Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University beginning an oral history interview with Dr. Charles Julienne of the U.S. Navy. Today’s date is the 5th of August, 2004. I am in the interview room in the Special Collections building on the campus of Texas Tech in Lubbock. Dr. Julienne is joining me by telephone from California. Good afternoon sir.

Charles Julienne: A very good afternoon.

LC: Thank you. We’re going to begin if you will by getting some basic biographical data onto the record. Where were you born sir and when?

CJ: I was born in Hayward, California in 1933.

LC: Tell me a little bit if you will about your family. First of all, your mother, what was her name?

CJ: Mother was Alice Julienne. She was born in Denmark and adopted and brought to America when she was three, so that would be about 1909 or 1906.

LC: Were her parents Danish citizens?

CJ: Yes, both born in Denmark. They came to America to establish a new life. Then when they were prosperous, they went back to Denmark to adopt a child.

LC: So they purposefully went back?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Do you know anything about how your mother came to be in the position to be adopted, anything about that?
CJ: Yes, story has it that her father was a captain of the King’s guard. Her mother was a notable actress. It was not convenient for their lifestyle to have a child. So the child was put up for adoption.

LC: Was it through a private arrangement that the adoption was handled do you know?

CJ: I have no idea what the final parts were. I just know that the grandparents went to the agency and picked my mother.

LC: How was it that they were making their living here in the States?

CJ: Grandfather was a gentleman farmer. The only thing he ever raised was his hat. But he was a cowboy in California with the land ranchers Miller and Lux. He was a butcher for them.

LC: Was that something that he a skill in previous to coming to the States?

CJ: Yes, he was recognized by the king and got a medal, Craftsman and Tradesman were in competition every year in Denmark and he got the bronze medal for being a butcher.

LC: So he was pretty good at what he was doing?

CJ: Oh, yes. As he went around the central valley of California he saw ranches that were poorly managed and so he bought them and improved their management and sold them for profit.

LC: Oh, very good. So he did well in the American west then?

CJ: Yes, very, very well.

LC: Did you know him?

CJ: Yes, I recall him as a child.

LC: What about your grandmother?

CJ: On my mother’s side?

LC: Yes.

CJ: I recall her also. Let’s see did she die first? They died shortly within a year of each other. I don’t remember which one died first.

LC: Did they adopt other children or just your mother?

CJ: No, just my mother.

LC: It sounds like then she lived in California all of her life, is that right?
CJ: let’s see now, who my mother?

LC: Yes, after her adoption?

CJ: Yes.

LC: So, she was practically a California native.

CJ: Yes.

LC: I know that’s important to Californians as it is to Texans. Where you came up is always important. Tell me a little bit about your father. He was a dentist you said.

CJ: Yes, father was born in Portland, Oregon. My paternal grandmother was a J-U-L-I-A-N. She became enamored with a riverboat gambler who was a J-U-L-I-E-N. When she found herself with child, she moved to Portland and took the feminine form of her boyfriend’s name. So the birth record was J-U-L-I-E-N-N-E. Unfortunately those records had been destroyed in a fire and all that kind of story. That’s the story that my great aunt told. My father denied it, but anyways that’s the story.

LC: Now what was your father’s name?

CJ: David Hunter.

LC: He went overseas, is that right?

CJ: He went overseas? Yes.

LC: Did he go to Switzerland is that right?

CJ: No, France.

LC: France, I’m sorry. I misremembered that. How did that come about?

CJ: Well, in those days people went overseas, they traveled back to the “old country” and that sort of stuff. But the French was basically in Louisiana and then before the king gave it to or sold it to America. So that was the basic French.

LC: Where did he go to school?

CJ: Father went to the University of California in San Francisco.

LC: Had he then been born in the bay area or in California?

CJ: No, he was born in Portland.

LC: I’m sorry in Portland yes I have that noted. His schooling, did he always want to be a dentist?
CJ: I don’t know that. Father was not the best of fathers. He was distance from me. We had very little in common except dentistry. We could communicate on a professional level but we never able to communicate as father, son.

LC: Where did you actually grow up? Did you grow up in Hayward?

CJ: Well, I grew up in the bay area and than after World War II I came to Southern California.

LC: Do you remember much about the war?

CJ: Yes, very, very definitely World War II?

LC: Yes.

CJ: I use to sit up on a hill and spot airplanes.

LC: Did you have a little guide so that you could tell be the profile what kind of plane it was?

CJ: Supposed to have but kids were pretty good at that sort of thing. They’re better than adults.

LC: They sort of pick it up right away.

CJ: Yes, you pick it up right away. So I went over to a couple of these classes with my mother. They had these black models that are silhouettes; it was no time at all before you could tell the American planes. We never saw any foreign planes, so it was all Americans.

LC: Now where were you living when you were doing this?

CJ: Hayward.

LC: What airport would you have been?

CJ: The Army Air Corps had built an airport in Hayward.

LC: So there was quite a bit of activity for you to seen then, I’m sure.

CJ: Yes, of course before that field was built we were still looking at airplanes. Sitting on the hill looking at airplanes started immediately after the beginning of the war. It took some time to build the base.

LC: Did you have any odd jobs or anything during that wartime period? As you were growing up it would have been?

CJ: I had a paper route.
LC: Was working something that you wanted to get to right away or being more of a kid?

CJ: It was something you kind of did. I guess my first job was cutting apricots in half for drying. We were in kind of a rural area that was loaded with cherry trees and corn and apricots and that sort of thing. So amongst the houses there was vegetation, groves of stone fruit, cherries that sort of thing. In fact our neighborhood we called Cherry Land. We all had some sort of parcels for growing veggies during the Depression and peddled that. So there was a lot of agrarian in the neighborhood and of course during World War II we put up veggies and so forth in canning.

LC: Yes, what about school. Tell me where you went to high school.

CJ: I went to high school in Southern California that was right after World War II. So moved to Southern California in ’46 and went to junior high and high school in Southern California.

LC: And graduated from high school in?

CJ: ’51.

LC: Were you paying much attention as a high school student to world events?

CJ: Sure. The Korean thing was about that time.

LC: Absolutely.

CJ: I had graduated at 16 and I went from “Charles” to “Mr.” in college and I wasn’t ready. So I joined the Navy to grow up basically. Also learned how to study.

LC: While in the Navy?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Tell me a little bit about your college experience that semester. Where were you?

CJ: It was a city college. I took pre-dental classes. So you had chemistry, and let’s see was it physics? No.

LC: Biology maybe or something?

CJ: No, I don’t think I took biology. Let’s see there was English and French and Zoo, probably California history. Some of those required classes.

LC: Sure, it didn’t go too well though?
CJ: No, I was really lost. I wasn’t going to get the grades that were going to get me in dental school. So I had to do something. What I was doing wasn’t working. So I joined.

LC: Did the family kind of get behind your decision to enlist, you were volunteering?

CJ: Yes.

LC: So that was all positive on that end as much as possible?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Did you think that that you would return to higher learning?

CJ: Yes. In fact the grades on my pre-recruitment exam guaranteed me a school. So I joined as a recruit knowing I was going to go to a school. I knew that it would not necessarily be my school of choice but the odds were very good it would be.

LC: How did you come to select the Navy particularly?

CJ: My mother had a boyfriend who had retired as an officer from the Navy at the time. That was probably why.

LC: So there was some kind of background influence?

CJ: Well, there was a little bit yes. He had been a radioman in the submarines and spoke highly of it. Didn’t have any really negative connotations. It seemed like a good choice.

LC: Tell me about your first sort of official interaction. When did you get your letter telling you to report? Do you remember that?

CJ: Let’s see. I don’t remember getting the letter but I remember going down to the physical.

LC: What happened there?

CJ: It was downtown L.A. What was surprising was that I told them that I was going down in the morning to get a physical. But after the physical we were sworn oath, we were on our way.

LC: Really?

CJ: Yes. I probably had been told that was a possibility, but it didn’t sink in. So they bought us lunch and that afternoon we took the train to San Diego to the recruit training.
LC: Bang, you were in the Navy. (laughs)
CJ: Yes, we were in.
LC: Tell me about that initial training period. Do you remember roughly how long it lasted?
CJ: Let’s see boot camp was probably 12 weeks or 16 weeks in San Diego. It’s in two places. One out to the east called Camp Elliot, you did your basic and then you moved back to the Naval Training Center, which was downtown San Diego. Having been to college, there wasn’t many guys that had college experience. So you could see a lot, or I had a perception of where it was going and the “why for” a lot of the things that we did, the mass training. Not the mass training but the mass punishment for the refractions of few and that sort of thing.
LC: Collective punishment?
CJ: Sure.
LC: What other things do you remember about boot camp, was the physical end of it something that you had no problem with? The PT training?
CJ: No, I had no problem with any of it except that I developed a bruise on my knee from the rifle range, developed into a cellulitis and I was taken off the register and put into the hospital for a couple of days and heat cradled for it to come to a point so it could drain. While I was there, I had absolutely nothing to do. So I wandered over to the dental department next door, nosing around. Someone says, “What do you want to do?” I said, “Well I was just interested and I wanted to ask to become a dental technician.” They said you want to speak to Captain Ford. I didn’t know who he is. So anyway they got me and all I can remember of the man was these huge Eagles. As a recruit they just looked enormous to me. He had just come from the Dental Technician School where he had been in charge out to, was a clinic director at Camp Elliott. So he made a phone call or two and he found out more. My status was that I was guaranteed a school. He listened do my story and chatted me up. From then on it was given that I was going to go to Dental Technician School.
LC: This was something that you were already kind of aiming toward on your own?
CJ: Yes, that would be the first choice, that hospital corpsman or something like that.

LC: How much work did you have to do preparatory to getting over to the dental technician school?

CJ: You finished boot camp and then you had two weeks of leave, which I took up in the Sierras. The reported back for school and there was a couple of days, part of a week anyway that I had general duty waiting for my class to start. Then started class.

LC: What was this sir?

CJ: San Diego. Yes, back to San Diego. It wasn’t slam-dunk but it was all familiar. I knew a tooth and I had been in an office. After high school and while I was first year of college I was working at a prosthetic laboratory. So, it wasn’t completely strange.

LC: You kind of knew your way around at least the groundwork of it?

CJ: Yes, at least the language. A lot of it wasn’t brand-new. So that made it easier.

LC: How big was the class?

CJ: Forty to 50 maybe. It’s a little vague, but at least 35.

LC: How many of those guys made it all the way through?

CJ: Probably most of them.

LC: I’m thinking this was probably pretty tough?

CJ: Yes, but we were screened for application before we get there. So the people who were picked had the ability to make it if they wanted it bad enough.

LC: Tell me about the curriculum, what were they trying to get you to be able to handle.

CJ: So that we were chair-side assistants and that we could clean teeth. So part of that included record keeping and ordering supplies so we all had to learn to type and that was probably the hardest thing for me to do.

LC: I know you mentioned that on the material you provided that was actually an obstacle.

CJ: That was the toughest.

LC: Why was that tough?

CJ: I don’t know.
LC: No sort of left, right problem or any of that? Just didn’t come to you?
CJ: Again it was absolutely sterile; there was no background, where there was background to almost everything else. I guess they taught us typing. I’m sure they taught up typing, but it was just nothing I’d ever done or had any semblance of familiarity before that. So that was all brand new. I passed, but it wasn’t the top of the class.
LC: It wasn’t the thing that was driving you?
CJ: It was one of those things that just took a little bit more effort.
LC: Do you remember anything about the instructors?
CJ: Let’s see…yes, there was one chief, bless his heart. He was not pickled, he was tired. I remember he was kind of in charge. The kind of a guy he would say, “You, I want you to do such and such. You go wait down at the master’s arms shack and I’ll be down there in a minute.” So when he didn’t show up you went looking for him. He said, “I’ve got somebody else down at the master’s arms shack. I want you to stand down there with him and I’ll be down there.” He was little bit foggy. So, he retired and he came back as a sanitizer. You go around and spray for bugs and what have you. I thought that was kind of sad. But the Navy had a civilian job for him after the retired.
LC: So he didn’t get turned out to pasture.
CJ: That’s the only one I really remember, that, and the commanding officer. I remember the commanding officer because of his impeccable uniforms.
LC: What rank was he, do you remember?
CJ: He was a captain.
LC: Was he a dentist?
CJ: Yes.
LC: Was he kind of a remote figure though?
CJ: Yes, he was. The only reason that I really ever got to see him was I had some assignments of typing and I used his secretary’s office to do this typing, and that’s before electric typewriters. Then he would come and go. But I remember his immaculate tailored uniforms. They were just unbelievably gorgeous.
LC: Did you have any kind of a graduation ceremony when you finished?
CJ: Yes, sure.
LC: So you remember that? Can you describe it?
CJ: Let’s see. I guess we all got up in a line and got a diploma. Then we had the basis for the next duty assignment. So let’s say there were 35 people in the class and there were 35 billets. The person who had the highest grade got to the first choice and the second person, third person, fourth person all that sort of stuff. Well people were dying in Korea and you wanted to be careful about what you asked for. So people tended to shy away from the Marines. I asked for the Marine Air Station at Tustin, which was across from El Toro, and that’s where the helicopter and the lighter then air was. I think I was the third or fourth in my class so I got what I wanted, but I had done my homework. So I knew that I was not going to go in harms way if I went up to the Marines in Tustin, Marine Air.

LC: So that was pretty much what you were basing your decision on?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Did you also want very much to stay in Southern California at that point as opposed to Korea?

CJ: That didn’t seem important, I think it was coincidental. There were ship assignments and that sort of stuff, but basically I guess close to home was back in my mind. But I thought it was a safe place.

LC: How much Charles were you taking in about the conflict in Korea? Were you following that fairly closely?

CJ: Well I guess it’s in the news. In the States we didn’t read the Stars and Stripes. So it was just what we got in the local press, the Harold Examiner in L.A., it was still in business then and the Orange County Paper in Santa Ana.

