; "a honey dipper". The first time this happened I was the junior man in the shop, so I got the job. Trust me, this is the dirtiest job you could ever have. I had to dress in a rubber suit with a gas mask and be lowered into the tank and hover just above the surface. All the time hoping that those holding the rope above me did not slip and drop me into the tank. Luckily, I only had to do this job one time

Sea Story #6, (Coffee Mess)

I always kept a squared away uniform, and highly spit shined boots. One day at quarters I was told to report to my leading Chief Petty Officer, Chief Goda,

he was a big, bald, mean looking grumpy dude. He worked at the Seabee Public Works Office, with the Division Officer and a civilian expert on utilities. I was told that the company clerk got sick and had to go back to the states and I was going to replace him for the next six months as the company clerk. Mainly because I always had a sharp uniform and a good haircut. My duties would include reporting for work a half hour before everyone else to make coffee and then be prepared to type up reports and run errands as needed. I told the chief; I did not even know how to type or make coffee. He said; don't worry you will learn.

The next day was my first, so I wanted to make a good first impression. The 30-cup standard Navy aluminum coffee pot, and all the coffee cups were a mess. I got some comet and a green scrubby pad and scoured them all clean and made a fresh pot of coffee. I was pretty proud of myself when the Chief walked in, (still only half awake) and grabbed his special cup with his name and rank embossed on it in gold letters and poured a cup of black coffee for himself. He took one sip and threw the cup down on the floor, shattering the cup, and coffee went everywhere. He yelled, what the hell did you do to the coffee? I told him what I had done and he then told me I had ruined the coffee pot and all the cups, all of which had taken a long time to season properly. He told me to go to supply and get a new pot and make 10 pots of coffee in it that day. And also, to get him and the others in the office new cups just like the ones I had ruined. I did, and it came out of my pay. It took quite a while to overcome that mistake but they all finally realized I was an exceptional sailor who had just made an error in judgement. Six months later I was sent back to the Water & Steam shop as promised after I trained my replacement.

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For such a small place there was quite a lot of stuff to do besides work. The first bike I built was a chopper with really long front forks, a small wheel on the front, a big wheel on the back, shoulder high handlebars, a sissy bar above my head, and lots of chrome. It was the only one on the island. That bike was cool but not practical, so my next bike was a big beach cruiser with three big baskets for carrying stuff, since we had no cars. There was a small bowling alley, a ceramics shop, a nine-hole golf course, a gymnasium, intramural sports teams, a ham radio club, deep sea fishing on one of two boats, and a scuba diving club. There was the (EM) bar for the junior enlisted, E-1 to E-4, the Acey-Deucey club for E-5 to E-6, a Chief Petty Officers Club, for E-7 to E-9, and an Officers club for officers & civilians.

There was a lot of drinking on the Island. If you lived in a house with your family you could go to the package store and buy bottles of liquor for an average price of \$1.50 a bottle. At the clubs mixed drinks were 30 cents and beer were 25 cents. The only beer on the island was Olympia in bottles. There were also beer machines located inside all of the barracks. I could only go to the EM bar since I was only an E-2. Many a night when the club closed at midnight, me and my buddies would get so drunk we could not ride our bikes the two blocks to the barracks, so we would crawl home. The good part was that we would find loose change and items of value with our heads that close to the ground. The bad part was that we were crawling on crushed coral, so we got cuts and scrapes on our hands & knees. Sometimes when you came out of the club at closing time you could not find your bike. Usually someone had stolen it because they did not have one, or they did not want to walk home. You would have to go around the island the next day and look for it, and you usually found it. If you could not find it, then you would start by looking off the end of the cargo pier in 50 feet of water, or up high in a tree near a tall building it would have been thrown off of.

One thing we did to entertain ourselves was to go to the club in the summer time when it was really hot and humid and get drunk. Then we would ride our bikes at high speed off the end of the cargo pier, and over a ramp we had made earlier and plummet into the lagoon in 50 feet of crystal-clear warm water. Then we would climb up a ladder back onto the pier and walk home arm in arm. The next day we would go back down to the pier with a long rope and grappling hook to retrieve our bikes.

Another one of the things we did to entertain ourselves was to go on rat safaris. We would get some bear and go down to the beach and build a fire. We had pellet guns, and we would wait until we could see the rat's eyes glow at the edge of the fire light, then we would all count to three and fire at a single rat at the same time. We got pretty good at it, and we would leave a pretty good size pile of rats when we were too drunk to focus anymore.

I golfed quite a bit and I got pretty good at getting my ball from the tee to the green in one shot. Only the tees and the greens were watered due to the limited amount of water available. Also, because there was this tern called a moaning bird that lived underground so there were holes all over the fairways that would suck up your balls.

There was not a lot to spend your money on while on the island so you would save it up and blow it all in Honolulu once every 90 days. Because we were on isolated duty we got to go to Honolulu once every 90 days for free for four

days. We just had to pay for the accommodations, which was usually a hotel on Waikiki beach.

Sea Story #7, (Crabs)

I shared a room in Echo, (the Seabee barracks) with three other guys, one was named Mike Powers. He returned one day from R&R in Honolulu and the next day he went to sick call. Later that day after work, he walked into our room and threw a tube of Quell Cream at each of us. He told us he had the Crabs, and that we probably did as well, sure enough, we did. The two of us went into the Head and showered three times using the special cream that removes and kills the Crabs and the Nits (eggs) laid by the Crabs at the base of each hair, which can be anywhere on your body. Mike had them everywhere, and the two of us only had them in our groins. When we came out of the shower, we saw Mike standing at one of the sinks with one leg up on a sink picking the crabs off one by one and putting them into a container, laughing the whole time. We asked him, what the hell are you doing? In between laughs he said, "I have a job tomorrow washing the captain's car". The next day after he washed and delivered the car back to the Captain's office, he sprinkled the Crabs on the front seat. Captain Kirsh, (who was unliked by most enlisted personnel) his wife, and both his children all got a case of the Crabs. It all remained a secret between the three of us until now.

Sea Story #8, (Weed)

There were little to no illegal drugs on Midway, and the island had an efficient security force. My buddy and I were sitting around one night drinking beer and listening to music trying to figure out how we could get some weed onto the island. You could not send it through the mail because it was all sniffed by the drug detection dog. Also, everyone and their bags were searched when they arrived on the island. So, we devised a plan. We would go to Honolulu on R&R, buy some weed, and hide it in zip lock bags wrapped in aluminum foil in our armpits and groin. Then while we were on the plane during the three-hour flight back to Midway, we would each go into the bathroom, take the weed bags out and place them in sanitary napkin bags, and put them in the bathroom trash can. We knew that every time the planes landed on Midway, they would dump their trash into the dumpster at the end of the airplane hangar. So that's what we did, and it worked.

On the same day, after everyone went home, we got our buddy who had the job of dumping the dumpsters to go to the hanger, get the dumpster and take it to the land fill. We would meet him there on our bikes and we would all go through the trash looking for the bags from the plane which were easy to identify. Then we would go through those bags looking for sanitary napkin bags which contained our stash. And yes, we wore rubber gloves when doing this. This system worked on three different occasions, and kept us in weed for quite a while. Only, the three of us knew the secret weed connection, and we only shared the stash with a few other very close friends. Even being very careful, eventually the word got out that possibly me a few others had somehow figured out a way to get weed onto the island, so we stopped bringing it back on the plane, and started trying to grow it on the island, which never worked out.

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One day when I had the duty at the Water and Steam shop, I was on my morning rounds taking samples from the 20 or so brackish water wells on the island. Besides the fresh water system, we had a brackish system which supplied water to everyone for everything but drinking, like washing dishes, laundry, etc. Anyway, I was driving around doing my job and I see the security division Chief Petty Officer riding on his bicycle with a rope coiled up in his front basket on his bike. We called him the island sheriff and he was kind of an old grumpy dude who never smiled. I thought it was kind of odd seeing him on that part of the island which was kind of isolated. Later that day he was found hanging from an ironwood tree next to the golf course, quite near to where I had seen him. I believe I was the last person to see him alive. Later that day I made a statement of what I had seen and when. It was determined to be a suicide, and it was the only one that happened when I was on the island.

I was already a certified scuba diver when I arrived on Midway. The biggest of all the clubs on the island was the Koral Kings Dive Club. I would go out diving from a small club boat with my best friend and dive buddy Dave Munyon almost every weekend, and some weekdays as well. We got lots of big spiny lobster, the limit was six per person per day, and we almost always got our limit. We usually shot them with spear guns because it was easy and legal. If the wind was too high to go out in a boat, we would dive under the cargo pier and get buckets full of rock scallops, because there was an endless supply. We did not have big spearguns back then so we made 44 caliber or 12-gauge shot gun power heads to screw onto the ends of our speargun shafts. Then we would dive under the cargo pier and shoot a big Jack Crevalle in the head and have enough fish to feed a crowd.

Most of our diving adventures on Midway involved searching for lobster and octopus. We also stayed quite busy tagging green sea turtles for George Balaz who was the head biologist at the University of Hawaii and was the world leader in studying green sea turtles.

We captured and tagged lots of turtles which also included measuring and weighing them.

When we were out diving in the lagoon, we would catch sea turtles and let them take us for an underwater ride before taking them ashore to tag and release them. Sometimes

we would come upon a pod of giant manta rays which were quite tame. Almost all of them would have Remora fish attached to

their backs which provided us with grab handles to go for a great ride. These were huge creatures, and if they went quickly towards the surface you had to let go before, they flew up into the air and fell back on top of you.



We also did a lot of night dives under the fuel and cargo piers which were located close to our dive club. The largest eels on Midway were Conger eels and we would only see them at night. On one-night dive I saw one swim by me that was seven feet long and about 10 inches in diameter. Let me tell you, that will send a shiver up your spine. There was a lot of debris under the cargo pier so you had to be careful not to get tangled in it when you were diving. On one-night dive, my regulator hose got caught on something and I jerked my head to try and get it loose. When I did, the mouthpiece on my regulator second stage came off so that the mouthpiece was still in my mouth but I was not breathing air any longer. I took in a breath and it felt different because I was breathing in water. I exhaled and took in another breath of water, then I figured out I was breathing water and not air. I took the plastic mouthpiece out of my mouth and put the metal second stage directly into my mouth and was able to breath air again and surface to correct the problem. What was surprising to me was that I only coughed a couple of times during the process of transitioning from breathing water and back to breathing air. Maybe my gills were starting to form by then.

I really got into Scuba Diving on Midway. One of my best friends was Ian “Mac” McFarland who was a First-Class Petty Officer Hull Technician, (HT-1), and the only dive instructor on the island. Mac was a NAUI, (National Association of Under Water Instructors), diving instructor. I became his assistant and soon was certified as a SDL, (Skin Diving Leader), then soon

after a DM, (Dive master), and finally an AI, (Assistant Instructor). We taught many classes together and became very good friends.

When I left Midway for the last time, Mac gave me a special plaque that was inscribed; to the best NAUI certified diver on Midway Island, (NAUI, a No-Account Underwater Idiot).

On one side of the island we could always see this really big old fluke anchor exposed on the other side of the reef at low tide. We never thought to dive there because it was really shallow and there were always waves and rough water there. No one on the island knew the history behind it or where it might have come from.

The next time I went on R&R in Honolulu Hawaii a friend and I decided to go to the main library and look up books on Midway. We found that they had quite a few different history books about Midway. One of the books was called; "The Shipwrecks of Midway Islands". We made copies of several pages of the different books to use as reference material when we got back to Midway.

When we got back to the island, we started reading through what we had copied and found mention about the big old fluke anchor that was exposed on the reef at low tide. It described the stranding of a wooden hulled steam/sailing ship called the Bark Carlton that wrecked on the reef in 1906 and was broken up by the waves. The book also mentioned that more natural shipwrecks had occurred on Midway than any other island in the Pacific.

After obtaining permission from the Commanding Officer to dive in that area we made our plan. We would dive on a calm day with light winds, small waves, at high tide, and on the inside of the reef. My dive buddy John Ross and I were ready to go a short time later. John was older than me, and of higher rank, and was a huge shell collector. He collected shells from all over the world, and had been doing it most of his life.

We anchored our boat as close to the reef, and the anchor as we could get and snorkeled toward it. We could not get to the anchor due to the waves, so we returned to the boat and put on our scuba gear. We decided to spend the entire dive just searching the bottom in shallow water, less than 10 feet deep near the reef. It was a long dive due to the shallow depth of the water so we were able to cover a lot of the bottom. We started poking around on the bottom, and turning over small coral heads and we started finding artifacts from the ship that had sunk. I found a brass chisel, a brass bearing, and a few other items. John found a few brass items also, including the port and

starboard marker from the helm on the bridge of the ship. Then I tried to turn over a big coral head which should have been heavy, but was actually very light because it was actually a coral encrusted chunk of coal from the shipwreck. When I turned it over there was a beautiful big cowrie shell under it, one I had never seen before, and I grabbed it. The snail was still alive and I put it in my BCD pocket.

When we got back to the dive shop and we were unloading our treasures I laid the shell on the table. John saw it and got all excited about it. He asked me, where did you find it, and were there anymore? I told him where, and that I only saw one. He said, I will give you \$100.00 for it right now. I said, so how valuable is it? He said he had only ever seen one in a book and this one had to be the largest one anyone has ever found. I asked him what he was going to do with it if I sold it to him. He said he would put it on the international world market for shell collectors to bid on and sell it to whoever offered the most money. I told him, ok if you do that then we will split the profit from the sale of it. He did and it sold for nearly \$800.00 because it was still alive, which made it even more valuable. And yes, it was the largest one ever found, and we never found another one.

One time I was out diving with my best friend Dave Munyon. We were shooting lobsters with our spear guns and I guess I got in the way of a big one because Dave missed and shot me in the leg just above the left knee cap. It was a glancing blow which opened up a cut 2 inches long. I washed it out and put some steri-strip bandages on it which worked quite well. It healed up quickly but left me with a scar which I still have today.

I had an accident one day when I was doing some maintenance on my diving equipment. I had replaced the old high-pressure hose on my scuba regulator with a new one but accidentally used a low-pressure hose by mistake. In the old days it was easy to make that mistake, but now different fittings are used which eliminates that problem. When I turned on the air from the 3000-psi scuba tank I heard a small leak in the hose. I held it up to my right ear to feel where the air was coming from. Just as I did, the hose exploded throwing little pieces of rubber shrapnel into the side of my face and causing a near total hearing loss for about 30 minutes. I went to the medical clinic and they removed the rubber particles imbedded in my face, but they could do nothing about the ringing in my right ear. I had tinnitus, a constant ringing in my right ear. It was really bad for a couple of weeks and gradually got better over time. I still have it today, but it is minor compared to back then, now I just get a short episode maybe once a week that only lasts a few seconds.

Sea Story #9, (WW-2 Explosives)

I had a lot of adventures while I was on Midway. One time a friend and I were walking around the island on the beach and we found a wooden crate half buried in the surf. It looked very old, so we started digging it up with our hands. We got it open and found out it was full of WW-2 hand grenades.

Another time walking around the island with a friend on the beach we found this half round shaped black object twice the size of a basketball with a couple of long spikes sticking out of it. Soon after we started digging it out of the sand, we realized it was a WW-2 underwater mine.

Many times, when we were out diving in the lagoon, which was massive in size, we would come across coral incrustated unexploded 500-pound aerial bombs from the WW-2 Battle of Midway. In addition, we would find mortar shells and 50 caliber shell casings underwater.

Anytime you found unexploded ordinance you were trained to mark the location with a float for future reference. About once every six months EOD, (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) from Hawaii would come to Midway and blow the stuff up in place.

Sea Story #10, (WW-2 F4U-1 Corsair)

Near the end of my first tour on Midway Mac and I were at the dive club having a beer talking about the Battle of Midway and activities that occurred on the island during WW-2. Up until that point there was only one known plane wreck on or near the islands. It was a Japanese Zero or what was left of it at one end of the island. We started thinking that maybe one of the US planes may have missed one of the runways during takeoff or landing and crashed in the water. So, we hatched a plan to investigate the possibility. Only Mac and I were allowed to dive outside the reef since we were instructors, and the nearest decompression chamber was in Hawaii. We took Mac's boat out one day and started searching dive-able depth water off the end of each of the runways on both Sand and Eastern islands, a total of 6 different locations. It took us a total of five days to complete the task in good weather. The process included one of us driving the boat and the other person sticking their head in the water with a dive mask on and looking at the sea floor. You could see quite well underwater with the visibility at 150 feet. At the last location off the end of one runway on Sand Island Mac yelled out, "drop the anchor, I see a

plane". The plane was in just over 100 feet of water sitting upright. After we positioned the anchor by hooking it on a wing, we geared up and, back flipped into the water and dove down to the plane. When we got down to it, we determined it was a WW-2 F4U-1 Gull Wing Corsair. It was sitting on its wheels with the tail and the back side of the wings buried in the sand. All of the paint and markings were long gone, the canopy was open, and the engine was separated from the plane and was sitting about 50 feet in front of it, otherwise it looked intact. We dove on it several times after that and took some pictures of it.

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Many years later after Midway was closed as a military base, the private company Midway Phoenix utilized it for eco tours which included a scuba diving operation. Mac and I contacted them and told them we knew where there's a WW-2 U.S. Navy airplane in 100 feet of water.

They flew Mac out to Midway to locate it for them as a future dive site. After several attempts, Mac finally located the corsair in 150 feet of water where a past storm had relocated it. The plane is now upside down and in pretty bad shape.

I was still just an E-2 (Construction-man Apprentice), but just after six months on Midway I took the exam for E-3 (Construction-man) and passed it. Now I had three blue stripes, plus more money and responsibility.

During a certain time of the year the Laysan Albatross, (Gooney Birds) chicks would start learning how to fly. During that time, we would not go out diving at all for about a month, or until all the chicks had left the island. We would get a case of beer and go down and sit on the sea wall by the piers and watch the chicks take off and usually crash in the ocean. Not long after they did, a 10 to 15-foot-long Tiger Shark would come up from below and take them in one bite. The Tiger Sharks only came inside the reef that fringed the island during that time of year, pretty smart fish. We would also go out in small boats and chum for the Tiger Sharks, hook them on a hand line tied to the boats front cleat, and get taken for a free ride. When they tired, we would shoot them in the head with a power head and haul them ashore and cut their jaws out. The tooth I wear around my neck came from the first Tiger Shark I caught.

There were basically three islands that made up the Midway Islands. Sand Island where everyone lived and all the infrastructure was. Eastern Island had an old runway which was used during WW-2 and then abandoned. It still had a

small pier and a small communications station with very big receiving antennae's where a handful of watch standers rotated and worked for a 24-hour period. A small Mike-6 boat would go over once every day to bring and take away watch standers. There was also a very small sand spit island between the two bigger islands with a few trees and shrubs. It was also off-limits to all personnel because there were usually Hawaiian Monk Seals on the beach there.

Midway was also a designated federal exotic bird sanctuary. There were three different species of Laysan Albatross that raised their young on the islands every year. In addition, there were Frigates, Boobies, Canaries, Tropic birds, and many species of terns. Cats and snakes were not allowed onto the islands.

Sea Story #11, (Sharks-1)

In the summer time a big group of us from the dive club would go over to Eastern Island for 24 hours to camp out on the back side of the island and do night dives. The water was very shallow, less than six feet so you could easily free dive it. And the reef was within 200 yards of the beach. We could walk on the reef at low tide with a full moon and grab big lobster with our hands and fill our catch bags quickly. Then we would swim back to the beach, build a big fire in the dunes, and cook up a bunch of lobster and have a great time. One time I was swimming back to the beach with my dive buddy John Ross. When I got to the beach and stood up, I turned around to see John sitting in the small lapping waves trying to beat off a 3-foot Gray Reef Shark with his pole spear that had a hold of his bag of lobster. The shark got a couple of them, and John walked away from the ordeal.

Sea Story #12, (Nuns)

I had been on Midway for seven months when I got a letter from Jeff Holland telling me I should come home if I could, because Debbie was not doing well. I had been receiving sporadic letters from her but not as often as I would have liked since I was writing her quite often. I asked for leave and was granted a week's leave to go home. I flew for free to Honolulu and got a standby flight on a commercial airline to San Francisco. There were only two people flying standby on the flight, me and a lady a little older than me. We ended up

getting two seats in a row of three and the rest of the flight was full. It was a red eye flight and there were three nuns in their habits sitting behind us. The lady sitting next to me and I hit it off and started drinking scotch and water. Pretty soon the lights were turned down in the cabin trying to encourage everyone to sleep. But we were having a party, and the stewardess stopped selling drinks. My seat mate got up and came back with several glasses of ice water. Then she pulled out a bottle of scotch from her carry-on bag. (You could do that before 9-11). We continued with our party. In the morning when the sun started poking through the windows, we woke up and she was wearing my white sailor hat and she had lost one of her earrings somehow. Well, the nuns were looking at us pretty hard, and we tried to stay quiet till we landed. My mom and dad met me when I landed, and I gave mom a nice flower lei from Hawaii. I had also brought a small cooler with me full of frozen lobster tails from Midway for a special meal with the family.

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The next day I found out Debbie had been having a relationship with my brother that was now over. I went to Debbie's parents' house where she was now living with her daughter. She was not there but my car was in the garage, so her dad told me I should take it. It was full of trash and garbage, so I cleaned it out and took it home to my parents' house. I left the car at my parents' house, and a week later flew back to Midway without ever seeing Debbie again.

When I got back to Midway, I thought about dating new girls again. However, at that time there were several hundred single guys on the island and only 12 single female sailors called WAVES, which stood for (Women's Auxiliary Volunteer Enlisted Service). The saying back then was that men joined the Navy to ride the Waves. Later on, they changed WAVES to WINS, which stood for (Women in Naval Service). Out of the 12 available single women on Midway, eight were hooked up with guys in permanent relationships, two were gay, and that left two really ugly ones available. In addition, there were a few high school girls, and a few married wives looking for younger guys. I had to settle for going to Honolulu once every 90 days for R&R like most of the other single guys on the island.

A few months later, a flight full of female sailors reported to Midway for duty. I think there were about 40 of them. Then a couple of weeks later another big group showed up, enough now to have their own barracks.

I dated one of the new girls who was from California for a while, she was also a diver like me. She was pretty wild, we would have sex in a small boat while we were out diving in the middle of the lagoon, we would sneak into the captain's small boat which was covered with a tarp, we would take a blanket out into the sand dunes, and we would sneak into the dive club house at night and pile up all the wetsuits to make a bed.

Then I dated another girl who was actually taller than me for about a month, but neither of them worked out.

Then one day at the galley I saw this one girl sitting with a black male sailor talking. After he left, I went over to her and struck up a conversation with her. One thing led to another and we started dating, her name was Candice "Candi" Costain and she was a non-rated enlisted Journalist that worked at the TV and Radio Station on Midway called AFRTS; Armed Forces Radio and Television Service. Candi was an announcer on the local island radio and TV news service, but most of what we saw and heard was canned shows. We were a couple for several months until I finished my tour on Midway and I was transferred to North Island Naval Air Station in San Diego, CA. By then the semi-weekly Log flights which serviced Midway were Air Force C-141's from Hawaii. Saturn Airlines was no longer under contract to service midway. The Air Force planes were big cargo planes with no windows and carried half cargo, and half passengers in rear facing seats. When you left Midway, the radio station would play "Leaving on a Jet Plane by John Denver". Your friends would also present you with a macramé lei containing little fish balls and miniature booze bottles.

Not long before I left Midway, I passed the test for E-4 and became a 3rd Class Petty Officer. The patch on my left arm was now a white eagle, called a crow with wings spread and a single red chevron. The day you got your first crow, (and all subsequent crows) all the enlisted personnel senior to you would congratulate you and tack your crow on your arm. That meant they would punch you as hard as they could on your patch to help you keep it on, and not get in trouble, and have the Commanding Officer take it away from you.

North Island Naval Air Station, (San Diego/Coronado, CA.)

When I got to North Island, I was assigned to the Transportation Division. Any Seabees who were stationed there were assigned to the same division.

On stateside bases all construction work was performed by civilians, not Seabees.

Our duties included driving the base buses, taxis, and driving Admirals wherever they needed to go. We were also tasked with building, maintaining, and driving the base float in two parades a year. The float looked like a small aircraft carrier with two planes on it. The first Navy Plane, (a bi-plane called the Curtis) and the most recent Navy Jet plane. I enjoyed working and driving the float, it was lots of fun.

The base taxis were mostly required to carry P-3 Orion flight crews to and from their planes which were designed to track and observe Russian Submarines anywhere in the world. One day I got dispatched to pick up a flight crew that was put up overnight in a motel in Coronado which was off base, and deliver them to their plane on the flight line. After I got them all loaded, they said they needed to stop at the nearest liquor store. When we got there, they went in and came out with all the Coors beer they had, and filled up every available space in the van we had left. It was more beer than I had ever seen in one place. I didn't know what was going on, but they gave me a case of beer for helping them. I found out later what the beer was for when I returned for duty on Midway for the second time.

While I was stationed on North Island I went to a lot of parties, and several trips to Baja Mexico for cheap lobster and beer.

I had one girlfriend for a while in San Diego, and I was still in constant contact via the mail with Candi back on Midway.

After about six months in San Diego I called Candi on the phone and proposed to her, but only if I could get orders back to Midway and she could get an extension to stay on Midway, she said ok.

I called my detailer at the Pentagon and asked him if I could get orders back to Midway on an accompanied tour for three years. He said, nobody asks to go to Midway, much less for a second time. I explained to him my situation with Candi and he said, you get married first then call me back, and then I can cut you orders back to Midway.

Candi flew to California and we got married in the First Christian Church in Watsonville so all my friends and family could attend. Candi's mom, brother, sister, and grandparents all came out from Nebraska to attend the wedding. I

wore my uniform, and Candi wore a wedding dress, and we had our reception at the church as well.

Sea Story #13, (Slot Machine)

We went on our honeymoon to South Lake Tahoe and Reno in a rented Chevy Vega. The South Lake Tahoe motel honey moon sweet was all red with a round bed. When we went to Reno, we rented a motel that had water beds. The only problem was that after we went to bed, we figured out the bed had no heater and we almost froze to death, we ended up sleeping on the floor that night.

We made a day trip to Virginia City when we were in Reno. We went into the Bucket of Blood saloon and Candi went into the gift shop as I started playing a slot machine. It was an antique machine that had two quarter slots on top. I loaded quarters into it for just a few minutes and then hit a jackpot for \$150.00. The waitress came over to pay me and said you have to put two more quarters into it to stop the bells from ringing. So, I did, and I hit another jackpot. She then told me that this machine is out of order. She paid me \$300.00 and Candi came up to me and said, "you know half of that money is mine, were married now". I gave her half and she went back into the gift shop. After the honeymoon Candi flew back to Midway and I followed her in a few weeks.

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Naval Station Midway Island (Second Tour, Three Years)

On my second time around going to Midway I knew what was needed there so I took some things with me which I knew I would use. A good spear gun, a brand new 10 speed Raleigh bicycle, and some of the things we would need to start in a new house. I knew we would get a house within the first year, and the navy provided all the furniture and the appliances.

When I arrived back on Midway a lot of my old friends were there when I came off the plane to welcome me. The security personnel had a strong suspicion that I was one of the people responsible for getting weed onto the island in the past. Anyone arriving for the first time, or returning from R&R or leave were patted down and had their luggage searched. They also had a

German Shepard drug sniffing dog in service. Well, they did me up special with a complete strip starch, more so to just prolong me getting my hands back on Candi. Midway was a small Island with only about 2000 people total so everyone knew everyone's business.

When I checked into the Personnel Office to turn in my orders and get my assignment, I just assumed I was going back to the Public Works Department, where I had worked before. Well, I was totally surprised when I was told I was going to be assigned to the Supply Department, fuel handling division. Everybody just called it the Fuel Farm. There were only two Seabees assigned to Supply Department, me and a (BU), Builder who had the job of building wooden crates for people's household goods when they departed the island.

For about the first year I did a lot of dirty jobs, such as cleaning out huge fuel tanks when they were finally empty, doing a lot of preventative maintenance on the pipelines and valves of various types of fuel delivery systems, and a lot of scraping and painting. At the fuel farm we handled, (MOGAS), which was regular leaded gasoline. (AVGAS), which was aviation fuel for airplanes with reciprocating engines, and was highly flammable. And (JP-5), which was aviation fuel for jet engines which was not very flammable. In addition, we also had aviation engine oil for the old reciprocating engines, and it was pumped from a 500-gallon truck directly into the engines on the airplanes. Besides refueling planes, we also refueled Navy and Coast Guard ships at the fuel pier that we also maintained. The farm was surrounded by a security fence with barbed wire on the top, and was located right next to the 9th fairway of the golf course. That meant any of us employees at the fuel farm who played golf had access to all the free golf balls we ever needed. The fuel farm was designated as a high security area for obvious reasons.

Sea Story #14, (Fuel Spills)

Most of the infrastructure on Midway had been around since WW-2 with not many upgrades, so things were starting to fall apart more and more. One morning I was coming to work on my bicycle and as I entered the gate to the farm, I smelled fuel, more than I would normally smell. I stopped and looked down the 9th fairway of the golf course which bordered the farm and saw what looked like a small lake. I walked the short distance to it thinking I was looking at water. When I got to it, I realized it was AVGAS fuel. I ran to the office and sounded the alarm; we had a leak. The AVGAS and the MOGAS systems

were our oldest, and the tanks were half buried in the ground to help conceal them. An island wide alarm was sounded and the whole end of the island where the farm was located was quickly roped off due to the possibility of a fire or explosion. By the time we got organized and responded with recovery equipment the lake was gone. Two reasons, one, AVGAS evaporates very quickly, and two, the water table on Midway is located at four feet below the surface. The island is made of crushed coral and is very porous. The fuel had flowed out to sea on the outgoing tide, a total loss of our entire supply of AVGAS, about 50,000 gallons. By the next day there was not even a smell you could detect. After further inspection of the system it was revealed that the bottom of the tank had rusted away and collapsed.

About a month later, the exact same thing happened with our MOGAS tank, which was the same age and constructed the same way.

So now we were totally out of both of those types of fuel. The AVGAS was not as big a problem as the MOGAS. We only had one plane on the island that used AVGAS and very few planes came into Midway which required it. But every working vehicle on the island needed MOGAS. We still had one 5000-gallon tanker truck full of AVGAS, and a single 1000-gallon truck full of MOGAS, so we were still ok for a while.

