

Oral Memoirs

of

Marc Ennis

An Interview Conducted by

Kendra Hazen

February 26, 2014

Community Veterans History Project

University of Central Florida RICHES of Central Florida

Copyright 2014

This material is protected by US copyright. Permission to print, reproduce or distribute copyrighted material is subject to the terms and conditions of fair use as prescribed in the US copyright law. Transmission or reproduction of protected items beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the copyright owners.

Interview Histories

Interviewer: Kendra Hazen

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the RICHES of Central Florida Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

Project Detail

The Community Veterans History Project, a RICHES of Central Florida Project at the University of Central Florida, includes interviews with Central Florida veterans from all branches of the United States military. Beginning in 2010, the UCF Community Veterans History Project is collecting, preserving, and making accessible to the public the experiences of Central Florida's veterans so that future generations will better understand the realities of conflict. It is a collaborative endeavor supported by multiple departments and offices at UCF. The histories, which are collected by students and faculty, are archived and made digitally available through the UCF library. The UCF Community Veterans History Project will also contribute selected veterans' histories to the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Marc Ennis is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on February 26, 2014.

Abstract

Oral history interview of Marc Ennis, who joined the Navy in December of 1990 and attended Recruit Training Center (RTC) Orlando, Florida, for boot camp at age 17. After boot camp, he attended Electronic Warfare training at Corry Station Naval Technical Training Center in Pensacola and then reported to his first ship, *USS Gunston Hall*, at Little Creek, Virginia.

After three and a half years, Ennis trained at aircrew school in Pensacola and then Millington, Tennessee, to become an Aviation Warfare Sensor Operator and rescue swimmer for Sikorsky SH-60/MH-60 Seahawk helicopters. He also joined the fleet replacement squadron aircrew for Helicopter Squadron 1 in Jacksonville, and then reported to his first fleet squadron, Helicopter Squadron 5, also in Jacksonville. After completing his service for HS-5, Ennis reported to the helicopter wing as an instructor. After three years instructing, he transferred to Naval Air Facility Atsugi in Yamato and Ayse, Japan, for sea duty with Helicopter Squadron 14.

This interview was conducted by Kendra Hazen and includes topics such as Ennis' background and family, RTC Orlando, his Navy life after training, Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD), and the simulation industry in Central Florida.

Marc Ennis

Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Kendra Hazen
February 26, 2014
Orlando, Florida

0:00:00

Introduction

Hazen Cool.

Ennis Cool.

Hazen Alright. I get to be fancy at the beginning.

Ennis There you go.

Hazen So just so you know. Alright. Today is Wednesday, February 26th, 2014. I am interviewing Marc Ennis, who served in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Ennis attended recruit training at RTC Orlando and after 21 years of service returned to Orlando to work at NAWCTSD [Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division]. My name is Kendra Hazen and I am interviewing Mr. Ennis as a part of the UCF [University of Central Florida] Veterans History Project and as research for the creation of the Lone Sailor Memorial Project. We are recording this interview in Colburn Hall at UCF in Orlando, Florida. Mr. Ennis, will you please start us off by telling us when and where you were born.

Ennis I was born in Port Hueneme, California. February 9th, 1973.

Hazen And what did your parents do for a living?

Ennis Uh, my dad was actually in the Navy, but when we were born he had, uh, just retired. So, uh, my only recollect – recollection of the Navy was, uh, living near it, and, uh, he actually worked for the State of California, uh, for the, uh, gas company, and, uh, my mom was a stay at home mom, uh – didn't work. I mean, she worked, [*laughs*] but in the – in the home.

Hazen Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Ennis I have, uh, three brothers. Uh, I'm a twin. A fraternal twin, right?

Hazen Okay.

Ennis And, uh, two older brothers, One of which is, uh, still in the Navy up in Jacksonville, and my – the – the oldest brother – he's in, uh, Pensacola.

Hazen What did you do before entering the Navy?

Ennis So, uh, I was a student, and, uh, actually I, uh, graduated high school and, uh, joined the Navy, uh, that summer. So...

Hazen The summer of what? What year?

Ennis Uh, well, I guess it was the summer of [19]89. So I actually graduated, uh, during the summer of my junior year. So I never attended my senior year, and, uh— so I had enough credits, so I just joined the Navy.

Hazen Oh, so why did you join the Navy?

Ennis Yeah. There was a couple different factors, but I was getting married and had a baby on the way, and, uh, that's what really started everything off.

Hazen And was there a reason why you chose the Navy opposed to any of the other branches of service?