LC: Did you think that the U.S. was making a good decision, that President Truman had made a good decision to commit U.S. forces to Korea?

CJ: I don’t think there was any question about it. The country was 100% behind it. It was a peacekeeper for the United Nations. It wasn’t a sole effort by only the Americans. It was peace keeping with the United Nations.

LC: As you pointed out it was coalition of allies.

CJ: I remember the Turks. The Turks didn’t take prisoners.

LC: How did you learn that?
CJ: I thought it would be nice if I took some leave and went to Japan. We had a  unit that was transferring to Korea. I thought I’d just travel along with them and get off in  Japan. So I took leave and we didn’t stop in Japan, we landed in Korea. I’m in the middle  of a war on leave. Good ol’ leave time taking up getting shot at.

LC: You’ve got all the luck huh?

CJ: It’s good you learn these lessons early because later on then you know what to  ask for. You might get what you ask for. So anyway I got shot at and I ran into some  really brave Marines when I was on leave in Korea.

LC: Now how long were you over there?

CJ: It was about a week.

LC: Where were you, do you know?

CJ: A place called Charlie Med. I have no idea other than I think it was the west  coast of Korea.

LC: Tell me about these Marines that you met, how did that come about?

CJ: They were billeted. In other words I had a bed in a tent. It was one of those  things, “Come on Doc let’s go find Charlie.” I said, “That sound like fun.” It had been  raining and it looked like Camp Pendleton, although I hadn’t been to Camp Pendleton  yet. It looked like hills and dales and very much like Southern California. So we went out  one night on patrol. The sergeant who kept taking us along took me by the helmet and  pushed my face down in the mud and about that time the mortars start dripping. I was the  only on that lived through that.

LC: You were the only one left?

CJ: Yes, there was a couple people alive but they died later. And the sergeant was  on top of me.

LC: Wow! How did you get out to there?

CJ: Probably the radioman was still alive, that sort of thing. Some people came  and got us. But Charlie knew where we were and every square meter was zeroed in with a  mortar. So you stepped into that and you become a target.

LC: And you weren’t even supposed to be there at all?

CJ: Nope.

LC: That’s extraordinary. Do you know that unit that you were with?
CJ: I have no idea. All I know is Charlie Med.

LC: Nothing about any of those guys, their names or anything?

CJ: No.

LC: That’s extraordinary.

CJ: That would be about 1950… I want to say ’52. That’s not right. I graduated from dental technician school at Christmas time in ’52 so that had to be ’53.

LC: Wow, some early part of the year there, there was an increase in activity as the negotiations were coming to their fruitions, the cease-fire clause.

CJ: I suppose, yes.

LC: That’s probably part of that. How were you able to get back? Do you remember getting back on a plane to get out of Korea?

CJ: Yes, very definitely. A couple of long truck rides to get a hop to Japan, to Tokyo and then I got a hop to the States from there. MAC, they called them MAC flights in those days, Military Airlift Command.

LC: That was a pretty extraordinary leave for you?

CJ: Yes, it certainly was. (Laughs) I’ll tell you I did a lot of my homework a lot better from then on.

LC: How did this incident change your thinking Charles? Can you describe that?

CJ: I didn’t talk about it. I didn’t really bury it. Yes, I guess I buried it. I just didn’t talk about it much because I had no business being there in the first place. So I came back and went to work and asked for Prosthetic Technician School. In the fall of ’52 or ’53 went back to San Diego for six months of training as a prosthetic technician.

LC: What did you have to do to make that request and have it fulfilled?

CJ: I took written examinations for dental apprentice to dentalman and passed that. Passed the rating for third class and about hat time my boss suggested that maybe I’d like some more training. So he had a cronie who was at the Dental Prosthetic Technician School in San Diego. So I just applied and was accepted.

LC: Would you call this process sort of mentoring or was it more kind of luck or somewhere in between.
CJ: Probably a lot of luck, being in the right place at the right time. I know that my boss, Dr. Owens was drinking buddies with Chief Lynch. It may not have been Lynch-was at the Prosthetic Technician School.

LC: So it was kind of a network thing?

CJ: But you still had to apply and you had to go through channels.

LC: Absolutely.

CJ: So all Owens could do was write a favorable letter, which I presume he did because I was accepted. But his cronie would have no input in it what so ever other than to look out for me when I get there.

LC: As you say, you had to qualify for this.

CJ: Yes, you had to qualify. But I didn’t take a test specifically; I didn’t like go and do hand-eye coordination things and all that. You had to have a good report on what you had been doing, your behavior, this sort of stuff. As a person working at the chair, my evaluations were favorable so that was certainly a strong part of the recommendations.

LC: How long did you this training period last?

CJ: Six months.

LC: Do you remember can you describe the differences in the curriculum in the Prosthetic Technician School from the earlier Dental Technician School?

CJ: Most of the people were a little bit older, a little more mature. Most of them were petty officers, in other words they’d been around a little while. Had succeeded in the opportunities for advancement. Some of them had come back from ship port duty or overseas duty. Myself of course I had been in Southern California and just went back to school.

LC: How many guys in this class at this stage?

CJ: I want to say 24, thereabouts.

LC: Did they start up a new class every six months or was it more staggered?

CJ: Yes, a new class every six months.

LC: So this was a pretty select group at this point?

CJ: Right, because it was the second prosthetic technician class.

LC: Ok, this is the second class?
CJ: Yes, the second class the Navy gave in San Diego. They may have had another class a Great Lakes, but this was the second one they gave in San Diego.

LC: Where exactly was this training given?

CJ: Same building that I did with the enlisted, or the first one.

LC: Technician school.

CJ: Just a different part of the building.

LC: Can you describe the facility? Was it World War II era or was it newer?

CJ: The building itself was built during World War II yes, wooden barracks.

LC: How big a building are we talking about? If you were standing in front of it describing it to me

CJ: Ok, it’s a typical H-shape where you had a wing on the right and a wing on the left connected by an isthmus. The isthmus would be longer than the extensions on the ends. You had an upstairs and a downstairs.

LC: Were you billeted in the building?

CJ: No we slept in other barracks and we marched to and from class.

LC: Did you have any other duties assigned to you while a student? I don’t know if they made you pick up a few shifts doing something else?

CJ: No, we had studies every night I remember that. We probably had fire watches because those buildings burned in a flash. So we probably had a fire watch. No, there was nothing other than the job itself.

LC: What did a typical day look like? Can you take us through that?

CJ: You get up early and go to breakfast and then you go back to clean up the barracks and then march off to class and break for lunch. I think we may have marched to lunch, straggled back. Then the afternoon and then marched back to barracks and then we had chow and laundry and that sort of stuff. And then study hall at night.

LC: Was most of what you were doing, could it be described as bookwork?

CJ: Yes and no. We had during the day we had technical things to do, like making dentures. In the evening it was the bookwork associated with it.

LC: Tell me a little bit about that process of learning how to fabricate, how to measure, how to manipulate the materials, what kind of things were you working with?
CJ: Well, we had the metals used to make dentures or partials and gold. We had the resins, we called acrylics that you combined and processed in a water bath to a temperature near boiling for a period of time. It hardens into solid plastic. Then there was some building of porcelain restorations as well.

LC: Did you enjoy this Charles, I mean this is more hands on?
CJ: Yes, this was great. This was more technical and of course it’s closer to dentistry.

LC: So this was something that you were really starting to…
CJ: Of course I had already had six months of this in high school and a first year of college. So a lot of it was slam-dunk. I was ahead of the curve.

LC: The other guys tried to catch up with you in a way?
CJ: There wasn’t much rivalry amongst us.
LC: That’s interesting.
CJ: Again we knew that we were going to get our first choice of duty on the basis of the billets available. This was one of the things where we were a competitor to ourselves rather than the class. You had to learn stuff, you either learned it or you didn’t learn it. I didn’t feel any competition at all.

LC: Did anybody in the class that you were in, the 23 other guys, did anybody wash our or was everybody pretty successful?
CJ: That’s a good question. I don’t know. I don’t remember anybody washing out.
LC: Was it stressful at all?
CJ: I suppose. Yes, it was. When you say stressful I’m thinking we were working with a substitute for gold, we called it technique metal and it’s very difficult to handle.
LC: In what way?
CJ: It doesn’t have all the physical properties of gold, so it doesn’t melt as nice, it doesn’t case as nice. So if you follow all the rules you’re going to come up with some failures. That may have been designed into it so you could re-do it. If you could master the technique metal you could master gold, no doubt about it.

LC: Were they giving you this secondary material to work with because they didn’t want to risk the gold?
CJ: Yes, because the gold was expensive and this material— you didn’t have any accountability for.

LC: This was training work?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Was there some kind of concluding ceremony here as well?

CJ: Yes, there was again a certificate I’m sure a graduation certificate was issued. The folks arrived and all that sort of stuff.

LC: I was going to ask you, did they sort of show up and lead the cheers?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Did your dad sort of acknowledge the work you were doing?

CJ: No, my dad was not involved with us at all.

LC: So he was away at this point?

C: Yes, he and my mother separated when I was six.

LC: So he’s not really in the picture?

CJ: No.

LC: What was your initial enlistment period for?

CJ: Four years.

LC: You were coming up then; you were in your third year at this point. Were you thinking much about extending your tour?

CJ: No, I wanted to be a dentist. I had taken all of the stuff I could that would prepare me for dental school. In other words the Navy had nothing more to offer. So I got what I needed or what was available for me to build on as a foundation for dental school.

LC: That was the plan?

CJ: That was my plan, yes.

LC: You had that planned pretty much throughout or was it getting solidified as you moved forward?

CJ: Probably solidified as I was moving forward, but the basic was I wanted to be a dentist. Everything had to be going in that direction or it wasn’t part of my plan.

LC: So to kind of continue toward the end of the enlistment period, did you get an assignment posting after?

CJ: After Prosthetic Technician School, yes.
LC: Was that Camp Pendleton?
CJ: Yes that was Camp Pendleton.
LC: What position did you take there?
CJ: I worked in the laboratory, and there were 30 or 40 of us. It was a big lab. Someone decided that they wanted me to do crown and bridgework, which was something I really had to get the book out and teach myself because we didn’t get a lot of that in prosthetics school. We got a lot of basics. So I had some dentists help me with the way they wanted things done. So I had a lot of mentoring there.

LC: Who were those people?
CJ: Yes, one of them was Cy Tandy and it’s interesting because Cy Tandy will come along later in this story. Cy Tandy was there and there was a Commander Calhoon, again he come to count gold. There was a Captain Fachette who was executive officer who was a prosthetic dentist and famous for, I learned later, for some concepts. Then we had a commanding officer whose name escapes me, but his replacement was a Lynch. He was a very noble person, aristocratic. Let’s see, there was a couple more captains. One was a Fleet Marine Force and I don’t remember his name but we had five captains at the dental clinic at Camp Pendleton.

LC: Was this the principle clinic for the Marines?
CJ: Yes, there were other scattered clinics on Camp Pendleton. Camp Pendleton was a big piece of property. There was a dental clinic at Del Mar where the amphib people were and there was one at Las Pulgus, which was still taking care of recruits because of the gunnery range. There was another clinic near San Clemente. So there were several dental clinics, but I was at main side.

LC: You’ve described some of these men as acting in a mentoring capacity. Did they do that with anybody or was there something kind of special? You clicked with them?
CJ: No, it wasn’t me. It was just if they wanted me to do crown and bridge work then they had to teach me what they wanted.

LC: You’ve referred to that a couple items for a lay person, like myself; can you tell me how techniques might differ from one practitioner to another such that you would have to kind of get the groove?
CJ: When you spin a tooth down for an inlay or a crown that is different preparation than for a removable denture or a removable partial. The tolerances become very, very close, less than 1/100 of a millimeter. There’s suddenly a lot of precisions involved. That has to be taught. We really didn’t get a lot of that. We were exposed to it in Prosthetic Technician School but we didn’t develop skills at it. You’re working for a dentist who is doing the spinning down of the tooth to take this gold casting and wants it his way. And that’s fine, that’s what a prosthetic technician does.

LC: You execute for the dentist who is making these larger decisions?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Let me ask you a little bit about the sort of treatment schedules that people that patients would be on. Who would actually be seen in the clinics and in what state? Did they come in when they had a problem or did everybody come in every six months?

CJ: Let’s see now. It’s a little confusing because there’s so many years. Somewhere along the way they were required to come in. I believe in those days, in the first four years you got a screening. You got your physical exam, which included dental when you came in and you had one when you left.

LC: This would include x-rays as well?

CJ: May or may not. You certainly had it coming in and going out.

LC: You had to open up and let them have a look?

CJ: Yes. Then after that if you were on a second go around the re-enlistment physical may come at four years or at six years. So if you did the first four, let’s see your 18, 22. Then the next one would be maybe 26 or 28 for the re-enlistment, they were required physicals. That changed because all we were recording was disease, so there wasn’t any prevention. But this was 1954, ’55. Later it changed. This point people would come in with problems or their examine would say you need this, this and this to get done to be qualified for readiness. So then they would get their work done.

LC: What was, and I know this will be a general and impressionistic thing. Now looking back on it with all of your experience, what were the main problems that dentists were seeing in recruits coming in, in the early ‘50’s?
CJ: Neglect, cavities. The gum disease probably was well overlooked. We were just looking at holes in teeth. If they had too many of them they lost their teeth and prosthetic replacements.

LC: Would those decisions be made just by one dentist? He would say, “Look these all have to go?”

CJ: People were screening and documenting for forensics what was there and what was missing and what was decayed. Then the big holes were taken care of, the big cavities. So you’re going to be without pain.

LC: And without potential source of infection.

CJ: You have the highest rate of dentists to service personnel in boot camp. That’s where the availability of the time was at to get you taken care of. Not everybody obviously got everything taken care of at boot camp. An effort was made to have it all taken care of at boot camp.