About two weeks later a small detachment of Marines who specialized in portable storage of fuels came to Midway and brought with them fuel bladders which looked like giant flat rubber bags. They were big, and stood about six feet tall, and were rectangular in shape. They also brought some portable pumps, hoses, and other equipment. Soon after they had everything set up, a fuel tanker arrived and delivered Avgas and MOGAS to us. Now we had three temporary bladders filled with fuel. One big 50,000-gallon MOGAS bladder, and two 10,000-gallon AVGAS bladders. The Marines went back to Hawaii, but left one E-4, Corporal behind to assist us as needed with their equipment. He was assigned to stay on Midway for three months. He was then the only Marine on an entire island full of sailors.

Over the first few days he was there with us, he was very stand offish and we felt like he did not want to be friends with us. After about a week, we sat him down and asked him what was wrong? He said when his Sargent left, he told him to remember he was going to be the only Marine on the island and he needed to be prepared to kick every sailors ass on the island if need be. Within a week we had him getting drunk with us and doing all kinds of crazy stuff. When he left the island his uniform and his hair were not to regulation

standards and we heard he caught hell when he got back to Hawaii for looking too much like a sailor.

About a month after the last Marine left the island, we were in charge of maintaining the new temporary fuel distribution system. In the hot summer heat, the black rubber bladders needed to be cooled by spraying them with a salt water fire hose, every couple of hours during the day. Otherwise, they would expand and could rupture. We were doing this until a shade could be erected over them. On the weekends there was only one person on duty at the fuel farm. I had duty on a Sunday and I came to the fuel farm that morning to relieve the off-going Saturday watch who was a First-Class Petty Officer named Yunke, who was also my senior and kind of a nit wit. He was short, fat, and ugly with a bottom lip that stuck way out, and he kind of slobbered when he spoke. He was married and had a two-year-old little girl. One day I walked into the maintenance shop and he was making a wooden paddle to spank his little girl with when she was bad. He even drilled holes in it so there was less wind resistance when he swung it. Now a days they would call that child abuse.

Before I could relieve him, we had to tour the farm and make sure everything was ok. We had just recently received our first shipment of MOGAS, which filled the 50,000-gallon bladder, that was located inside the spill containment berm of a massive JP-5 tank. As we neared where the bladder was stored, I could not see the vent pipe sticking up above the edge of the berm. I said, "stop the truck". I got out and ran to the top of the berm, and looked over to where the bladder was located. It was nearly flat and almost all of the fuel was gone. I asked Petty Officer Yunke, "did you keep the bladder sprayed down and cool yesterday? He hesitated and finally said yes, but I knew he was lying. I went and got the MOGAS truck and I was able to salvage just under 1000 gallons. The rest of the fuel had drained through the crushed coral of the island and was floating on the surface of the massive lagoon. To make things worse, the Navy had not yet supplied us with any type of fuel spill recovery equipment in order to recover fuel spilled on the water. I heard later on that Yunke never did make Chief Petty Officer before he retired.

(Continued)

After about a year on the island I was eligible to take the advancement exam for E-5 and I passed it. Now I was a second-Class Petty Officer with two red chevrons under my Eagle/Crow, a little more pay and again, added responsibilities. Every time you made rank you reached a new pay level. Also, every two years you were in the Navy you received a longevity pay raise.

After I made E-5, I was put in charge of the Aircraft Refueling section. I had my own office on the lower corner of the hanger located on the flight line which had a set of bunk beds, a desk, some chairs, and a small fuel lab. I was responsible for two 5000-gallon JP-5 aircraft refueling tankers, one 5000-gallon AVGAS tanker, and two 500-gallon oil tanker trucks. I venture to guess that I was the only Seabee in the Navy at that time who was refueling aircraft.

Aircraft Re-Fuelers as we were called, consisted of me and three E-3 young non-rated female sailors. The three of them were in three section duty, meaning that each night one of them was on duty and was responsible for the fuel farm and refueling any planes that came in and needed fuel. If a single plane came in, it meant they would need a truck full of fuel when they landed, and another truck of fuel the next day before they left. I did not stand duty. My job was to drive another truck and refuel any second plane that may show up with the first, and this would occur maybe twice a week.

You could hear a plane land or take off from anywhere on the island, especially at night when you were trying to sleep. After a while I could hear a plane land and know what type it was from their engine sound. When I heard the second land, I would just get up and head to the hanger before I was even called to come and help.

Sometimes it would take us quite a long time to drive the big fuel trucks the half mile from the flight line to the fuel farm to fill them up and return. There were baby Gooney Birds all over the road and you got in a lot of trouble if you ran over one of them. You would have to stop and get out and grab them by the neck and try not to get bitten while moving them out of your path. Sometimes they would walk right back out in front of you right after you had just moved them.

Not too long after I was put in charge of Aircraft Re-Fuelers I was sitting at my desk one morning and I got a call from Air Operations that there was a single P-3 Orion inbound and would need one truck full of fuel. I worked by myself during the day time and I could usually handle one or two planes at a time. But if more came in, I would have to call down to the fuel farm to get someone else to come to the flight line and help me.

I took my truck out to fuel the plane and hooked my nozzle up under the wing and started pumping. It only takes about 10 minutes to pump 5000 gallons of fuel into a plane. While I am standing there, I started talking to the crew chief. After some small talk he asked me if I would like to buy some ice-cold Coors beer. (They could keep it nice and cold in the isolated tail section of the

aircraft), (Coors had to remain cold, because it was not pasteurized and if it got warm it would go bad). I said, hell yes! He said he could let me have four cases for what was about double what you would pay for it in California. later that day I sold most of it for triple what I had paid for it, and drank the rest of it with fiends.

Soon, I had a nice little black market going, buying and selling Coors beer. Only the Navy P-3 aircraft coming out of San Diego had beer to sell, and on their return flight from the Philippines they would sell ice cold San Miguel Black Label beer bottled in the P.I. Every so often I would give the commanding Officer a six pack of Coors for free just to be on the safe side. I figured that If I ever got in trouble, he would most likely be too.

When I returned to Midway Candi and I lived in separate barracks while we waited for a house of our own. There were other married military couples besides us who were in the same situation, maybe about a half dozen other couples. After a couple of months, we moved in with Candi's supervisor, JO1 Chris Bell and his wife Linda. We were all very close best friends. We were living with them until we got caught by one of their neighbors who turned us in. Chris, me, and Candi got called in to talk to the Captain about what we had been doing. He was very understanding, but told us we could not continue doing what we were doing. He also said there was a solution to our problem coming soon.

Candi and I would also request to go camping on the isolated Eastern Island for a weekend so we could be alone. We did this several times and it was fun because we were the only ones on the island, and you could pretend you were on a desert island.

About a month later Candi's division officer, Lt Hale and his wife were going to Hawaii for a week and asked us to take care of their house while they were gone. We moved in and had sex morning, noon, and night the whole week. Candi was not supposed to be able to get pregnant because of a medical condition, but I guess that week in the borrowed house broke all the rules and Joshua was conceived.

Not long after that, the Captain turned half of the 3rd floor of Delta barracks into rooms for married enlisted couples. Each of us got a four-person room to share with each other. The other half of the 3rd floor was for females, and the second floor was for males, so I had to go to the second floor to use a bathroom. Each room had two single beds, so we pushed them together and turned the mattresses sideways to form one double bed.

We were finally assigned a house, a two bedroom in "B" housing. Candi was pregnant and decided to keep working until the baby was born. She was allowed to wear civilian clothes because they had not yet developed maternity uniforms for female military personnel.

If it was your first baby you had to go to Hawaii to deliver at Tripler Army Hospital. 30 days before the expected due date I took leave and we flew to Hawaii. We drove around Oahu and did a lot of things waiting for the baby to be born. After 30 days still no baby, so I called my boss on Midway and he got me TAD orders to the Hickam Air Force Base Fuels Division.

I reported to the officer in charge and he talked to me for about a half hour and then told me to just call him every morning to check in. And that when the baby was born, he would endorse my orders so I could go back to Midway. The next day I was talking to a nurse, and she said to give Candi a big spoon full of Castor Oil, and that baby would be born within 24 hours. So, we did just that.

That same day my best friend and dive buddy from Midway was leaving and would be in Hawaii for one night, so I got together with him to say goodbye. We were out partying, when Candi went into a long labor. When I got back to the hospital, I found out she was in labor. I rushed over to where she was and she was a little mad and kind of let me know. Joshua was finally born after many hours of labor, and I cried and got to carry him to the nursery. It was the happiest time of my life so far. When the doctor was stitching Candi back up after the birth, I jokingly asked him to put an extra love stitch in and he got pretty angry with that suggestion. Two days later we flew back to Midway. The next day I took Joshua down to the beach and totally submerged him in the warm crystal-clear water for about 5 seconds. He held his breath and looked up at me from below the surface as I said "though shall be a diver" and later in life, he was. Soon after Josh was born Candi got out of the Navy.

We settled into married life with Josh and life was good. When we were deciding on a male name for the baby, the name Leroy kept popping up as another possible name. This was because Candi's first boyfriend on Midway was a black sailor and there was speculation that Josh might be born half black, and Leroy might be a better name for him. He was born white so we stuck with Joshua.

On Halloween, each year there was trick or treating for the kids, and trick or drinking for the adults. Just like it sounds, the kids carried paper bags to

collect candy in, and the adults carried glasses to collect various mixed drinks in.

On the 4th of July, the island put on a fabulous firework display over the lagoon on the enlisted beach, right next to the officer's beach. Those are still the best fireworks I can remember watching.

On Memorial Day every year there was a parade with floats and a lot of decorated bicycles. Also, there was a lot of games, food booths, and entertainment. It was the most fun day of the year by far. The biggest event of the day was a bicycle race called the Midway 500. A race course was laid out all around the island with white powdered chalk. It was about 10 miles long and went through deep sand, water, rocky coral, and pavement. A representative from each Command, or Department could participate. Two representatives from Supply Department participated, one of them was me. I had my brand-new Raleigh bike I had brought back to the island, so I thought I had a very good chance of winning. It was a long grueling race which started and finished with two laps around the baseball field which was in the middle of the festivities for the day. I had a good start and was in the lead for most of the race, but not by much. A good friend of mine, another Seabee from Public Works Department was right on my heels. About a mile from the finish line he passed me and never looked back. When we got back to the ball field, he ended up beating me by a full lap of the ball field. The 3rd place finisher was not even close to us. Trophies were awarded to the top three finishers, and bragging rights went to the first-place finisher. The winner won with a single speed bike with only one gear, and totally stripped down with no brakes. Josh is now in possession of the trophy.

During this time on Midway I was doing a lot of scuba diving, and teaching scuba diving. So much so that I kind of got sick of eating spiny lobster. The movie "JAWS" had just come out and a lot of people were now afraid to get into the water, even though there were no Great White Sharks anywhere close to Midway. But we did have a lot of other sharks in the water such as, Tigers, Black Tip, White Tip, and Gray Reef Sharks. I started trading lobster for steaks to the people who were too scared to get into the water and get them for themselves. By the way, Josh's first solid food was lobster, which he really liked. Later in life when we would go out to dinner in the states, he would always want to order lobster, which was usually the most expensive item on the menu.

Sea Story #15, (Lion Fish)

One day John Ross and I decided to do a shell hunting dive directly off the beach from the dive club. We decided to snorkel out into the lagoon as far as we could or until we got tired, and then scuba dive back to shore. We made it out about a mile, then submerged in about 35 feet of water and started scuba diving back to shore. When we got close to shore, we were in just a few feet of water over a sandy bottom. I was experiencing a little bit of negative buoyancy, so I was pushing off the bottom with my gloved hand about every three kicks of my fins. I could have put a little more air in my BCD vest but I was tired and feeling lazy. About then I spotted a baby Lion Fish, (a very dangerous fish which has a toxic poison in its dorsal spines which attacks your central nervous system) sitting on the bottom in front of me. As I swam closer to it, I figured it would move, but it didn't. I put my hand down on top of it as I pushed off the bottom and it didn't move. When I lifted my hand up, it was stuck to the bottom of my hand because three of its dorsal spines had gone completely through my hand like needles. I shook my hand and it fell off and settled on the bottom in front of me, dusted itself off and was ready for more fun.

I took off my glove and could see small blood droplets in three places on both sides of my hands. John looked at me and his eyes got really big and motioned me to swim toward the shore. When we got to the beach my hand was already swelling up and I was in great pain. By the time I got my gear off and had walked to the dive club my hand had swollen to the point that my fingers were all touching and it felt like thousands of ants were crawling across my skin stabbing me with ice picks. We got a bucket of ice, put my hand in it, and called the base ambulance. The ice was what we thought was the proper medication at the time, but now we know the opposite was the correct thing to do, (Putting the affected body part in the hottest water you can stand will help draw out the venom.)

When I got to the clinic, doctor Brown, another dive club member examined me and sent the corpsman next door to the galley to get the ripest Papaya he could find. When he returned a few minutes later the doctor cut it up and mashed it into a paste and covered my hand with it. In about 15 minutes the swelling was rapidly going down and the pain was subsiding. I asked the doctor about what he had done with the papaya? He said there were chemicals in the Papaya that naturally draws out toxins. Then he said "when in the jungle you have to practice jungle medicine". I got better very quickly and there were no lingering effects from the toxin. We also got some really nice shells that day during the dive.

Sea Story #16, (Fluke Anchor)

Mac and I decided to teach an advanced diver class and one part of it included a little light underwater salvage. We had located an old 5000-pound fluke anchor in the lagoon sitting in about 20 feet of water, which would make the perfect project to salvage. There were about 10 students in the class, so we had plenty of help for the task. We acquired 12, 55 gallon used oil drums from the Fuel Farm and welded lengths of steel chains to each end of them. Then we hauled them out on a small boat and sank them next to the anchor. Next, we wrapped the chains around the anchors upper arm and shackled them together. The next step was to fill the barrels with compressed air from a scuba tank and float the anchor. We knew the air would expand as the barrels rose so we left the plugs out of them to allow the excess air to escape. After all the barrels were full of air, the anchor rose up into a vertical position, but the bottom of it was still under the sand bottom. We had estimated that we had enough barrels to lift it so a few of us started rocking the anchor back and forth to try and break the suction on the bottom of it. After a few minutes of rocking it, it broke loose and started moving slowly toward the surface. As the anchor rose it increased in speed and lots of air escaped as it expanded. At one point the anchor was moving towards the surface very quickly, and almost hit the boat when it broke the surface. Once it was on the surface, we recapped the drums and tied a tow line to it. Then we slowly towed it to the sea wall next to the cargo pier and the Koral Kings dive shop and re-sunk it. The plan was to recover it later using a crane and relocate it in front of the dive shop.

A few weeks later we planned the recovery and relocation of the anchor. Mac was no longer in the Navy at this time, and the Commanding Officer had arranged for him to return to the island just to teach scuba diving.

So early on a Sunday morning I went to the fuel farm and sort of borrowed the mobile crane, called a Cherry Picker which we used to transfer fuel hoses over to ships when we refueled them at the fuel pier. Then I drove it down to the dive shop where I met Mac and John Ross, another dive buddy. Mac said he was not feeling well and could not go into the water to help, so I said he could operate the crane and I would go into the water. I positioned the crane at the edge of the sea wall facing the lagoon, lowered the four support outriggers, (which helped prevent the crane from tipping over) positioned the boom at the proper angle, and lowered the hook down to the surface of the water.

The next step was to quickly train Mac on how to operate the three levers which operate the crane. One to raise and lower the boom, one to swing the

boom to the side, and one to lower and raise the hook. (The hook could only be operated slowly, but the boom could be operated slowly or quickly depending on how far you moved the handle).

Then John and I donned our scuba gear and got into the water. We dove down and rigged the anchor to be lifted by the crane, then we surfaced and hooked the rigging onto the hook of the crane. We backed away from the anchor a short distance and inflated our bouncy compensators so we could float on the surface. I then directed Mac to move the first lever back slowly and raise the anchor high enough for it to clear the sea wall. All of the barrels from lifting the anchor were still attached to it so we let it hang for a while to let the water drain from the barrels.

Next, I told Mac to slowly pull back on the second handle to swing the boom to the right, and then the anchor would be moved over to the side of the crane where he could lower it down to the ground. Well, Mac pulled back to quickly on the handle and the boom moved very quickly to the right, leaving the anchor hanging in the air in front of him. Now the anchor had become a pendulum and was swinging to the right out of control. As it did, the crane started to tip over onto its right side. All this time I was yelling at Mac to push forward on the 3rd handle and drop the boom, which would have quickly lowered the anchor to the ground. But Mac panicked, and jumped off the left side of the crane, which I guess was the safe thing to do. Meanwhile the anchor had started its return swing on the end of the hook back towards us who were in the water underneath its path. We quickly started back peddling in the water to get out of its way. This time the anchor had more momentum and the crane could not hold the weight, and turned over onto its front and left side. The anchor pulled on the crane as it hit the water and sank, and bent the boom nearly in half. The crane was destroyed, but no one was injured. I told Mac to turn off the still running motor of the crane and meet us at the dive shop.

John and I got dressed and we all sat down and felt terrible. Mac said, what do we do now? I said I don't know about you guys but I'm going to have a cold beer. (We had a fridge with beer and soda in the dive shop). So, we all had a cold one and just sat there crying in our beers. Before we could finish our beer the duty security officer, another dive buddy of ours pulled up in front of the dive shop and came inside. He took one look at us and said, man you guys are in a world of shit!

He made some calls and reported it, and soon anyone who was important was on the scene. The big crane from Public Works was brought down to lift the smaller crane, and the anchor was lifted out of the water as evidence.

Mac was not charged and quickly told he would have to leave the island, and John was told he was not going to be charged. I was the only one in trouble and I was charged with misappropriation and destruction of government property in excess of \$10,000 and I would be going to Captains Mast. (Non-Judicial Punishment, not quite a Court Martial).

My wife's Division Officer, Lt Hale was assigned as the JAG officer to investigate the case. He was unable to fully investigate the case since Mac was no longer on the island, and John and I refused to speak with him and further incriminate ourselves. I was still an E-4, and if I got busted just one rank, I would lose the privilege of having a house and then Candi and Josh would have to leave the island.

A few weeks later it was time to go to Captains Mast, and a lot of people on the island showed up to witness it. LT Hale made his case which was incomplete. Then my Department Head, my Chief, and my Division Officer all got up and spoke favorably about me. Then the CO asked me to tell him the truth and the complete story, which I did. He then gave me the maximum punishment he could, busted one pay grade, took half my base pay for three months, and extra duty doing dirty jobs for three months. He then said that due to my excellent record and all the good things my superiors had said about me he was going to suspend all charges for six months, as long as I did not get into any other trouble. However, he said the Navy could still come after me for the \$10,000 dollars in damage I had caused to the crane. Well, the crane was never repaired and was pushed over the sea wall at the marine dump, so I never had to pay for the damage. Six months later my record was cleared as if nothing had ever happened.

Sometime later I found out why I had gotten off so lightly. Apparently, the CO had got Mac onto the island without the admiral's permission, who was located in Hawaii. If I had appealed the CO's sentence, then the admiral would have found out and then the CO would have been in trouble with his boss the admiral. It all worked out for everyone and we got a brand-new crane at the fuel farm, which we then called the "Anchor Picker".

Sea Story #17, (Buoy Light)

Not long after the anchor was salvaged, I was diving on the cargo pier with my buddy Moke Kurishima who was in the Navy and also a full-blooded Hawaiian. At the end of the dive, we headed in a new direction towards shore that we had never taken before and discovered an old channel buoy in about 40 feet of water, with a light attached to the top of it. We came back out the next day with a boat and some tools to salvage the light. Only four one-inch brass bolts connected it to the top of the cage tower located on top of the buoy and we had it off in no time. It was very heavy and it took all of our strength to pull it up into the boat with a rope tied around it.

After examining it and doing some research, we found out it was made from solid brass and copper and had operated by burning Cobalt and Acetylene Gas. I spent approximately 50 hours in my spare time removing the coral from it and restoring it to its original condition. It was beautiful when I got finished. It stood about two-foot-tall with a cone shaped vented top that swung on hinges to one side. Below the top was a brass cage with eight pieces of triangular glass, one of which was missing. Inside of the cage was a Fresnel lens which was comprised of seven glass rings held together in another smaller brass cage. Inside of that lens was a blue glass circular lens, and inside that was the burner for the flame. All of this sat on a solid brass base. I had it for many years and finally sold it for \$500.00 to a store which sold maritime antiques when I was stationed in Norfolk Virginia and needed the money to support my family. Many years later I discovered the Fresnel lens alone was worth at least \$5000.00.

Sea Story #18, (Buoy Bell)

A couple of months later Gary Means, (he was a civilian DOD school teacher and also the islands game warden) and I were scuba diving in the same area where the old anchor was on the reef from the 1909 shipwreck. It was the shallow area where John Ross and I had found the artifacts from the shipwreck, and the valuable cowrie shell. We were looking for shipwreck artifacts and had expanded our search area up onto the reef in channels between the coral and in small surf. Then I found a really big anchor chain and started following it across the top of the reef in very shallow water less than four feet deep. After just a minute or so I see a big buoy in a deep hole on top of the reef. The buoy was about 25 feet long and 12 feet in diameter, totally submerged, laying on its side in about 15 feet of water. It had a large bell in

the middle of a cage structure attached to the lower enclosed part of the buoy which originally provided the floatation for it. We inspected the bell and could see the clapper on the inside was missing, and etched into the side of the bell was USCG 1940. The only thing on the buoy not rusting was the bell, so we figured it was made out of brass, later on we discovered it was made from cast bronze. The lower floatation chamber had a big hole in it, so we turned on our lights and swam inside of it and found that half of it was full of air. We took our regulators out of our mouths and were able to breath the air trapped inside. Later we thought, that had been a really bad idea because there could have been toxic air trapped inside of it. We also discovered that some nice big lobster had made the inside of the buoy there home. Also, nearby the buoy was what was left of the brass light that had once been attached to the top of the buoy. We took what was left of the light and loaded it in our boat and headed back to the dive shop.

When we got back, I started inspecting the light and found the copper top was missing, along with the inner lens, only the outer cage and the bottom remained. The good thing was that the middle cage of the light had one triangular piece of glass still intact, and I was able to salvage it and install it into the other buoy light I had salvaged earlier and fully restore it.

Well you guessed it! Gary and I made a plan to salvage the bell. After about 30 dives over about a six-month period, we were able to cut the top cage loose from the lower floatation chamber. First, we tried to remove the bell from the structure. It was connected by four really big brass bolts which we could not move at all. later we took big hammers out to the site and beat on the steel structure which was holding the bell. We were able to reduce the thickness of the steel angle iron structure in four locations by half its original thickness due to how rusty and decomposed it was. Then we started taking out a bag of 10 hacksaws each per dive and started cutting through the angle iron in those same four locations. Each dive was concluded after we had broken 10 hacksaw blades. Eventually we were able to cut it loose.

The next plan was to get the bell off the reef and float it to the island. Luckily it was not a long distance from the inner harbor boat ramp, only about a half mile. We used the same method we had used to salvage the fluke anchor, only this time no crane was involved. Using four oil drums, we were able to float the bell at high tide, and with the help of the waves we were able to get it over the reef and into the deeper water of the lagoon. We then towed it to the boat ramp and hauled it out of the water on a boat trailer. Then took it to the fuel farm and removed the bell from the structure by removing the four brass bolts on the top of the bell. Next, I sandblasted the bell clean and placed it on

a wooden pallet, which it just fit on. The bell weighed 1200 pounds and stood 3 feet high.

When I left Midway, I crated it up and shipped it to my next duty station in San Diego, California in my household goods as a table base. Then I trailered it to my parents' house in Aromas California where it sat for many years. Later, when I was stationed on the USS Puget Sound in Virginia, I had a friend in the machine shop manufacture a clangor for the bell made from solid brass. I eventually sold it to a housing developer in Los Angeles for \$1000.00 which was more than it was worth at that time for scrap brass. It ended up high in an arched entranceway leading into a new Spanish designed housing complex.



Sea Story #19, (Underwater Cave)

One time another dive buddy and I were diving just inside the reef looking for a possible cave in the reef that would lead us outside the reef. After several attempts we actually found one. The first time we dived through it to the outside of the reef and back into the lagoon we nearly killed ourselves. The cave was about 100 yards long and quite big inside, at one spot about half way through there was a large chamber about 12 feet high with a sandy bottom and there were lots of lobsters in the holes of the walls on either side. We had lights with us, but most of the way through there were holes in the ceiling allowing light to filter through. However, the holes were too small to escape through in an emergency. We made it to the end and found ourselves outside the reef. We looked around a bit and decided we needed to get back to where we started before, we ran out of air. We started back through and then realized we were fighting a slight current that was working against us. We had to hold onto the sides of the cave and pull ourselves against the current which was too strong to swim against. We finally made it back into the lagoon with almost no air left in our tanks.

The next time we dove through the cave we brought a long thick rope with us, tied it at the beginning of the cave and stretched it to the end, and tied it off again. That way we could easily pull ourselves back through a current. From then on, we mainly just dove through as far as the large chamber to load up

on lobster and return to the lagoon. On about the third time into the cave we entered the chamber and saw three six-foot-long Black Tip Reef Sharks laying on the sandy bottom facing into the current. We discovered they were breathing with the help of the current and either resting or possibly sleeping. We left them alone and exited the cave. About half the time we came back into the cave in the future there were sharks in there doing the same thing, sometimes Gray Reef Sharks or sometimes Black, or White Tip Reef Sharks. Years later when I was back in the States, there was a TV documentary revealing a new discovery made by Jacques Cousteau about sharks sleeping in caves with a current flowing through their gills. I guess we were a step ahead of the famous man!

Sea Story #20, (Sharks-2)

Another shark encounter happened one time when Mac and I were teaching a brand-new class of 12 diving students. Each day before class we would have all the students jump off of the cargo pier and swim along the sea wall to the boat ramp next to the dive shop, about 200 yards. Mac and I would walk along the sea wall above them and throw them a life preserver if they got in any trouble, and one of us could also jump in and help them if need be. The students were about 100 yards into the swim when a really small two-foot Gray Reef Shark swam by them. We both saw it and I asked Mac if we should say anything to the students. He said no, just remain calm and see what happens. Well, one of the students saw it and yelled out a blood curdling scream; "SHARK". The next thing we knew, half of them were swimming for their life to the boat ramp, and the other half were trying to climb the barnacle laden sea wall. We tossed down life preservers to them and told them to remain calm and that it was just a small two-foot reef shark and there was nothing to worry about. Just about then I spotted a 15-foot Tiger Shark coming up about 50 feet behind them. Mac saw it at about the same time and we both started yelling; "SWIM FOR YOUR LIVES". They did and they were at the boat ramp in record time and out of the water.

Mac and I then donned scuba gear and went looking for the Tiger Shark with our power heads and try to kill it. After 30 minutes of searching in the general area there was no sight of it, so we exited the water and told the students we were going to resume the training. We did, and there were no further incidents with the shark. Over a period of several years this was the only time something like this had happened.

Sea Story #21, (Sharks-3)

When I was nearing the end of my second tour on Midway, Mac came to me one day and asked me if I would like to make some very good money doing a commercial dive job. He told me he was hired by the AT&T Transpacific Cable Company to repair the three cables where they crossed the submerged ancient reef that was in 110 feet of water on one side of the island, just outside the current reef system. He said he had funding to hire one more diver to help him, and that the job would take about two weeks. I said yes, and took two weeks of leave from the Navy to do the job with him. Note: The Commercial Pacific Cable Company originally installed the cables as part of a worldwide teletype communications system.

The job consisted of placing hub and spigot steel covers over three cables approximately in the same location and then bolting them together. The cables had become damaged from chafing on the reef and if not covered soon would wear through and be destroyed.

The Navy supplied the company a Mike 8 boat with a ramp that lowered and raised which made the diving a lot easier. All you had to do was walk in the water down the ramp and then walk onto the ramp when you were done and the ramp would raise you up and you could walk into the boat. When the boat was in position, we would toss the steel repair parts into the water and hope they landed close to where we needed them on the bottom. Then when we dove, we carried the bolts and our tools on a belt on our sides. When we got to the bottom, we would take off our fins and walk on the bottom to carry the heavy repair parts to where we needed them, and then bolt them over the cables.

We were working at depth with a limited bottom time, so we had to do a little decompression in the water for about 10 minutes on each dive breathing from spare tanks hanging below the boat. We would only make one or two dives a day depending on the weather.

On one dive about half way through the contract we had just got to the bottom and started working when three big 15 to 18-foot Tiger Sharks cruised by us and started circling. We ended the dive and swam back to the surface and quickly exited the water. After we got out of the water, one of the sharks attacked the large floating anchored buoy we had used to mark our underwater work location. The buoy sank and we had to replace it on the next dive. We ended up replacing it several more times before the job was completed due to shark attacks on it. Mac then had to hire another diver to

protect us for the remainder of the dives. The safety diver watched our backs on the bottom with two power heads ready to kill any shark that got too close. The power heads were basically a contact weapon that fired either a 44 magnum, or a 12-gauge shotgun shell with double 00 buck shot. If you hit a shark in the head, you could blow half its head off with one shot. We made the power heads ourselves in the machine shop and smuggled the ammo onto the island in our checked bags, this was well before the rules put into effect after 9-11. After a little more than two weeks we finished up the cable repair job and I went back to refueling airplanes.

Sea Story #22, (Ran over by an Airplane)

Not long after that I was refueling a P-3 Orion and it was a very windy day. As I was hooking up the fuel hose under the wing and located next to one of the planes landing gear, I did not notice the plane was being moved by the wind. The flight crew had only chocked one tire so the plane was actually pivoting as it moved. The plane only moved a couple of feet, and then rolled up onto my foot, breaking my ankle. I was stuck there with the plane on my foot until they got a dock mule, (type of a tractor) to move it off of me.

I was taken to the clinic and had a cast put on it, and then I had to keep it elevated in bed at home for a long time. So long that I got hooked on soap operas, General Hospital, and Days of our Lives. Eventually I was good to go back to work and the ankle fully healed up.

(Continued)

I had been in the Navy now for over five years and my enlistment was coming to an end soon, and I had to start thinking about my future and my family. I was really interested in the Coast Guard, so when I was in Honolulu on R&R I went to talk to a Coast Guard Recruiter. He told me that since I was a Seabee and had never been on a ship, I would need to be reduced in rank one step to enlist in the Coast Guard.

When I returned to Midway, I talked to the career counselor about re-enlisting in the Navy. He told me that all of the Seabee ratings, including mine were overmanned, and if I wanted to re-enlist, I would need to cross rate to a critical fleet rating. He offered me a few choices of different ratings and I chose Hull Technician, (HT) which was somewhat similar to what my Seabee rating had been. (HT) included plumbing, carpentry, pipe fitting, welding, and damage

control. In addition, I would receive a \$12,000 tax free cash bonus to reenlist for six more years. I had also considered getting out of the Navy, but I was overseas, with not much in savings, and I had no prospects of a job back in the states.