Ennis No, I guess it was, uh, because of my father, but for the most part it was, uh— didn't really think about any of the, uh—the other services. So yeah.

0:02:40 **Family service members**

Hazen Did, um—besides your dad, was there anyone else in your family who served in the Navy?

Ennis Um, yeah, so we, uh—since my dad moved around a bunch before I was born, uh, we didn't have a lot of family, but my uncle on my mother's side, he was in the Navy, and then my, um—my wife's grandfather was, uh, also in the Navy back, um—uh, I mean it was a pretty long time ago. Back in the '40s-50s. Uh, but that didn't really, um, you know, make my decision to join, I guess. Now, as I think about it, and in fact, my mom was in the Navy too which is pretty unique. She was a WAVE [Women's Auxiliary Army Corps], and when they—when my mom and dad first met, uh, they were both in the Navy, right?

Hazen What's a WAVE?

Ennis It's a, um—it's a Woman Active—I'll have to look the acronym up, but it's basically a, uh—um, a woman, uh, sailor that was doing administrative duties, but they were still part of—they were very vital to the war and everything. Uh, but she was yeoman...

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis Which is a clerical type person, and, uh, but she was actually modeled on a three cent stamp—her and three other women.

Hazen Hm.

Ennis Yeah, that's uh—I'll send that to you—the details on that, but that's pretty cool.

Hazen Yeah, thank you. Um, how did your family feel about you joining the Navy?

Ennis So, uh—no—no real, uh, heartache, and no real like, "Hey. that's great." Just kind of indifferent.

0:04:12 **Recruit Training Center Orlando (RTC Orlando)**

Hazen Um, and where did you attend boot camp?

Ennis So I attended boot camp here in Orlando, and I was living in Pensacola, Florida, when I joined. Actually it was Gulf Breeze, Florida, but...

Hazen It was called Freeze, Florida?

Ennis Gulf—Gulf Breeze.

Hazen Gulf Breeze. What was called Gulf Breeze?

Ennis It was the city.

Hazen Oh, okay.

Ennis So it wasn't Pensacola, but—yeah.

Hazen Gotcha. Um, and you said you began your training at RTC [Recruit Training Center] Orlando after graduating?

Ennis Right. So I, uh—there was a couple of months, uh—so I graduated that summer. I guess it was maybe August-September. You know, I took the final class of summer school, got the paperwork signed off, and then, uh, took maybe a month or two off, and I was, uh, reported to board December 9th of 1990.

Hazen Okay, and, um, you were from Florida at that time, but, um, what did you know about specifically the RTC Orlando region before you got here?

Ennis Uh, nothing. Yeah. So...

Hazen And...

Ennis It was kind of a whirlwind, right? You know, you hear about all this stuff, "Hey, you're going to boot camp here." But for the most part, you know, it was, uh, get on an airplane, you show up, they bus you here, and then everything was a whole different world, you know? You're, uh, taken out of the comfort zone, thrown right into, uh, you know, people yelling at ya, right?

- Hazen** Uh huh.
- Ennis** And 20 years ago, you know, it was a little different too, because they – you didn't have all this, uh, kindler[sic], gentler, you know, no screaming, no cussing. It was – it was pretty hardcore, but it was good, you know?
- Hazen** How long were you at RTC Orlando?
- Ennis** Uh, for approximately six to eight weeks. I'm not sure exactly. I guess I graduated right around February – was it February 7th, [1991]? It was right near my birthday. So that was kind of cool, 'cause I turned 18, uh, you know, right when I graduated boot camp. So it was right around that day. I can't remember the exact day, but yeah. It was pretty unique.
- Hazen** What were your first impressions of the base?
- Ennis** So, uh, the base – uh, we showed up at night, and then during the day, uh, we'd walk down a long, um, kind of sidewalk, and we marched everywhere we went, and, uh, there was[sic] trees. The weather was, uh, really nice. It was December. It wasn't too cold, and, um, yeah. it was just, um – we saw a very small part of the base. I mean, we – we walked down the same street. We, uh – they had a big, uh, like marching field, right? Looked like a big tarmac – a big airport. Just a big black top, right? And, uh...
- Hazen** Did that area have a name at all?
- Ennis** The Grinder.
- Hazen** Okay.
- Ennis** Yeah, so that's where you do all your practicing for marching, and, uh – but no. For the most part, it was, um, the same thing every day. So you really didn't see any part of the, uh – the outside of the base, and all the buildings were very similar. Um, it was – it was, uh, very sanitary, I guess, right? So...
- Hazen** And you've started to talk about this a little bit but what were your first days of service like? What were your first days of training like?
- Ennis** Right. So – so, the very first day, you know, when we arrived here, there was a lot of yellin', and, uh, obviously they were lining a bunch of people up from different parts of the country, and, uh, it was just kind of a shock, and, uh, for the most part it was, uh, *Wow*. You know? Your eyes are o – opened wide, and from then on, you just stayed busy. I mean your – you didn't have a lot of time to think, I guess, 'Cause they were just hitting you with you so many, uh, new things, and you were learning this, learning that. Um, so yeah. It – it wasn't – there wasn't really a lot of time to – to think about it, and then as you asked the question now, I guess I really hadn't thought about it until – 'til now.