LC: So guys who were training at Camp Pendleton were coming into the clinic?

CJ: Well, that’s not our recruit center. Recruit center was in San Diego. This was the next step up. So they may still be recruits and doing infantry man rifle range type things but they were still attached. Can you wait just one moment?

LC: Sure. Charles tell me, to actually pull a young persons teeth and recommend that they go to dentures, either upper, lower, or both, how bad did it have to be?

CJ: Let’s see. I had a couple of experiences with that. We had in my boot camp class, there was one kid from Oklahoma who’d lost all his teeth. I don’t know what it was like before. He went and had all his teeth out and I remember it had blood, seeping, oozing. But he was fitted with dentures before he left boot camp. He had teeth to go home with. They were a lot better than what he came in with.

LC: It sounds like it. It sounds like he was in deep trouble.

CJ: Then there was somewhere along the way a couple were he had a full mouth extraction. Most of the time I was aware those people had already been taken care of in boot camp.

LC: You mentioned document for forensics. Can you just talk about that element of what was done?
CJ: In other words you examined the mouth and you count the teeth that are there and you note the ones that are missing. Then you look at the x-rays and determine whether they’re missing or they’re just not erupted. Then you note the presence of fillings, white fillings and metal fillings. Then the areas that have decay. So it’s decayed, missing, and filled teeth. Then you have a chart and there’s some x-rays. So if someone perishes and you have a lot of these perishes and you can’t identify them then you look at their dental records and see if the dental record matches the skull.

LC: Was that standard operating to be making those kind of documentation, records for everyone who came in?

CJ: Yes, everybody had the same exam. Specifically where the filling was on the tooth, not just a filling, but exactly the design and all the other stuff.

LC: Where would those records be kept do you know?

CJ: Those were kept as part of the medical records.

LC: Part of the individual’s medical records and they would travel with?

CJ: With the person whenever he got transferred.

LC: Let me ask a little bit about the assignments. I believe you took after Camp Pendleton, you went on to Barstow is that right?

CJ: Yes, I went to Barstow. Let’s back up to Camp Pendleton. A couple of things happened there that were significant.

LC: Good.

CJ: One of them, in those days the Dempsey brothers of Knoxville, Tennessee got the contract for trash. They had developed a system where a truck picked up a dumpster that is full of trash and totes it to land fill somewhere on the base and then returns the dumpster. In those days we were using wax paper bags for trash at the chair side. So you put your disposable in the wax paper bags. The wax paper bags were collected at the end of the day and they were put out in the dumpster. Well, someone had some flammable material or a match or cigarette or something and we had a fire in the Dempsey dumpster. So the commanding officer decides that we can’t have that. So the wax paper bags were collected on the back porch of the dental unit, of the dental clinic. So that supposedly if someone saw it smoking or fire or smoke they could put it out. But those buildings burn down in three minutes. They were like tender sticks that you used to start a fire for boy
scouts. So this is the kind of mentality that we’re dealing with. Because they didn’t want
to be embarrassed about having a fire in the dumpster, which was steel.

LC: And much safer (laughter).

CJ: So about this time, the Navy promoted a lot of people who had been
overlooked for a long time because of retention purposes and maybe fairness. I don’t
know the purposes of it. Anyway we went from five captains to something like 20
overnight. Actually there was a letter from the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery saying
that if we make all the braves, chiefs, someone still has to paddle the canoe and we don’t
have enough gray desks for all of you, so you all go back to work. In those days captains
didn’t work. They walked around with a clipboard and sat behind a gray, steel desk. So
they had to put all these people to work. The problem with us underling was they were
finding world for us to do. So I figured it was about time for me to get out of Camp
Pendleton.

LC: Things had kind of lined up that way.

CJ: I said, “It’s going to go from bad to worse.” Of course it was like these
clever decision like putting the wax paper trashcans on the back porch. I said I don’t
want to be part of this. So I got myself transferred to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in
Barstow.

LC: How did you finagle that? Did you put in for it?

CJ: I put in for it.

LC: What was the job going to be?

CJ: Same job, prosthetic technician.

LC: How big was the clinic there?

CJ: It was much smaller. Let’s see we had five dental officers, two captains and
three lieutenants. One captain did removable dentures and the other did fixed. In other
words, casting when you had spun down teeth. The other ones did fillings and took out
teeth. All of them did dentistry, but one of the caps, Abel did removable and Captain
Lukins did fillings plus castings.

LC: Would this have been ’55, ’56?

How long were you actually there?

CJ: Yes, this is ’55, ’56.
CJ: I was in Barstow maybe a year and a half roughly.

LC: Did you learn much while you were there or was it more of the same?

CJ: Well, don’t know. I probably got better at what I was doing rather than learn anything new.

LC: Do you mean technically?

CJ: Yes.

LC: What about your own thinking about your future in dentistry, were you giving more thought now too?

CJ: I’m getting ready to get out so I’m looking at college, going back to school.

LC: You would need an undergraduate degree first?

CJ: Yes, because I haven’t got my AA and I didn’t have the requirements for dental school. I didn’t have the admission requirements yet.

LC: So what institutions were you beginning to kind of look at or had you already?

CJ: I was going to go back to where I started from, Glendale City College.

LC: Why was that? Why were you convinced that’s where you needed to go back to?

CJ: Probably familiarity and it was dirt cheap, I know that.

LC: How cheap?

CJ: What $25.00 a [credit per] quarter, something like this, or per semester, City College.

LC: Even city colleges now are becoming dreadfully expensive. So that kind of figure!

CJ: Well, it was minimal really. Gasoline was 29 cents a gallon, but still it was minimal.

LC: Did you have a car at this point?

CJ: Yes.

LC: What did kind, do you remember?

CJ: I had a 1954 Mercury.

LC: Nice.

CJ: Two door coupe, yet it was nice. It was a really beautiful automobile.
LC: That sounds great. Now where were you living when you were at Barstow?
CJ: I lived on base.
LC: On base?
CJ: I’d come in on weekends.
LC: Did they allow you to keep your car on base?
CJ: Yes, but the desert was harsh. The desert would get up and move in the wind and you’d get a lot of damage. So I rented a garage in civilian housing. I kept the Mercury in there.
LC: That was kind of you and it probably extended the life of the car quite a bit.
CJ: It extended the life of the car to over 100,000 miles.
LC: Superb. I’m from Michigan so I’m kind of tuned into the car thing. Now did you keep the car from quite a long time?
CJ: Yes I did. I kept it until ’64.
LC: So all the way through dental school?
CJ: Yes.
LC: Tell me about your actual separation from active status.
CJ: I stayed in the reserves because that was part of the deal. I actually didn’t have to stay in the active reserves but I had a good buddy who was in the active reserves and I could go with him to the reserve center in Pasadena. So one night a week I’d go over to Pasadena and actually did records, record keeping. Did exams although I wasn’t legally supposed to, the dentist is supposed to do the exams. I went in I think on a Monday and the dentist came in on Wednesday and signed all the paperwork.
LC: So he had it all laid out for him when he got there?
CJ: I was doing all the exams, counting the missing, filled and decay and reading the x-rays and making sure the dental records were up to date for all the Reservists. Then he would sign them on Wednesday. One night I remember somebody had a toothache and I put a temporary filling in it—in a year and a half something like that.
LC: Now that wouldn’t have been the first time you’d done a filling?
CJ: Oh no. Not a temporary, no.
LC: Were you authorized at this point to do that?
CJ: The temporary I was authorized to do, but I’m not authorized to make a
diagnosis. I collect data, but only a dentist can do diagnosis.

LC: So you’re doing this one night a week and I suppose you had a couple of
weeks during the summer?

CJ: Yes, the group I was with had just finished their training. So the command
was interested in my getting my two weeks of active duty training out of the way. So I
almost turned around and went right back out to Barstow and did the two weeks of
training. I hadn’t really been gone long enough for some people to miss me.

LC: You were back like a bad penny huh?

CJ: They said, “Do you know where you want to go?” I said, “I’ll go back to
Barstow.” They said that’s fine. So I went back. By this time I was working in prosthetic
technician lab and went back to my lab and I had a lot of new stuff to share, new
materials with the people in Barstow. So it was kind of nifty. There were a lot of neat
things going on.

LC: Let me ask you about the academic end of this. Take me through if you can
the progression of the schooling that you completed during this reserve period.

CJ: I was in undergraduate at Glendale College. Then I had to do English, I had to
do English Lit. I got the second half of Zoo done. I got the Physics and the Chemistry
done. There were classes like dental aptitudes, things where you had simulated exams.
But that was actually a class at Glendale College on dental aptitude. It was a three-unit
class.

LC: That’s incredible that they had even that specialized curriculum. That’s great.

So you were there what-two years?

CJ: A year and a half.

LC: And then on to where?

CJ: Then my grade point average really wasn’t high enough at the end of two
years to compete for USC.

LC: Right that first semester had really?

CJ: Yes, it held me. I had only applied to Cal [San Francisco] and I’m not sure I
applied to Loma Linda. I don’t think Loma Linda was there yet. But anyway Cal and
Southern Cal, USC. The school at UCLA hadn’t started yet. I may have asked for
Washington. Anyway the consensus of the places I asked were that I hadn’t a strong
enough grade point average to be competitive. So I went back and I went to LA State, LA
City College, which became LA State at about that time. So I had the junior year at LA
State and basically grade grubbed and really, really floated grades. So I had two
semesters there and then I applied to dental school throughout the United States and they
all took me.

LC: So that was the right thing to do?
CJ: They even gave me a pass at Harvard for lack of a language. I could take the
language while I was in dental school. So then I was a shoe-in and I went to the
interviews and all that and went to USC.

LC: What made you choose backyard USC overall of these other possibilities?
CJ: The cost. Even though it was a private school and expensive, it was cheaper to
go to USC and live at home than to board in San Francisco and go to Cal.

LC: Tell me about the other schools that you had at least on your radar. Where
else were you thinking of? You mentioned Harvard, where else?
CJ: Washington, George Washington [State] in Seattle, let’s see where else?
That’s been a long time.

LC: I know but it’s interesting that you basically did your own national search.
CJ: Right, some of this helped because the American Dental Association, in those
days had a lot of stuff available to people who were looking for application for dental
school. So they’d have lists with like Northwestern in Chicago, University of
Pennsylvania [and] in Connecticut and Maryland and that sort of thing.

LC: Places one might not immediately think of.
CJ: Right.

LC: Was the application process and kind of going through the interviews and so
forth, did you find that interesting and engaging or was it not?
CJ: There’s a certain amount of trepidation. I recall the thing that stands out was
that I didn’t take Cal. I got a really nasty letter from the guy I’d interview with.

LC: Really?
CJ: Because I didn’t pick them.

LC: You’re kidding.
CJ: It was of course my father’s alma mater, but that was beside the point.

LC: He was personally offended?

CJ: Yes, he really was. He wanted to know why I didn’t come to Cal. It was just a very negative letter.

LC: Yes, you remember things like that.

CJ: Yeah you remember things like that. Absolutely.

LC: Do you remember your interview for USC?

CJ: Vaguely. I knew who gave it to me.

LC: Who did you speak with?

CJ: Dr. Rutherford. I vaguely remember the interview. I guess it’s mostly the same things that all the other people talk about, their hand eye coordination and all this other stuff. I basically talked about all the stuff that I had been preparing with all my life to become a dentist and prove to myself that I could do it. Being a successful prosthetic technician I had the hand-eye coordination. And grade wise I could show that I could do upper division academic work and pass. So that’s what you need.

LC: Tell me about the dental school years if you can, and this isn’t something I want to gloss over at all. I’m really interested in the composition of the class, how many students were there, what was the academic end of it like?

CJ: Well we had about 105 in our class. We lost some of the first semester and by the end of the first year. They just didn’t belong there. Their dads were dentists and their dad said, “Do you want to go to school?” and this sort of stuff. In fact we had one kid who sat near me who was a Phi Beta Kappa in psychology, psychology, or philosophy. One of the hardest subjects at USC. It was Phi Beta Kappa and he lasted one semester in dental school because he didn’t want to be in dental school. His family wanted him in dental school.

LC: Right and I’m sure over your career you’ve observed that just isn’t going to work.

CJ: No, you’ve got to have a passion for dentistry. To put your hands in someone’s mouth you’ve just got to have a passion for it. That’s all there is to it.

LC: Describe if you can and if you remember the other dental students, were there any women?
CJ: No.
LC: Not a single one?
CJ: The class behind me did not have any but the class behind that had two. You never had one, you always had two.
LC: That’s right. I think that’s true.
CJ: Let’s go back to my class.
LC: Yes, please. Were they all Californians, were there guys from the East?
CJ: No, we had people from Arizona because Arizona subsidized their education. We had people from Utah; the Mormon kids come down from Utah. And not just the Mormons had to come from Utah. There was Mormons but there was significant bunch of kids from Utah.
LC: I don’t know whether this is the case, but there may not have been a dental school in Utah. I don’t know.
CJ: There still isn’t.
LC: No kidding?
CJ: Arizona is just opening theirs and Nevada started theirs.
LC: That’s amazing.
CJ: So the States rather than build a dental school would subsidize their education to a California school or an Oregon school or a Washington school.
LC: I think that happened in Michigan as I mentioned to you before as well.
Michigan was one of the very early dental schools in the mid-west and I think a similar situation there. Tell me a little bit more about the academic work that you had to do?
CJ: The academic work. Well, there’s advanced chemistry, biochemistry, and head and neck anatomy, body anatomy, physiology, the microscopic examinations of tissues. So you had the body and then you had the tissues of the body and you to understand then on a cellular level.
LC: Absolutely. Did you have pharmacology and all of that stuff?
CJ: Yes, you had pharmacology in second year, bacteriology the second year and the instruction was pretty much didactic the first two years and then we went to clinic. Some people had problems with saliva and that’s when they washed out. The book work was fine, they could relate to the study just like they had undergraduate but when they
actually got to the dentistry part to be in people’s mouths they could do the technical part. Otherwise they wouldn’t have got accepted because you had to take a technical exam for a rating to get in.