Meanwhile, I was so into diving that I wanted to become a Navy Diver. My counselor told me to put in my application, so I did, and I was accepted. I was sent to Pearl Harbor Hawaii to be interviewed and take some tests. Along with the Navy Diver application was a copy of my medical record. I did not have normal color perception, which is called color blindness. To be a Navy diver you needed to have normal color perception, so I had my Corpsman dive buddy on Midway delete that fact from my medical record.

When I reported to the diving unit in Pearl Harbor, I took a written test and was interviewed by a panel of divers. Then I had to do a test dive in a tank wearing the Mark-V diving rig. That is the one with the canvas suit, the lead weight belt, the lead boots, and the brass helmet. They dress you in the suit while you are sitting on a bench, then the last step is to put the helmet on you which is blacked out so you cannot see. Then you stand up, which is a struggle with all the weight on. Next, you climb up several steps to a platform, turn around and step down several steps into a round tank full of water. Then you adjust your air valve so you can attain negative, neutral, and positive buoyancy. Then you have to climb back up the steps and out of the tank, wet and heavier than when you entered it. Trust me, it takes all your strength to do that. When they were undressing me, the tops of my shoulders were hurting badly. When they took the brass collar off, I was bleeding where it had been resting on my shoulders. I said, "why am I bleeding"? One of them said; "I guess you will ask for the pads next time", like I was supposed to know that already.

So, I reenlisted in the Navy for six years, switched to (HT), and received the cash bonus. I was also guaranteed "HT-A" school, and an advanced "C" school in my new rating.

HT-A School, (Phase-1), Fleet Training Center, (FTC) Detachment Treasure Island, (TI) San Francisco, CA. (Student)

Candi and Josh left Midway and went to live with her family in El Cajon, Ca. near San Diego. At the same time, I left Midway and reported to HT-A school on Treasure Island, (TI) Ca. The school was a two-part school, the first phase

on (TI), and the second phase in San Diego on the same base I went to boot camp at. While I was in San Diego, I was able to stay with Candi at her family's house, a rented apartment. Her family then consisted of her mom, sister, brother, and grandfather.

I sold the Capri I had before I returned to Midway for the second tour. In San Diego I bought a Toyota Tacoma with the reliable 4-cylinder engine. I loved that little truck, and we could fit all three of us in it just fine. It was chocolate brown, with chrome mag wheels and a white camper shell with port holes on both sides.

HT-A School, (Phase 2), Fleet Training Center, (FTC) San Diego, CA. (Student)

When I graduated Phase-2 of HT-A school, I received orders to 2nd Class Navy Dive School in Little Creek, VA. with follow on orders to the USS Diver, (ARS-5) a WW-2 class salvage ship.

2nd Class Navy Dive School, Little Creek, VA. (Student)

We then moved to Norfolk, VA. which was right next to Little Creek, VA. Where the dive school was located and found a nice apartment to live in. We got a deal on the cost of the apartment if I was willing to maintain the swimming pool in the unit during the summer months.

Sea Story #23, (Maggots)

One hot summer day I came home after school and the pool was full of adults and children. I checked the skimmer filters to clean them out, and found them half full of live maggots. Calmly, I asked everyone to get out of the pool and then I showed them what was in the pool with them. Everybody freaked out at that point, so I had to close the pool and super treat it with chlorine to kill all the maggots. A couple of days later I was able to reopen the pool. This same thing happened again about a month later, and I finally figured out it was due to the neighboring apartments dumpster being located too close to our pool. After several attempts to get the dumpster relocated, I failed, so we just had to live with the maggot problem periodically.

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When I was half way through dive school and doing good, there was a surprise inspection and a few of us were chosen for a medical screening. To make a long story short, it was discovered that I did not have normal color perception and I was terminated from dive school. After that, I stayed at the dive school for a while, doing odd maintenance jobs at the school awaiting new orders.

One day the Chief had me cleaning up a bunch of stuff stored in an old barge floating next to the pier. It was a real mess which took several days to clean up and organize. When I was going through it all I found an old Mark-V dive suit, (the canvas suit with the brass helmet). It was all there except for the brass helmet. I relocated it to the trunk of my car and was able to sell it to an antique nautical store in town for several hundred dollars. The same store bought the antique buoy light I had salvaged on Midway for \$500.00.

USS Puget Sound, (AD-38) Norfolk, VA.

Then I received orders to the USS Puget Sound, (AD-38) a Destroyer Tender repair ship home ported in Norfolk, so we did not have to move our residence. (Most crew members referred to the ship as "The Pubic Mound"). The ship consisted of two groups of sailors, repair division which only worked on neighboring destroyers, and ships force personnel who only worked on the Puget Sound. I was in ships force and assigned to be the leading petty officer in charge of the Ship-Fitter Shop, with a half dozen sailors working under me.

Because of our repair mission, the ship never left the pier except one time when Hurricane David passed through, and all ships had to go out and anchor in the bay to ride it out. We sat out at anchor for one night and in the morning, we started bringing in our three anchors. One of the anchors got fouled and ended up breaking one of our anchor windlasses that pull in the anchors. The easy fix was to cut one of the anchors free and have the divers come out and recover it, and then return to the pier. But the CO said no, so we sat there for five more days until we repaired the anchor windless.

I was also assigned to the Rapid Response Team, (RRT) we wore red jerseys so everyone on board knew who we were. If there was any emergency like fire or flooding on the ship, we were the squad to arrive first and attack the

problem. There was also a nuclear repair facility on the ship and we had to be trained to deal with that as well.

We had a lot of P-250 portable water pumps on board for use in firefighting and most of them did not work, plus we were expected to repair the ones for the destroyers that came alongside of us for maintenance. It was decided that I should go to the special school to learn to rebuild them. When I returned from the two-week school, I was an expert in repairing the pumps. Soon I had taught several other people how to repair them, and in no time, we had them all working

The only drawback to living and working on the ship, was that it was infested with cockroaches. When you walked through the galley at night it looked like the deck was moving. No matter what actions were taken to eradicate them nothing seemed to work, so we just lived with them. We would put double sided sticky tape around our berthing racks to catch them before they could crawl into bed with us at night.

After I was onboard for about nine months, we were told we would be getting women sailors on the ship soon. This was brand new to the Navy, since women had never been assigned to ships. A lot of the old timers thought it was bad luck to have a woman on a Navy ship. At this time, they were only going to be assigned to noncombatant ships, like the Puget Sound. First only three women officers were assigned, all new Ensigns. That way they could get their feet wet and be ready when the estimated fifty or so female enlisted sailors arrived on board. One of the female officers was assigned to be the new R division officer, and I was in R division. Her name was Ensign Brest, pronounced breast, and she actually lived up to her name.

Sea Story #24, (Peep Hole)

One day I was on watch in Damage Control Central, (DCC) which was also the same office where all the engineering officers had their desks. I saw Ensign Brest talking to her boss the Chief Engineer, and then he looked over at me and motioned me to come over. I did, and said; yes, sir you want to talk to me? He told me that Ensign Brest was concerned that someone may be peeping through a hole into her stateroom, and since I was in charge of the Ship-Fitter shop, would I check it out for her. I went with her to her stateroom and saw one little tiny hole in the bulkhead. I poked my pen into it and looked through the hole but I could not see anything. I told her I will investigate the

other side of the bulkhead and get back to her. On the other side was the Captains personnel cooks kitchen space. I went in and talked to the cook who was senior to me and told him I needed to inspect his kitchen for ventilation leaks, because the officer in the space next door was complaining of fumes leaking through the bulkhead. I started looking around and found a big pot covering a small section of insulation which had been neatly cut out so it could be quickly removed and replaced, underneath was the hole. I asked him about the cut insulation and the hole, and he said he did not know anything about it. I filled the hole with liquid steel and re-taped the insulation and painted over it. Then I told Ensign Brest I had found and filled the hole and that it looked like an old rivet had fallen out and that was all. Everybody was happy and no one was in trouble.

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At this time in the Navy it was ok to smoke pot, just not on the ships or bases, even though some people did anyway. Then one day the word came down to everyone in the NAVY that there was now a zero tolerance for illegal drugs. Random urinalysis was started so you never knew when you would be tested for illegal drug use. I decided to stop smoking pot all together because I had decided to make the Navy my career at that point.

When I was nearing the end of my tour of duty on the Puget Sound, we made a road trip to Washington DC, so I could talk directly to my detailer. The detailer decides where you will be stationed next depending on the needs of the NAVY. The detailer suggested that I should take my guaranteed C school now, so I did.

C-1 Welding School, 32nd Street, San Diego, CA. (Student)

After being on board the Puget Sound for almost two years we got the word that the ship was going to be changing home ports soon to Italy. I was given the choice of going with the ship, or electing to go to my guaranteed "C" school instead. I opted for school and received Permanent Change of Station, (PCS) orders to the eight-month long C-1 welding school at 32nd Street Naval Station in San Diego, CA. The school was very intense, with several different phases that included; Oxygen Acetylene cutting, brazing, Carbon Arc cutting, Stick plate and pipe welding, Aluminum MIG welding, and TIG welding of Nuclear Components in power plants.

While I was in school for eight months, I stood duty on Shore Patrol once a month. We wore our dress blue uniform with a white duty belt and a baton, (billy club) hanging from it, we also carried a two-way radio. Our job was to walk back and forth along one side of the perimeter of the base on the outside of the fence for six hours. It was very boring but we had some entertainment on our beat. Across the street from our beat was a club called: The Stone Fox, and their motto was "Just a Hare Away". It was the only totally nude strip club in the San Diego area with a liquor license. We figured as Shore Patrolmen it was our duty to go in and check out the place on each round which was about every 30 minutes, and make sure no sailors in the club were causing, or were in any trouble. It sure broke up the boredom, so we always requested that portion of the perimeter to patrol.

When we arrived, we moved into an apartment south of San Diego in Chula Vista, CA. During the time I was in school, I took and passed the E-6 exam for advancement. I was then advanced to First Class Petty Officer. My arm patch was now the eagle with three red chevrons. The red chevrons were switched to gold after you had 12 years in the Navy and you had received a Good Conduct Medal every four years. (Otherwise you had not got into any trouble, or you had not got caught anyway).

When I first reported to the Puget Sound it was in dry dock undergoing repairs. The nearest place to park your car was a half mile away and you had to walk to and from the ship every day. Soon after I reported aboard, I started getting sick all the time. Especially after I warmed up from a long walk or after exercise. It was like I would get a cold every other month, and cough and hack a lot. This went on for quite some time, until I got transferred to San Diego.

While I was in school, I went to Sick Bay one day because I was sick again. I told the doctor about how long this had been going on, so he looked back through my medical record and was concerned. He said; lets send you up to Balboa Naval Hospital for some tests. I reported to the hospital a few days later and a Bronchoscopy was performed on me. I sat in a reclining chair sort of like a dental chair and an IV was put into my arm. Then I was injected with pure liquid Cocaine. Let me tell you, they could have cut my head off and I would have laughed about it, that's how good I felt. Then they put this tube with a light and camera on the end of it up my nose, down into my throat and into my lungs. I could follow along on a tv monitor and see inside my lungs as they went. First, they went into my right lung and it was healthy. Then they went into my left lung and found scar damage and an infection in the lower left quadrant. They injected an antibiotic through the tube and directly into the infected area. After that my condition was never as bad as it had been

previously. It was determined the scar damage was caused from having Pneumonia in Boot Camp in 1973. I now have COPD, which is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In my case it is chronic bronchitis and emphysema, so every time I get a cold it goes right to my lungs and I have to go to the doctor and get antibiotics to clear it up until the next time, which is about once a year.

During the time I was in school in San Diego we sold the Toyota pickup and bought a new 1980 Chevy Citation. It ended up being a piece of crap car which we did not keep very long. I also bought a French made moped and used it to commute back and forth to school on. When we got to Bremerton Washington, I bought a new Honda 750 motorcycle to commute on and just have fun with. One day I was cleaning the chain with a rag with my finger and it went through the sprocket and took the skin off the end of my finger, down to the bone. I had to have skin removed from under my left arm and grafted onto the end of the finger. It took a good long year to heal up. I always wanted a Harley Davidson but I could never afford one.

USS Enterprise, (CVN-65), (The Big E), Bremerton, WA.

When I graduated from welding school, I received PCS orders to the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) which was located in Bremerton Washington undergoing an extended refit and overhaul. It had just come out of dry dock and was tied up alongside the pier. The Enterprise was the first nuclear powered aircraft carrier in the world. It was in a class all its own, and was powered by eight reactors. When it was commissioned, it was the fastest surface ship the Navy had on active duty. When I reported onboard, she had already been in overhaul for two years and it would end up taking a total of five years to finish the job.

The USS Enterprise was pretty cool. All around the ship it was decorated with themes from the Starship Enterprise tv shows and movies. Pictures of the Starship, Spock, Captain Kirk, Phasers, etc. Even the ship's theme song was related; (it was the theme song from the Star Trek tv series).

We rented a house in Port Orchard, which was just across the bay, and was located in the country. In the distant view was Mt. St. Helens. Every work day, I was able to walk from our house, down the hill about a mile into town and catch the foot ferry across the bay to the entrance of the shipyard where the Enterprise was located.

About two weeks before we arrived in Bremerton, Mt. St. Helens had erupted for the first time. While we were living there the mountain erupted again and we were able to actually witness it, along with all the ash falling all around us.

When I checked on board the ship, I was assigned to the Nuclear Weld Shop. There were now two First Class Petty Officers assigned to the shop. A few days later I was assigned to be the Petty Officer in charge of the head habitability shop. I was now the head plumber onboard and responsible for thousands of drains attached to urinals, water closets, sinks, deck drains, etc. I had 18 guys who worked for me who refurbished heads, (bathrooms) and kept the drains unclogged, which was a full-time job. I was also in charge of taking over the newly completed Sewage Holding and Transfer System, (CHT) which the civilian shipyard workers had just recently completed. If a disgruntled sailor flushed anything down the drain line other than shit and paper the system would clog up and damage would occur. Then we would spend a long time trying to repair the system, and not long after we did, it would happen again.

Sea Story #25, (Fireman Leja)

I had lots of problems with the young guys who worked for me. One guy who was named Leja, was notorious for getting into trouble. One day I assigned him a routine job of performing maintenance to a water reduction valve. The valve controlled the flushing water that supplied the Commanding Officers, (CO) head. Part of the job was to notify the Commanding Officers Marine orderly that no flushing water would be available, so that the (CO) could use another head. Later that day, I heard my name announced over the ship's public address system. (Petty Offer Haney, report to the Captains stateroom). This was not what I wanted to hear. When I got there, the Marine guarding the door said, you're in a world of shit buddy. I went in and the Captain asked me why he had no flushing water for his head? I told him maintenance was being performed on the system and should be back on soon, but that he should have been notified of the work being performed. He said that he had not been notified, and that he wanted "ME" to go get a bucket full of water and flush his head. I said, yes sir and completed the task. For quite some time after that I gave fireman Leja the dirtiest jobs I could find.

A few months later, I gave Leja a job with a little more responsibility. He was to do the same sort of job as before, that he had done in the (CO's) head, but this time it was in the admiral's quarters. The admiral's area was unoccupied

since here was no admiral onboard during the time the ship was in overhaul. A few days after Leja performed the maintenance I got a call from the ship's security officer, that he wanted to talk to me. He told me that all of the silver ware and all of the silver serving dishes were missing from the admiral's quarters, and only I and my crew had access to the space in the last few days. I told him; it was not me who had taken them, but I had an idea who had. We figured the stolen articles were most likely still on the ship, so an inspection was conducted. I had an idea it was most likely Leja who was responsible for the theft. In our work shop, everyone had a storage locker for personal belongings, including Leja. The next morning, everyone who worked for me reported to the shop as normal, but this time they were each met by the security officer and asked to open their locker for inspection. When Leja opened his locker, all of the stolen silver in question fell out all over the floor. He was busted and went to Captains Mast where he was given the maximum punishment.

At Captains Mast, the Captain asked Leja if he had anything he wanted to say before he passed judgement on him. Leja said, yes sir and pulled out his flip phone. He flipped it open making a "beep - beep" sound with his mouth and said: "Scotty, beam me up, there fucking with me down here".

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We had a big refrigerator in our shop where we had a soda mess. One Monday morning after I got back on board from being ashore at home for the weekend. I came into the shop and opened the fridge to see how the soda mess looked. I then decided to open the freezer compartment and when I did, I saw two full size frozen Sockeye Salmon. They were not cleaned prior to being frozen, and they were also Salmon which had already changed from egg laying and were not really edible anymore. Come to find out, two of my workers who were city boys had gone out hiking and had come across a shallow stream full of Salmon. They had scooped them out of the stream and brought them back to cook up and share with us. I took them out and tossed them into the bay.

I was also assigned to the ship's "Flying Squad" basically the same thing as the Rapid Response Team on the USS Puget Sound, just called by a different name. But now I was in charge of the squad in my duty section, and I was called the duty Fire Marshall.

I was one of two first class petty officers in the division, the other was my good friend Bob. Since we were senior, we were in charge of checking in new

sailors reporting to the division. We would have a lot of fun checking in the new guys who were reporting from either boot camp or A-school. They were very new to the Navy and were very gullible. Just the two of us would sit them down in the division office and assign them their duties and complete all the paperwork required to get them checked in.

Then when we were all done, we would tell them we had one more important question to ask them. We would tell them to think about the question very hard before answering. The question was: Do you think you might be gay? Almost every time, whoever we asked would get very defensive and immediately say no. We would then say, you answered that question very quickly and tell them that they may be gay and not know it. Then they would get a very confused look on their face, and I would say, Bob and I know were not gay because we tried it and we didn't like it. You can imagine the look on their face now. After a few seconds of enjoying that look we would burst into laughter and tell them we were just fucking with them, and welcome them to R division. The initiation into repair division was light compared to some of the other intimations performed in other divisions on the ship.

Bob and I were also in charge of issuing the foul weather jackets to everyone in the division. Everyone was issued one when they checked into the division and they had to turn it back in when they transferred off the ship. In order to keep track of them, we would stencil R-Division and a serial number on the back of them in two-inch-high block letters with black paint.

One day we were stenciling some new jackets for ourselves and we had an idea. I said, why don't we stencil a special code on the back of our jackets and see how long we can get away with it. Bob agreed so on my jacket we stenciled, R - DIVISION and below that we stenciled, 4 - Q. On the back of Bob's jacket, we stenciled, R - DIVISION and below that we stenciled, 4 - Q - 2. We got away with no one noticing our message for quite some time, almost two months. Then one day at quarters when we were in formation, I was standing next to Bob and the Chief noticed the serial numbers on our jackets and put two and two together and figured it out. He pulled us aside later and told us to get those serial numbers changed ASAP. Then he said he thought it was funny as hell and we should probably make Chief Petty Officer some day for sure.

Sea Story #26, (Big Fire)

One night when I was on duty, and after we had finished our fire drill, I was sitting in the First-Class Mess watching the nightly movie. When all of a sudden, the word was passed over the ships PA system; "Fire - Fire - Fire", smoke reported on the 03 level at frame number 225 amidships. When our squad arrived on the scene, we saw lots of smoke but no flames. We suited up, manned two fire hoses and attacked the location where the smoke was coming from. We entered the space and found more smoke and heat, but no fire. We backed out and started searching all of the adjoining spaces of where the smoke was coming from. After about 45 minutes of searching, we were stumped, we could not find the fire. Then I decided to go down to Damage Control Central, (DCC) and look at the ship's blue prints. When I did, I discovered the diagram of the space on the blue prints was different from the space that I had been into where the smoke was coming from. I returned to the scene and told everyone to, "Get ready" and that we were going back into the space where there was still a little smoke coming from. We entered the space with both fire hoses, with me Leading the way. As I proceeded through the space, I banged on the bulkheads to make sure they were solid steel. After about the third time I banged, the bulkhead moved, meaning it was not solid steel. I asked for a fire axe, and when I got it, I started swinging it at the bulkhead. After a few blows from the axe the bulkhead gave way and the fire erupted into flames, since it was now receiving enough oxygen to fully burn well. We put the fire out quickly and we were able to ventilate the smoke away easily

After the post fire investigation, we discovered that the nuclear power personnel had made a fake bulkhead out of plywood, painted it gray, and made fake welds out of caulking to make it look real. The purpose of the fake bulkhead, was to hide the paint they were using so they would not have to turn it into the paint locker at the end of each work day.

Our entire squad received a letter of commendation for a job well done. In addition, I received my first of three Navy Achievement Medals for the part that I had played.

Sea Story #27, (Movie Stars)

One day on the ship we were told that the movie studio Paramount was coming to town to film on the battleship USS New Jersey, (BB-62) which was

in moth balls, (decommissioned in long term storage) sitting next to the battleship USS Iowa, also in moth balls.

Paramount Studios was going to be shooting the first part of a tv mini-series called; The Winds of War, which was based on a book written by Herman Wouk. Paramount was looking for extras for the movie and the Enterprise CO volunteered 200 sailors, including himself. I volunteered because I thought it might be fun and less work than on the ship, but I was wrong. It ended up being 12-hour work days, mostly standing around board to death just waiting, but the catered food was great.

The main stars in this part of the movie sequence were Robert Mitchum and Ralph Bellamy. I was selected to play several parts in the movie. I was a random US Naval Officer, (a full Commander), a Secret Service Agent, and myself as a First-Class Petty Officer. In addition, I was Robert Mitchum's stand in for lighting purposes. One day I was sitting in the Officers Wardroom on board the USS New Jersey waiting to be needed for Mitchum, who was also in the same room. They were doing some filming there and suddenly needed another Naval Officer in the scene. I was asked if I would like to do a speaking part, I said, sure, why not. I was to be sitting next to Mitchum at the dining table having breakfast. The steward would come out and place a plate with cold meat, eggs, and potatoes on it in front of me and I was to say, "Thank you Marcus". Well, after two takes they finally got it and that is all I ever said, a total of three words.

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A couple of months after the movie shooting was completed, the Enterprise had her 20th birthday party. It was a great party that lasted an entire weekend and was at a private secret location on an Indian reservation located right on the water. Everyone was ferried to it by boat to keep the location a secret so the crews from other ships could not find it. The party was fully catered by the local Native American tribe along with free beer, wine, fresh and smoked salmon, steamed clams, etc. Entertainment consisted of the Beach Boys for one night and two comedians for the other night, (Gallagher, and Carrot Top). A movie clip loop from the Winds of War was run all night on a big screen tv of the scenes Enterprise sailors stared in.

While I was stationed in Bremerton, we sold the Chevy Citation and bought a new 1981 Ford Thunderbird. It was the most luxurious car we had ever owned, but it also ended up being a piece of crap car, mechanically speaking.

Dana was born in Bremerton Washington at the Naval hospital when we lived there. When Candi was in Labor the doctor came in the room to check her because she was still in pain even after the epidural injection. When he put his fingers in to check her cervix, she urinated all over his chest and face. It looked like a fire hose had been tuned on. He then got mad because the nurse had forgotten to put the catheter in. After they did that, she had no more pain. The reason the nurse forgot was because all of the nurses, including myself were out in the hallway eating birthday cake for one of the nurses. It all worked out, and I was as happy with Dana's birth as I had been with Josh's. Before Dana was born, we had not decided on a name yet. When I was driving to the hospital when Candi was in labor, I said how about Dana, it works for a boy or a girl. In her pain she agreed, but little did she know that Dana had been one of my girlfriend's names in high school who I had really liked.

Sea Story #28, (Vasectomy)

After Dana was born, we decided not to have any more children, so I got a vasectomy. It was not really a pleasant surgery because they keep you awake and just administer a local anesthetic.

When I arrived at the hospital early in the morning for the operation, I was met by a very attractive blonde second-class female corpsman. She told me to take off all my clothes and lay on the operating table. I was told the day before to prep myself and remove all the hair from my testicles. I tried to shave but was unable to, so I used NAIR hair remover which worked great. The corpsman then covered me with different sizes of surgical cloth, one being two-foot square with a hole in the middle of it. She then pulled my scrotum up through the hole. When she did, she noticed how well my prep job had been and started feeling how soft the skin was and she remarked that she had never seen anyone do such a great job of prepping. At the same time, I achieved a massive erection which embarrassed us both. She then apologized and said, "No worries, I can take care of that" Then she sprayed the affected area with a bottle of lidocaine and the erection instantly disappeared. then the surgeon came in and asked how I was doing. He then said not to worry, that he had done one of these surgeries before in training, he was just joking. It all worked out, and you just end up a little sore for a while and your testicles swell up to the size of oranges.

(Continued)

C-1 Welding School, 32nd Street, San Diego, CA. (Instructor)

At the end of my tour on the Enterprise, I received orders to return to San Diego and be an instructor at C-1 welding school, which was shore duty for three years. First, I had to attend instructor training school at NTC San Diego for 12 weeks.

After Instructor Training School, I reported to C-1 Welding school as an instructor. Above the door at the entrance to the school it says; "Welcome to C-1 Welding School, we can weld anything but the crack of Dawn"

We rented a 3-bedroom house in Spring Valley California, which was east of San Diego, and had affordable rental prices. At about the same time, I bought a new Honda 250XL dual sport motorcycle to commute to school on, which left Candi with the T-Bird to drive. A few months after having the motorcycle I was hauling ass across a dirt field with tall grass. There was a four-foot-deep ditch in the field I was unaware of and I did not see it until it was too late. I was unable to clear it and the front wheel hit just below the lip of the ditch. The front forks bent under the bike and I went over the handle bars. I rolled and tumbled on the ground and had the wind knocked out of me but that was it, I was just sore for a few days.

A few months later we bought our first house. It was a brand new three-bedroom house with a two-car garage. It was located in Imperial Beach, California just two exits on the freeway from entering Tijuana, Mexico. Several times when we lived there, we would have migrants who had just swam the river come walking down our street. One time one of them knocked on our door and asked for some water to drink. Usually there was a Border Patrol agent parked on our street or at the end of the block, just waiting for them. We used to tell our friends we lived in a gated community. We did a lot of improvements on our new house after we bought it. We put in a sod lawn with a sprinkler system, a covered patio in the back yard, A swing set for the kids to play on, and planted lots of plants and trees. Candi's grandpa Joe spent a lot of time helping me with the improvements on the house, as long as I supplied the cold beer. We sold the house at the end of my tour of duty at the welding school and broke even on it.

After reporting to welding school, I was required to qualify in all phases of welding at the school. After doing that, I taught a class in each phase of the school and was then assigned to be the lead instructor in charge of the; Emergency Nuclear Submarine Repair Course. HT-1 Merrill, who was just a year junior to me, and myself were the two instructors qualified to teach the

course. We taught MM-3 and MM-2 personnel who had just graduated from Nuclear Power School and had not yet reported to their submarines for duty. The course was 12 weeks in length with a two-week break for us between classes. During the two-week break, we would prepare for our next class of students which only took us a couple of days to do. The rest of the time we would take leave, or just report for duty each morning and go home.

Not long after getting to San Diego, I got a call from my mom and dad informing me that my brother David had been killed in a trucking accident in Idaho where my parents were also living at the time. He had been picking up milk at dairies and his brakes had gone out coming down a hill. He had tried to make the ninety degree turn at the bottom of the hill and he did not make it and the truck turned over upside down in a muddy agricultural field. When he was found he did not have a scratch on him and it was determined he had suffocated to death. His death was hard on me for a while. I attended the funeral and burial in Idaho and returned to San Diego. David had been married and had a six-month-old son named Ben. After the burial at his house with all the family present, there was a knock on the door. It was the neighbor who was widowed with three children. He had come to express his condolences, and to ask David's widow out on a date. My dad was furious and threw him out of the house before I had a chance to do the same thing myself. Not long after that the two of them got married and I did not see them or my nephew Ben for a long time. Many years later I reconnected with Ben, his wife and two children.

When we lived at the New house, I could ride the San Diego Trolley to and from work every day. There was a station close to our house and I rode my bicycle there and locked it up with the rest of the commuter's bikes. It was a great bike, an antique Schwinn cruiser with an all-chrome frame and the big leather springer saddle. One day after many months, I got off the trolley to ride my bike back and it had been stolen. I really loved that bike and was sad to lose it.

A few months after reporting for duty at the welding school I bought an old 1948 International Harvester KB-1 half ton pickup to restore. (This was not long after I had the accident on the motorcycle). It was a cool old truck with a windshield you could open for ventilation, a rear oval window, a spotlight, a four-speed tranny with a granny first gear, a flathead six-cylinder engine, a big chrome grill, and a wooden bed. I spent two years working on it as I also used it as a commuting vehicle. I had lots of time to work on it during my two week breaks between classes. At the end of my tour I sold it and made a little profit.

In order to restore the truck, I needed some extra money. Just outside the plate welding phase of the school, located on the sidewalk, was a metal scrap bin for recycling the used metal after it was welded on. Once a month, I would load it into the truck and take it to the metal recycle shop in national City. I would get about \$200 a load for it. I did this for two years and never got caught. Also, when I was there a big job was going on in our school building replacing the ventilation system. All of the old ducting being removed was made from thin copper sheeting. I offered to remove all the waste if I could have the copper as well and the contractors doing the job said sure, go for it. It took me several days to do the job after school ended every day but I was able to get over a \$1000.00 for the recycled copper.

I was nearly finished restoring the truck after two years but I was still missing many of the chrome parts, headlight and running light covers, the hood ornament, and the name badges on the side of the hood. At Christmas I received a big heavy box from my dad. When I opened it up, there were all the missing parts I needed for the truck, it made me cry with happiness and gratitude. I called my dad and he said he and mom had been on a drive in the country in Idaho where they lived. He saw an old truck just like mine parked in a field with no running gear, its bed being used to feed the cows. He told the rancher about my truck, and asked him if he could take some parts off of it. He said, "sure take whatever you want". They both sure made me happy.

Sea Story #29, (The Stone Fox)

Once a month at the welding school we would have personnel inspection, usually on a Friday and we would get off work almost a half day early. One hot Friday afternoon following the inspection four of us instructors decided to go over to The Stone Fox strip club for a couple of beers and some entertainment. We sat at the bar where the girls were dancing one at a time on the brass pole. After a bit the Master Chief got up to go to the head. When he got back, he said he had built up so much pressure that he had pushed the white round hockey puck deodorant bar in the urinal all the way to the top of the fixture. After a little bit, the Senior Chief went into the head and came out and said he had so much pressure he had pushed the puck all the way around the inside of the fixture. Next it was my turn, when I came back, I told everybody I had beat them all. I had so much pressure I had nearly blown the puck out of the urinal after it had traveled three times around the inside of the fixture. Then HT-1 Crazy Joe as we called him went to the head. He was in there longer than any of us had been in there. When he came back, he sat on

his bar stool and did not say a word, he just sipped on his beer. (All this time the same girl had been dancing in front of us and was aware of what was happening). Finally, the Master Chief said to Joe, "well, what happened to the puck". Joe said, "well, I had built up so much pressure waiting for you light weights to get finished that I blew that son of a bitch clean out of the urinal", "and here it is"! He then slammed it down on the bar all wet and it broke into smaller pieces. The girl dancing nearly puked and ran off the stage. The rest of us laughed so hard, we nearly fell off our bar stools. Man, those were the good old days.

(Continued)

In the meantime, Candi got a job working as a teller at Bank of America at the branch located at Coronado, California, just across the bay.

About a year after I got to San Diego I took and passed the test for E-7, (Chief Petty Officer). The next step was to pass the Chief's selection board in Washington DC, which I did. After that you go through about a month of hazing at work and then you go through a day long initiation ceremony. By making Chief Petty Officer you join a brotherhood which is a life changing experience. You take on a great deal more responsibility, your entire uniform changes, you have more prestige, and you make more money.

USS Los Alamos, (AFDB-7) Holy Loch, Dunoon, Scotland, UK.

At the end of my three years at the welding school in San Diego I called my detailer in Washington DC. I requested orders to any ship stationed in San Diego, so we could stay in the new house we had purchased only two years earlier. The detailer said there were no billets open for an HTC on any of the ships in San Diego. But the needs of the NAVY needed me on the USS Los Alamos in Scotland.

We sold the house, the T-Bird, and the truck, and packed up to move to Scotland. When we lived in Seattle it rained a lot, but where we were headed now it was supposed to rain only sideways and at 35 MPH.

When we arrived in Dunoon Scotland the Navy put us up in a four-star hotel called "The Royal Marine" for three months with meals included, while we waited for Navy housing. The hotel was right on the water with a great view of the Holy Loch.

The Loch is located near the upper end of the Firth of Clyde, which leads into the Atlantic Ocean. The loch is like a small bay which juts off the side of the Clyde. In the middle of the Loch was Site One, which consisted of the USS Hunley, a US Navy Submarine Tender, attached to two large YFNB maintenance barges, connected to the USS Los Alamos. All vessels were moored together and anchored in one spot, but would move around quite a bit in high winds. To get to Site One, which was considered part of the United States, you had to walk down a very long pier, (the tides are huge in Scotland) and then ride in a covered Mike-8 boat, about a quarter of a mile to the site. When you left the site you reversed the procedure, but when you got to the beginning of the pier you had to go through the UK Ministry of Defense, (MOD) Customs every day. You could not bring anything ashore except personal belongings, without written permission.

We started looking for a used car that would last for the three years we were going to be in Scotland. We were told by our new Navy friends to look for a car that was seven years old. That was because most cars in the UK could not pass the annual safety inspection, and qualify for insurance if they were over 10 years old. We found a small old four door car for \$500.00 that could get us around locally. The only issue with it was that the rear floor boards were rotted out and you could see the ground through them. To keep from losing Josh and Dana, I put plywood down over the holes which would work for a while, then I had to repeat the process. When we left Scotland, we gave the car away for spare parts. When we went on trips where we had to go on the freeway, we would rent a new car which was much faster and safer.

There were some drawbacks to living in Scotland. All Americans were on ration cards which limited the amount of tobacco, electronics, food, and gasoline that you could buy. You could buy what you needed but no more, which curbed the black-market sales to the local Scottish people. Another drawback was the Midges, which were prevalent in the summer months along the west coast of Scotland. They are tiny flies which move in masses like clouds and can really bite, much worse than mosquitos, we called them flying teeth. There was only one repellent that worked and it was a local concoction. The biggest drawback was the weather. It rained a lot, but when it was clear and the sun came out, it was beautiful. You could experience almost any kind of weather in a single day. The saying was that if you don't like the weather now, just wait five minutes.

Almost anyone coming to Dunoon Scotland will come down with a local flu bug within the first 30 to 60 days. It was called the "Dunoon Crud" and we all

got it within 30 days and it lasted 3 or 4 days. I think it was your body adjusting to the weather, water, and food.

Sea Story #30, (Funny Josh)

While we were staying in the hotel Josh picked up the local accent very quickly, to the point that many Americans staying there thought he was a local. In addition to waiting for Navy housing we were also looking for a local house to rent, but they were hard to come by. Every morning we would send Josh down to the newspaper booth at the entrance to the hotel to get the local "Daily Sun" newspaper to check on the classifieds for a rental house. The Scottish newspapers always had a full-page topless beauty just inside the cover called the "Page Three Girl". Josh always made a habit of showing off the page three girl to everyone in the hotel lobby on his way back to bringing it to us. Josh and Dana went to a local Scottish school, and Josh soon learned the proper names for his body parts. One morning while bringing in the newspaper Josh spoke to three elderly ladies knitting on a bench in the hotel lobby while having their tea. He walked up to them and showed them the page three girl and said, "You have a Vagina and I have a Penis". I remember they all smiled and one of them said, your quite correct, thank you for reminding us.

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Candi got a volunteer job in the Navy Relief Office, and also got very involved with the Girl Scouts, and stayed quite busy.

After months of waiting, we were assigned Navy housing in Innellan Village, which was a small hamlet about six miles west of Dunoon located on the Clyde. It consisted of about 15 duplex houses, each with a nice front and back yard. They were each heated by an oil furnace which could not be controlled, so if you got to hot you had to open some windows.

After we moved in to our house we pretty much spent most of our time indoors reading or watching TV. You had to pay an annual fee for a TV stamp at the Post Office to watch TV which consisted of only four channels, BBC-1 and 2, and Scottish TV 1 and 2. Special little trucks with a rotating antenna on top would drive around and try to catch you watching TV without the stamp on your TV which showed you had paid. It was a big fine if you got caught. The purpose of the stamp was to pay for TV without having to watch commercials.

The summer days in Scotland were long, daylight from 5:00AM until 10:00PM, and winter days were short, with darkness from 6:PM until 7:00AM. It was dark when you went to work and dark when you got home. I would ride the bus to and from the Dry Dock, which was quite inexpensive.

After a few months mainly staying indoors we heard a knock on our front door one Sunday morning. It was Richard and Susan Guest our new friends, he worked with me and Susan volunteered with Candi. They had slickers and wellies, (raincoats and boots) in their arms and said, "put these on, you're coming outside with us". They took us on an outdoor adventure in the rain and we all loved it. A few days later Josh said, can we go outside and play, it's just raining a little? After that we never let the weather stop us from doing anything outside

We got our first family pet when we were in Scotland. It was a purebred Dalmatian we named Pebbles. We had her for several months but we had to give her up because she could not be left alone in the house. If you did, she would quite literally chew and claw through the wall to get outside. She was very high maintenance and needed huge amounts of exercise.

The USS Los Alamos was a WW-2 era floating dry dock, which originally was designed to lift a battleship with its 10 sections linked together. Sometime after WW-2 it was reduced to four sections in order to require less maintenance, and be able to dry dock submarines. The dock was anchored on 22 anchors in 100 feet of water in the middle of the Loch. Each of the four pontoon sections were attached together by bolted plates and steel mesh, and had a 50-foot wing wall attached to each side. On top of each wing wall was a 50-ton electric powered gantry crane which could travel the length of the dock. The dock received water and phone lines from shore via an underwater hose and cable. The dock supplied its own power from eight Caterpillar diesel engines, two located in each pontoon. The dock could also supply water and shore power to any submarine dry-docked or moored alongside. The dock had a crew of 200 personnel, 5 Officers, 10 Chief Petty Officers, and 185 Petty Officers and non-rated personnel.

When I reported to the dock I was assigned to the docking/repair division. We were the second largest division on the dock, Deck division being the largest. We were responsible for building the wooden block cradle the submarines would set on when dry-docked. We also conducted all maintenance and repairs needed to the dock, plus we were in charge of damage Control and Fire Fighting on the dock. Chief Tann, who was senior to me was the Division Officer and I was second in command. My other duties

consisted of being the Quality Assurance Officer, (QA) for the dock and I also stood duty as the Command Duty Officer, (CDO) once every eight days. The CDO is the highest held position on the dock when the CO is absent, usually at night after everyone else has gone home.

This was during the Cold War when we had the nuclear triad, Nuclear Ballistic Submarines were one third of the triad. These submarines, or boats as they are more commonly referred to would transit in and out of the Holy Loch for maintenance and crew changes every 90 days. Each boat had two crews, a Blue and a Gold crew. One crew was on the boat and the other crew was in the states training. The dock also hosted about 100 civilian shipyard workers who did most all of the repairs to the boats, including shaft, screw, and periscope change outs plus internal repairs. Sailors from the tender also did a lot of work on the boats in dock and tied up alongside of them, which there were usually four at any one time. On the dock we always had one boat on the blocks and one or two tied up alongside of us.

The main job of the dock was to provide services to the boats and paint them below the waterline. When a boat was dry-docked the paint above the waterline was always black, and the paint below the waterline was light green in color. We would first hydro-blast the hull with high pressure salt water and scrape or sand off any bubbles in the paint. Then we would hand paint the boat with a two-part anti-foulant epoxy quick drying paint using rollers. Even if it was raining, we had to paint, wipe off the water with a rag with one hand, and roll on paint with the other. The new anti-foulant epoxy paint applied to the boats was orange in color.

Each boat that was dry-docked was assigned a representative from the dock, usually one of the Chiefs. One day when I was the CDO I was up on the wing wall observing the deck division paint the boat in dock which I was assigned to as the representative. A junior Officer from the boat approached me and asked me a question about the paint job we were performing on his boat. He said, Chief when we came into the dock our paint was green, why are you painting it orange? I told him that when we un-dock the boat and it hits the salt water the paint will turn green within 24 hours. Well, he thought I was bullshitting him because he was just a junior officer and he went to my CO to report my behavior. Not long after that he came and found me and apologized to me. Just another reason why we call submariners, "Bubble Heads". Every time we had a problem with a crew from the boat, they always answered the same way, it must have been the other crew who did it.

We ate well on the dock. While the dock was underwater when docking or un-docking a boat, the fish would swim into the dock. Just as soon as the boat would exit the dock and there was still a little water in it, we would put on hip wading boots and go down into the dock basin and start clubbing the salmon which had been stranded in the dock when the water flowed out. Then we would gut and scale them and flash freeze them. The next day we would take them to the carpenter shop and cut them into steaks on the band saw and the whole crew had salmon for dinner. We could never take them ashore because we would be stopped by (MOD) because the salmon belonged to the Queen of England. All of the swans in the UK also belong to the queen.

On nice sunny days we would hold a fishing derby on the end of the dock where we could sit a few feet above the water. We would all put \$5.00 in a hat and whoever caught the biggest fish in an hour, won the pot. We never caught salmon but we did catch huge cod fish which were not very good to eat.

Sea Story #31, (Fell Through a Scuttle)

I had been on the dock for about six months when I had a bad accident. I was the CDO and it was about midnight when I was making my final tour of the dock for the night. There was a boat in the dock and I had just left the quarterdeck located on the bow, so I was in the basin under the boat. You can enter each of the pontoons from above through a scuttle in the center of a hatch. A scuttle is a round opening with a wheel on it that you turn, and then you can open it. The hatches were usually closed to keep water out of the living and work spaces located below in the pontoons. I had just lowered myself down through the scuttle about half way and I had placed my feet on the angled step ladder tread below. Just as I let go of the top of the scuttle, my feet slipped out from under me on the wet oily steps. As I fell down through the scuttle, I caught myself by the armpits for a second on the knife edge of the scuttle which is the edge of the bottom opening of the scuttle. And then the inside of both of my arms chafed against the knife edge as I fell through. I caught the knife edge with my fingers on both hands which held all of my weight for just a second, and then I had to let go. I fell/slid down the ladder on my back and ended up on the deck in a tangled mess. I laid there for a few minutes until I could stand up. I made my way up to the Chief Petty Officers, (CPO) Mess and woke up Master Chief Robeson who was the only Chief who lived on the dock at that time. I told him what happened and he took a look at my injuries. I was black, blue, and bleeding from my armpits to my elbows. I was very sore and it was an effort just to raise my hands to head level.

The Master Chief took over my duty and arranged for me to be escorted to the Sub Tender where they had a doctor on duty 24 hours a day. The doctor said I had torn my bicep muscles in my arms quite badly but would not require surgery. He bandaged me up and put both of my arms in slings. It took a couple of weeks to heal up enough to where I could resume my normal duties. It took over a year for both arms to fully heal.

Sea Story #32, (High Winds)

About a year into my tour of duty on the dock, there was a major weather event. I was the CDO and I had just met with the CO at about 0800, first thing after quarters to assume my duty as the CDO for the next 24 hours. The CO told me that we were expected to get some high winds during the day and to inform him when they reached 50 MPH. 35 MPH winds were normal, and 50 MPH winds occurred quite often which meant we had to take certain precautions like securing the cranes from moving and tying stuff down so it would not blow away.

There was a boat in dock and another boat moored along our starboard side, 50 feet below the top of the wing wall. I was in Dock Control, the highest location on the dock except for the cranes, which was located on the top of the wing wall on the starboard side. At about 10:00 AM the wind had reached 50 MPH so I informed the CO, and then I informed the Deck Division officer to secure the cranes and secure all loose items on the weather decks.

In a very short time, the winds increased to 70 MPH and then to 75 MPH. I informed the CO and he came up to Dock Control immediately and relieved me and took command. The winds had come up so quickly that there had not been enough time to fully secure the cranes or the weather decks of the dock.

Not five minutes after the CO relived me, the winds were gusting to 100 MPH, (we had never had winds over 75 MPH in the past). One of the 50-ton gantry cranes started rolling down the wing wall on its own out of control. The CO passed the word over the docks public address system for someone to climb the crane and set the brakes on it. A young seaman climbed up the 30 feet into the cranes cabin and stopped it from rolling any further. Later he received a medal for his bravery.

And then bad things started happening one right after another, or at the same time. There was a six-foot-high stack of 3/4 inch thick, 4 by 8-foot sheets

of plywood on top of the starboard wing wall. On top of the stack of plywood was two oak blocks of wood that weighed 50 pounds each and were meant to keep the plywood from blowing away. The wind blew the blocks off the plywood and one of the blocks went over the side of the dock and struck a sailor on the boat moored on the starboard side of the dock 50 feet below. The plywood flew away in the wind like a deck of playing cards. A medical emergency was announced and our Chief Corpsman responded, and evacuated the injured sailor to the Sub Tender for emergency care. Later we found out he had been hit in the head and died.

This was not a storm, there was a clear sky and just a lot of wind coming in off the North Sea. The winds continued to increase with sustained gusts reaching 148 MPH. The wind continued to blow at over 100 MPH throughout the day and into the next day.

At about noon on the first day when the winds were at their strongest, all hell broke loose. The dock was not the only thing afloat affected by the winds. There were several work and trash barges anchored out in the Loch upwind of the dock. Two of them broke loose from their moorings located about a mile from us and were headed straight for the dock. It looked like one or more collisions with them were eminent. The two navy tug boats were busy with two submarines and could not come to our rescue. A small Scottish tug boat with a crew of two were busy tying up another loose barge when they spotted the two barges headed for us. They headed off the one closest to us and tied it to a mooring. Then they went after the second one. Just as they approached it a huge wind-blown wave swamped their decks and capsized the small tug. Both men were able to swim free and were saved by their life vests and later rescued by a Navy tug boat. The large trash barge was now on a collision course with the dock.

The dock was anchored on 22 separate anchors to hold her in position, but you would never have known it that day. The dock was moving in the wind like a big sail boat going in all directions, and as much as 40 feet back and forth. It was impossible to get onto or off of the dock from a tug boat, or across the brow which connected us to the YFNB barges and the Sub Tender.

Just before the barge rammed into the port side of the dock the CO announced over the public address system, Collision, Collision, Collision, all hands brace for shock. When the barge collided with us there was a shock felt throughout the dock, but not as strong as we had expected. The barge ripped a good size hole in us and caused flooding into one of the tanks that was

designed to be flooded, so the damage was minimal. We were able to keep pumping out the water for a few days until it could be temporarily patched.

On the third day the winds dropped to 70 MPH and stayed there all day. We were finally able to go ashore to our homes and families at the end of that day. In order to walk down the long pier, we had to walk four abreast with our arms interlocked to keep from being blown off the pier. The winds recorded that day were the highest winds ever recorded in Scotland's history since they had started keeping records.

Sea Story #33, (Funny Josh Again)

During the time we were stationed in Scotland was when the trouble arose with Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. All overseas bases were put on high alert of a possible terrorist attack. All family members were informed as well and told to dress like the locals and try not to stand out as an American, which could make you a target. I was on my way home on the bus with some of my other military neighbors. As the bus approached the bus stop located at the entrance of our housing project one of my friends said; "Check out Curt's son Josh". Josh was dressed in a camouflaged shirt, pants, and hat, and was holding a toy rifle. As we got off the bus he went to attention and challenged us by saying, "Who goes there"? He said he was protecting our street from terrorists, and they were not going to get by him, and we believed him.

Sea Story #34, (Skid Box Rats)

I had been on the dock for about two years now, and on this day, I was the CDO again. At the morning briefing the CO reminded me that the skid-boxes had not been able to be dumped because the winds had been at 50 MPH or more for the last three days. There were two skid-box's which were large trash containers the size of a dump truck with pad eyes welded to each of the four upper corners so the cranes could lift them and empty them into the trash barge floating alongside the dock 50 feet below. The boxes were totally full and bags of trash were piling up next to them causing a health, and a possible rat problem. There was a boat in dock, and no boats alongside the dock.

The wind continued to blow until about one in the morning. I was in the CPO mess half a sleep on the sofa when the Petty Officer of the Watch on the Quarterdeck called me on the phone and told me the wind had died down to

35 MPH. I told him to wake up a three-man crane crew and get the skid boxes dumped. About 10 minutes later I awoke and heard the crane moving along the wing wall above me and I went back to sleep with a smile on my face.

Not ten minutes later the phone rang again, it was one of the crane handlers. He told me they could not dump the skid-box's because the rats were as big as cats in the trash barge. I told him to put on a pair of the hip boots we used to walk in the deep water in the basin when un-docking a boat. He said no way, these rats can jump above those hip boots. I grabbed my flashlight and went down to take a look for myself. When I looked into the trash barge with the flashlight, I could not believe what I saw. More rats than I could count, and bigger than a cat in size. There was no way to safely get down into the barge to unrig and reconnect a skid-box to the crane slings. I told them to hang tight and I would go call the CO.

I called the CO at home, he was single, I woke him up and told him about the problem. He told me to call the Squadron Duty Officer and tell him we need a different trash barge, one with no rats in it. Squadron 14 was the senior command on Site One in charge of all of the submarines, the USS Hunley's CO was second and my CO was the junior CO on site. I explained the situation to the Squadron Duty Officer and he said; "You expect me to wake up a tug boat crew to move a trash barge"? I said yes and he said no. I called my CO back and told him what the Squadron Duty Officer had told me.

The CO told me to go down and cut the trash barge loose and cast it adrift. And then call the Squadron Duty Officer and tell him the rats must have eaten through the lines because the trash barge was adrift and a hazard to navigation. The CO also told me to not accept it back alongside the dock and to repel all boarders if necessary. Basically, requiring the tug boat to bring us a different trash barge. I left it in the hands of the crane crew and went back to the CPO mess for some sleep.

About 45 minutes later the phone rang again, it was the crane handler again. He said the tug boat had taken the same trash barge and tied it up to the other side of the dock and left. I called the CO back and told him what had happened.

This time the CO got mad. He told me to go down to one of the engine rooms and get five gallons of diesel fuel and pour it into the trash barge, set it on fire, and cast it adrift again. Then call the Squadron Duty Officer back and tell him a spark from the tug boats smoke stack must have caught the trash in the barge on fire and burned the mooring lines away.

I asked the CO if he had my back, and he said, "You bet I do". So, I did exactly as he said, and there was a long pause on the phone when I told the Squadron Duty Officer what had happened. This time we got a clean trash barge with no rats in it and we finally got all the skid boxes dumped. The day I left the dry dock for the last time I was awarded a special plaque with a model skid box on it. The brass tag below it was inscribed, To HTC Skid Box Haney, "Who went above and beyond the call of duty - FOR TRASH".

Sea Story #35, (More Rats)

About a week later a big rat was spotted on the dock. This was the first rat anyone could remember ever seeing on the dock. The CO was pissed, and immediately put a reward on the rat's head. He told the entire crew that whoever caught and brought the rat to him dead or alive would receive a 96-hour liberty, (that's four days off in a row over a weekend). The entire crew was fired up to try and catch that rat. All kinds of traps were made and deployed around the dock, including poison bait, and some people using pellet guns equipped with lights at night. After only a few days the rat was captured alive in a homemade trap that was designed by one of the junior sailors in Deck Division. We never saw another rat on the dock after that.

Sea Story #36, (Crane Incident)

The next big incident that occurred on the dock was a big one! It was a regular mid-week workday, there was a sub on the blocks in the dock, it was lunch time, and all the Chiefs were in the Chiefs Mess for lunch. We had just finished eating lunch and two of us were playing darts, and the rest were napping or watching tv.

All of a sudden it felt like we were hit by an earthquake! Those of us standing were nearly knocked down, the tv fell off its stand and broke, and there was sheer pandemonium. The Master Chief jumped up and yelled, "The sub in dock must have fallen off the blocks". We all jumped up and ran topside to the top of the port wing-wall. When we got there, we saw the starboard crane rocking back and forth, coming up off the tracks on one side and dropping back down on the tracks on the other side, which it did several times. At the same time the crane's small hook was swinging back and forth through the air

with about a four-foot square section of the submarines stern plane attached to it.

After everything calmed down and we made sure no one was injured, we immediately started an investigation. It turned out that a shipyard worker had convinced the crane crew to lift the sub's starboard stern plane with the crane, to return it to its normal horizontal position. It was a routine operation done many times before, but this time they cut corners and failed to ensure the stern plane was unlocked and not red tagged. They also failed to attach a dynamometer, (it shows the weight the crane is lifting) between the hook and the pad eye welded on the stern plane.

They just kept lifting the stern plane until finally the steel that surrounded the welded pad eye failed, and a big section ripped out of it. In reality, the crane was actually trying to lift the entire submarine.

The crane was then put out of service for two weeks until it could be re-certified by an expert coming from the states. The Deck Division Officer, who was a Senior Chief Petty Officer, and my friend, was relieved of his duties and transferred to the Submarine Tender. He was responsible for the crane crews' actions, and he should have been on deck before the crane ever attempted the stern plane operation. The civilian shipyard worker was also relieved and sent back to the states.

(Continued)

The next day the Executive Officer, (XO) called me into his office and told me I was the new Deck Division Officer. I reminded him that I was a Hull Technician, (HT) and not a Boatswains Mate, (BM) and I was not trained in that job. The XO, who was an ex-BM told me that I could handle it and to just rely on my Petty Officers and just lead! He also said that if I had any questions to just come and see him for advice.

I then had just over 50 people working for me, mostly junior non-rated personnel who seemed to get into trouble a lot. My work and stress level increased for a while until I got the hang of the job and learned my people. Then everything calmed down and fell back into a routine and life was good again.

I spent a lot of time with my family in Scotland taking trips throughout parts of England and Scotland. Twice we sailed the Caledonian Canal which cuts across Scotland from the Atlantic to the North Sea. Each time, usually in the

fall when the weather was better, we would rent a big three deck motor boat with two bedrooms. We would pick up the boat in Fort William and motor to Inverness and back which would take seven days. The Canal passed through three locks, one of which was Loch Ness where the sea monster Nessie lived. It was a huge loch, and we could let Dana who was five or six at the time drive the boat by herself for an hour and not even have to pay much attention to her. It took five hours to pilot the boat from one end of Loch Ness to the other.

We also liked to take trips to Edinburgh on the east coast. There were a lot of things to see and do there, including the military tattoo which was a big annual event. It was also home to the first golf course ever constructed. The old course at St. Andrews was a must play course for anyone who golfed. I played it once with friends and it was an amazing links course. The course consists of 18 holes on 9 double greens, no water hazards, but there are sand traps so deep you have to climb down a ladder to get into them.

We also liked going to Glasgow on a more frequent basis, and we would take a car ferry to get there and back across the Firth of Clyde. In Glasgow we loved going to the Barrows, which was a huge indoor/outdoor flea market where you could find lots of antiques at a reasonable price. In addition, we would go to lots of estate sales and auctions and we got some great deals on antique furniture.

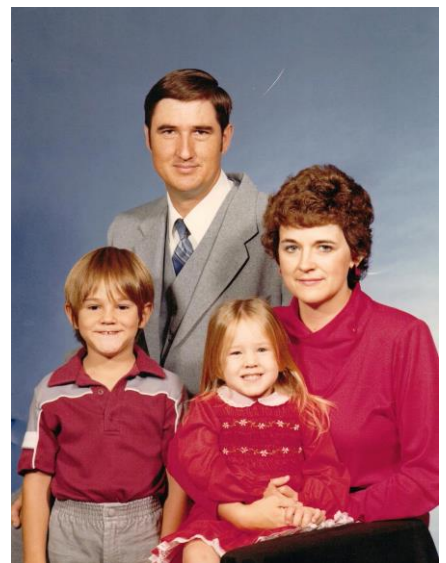
Sea Story #37, (Antique Golf Ball)

I also played a lot of darts, and golfed a lot locally on two public courses. There was a small nine-hole course right near our house that I played quite often. It was a very old, small par-3 honor course, and quite inexpensive. You would just show up and put your small fee in a box and go play. One day after work I went to play nine holes in a light rain and I had the course to myself. While playing the round, I hit my ball off the 8th tee too high and when it came down it plugged itself into the soft wet grass. I thought I saw where it landed, so when I got to the spot, I saw what I thought was where it went into the sod. I dug into the wet earth with my fingers and pulled out a ball. It was not mine, but a 75-year-old ball called a Warwick and had a combination of round and square dimples instead of just round ones. It was brown in color instead of white and it was totally water logged. I sat it on the mantle above our stove at the house and it seeped moisture out of it for over a year. Many years later I sold it on E-Bay for \$80.00.

(Continued)

One day while golfing the same course, I hit my ball into a ravine bordering one of the fairways. The ravine sloped down about 20 feet and was covered by lots of trees. As I was looking for my lost ball, I started noticing a lot of antique glass bottles on the ground. The next day I came back with a neighbor buddy of mine and a couple of shovels. We started digging and discovered we had found an old dump full of antique bottles and other items. We spent many days in the future excavating that old dump and discovering some great old bottles. I brought back many boxes full of bottles when I returned to the states and ended up selling off or giving away most of them. I still have a small collection of the smaller poison and medicine bottles.

While I was stationed on the Los Alamos, I applied for a commission in the Warrant Officer program. You had to be at least an E-7, (CPO) and have 12 or more years in the Navy to apply, which I did. To my surprise I was selected and received a commission as a Chief Warrant Officer, (CWO-2). My uniform changed again, mainly it was just a new larger hat device, new shoulder boards, and new-collar devices. I was no longer called Chief, now I was called Warrant or Sir. There was a big ceremony in the Ward Room on the dock and I remained on board for a little while longer awaiting my new orders.



My new detailer at the Pentagon in Washington gave me two choices of duty. I could go to the Aircraft Carrier Independence in Philadelphia as an Engineering Officer, or I could go to the USS St. Louis, (LKA-116) a gator ship home-ported in Sasebo, Japan. I chose Sasebo, but later on I had regrets about that decision.

Candi and the kids went to stay with her mom and family in San Diego, CA. while I went for additional training before reporting to my new ship in Japan.

Officer Indoctrination School, Naval Air Station, Pensacola, FL. (Student)

Pensacola, Florida is the home of the U.S. Navy Blue Angels who were there when I reported for what was nicknamed (Knife & Fork School) for newly commissioned officers. Only Chief Warrant, (CWO) and Limited Duty, (LDO) officers attended this school due to the fact that they were all previously enlisted sailors, and now were required to become officers and gentlemen.

A lot of information was crammed into our heads in a short period of time, about six weeks. We learned new leadership skills, how to properly handle an officer's sword, which now became part of my new dress uniform. We learned table manners, and the proper way to mingle socially at special events.

There were about 30 officers in my class, and a Marine Drill Instructor who was in charge of us. Early every morning he would lead us on a run and through drill exercises before breakfast for about an hour. We all wore the same exercise uniform of shorts and a t-shirt of the same color. It was tough, but we all made it through the exercises and the school. Most of the Warrant Officers hung out at a bar just off the base where only Warrants and LDO officers frequented.

Damage Control Assistant School, (DCA) Fleet Training Center, (FTC) Newport RI.

After Knife & Fork school I was sent to attend Damage Control Assistant, (DCA) school in Newport, Rhode Island. I was going to be the new (DCA) on the USS St. Louis, so I needed training in that position in order to do the job. I arrived by taxi at the front gate of the base in my dress blue uniform on a Sunday in December. It had just snowed a few inches and it was extremely cold. I had to walk through the snow for three blocks in dress shoes to the headquarters to get checked in and assigned a room in the Bachelor Officers Quarters, (BOQ). It was so cold, the next day I bought white earmuffs and a white silk scarf which were uniform items I had never needed in the past.

The (DCA) school was a challenge, but I already had a good working knowledge in most of the areas they were teaching us due to having been a Hull Technician, and my knowledge in Damage Control. After a few weeks, I graduated in the top 10% of my class and headed for Japan.

USS St. Louis, (LKA-116) Sasebo, Japan

The Navy first flew me to Okinawa Japan where I would meet the ship when it made a port of call there. I was there for a few days before the ship got there and I was able to explore the island a bit and start learning the Japanese culture. I soon learned that the people in Okinawa did not consider themselves Japanese, but rather thought of themselves as Okinawan.

When the ship arrived in Okinawa I checked aboard and was taken to the Commanding Officers, (CO) office to meet him. Captain Butler was an older man nearing the end of his career, overweight, and slow in his speech. He was a nice enough person, but I sensed something odd about him, I was to learn more about later. I was assigned a stateroom to share with another junior officer, a new Ensign. I was the only Warrant Officer on board, and there were no LDO officers either. All of the other officers on board were either graduates of the Naval Academy, or another college, except for the ships doctor who had gone to medical school.

The ship then returned to Sasebo its homeport. This was the first time I had been on a ship at sea. As we approached the island of Kyushu it looked like we were going to run into the island. As we got closer, I could see a narrow opening to a bay very similar to the Golden Gate leading into the San Francisco Bay. Sasebo bay actually looks like a miniature version of the San Francisco Bay.