LC: Who were the patients that students were seeing?
CJ: They’d just come to the clinic, people who had more time than money. In my class, in my dental school class there were 11 former prosthetic technicians. Ten of us were together in San Diego in school.

LC: That’s extraordinary.
CJ: With the sorting out and the focus and coming back to where we were headed together, so we had a focus as a prosthetic technician. We went out and did our things and then came back on together at the time of acceptance for dental school.

LC: Now were you guys pretty tight as a group?
CJ: Yes we were.

LC: If you wouldn’t mind Charles give us the names of some of those guys that were in this group. This is quite extraordinary really.
CJ: Let’s see now. The one that immediately comes to mind was Woody Clancy. He was a prosthetic technician in San Bernardino when I was working in the lab in Glendale. Woody was one. Harold Edwards was the Army guy or the Air Force guy. He wasn’t Navy. Then there was Mike Ramos, he’s still practicing in the valley. Let me see. Wayne Bemus, I think Wayne Bemus was, I’m blanking.

LC: That’s fine. You’re doing great. Was it happenstance that all of you sort of selected USC? You probably all selected for more or less the same reasons.
CJ: Probably, we recruited in California and it was the only show.

LC: The only game in town kind of thing.
CJ: Loma Linda hadn’t started and ULCA started when we were in dental school. So there was no class at UCLA to be accepted to.

LC: That’s amazing to have the nucleus of guys who had similar background and dedication.

CJ: Pat Slavens. I think Pat Slavanes was one of them.

LC: Where did you live?
CJ: I lived at home in Glendale.
LC: Were you commuting back and forth?
CJ: Yes.
LC: Driving the Mercury?
CJ: Yes.
LC: Wow. Tell me about the sort of social end of things at the dental school.
CJ: I joined a fraternity. I hadn’t had the chance for fraternity before because it was grade grubbing. Every minute spent in undergraduate was for grades. So there was no social life.
LC: You were just directed, you were focused.
CJ: Yes, I was working and going to college and there just simply wasn’t time. I think I had a half a day every two weeks that wasn’t scheduled.
LC: That’s another thing that will be of interest I think, just the chalk a block nature of trying to get through school in those times.
CJ: This was undergraduate. This was when I was grad grubbing. In other words I had to decide that if this is what you wanted to do then this is what you had to do to get there. There was no deviating from it. So then when I went to dental school I had a chance to join the fraternity.
LC: Which one did you join?
CJ: Xi Psi Phi, it was a dental fraternity.
LC: It was a dental fraternity, what kinds of things did this initiative bring to your life? Did you go to parties with these guys or was it more just social interactions?
CJ: Part of it the guys lived in the fraternity house.
LC: Did you live there as well?
CJ: No, I lived at home but not all of them. We were kind of the third one, the jock’s kind of went to the Delt house and the party guys went to Psi Omega and we were the ones that had the great...I think all the Asians if they were going to be in a fraternity they were in the Zips because they tend to be more serious for their studies and that sort of thing. You kind of gravitate toward that attitude. So when you rush fraternities they could pretty well tell who the nerds were and who the jocks were and who the party people were. That’s where you end up. So we were all comfortable with each other. This was one of those things. But I cooked for my fraternity house for the meeting nights.
LC: You cooked?
CJ: Yes.
LC: Wow! What was your specialty? Whatever they…
CJ: Whatever agreeable food. But so we had a meeting a month. They had a gal who did breakfasts and fixed lunches and then did a dinner for the people of the house. But in her contract she wasn’t feeding 45 people for dinner. So meeting night I did dinner. That was a good learning experience; get a lot of organizing and planning a head, that sort of stuff.
LC: Did you make friends during this period, new friend that continued?
CJ: Yes, they’ve been friends forever.
LC: Was that part of the fraternity end of things or dentist school or both?
CJ: All of the above. While I was in dental school there was something called Dental Company. It’s reserves of [Navy] Dental Ensigns. So when Truman asked for physicians and dentists at the beginning of Korea who had been trained by the government under the V-12 program he didn’t’ get much response. He was furious. So the edict was put down that if you’re going to dental school, and you’re going to corps medical school or law school and you’re going to be in the military, you have to have a commission. So the physicians and lawyers and dental students were commissioned as ensigns under a certain program. Then otherwise you couldn’t be in the reserves. So we had a lieutenant commander pilot who wanted to stay in the reserves and he had to go back and become an ensign. That was the way the law was. So I think Keith Livingston dropped out of the reserves because he wanted to fly, he didn’t want to be a dentist. So we had a dental company and the representative from the 13th Naval District of San Diego came up to inspect the company and found it woefully lacking. The fellow who was running it was a reserve dentist who they didn’t let him have his 20 years of active duty as a reserve. He had something like 18 years and so he was doing this to get his points for successful federal years. They weren’t happy with him. His executive officer was a Navy lieutenant reserve. Anyway the guy in San Diego asked me to take the company. So I was the commanding officer of a dental ensign company at USC and we had meetings and saw Victory at Sea films and did all that sort of stuff. So I of course
bonded with the fellows in my company as well as dental student as well as fraternity members. So this was reinforcing with classmates in several layers or several levels.

LC: Several points of connection.

CJ: There was only two of us that made a career in the military. One went to the Air Force and myself. The rest of them all had their time and then got out.

LC: How big was the company when you were in it?

CJ: Let’s see there would be about maybe six from each class. So maybe 18 to 22 to 24. It’s all a matter of paperwork, coming watch the movie, sign the muster and go.

LC: Also gave you some interaction thought with guys in other classes too.

CJ: Yes, that were not in my fraternity. Then for interest I would have a recent graduate who was maybe stationed on a ship in Long Beach come back and tell us about this experiences and what he got out of it and what they expected from him. Then I would have one of the dentists from one of the carriers or one of the tenders in San Diego or Long Beach come and talk to us about what the Navy expects from us.

LC: Did you organize all of that off your won back?

CJ: Yes, I started meddling in other people affairs earlier in my career. Well I had insight on how to make it a little bit more interesting because I had been there.

LC: Right. Did your having been in the Far East for that brief amount of time also form you of wanting to get real world ideas and experiences in front of these younger guys?

CJ: I don’t know. It was really surristic. But basically my enlisted was in the 13th Naval District which was Southern California. I got to all the bases. I got up to Bridgeport, which was where the Marine had their cold weather training at Pickle Meadows. I got out to Lake Mead Base where the Marines had a testing area for torpedoes and rockets. I was at 29 Palms where they have their artillery. Of course I was at Barstow and I had been out at El Toro Air Sta. at Tustin and then I started at MCRD when I was in dental technician school doing some paperwork and arranging cabinets to represent the dental technician manual because MCRD was a teaching facility for the technicians as well, so it had a little standardization. But basically I enlisted in Southern California except for the two weeks of leave I took in “Japan”.
LC: Yes, “Japan”. So you really kind of had your fingers on the pulse of the different bases and who the personnel were and other things to the degree.

CJ: I knew how to use the system, how to make the system work to my advantage.

LC: Let me ask you a little bit more about that as it applied to the end of your time in dental school. When did you actually graduate?

CJ: I graduated in June of ’63. Or May I guess it was, May/June. We took our state boards in June and my orders and I went over to Arizona and took their state boards and my orders for active duty were within that week I was traveling to New Jersey.

LC: How was it that you came to go back on to active duty status?

CJ: All the people in my dental company got orders and I didn’t. So I called Liberty, which was the extension those days in Washington D.C. and talked to the people at the Dental Department and I said, “I have not gotten orders.” They said, “Well you’ve met your military obligation.” I’d already looked at some of these weekend Reserve meeting and its neither fish nor fowl, you’re either in or out but this part time thing didn’t appeal to me at all. So I decided to go back on active duty. They said, ‘Well you didn’t get orders because you’ve met your military obligation.” So they said, “We’ll find a job for you.” So it was Airborne Early Warning out of Argentia, Newfoundland. Well, to me airborne early warning was one of those geodesic domes sitting up on the dew line up somewhere in Canada. That’s not what it was at all. It was a squadron of aircraft that had [radar] ray domes and they flew a barrier between the northern hemispheres and the Russians and watching for badgers and bears and I was a dental officer for that squadron.

LC: How many guys in that squadron?

CJ: It was big, 800 or 900. Big enough in those days to have their own dentist.

There were two squadrons so there were two squadron dentists.

LC: You and who else?

CJ: Sherry Hamilton

LC: What was the background of Dr. Hamilton?

CJ: He settled in Virginia so I presume that he was trained on the east coast somewhere.

LC: Were you please with this assignment in Newfoundland? Did this look like a good at least initial posting for you?
CJ: Yes the squadron alternated taking an aircraft to Idyllwild to Lockheed Air Service for service.

LC: Idyllwild being the airport at New York?

CJ: At New York, that was before Kennedy. So every other month our squadron had an aircraft go down to Lockheed Air Service and we would pick up the one we left behind. So if you had to get off out of Newfoundland off the rock you had to ride to New York.

LC: That’s pretty sweet.

CJ: That was pretty nice in those days. So knowing that you could was probably enough that you didn’t have to go every other week. They weren’t going to let everybody go every other month, but knowing you could was nice. Newfoundland was interesting. Backwater, Irish, wonderful people, but they were poor. There was a high level of Tuberculosis. The kids ran around in bare feet in the winter. But you go out and pick out your Christmas tree too. That was the first time I had done something like that. So I enjoyed Newfoundland very much.

LC: This was 1963?

CJ: To ’64. Half of ’63 and all of ’64.

LC: Let me ask you just a time line question about that period Charles. Do you remember hearing about the president being killed?

CJ: Yes.

LC: What was going on for you that day?

CJ: It was an evening thing. By the time it had come through, it was toward quitting time and the base shut down. There was nothing going on, no cinema, officer club closed. So we had the toy store for Christmas had their inventories come in. The officers had brought several sets of Lionel trains and they strung them out on the floor of the BOQ and ran trains during that period of time. I remember that because there was really very little to do. It was sad because these educated people couldn’t amuse themselves. They’d forgotten how to pick up a book and read and this sort of stuff. Then I had an opportunity to go home on leave and that was still during the mourning period when the flags were at half-mast. So I got a ride to Washington D.C. and I can remember going into town to position myself to fly to California. Everything was at half-mast, how
bleak it was. There was no leaves on the trees. I came from Newfoundland, which was
evergreens. Here now you’re down to where there’s deciduous trees and there’s no leaves
and everything looked so bleak and gray and cold like the earth was mourning.

LC: Were you personally affected just in your own thinking about you’re overseas,
you’re in the military, did it bother you particularly?

CJ: I guess it affected all of us. I know that everything stopped. We saw the
funeral on television. We hadn’t gone back to work and there was a period of mourning.
The government or the bases overseas where I was which was still North America, just
stopped. Everything came to a stop.

LC: No sense of alert of anything that you remember?

CJ: No.

LC: Not at all.

CJ: It was more of a personal thing. There was no conspiracy. No Russians going
to sweep down on us. It was all personal.

LC: Just a very difficult time I’m sure for some people anyway. Let’s go ahead
and take a break.

LC: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University
continuing the oral history interview with Dr. Charles Julienne. Today’s date is the 5th of
August 2004. I’m in the interview room on the campus of Texas Tech’s Special
Collections Building. Dr. Julienne is speaking with me by telephone, He’s in California.

Good morning sir.

CJ: Good morning. It’s the 6th of August.

LC: I’m sorry you’re right it is the 6th of August. Thank you. And another
correction I think is coming.

CJ: When I talked about the Navy prosthetic technicians in my dental school class
we were not all together in San Diego at the same time. There were 10 Navy prosthetic
technicians. Some were in the class before me. Some were in my class and some were in
the class behind me. I didn’t want [you] to think that we all 10 came from my class, that
would be very unusual. But there was about three of us.

LC: But still quite an interesting cluster of guys with that background coming into
dental school.
CJ: Their focus was probably the same place, dental school and this was just an interim stop on the way. You said you wanted to start with Vietnam.

LC: Actually if you could get us from Newfoundland to Virginia Beach I think.

CJ: Yes, we went to the Naval Air Station in Virginia Beach where I was a dental officer, in other words did not have a squadron affiliation like I did in Newfoundland. Then we were sending units directly to the ships, the aircraft carriers. So Virginia Beach Naval Air Stations had A-6 squadrons and F-4 squadrons and it was a training squadron for these two types of aircraft. There was a composite squadron of mixed aircraft. The people were arriving in Vietnam as replacement on the carriers and they weren’t dental ready. So they came from the fleet to dental back to us and I suggested to my boss that he assign a dentist to on of the squadron, one of the aircraft types. So I went to the A-6 program and sat in as if I was a squadron dentist. The A-6 didn’t again the squadrons were too small to rate a dentist. About that time they were changing the configuration. They thought that the dental squadron dentist was administratively misplaced. Of course I disagreed with that because having been in Newfoundland I knew the level of readiness was much higher if you had someone responsible. So anyway I sat in with the A-6 program, went to the officers meeting and their parties and all the other stuff and in fact became the dental officer for the A-6 program. Form there I got a telephone call too. The head of the dental corps called me. I thought number one is calling number 1942. He said, “I’ve got a great job for you. I can’t tell you where you’re going but you’ll go through the canal.” So I said, “Fine.” So I had my own department aboard a small repair ship. I would be my own boss and they felt I could handle that having had all the background that I have had. I new my way around and wouldn’t embarrass the Dental Corps. So I picked up the ship in Norfolk and we sailed through the Panama Canal to Hawaii and from Hawaii to the Philippines and to Vietnam.

LC: Which ship was this?

CJ: This was the U.S.S Tutuila.

LC: The Tutuila was the second ship of that name, is that right?

CJ: It may have been the third but the first one of note was…yeah probably was the second, was a gunboat on the Yangtee River that was involved in the Panay thing where the Japanese strafed it.
LC: Yes, in ’37. I’m a China hand so the name is familiar to me from that. But the actual physical ship that you’re serving on is the namesake of that craft?

CJ: I believe so.

LC: Where did you actually pick up the ship then?

CJ: Norfolk.

LC: Tell me who else was on the ship? What were the other components of the ships?

CJ: It was a repair ship. So you had an enormous repair department. You had founders or a foundry. You had mold makers so they could cast a thing and then machine it down into a finished part. We had carpenters, we had boiler tenders, we had photographers, we had everything but a chaplain. It was crowded. There was a tendency to hot bunk.

LC: What does that mean?

CJ: Hot bunking was when two person shared the same bed. In other words somebody was in the daytime and somebody was at night. That never happened but a lot of the fellows from the carpenter shop kept their mattresses and slept on the benches of the carpenter shop rather than in the breathing areas because they were so crowded.

LC: How many personnel do you know?

CJ: I’m sorry?

LC: How many personnel all together on the ship?

CJ: I want o say about 900.

LC: Wow, that’s amazing.

CJ: It was really a lot of people.

LC: You were going to mention the AC.

CJ: The ship air-conditioned itself, all of the sleeping quarters while we were underway. Of course we had metal smiths, tin smiths, nothing that couldn’t be constructed. They were wonderful. So all the birthing areas were air-conditioned. So it was really quite nice living in the tropics. Not your stand [standard] picture with all the white awnings and shade and all that sort of stuff because we were quite comfortable

LC: Now tell me bout the officer personnel and how did you fit into that?
CJ: There was a commanding officer and an executive officer. There was a repair officer; there was the assistant repair officer. There was a warrant officer who was in charge of admin. There was a warrant officer who was an electrician. There was a warrant officer who was a carpenter. There was a warrant officer who was a machinist. Then we had LDOs, in other words these were people that had been enlisted and come up through the ranks and the first lieutenant that was in charge of the deck crew, the boatswains, he was a lieutenant, LDO. So we had one Academy person anyway, who was a commanding officer. But the rest of them were old hands who had come up through the ranks and had been enlisted and knew their way around.

LC: Any of them already have Vietnam service behind them?
CJ: No, none.
LC: This is fairly early. This is 1967, is that right?
CJ: Yes. It was ’67, ’68, yes.
LC: Who was the commanding officer?
CJ: Byington. He was the first one.
LC: So there was a change?
CJ: There was a change in command in Thailand. So Byington took it over and for the life of me I can’t remember the name of the CO after that.
LC: Were there other medical personnel?
CJ: A physician and then a corpsman. I had two dental technicians.
LC: I was going to ask.
CJ: I had a two-chair office and two dental technicians. Again the allotment or the compliment of the ship in a war zone was at least 100% so every billet was filled. So ordinarily I’d only need one assistant. I had two.

So tell me about your trip over. What went on, on that trip?
CJ: (Laughter) Nine knots in the nuclear Navy, you’re halfway around the world in 81 days. This was a converted liberty ship. I had to think about between liberty and victory. This was a liberty ship very much like the ones the Israelis shot up in the Mediterranean. It wasn’t noted for speed. It had a three-stage triple expansion steam engine, it didn’t have turbines. It was all dip and hope and an enormous amount. In fact the whole ship ran on steam, all the wenches, except there was one small electric motor
for one of the electric shop for getting down the hole. But everything was run on steam.
So we pushed more water than we sailed over, it was slow. We got there, we did combat
training with the five-inch, .40 caliber gun on the way over and stuff like that, battle
stations and all the things we were suppose to do.

LC: How many guns did she have?
CJ: It came originally with two. They took the stern one off before it left Norfolk.
We just had the forward mount, five inch, .40.

LC: What was the mood on the ship going over to Vietnam?
CJ: We had probably 2/3 reserve had been called to active duty. Of course their
lives were disrupted. There was a lot of them that were just able-bodied seaman. Some of
them had schools as reserves. But I didn’t see any sense, any foreboding, there was a lot
of interest in the transit of the Panama Canal. Of course holiday in Hawaii, we were there
for the best part of a week and then went on form there. So there was some, again most of
the crew was reserves. The seasoned sailors, the old shipmates that had been around a
while, the senior petty officers and officers knew more what cruise was all about and that
sort of stuff and they took it in stride. Again one of the big accomplishments on the ship
where they were working- they put in a new evaporator, which can change seawater to
fresh water. They laid the foundation for that when we were in Panama. So some people
didn’t get an awful lot of time off the ship in Panama. They got that thing in place in
route from Panama to Hawaii. So they were hard working people and pretty well focused
on their jobs. I remember we had a party. We had a picnic or a barbeque rather I should
say. I remember having ran into those pictures. There was a picnic on the way over
between Panama and Hawaii so that was always good for morale.

LC: Absolutely a mood builder.
CJ: You’re going to meet people that you might not meet otherwise.
LC: Did you get along well? Did the guys sort of call you Doc and like include
you?
CJ: Yes, we had one sailor who was mess cooking and he had some really rotten
teeth in front. Between Norfolk and Panama he lost those teeth. Of course [now the crew
knew] they knew a dentist was on board. The dentist they had on before was not a good
sailor. Even if [the ship] it was “welded” to the pier he’d still get seasick. So I don’t know
if he did a lot of work because again the crew was transferred and mixed up. When I
inherited it there was about a year's backlog worth of work.

LC: There was some deferred maintenance there that needed to be taken care of.

CJ: I can't say that, there was a lot of maintenance that had been inherited from
the civilian community. So I had plenty to do. The physician was transferred after we got
over to Vietnam, another physician came along, Dr. Robert Higgins and he becomes
important in the stories.

LC: What was his background?

CJ: He was a pharmacist in Washington State who went to medical school and
then I don't know whether he had to take active duty or not but he was in for a couple
years and he came out, they flew him out to the ship.

LC: When you actually arrived in Vietnamese waters, where did you take up
station?

CJ: We were in a place called An Thoi. An Thoi is in the Gulf of Siam toward the
south of things. Let's see, southern tip that might not be quite correct. We were off
the west coast. We were toward the southern end of Vietnam.

LC: Were you as far over as Phu Quoc Island, which would be near the border
with Cambodia.

CJ: Well Phu Quoc is where we were anchored yes. Anchored off of Phu Quoc.

LC: How close to the island were you?

CJ: We were close enough to go to the beach on Sunday, get in a boat and go
over.

LC: No kidding!

CJ: The island was close to us. We weren't anchored on a pier or anything we
were off in the water so the boats that we serviced could come around the sides of us but
we were very close to the island.

LC: Tell me about the mission. What craft were you supporting?

CJ: It was a repair ship and what it was it was servicing the swift boats, which the
shallow watercraft. The Coast Guard point class cutters, those were brand new. They had
a new engine in them and the diesel people I want to say a company, but it could have
been another manufacturer. Anyway the manufacturer had suggested so many hours
before they are torn down. Our people took them apart and showed that the maintenance
could be extended twice as much, which was important for availability and all that sort of
stuff. So we had a couple of barges there, floating platforms alongside of us. We would
pick up a swift boat, set it a cradle and then service the swift boat. One of the things we
did was that their windshield in the front was too big and the waves would blow it in. So
we welded aluminum, which was tricky, struts and made three windows out of one.

LC: So reinforcing it?
CJ: Yes, the reconfiguration there. Of course they would tear the engines out
because the ship was designated as a non-combustion engine, excuse me, a combustion
engine repair ship, so that would be like diesel engines and gasoline engines. We had a
diesel shop and we could tear a diesel engine down and rebuild it and all that sort of stuff.

LC: How much of all that activity did you observe? I’m sure this was like the
main thing that was going on.
CJ: Yes and it went on night and day, mostly daytime. There was seldom work at
night because a certain amount of hazard or working in the dark even though it’s
illuminated. So it was sitting right there and we’d see the ships and what have you come
along and occasionally a Chinese style junk, sampans, that sort of stuff.

LC: Did you have occasion to work with guys who had been on the swift boats?
CJ: No, I don’t ever remember seeing one of the crewmen from the swift boats. I
did see crewmen from the point class cutter, maybe one or two, there was maybe half a
dozen of them and they were rotating. Those people hadn’t been brought up to snuff.
They didn’t report for sick call with dental problems. They may not have been 100% but
I was not responsible for them, some other group was.

LC: Who were you seeing and what kinds of thing did you see?
CJ: Our crew, I’m still working on the backlog.

LC: The guys on the Tutuila?
CJ: Right. Then we moved from Phu Quoc to Vung Tao. While we were in Phu
Quoc they put a barracks ship alongside of us to rehabilitate. So a lot of our people were
working on that, chipping paint and welding and that sort of thing. They had a dental
office on board and the equipment sent out was inferior. As it came from supply depot
every command that it went through traded and they took the new and sent along less
than. To when it got to me I wrote a letter to the fellow who sent me out to the ship and
told him what was going on and heads rolled I suppose. But I got all brand new
equipment for the new dental office and a repairman flew out with it to put it all together.

LC: Tell me what kind of equipment you were trying to get hold of that you had a
little difficulty.

CJ: Well I didn’t have any difficulty with it; it was just the stuff you’ve seen in a
dental office, cabinets, chairs.

LC: Just the basic equipment then?

CJ: Yes, the lights and all of that. I see this package of stuff was brand new and it
was passing through places where people felt they needed brand new. So they would
switch. So what arrived to me was really drags. I wouldn’t have any part of it. I knew
better. So someone maybe just out of school, dental school would accept this as this is the
way it’s done. I knew better. So I wrote to my boss and complained. By return mail he
said the good stuff was on its way with a repairman. It arrived and our people helped the
repairman install it. About that time we shifted to Vung Tau, which was off the Cau Mau
peninsula. We were there until I left.

LC: So a number of months on that site?

CJ: Yes, we were out about maybe three or four months in Phu Quoc and then
went to Bung Tau.

LC: Did the ship get involved in any actions when you out there?

CJ: No, it was anchored out and that was its mission, small boats would come to
it.

LC: Were you still seeing swift boats when you were at Vung Tau?

CJ: Yes, we’d still have the swift boats, cutters and occasionally there would be a
Vietnamese boat show up. We sold a lot of ships to the Vietnamese years ago. These or
maybe this wasn’t one of them. This was a beautiful cutter. It had German diesels on it,
magnificent craft. I’m waking up early in the morning and I hear a cock-a-doodle-doo.
You’re anchored out in the river or the bay you call it “stream” and you don’t ordinarily
hear a cock-a-doodle-doo. In the middle of the night this Vietnamese craft had come
alongside because it was taking on water so our people pumped it out and got that taken
care of and did some other tuning for their engines and the stuff that we could do very
easily and sent them on their way. From time to time we saw a larger U.S. ship come alongside that needed something. There was a ship that basically was nothing but an electrical generator, they’d had some problems. Actually ran into us

LC: Really?

CJ: They lost either power or steering approaching us and they just kind of floated into us. The first lieutenant was smart to see what was happening so he had his boat swains pull that floating platform forward so that it actually was a barrier or buffer to the ship, so just the very nose of the ship took off part of our super structure. It was still a collision, but it certainly wasn’t a lot of damage, not to where a ship can’t repair itself.

LC: Right, the impact was also moderated by the introduction of this?

CJ: If you touch bottom, you don’t “touch bottom” on a ship, you ground it. You touch another object with a ship and it’s a collision. It’s very rigid definitions. It doesn’t talk about the damage like when the Stockholm went through the Andrea Doria. It sank this one, but we touched.

LC: But degrees of difficulty are not hidden in the word collision.

CJ: But there wasn’t a lot of excitement. The crew got to go on liberty every third day and we had some landing craft that we used as liberty boats, took the fellows to town. I went into the villages with the medical civic action program on weekends.

LC: Tell me about that experience.

CJ: Let’s go back to the ships we were servicing. Basically we’re still doing the swift boats and the point class cutters and occasionally a larger ship would come along that needed something tweaked. Now one other thing that we did, ever howitzer, [US] Army howitzer in Vietnam needed a part modified. So the Army delivered us brass shell casings which we melted down and poured into a mold and made a blank and our machine shop machined it and sent it back to the Army because we had that ability, that capability as a repair shop.

LC: So the guys on the ship were doing that pretty much all the time?

CJ: I don’t know how many howitzers there were but it kept them busy for a month and half or two months.
LC: I’ll bet if there was nothing more pressing they were probably doing that.
That’s an interesting story. Do you know what kind of item it was or what function it was?
CJ: It was just a hunk of brass that had a bunch of holes in it that went on to a howitzer, that’s all I know.
LC: That’s interesting though. What was the relationship between the Army guys?
CJ: A major came out and he came by helicopter and we had constructed where the aft cannon had been. We erected a helicopter platform. Mostly for vertical replenishment but you could if you moved the wenches and the lift capability of the aft booms carefully you could land a helicopter on the deck.
LC: That was how he got in and out?
CJ: So he came out and that was a novelty for the rest of it. We built the damn thing but we hadn’t used it.
LC: So the Army got to use it?
CJ: The Army got to use it, yes. In fact as an aside, having been air in squadrons and the commanding officer knew this, he assigned me the job of building the helicopter deck.
LC: Is that right?
CJ: Yes. (Laughs)
LC: Wow, you were playing many roles on the ship.
CJ: So this was on our way, we’d no sooner left Norfolk then he had me in and told me with the repair officer and the supply officer what it was that he wanted there and having knowledge of aircraft carriers and all that sort of stuff this was just a miniature flight deck. So you surrounded it with the netting and the stuff in case someone gets blown off the deck and you’ve got a place to land, the proper type of fire extinguishers and a couple of lights on the mast that were there to illuminate it for night work. They already had the safety stuff, that was all there was to it. So I would just get the manuals that had the parts in it and count off how many feet of stuff I needed and it was done.
The repair department people built the platform and it was already reinforced to hold the
vibrations of a canon. So no problem about it holding up a helicopter. Just all the naval
air parts to make it proper.