I then settled into my routine as the new (DCA), and as Repair (R) Division Officer. I had about 20 people who worked for me, one Chief, five Petty Officers and the rest were non-rated Firemen. I had my own desk in Damage Control Central, (DCC) which was also the Engineering Department Office, where four other officers also shared the space including my boss the Chief Engineer. I was not an Engineer, so I stood four-hour duty watches as the Officer of the Deck whenever we were in port and not at sea. This was in addition to my regular duties.

The St. Louis was a WW-2 era Amphibious Assault Ship designed to land Marines on the beaches using Mike-8 and Mike-6 landing craft. She was old, tired, and not in very good condition. I soon learned that my Chief was lazy and spent most of his time in the CPO Mess instead of doing his job. I also soon learned that I had quite a few misfits in my division who were constantly getting into trouble when they were on liberty ashore. When you are a Division Officer, you are responsible for the behavior of those who are assigned under you.

Sea Story #38, (Circus Tiger)

I had been on board only about 10 days, and was still getting my feet wet, when there was an incident with two of my men. There was a circus in town and two of my men decided they were going to sneak into it under the side of the big tent. Little did they know that they were entering the tent right next to a tiger cage. It was quite dark, and one of them did not see the tiger until it was too late. The tiger reached through the cage bars and slashed the sailor's right arm open from the elbow to the wrist. His buddy panicked and ran, leaving the injured sailor to quickly bleed out and die due to rapid blood loss. If his buddy had not panicked and fled, he may have been able to save him using his belt as a tourniquet. Since we were a relatively small crew of less than 200, everyone on the ship was affected by the death in one way or another, especially me since he was one of my men.

(Continued)

About a week later two of my men were ashore on liberty, got drunk, and totally destroyed a children's bus stop which had been built by the neighborhood so their children could stay warm and dry while waiting for the bus. They were punished by the CO, and then my men and I rebuilt the bus stop on our off time to keep up good relations with our host community.

Then, about two weeks later one of my men raped a young Japanese girl while he was drunk on liberty. He was jailed and went before a Japanese judge, and was sentenced to a nearby prison for five years. In prison he was given three meals a day, which consisted of one fish head, one ball of rice, and all the water he could drink. Once a week, the Navy was allowed to visit and bring him additional food, and check on his medical condition. This was usually one of my men or someone else from the ship. If we were at sea, then someone from the base did it for us.

During this time, I was also getting to know my CO better. He was quite literally a control freak, and everyone else on board knew it, and almost no one on board liked him very much. It was very difficult for myself and the other Officers and Chiefs to do our jobs of controlling the men assigned to us. He would not let us keep the men on board and curtail their liberty even after he knew they had not performed their duties to our liking. Otherwise, they were not completing their work on time, goofing off, etc. When we would bring some of the men up on charges, he would dismiss them, saying we were not good leaders. Whenever we went to sea, the CO would never come out of his at

sea cabin at night onto a weather deck because he was afraid someone would push him overboard, it was that bad!

Meanwhile, I was waiting for a house on base so Candi and the kids could join me. After a couple of months, I was assigned a three-bedroom house, part of a four-plex unit in Hario Village, located about a half hour drive from the base. It was like a small base of its own, with a school, store, a small club, restaurant, and recreational facilities. It was in the country, and was located right next to a huge facility the Japanese had built called Holland Village. Sort of like Disneyland but built around a Dutch theme, with canals, windmills, and people in Dutch attire, including wooden shoes.

Just before Candi and the kids got there, I purchased a four-door medium size car that was nine years old for \$500.00. We were there for three years, so each year we would buy another car that was nine years old for about the same price and scrap the old car. The Japanese government rules did not allow any car on the road over 10 years old because they were deemed to be unsafe.

About the same time that we moved into our house, the ship was scheduled to go to the Philippines for training and a big readiness inspection. I knew the Damage Control side of the ship which I was responsible for was not ready. I did everything I could to get us ready but I had little support from my men, my Department Head, and the CO. I became stressed out and depressed, and felt that it was all my fault, because I was a new officer and I was not ready for the job.

When we got to Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines, I went out on liberty with some of the other officers from the ship and drank heavily the night before the three-day inspection was to begin. When I got back to the ship at midnight, I was very depressed and had suicidal ideation thoughts. I wrote a letter to the CO about how I felt and slipped it under his door, and then I left the ship and went back out into town and drank some more.

When I returned to the ship, quite drunk and depressed at about 3:00 AM I was held on the quarterdeck until the ship's doctor came and took me to sick bay. He put me in a bed and restrained me until morning about 7:00 AM when I was taken to the base hospital for observation. I was then placed in a padded cell with a one-way mirror in the door for the next 24 hours or so, it was hard to tell how long. Then I was placed on a hospital ward ashore with about 12 other sailors who were in the same situation as me. For the next few weeks, I was prescribed anti-depressant drugs and had daily one-hour sessions with a

psychiatrist. At first, I was very depressed and cried easily, and a lot. After a while I started getting better and I started exercising every morning instead of just sleeping. The CO and the ship's doctor came to see me one time and did not say much as I remember, except get better soon. My doctor determined that my stress and depression had been caused by many factors coming together all at the same time. It was my first time on a ship at sea, I did not have the support of my family with me, I had left one country on the other side of the world and traveled to a new one with a different culture, I was placed into a situation on the ship I could not handle, and there was no support on the ship to help me. It all made sense to me now, in a matter of time, I was going to get back to normal, but how long?

I was then medically evacuated from the Philippines to the hospital at Travis Air Force Base in California. I was admitted to the psychiatric ward and placed in a padded cell again for about 24 hours, and observed again. Then I was placed on a ward with a bed and underwent testing and counseling by a female doctor who I did not much like. My mom and dad drove down from Mt. Shasta, CA. and visited with me one day which made me feel a lot better.

After many talks with the doctor she decided that the best thing for me was to resign my commission as an officer, and revert back to Chief Petty Officer where I was more comfortable, and I agreed with her. I was then sent to the Oakland, CA. Naval Hospital to await orders back to the ship. Meanwhile I was housed at the BOQ on Treasure Island Naval Station until my orders came in.

After about a week I flew back to Japan and reported back to the CO on the ship. He knew nothing about the arrangement I had discussed with the doctor and told me he could not support that decision, and that he was going to process me for a medical discharge. I disagreed with him, and he immediately put me on Temporary Assigned Duty, (TAD) orders to the Sasebo Naval Base, and off of his ship. He did not want me on the ship in case I relapsed, and then it would be on his head.

Fleet Activities Naval Station, Sasebo Japan

I reported to the CO at the base, and he assigned me the job as the base Safety Officer which was a civilian position that was currently vacant. I stayed in this job for almost six months and got very, very good at it. The base CO sent me to Yokosuka naval Base for a week to receive training from their civilian Safety Officer. He taught me the basics, and I read a lot of manuals

until I was well informed on all the rules governing safety matters concerning the Navy, including OSHA, NAVOSH, HAZ-MAT, etc. I was responsible for the safety of the entire Naval Station, and also the nearby ordnance facility. I had a Japanese secretary, two Japanese safety inspectors, and one military safety inspector who worked for me.

When I first reported to the base CO, he told me that they had a big inspection coming up in three months by the admiral in Yokosuka and he wanted me to have the Safety Department ready to pass with flying colors. I told him I would do my best, because I already liked this new CO.

Three months later we passed the inspection with flying colors. Just before the admiral left Sasebo, he and the CO visited the Safety Office to personally shake my hand and tell me well done. The admiral said if I wanted to come work for him in Yokosuka, he would be proud to have me. The needs of the Navy were different, so that never happened.

Meanwhile, every time the ship came back into port, Captain Butler would require me to come back to work on the ship. Not as the DCA, but just to harass me by giving me meaningless jobs. Then he would send me back to the base at the last minute just before the ship left the pier. He was just an angry, mean man who everyone despised, even the officers stationed ashore and on the other ships did not respect him.

He was still doing everything he could to discharge me from the Navy. So, Candi took up the battle as well. She was an ex-Journalist in the Navy and she knew how to write letters. She wrote letters to everyone, the President, the Vice President, the Chief of Naval Operations, our Congressman, our Senators, and even Captain Butlers boss, the admiral. She told them about the injustice that captain Butler was pursuing and how he was ruining my career, etc.

Finally, after many months, the Navy made a decision. They agreed to allow me to revert back to Chief Petty Officer, but not as a Hull Technician, (HT). I would have to be a Damage Controlman, (DC) since that was what the Navy needed at that time, and I had been through DCA school, the top level of training for anyone in the (DC rating).

During my time as the Safety Officer at the naval Station I had time to start the first ever "Sasebo Diving Club". It started out as a small club with about 20 members, but it was a start. I made contact with several dive equipment manufacturers in the states, (Dacor, US Divers, Sherwood, Trident, etc.) and

they agreed to sell and ship dive equipment to me at wholesale prices due to the fact I was in the military and located overseas at an FPO address. This helped grow the club since members could purchase equipment at a significant discount.

U.S. Naval Supply Depot Yokosuka, Detachment Sasebo, Japan

A short time after I reverted to (CPO) I received orders for three years to the Supply Depot detachment in Sasebo as the new Safety Officer.

The Supply Depot Detachment in Sasebo was the fuel depot which consisted of three separate fuel terminals located around the bay. There were 12 Navy personnel assigned to the detachment, two Officers, two Master Chiefs, three Chiefs, and a few senior Petty Officers. The military personnel were all in management positions over civilian Japanese employees. We had about 120 Japanese employees who were paid by the government of Japan, (GOJ) just like civil servant positions in the states. Our job was to refuel Navy ships and military vehicles on an as needed basis. The Japanese employees did all the work, including maintaining all of the infrastructure, we just managed.

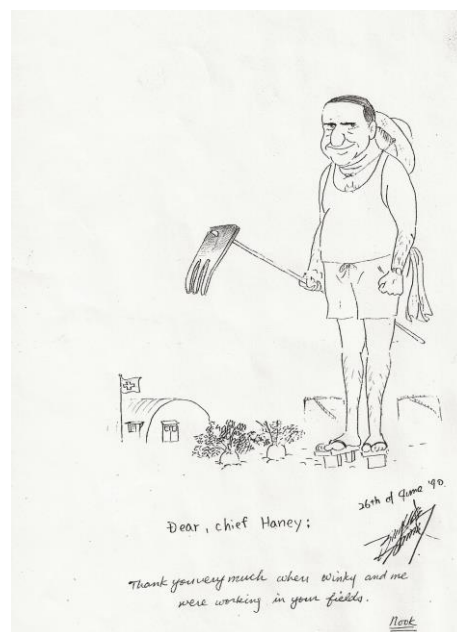
All of the military personnel were located at the main fuel terminal, about a 15-minute bicycle ride from the Naval Station. Most of us drove to work, but used a bicycle to get around as needed since gasoline was so expensive. My office was a WW-2 Quonset hut with a flag pole in the front which flew a white flag with a green safety cross. Mr. Yano was my assistant, and he was also the main safety inspector.

My Job was to conduct inspections and provide safety training to all of the military personnel. Mr. Yano did the same, except he trained the Japanese personnel. I had a great Job at the fuel terminal. There was quite a bit of paperwork, but there was also plenty of free time. Two of the fuel terminals were located quite a distance away from the main terminal, and it was a long way to drive to them. So, we would use one of our three fast Boston Whaler boats equipped with 100 HP mercury engines, to visit the other terminals. My

other duty included being the CDO of the fuel terminal once every eight days, which was a normal 24-hour duty day.

I had always been a gardener, so I also had time to have one in Japan. I made a couple of raised beds in front of the Safety Office and grew many different types of vegetables. Some of the Japanese employees who worked on the terminal would come by periodically and give me advice on what would grow well, and what would not. Japan had the normal four seasons during the year, and spring and summer was the growing season.

The weather in Japan was somewhat tropical. In the summer the ocean warmed up and there was corals and tropical fish. In the winter, it got cold and sometimes we would get a little snow. Typhoons were the biggest threat to us in Japan. When one was headed our way, we would literally tie buildings down using steel cables attached to anchors in the ground. All military personnel were sent home to ride out the storms in our houses which were built out of concrete and steel. All we had to do was either tape over, or board up our windows. I remember one typhoon in particular when the eye of the storm passed right over us. One minute it was raining heavy and the wind was blowing from one direction, and then it became silent and calm for a while, and then it started raining heavy with the wind blowing in the opposite direction.



Sea Story #39, (Golfing)

I continued to play a lot of golf when I got to Japan. The Navy had its own nine-hole golf course located on a hillside above Sasebo. The first time I played in Japan was in a foursome with me and a buddy and two of our Japanese employees. As we were playing one of the Japanese hit his ball in the rough, but it looked easy to find. When we got to where he had hit it out of bounds, he dropped a new ball to hit. I said, why don't you look for your lost ball? He said, oh no, Mamushi Snake in the grass. All of the Japanese were scared to go into the grass because of the deadly Mamushi Viper, plus they might get their nice clothes dirty. Golf was a luxury sport for most of the Japanese people. After learning this about all the lost balls, my Navy buddy

and I got some knee-high rubber boots and went looking for all the lost golf balls. We found tons of them, and never had to buy anymore golf balls while we were stationed in Japan. We had so many we started selling and giving some away, and we never did see a Mamushi snake.

Josh wanted to start playing golf with me so I bought him a new cheap starter set. One Sunday morning, Josh and I, along with Master Chief Sample and Senior Chief Paul got ready to tee off on the first hole at the Navy golf course. We gave the honors to Josh to go first. He teed up his ball and took his #1 driver out of his bag. He addressed the ball, swung his club back, and hit it as hard as he could. When he swung, he missed the ball and the head of his club came off and flew down the fairway. It was so funny none of us could stop laughing for quite a long time. I then bought Josh a real set of clubs, used if I remember correctly.

Sea Story #40, (Wasabi)

During our first year in Japan the Commissary ran out of Mozzarella Cheese that we needed for making pizza. We checked around and found out the Marine Corps base at Iwakuni, a five-hour drive north of us had the desired cheese. We planned a day trip to drive there and buy all the Mozzarella Cheese they had, bring it back and sell some for profit, and keep some to make pizza. The only American restaurants in Sasebo were a Pizza Hut and a KFC, and neither were very good.

We took the toll road to Iwakuni which had rest stops on the toll way, which included gas stations and food places so you did not have to get off and back on. About half way there we stopped for gas and to rest. When I came out of the bathroom, I saw a corn dog stand, so I decided to get one. Two young Japanese girls were working the stand and I ordered a corn dog. While they were making the corn dog, I was looking at what was available to put on it. There were several squeeze bottles to choose from, and I took what I thought was mustard. I am colorblind and I thought I had picked up the yellow one. I squeezed out a generous amount on the dog, and at the same time the two little Japanese girls were giggling with their hands over their mouths. I thought they were reacting to just another foreigner who could not speak their language. I took a big bite and instantly my mouth was on fire. I smiled and hummed yum and walked away as quickly as I could and spit out the bite as soon as I was out of sight. It was not mustard but wasabi, which I had never

experienced before then. Until this day I still do not care much at all for wasabi.

Sea Story #41, (Car Crash)

The Japanese culture is vastly different from America in many ways. First of all, I felt very safe living in Japan and rarely locked my car or the front door to our house. If you lose your wallet in Japan, it will be found and returned to you, 99 percent of the time. But the unwritten rule in Japan is that you owe half of the value of what you lost to whoever found it. Look at it this way, would you rather get half of what you lost back, or nothing at all?

Driving in Japan is also a culture shift. First of all, they drive on the other side of the road, just like they did in Scotland, so I was used to that. Also, when you come to an intersection with stop signs and you make eye contact with another driver, you just gave them permission to proceed. There were lots of little rules like that you had to learn and adapt to. One was being a gaijin or foreigner. When you are walking down a sidewalk in Japan almost no one makes eye contact with you. If they do, then they have acknowledged that you actually exist, if they don't then you're not even there.

One day I was driving home after work and I was going through an intersection with red lights. In Japan there is a huge delay between the yellow caution light and when it turns red, so you can get at least six more cars through on yellow. I had a green light and was in the middle of the intersection when I got hit by someone that ran the red light. No one was injured so we waited for the Japanese and the Navy Police to arrive. I knew it had not been my fault and there were witnesses to attest to that fact. The two police departments arrived and talked to us, the witnesses, and then between themselves. The Navy police then came to me and told me there was good news, it was only half my fault. The reasoning being that because I was a foreigner, the accident never would have happened if I had not been in Japan in the first place. So, we were each responsible for repairing our own cars. My car had only cost \$500.00 so it was easier to just buy another new nine-year-old \$500.00 car instead of repairing the damaged one.

(Continued)

I did a lot of diving while I was in Japan, both on boats and from shore. When Josh turned 12, I arranged for him to become a certified scuba diver. We

would dive together a lot, especially in Sasebo bay, just offshore of the main fuel terminal. I would be spear fishing and Josh would be happy just to look at the fish and other sea life. After one dive I asked Josh, how did you like the dive? He said, dad, every time I was just getting interested in a cool fish, you would kill it! I laughed and said, yeah but you sure like eating them.

There was only one dive shop in town and one dive boat to dive off of. During the warm water months, me, my two buddies, and Josh would do a boat dive about once a month. Every time we did, the boat was full of young 20 something year old Japanese girls. There were never any other men, so it was a lot of fun as you can imagine, plus Josh was the life of the boat party so to speak.

About once a month, weather permitting, Mr. Yano would ask me on a Friday if I could supply some seafood for a special lunch for him and his three buddies who also worked at the fuel terminal. I would always agree because I knew it would be a feast and all I had to do was gather the goods.

I would put on my free diving gear and jump into the bay off one end of the fuel depot seawall with Mr. Yano walking along above me. (The Navy controlled the waters of the bay 50 yards out from the fuel terminal for security reasons, and the Japanese were not allowed to fish in those areas). First, I would fill a big catch bag full of large crabs that lived on the sea wall and Mr. Yano would haul them up with a rope. Next, I would swim to the end of the seawall where there was a rocky bottom and fill another bag full of large Uni, (sea urchins) that would get hauled up again by Mr. Yano. Then I would swim a little further to a sandy area that was cram packed with really big oysters. I would fill up a bag full of oysters and then walk out on the small beach right in front of the Safety Office. By the time I changed and showered the feast was ready to begin. I sure miss those good old days.

One morning I woke up at home after I had been diving the day before with Josh. When I went to stand up, I immediately fell down because I was extremely dizzy and determined that I had vertigo. The ambulance came and took me to the base hospital on a gurney. The doctor determined that I had water droplets on the inside of my eardrum which was causing the vertigo. He gave me two Sudafed and dried out my ears with a hair dryer. After about an hour I was fine and went to work. They never did determine how the water had gotten on the inside of my eardrum.

During my last year in Japan I got a part time job along with my co-worker and dive buddy master Chief Sam Sample at the CPO Club as bartenders.

We worked alternate nights, three nights a week each. We both had really flexible work schedules so we were able to be at the club at 4:00 PM to start work. It was more fun than work, and we were doing it to use the money we made to go on a week-long diving trip to Yap island in Micronesia which was close to Japan.

The first day we got to Yap island, (the land of stone money) where the natives chew betel (Areca) nut which gives you a high and turns your teeth red, it was really hot and humid. We decided to walk down the road about a half mile to the stone money bank, (where a pile of giant stone coins was on display) and check it out. After we got there and took some pictures, we were really hot and thirsty so we went next door to a little store and bought a six pack of Budweiser, the only beer available on the island. Yap was a beautiful island, but along all the roads there were empty Budweiser beer cans a foot deep. As we were walking back to the hotel, each of us drinking a beer and me carrying the remaining four cans, the only police car on the island with two officers in it pulled up alongside us. They said, it was illegal to walk on Yap island and drink alcoholic beverages. Sam said, so where did all these empty beer cans come from laying alongside the road? The officer closest to him said, it's ok to drink and drive, just not drink and walk. They confiscated our remaining four beers and drove away. When we got back to the hotel, the owner told us there was no such law, the cops just wanted to drink your beers.

Every Christmas, the Morale Welfare & Recreation Department, (MWR) would sponsor a holiday decorating contest in the two different Navy housing complexes. We were living in a four-plex and we got together with our neighbors who we were all really good friends with and entered the contest. Our decorating theme was the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles which were a really big deal at the time. We made a life size display by cutting out all the figures in action poses, painting them, and placing them in appropriate positions. We even had a Domino's pizza box mailed to us from the states which was part of their theme. Then we covered the entire complex in lights, added music, and Christmas decor. We ended up taking first place and we received a plaque from the CO and a \$150.00 cash gift. We all went out to dinner at the club and had a great time.

Sea Story #42, (Trash Can Fire)

I was good friends with the Fire Chief Bob Carr in Sasebo, who was a civilian, and was also my next-door neighbor, plus Josh was best friends with

his son Chad. (This incident occurred when I was still a Warrant Officer in charge of the Safety Office on the Naval Station). I was sitting at my desk and the phone rang, it was the CO's secretary. She said the CO would like to see me immediately, I told her I was on my way. When I walked into his office the Fire Chief was already sitting there, waiting for me to arrive. The CO asked me to have a seat. This was just a few days after the big inspection we just had by the admiral. At this point I figured I was getting a medal or there was some kind of problem he needed our help with. The CO asked us if we had heard about the trash can being burned up in Hario Village where we both lived. We said yes, everyone had heard about it, especially the Safety Officer and the Fire Chief. He then said he had found out who had set it on fire, it was our sons, Chad and Josh. They had bragged to someone at school who had ratted them out. This did not look good, having our two sons involved because of both of our positions. The cost to replace the trash can was \$450.00. It was a special trash can that was made out of cement, metal, and plastic and covered on the outside with decorative stone. On the inside was a plastic container which had caught on fire due to the rubbish inside and a full book of matches that had been thrown inside it. (This was also about the same time as the \$400.00 hammers and the \$500.00 toilet seats in the Navy that had made big news). Well, the Fire Chief and I had to pay for the trash can and the boys caught hell, got grounded, and had to pay us back.

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While we were in Japan, we got our second pet. Candi came home one day and told me she saw a nice young dog at the pound and wanted to adopt it. Stray dogs and cats were kept for seven days and if not adopted were euthanized and then fed to the tigers and bears at the local zoo. So, we got the dog and named him Jake, he ended up being more Josh's dog than anyone else's. We ended up taking him back to the states when we left Japan and he stayed with me or Josh or the rest of his life.

One time we went to a Japanese festival and they were giving everyone a baby chick to take home and raise. We got four and took them home to raise. The first night I built a home for them in a cardboard box with a light in it and put them on the back porch. The next morning, I went out to check on them and a cat had gotten to them. All that was left of them was a blood spot, feet, and beaks. I cleaned up the mess really quick and told the kids they had gotten out and flown away, I think they believed me, I think Dana did anyway.

The years passed quickly in Japan and I was up for orders again, and I qualified for shore duty.

Naval Technical Training Center, (NTTC) Detachment Treasure Island, (TI)
San Francisco, CA. (Instructor)

We moved to Treasure Island where we were assigned Navy housing, our house on Exposition Drive was only a five-minute walk from where I was assigned. I was to be an instructor again, this time teaching Damage Control, my new specialty. First, I went back to Instructor Training School in San Diego for four weeks, and I breezed through it at the top of my class.

Back on TI, I was first assigned as an instructor, teaching Repair party Leader, (RPL) course. As soon as I qualified as an instructor in that class, I was assigned to teach Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Warfare, Defense, (CBRD). The next course I qualified to teach was Gas Free Engineering, (GFE) which was confined space entry testing. After that, I was part of a larger team that operated the USS Buttercup, a mock ship inside a big building that floated in a wet sump. Our goal was to fill the mock ship with water damage and flooding and try to sink it before the sailors inside could save it. The sailors would finally succeed after many failures, and they would end up very wet and cold. We trained both Navy and Coast Guard personnel.

After I was qualified in all of the courses which I was required to teach, which took almost a year, I was promoted to the position of Course Director for the RPL and the GFE courses. These courses were taught at other locations in the United States and I was in charge of making sure all of them were up to date on the material that was taught. I also developed all of the curriculum and the testing materials for those courses. When I was the course director for the RPL course, I received a request from the training center in Mayport Florida to come and qualify them to teach the RPL course. It was basically a two-week vacation to go there and watch them teach the course and give them suggestions or answer their questions. A couple of the CPO instructors took me just south to the Navy sub base in Georgia on the one free weekend I had there, and we walked the beaches looking for fossilized sharks' teeth. I found a nice selection of various different types of shark's teeth, and they are now displayed in a shadow box at home.

My other duty on TI was as the CDO for the school command. Every couple of weeks when I had the duty, I was required to drive the duty pickup truck around the island and check on the various buildings which housed our courses of instruction. I also lowered the flag in front of our headquarters building at sunset and raised it the following morning at 8:00 AM. In addition, I was in charge of all the students who were housed in the barracks on base. The job was basically that of a babysitter to a bunch of young sailors almost

right out of boot camp. There were lots of problems with these young men and women.

When we got to San Francisco we bought a new Toyota Previa minivan. It was maroon in color and ended up being a very reliable vehicle, and served our family's needs quite well. I also used it for overnight and weekend long dive trips because I could sleep in it by laying on the floor between the two rows of captain's chairs.

Sea Story #43, (CHP)

One night when I was on duty in the barracks, I received a phone call at about 3:00 AM in the morning. It was from the California Highway Patrol, (CHP). The officer told me he had picked up one of my sailors trying to walk across the Bay Bridge back to TI, and he was now in the back of his car. He asked me what I wanted to do with him? I thanked him for picking him up before he had gotten ran over, and if it would be possible for him to release him into my custody? The CHP officer was a Navy veteran and granted my request. The sailor in question had missed the last bus to the island and had spent all of his money on hookers and booze down on Broadway Street in San Francisco. Everyone was understanding about it since most everyone else had been in a similar situation in the past. He got in a little trouble the next day but not too bad.

Sea Story #44, (Gas Chamber)

About half way through my tour at NTTC I was assigned as the course director of the CBRD course, now I was in charge of three different courses. This means I was also in charge of the Gas Chamber. The gas chamber was located in a big lot about 50 feet from the back door of our classroom. It was a one room building, with one big window, and a door on each end. It had a line of painted footsteps on the ground leading up to the entrance door and exiting out of the other door. The building was just big enough to hold about 25 people in a standing position. There was a small table next to the window with a hot plate on it and a metal can sitting on it, plus there was only one lightbulb in the center of the ceiling.

At the end of each CBRD course the students were required to go into the gas chamber and show their proficiency in using the Navy gas mask. Before

we would lead the students into the chamber, we would place two CS Tear Gas capsules in the can on the hot plate. The CS gas was in a powdered form and would burn, which produced an invisible gas. Then we would lead the students into the chamber with their masks on, but they were unaware that there was active gas already in the room. Next, we would tell them to close their eyes, hold their breath, remove their masks, and place them back in the storage bag on their belts. Then we would tell them to open their eyes, when they did, they were instantly hit by the gas which enters through the mucous membranes. We would then immediately yell, "Gas - Gas - Gas" which automatically told the students to re-don and clear their mask. Hopefully they had remembered to hold their breath, and not to breath until after they had cleared their mask. If they did breathe, there was good chance they would start coughing, vomit, panic, or all of the above. Anyone who failed, had to repeat the process until they qualified. Very few students failed to qualify transiting the gas chamber. When you came out of the chamber it was important to not touch your eyes or mouth. It was best to stand in the wind and let it blow the invisible particles of gas off of your skin and clothes.

Many times, I would bring Jake our dog back to school with me on the Friday afternoons when I was getting ready to operate the gas chamber. Jake would come into the chamber with me on a leash and be just fine because dogs have no tear glands and were barely affected by the gas. Sometimes he would just sneeze a little bit but that was it, and his tail wagged and he seemed happy. I would come home about an hour after being in the chamber and give Candi a big hug and a kiss and she would freak out because the gas was still on my clothes and would start burning her skin a little.

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Living on TI was a challenge since it was located in the middle of the bay. If you wanted any kind of decent shopping or entertainment you had to drive either to the east or the west across the Bay Bridge to a big city. The kids also had to ride a bus everyday into San Francisco to attend their schools.

Dana got into trouble a couple of times on TI. One time she and a girlfriend cut school and went to Pier 39 on fisherman's wharf for the day. The school called us and she was busted. Another time she got caught stealing a single song cd at the Navy Exchange, which actually put me in jeopardy because I was responsible for my children's behavior. She was busted again, but not too bad. She graduated from 8th grade when she was on TI and we attended her ceremony.

Josh later told me that he had lost his virginity on TI to an older girl in the bushes near the seawall. When Josh was in his second year of high school he dropped out. He said he knew more than what the teachers were teaching him, and that it was so dangerous in school he was afraid he was going to get killed one day. Overall, they were both pretty good kids and did not get into any really big trouble.

One time there was a big accident on the lower deck of the Bay Bridge and it involved a truck losing its entire load of asbestos hazardous material all over the bridge deck. Everyone on the island was ordered to shelter in place and we could not go outside for many hours, almost all day.

I had quite a bit of free time in between the different courses I taught. I still had to come into work every day and muster, but afterwards I could take off if I did not have any work to do, and everything was ready for my next class. A lot of the time I would launch my kayak at the boat ramp that was located next to my classroom and go on a five-hour paddle around TI and Yerba Buena Island. Candi was at work, the kids were in school, and I would have the day to play. I really enjoyed my paddles around the island, especially being able to beach-comb along the seawall, and land on the remote little beaches on Yerba Buena Island.

Sea Story #45, (Dead Body)

One day after work I was taking Jake for a walk along the sea wall near our house that faced the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz. About every 50 feet or so I would climb up on the big rocks and look over to see what had washed up, you never knew what you might find. One day I found a ball of money which ended up being \$65.00 in cash. On this day, I looked ahead to where we were going and spotted what looked like a dead seal on the rocks. When I got to that location and looked, I saw that it was a dead body. It looked like a large black man that was only wearing trousers and he had large white blotches on his skin where he had lost some pigment. I just stood there with Jake for a while thinking we are the only ones who know this body is here. Soon I hailed down a military vehicle that was driving by on the other side of the fence and asked them to call base security and tell them I had found a dead body. About five minutes later I heard sirens, then a military police vehicle and a fire truck shows up. I knew the Chief who was the policeman and then told and showed him what I had discovered. He went to the body and removed a wallet and then put-up yellow crime tape around the scene. Next, a

female military doctor who was on duty showed up in a skirt and heels and had to be carried by two firemen down to the body so she could pronounce that the person was actually dead. One look at it would tell anyone that the person was dead and had been for quite some time. After about an hour I was allowed to leave, but about two hours later two Naval Investigators, (NIS) came to my house and questioned me further. They basically gave me the third degree and I almost felt like they thought I may have been involved with the death. Later on, I discovered that the person had committed suicide by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge.