LC: Did you enjoy pitching in on this kind of project that wasn’t your training
necessarily, but something that you could clearly handle?

CJ: Yes, it was easy it was a slam-dunk, because again I knew how to get things
done and I had tremendous people. The four warrant officers on board had something
like 120 years between them.

LC: Wow!

CJ: One of them was in the Bataan Death March.

LC: No kidding!

CJ: These were really, really talented people.

LC: Did he talk about that much about the experience in the Philippines?

CJ: No, he didn’t talk about it much. It only came out accidentally.

LC: But these guys were seasoned, they had it all figured out?

CJ: Yes, the seniors had been around, really, really had. Some of them I thought
were a little harsh to the enlisted people because they had been enlisted themselves, but
we tend to repeat the behaviors of how learned from those we learned from. If they
learned from someone who was a taskmaster then they become a taskmaster. We see that
here in the dental school as well.

LC: Observable generally too I think.

CJ: So anyway, we started med caps, helping the Psy warfare office in Saigon
and we’d go into the villages that were where we had American advisors to the
Vietnamese junk force. Their armed junks. There were bases, which were the mortar
range of villages that needed to be pacified. So the Viet Cong would come in at night
and get the villages all stirred up and then the Americans had a daytime presence. So we
would go into the villages and pacify them for Psy warfare purposes and they felt it was
effective.

LC: Do you remember any of the missions that you actually went on? Can you
describe one or two?

CJ: Yes, there’s several. Sometimes we would go by junk. They would pick us
up at the ship and we would motor off in to the IV Corps, the southern part of Vietnam up
some river to a village and we would set up our medical, dental, the physician took a
repair officer along and he would dispense the pills and I would take out teeth. In the ten
months I probably did something like 1,700 extractions. Most of these teeth were
periodontally involved or pieces of baby teeth were left behind that just didn’t dissolve.
But I didn’t see any decay because these villages were poor. There was no refined sugar,
no sodas, no refined carbohydrates. It was interesting. Sometimes we’d go in by
helicopter, but that didn’t take place very often, but sometimes we would go in by
helicopter. We always had great protection. We had the U.S. Navy Advisors which
really weren’t Marines but they were a suitably mentality killers. We felt very, very safe
with them. They weren’t going to let anything happen to the docs because that would
shut done the program.

LC: Were there any incidents where they actually had to become involved in any
kind of defensive action for you guys?
CJ: Well, yes. We’d gone in by helicopter to one little village and the, well let
me get this straight. There was the problem with the helicopter coming to get us, but
crashed on take off from Tan Son Nhut and we were delayed. We’d gone into this one
place by boat and the Vietnamese police, white mice we called them, set up a perimeter.
Then beyond that was the Vietnamese Army at another perimeter about two kilometers.
Then we were in the center of this. Then the Vietnamese Army said that there was some
sort of insurgency or bad people out at their perimeter. So when we withdrew there was
some charges set in the banks of the dike of the stream that we were going to pass
through. Our people, our Navy people with the junket advisors went down and destroyed
those charges. So that really shook the ground. So that really kind of brought the war
close to home that there was actually some, danger. Even though we’d go in the villages
and they’d have lunch for us and everything was very, very pleasant. There was a
situation where we would go past when we were out in the Vietnamese junk boats, we
would go our past a point and there would be .50 caliber rounds come out toward us but
they were always out of range. So the people would call in a phantom and they’d lay
down some napalm and that would be the end of that. So we were shot at in anger, but
they were out of range, so where’s the hazard? It was very much like Disneyland. That
there was simply no harm. There was a day where we were in a village and they were
nervous. It turned out that there was a fellow in black pajamas up a tree. We weren’t
looking up, we were looking down into peoples mouths and chests and blood pressures
and all that sort of stuff and the fellow was discovered in the tree and some people
snapped off some rounds and shot him, a lot of excitement but it apparently wasn’t the
first time someone in the village or near the village had been shot at. So it was kind of
new to us but it wasn’t a big deal to the villagers.

LC: Did you witness this incident?
CJ: Yes.

LC: Did you actually see the VC guy?
CJ: I shot him.

LC: You shot him?
CJ: Yes.

LC: You were one of the guys? Were there other people firing as well?
CJ: Yes.

LC: I presume then he was hit and fell out of the tree?
CJ: He just fell out of the tree.

LC: But he was killed?
CJ: Yes.

LC: Did you get a look at him?
CJ: Did I look at him?

LC: I just wonder how old he was.
CJ: It was a mature Asian. It wasn’t an old man; it wasn’t a teenager.

LC: Anything strike you about this incident? Did it make you think well maybe
these Medcap things aren’t such a great idea?
CJ: It was one of things at the time, it was us or them. I don’t know that we were
in danger, but you don’t take a chance. I know that when we were going to and from
villages sometimes we had to walk. We had the Navy advisors; area carried a cutoff
shotgun. He had his own rounds, brass rounds rather than cardboard, because cardboard
would swell up in the tropics. So most shotgun shells are fiber and he had brass shells. I
don’t know where he got them. He was again a professional, wore a glove on one hand
to keep the barrel down because it tends to jump up. He walked point and if you thought something was there, it was too late. So he kept us alive.

LC: You just had to react?
CJ: Yes.

LC: Rather than kind of cognitively go through it?
CJ: Yes, if there was somebody there they would have been shot at before they could shoot at us.

LC: Did that happen?
CJ: No, no. I was never along with them that we got ambushed.

LC: This VC that you actually did participate in shooting, what was he carrying do you remember?
CJ: He had a Russian rifle AK-47.

LC: Anything else do you remember?
CJ: A bandolier and of course black pajamas. I was really thinking about all the patients I had seen lined up with “toothaches” in black pajamas. And how many of them were local villagers and how many of them were bad guys?

LC: Did you think about that while it was going on? Did you think wow, maybe I’m treating VC?
CJ: Afterwards. After running into a real live one in black pajamas. So it was only then that it sunk in that some of the people that I was treating were enemy. But you line up, you’ve got children and you’ve got people who run a little store and old farmers and wood cutters, fishermen and the person with a cloth wrapped around his jaw in black pajamas was really no different. It was only after this incident I thought, well maybe the guys in black pajamas some of them were enemy. But the villagers weren’t anxious about it. Generally when the villagers are anxious then something’s amiss.

LC: Tell me a little bit more about the cases you saw. Did you ever treat anybody who was injured, either Vietnamese civilian or Vietnamese military?
CJ: Yes, when we were at Phu Quoc a truck had overturned in town and spilled a bunch of people out of it. There was a person who had his hip dislocated. One of them was killed, but that was a dead body and we don’t treat dead bodies. But there was somebody with a dislocated hip. They brought him back to the ship, they brought the
other people who had been scraped and bumped and what have you. I did an ether drip
and put him just under so the physician could pick up his leg and pop the hip back in
place. So that would be really the only injury, but it wasn’t war related. Just an
automobile accident.

LC: Were there any other times when you were called in by the doc to help out?

CJ: On weekends the physician and I would go on these Medcaps. So, usually
Saturday or Sunday for 10 months.

LC: Was this Robert Higgins that you were going with?

CJ: Yes.

LC: What was his attitude toward the Medcaps, do you remember this was a
good thing to do?

CJ: Yes, he thought he was doing some good. He was frustrated because he
couldn’t leave any sort of medications for any long period of time because the Viet Cong
would come along and take it. So you didn’t give people three months of supply of pills,
he gave them a couple days supply.

LC: What kinds of equipment would you take in with you on these Medcaps?

CJ: I had a canvas bag and I had a couple of pans in it to put water and then I had
decontamination solution, penazconilum chloride and then I had sterilized mirrors and
forceps and suture equipment, stuff to take out teeth with.

LC: Did you give the patients painkillers at all?

CJ: No, I didn’t have any painkillers at all. We had them bite down on gauze and
they’d never been numb before. We ran into a Chinese medical group once and they’re
all painted faces and theatrical and of course we looked like a bunch of rag tag bums
compared to that outfit. But the Vietnamese patients would chatter that they’d never
been numb before. They keep patting their faces and all that. I’d tell them to keep biting
on their sponges. But I saw some patients several times, in other words they’d come back
for another area with was bothering them. But most of the time it was just a one-time
visit.

LC: Tell me about this Chinese medical group, what were they doing?
CJ: They were traveling. They were going from one point to another and they were resting when we came by, we walked by. They were colorfully made up like a Chinese opera.

LC: No kidding?
CJ: Yes, I thought they were performers and they said no that’s the medical team. White face and rosy cheeks and colored hair and that sort of stuff.

LC: Did you know the purpose of all the makeup?
CJ: No, I didn’t know anything about it.

LC: Let me ask you about supplies in general. Did you have a steady line of supply of the things that you needed just on general basis?
CJ: When you say general basis what do you mean general basis?
LC: When you’re on the ship did you have a monthly quota of materials that you were receiving or did you have to order it?
CJ: The stuff that didn’t deteriorate you sailed with.
LC: So you started off with a big load?
CJ: Yes and again the supply line was very short. If you wanted something it was there in a very short period of time. The A-6 aircraft had a commitment to 24-hour supply. So on the carriers, which had aircraft flying with spare parts and all this sort of stuff, if something was wrong and you didn’t have the part you had it in 24 hours. Now, my priority wasn’t that high, but if there was something that was essential we could have it within 24 hours.

LC: That’s pretty amazing really.
CJ: Or maybe where we were, we were a little more remote within a couple of days.

LC: But you weren’t hanging out there wanting for supplies at any time?
CJ: Not dental supplies, no.

LC: Were there problems with some of the supply chains for materials on the ship?
CJ: I don’t think so. The biggest thing was fresh vegetables and fresh fruit. We were at the tail end of the supply line for that. By the time it got to us, they may not have been there. I recall once when the fresh fruit came aboard, watermelons, the crews
handling the supplies just broke them open and ate them right at the spot. We had dehydrated cabbage, which you cannot make coleslaw out of. We had canned peas. To this I will not eat canned peas and I will eat all my parsley. Because we didn’t see any fresh greens.

LC: Right, you have respect.

CJ: On the weekends, I’d go out of town; you had to be careful about fresh greens because of night soil that was used for fertilizer. So going to town and getting a salad was not an option.

LC: Did people regularly get sick?

CJ: No, we did not have a problem with the local bugs. We did have someone who was sick, came aboard from one of the swift boats. He had Dengue fever and when we were going to Bangkok for the change of command, no we went to Bangkok for liberty I guess. Anyway went to Bangkok, we transferred him to the hospital in Bangkok.

LC: Is Dengue fever contagious?

CJ: No, it’s a parasite.

LC: What does that look like? What are the symptoms?

CJ: You had what they called rice water stool. So you can imagine if you cook rice in water and it’s kind of white watery, that’s what your stool looks like. Everything just falls out; it’s not brown at all. And there’s temperature, lymphadenopathy, this sort of stuff as well.

LC: Sick, very sick though.

CJ: You’re debilitated because you’re losing your electrolytes.

LC: But you only saw one case of that coming onto the ship that you remember?

Tell me about Vung Tao; tell me about going in there. What was the town like and where did you guys hang out?

CJ: I did liberty with enlisted people. Vung Tao was the recreation area R&R for in country people. So there was a lot of U.S. military in Vung Tao. And Vung Tao had once been a very attractive resort like Cains, beautiful beaches, promenade on the boulevard, lined with trees. Rumor had it there was one part of the town you didn’t go into because it was controlled by the Viet Cong and that was fine. We just stayed away from there. Our areas were where we had airfield and the Australian had their billets, that
sort of stuff was on the other side of town. The fellows got in trouble with the bar girls
and that sort of stuff, drinking too much. But that’s no different than in the States. I’d
found a lovely rooftop restaurant that had a lovely bouillabaisse and of course being in a
restaurant with water and fish and having been a French colony the bread was
magnificent. The bouillabaisse was really, really superb. It wasn’t as good as Marseille
but still when you’re halfway around the world, it was a huge treat.

LC: It would do.

CJ: It really, really was nice. But I didn’t go into town very often because I went
to the villages.

LC: You were working.

CJ: Well, it was volunteer. In other word, setting off the ship where they went on
liberty and drank too much or you went to the villages was still getting off the ship. That
was satisfying enough just to go into the villages.

LC: Did you come across or at any point work with members of allied forces, the
Australians, the ROKs?

CJ: Yes, I did see the Australians. They had a prosthetic lab and I didn’t have a
prosthetic lab on the ship. I wanted to make a denture for this guy and so I used their
facilities for that.

LC: Where was this?

CJ: That was in Vung Tao.

LC: So they had a fairly complete dental facility there?

CJ: It had everything. It was field stuff, but it had everything.

LC: How did you make the arrangement with them such that you could have this
denture manufactured?

CJ: I had gone to or an invitation to go to a dental meeting in Australia. The
skipper of the ship was not about to loose his dentist. So I said the Australians would be
more than happy to take care of any emergency. At this point, there were no emergencies
on the ship unless somebody fell down and hurt themselves. So I had liaison. We’d run
into them coming and going from some of our activities at the airfield or coming back
and forth and when the Australian aircraft carriers came into Vung Tao they would invite
us to the ship for a drink. They rationed their rum and all that sort of stuff and you got to
meet the locals, the local Australian troops as well. When I flew to Australia with the
Australians they had an operation where they had sent their reserve components to
supplement their ground forces. So they had members of the reserves come and evaluate
how effective the reserves were in the field. So there was a commando and there was an
engineer and there was an artilleryman and there was an infantryman, there was five of
them. So on the flight back to Australia they were along and I formed some really, really
long lasting friendships with these fellows.

LC: No kidding? People you’re still in contact with?

CJ: Yes, we’ve visited. They’ve visited here and several times they’ve been
here. I’ve been to Australia several times and then looked them all up and got together.

LC: Great, wow that’s incredible. What was your impression if they gave you
any information on this topic, of the Australians view of the war?

CJ: Again when I was in Australia or in New Zealand, the war was still going on
and people would say the rest of the world is pretty unhappy with us. Here you are down
here demonstrating a welcome for the aircraft carrier coming into Wellington. They said,
“You know you did it once before: and that was World War II because there was nothing
between Port Moresby and Darwin.

LC: That’s right.

CJ: So they felt that we had in a timely fashion saved their butts before. You
have anti-nuc and you have anti-war people but they weren’t anti-American. There’s be
some protestors and then there’s be about maybe 500 people behind them waiting to take
a Yank home to dinner.

LC: Did you ever get a sense that there was any kind of resentment about the
United States in some way, press ganging them into participating in the Vietnam
Conflict?

CJ: No, not with the Australians and New Zealanders. They were just absolutely
wonderful.

LC: Did you have any interaction or make any observations of our Korean allies
in Vietnam?

CJ: One more time about the Koreans?

LC: Our South Korean allies in Vietnam, the ROKs?
CJ: I didn’t have any contact with them at all. In fact I wasn’t even aware that
the South Koreans were in Vietnam.

LC: Ok, I think most of their military forces were further north than you were.
CJ: Yes, because I’m about as far south as you can get.

LC: I just wonder whether the friendships that you had that grew out of these
contacts with the Australians, can you talk about what part that’s played in your own
thinking about your experience in Vietnam. I mean this is something quite good
obviously that came out of your being over there.

CJ: Well, it had nothing to do with the war. War was only coincidental in
bringing us together. The friendships were on the basis of just being a good mate. You
treat people nice and they treat you nice type of thing.

LC: Were there American officers that you formed friendships with as well?
CJ: The only person I kept contact with was Dr. Higgins. I did write to one
fellow but he wasn’t a good correspondent. Well, there have been several of the other
officers on the ship. I corresponded with the repair officer that went with Higgins and I
into the field, has since perished. Bob Keough is, I think he’s about ready to retire. He
was up at Rinsler University in computers and computer sciences. He was our ships
radio officer. Let’s see who else on the ship, I think that’s about it for the ship. But
Higgins, we became very close friends through the years even though we were not
stationed together. Enough so that I spoke at his retirement ceremony and told stories
and was his guest at the Marine Corps gave him a parade when he retired in Washington.
Then I’ve seen Bob time and again for the wedding of his kids, the funeral of his wife,
this sort of stuff. I’m almost family.

LC: Did he stay in the service?
CJ: Well he got out, let me see did he get out and come back? I believe he got
out and came back. Yes, he did his two years and got out and then came back and
became the director of family practice for the surgeon general and taught family practice
at Charleston, South Carolina and Camp Pendleton. He was promoted to admiral at
Camp Pendleton.

LC: And he’s retired now?
CJ: Yes.
LC: Charles, tell me about going to Bangkok, you said you were over there for a
little while.

CJ: We went into Bangkok for a change of command and we had been in Phu
Quoc and then went into Bangkok. It was liberty, shopping. I did not have an
opportunity to sit down with Fodor guide to Southeast Asia and that sort of stuff. But
again I did a considerable amount of research and knew that I wanted to eat at Nick’s
Number one and I wanted to shop at Jim Thompson’s for fabric. In fact I bought some
material for a bedspread and curtains for my stateroom on the ship. I had the sail loft, I
had them sew a bedcover and curtains. I bought some lovely fabrics I sent on home.
There was things that I knew that I wanted to do and do sight seeing and that sort of stuff.

LC: Were you taking photos and that kind of thing or not?

CJ: Let’s see photos…I think I had my camera by then. I had a little snap shot
Browning on the trip over. Somewhere along the way in the Philippines I bought a
Nikon. I can’t remember exactly when that was, but probably that I time I had good
pictures. When I was in Bangkok I had good pictures and I know that Dr. Higgins and I
had the same camera body and we would exchange lenses when we were hanging out of
the helicopter going to and from. So, yes there are lots and lots of pictures.

LC: Great, now you got a new commander is that right?

CJ: Yes, the new CO came on board in Bangkok.

LC: Did ship life change when you got the new commander?

CJ: Not really, I didn’t see any change. He was more outgoing. Byington had
some issues I think going out in the first place. I think he thought that he should have
been relived in the States and let somebody take the whole task, it was just disruptive to
go halfway around the world and then turn around and come back. But, you know that’s
his problem and not mine.

LC: Right, that’s duty.

CJ: Physician did the same thing. He went out and turned around and came back.

There may have been others, but I can’t recall who the others would be. Certainly the
repair and the cistern [assistant] repair officer and the supply officers and the four
warrants were in the same 12 months tour that I had.
LC: That’s interesting because it allowed for a little bit I’m sure for cohesion to develop among you guys. That was probably the case.

CJ: That was the deal, you went over with a crew and 12 months later they were rotated and you started with a whole new crew. So whatever I had accomplished in the way of dental care was dispersed when the group got transferred.

LC: By the end of your one year over there, were you doing very much in the way of dental work? Most of them by then had been taken care of.

CJ: We got the new stuff trickling in.

LC: Just one or two guys coming in who had some problems or more than that?

CJ: Well we’d screened and we’d take care of whatever there was to be done. So it was different than boot camp where you take care of the worst. You’d finish it, you’d get it done.

LC: Were there guys who came in who had then received some treatment, got dental ready but needed some further work that you could then finish up?

CJ: Probably.

LC: This concept of dental ready can you just go over what exactly that meant and what in general terms did you have to get someone to? What point did you have to get them to?

CJ: You wanted to have them “as many people and as many guns for as long as possible”. If that meant you had a broken arm, you’d put them in a cast and send them back to the line. For dental, you’d want to have them in a state of readiness so they didn’t interfere with their mission. So if you had a submarine and somebody had a toothache in the submarine, the submarine had to surface and its location was then observable from a satellite, then you lost its stealth. So the level of the dental care for the crew of the submarine was 100%. There was nothing left undone, whereas on an aircraft carrier where you had five dentists, the dentists are taking care of the crew. The people at the stateside air stations should have taken care of the aircrew. But again you’re taking care of the big holes and not looking at the little tiny insipient things that you would on the submarine. So, its level of readiness would be different to the accessibility of the dentist. The spy ship and I’m losing its name the Pueblo [Jamestown] did not have a dentist on it. They had a comparable ship out with us although I never got to see it. It’s
anchored on the other side of Phu Quoc Island. Sundays it would send a message saying
that it had somebody that had a dental problem. They had a dental office on board but no
dentist. They were supposed to have been brought up to snuff in Hawaii before they
sailed out. So this was interfering with my liberty, or my day off on Sunday. So I talked
the boss into letting me sail with them. They did a liberty port into Borneo, Jesselton. I
said, “Let me sail along with them, screen the crew, see what it is and take care of all
these annoying little inconveniences.” He thought that was worthwhile. So I was gone
for about four days or something like that.

LC: What was the name of the ship do you remember?
CJ: I can’t remember. It doesn’t come up right now.
LC: But it was the sister ship to the Pueblo [Oxford]?
CJ: The sister ship to the Pueblo [Oxford], yes.
LC: Where did you stay? Did they have a stateroom for you?
CJ: Yes, it was officer’s country, just a bunk.
LC: What kinds of problems did they have? Was it relatively minor?
CJ: Yes, a little gum thing, a partially impacted wisdom tooth. The guy was
getting groceries under the flap and it would flare up and swell and he couldn’t close his
mouth. There was a fellow with a loose bridge that needed to be re-cemented. There
wasn’t really very much but in four days of sailing from Phu Quoc to Jesselton and back
maybe it was five days, I was able to get all these little things done and clean some teeth,
do some fluoride treatments, this sort of stuff.

LC: Did you get off the ship at Jesselton?
CJ: Yes.
LC: Tell me about that, did you go walking?
CJ: Yes, we went up river into long houses and that sort of thing. Someone had
laid on tours for the crew, amazing.

LC: What did you see?
CJ: You’re talking about Stone Age and Borneo. Well I don’t know I haven’t
been to Papa, New Guinea. It looks like the pictures that you see of the mud men and the
Hottentots and colors and feathers, that sort of stuff was very similar to what we saw in
Borneo.
LC: That must have been an amazing experience.
CJ: Yes, the big communal houses, the long houses and the animals down below in the ground and you went up the ladder, they had cooking fires inside. Interesting it really eliminated the problem mosquitoes with those smoky fires. They had handcrafts and in those days it wasn’t tourists so much. So we could buy handcrafts and things like that. I bought a nice piece of what we call tapa cloth.

LC: Do you still have those things?
CJ: Yes.

LC: As you were coming near the time that you were going to leave the Tutuila, how did you feel? Any sense of?
CJ: It’s interesting the casualties happened in the first month in country and the last month in country. The first month is what you’re going to experience and you make dumb mistakes and the last month is that you’re over confident and you make dumb mistakes. So the last month I refused to go on Medcap. The four that were scheduled all got scrubbed for one reason or another, security or somebody couldn’t do this or something wasn’t right or they hadn’t got the perimeters committed and all that sort of stuff.

LC: Interesting.
CJ: I remember the skipper asked me; he called me in and said, “I see you’re not going to go.” I said, “It’s volunteering I don’t have to.” “Yes, right it’s volunteer. Yes.” And that was all that was said about it.

LC: So you didn’t really get into hot water about it?
CJ: No, no the message would come out there’s going to be a Med CAP and we’d like the company physician and the dentist and then the skipper would contact us and we’d say, “Yes.” We’d been doing it every week for months and all of a sudden I said, “I ain’t going.”

LC: Did you just reach this point on your own? It had enough of the risk in it?
CJ: No, it’s not rocket science. If you know that people are “buying the farm” in the first and last month they why go in harms way? You just don’t go since it was volunteer. As it turned out those four missions didn’t go for one reason or another.

LC: This would have been, if I think I’m right, early 1968, does that sound right?
LC: Would this have been in early 1968?
CJ: Yes, toward the middle of the year because we got out there in May-June, so our rotation was May-June and I actually had 13 months, but that’s not significant. But it was in the summer time.

LC: Had you had any difficulties over the period of the Tet Offensive? Anything happen around that time?
CJ: Let’s see Tet Offensive, I don’t think I was in country during Tet. I was in when the Pueblo, I was in New Zealand and I think I was in New Zealand during the Tet Offensive as well.

LC: Let me ask you if you can Charles to go over the subsequent service. I know you remained with the Navy for many years. Were their particular assignments that you had over the following years that you felt especially proud of or things that you accomplished that you’d like to include here?
CJ: Let’s back up when we were in, let’s see where was it? We were in Vung Tao, one of the swift boats says, “Doc why don’t you come along with us. We’re going to go get Charlie in the middle of the night.” I had been doing these Medcaps and I said, “Yes, ok we’ll [I’ll] go along.” So we went up some creek, not river, enough room to turn around but it’s not like the Colorado River, it’s more of a stream. There were reports that there was going to be a movement of Vietcong down through this area. So it was in the afternoon and we positioned ourselves opposite the water crossing. The fellows went and put these little microphones, in the trail alongside the trail so you could hear people coming. Then they zeroed in their .50 caliber machine guns and it got dark and we got quiet. Along about 10:30 or 11:00 at night we hear sounds and voices and here comes Charlie. I’m thinking afterwards it was like Korea where we knew each square or each meter where a mortar had been armed. We had each meter of the trail lined with these dual .50 caliber machine guns. So we could hear the voices or the people [crew] could hear the voices and they knew they were on top of us. So we opened up and turned on the searchlights or the bright lights. It was two nuns and 23 children, orphans.

LC: What transpired?
CJ: Well, there wasn’t anything left. Just bodies.
LC: Nobody?
CJ: Nobody.
LC: This must have been shocking for you and the other guys too.
CJ: It still is.
LC: How did the command, whoever was in command take this?
CJ: Of course these are young guys. They’re devastated, they all were children and they all know children and this sort of stuff. I don’t know if we had Catholics among us but we probably did. In your average selection you’re going to have some Catholics along with us. So it was pretty devastating. Within a minute and it was over with. It still affects me.
LC: Charles let’s take a break for a minute.
CJ: So I asked for the Antarctic support squadron. We were stationed at Quonset Point, Rhode Island and the squadron basically did the support of the Antarctic operation from late September to February flying on the ice to the outlying bases and helicopter service. We had super consolations like the ones we had in Newfoundland without the ray domes to haul passengers back and forth from Christchurch to the ice. Again by this time I had done my homework and you had to be careful what you asked for. I did not want to winter over. So my officer was in Christchurch at the airport. I had worked diligently to have the squadron in good shape. There were some people who arrived after I left who needed some dental care before they went down to the ice. But by in large I had a lot of free time because I worked nights in Quonset Point. I got to know the local dentist, became very, very good friends. And he got me to be sponsored by the local dental society throughout New Zealand. So on the weekend I would take the train or the bus or fly to a location and the put on a show on Saturday. So Friday night was “get the Yank drunk”. Saturday we put on our dog and pony show and then they’d show me around, have dinner and I’d come back on Sunday. I got to see almost all of New Zealand by the way.
LC: I was going to say you were on both islands back and forth is sounds like.
CJ: Actually all three islands.
LC: Ok, all three yes you’re right, you’re quite right. Well Christchurch is a fabulous town.
CJ: Absolutely. Again, long lasting friends, still communicate or write with people. Was down for the funeral of my good friend, the dentist who had looked after me and those strong, strong ties. So after the Antarctic support squadron thing I went to training for periodontology. I had a fellowship in Orlando and then two years at Bethesda and coming out of Bethesda, went to Japan. Finally got to Japan and had two 18-month tours back-to-back so I could build my board cases to take my board examination in the specialty.