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When I was still living in Japan, I knew I wanted to continue diving when I got to San Francisco. I did some research and found out that there were three local dive clubs in the city. They were the Barbary Coast Divers, (BCD) The SF Reef Divers, and the SF Rainbow Divers. When I arrived in San Francisco I decided to check them all out and see which one I wanted to join. First, I checked out the Rainbow Divers and discovered they were the biggest club in the area and were also the gay and lesbian dive club, with members which mainly just traveled to warm water locations to dive. Then I checked out the Reef Divers and discovered they were the second biggest club in the area with over 100 members. Last I checked out the Barbary Coast Divers which I learned was the oldest dive club in SF and was a smaller very social club. I decided to join both the Reef Divers and the Barbary Coast Divers clubs. After belonging to both for a year, I decided to just remain as a member of the Barbary Coast Divers which had funnier members and was a smaller club.

I made a lot of new friends in the dive club. Two of them were John Peterson and Carol Reed who were partners and lived in an old house at 150 Sadowa St. in San Francisco. After living together for many years, they finally decided to get married. They were married on top of the Maritime Museum at Aquatic Park, in San Francisco. After the wedding, which Candi and I attended, there was a huge Abalone dinner for 150 people. Everyone in the dive club donated four abalone each to them for the dinner. Carol later Said, I didn't know it would take so long to clean that many Abalone.

I did a lot of diving after returning to California. Some boat and shore diving, but mostly diving from sit on top kayaks. Everyone in the dive club had a kayak which was our diving platform of choice. One of my best friends and dive buddies at the time was Carol Reed's cousin, Chip Toll. We dove a lot and after so many times diving together we were able to communicate underwater just by eyesight, and minimal hand signals.

On one diving weekend with the club, Josh came along with me. He had become a pretty good Abalone diver and was having a lot of fun. After dinner at the campsite, we were all sitting around the fire telling stories. A short time later John Peterson and I walked away to smoke a joint. As we were smoking John said, does Josh smoke yet? I said, I think so, and I called him over and offered him the joint. He took a couple of hits and it seemed he knew what he was doing. A few years later he told me that was the first time he had smoked pot. I felt kind of bad that I had been the one to introduce him to Marijuana, but later I figured if not me, who then? (This was after I was out of the Navy).

The first time I took Josh Abalone diving he had some trouble seeing them and getting them off the rocks. So, I dove down and picked one, and placed it out in the open where he could see it. Then he dove down and got it and brought it to the surface. He examined it, took his snorkel out of his mouth and said, hey dad it looks just like a vagina. I thought, how does he know what a vagina looks like. Then I remembered him telling me about the older girl that took advantage of him when he was 12.

Sea Story #46, (Ling King)



Every time Chip and I dove together it was for the purpose of hunting for Abalone, Scallops, Lobster, Crabs, or Fish. Every time we hunted fish, we were looking for our prize fish the Ling Cod, the bigger the better. For some reason, every time we both had gotten a Ling Cod mine was bigger, "Every Time". The last time we dove together before Chip moved away to New York, we dove the lost coast of Mendocino County. At the end of the dive, Chip said he had got a huge Ling Cod and he knew it had to be bigger than mine. We compared them and they were both exactly the same size. Chip then said, man, you're just the "Ling King". It stuck, and that is my nick name, it's on my license plate, my e-mail, etc.

Sea Story #47, (Great White Shark)

I have only seen one Great White Shark while I was underwater. One day I got a call from a buddy in the Reef Divers who lived in Pacifica, CA. He said the visibility was 50 feet with calm seas in Pacifica, which was unheard of. I headed over there with my kayak and my dive gear to meet up with him for a dive on an old barge near the mouth of the small bay. We paddled out and dropped our anchors and suited up in the water. When we were about half way to the 50-foot bottom a 15-foot Great White Shark circled us, a few times coming very close. We agreed that we should exit the water as soon as possible. We got back on our kayaks and could see the shark in the water close by. Up on the cliff above us were people yelling "Shark" at us, and some of the other divers who were also in the water who had come out on floats. We talked a bit and decided to paddle to the other end of the beach about a half mile away and dive there. We did, and we got a bunch of crabs but no fish, and we never saw the shark again. When we got back to the beach we were talking with some surfers about the shark. They said, oh that's just Charlie, he won't hurt you, he's just looking for fish in the waves. There was never a shark attack in Pacifica by Charlie.

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Near the end of my tour on TI in 1995 I called my detailer at the Pentagon in Washington DC. The only duty he could offer me was an Aircraft Carrier home ported in North Folk, VA. I did not want to go to another carrier, and I hated North Folk. I decided to retire from active duty and transfer to the Fleet Reserve, (a decision I would end up regretting later). I had 22 years of active duty, with little chance of promotion due to the Captain Butler fiasco in Japan, plus there were no more longevity pay raises after 22 years.

I had a really nice retirement ceremony on TI next to the water. It was a beautiful sunny day attended by my family, my parents, my sister and her husband Ken, a couple of my aunts and uncles, and a lot of friends, especially from the dive club. It was followed by a special dinner out in town with my family. After dinner we were walking through a mall and Josh said to me, Dad, you should mark this occasion with something special. He said, you should get your ear pierced. So, I went into a store in the mall and got my left ear pierced and when I got home, I smoked a joint, the first one since 1980.

After I discharged from the Navy, I joined the Disabled American Veterans, (DAV) who submitted my disability application to the Veterans Administration, (VA). I was called into the VA office in Martinez for a physical and an

evaluation. It was determined that I qualified for 30% disability due to the injuries I had sustained in the Navy over my 22-year career. To this day I continue to periodically return to the VA to have my level of disability reevaluated and possibly raised to a higher level, which means more tax-free money in my pocket.

I think Josh and Dana turned out pretty good after having their lives disrupted so many times during my career in the Navy. Every two or three years we would move to a new location and they would have to leave their friends, and start all over in making new ones. When they were young, they would be upset and cry when we left, but they would adjust quickly at the new location and make new friends quickly. Not long after I left the Navy and we were settled more permanently Josh told me he was glad he had moved so many times. He said he now had friends all over the world.

Sea Stories, Chapter 4

(The Middle Age Years, Ages 44 - 64)

(1996 - 2016)

We moved into a four-bedroom house we rented in a nice neighborhood in Dublin, CA. It was in the suburbs of the east bay with good schools, and good shopping. I bought a new white Toyota Tacoma with a four-cylinder engine and a five-speed transmission. It also had a white fiberglass camper shell on the back.

I applied to get a job at the United States Postal Service, (USPS) but it could take as long as a year or longer to get hired, so I had to find another job in the meantime. I got hired at the Dublin Target department store as a level three supervisor starting at \$12.00 an hour. I was put in charge of the seasonal department which was kind of fun. I put together the displays for Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, plus I stocked all of the shelves with merchandise associated with those themes. I was also required to qualify as a relief cashier at the front of the store. At about the same time, Candi, Josh, and Dana also got hired to work at the same Target store, so it became a family affair. We lived quite close to the store, so we could walk to work if we wanted to.

After working at the Target store for a year, I got a job working at Pleasant Hill Microwave and Appliance for \$15.00 an hour. It was much harder work, but also much more rewarding since I was able to utilize more of the skills I had learned in the Navy. My job was to deliver and install all types of appliances, including; refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, etc. I drove a big delivery truck and worked with a team-mate using industrial type hand trucks to move the appliances. The hand trucks were tough on your hands. Every morning when I woke up my hands and fingers would be stiff and hard to move. My hands looked more like claws in the morning than hands.

Sea Story #48, (Flattened Volvo Wagon)

One day my partner and I were on a delivery in our big 2 1/2-ton panel delivery truck with dully rear wheels. We were approaching a wide intersection in Lafayette, not far from Pleasant Hill when the light turned yellow. It had turned yellow just as I was entering the intersection and I was driving slowly.

When the front of my truck was half way through the light it turned red. As I continued through the light the back of my truck suddenly lurched upward and came back down hard on its right wheels. My partner looked back out the passenger window and said, you just ran over a car. I pulled over to the side of the road and we got out of the truck. Just into the intersection sat a new white Volvo wagon with its entire front end smashed where I had driven over it. The front tires were flat, and smoke and liquid were coming out of the front of it. A young blonde woman, who was the driver had gotten out and was screaming about her baby in the back seat. Several people from other cars and nearby businesses had come to the scene and were trying to help. There were no injuries so we waited for the police. In like two minutes, the police and a fire truck showed up and took charge of the scene.

The police came over to talk to me after they had talked to the other driver. The cop looked at my truck and could not find any damage. He determined after talking to the other driver and witnesses that I had had the right of way. If you are in an intersection when it turns yellow you have the right of way to continue through the intersection. He said, do you want to know what the other driver said? I said, sure. He said she said, "Green means go". Her light had turned green, and she drove right under the right rear wheels of my truck. When I got back to work, I told my boss, who was the owner of the company about what had happened, and that it had not been my fault.

A few days later, the other driver filed a law suit against Pleasant Hill Microwave and Appliance. After working there for six months, I got a call from the Post Office telling me I had been accepted for a job. I turned in my resignation at the appliance store and they were really sad to see me leave.

(Continued)

United States Postal Service, (USPS), Concord, CA.

I had applied for a job as a maintenance technician, or a Letter Carrier at the Post Office. When I was hired by the Oakland district of the USPS, I was hired as a part time flexible, (PTF) clerk, and assigned to the Concord Post Office. My position was as a full-time clerk, even though it was described as part time, and I was required to work all holidays which included holiday pay. After several years on the job you would be promoted to a regular status and then you could have holidays off with pay. I started out at the minimum wage with full benefits, and I would receive regular longevity raises as time went by.

The Post Office is unionized and there are three different unions, one for the clerks, one for the letter carriers, and one which covers the mail handlers and the maintenance personnel. I joined the American Postal Workers Union, (APWU and paid my dues monthly, which were not cheap).

I reported to my new supervisor Dick Church at the Concord Main Post Office and was assigned as a Distribution Clerk starting at 5:00 AM with Tuesdays and Thursdays off. For the first few months I worked on letter sorting machines in the mornings and stuffing PO Box's with mail in the afternoons. Working on the big letter sorting machines was very tough work with lots of bending over, and you had to move quick to keep up with the pace of the machines. After a while you sort of felt like a robot. This was the first time I felt like quitting.

One day I was working on the sorting machine and I needed to move a heavy mail pallet out of the way. I asked a fellow employee who was walking by to give me a hand and he said, sorry, not my job. He was a maintenance worker and did not touch anything related to physical mail. That's the way it was at the Post Office, no teamwork to speak of. Totally different from the military way of thinking. This was the second time I felt like quitting.

During this same period of time, I was told I was being assigned a scheme. A scheme was a list of every street address assigned to a particular zip code. I was assigned the 94520-zip code with over 12.000 address assigned to it. I had 90 days to memorize the scheme or I could be terminated from my job. You trained by studying your scheme on a computer every morning for an hour until you could pass the test, it was total memorization. That was the hardest job I ever had in my entire life. I spent a lot of time at home using flash cards I made up to help me pass the test. This was the third time I felt like quitting.

After a few months I was told I was going to be a Window Clerk. I was trained on the window for about a week, and then I was a qualified window clerk. I sold stamps, mailed packages, processed passports, and performed other duties as assigned.

In Concord there were three smaller offices that were under the main office, and one supervisor oversaw all three of them. There was the Pleasant Hill office where the supervisor was located and five clerks worked, there was the Treat St. station with three clerks, and there was the Todos Santos Station with three clerks. I started out working on the window at the main office where there were five clerks working. I was assigned as a floater, and I would relieve

clerks for their one-hour lunch break, and also fill in for clerks who called in sick or were on vacation.

I would normally report to the main office each morning and then find out which office I would be working at that day, depending on if someone had called in sick or not. One morning I reported to Dick Church at the main office and he told me to go over to the Todos Santos office and open it up, because all three of the clerks had called in sick that day. I got there a half hour after it was supposed to open and customers were in line and upset. Then it took me a good half hour to get the office set up to open. By then the customers were really upset and they took it out on me. I was there on the window all day by myself and I had to close the office for 30 minutes so I could take a lunch break, that was a tough day. That was the fourth time I felt like quitting.

When I worked in one of the three smaller offices, I had a different supervisor. My first supervisor was a black woman who no one liked, because she was a real bitch. She was older and nearing retirement, plus she was just mean and unforgiving as hell.

When I first started working at the Post Office you were allowed to call in sick up to three days in a row without getting a note from your doctor. About two years after I started, the rule was changed so that your supervisor could require you to get a doctor's note if you called in just one day sick. Whenever I got a cold, it would turn into Bronchitis and I would be sick for about a week. I would always go to the doctor for medicine and that way I would have a note to be able to return to work. My supervisor did not like me much. I think it was because I would be sick about twice a year and she would have to scramble to cover for me most of the time. I suffered through her for about a year until she retired, and she was replaced by a new supervisor who was a retired Navy Warrant Officer just like me. We got along great, and he was a great supervisor who everyone liked. At this point I did not want to quit anymore.

Sea Story #49, (Crickets)

I was still on split days off as a window clerk, usually Sunday and Wednesday, but when I filled in for someone on vacation, I would assume their days off instead. I liked working on Saturdays because I would usually be assigned to either the Todos Santos or the Treat St. office which were both closed that day but still needed to have the PO Box mail distributed. I would

arrive there at 7:00 AM, stuff the mail in the PO Box's and then drive over to the Pleasant Hill Office and finish my day on the window.

On this particular Saturday morning I was assigned to the Treat St. office. It was winter time and I arrived at 7:00 AM when it was still dark. I unlocked the door and I had to walk across the office to reach the light switch, and to disarm the alarm. As I walked across the floor, I heard a distinctive crunching sound under my feet. After I turned on the light, I saw that a thousand crickets had escaped from the box they had been shipped in and were jumping all over the office, except those I had smashed. The package was insured, so I got a big push broom and swept them all out the front door, then I had to mop the floor since it was a slick slippery mess. Something similar to this happened a short time later in the middle of the night at the main Post Office, but it involved baby chicks getting loose and running around chirping everywhere.

Sea Story #50, (Eye Problems)

I had been in Concord for about three years and I had another new supervisor, this time an older Filipino woman. She was totally incompetent, a total yes person to her boss and a total no person to her clerks. Anytime you needed a day off she would say, no.

I had a weekend off coming up which was the 1st of April, and also opening day of Abalone diving season. I was on the overtime desired list and she came to me on Friday and said she wanted me to work the next day, Saturday. I said ok, and she said, you're going to be here tomorrow, right? I said yes. The next day I called in sick and went diving with the BCD gang. When I got back to work on Monday morning, she called me into her office and told me to have a seat. I could tell she was mad. She said, why did you call in sick on Saturday? I told her I was having eye problems. She said, what kind of eye problems? I said, I could not see coming into work on Saturday. She was really mad now, and before she exploded, I said, April Fools, and that what I had just said was just a joke. She was still mad.

She held a grudge, and had it in for me from then on. About two weeks later I was the closing clerk at the Treat St. office and I was the only clerk there at the end of the day. She showed up to do some paperwork, and was there alone with me for about 10 minutes. The next morning, I reported to the main office for work and the union steward told me to come with him to the Post Masters office. When I got there, she was there along with two other

supervisors. The union steward and I had a seat and I was told that this was an investigation into my alleged assault of my supervisor. She claimed I had hit her with a clip board when we were alone at the Treat St. Office the day before. I called her a fucking liar and then told them why she had it in for me. And that if I had assaulted her why did she not call the Postal Inspectors or the police at the time of the alleged assault? It was her word against mine and it was dismissed, but the incident was now on my record and could possibly be held against me in the future, but never was.

Sea Story #51, (Josh Talks to God)

One-night Candi and I were sound asleep in our bedroom at the house in Dublin which was at the end of a small cul-de-sac where all the neighbors knew each other very well. It was about 2:00 AM in the morning when we heard Josh outside talking very loudly. We looked out the bedroom window and Josh was standing in the middle of the street in his boxers looking up and talking to God. We got dressed and went outside and lead him into the house. He was totally out of control on some kind of drug and we could not measure his pulse because his heart was beating so quickly. We were scared for his safety and called the police. The cops came and restrained him and they called an ambulance to take him to the emergency room. He was released the next morning after he came down off of the acid he had taken with his friends. They had dumped him in front of his house when they could no longer control him. Josh ended up having to pay us back for the \$5000.00 ambulance ride to the hospital. Later Josh told us when he woke up in the hospital his hands and feet were tied down to the bed and he was naked and uncovered. He asked to be covered up, but first one of the nurses wanted to know what God had said to him.

(Continued)

I was really into Abalone diving at this time and I would take a week off periodically camping and hunting for a world record abalone along the Mendocino and Humboldt County coast in Northern California. I had been away from home for a couple of days when I was in need of a change of clothes. When I opened my bag, I saw an envelope addressed to me. I opened it and discovered a dear Curt letter from Candi. Basically, she said she was not happy with the direction our relationship was headed and she felt I was not giving our children enough attention and support. She thought that we had grown apart and we now had different interests in life and that it would

be better for both of us if we got divorced. When I got back home, we talked it over and we both agreed on a divorce. At the same time, Candi told me we were over \$100,000 in debt which I had no knowledge of. Candi always wanted the finer things in life plus she wanted the best for our children. I found out she had been using one credit card to pay for another, and then would apply for more credit cards to pay off others, etc. There were also other loans and financed items involved as well which contributed to the total debt, including the IRS and her student loan.

I had been unaware of the situation because I let her handle all the finances since she worked for a bank in the corporate division and was very smart about money, or so I had thought.

We decided to stay together for a year until Dana turned 18 so no child support would be involved. We had a four-bedroom house so each of us had our own bedroom.

One night a couple of months later I was in my bedroom on my computer and Josh came in. He sat down next to me and said, dad, let's look on the internet and see if we can find you a new woman. We searched for a long time and could not find a woman on any dating site with the same interests as mine, diving, camping, etc.

About this same time, I had been very active with the dive club, diving once or twice a month. My best dive buddy was Carol Reed, who had been married to John Peterson for only six months, and had now been divorced for a couple of years. Carol and I dove together a lot. I had watched her go through several relationships after her divorce and none of them had stuck.

On a Labor Day weekend, the whole club went down to Big Sur to dive and hang out camping together. Carol and I had Sundays and Mondays off so the two of us decided to stay one more night camping together at Limekiln State Park on the beach. We pretty much had the campground to ourselves which was nice. After dinner we finished off the wine and were feeling pretty good. Carol, I, and Buster her dog had carpooled down in her old white Plymouth minivan. About midnight Carol closed the side door to the van and we went into our separate tents for the night.

The next morning Carol got up first and went to open the van to get the food out for breakfast. When she did, out jumped a big raccoon that ran off very fast. The beast had been trapped all night inside the van and had ran all around inside trying to find a way out. As a result, there were footprints on

nearly every square inch of the interior of that van, which took a considerable amount of time to clean off.

One day Carol called the house and Dana picked up the phone and said, Dad, it's your girlfriend Carol. She asked me if I wanted to go diving with her in Monterey on the upcoming weekend. I said, yes and we drove down in separate vehicles as usual, she staying with her friend Cathy in Monterey, and I stayed at my sister's house in Aromas.

The next day we met up at Stillwater cove to dive and afterwards we were sitting on the tailgate of my truck sharing a beer. Carol had just recently broken up with Dan Schwartz who was another dive club member. I turned to Carol and asked her if she had ever considered dating me? She turned beet red and said, not as long as your still married. Later on, she told me it was because she was afraid, she would lose her best dive buddy if we had gotten into a relationship that did not work out.

Our next dive together was on Valentine's Day weekend and I presented her with a dozen red silk roses underwater, and three heart shaped balloons, I blew up for her underwater. After the dive we shared a beer on the tailgate of my truck and talked so long we forgot about our empty kayaks on the beach and they almost sank.

About two weeks later Carol called me and asked if I wanted to go with her to the boat show at the Cow palace in SF. I asked her if this was a date, and she said no. So, we went, and it turned out not to be a date.

We went on another dive a couple of weeks later and she asked me if I wanted to come over for dinner one weekend. I asked her if this was a date, and she said, maybe. I have heard that word, "MAYBE" a lot from her over the past 20+ years.

The next weekend I went to her house for dinner. She had a cousin named Jennifer who was her roommate renting a spare room in her house and she and her boyfriend joined us for dinner. At the end of the night Carol walked me to the front door to say goodnight and we had our first kiss, which was a doozy.

Then a couple of weeks later we went diving again in Monterey and we both stayed at Cathy's house and we shared the sofa in the living room. From then on, I started spending the weekends at Carol's house and we were best friends and dive buddies.

My divorce was quickly approaching and I had been looking for a place to live near where I worked at the Post Office in Concord for about a month and I was not finding anything reasonable. Then Carol told me she knew where I could rent a room. She said her cousin was moving in with her boyfriend and the spare bedroom in her house was available for \$400.00 a month. I jumped at the offer and moved in as soon as it was available. The only down side was the 75-mile round trip commute to Concord every work day. The Bay Area Rapid Transit System, (BART) was not an option since most of the Post Offices I worked at were not near a BART station.

A year after we decided to divorce, Candi and I set up a divorce yourself plan that cost us \$500.00 for the legal aid and the court costs. We split up the contents of the house, Josh got the Neon, and I took the truck. Legally I owed Candi half of my Navy retirement for the rest of her life, but she agreed to only take half of it for 5 years. I agreed to not sue her for alimony because she had obtained a master's degree while we were married, and made a lot more money than I did. We also did a bankruptcy which cleared all of our debt except for the IRS and her student loan. She agreed to pay off the student loan and we both payed off the IRS together with a monthly payment plan.

I had been at the Concord Post Office for five years, and I was now a regular employee but I still did not have a permanent union bid job since I my seniority level was still so low. One day I was told that several clerks were being transferred to Oakland because they had too many clerks in Concord, and I was one of them. This was good news for me, because my commute would be cut dramatically and promotion opportunities were much higher in Oakland.

United States Postal Service, (USPS), Oakland, CA.

I reported to Oakland and was assigned to the main Post Office in downtown Oakland on 13th St. where the Post Master was also located. My job was again that of a floater relief clerk and this time I could expect to work in any one of the 16 Post Offices in Oakland. By the time I got a permanent position with set days off I had worked in 15 of them at one time or another. One of the offices I worked at was located on the campus of the Mills Girl's College. It was a one-person Post Office and all the students had a PO Box assigned to them that the college paid for. Every PO Box door was broken, so I had to retrieve the mail for each student every time they needed to collect it. It made for a long day sometimes, but overall, it was a nice place to work.

One of the offices I worked at was the Fruitvale Station. I was riding BART one day headed to that location to work. I was reading my book and then I noticed quite a few people were talking about something on their phones. I didn't pay much attention since I did not have a smart phone yet. When I got to work, I walked into the lobby where there was a TV set for the customers to watch while they waited in line. There was a big group of people huddled in front of the TV watching the news. I walked into the back office and said, what's going on? The supervisor said, where you been living, under a rock? She then said, were under attack, (It was 9-11). One plane had already crashed into one of the World Trade Center towers, and just as I greeted my first customer of the day, the second plane hit the other tower. Nobody wanted to work the rest of the day, we all just wanted to go home, it turned out to be a very long day at work.

Meanwhile, Dana continued to be a good girl and continued her education, graduating from Diablo Valley Junior College.

In May of 2003 I got a call from my mom in Mt. Shasta telling me my dad was very sick and was at the hospital in intensive care. He had respiratory problems for years and used an inhaler and was on oxygen full time to help him breath. My sister Brenda and her husband Ken, and Carol and I drove together up to Mt. Shasta. We went to see dad in the hospital and when we got there, he was sitting up on the side of the bed eating strawberries, and seeming to be better. I talked to him alone for a while and he kept saying to me that the day before he thought he was a goner. We stayed a couple of days and visited with him and it seemed he was getting better. We all returned home and went back to work. Just two or three days later I was at work on the window at the Post Office in Oakland when my mom called me to say that dad had died. It took me by surprise since I was just talking to him a few days before that. I broke down and my supervisor saw me and asked what was wrong. I told her, and she pulled me off the window and took me up to the Post Masters office. In no time I was granted leave for as long as I needed to grieve and take care of family business. My supervisors and coworkers really supported me in my time of need.

Mom had dad cremated in a cardboard casket and then spread his ashes in the vegetable garden he liked so much. We had a nice memorial for dad in Mt. Shasta City and a few family members attended. Mom lived in the house in Mt. Shasta for one more year, and then she moved back to Aromas and moved into the apartment above Kenny and Brenda's garage.

I was a floater in Oakland for a long time and I was having a hard time winning a bid position so I could work at a single location. I was working at the 13th St. office relieving a clerk for two weeks who was on vacation over the holidays. It is a large office with four windows on the front to help customers. One of the windows belonged to Steve who was the Philatelic, (stamp collecting) clerk. He had a great job, arriving first everyday as the opening clerk and leaving first at the end of the day. He also had Sunday and Mondays off. We all came back to work the day after Christmas, except Steve was not there that morning. Just as we were getting ready to open our windows the supervisor came up and told us Steve had died the day before of a massive heart attack. That made for a very sad and long day.

Two weeks later Steve's old position came up for bid. I bid on the job thinking there was no way in hell I would get it. To my surprise, I got the job. No one else had even bid on it. Later we determined no one wanted to bid on a dead man's job, bad luck and all, I guess.

I enjoyed my new job as the Philatelic Clerk. In the entire Bay Area, there were only three Philatelic Clerks. One in San Francisco, one in San Jose, and me. Directly behind me at my window, I had a big machine with 25 revolving shelves that held all of the stamps and collectibles that were available from the Postal Service. Some of my customers who were big stamp collectors would spend up to an hour at a time inspecting and buying stamps from me.

I had been working in Oakland now for about four years and I had settled into a routine once I had the philatelic clerk job. I was in the minority of the 150+ employees who worked at the 13th St. Office. There were only two white people who worked there, me and a clerk named Mike who was also the union steward. He was a real jerk, and no one liked him.

Sea Story #52, (Disgruntled Customer)

One day I was working on the window and I had a young black woman at my window who was being very rude to me. When I gave her change of 12 cents to her, she said, you keep it, and threw it into my chest. I got mad and went into the lobby and told her I did not want her change and I threw it back at her, landing on the floor in front of her. She immediately fell to the floor, holding her face and screaming in pain. It was all caught on closed circuit video so it was determined to be all my fault. I was given a two-week suspension without pay as punishment. I used the time off to go to Colorado and pick up my new pop-

up camper for my truck. A few months later I needed another week off work for something and I did not have enough leave time to take the time off. I went to my supervisor and asked him, what did I need to do to get a one-week suspension. He growled at me and said, get your but back to work.

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About this time, I bought a used white 2005 Toyota Tundra as the platform for the new pop up camper I was planning to buy. I still had the Toyota Tacoma which was getting up in age, but still ran well. I decided to gift it to Josh because he needed a reliable vehicle. He only had it a short time when someone crashed into him, totaling out the Tacoma.

My brother-in-law Ken Mahler volunteered to drive to Colorado with me to pick up my new pop-up camper. I bought a new 2009 model Hallmark Milner camper with a power roof which could lift up to 500 pounds on its roof. I planned to carry two kayaks on top of it for diving trips. The camper worked out well, and as of now I have had it for 10 years with only minor issues.

The issues I had were with the Toyota Tundra that carried the camper. The truck had problems carrying that much weight on the rear axle and would keep burning out the rear wheel bearings and damaging the axles at a rate of one a year.

Sea Story #53, (Broke Down in Ely Nevada)

I was on my way back from the Magic Mushroom Festival in Telluride Colorado when I broke down big time. The camper was still on the Toyota Tundra and I was headed west on Highway 50, (the Lincoln Highway, the loneliest road in America). I was about 50 miles east of the little town of Ely Nevada when I heard my left rear wheel bearing start to go out. I slowed to 30 MPH for the last 50 miles and limped into the only mechanic available in Ely. It was almost 5:00 PM and he was closing soon. He told me to come back at 8:00 AM in the morning the next day. I spent the night at the KOA campground at the end of town and researched my options on the internet. I found out that there was only one tow truck company in town, and the nearest Toyota mechanic was the dealership in Reno.

The next morning, I went back to the mechanic in Ely and he took my truck for a drive around the block. When he came back, he told me it needed a whole new front end. I said no, it's the left rear wheel bearing, I knew from

previous issues I had had with this truck. Also, this dude was still drunk from the night before, and he smelled really bad. While he was called away to answer a phone call, his young assistant came up to me and said, hey man you should get out of here, this guy is going to work on your truck for a week and it still won't be fixed.

I got on the phone and called the Toyota Dealership in Reno. They told me if I could get to them that day by 7:00 Pm they could take a look at it. I then called the tow truck company and they said they were free and could tow me to Reno for \$1300.00. I asked them if they gave a military discount, and they knocked off \$100.00, but I had to agree to buy the driver lunch. I said yes, and the tow truck came and loaded me on his flatbed. It took us eight hours to get to Reno, which was on the other side of the state of Nevada. On the drive to Reno, I was on the phone trying to rent a car one way to San Francisco. I finally found one at Enterprise rent a car. There were no more rental cars available anywhere else because Burning Man was coming up in two days. When we got to Reno at 6:00 PM they confirmed the wheel bearing issue and I left it with them for the repair which would take a few days. I loaded up the rental car with all my mushroom business merchandise and drove home. I returned to Reno a week later and picked up the truck after paying \$1200.00 for the repair.

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I soon got rid of the Tundra and found a 2002 Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD for sale with only 30,000 miles on it. It was in great condition and belonged to a retired California Highway Patrol, (CHP) Officer who only used it to tow his 5th wheel trailer. I put the camper on it and it held up fine for many years.

Carol and I had been living together for two years in the 1909 Edwardian style house she and John Peterson had bought together in 1988. It was just after 9-11 and we were getting ready to fly to Turkey with our friends Roy Coto and Margaret Brown to sail the Turquoise coast with Christy Herman.

Sea Story #54, (The Proposal)

It ended up being just Roy and us that flew to Turkey because Margaret was too scared to fly after the 9-11 attack. I had planned to propose to Carol on this trip, and I had brought along an abalone shell painted gold with a proposal

in the form of a poem laminated to the inside of it. My brother-in-law Ken had written it for me and he did a great job. Here is what the proposal said:

“MY TREASURE”

We’ve searched the north coast’s foamy blue seas for this rare pearly treasure, you and me.

What I’ve found in this quest is more valuable than gold, for the treasure I’ve sought was always there to behold.

I’ve learned the treasure I longed for... was there from the start. This treasure’s special you see, for it captured my heart.

A partner, a lover, a companion, a gift. This treasure... I wish to spend the rest of my life with.

Carol, I love and cherish you, this I profess to the deep blue sea.

Will you be mine forever and always, Carol... will you marry me?

CURT

When we got to Turkey and settled into the bow cabin on Christy’s 38-foot-long sailboat named Pwyill, I let Roy and Christy in on my proposal plan. The plan was to have Carol find the abalone shell on the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea, read the proposal, and say yes. Christy said she knew the perfect spot, which was a beautiful little cove on the coast that we would have all to ourselves.

Two days later we arrived at the cove and Carol swam the bow line down to the bottom and looped it through a metal ring attached to a 500-pound concrete block. Meanwhile, Roy was in the water swimming around and placed the shell near the boat on a patch of sandy bottom that was encircled by sea grass. The sandy bottom area around the boat was supposed to contain amphora jugs from the Roman Empire times, so Carol and I put on our snorkel gear and set out to explore the bottom. I directed her to follow me, and I guided her in the direction of where Roy had placed the shell. Soon Carol saw the Golden Abalone Shell and made a loud noise through her snorkel. She said, look, a Golden Abalone Shell. I said, go get it. She swam down and plucked it from the sand and I could see her reading it as she swam slowly toward the surface. When she got to the surface, she handed it to me and said, it’s for you. I had taken first place in a big abalone hunting contest a

month before and she thought maybe Roy was doing something for me. Also, the poem was in small 10 font size letters, with my name at the bottom three times larger. She could only read my name clearly and thought it was for me. I told her to read it again. She did, then she did not say anything. I said, well yes or no, she said yes.

At sunset we were on the stern of the boat taking pictures with the shell and toasting with champagne. Then Carol said, the shell is nice but what about my ring? I said, I would never attempt to buy a ring for a jeweler, I knew you would want to make your own. She said, good answer, (short pause) what's my budget. Well, she ended up going over budget, but I figure I saved money on the labor cost to make it, plus I received a nice ring in exchange.

The night of the proposal it was calm with just a gentle rocking of the boat. We all went to bed about 10:00 PM and were sound asleep, when at about 1:00 AM the boat banged into the rock island we were moored next to. We all jumped out of bed naked and ran topside to see the boat had broken its mooring and was up against the rock wall. Carol, Roy and I jumped in the water with our mask fins and snorkel's on and towed the boat away from the rocks as Christy steered the boat. Then we dropped the bow anchor in a spot away from the island. We broke our mooring because the rope that had been run through the ring on the cement mooring had worn in half from the gentle rocking of the boat.

The next morning, we headed down the coast by cutting across the open sea. Just as we were out of sight of land, Roy came up from below and asked Christy if there was supposed to be a foot of water in his cabin. Christy told Carol to take the wheel as she ran below to investigate. At first, we all thought there had been some damage from the bump in the night on the rocks, but after inspecting the hull we saw no damage. We started using buckets to bail the water out before it reached the tops of our batteries. We were able to stay ahead of the flooding while Christy investigated further and discovered the bilge pump check valve had failed. When we got to the next port, we were able to find a new valve and install it which solved the problem.

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Carol and I got married in Las Vegas on New Year's Eve, 31 December 1999. We invited all our friends to come, and told them we would buy them a nice surf and turf dinner if they did. Quite a few of our friends took us up on the offer, maybe about 10 of them.



We had our wedding at the Little Chapel of the Flowers which included the minister, the witness, flowers, pictures, a video, music, a limo to and from our hotel, and an internet feed so our friends back home could watch it. We stayed at the Luxor hotel, which is the one that is shaped like a pyramid. After dinner we all went out on the strip and had a good time ringing in the new year.

My friend Cal Stroop was my best man at the wedding and this was his toast to me:

Now that your married, it's time to be a man.

That means taking responsibility for your actions.

You knew that Carol was a woman when you married her.

Don't blame her for anything, because anything that goes wrong in your house is your fault.

Everything that is right with your house is to Carol's credit.

If a person accepts his responsibilities, his wife will feel pity for him and will do anything for him.

Not only will this person be a man, he will be a happy man.

You will never again argue about who is wrong.

"Cal was right, I can count on two hands how many times I have been right in the last 20 years."

Over the past 22 years, Carol and I have taken quite a few trips throughout the country and overseas. Lots of them have been warm water diving trips, either with friends, or just the two of us. Some of the destinations have

included: Bonaire, (2) Trinidad and Tobago, St. Croix, Hawaii, Turkey, Greece, Puerto Rico, Indonesia, (2) Mexico, (3) Alaska, Massachusetts, Maine, (2) Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Nevada, Washington, Florida, (4) Arizona, Wyoming, and all over California.

Eventually we decided to buy John out of his half of the house we were now sharing. We took out a loan against the house for \$50,000 and gave it to John, and then we refinanced the house for 15 more years and ended up paying it off much sooner than that.

Not too long after Carol and I got married we decided to enter the annual Abalone Cook-Off contest in Fort Bragg. We tried to get other BCD club members involved but it ended up just being Roy Coto, Carol, my daughter Dana, and I. We had to provide 200 tastings in order to qualify as a cook in the contest. Carol came up with the idea of making mini burgers without buns and calling them, "Zab-a Dab-a Du Das". We used ground abalone and mixed it with breakfast sausage, herbs and spices, and made it into patties which were topped with cheese and tomato. Roy and I went diving the day before the contest at MacKerricher State Park and picked eight really big 9 1/2-inch Abs. Our booth was a pop-up shelter with two tables, and we decorated the booth with a nautical theme.

The competition was tough with a total of 40 cooks participating in the contest. It was a long day, and a lot of hard work, but it was fun. We ended up taking second place, with the prize being a full wetsuit. Roy and Dana didn't want anything, so Carol got the suit and I got the gloves and the booties. First prize would have been a week for four at a private beach diving lodge in Mexico.

The following year on Memorial Day Weekend the BCD club decided to hold its own Abalone Cook-Off. Everyone came up with a recipe and we had a competition amongst ourselves. I took first place with sweet and sour abalone. Every year afterwards the competition got tougher and tougher. So much so that we started inviting our friends to come along and contribute a side dish to the feast, and be an official judge. We would reserve a large group campsite somewhere on the north coast of California to accommodate our large group. The awards for the winners were your choice of prizes donated by our friend Ginny Branco who worked at World Market Headquarters in Alameda, CA. as a buyer for the company. Also, the first-place winner would retain the trophy which was a large abalone shell painted gold until the next contest was held. The winner would inscribe their name and the year they won onto the shell. I took first place three times, more than anyone else over the 10 years we held

the contest. After ten years of contests we decided to call it quits, because it had become more work than fun cooking for so many people.

One-time Carol and I were invited by our friends who belonged to the Mycological Society of San Francisco, (MSSF) to a mushroom dinner. We accepted and after that first great dinner we were hooked on wild and cultivated mushrooms. We were already big ocean harvesters, and now we became forest harvesters as well.

Soon we were members of the society, and heavily involved in the culinary group. The culinary group is made up of MSSF members who are interested in eating and cooking with mushrooms. The dinners are held at the SF County Fair building where we rent a room with a kitchen. The monthly dinners are limited to 60 members and everyone is expected to participate in preparing part of the meals at least once during the season, (September - May). If you're not involved with a dinner than your expected to bring an appetizer preferably containing mushrooms. In no time, Carol was the treasurer of the culinary group.

A couple of years went by, and I was asked to be on the board of directors of the society. I filled several positions in the society over the first five years and then I was elected President of the MSSF. I did that job for two years and then stepped down into a job that was more fun, as the Foray Coordinator. For eight years I was also the director of the fall foray, called the Mendocino Woodlands Camp which was our biggest foray/camp of the year. I was also in charge of the spring Morel foray/camps for many years as well. In addition, I was heavily involved in the annual Fungus Fair, mainly as the vendor coordinator. After many years of service to the society, I was voted in as an honorary member for life.

I wanted to start traveling more during the winter to other mushroom festivals located in Oregon, Washington, and Colorado to hunt and collect wild mushrooms. So, I started a business called: Just Mushroom Stuff in order to make some money at the same time I was traveling to various locations to hunt mushrooms. I became a vendor at the festivals which were held between October and August each year throughout mainly the western United States. It kept me busy for 10 years and was a good tax write off as well. I never really made a profit, but I broke even and it paid for my travel expenses to the festivals. My business also had an on-line presence and I was constantly shipping my merchandise all over the country. At one point I had as many as 300 items on my web site, all mushroom related.

Dana and Josh would help me at many of the festivals, especially the San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and the one in Seattle. It was fun working with them and being able to pay them well for their work.

I needed something to help me access areas in the forest where there were more mushrooms than people, which meant I needed to get to areas in the forest which were further off the road. I bought a vintage Honda trail 90 motorbike and I would haul it on the front of my truck on a special rack. It was big enough that Carol could ride on the back of it and help spot Morels as we traveled along the forest roads.

After a couple of years, I sold the Honda and bought a used Yamaha TW-200 dual sport bike with big tires. It worked out better and had more speed on the highway. The only problem with it was that it could not get to high elevations because it had a carburetor which could not get enough oxygen. So, I sold it and bought a new fuel injected Honda 250 dual sport bike. It worked very well for a few years and then I was not using it as much so I sold it as well. After that I just started using my mountain bike to get to the best mushroom picking locations. Later on, I purchased an electric pedal assist mountain bike with the big tires which worked great.

A few years after we started hunting mushrooms, we had a very good Morel season at the Texas Hill Road Fire in Tahoe national Forest. The fire had been near the SF Viking Ski Cabin located on Donner Summit just off Hwy 80, so we were able to utilize the cabin as home base while hunting for Morels. We picked so many Morels we were giving the excess mushrooms away. We dehydrated enough that season to last for years, plus I sold some later at some of the festivals I attended. We went up to that burn area four times over six weeks. The first two trips we picked Black Burn Morels of good size. On the third trip, there were Gray Morels fruiting so we picked a lot of them. Then on the fourth trip, there were Green Morels fruiting, and they were the largest in size.

Carol and I had been picking all day Sunday on our last trip up there and we had our baskets full, we were black with ash, hot, and tired. Just as we were about to call it a day, Carol looked up at the top of the slope we were picking and said, Is that a big pine cone up there? We could not tell, so we hiked up to it and discovered it was a huge 10-inch-tall Morel. We took some pictures of it and later I turned one of the pictures into a postage stamp.

Carol and I went on a lot of mushroom foraging trips to many different states in pursuit of delicious Fungi.

Sea Story #55, (Mushroom Bog)

One of the mushroom hunting trips we took was a weeklong paid trip to Oregon where we stayed in a lodge in the forest with 10 other people. It was headed up by David Campbell, an ex MSSF President and good friend of ours. The lodge was located in the Cascades, above the town of McKenzie Bridge. On the third day we were taken to an area called; The Bog. We hiked down a trail for about a mile and entered into an area of old growth forest which looked primeval. It was very wet, with lots of vegetation and there was a small river running down through the middle of the glen. Everywhere we looked there were Chanterelle Mushrooms. In no time we all had our baskets full and it did not even look like we had made a dent in the numbers of mushrooms available to us. It took us twice as long to hike back up the hill, taking several breaks along the way out.

Over the next few years, Carol and I returned to the bog several times, and the Chanterelles were always there in profusion. A couple of times I went there alone and I also discovered hordes of Matsutake mushrooms in the same vicinity. The last time I went there I discovered a family of Russian commercial pickers camped out at the entrance to the trail leading down to the bog. When I got down to the bog, I discovered that they had just finished picking the entire area and there were literally no mushrooms left. It was like the entire area had been vacuumed clean. I have not been back there since.

Sea Story #56, (15 Pound Porcini Mushroom)

Carol and I took a trip one time up to the Olympic Peninsula with her brother Russ and his wife Darlene. We stayed in three different Washington State lodges over three days and had a blast. On the second day we were staying in some cabins on the beach near a campground that was closed for the season. Carol and I took a walk through it looking for mushrooms we could cook up and eat for dinner. As we were searching the fringes of the campground, we started finding food; canned goods, jelly, peanut butter, and cans of beer. We soon figured out that the raccoons had stolen bags of food from campsites and drug it into the bushes, but were unable to eat it. We also found some nice porcini mushrooms to cook up for dinner.

The following year I was driving by that same location on my way up the Olympic Peninsula and decided to take a walk through the campground and check it out for more Porcini. About half way into the campground I started

finding really big Porcini mushrooms, the biggest I had ever seen. One of the specimens was so big, I had to strap it to the top of the black storage box which is connected to the back of my truck. I had to know how much it weighed, so I went to the local Safeway store and asked them to weigh it for me. It topped the scales at just under 15 pounds, it had to be some kind of record. I took a bunch of pictures of it and sent them, along with a story about finding it to my buddy Britt Bunyard, editor in chief of Fungi Magazine. A couple of months later, the story with the picture of the monster Porcini was printed in Fungi Magazine. A short time later, I received a phone call from David Aurora asking me if he could include my picture holding the 15-pound Porcini in the new revision he was currently writing for his book, *All the rain Promises and More*. I said, sure what's in it for me? He said, a free copy of the new book when it is released, I agreed and sent him the picture. It has been many years, and he is still not finished revising his book.

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When I was working at the Post Office in Oakland, I received a letter from a lawyer on behalf of my ex-wife Candice Costain. The letter said that she had never forfeited her right to half of my Navy retirement for life, and now she wanted it. I had been paying her half of my retirement for 5 years so far. I found and retained a local lawyer in Oakland who would take my case. He did not have a lot of knowledge in military law, as it pertained to my case. He said that if I did the research, he could do the job for less than \$500.00. I agreed and I spent many lunch time hours combing through books in the free law library which was only two blocks from where I worked. After he read my research information, he suggested I try to settle the case with my wife versus going to court. I offered her 5 more years of half my retirement if she signed a legal document forfeiting her rights to any future claims against my retirement, she agreed.

A few years after I married Carol and moved to San Francisco, I received a jury duty summons in the mail. I had never been on jury duty before because I had been in the Navy so long. The first jury I served on was a civil trial which ended up being a one-day frivolous lawsuit for a trip and fall in a retail store. The claimant perjured herself on the stand and ended up not getting hardly anything at all. She was asking for over a million dollars in damages for a quarter inch long cut on her big toe, and we ended up awarding her twenty-five dollars.

A couple of years after that trial I received another jury duty summons. This time it was for a first-degree murder case, and I ended up being the jury

foreman. The trial went on for over a month, and deliberation took another week. All this time I was still getting paid by the Post Office, and my supervisor was not happy with me not being available to work my regular job. The trial ended up in a hung jury due to the fact that we had two Chinese immigrants on the jury who could not grasp the idea of self-defense. The two of them just kept saying, in my country, someone killed someone have to pay. The accused was tried again and this time he was found not guilty due to self-defense.

When I was nearing the end of my career at the Post Office, Josh came to the house with an old 2003 Harley Davidson Sportster motorcycle that Needed work. I ended up taking it off his hands and getting it fixed. I cleaned it up, put a windshield and some leather saddle bags on it and rode it all over for a few years. I had lots of fun on that old bike.

When I had been working for 13 years at the Post Office, a notice was distributed to all employees informing us that an early retirement incentive was being offered. We would receive a \$15,000 bonus over two years if we retired early. I was interested, so I applied on the USPS website for a retirement package, so I could take a look at it first. The package came in the mail and Carol and I looked it over and decided I should work for five more years.

About a month later, I was coming back to work on a Wednesday after my lunch break. My supervisor said, Curt can I talk to you for a minute? She asked me if I was retiring on Friday? I said no, and she said we needed to go talk to the Post Master. I was then told that they thought I was retiring, because I had requested a retirement package. They then told me that fairly soon all the Philatelic positions in the Post Office, nationwide were going to be abolished, and all the Philatelic products would only be sold on the USPS website. Because they thought I was retiring, they were abolishing my position sooner and had already set a date a week from then. I would still have a job, but I would have to go back to the main plant and work on the mail sorting machines I hated, plus I would be working the graveyard shift with Tuesdays and Thursdays off. I told them I felt sick and was taking the rest of the day off to look over the early retirement package again and they would have my answer the following day.

I went home and looked over the retirement package again with Carol and contemplated my options. I decided to retire from the USPS and take the money. I retired two days later on Friday and my coworkers threw a little party at work for me with a farewell cake. After working for 13 years at the Post Office I wished then that I had stayed in the Navy for as long as I could have.

So, now I am retired from the Navy and the Post Office. Before I retired, a lot of my retired friends told me that I would be busier after I retired than when I was working full time. I didn't believe them, but they were right. I still can't figure out how I was able to work full time and still do everything else I was doing before I retired, guess I slept less then.

At this point in my life, I have my Navy, a separate VA disability payment coming in, plus now the Post Office retirement money. Also, when I worked for the Post Office, I was putting the maximum amount allowed monthly into my Thrift Savings Account, (TSP) sort of like a 401K. I took \$30,000 in cash out of my TSP account and bought a new used Harley Davidson motorcycle as a retirement gift to myself. The rest of the money in the TSP account was distributed to me monthly in increments of \$1000.00 a month over 10 years, and then it was all gone. Plus, I still have the Just Mushroom Stuff (JMS) business going strong at this point.

Sea Story #57, (New Harley Davidson)

I had just sold the old Harley Davidson Sportster and I was getting ready to buy a new 2014 Harley Davidson, (HD) Limited full bagger motorcycle for \$24,000. I had been looking for a newer used bike on Craigs List for about a year and I had not found what I was looking for. About a week before I was getting ready to buy the 2014 limited, a bike popped up on Craigs List. It was a 2011 CVO Ultra Classic HD for \$26,888.00 with only 12 miles on it. When I read that, I thought for sure that it was a typo. I called the seller and he assured me that it was not a typo, and there were only 12 miles on the bike. I told him I was coming to Redwood City to see it.

When I got to his house, located in a very nice neighborhood I saw a new sports car, and a new truck with a new camper on it in his driveway. A young Asian man answered the front door and then he came out and opened the two-car garage door. In the garage were four brand new motorcycles. The one I had come to see, plus a 2010 CVO Street Glide HD, a 2012 BMW track racing bike, and a 2013 BMW full bagger, still in the wooden crate from Germany.

So now I am thinking something fishy is going on. I asked him, what's the story with all the new bikes? And why are you selling this one? He told me that he was Chinese and was an only child, and that his mom is rich but will not give him any money. But that she would buy him anything he wanted every

year for his birthday. The blue book on the bike at that time was \$31,000.00, so his asking price was very fair.

I bought the bike the following day and rode it home. I got one block from his house and realized the air pressure in the tires was very low. Three blocks later, I pulled into a service station and added air pressure to the tires, that's all it needed. The bike was brand new, and had been trailered to his house from the HD dealership, and still had all the pre dealer prep stickers on it.

I joined the Harley Owners Group, (HOG), Golden Gate Chapter, and got active with the chapter and riding the bike a lot. I made my first long trip on the bike up to Seattle to visit Josh and I really enjoyed the ride along the Oregon coast on the way home. I also like to ride it up to the Viking Ski Club cabin on Donner Summit a few times during the summer every year. It's a big bike that weighs just under 1000 pounds fully loaded. Every once in a while, I will lose my balance and it will lean over onto its side, but not cause any damage. However, it is a bear to get back upright, and, usually it takes two people to right it.

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Now I am splitting my retirement time between, the Just Mushroom Stuff business, working on maintaining the house and the big backyard garden, diving with the BCD, cross country skiing with Carol in the Sierras, riding the Harley, and traveling in the US and overseas.

I was doing a lot of diving with Carol and other members of the BCD at this time and that reminds me of some good diving stories.

Sea Story #58, (Miracle Shot)

Carol and I were scuba diving together one Labor Day weekend near Big Sur, CA. At Limekiln State Beach. Carol was close by looking in a hole for fish as I was doing the same thing, but in a different hole. When I shined my light into the hole, I saw a big Cabezon fish, so I backed away and prepared my speargun to shoot it. When I shined my light back into the hole and got ready to shoot, I then saw two fish, the Cabezon and a bigger Lingcod fish. So, I decided to shoot the Lingcod because it was bigger, and I could already taste it. My speargun had a five-prong spear tip on it to make it harder for the fish I shot to get away. I fired the gun and there was a lot of thrashing in the hole and a lot of silt was stirred up in the process. When I pulled my spear out of

the hole, I saw that I had speared both fish. Two of the five prongs had each pierced through the eyes of each of the fish. Carol came over to where I was and witnessed the miracle two for one shot. Without Carol, I don't think anyone would have ever believed this story.

Sea Story #59, (Lingcod Heaven)

I was diving one time with Chip Toll on the Mendocino County coast near Fort Bragg, CA. We were scuba diving from our kayaks in about 40 feet of water. It was sometime during the winter months and the visibility underwater was excellent at near 50 feet. We were swimming together side by side, about 10 feet off the bottom, through a channel between two large underwater cliffs. All of a sudden, we see four huge Lingcod swimming side by side directly toward us. They swam right up to within three feet of us and just hovered in the water column looking at us. Chip and I looked at each other, and we each pointed our spearguns at the two Lingcod located at either end and fired. We each successfully shot our fish and started stringing them on our stringers. Meanwhile the two other Lingcod did not move, and just looked at the dyeing fish and us. So, after we had strung our first two fish, we both reloaded, aimed and we shot the other two fish. It was amazing, I have never seen any behavior like this before or since that event occurred. All four Lingcod were female, and all ranged in size from 32 to 38 inches in length.

Sea Story #60, (Trophy Abalone)

My most memorable abalone dive was when I was on a trip by myself on the north coast of California for a week looking for big AB. I was camped at Union Landing State beach on the southern end of the lost coast in Mendocino County. I had not planned to dive there, but when I got up in the morning, I spotted a Sea Urchin diver in the water a mile offshore. I got my binoculars and saw that he had anchored his boat in what appeared to be shallow water in a large kelp bed. The wind was calm, and the sea was dive-able, so I suited up and headed out on my kayak to see if the water was shallow enough to dive there for AB.

When I arrived about a half hour later, the urchin diver was back on his boat. Urchin divers usually dive solo and use a hookah rig, which is a long hose attached to an air compressor on their boat. I asked the other diver what the

conditions were like, the approximate depth, and if there were any big abalone down there? He said it's great visibility, shallowest spot is 15 feet at low tide, which it was, and there were huge abalone down there.

He left, and I jumped in the water to free dive the spot for big AB. It was a great dive spot with abalone everywhere. I spent about an hour or so in the water and took my time looking for the biggest abalone I could find. I ended up picking the two biggest abalone I have ever found in all the time I have been diving. They both measured out at exactly 10 1/2 inches in length, but one was really thick and the other was a bit thinner. There were also a lot of fish in the kelp bed, so I shot five nice big Black Rock Fish as well. When I got back to the beach, I noticed that the swell had picked up and big waves were crashing on the beach. I was committed, so I had to land on the beach. It was not a pretty landing, I got picked up by a big wave and the kayak pirouetted, and I was slammed down onto the beach with the kayak on top of me. Two other campers were on the beach and came to my rescue and helped me with my kayak and gear. For a reward I gave them the biggest Black Rock Fish I had shot for their dinner.

Sea Story #61, (Abalone Pearl)

Carol and I had been diving together for quite a few years. Every time we cleaned our abalone, we would search for the elusive abalone pearl. Over the years we found many pearls but they were all small in size, after diving together one weekend at Timber Cove in Sonoma County we drove home with our limit of four abalone each.

Once back at home we had a routine we followed. I would remove the shells from the abalone and clean them, then Carol would tenderize, (pound) and freeze most of them. As I was removing the shell from one of the abalone, a big pearl fell out of the shell and bounced across our cement driveway. Carol saw it and said, was that my abalone? I looked at the tag on the abalone shell and said, sorry, looks like it was mine.

It was a beautiful pearl, nearly the size of a quarter, it was pearlescent silver on one side and pearlescent green on the other. Carol took it into her pearl expert in San Francisco, and it was appraised at \$5000.00. She then set it into a gold wire wrap and presented it to me to wear on special occasions. The only catch was that she would get to wear it whenever she wanted to. We never found another big abalone pearl after that.

Sea Story #62, (10 Inch Scallop)

One weekend the dive club was camped out together at Russian Gulch State park located on the Mendocino County coast. On Sunday, a few of us headed south out of the cove on our kayaks to a protected little cove we knew about. We were all free diving for Ab and fish, plus I had brought my scuba diving gear along as well. After everyone had their AB and fish they decided to head back to the campground. I decided to paddle out and dive the very end of the Mendocino Headlands which I had never dived before. It was a sunny, calm, and nearly windless day, just beautiful in every way.

After a 15-minute paddle, I arrived at the dive site and could see the bottom in 30 feet of water. I suited up and dropped into the water. The headlands extend out into the water just below the surface for about a quarter of a mile in the form of a ridge, and the last few hundred feet of it was covered with a thick kelp bed. The top of the ridge was about 100 feet wide and, on each side, there was a vertical wall that dropped off to a depth of 100 feet.

After exploring the top of the ridge for about 10 minutes I decided to drop down on the seaward side of the ridge. As I got deeper there was less and less marine growth, and at about 50 feet none at all. I almost decided to head back up to the top of the ridge, but decided to go ahead and dive to the bottom first. At about 75 feet I saw that the wall was undercut and it angled into the ridge for about 20 feet. I swam into the undercut and now I had a ceiling over my head. As I looked up, I saw the biggest Scallop I had ever seen, as big as a large abalone. I pounded it with my fist until it came loose, along with two other smaller ones. When I got back to shore several of the club members were there to greet me. One of them picked up my bag of Abs to carry them back for me and saw the scallop. They said, wow that's a big Ab. I corrected them and said, no that's a huge scallop. The scallop measured out at just over 10 inches, which ended up being the second largest scallop ever found in California waters.

After eating it, I placed the shell in the backyard in a prominent location. A couple of years later I took the shell to a taxidermist in Fort Bragg, CA. who mounted it on a fake rock and made it look real again. It sat in our house for several years collecting dust until Carol said I should donate it to a museum. So, I donated it to the Academy of Sciences in San Francisco where it still sits on display in the learning center on the second floor near the exit of the planetarium.

Sea Story #63, (Tagged Black Rock Fish)

Back when I was still living in Dublin, I spent a week on the far north coast of California searching for the biggest abalone in the world, in order to break the record. John pepper had not yet set the current record of 12 1/8 inches but soon would. On this trip, I was searching the waters near Shelter Cove on the lost coast of Mendocino and Humboldt Counties. I camped in the private campground on the beach in Shelter Cove, and also the BLM campground on top of the ridge above the cove. I dove in Shelter Cove, and the cove just south called Bear Creek Harbor. I found some big Abs, but no record breakers.

Then I drove north to Cape Mendocino, located near the tiny town of Petrolia. I camped on the beach, and I was the only one there. The weather cooperated with me and I was able to dive for three consecutive days at the cape, where the weather is usually fierce. On the third day I was free diving a promising location and spotted some really big Black Rock Fish. There was a whole school of giants so I decided to take a couple for meals. They were so unafraid of me that I could shoot them from the surface. I shot two and put them on my stringer. Then I saw an especially large one that had something attached to its dorsal fin, which looked man made. I shot it in the head, and with the long recoil line attached between the gun and the spear, it allowed the fish to drop out of my sight in the depths below me. With the visibility at about six feet, I started pulling the shot fish on the spear closer to me. Just as my prize came into view, I saw that a huge Lingcod was following it, trying to eat it. When it saw me, it turned around and headed back into the depths.

Now I wanted the Lingcod, a much better meal. So, I took the anchor off of my anchor line and threaded the line through the gills and mouth of the fish I had just shot. Then I lowered the tethered fish to the bottom and waited five minutes while I reloaded my spear gun. When I pulled the line back to the surface, I saw that the Lingcod had completely swallowed the Black Rock Fish, and the anchor line was coming out of its mouth. I got it close and shot the lingcod in the head. In the end, I was able to retrieve the swallowed fish from the 36-inch-long female Lingcod.

Back on the beach, I inspected the large Black Rock Fish closer and found it was tagged. Printed on the tag was; "Return this tagged fish to Fort Bragg Fish & Game Office for a Reward". So, the next day I was headed home and I stopped in at the F&G office to turn in the fish. The biologist on duty told me

that this was the first tagged fish that had ever been turned in that had been speared. My reward was a choice between a nice F&G logo shirt or a hat. I told him, heck I should get one of each since this was a first ever speared tagged fish. He agreed, and I got a hat and a shirt.

Sea Story #64 (Mammal - Fish - Fish - Mammal)

One winter, I remember I was diving with David Elkhart off of Salt Point State Park. We were free diving in about 50 feet of water with the same amount of visibility. We had already taken our limit of Abs and now we were spearfishing, and the hunting was excellent. David would dive down and I would watch him, and then I would dive down and he would watch me. This went on for quite a while and then it was his turn again. I watched him dive down, swim through the bottom kelp, and then shoot a Blue Rock Fish. As he was swimming vertically towards the surface trailing the shot fish 10 feet behind him on his tethered spear, I witnessed an amazing sight. Coming up from the bottom after his shot fish was a huge lingcod. Just as the Lingcod was about to snatch David's fish, a Harbor Seal came up from below and was about to snatch the Lingcod. Just as David reached the surface, and before he turned around to retrieve his shot fish, the Lingcod saw the seal and they both darted off back to the bottom. David retrieved his fish and never saw what had almost happened. I told him what had happened, but I don't know if he believed me.

Sea Story #65, (Near Death by Pelican)

One time I was diving with Pete Davis and Carol at the Coral Street dive site in Monterey. It was a warm, sunny, calm beautiful day. We were all scuba diving and shooting fish below a large kelp bed off shore. Carol never attaches her fish stringer to her person, since one time something grabbed her from behind and ripped the fish off her weight belt. Shark, seal, who knows she never saw it. Since that event, she now always attaches her fish stringer to her speargun. She had just shot a Lingcod and had placed it on her stringer. She was in the process of hooking the stringer to her gun when the Lingcod took off with the stringer and all the other fish that were on the stringer as well. She took off swimming after the stringer of fish and soon lost sight of it. Meanwhile, Pete was swimming along a short distance away and sees the Lingcod swimming directly toward him, so he shoots it, "again". Just about that same time here comes Carol and she spots Pete with her stringer of fish, and

he has shot the Lingcod again. She uses hand gestures to tell Pete that those are her fish, not his. He reluctantly surrenders the stringer full of fish to Carol, and she thanks him.