LC: In periodontics?

CJ: Yes and that worked very, very well. So this was ’69, ’70 and ’71, ’72. Then I was in Japan for three years and I came back to Philadelphia in ’75 and that’s the bicentennial ’75, ’76. So I was in Philadelphia for the bi-centennial. You couldn’t be in a better place.

LC: I guess.

CJ: I mean that was where everything was happening. You know Valley Forge and the centennial was about maybe a year or nine months long and there were 50 states and each state has its favorite marching band so you can’t squeeze it in. So there would be two favorite marching bands very weekend. The celebration just went on and went on and went on. It was just a wonderful place to be. It really was a blessing.

LC: Sounds great. What a fabulous opportunity and experience.

CJ: And the same time I was able to get my boards in Ferry Oaks [Perio], it was a good place to be for that. I had bosses who were understanding about the importance of academic excellence as well as clinical excellence. So it was just a good place to be.

Again ran into some wonderful people I’ve kept contact with ever since. Then the people in Washington wanted to put me out into the Pacific so they could relocate me back to the west coast. So I had a year with the Marines at Okinawa.

LC: What was that like?

CJ: Passing time. We would play at war. We’d put up the tents and do field dentistry and that sort of thing. It wasn’t arduous.

LC: Were you employing all your newly gained skills?

CJ: Yes, sure because I was doing that in Japan too. I was a periodontist. Let’s see I was up at Camp Hanson. There may have been another Navy periodontist on the island.
We had several bases but may not have been. So I would see the people with gum
problems, stayed relatively busy.

LC: I assume through all of this you were also advancing in rank, is that accurate?
CJ: Yes.

LC: Can you give me a sense of where you were?
CJ: Let’s see I got promoted to lieutenant commander at the Antarctic support
squadron. I was selected for commander when I was with the Marines. I was selected for
captain, I can’t remember about the commander. I was lieutenant commander in training.
I made commander I guess when I was in Philadelphia, but I was selected for captain
when I was out with the Marines in Okinawa and they wouldn’t put it on because the
staffing of the billet, you only had one captain, even though we had senior captains there
doing jobs that a junior would do only because it was comfortable or convenient for the
Navy to send that person in that job out there. So compliment for the command only had
one captain so they wouldn’t put the rank on until I got back to the States. As soon as I
got back to the States I went to San Diego and they put on my captain there. Then I was
in San Diego and spread my time, was at North Island. Then the commanding officer
wanted me to take over the restorative department at 32nd street. There was problems and
he didn’t tell me what the problems were. He just told me to take over. The fellow who
was in charge just had everybody just riled up. So we got that sorted out, but for a
specialist to be doing general dentistry, there has to be a really good reason for it because
of all that training and experience being used then. So I did the restorative department at
32nd street for about a year. Then they wanted me to transfer. He said, “We’ve got to send
you over seas.” Bad connection so I called him back. He said, “Where’d you want to stay
in the States?” You just said, “I had to go overseas.” “Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.” So they were
talking about Adak, Alaska and you don’t send a specialist to Adak, Alaska where there’s
no need for them. So this was the message that we’re ready for you to get out. So I put
my papers in and my executive officer just had a fit. He said, “What’s this all about?” So
I explained it to him. He said he’d look into it. No, my perception was not that they
wanted to me to get out, so what do I want? I said, “I want to do a teaching hospital.” So
the admiral said it was a waste of my talents, just delaying until I take command
somewhere. Well, I wasn’t interested in command. So anyway I stayed in San Diego for
an extra year between two bases. Between the Naval Training Center and the Amphibious
Base, North Island [Coronado].

LC: Was this while they were trying to sort out what they were going to do with
you?

CJ: Right this was the fifth year and they found a training facility for me and that
happened to be the hospital in San Diego so I was there for four years. That’s about the
time they were going to transfer me to the Bay Area and I was selected for admiral. So
that was looking very good and then my mother’s health had got to the point where she
became very frail. Mind was good, but she became frail and I felt that she needed
someone to look after her. Even though I was coming home not every weekend, but
frequently so I put in my letters to retire. A lot of people were just really upset about that
because a lot of people had gone to a lot of effort to get me selected for flag and I
appreciate that but still you’ve got to look at the practicality of it. This is the time; this is
what it’s all about. It was time to get out, so I did and that was in 1988.

LC: You’ve continued in the field obviously can you tell me a little bit about your
post-naval career?

CJ: I retired and was under foot at home and the nice thing about that is you can
go play in the snow in the middle of the week. You don’t have to wait until the weekend.
And mother enjoyed having someone to tote and fetch and that sort of stuff but she didn’t
expect me to live with her. I didn’t know how in the hell I was going to look after her if I
didn’t live with her. So she put up and she denies it. She put up two of my mentors to find
something for me to do. So when I was back in Washington D.C. for a perio meeting one
of them comes up and says, “You know you really should go down to USC and give them
a hand. They don’t have any boarded people in the “perio” department. This fellow was
on the American Dental Associations Accreditation Team. So he knew that the perio
department really should have someone who is boarded in the department. I said, “Yeah
yeah, yeah.” So the next day one of my other mentors who was with me at Bethesda
came up to me and said that I really should go down to USC and give them a hand. They
didn’t gang up on me two to one; it was just two days in a row. I said, “Well what do I do
about that?” “Well you know Danny Grant comes up from San Diego one day a week and
he’s here at the meeting why don’t you talk to him?” So I talked to him and he said give
Dr. Schonfeld has the department, give him a call when you get back. So I did and it was getting toward Christmas. He said, “Come in, in December and see what it’s all about.” So I followed him around and he said, “This is what you’re going to be doing.” And I said, “Well I can do that.” He said, “Well you can start in February.” So he called me in mid January and the girl I’m going to be replacing, her private practice was getting busy. So I started in January of 1990 with USC.

LC: What did they have you doing? Are you full teaching faculty?
CJ: Yes. Little bit of everything. I would do the clinic I was teaching dental hygienists, perio. I was teaching undergraduate students perio-and the gums and the relationship to the gums and the gum disease and the cause and the treatment. Talked about the surgical application and the application of those lessons to a model. We called it typodonts. They’re a simulated mouth with rubber gums and plastic teeth. I taught the advanced program of upcoming specialists in perio in the classic literature. So I was teaching he residents, dental students, and the hygienists and then we have a program here of international students who are dentists overseas. Overseas degrees come back to become a California dentist. They have an accelerated program. So I kind of fell in looking after that program because my boss felt that my perambulations around the world, I would be [as] sensitive as anybody to the differences between their cultures and that worked out very, very well.

LC: Is this sort of second career that you’ve had or in fact third maybe even something that you’re really enjoyed?
CJ: Yes, I love teaching. I love the young people, they keep me young. They really do, they’re super. I really like the students very, very much.

LC: Do you stay in contact with Navy personnel other than the friends that you’ve talked about? Do you keep in contact? Do you go to function there?
CJ: Well there’s function’s every year in Washington D.C., but it’s in May and it conflicts with my academic schedule and I haven’t been. I was back for the funeral for one of the admirals who was CO of the dental corps, head of the dental corps. Bob Elliot was a really nice guy and he had furthered my career. So I went back to his funeral and I saw a lot of the other retired people. And there’s some e-mailing back and forth. My mentor Pet Fedi had his 50th wedding anniversary in Florida and I went out for that and I
saw a lot of the retired Navy who go to Florida, saw them there. But that’s the only time. Go to the professional meeting and see ex-navy and then the ones still on active duty. But most of the ones on active duty I don’t know. They’re a younger crowd and I’ve been out of the loop long enough now, 14 years, well more than that, 16 years that they don’t run into any of my legacy. But there’s also people in the Navy who are retired who are in places like Texas that I will see at meeting and we get together.

LC: Right, still being on the professional loop I’m sure you do see these guys. Charles let me ask you a couple of big picture questions about the conflict. I’m just offering these up for your observations. Was the United States perusing a good policy in investing the kinds of resources we did in the defense of South Vietnam?

CJ: In retrospect I don’t think so. If we had “won” then it would have been worth it. But since we didn’t win then none of it was worth it. In other words, there wasn’t a political commitment along the way. Everybody was like many people had said we were in Vietnam one year–14 years, one year at a time, that type of thing. Every year it would change, you would change all the personnel and you had to reinvent the wheel. So in hindsight we probably shouldn’t have gotten involved with it. I don’t know if the Domino Theory was actual or not. I know that the Australians were in Malaysia, their only overseas base at Butterworth in Da Nang and they were fighting the Communists insurgents successfully in Malaysia when I was visiting. So making my trip through Malaysia.

LC: When was that Charles that you were there?

CJ: I was in Japan [Vietnam]. We stopped in [Penang] from Vietnam at Butterworth when I went to Australian dental meeting while I was still in ‘Nam. That was the first time. The second time was when I was in Japan for duty and the Marines were mounting a dual operation with the Australians and the forward liaison was going down. Did I want, let’s get this straight. Anyway, I went down when I was in Japan to Australia as well. The thing was anybody with a passport and I said, “I’m you’re man.” So I went on down. Flew to Bangkok, took the train from Bangkok to Singapore and then flew from Singapore to Sydney and went on down to Melbourne, took the train to Melbourne.
LC: You were mentioning that the Australians had their own anti-Communist action on their hands in Malaysia. The British certainly had that before in the 50’s Himalaya. [Malaya]

CJ: Exactly.

LC: Do you do much reading on the conflict or is this something that is not really you?

CJ: No, I was surprised that the Australians were overseas. But that was their only commitment- was Malaysia, and they just gave us very good, treated us very nicely.

LC: Do you spend much time or have you subsequently over the course of your career spent time thing about the Vietnam Element of your experience? Is that something that’s kind of trailed you around? Obviously certain things that happened bother one as time goes by.

CJ: Well, I’ve got boxes and boxes and boxed of slides that I’ve never looked at.

LC: Really?

CJ: Yes. I have a Vietnamese lover and I had a Japanese lover. In fact I brought the Japanese back with me and got him educated at University of California [San Diego]. He’s back in Japan, “big frog in a little pond” type of thing. So no, I haven’t thought much about the war. Dr. Higgins has been back several times and he is conducting program with the Vietnamese government developing medical education.

LC: Is that right?

CJ: Yes.

LC: Is that something that you might want to be a part of at some point or not necessarily?

CJ: No. I don’t think so. I don’t see outreach on an international level. Higgins was a world health organization and an international association of family practice people.

LC: Right so his focus has been international.

CJ: Right. So when he retired he was taken up with several international societies and has kept him very, very busy.

LC: Sure absolutely. But you’re not in some kind of state where you need to get back to Vietnam?
CJ: No, I sometimes fantasize about motoring in the countryside. It is a gorgeous country, it really is. Motoring in the countryside and seeing some of the places I had been before, but I don’t have a burning desire to do it.

LC: I wonder if there is anything else that you would like to add to the interview that perhaps I haven’t asked you about or that comes to mind as something you’d like to include here.

CJ: Yes if I had it to do all over again, I would do it exactly the same.

LC: Really? Not everybody can say that. That’s quite something.

CJ: For instance if I had been overseas in Korea rather than Barstow, I wouldn’t have met Dr. Aable so when I left Newfoundland and was stationed at Virginia Beach, Able was at Norfolk at the main dental. He was still looking after my career. For instance when Helen Gagen Douglas was visiting, I was her escort.

LC: Now this is Senator Douglas?

CJ: Yes, when she went to some function in Virginia or Norfolk, or whatever it was. On some committee anyway, I was her escort. I would go over to the main dental at Norfolk for their in service training on the afternoons when I was free from ours. So Aable looked after my career, he really did. If I had not met him probably a lot of neat things wouldn’t have happened. For instance going from Newfoundland to the air station at Virginia Beach he probably had a hand in that. That was neat, it really was.

LC: This really underscores the importance of established officers looking after younger ones and kind of bringing them along.

CJ: Yes, exactly. Of course I worked with him as a chair side assistant as a prosthetic technician.

LC: That’s right; I think you had mentioned that.

CJ: Those sort of things are there. I remember inspection tour in Newfoundland. The admiral was the head of the dental corps at the time and we chatted about something I can’t remember what. In Norfolk he came through and it was a cocktail party and he picked up the conversation from where we had left off two years before. It just impressed the hell out of me.

LC: No kidding!

CJ: Absolutely Raffeto was marvelous. Just really was.
LC: Very sharp.

CJ: There were good mentors all along the way.

LC: You mentioned Senator Douglas, were their other VIP’s you came across?

CJ: Yes, Hubert Humphrey came in one day to get his teeth cleaned at the hospital
at Bethesda because his people called and said, “Could we see the Senator?” I said,
“Absolutely.” Well he walked in the door at that moment.

LC: Right, they were around the corner.

CJ: That wasn’t appreciated. We’d be happy to take care of him, but give us a
little bit of breathing room to set up an office and all that sort of stuff. This was Saturday
morning and he was not a very pleasant person. He really, really wasn’t.

LC: No kidding?

CJ: No, he wasn’t very nice.

LC: Was he in pain?

CJ: No he just had his teeth cleaned.

LC: So he was just kind of gruff?

CJ: He just wasn’t very pleasant. He didn’t have to be politically suave and why
am I having to wait? Didn’t my people call? Yeah 30 seconds ago. This type of thing.

LC: That’s interesting.

CJ: I also saw then the under secretary of defense on his way to the NATO
meeting, Chief Douglas Douglas as patients. Those are small contact and you don’t see
them again.

LC: Right, just kind of one offs, brush with greatness.

CJ: Yes, I suppose.

LC: That’s interesting.

CJ: I was more impressed with Douglas and his work for the Chesapeake Canal
and conservation and all that sort of stuff.

LC: Well I want to thank you for the time you’ve give us and for participating in
the oral history project.

CJ: You’re entirely welcome.

LC: I appreciate it very much.