So now the dive is over and I start to surface in the kelp bed not far from my kayak. When you learn to scuba dive, you are taught that when you break the surface you do so with your arm extended above you. But when your spearfishing, you usually have one hand on a big underwater light and the other on your speargun. As my head slowly broke the surface it was almost taken off, or impaled by a full-size adult pelican. Sometimes Pelicans fly very close to the water's surface, almost touching it. As my head slowly broke the surface the first thing to exit the water was my snorkel, with my mask just below it where I could see clearly. The split second I saw the Pelican, it impacted with my snorkel, jerking my head slightly backwards. Trust me when I say, it scared the hell out of me. I turned to see the Pelican flying away like nothing had happened. I was uninjured, but I knew I would never forget that incident with the Pelican. Every time I see a Pelican, it jogs my memory back to that moment.

(Continued)

In 2011, I was invited by my friend Britt Bunyard to be a mushroom vendor at the Telluride Mushroom Festival, also known as; Shroom-Fest in Telluride, Colorado. The town of Telluride is located in a box canyon high up in the Rocky Mountains at 10,500 feet in elevation. It is a picturesque little town surrounded by snowcapped peaks on three sides, and a waterfall at the end of the canyon. The town makes most of its money on tourists during the winter, due to the fact that it is a world class ski destination. During the summer months it hosts a different festival almost every weekend to bring in more tourists, and money. The mushroom festival is held in the middle of August each year, 2020 was the 40th annual Telluride Mushroom Festival, and it was the first ever virtual festival!

My first "TRIP" to Telluride was also the first time I experienced Psilocybin (Magic) Mushrooms. The festival runs for four days, Thursday through noon on Sunday. Each year on the last day of the festival, Britt leads a group of people high up on the mountain above town on the "Final Foray" as it is known. There is usually between 15 and 20 people who participate on the foray each year. We all meet at a little bakery/deli in town called, (baked in Telluride) for a light lunch and then we get on the free gondola for the ride to the top of the Mountain. After were on top we hike about a mile along the ridge to a meadow with waist tall grass, which is actually a winter ski slope. We then

eat a prescribed dose, (usually five grams or more) of magic mushrooms of the *Cubensis* species which are normally cultivated. Then we all spread out and enjoy the afternoon on the mountain. About five hours later we are usually able to regain our composure and head back down the mountain into town. We then all get together at someone's house for a pot luck meal, or we go out to dinner together somewhere in town.

The first time I consumed the mushrooms I ate five grams, which is considered a shamanic dose. Most people only take about two grams when they do mushrooms, because they just want to have fun and still be able to walk around and party, etc. When you take five grams or more you have a much more intense experience. You can have an out of body experience, and also see things you would not normally be able to see without the mushrooms. When you are on a high dose of mushrooms you still have total control of your mind and you know where you are. However, your body does not usually want to cooperate, it just wants to relax and stay still pretty much, either sitting or lying down. One thing to remember is that you cannot overdose on magic mushrooms, it is scientifically impossible. However, the more you consume, (the higher the dose) the more intense the journey, but the time you are affected is still the same, about five hours. During the first few years I attended the festival, I always took a shamanic dose on the final foray, somewhere between five and six grams each time. In 2019, I decided to up the game and took somewhere between 10 and 12 grams. In the past I usually had to close my eyes to get the full effect of colors and the visions I experienced. But not that time, I could see everything with my eyes wide open, and if I closed them, it was even better than ever before.

I believe the best ever experience on them was the first time I took them. That first time was a life changing experience for me. I also believe that you can preset your mind before you consume them as to what kind of experience you will have. The first time all I had on my mind was mushrooms, and everything I saw with my eyes closed was related somehow to mushrooms. In 2019 I told my mind I wanted to have an X-rated experience, and I did. I try to revisit the mushrooms twice each year, once in Telluride and once in Baja on my annual winter journey down south into warmer weather. I also want to say that the best place to experience these truly magic mushrooms is when you are out in nature. For myself, that is the mountains and the beach.

After my first trip to Telluride, I returned as a vendor for two more years, followed by two more years non vending, and just enjoying the festival to its fullest.

Sea Story #66, (Heart Attack)

In 2015 I returned again to the festival in Telluride as a vendor. This time I was not able to experience the mushrooms on the mountain because my body had other plans for me. Here is the story I wrote, that was published in the spring 2016 issue of Fungi Magazine.

“Mushrooms may Trigger a Heart Attack at 11,000 feet”

Are you addicted to wild mushrooms? Be forewarned, some mushrooms have been linked to heart attacks. One survivor shares his harrowing tale. (But not the location of his patch.)

Every August for the past few years I have been attending the Telluride Mushroom Festival as a vendor, presenter, participant, or all three. Last year started out no different than in past years, except that I took a southern route from San Francisco to Telluride instead of a northern route or straight across the desert. Traveling on old Route 66, I started finding good edible mushrooms on and around Mt. Taylor near Albuquerque, New Mexico. The next day I headed north to Flagstaff, Arizona where I continued to find moisture and abundant fungi. Continuing north to Chaga, New Mexico, I entered the southern range of the San Juan Mountains. Adequate moisture and good edible mushrooms continued to be available.

It was now time to start heading to Telluride and obtain a campsite in the town park before it filled up for “Shroom-Fest”, aka The Telluride Mushroom Festival. I traveled north to Pagosa Springs, Colorado, then headed west to Durango where I turned north again on scenic Highway 550. I stopped at the pass near purgatory, (elevation 10,000 feet) above the historic town of Silverton and took in the view, along with a short walk. On the walk I filled my basket with beautiful Porcini buttons and a few chanterelles. Then I turned west again onto Highway 62 and the beautiful little town of Telluride, Colorado and set up camp for an adventurous week ahead.

It was Monday and I had time to kill before the Festival started on Thursday. The next morning, I packed up my Honda 250 dual purpose motorcycle, which I carry on the front of my truck camper and headed south to Lizard Head pass. I knew I was early and ahead of the crowds of mushroom harvesters headed my way later in the week, so I wanted to stock up on good edibles to take home to California. At Lizard Head pass there was plenty of moisture from the previous two weeks of rain and I started finding nice patches of chanterelles and lots of fresh porcini buttons, along with some small patches of shrimp

russulas, the “shrimp” is one of my favorite mushrooms with its shrimp-like seafood taste. Another of my favorites is the small dense Rocky Mountain chanterelle which has a fabulous flavor, and the gills are a striking fluorescent yellow orange color.

So here I am at 11'000 feet elevation, by myself, in the middle of nowhere picking some of my favorite mushrooms. I had been at high elevation for nearly a week, so I was mostly adjusted (to the elevation) and had been drinking plenty of water. Suddenly I felt a little tired, short of breath, a slight tingling in my arms, and a slight tightness in my chest. I thought it must be the elevation and that I was just working too hard. I took a break for a few minutes, drank some water, took a few deep breaths, felt mostly fine and went back to picking. This had occurred repeatedly maybe four or five times in a four-hour period; each time I had recovered very quickly. At about 2:00 pm it started raining pretty hard so it was time to head back to camp. I got back to the campground in Telluride an hour later which is lower in elevation (8,500 feet) than where I had been earlier. I spent the afternoon cleaning and cooking the mushrooms I had collected and had a mushroom feast for dinner, followed by a quiet evening.

The next day I awoke at 6:30 am, had breakfast, spent an hour reading and then got ready to head back out into the forest. Next, there was a knock-on my door; it was my friend Britt Bunyard, (Editor of Fungi Magazine). While we were talking, I suddenly felt a much bigger pain (tightness) in the center of my chest. I put my hand on my chest and told Britt I did not feel very well. Britt chuckled a bit and asked, you're not having a heart attack, are you? I said I didn't think so, and in a minute, I felt ok again. Then Britt suggested that I go to the clinic in town and get checked out. I said yeah ok, maybe so, and Britt told me where it was located which was not far away. Then Britt left and I felt better and read my book some more. An hour later I needed to walk over to the campground office and re-register my campsite. I did that and headed back to my campsite. About halfway back, a bigger pain occurred in my chest, along with shortness of breath, pain radiating down my arms, and sweating a lot. I stopped in my tracks and said to myself: Curt, you're having a heart attack. I had taught CPR as an instructor for many years when I was in the Navy and my knowledge and training finally kicked in.

I was able to slowly walk back the 50 yards to my truck and sit down. I immediately drank some water and took four 81mg baby aspirin. I take one every day, and had already taken one earlier that morning. In about 10 minutes I felt great, so I jumped on the motorcycle and was at the clinic in five minutes. I walked in and told the man at the counter that I was having a heart

attack; he immediately took only my name and lead me into the ER. I disrobed, put on a gown and had no sooner laid down a gurney when I had a “big one”.

A doctor and two nurses went to work on me immediately: IV in the arm, oxygen, mobile chest x-ray, and both oral and injectable pain killers and blood thinners. After about an hour I was stabilized and transported by ambulance to Montrose Memorial Hospital, an hour and a half away. Once there I was taken to the OR where a catheterization was performed to determine what was going on in my heart. They discovered two arteries on the front of my heart that were blocked, one of which could not be repaired with a stint. The doctor also told me that when I was up picking mushrooms at 11,000 feet I most likely was not getting enough oxygen to properly oxygenate the blood passing through my heart.

The next day I was transported by ambulance to the cardiac unit at St Mary’s Hospital and Regional Medical Center in Grand Junction, Colorado, one hour away. Two days later I underwent open heart surgery and had a double bypass performed. Three and a half days later I was discharged and flew home with my wife Carol to San Francisco.

Looking back now, I consider myself a really lucky man! I am now in recovery which tends to be a slow process. My cardiologist told me it may take up to a year for a full 100% recovery that will allow me to get back in the ocean to scuba and free dive, and hike the mountains in pursuit of fungi. I will be taking two different prescription drugs for the rest of my life, plus a health daily dose of reishi (*Ganoderma lucidum*) which has been shown to be a very good treatment for arterial heart disease.

I am planning on returning to Telluride, Colorado in August, where I usually spend up to a month exploring fungi-laden areas of the beautiful Rocky Mountains. I also have my costume ready to go for the 2016 Telluride Mushroom Festival parade, which is always a blast.

So, just what mushrooms may trigger a heart attack at 11,000 feet? You probably guessed it by now: The Rocky Mountain king bolete (*Boletus rubiceps*), the chanterelle (*Chanterelle roseocanus*), and the shrimp russula, (*Russula xerampelina*). Stay calm and shroom on!

Editors’ Note: The author is alive and doing well and was last seen by this editor in March where he was on his way back home from a seven-week

odyssey on the Mexican Baja - fishing, snorkeling, and swimming with whale sharks. You can't keep a good man down!

I went through the surgery alone in Grand Junction, CO. Carol flew out and picked me up at the hospital when I was discharged. We stayed at a friend's house just outside of town for one night where my brother-in-law Ken Mahler, and my son Josh met up with us for one night. They had flown out from the west coast and picked up my truck that had been placed in storage at the airport in Montrose, CO. by my buddy Britt Bunyard. Then they drove it back to the Bay Area for me.

Carol and I flew back home from Grand Junction, CO. I flew back First Class, which was a first for me, because I needed to be comfortable. The recovery time from the heart attack took a good six months. I remember I could only sleep on my back on a raised V shaped pillow for quite some time and I needed help getting out of bed. I changed my diet and started exercising more during the recovery and got my weight down to 210 pounds.

I took some time to reevaluate my life at this point. I was 64 and I decided to start taking Social Security early even though there was a penalty for doing so. Looking back, I am glad I did since I have been able to use the money and save more for the future.

Sea Story #67, (Baja Adventures)

About six months after my heart attack, my son Josh called me and told me he was planning to travel down to Baja for a couple of months to recover from his injury. He had broken both of the bones in the lower part of his left leg very badly in a bicycle accident and was recovering from surgery. He was walking with a limp, and the aid of a cane periodically. He said he was planning to drive his car down with his kayak and his camping gear. He asked me if I wanted to fly down and meet him, and camp out on some beaches down there. I thought about it for a while and talked to Carol about it. She said I should go and I should take my truck camper so that we would be a lot more comfortable. I told Josh what I had decided and he was very happy and said he had wanted to ask me about taking my truck camper but was afraid I would say no.

Josh did all the research and helped with the planning which made it a lot easier for me. We loaded up everything we thought we might need for a three-

month trip to Baja, including Josh's dog Lola, and headed south. We drove all the way down to Cabo San Lucas and back without any major problems except one, which I will tell you about at the end. We checked off several items on our bucket list down in Baja. We swam with 45-foot-long Whale Sharks in the bay of La Paz, and saw lots of Gray and Humpback Whales from a boat in the bay at Porto San Carlos. We camped out on lots of beautiful isolated beaches on the Pacific Ocean side of Baja as well as on the Sea of Cortez. We did a lot of kayaking along the coast and we did some great free diving in warm water. We were able to dive for oysters, clams, and spear lots of fish for meals. Most days in Baja were beautiful and warm, but sometimes the wind would come up strong out of nowhere, at any time of the day or night.

One night we were sitting on an isolated beach at our campfire when Lola started growling at nothing that we could see. When she would not stop growling, we started looking around to see what had her spooked. Finally, we saw that she was growling at a hermit crab that was under one of the chairs. Lola continued to have a problem with hermit crabs on every beach we camped on.

That night we drank and smoked a little too much and got to feeling pretty good. Josh finally went to bed in his tent and I stayed up a bit longer. A little while later, sometime after midnight, I got up to pee and then go to bed. I was peeing into our pile of driftwood firewood when I lost my balance and fell face first into the wood pile. I finally stood up in the middle of the wood pile and fell again two more times, plus I was barefoot. I finally got out of the woodpile, dusted myself off and went to bed. When I woke up in the morning, I saw blood on my sheets. I saw that my left foot had been injured because there was blood all over it. I went down to the beach and washed it in the ocean but I could not see where it was injured. When Josh woke up, I asked him to look at the bottom of my foot to see where I was injured. He looked and then gasped and said he could see the bone on the bottom of my little toe. I had actually torn the little toe half off, ripping open the skin at the joint where the toe connects to the foot. I cleaned it good with fresh water, applied an antibiotic cream, and wrapped it in a splint. I did this each morning for five days and stayed off of it and out of the ocean. On the sixth day we returned to Los Barriles and I went to the 24-hour emergency clinic to have them look at it. The doctor took one look at it and said, wow, you did a great job, its half healed, no stitches needed. He put a toe splint on it and a new bandage and charged me \$25.00.

One night on the same beach it got really windy after we went to bed. I was almost asleep when I smelled something really stinky that was burning. I

opened the camper door and looked outside and saw that the wind had blown Josh's camp chair into the fire ring that still had hot coals in it from our fire that night. The back part of the chair was on fire and was putting off black stinky smoke. I pulled the chair out of the fire and threw sand on it to put the fire out. the next morning Josh used a bunch of duct tape to make a new back for the chair that worked pretty well. A couple weeks later we were camping on another beach and we found a similar chair that the bottom had burned up in a campfire. Josh cut the good back off the found chair and slipped it over his chair. It worked great except the chair was now two tone in color.

Josh had brought along a tent for him and Lola to sleep in on the beaches right next to the truck. He had purchased a standard inexpensive two-person dome tent in the states at Walmart. After about a month of camping on the beaches the tent got damaged after blowing away in high winds. We were able to find and repair it somewhat and then place big rocks inside the tent to keep it from blowing away any more. Eventually it got ripped up pretty bad from the wind so we stopped at the Walmart in La Paz to buy a new one. Josh found the exact same tent except in Mexico it was a three-person tent. We figured it would either fit two big gringos or three small Mexicans.

When we got to Los Barriles all the camp grounds were full. When we went into the fanciest campground in town, the owner told us he was full but that we could camp next to the ATV wash station near the boat storage area in the back. We had electricity and water but otherwise it was bare bones camping. The campground was really nice with a laundry and a nice fresh water pool, a rarity in Baja because they are usually salt water pools. Out in town that night we went to the local gentlemen's club with two other guys from Idaho we met in the campground. Sometime after midnight, Josh ended up bringing one of the strippers back to his tent which was set up right next to my truck. My pop-up truck camper has canvas sides so you can hear noise through them quite easily. I did not get a very good night's sleep that night because Josh and his new girlfriend was making love most of the night. He stayed in touch with her and had plans to move to Baja and live with her, but that never happened.

That first trip to Baja with Josh was a real learning experience. We met a lot of interesting people and made a lot of new friends. There are a lot of Canadians from Vancouver and British Columbia who spend the cold winters in Baja California camping. Also, almost as many Americans from mainly Montana, the Dakotas, Idaho, Oregon, Washington State, and Northern California are down there doing the same thing.

As of the writing of this book, I have continued to return to Baja during January, February and March each year for the last five years. One year I traveled down to La Paz with Al Carvajal and his friend Toni Kieley. On the way south we went out on a boat in Guerrero Negro and petted the gray whales, which was another bucket list item to check off my list. In La Paz we rented a nice condo for a week on the waterfront and Carol flew in to join us. We timed our arrival in La Paz for the five days of Carnival which starts every day at about sunset with an hour-long parade of floats, and finishes up about four in the morning. There are lots of bands and loud music, dancing, games, food booths, etc. We all had a blast, and Carol especially liked swimming with the giant whale sharks and eating out at sea food restaurants.

Al and I went out one night by ourselves to enjoy Carnival. We were standing in front of the main stage on the Malecon listening to the headliner band in a very large crowd. All of a sudden, the mass of people we were part of started moving in two different directions, both to the right and to the left of the stage. I asked Al, what's happening? He said just move with the crowd or we will be trampled. Soon it became apparent from the smell that there was a large flow of raw sewage coming from up in town and was headed for the sea. The flow was about 50 feet wide and three inches deep, and stretched back into town for a couple of blocks. As we stood with the crowd watching the river of sewage flow by, I said to Al, what do you think happened? Al said, "Shit Happens" I laughed so hard I almost fell into the flow. We had to walk two blocks up into town to get around the main sewage line which had ruptured and looked like a geyser at Yellowstone National Park.

Each year I return to enjoy Carnival and rent a nice condo on the waterfront with a pool, hot tub, and a magnificent view. In the past few years Josh, Jean Lundeen, and Pete Davis have flown down and joined me either in Loreto or at the condo in La Paz for Carnival and to swim with the whale sharks.

I really enjoy going to Baja every year. The people are very nice, the food and the fishing are good, the weather is usually great, and it's much less expensive and safer in Baja than it is in San Francisco. During my trip to Baja in 2019 I outlined this book and wrote down notes of stories I remembered.

In 2020 I was in Baja when the pandemic hit and I heard the US Mexican border may be closed soon. It was March and I was half way through my trip and not ready to leave yet. I called Carol and told her I was going to one of my favorite remote beaches for two weeks and possibly ride out the worst of the pandemic. So, I went to the remote beach where there is usually at least a half dozen Americans and Canadians camping.

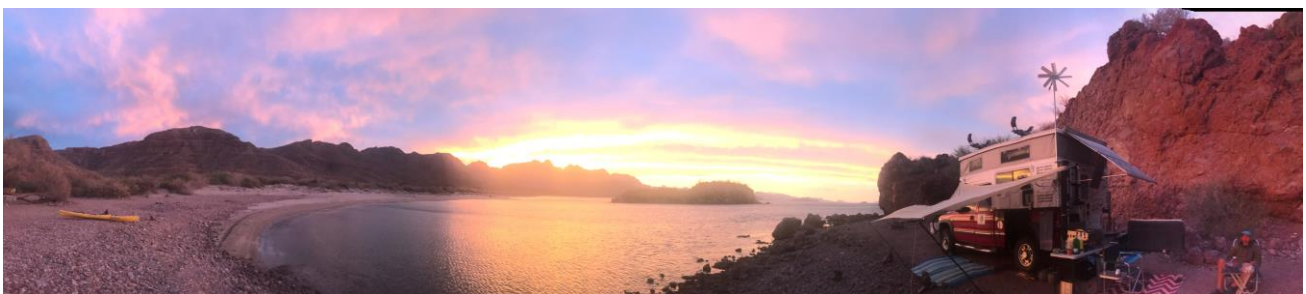
When I got there, I had the beach to myself, everyone else who had been there had headed back home to the north. I set up my camp and settled in for two weeks. I did not see another human being for five days, and then a sailboat went past the beach in the distance. A couple of days later a Canadian couple showed up with their little girl and set up on the beach nearby. They too were trying to ride out the pandemic and delay having to go back home.

At the end of two weeks in isolation and no news from the outside world I decided to leave and go to Loreto, restock, and head to another of my favorite beaches for another two weeks. When I got back to the main road, a two-hour drive from the beach, I found a roadblock set up by the Mexican Police. They told me that all the beaches in Baja were now closed and that I should go home to the USA.

When I got to Loreto, I discovered that the only services that were open were gas stations, grocery stores, a few pharmacies, and the hospital. Everything else was shut down including restaurants, hotels, camp grounds, etc. I stayed with friends I know who live in Loreto for two days and then headed north.

It took me four days to get back home to San Francisco. Each night I camped somewhere in the desert or off the road as far as I could get and feel safe. When I got to the border the Mexicans were mainly selling masks and hand sanitizer to cars waiting in line to enter the US. It was really strange driving through Los Angeles with no traffic at all. I was able to drive from San Diego to San Francisco in only eight hours.

During my trip in Baja in 2020 I wrote this book on my mini i-pad and when I got back home, I finished it up and proof read it.



Sea Story #68, (Carol Saved my Life)

In about 2016, Carol and I were diving for abalone from our kayaks at Van Damme State beach in Mendocino County, CA. We had paddled out to the area just inside some big rocks where the waves break on the outer ones. We tied off our kayaks to bull kelp in shallow clear water of about 10 feet. We put on our weight belts, masks and snorkels, grabbed our Ab irons and prepared to drop off our kayaks into the water.

I was wearing a two-piece camouflaged free diving suit which has a beaver tail on the jacket which extends between your legs from the back and attaches to the front with two swivel snaps. My paddle was attached to the center top of the kayak with a leash strap that had a carabiner on the end that clipped to a pad eye. I was ready to enter the water just before Carol was ready, so I slipped over the side of the kayak into the water. When I did, I did not realize that my beaver tail had gotten snagged on the carabiner clip. As I entered the water, the kayak flipped over and was now on top of my but and my back, because my beaver tail was attached to the kayak by the carabiner. I could not see or reach to where I was connected to the kayak to release myself. I did not carry a knife, because that was just one more thing on you to snag kelp and trap you underwater. So here I was trapped under my kayak and unable to breath. I kicked my fins hard and was able to get my head just far enough up on the side of my kayak to get my snorkel above water to get a breath, but I was still trapped and it was an effort to keep getting my snorkel above the water each time I needed to breathe. On the third attempt to breath, I took the snorkel out of my mouth, kicked even harder and got my mouth far enough above the water to yell "HELP". Carol heard me and jumped in the water to help me. She had seen my kayak flip over when I entered the water but thought nothing about it because that can happen from time to time and was not abnormal. When she got to me seconds later, she saw that I was attached to the kayak by my beaver tail. She pushed the kayak over a little so I could breathe from my snorkel easier and then unattached me from the kayak. Looking back, if Carol or someone else had not been there I would have eventually drowned. Thank god we were using the buddy system during this dive. There were a lot of times when I dove solo and this same thing could have happened with no one around to help me.

Sea Stories, Chapter 5

(The Senior Years), Ages 65 -?)

(2017 -?)

Almost every year on Labor Day Weekend the members of the BCD dive club travel down to the Big Sur area of California to camp out and scuba dive. We usually rent one of the group sites at Plaskett Creek Camp Ground and dive at one of three different locations in the near vicinity.

Sea Story #69, (Carol Saved my Life Again)

In 2017, on Sunday morning we all decided to launch our kayaks from Lime Kiln State Park beach and paddle out to one of our favorite dive sites a mile off shore. The site is a large underwater pinnacle in 80 feet of water and covered by a large kelp bed.

There were six of us, Roy Coto, Pete Davis, Dan Schwartz, Jean Lundeen, Carol, and myself. We had all dove this location many times in the past, so we were quite familiar with the underwater environment. It was a warm sunny day with a slight breeze and great visibility, about 40 feet. We all tied up our kayaks to the kelp and entered the water. Some members buddied up or dove solo and Carol and I stayed close to each other for about the first half of the dive, and then we split up. The spear fishing was great, in no time I had my limit of 10 Rock fish and one Lingcod, but I could still take one more lingcod. Near the end of my dive, I was on top of the pinnacle under my boat in about 20 feet of water. My air pressure in my tank was down to 200 psi so I started for the surface. I have a bad habit of not surfacing when you are supposed to when your tank reaches 500 psi. As I was swimming to the surface I looked down and saw a huge Lingcod just below me on top of the pinnacle. So, I figure I can go down, shoot it, and get back to the surface before I run out of air. I swim down, shoot it and head for the surface with the gun in my hand and the Lingcod trailing behind me. Just as I am about to break the surface, (my head is about one foot from the surface) the Lingcod gets caught in some kelp and stops me from moving. At the same time, I run out of air.

This is where you are trained to drop your weight belt, the spear gun, get to the surface and inflate your buoyancy compensator, (BCD). But I'm thinking, I

can make it, just kick harder and I won't lose my weight belt, the 11 fish attached to it, my spear gun, and the other Lingcod. So, I kick as hard as I can and just get my head half way out of the water, just enough to take my regulator out of my mouth and yell "HELP". I could see everybody else was already on top of their kayaks and Carol was closest to me about 20 feet away. I yelled for help again and Carol jumped in the water and Swam over to me. I was totally exhausted at this point from kicking so hard to keep my head out of the water just enough to breath. She took the speargun with the fish attached to it and started putting air into my BCD manually since she could not fill it from my empty tank.

I remember at about this point everyone else was leaving and paddling back to shore and it was just Carol and I left in the water. I was breathing so hard I thought I was going to have another heart attack. It took me a good five minutes to get my breathing back to normal, and another 10 minutes to get everything back on the kayak and start paddling back to shore. looking back on that event, I think I would have drowned if Carol had not been there again to help me. I don't think I would have let go of the speargun, or dropped my weight belt. But at least I would have left this world doing something I truly loved.

(Continued)

After Jake and Buster died of old age, (those were our two dogs). We decided to be pet free so we could travel more without having to get someone to take care of our pet when we were gone. It was working out just fine for several years until one day, we were ambushed

Carol and I were sitting on the back porch enjoying the view of the garden, and sharing a beer, when a cat we had never seen before jumped over the back fence into our yard. Carol called it, and it came over and jumped in her lap and wanted to be loved. After about 10 minutes of petting, it got up and jumped back over the fence from where it had come from. This same behavior continued to occur for several weeks, pretty much the same way. Then one day "she" came limping into the yard. Carol said, oh, dear let me get you some warm milk and make you better.

Well, one thing leads to another and the next thing you know the cat has a name and is sleeping in our bed, or wherever she wanted to. We named her GG because she caught all the gophers in the back yard, and sometimes would bring them in the house still alive. She also catches, mice, rats, birds, plus she ate all the spiders in the back yard. She sleeps most of the day in the

house and spends most of her nights outside. She won't use a litter box and has to always go outside, but not in our yard, which is cool by us. When we go on vacation for two weeks at a time she stays outside, and we have a neighbor put food on the back porch every morning. When we get back home, she shows up quickly in need of love for a few days then she's back to her regular routine. We love her and she loves us back, most of the time.

Sea Story #70, (Twin Rainbow Trout)

Five years ago, in about 2015 my brother-in-law, Ken Mahler invited me to be part of his family's annual trout fishing derby. He and his in laws, sons, and other family members and friends have been traveling up to McArthur Burney Falls State Park in Northern California each year for the past 15 years. The event is a big four-day long camp out with about 15 guys who love to fish for trout. Each year everyone participating in the derby puts \$20.00 in the pot and the person who catches the biggest trout wins the money and has their name embroidered on the trophy vest and that person has to buy everybody breakfast on the last day.

I had not been fishing in quite a few years and did not have much equipment except for an old fishing reel and a hand full of old lures. A few days before I was supposed to go, Carol came home and gave me a new fishing pole she bought at Gus's discount fishing store near her business. It was yellow, about six feet long, and had a label on it that said, "Caution, contains lead which may cause cancer".

On the first day of the derby five of us went to Baum Lake to see if we could catch the big one. It was a mile-long walk into the lake which belonged to PG&E. When we arrived at the lake everyone got rigged up and started fishing, except for me. I had to rig up my new pole with the old reel and it took a little time to get ready. Meanwhile, all the others were already fishing with their fancy poles, reels, and multiple lures. After I got rigged up, I started fishing, and on the third cast I hooked into a big Rainbow Trout. No one else had even got a bite yet and everyone was surprised at seeing me hook one so soon. As I reeled it in it looked to be about two feet long, just as I was reaching down to grab it, it spit out the hook and swam away. My nephew Kevin Mahler was standing next to me and said, don't you have a net? I said, no I only have this little pole and a hand full of old lures. He said, stand next to me and use my net so you don't lose the next fish you hook.

I got ready and started casting the same lure again in the same spot where I had hooked the first fish. On the second cast I hooked into another big one. I reeled it in and scooped it up with the net. Success, it was a beautiful 22-inch-long Rainbow Trout. Everyone said that it was probably going to be the winner since it was the biggest fish ever caught by anyone in the group in the past 15 years. I put the fish on my stringer, and five minutes later I was fishing again. On the next cast I hooked another big one. It ended up being another 22-inch-long Rainbow Trout, exactly like the first one.

About an hour later, Kevin walked up with a big 20-inch Rainbow Trout and said, check out this 20-inch-long big boy and then he threw it back in the lake. We were all shocked and wanted to know why he threw it back in the lake. He said he had bought it at the Nob Hill store where he worked to try and fool us into thinking that he had caught the winning fish. However, I had spoiled his plans with my bigger fish and he was dejected. I continued fishing over the next four days, but I never caught another fish, but I did win the fishing derby.

Here are some things I hope to be able to continue doing into my senior years:

Ride my Harley Davidson for as long as I can keep it on two wheels, and not on its side.

Hike in the mountains and hunt delicious wild mushrooms.

Scuba and free dive the world over.

Travel overseas and to Baja every year and stay for as long as possible.

Continue to garden and grow edible and non-edible plants and mushrooms.

Love and support my children, mom, sister, and most of all Carol.

Continue to support the organizations I care about. (The BCD, The MSSF, and the GG HOG Chapter).

Last but not least, stay as far away from Covid-as possible.

It's not the end, the adventure continues! (Updates to follow)