Hazen Sure.

Ennis You know, what I thought.

0:08:08 **Daily life at RTC**

Hazen Um, can you describe for me what daily life was like?

Ennis Yeah, so daily life was, uh, pretty good. Very routine. You wake up, uh, I think it was about 4:30, and, uh, you did the, uh, you know – you brushed your teeth, Got all your toiletry stuff done, You lined up, They came in, Inspected, uh, the – the compartment, and then, uh, we normally PTed [physical training], uh – exercised, and then we went to classes, right? And then you'd do some – you'd go to chow – lunch, and like I said, you were marching everywhere you went, so that was a chore in itself, 'cause we'd never done it, and um, yeah.

So there was a lot of motivation. Uh, they used to call it, um – uh, basically, you'd get punished, right? 'Cause you didn't do something right. So they would take you outside on the sidewalk and line everybody up, and they'd start making you do jumping jacks or something like that. But, uh, every day was filled with, um – with something new, as far as what'd you learn and then they'd move you on to the next step, So – but yeah the routine was: you wake up, get the compartment ready for inspection, uh, get inspected, go to class or PT, and um – and that's the funny thing about the, uh, the exercise. The exercise wasn't as, uh – we – we had no – no exercise uniform. I mean, you exercised in your daily stuff, Right? So it was kind of unique in that way that, uh – um, everything you did was kind of an exercise and you're always ready to, uh, do – do jumping jacks or pushups or whatever. So it was kinda – kinda cool, and then, um, yeah. You'd hit noontime lunch, hit some, uh, dinner, and then after dinner, I know we did stuff, but I can't remember what happened after dinner. Like I said, everything was kind of a blur. It's kind of hard to go back and to – to think about it now. It's, uh – you know, as I see the RTC now, I mean, none – none of it looks like what I remember, but then again all the buildings were tore[sic] down. So...

Hazen Can you tell me a little bit more about the inspections? What exactly was being inspected?

Ennis [sighs].

Hazen What exactly were the standards...

Ennis Oh, yeah.

Hazen That you were supposed to be meeting?

Ennis Yeah, this was...

Hazen [inaudible].

Ennis This was some crazy stuff, right? So on your bunks – and – and they were single, uh – very, uh basic bunks that you had. You had a bottom bunk and you had a top bunk. So what they would expect is, uh, the hospital corners, right? So how you folded your sheets and they would go down to the – the biggest detail of how the, uh – the edges of the sheets were, uh – I don't know if you had that little, uh – I don't know. You just had to have the sheets the right way, so when it folded over you wouldn't see that little rough edge. So you always want the smooth edge on top and then the, uh – the hospital corners had to be at a 45 degree – everything had to be...

Hazen What's a hospital corner?

Ennis It's just where you, uh, bring the excess sheet...

Hazen Oh.

Ennis And bring it at an angle. It's kind of like wrapping a present, right? And you take the excess and then fold it underneath so you have real, real neat corners.

Hazen They call it "hospital corners."

Ennis Hospital corners, right? And the next thing was, uh, how you fold your socks, how you fold you underwear, how – you know, your t-shirts, and then everything else had a place, right? And they're very detailed on – on – on that stuff. Your shoes had to be shined, and, uh, yeah. So everything...

Hazen Belt buckles, maybe?

Ennis Oh, belt buckles? Yeah. Attention to detail for all that stuff. So...

Hazen Um...

Ennis And that – that was every day, right? I mean, you didn't get a day that went by where you didn't get inspected, and most the time, you failed the inspection, right? 'Cause there was always something they would find that wasn't right, and then, uh, I think there was like 60 of us that started off. So you'd have 60 people in a, uh – in a room, where you slept and you did inspections, and, uh, normally, uh, those never went well, right? So you're – you're always getting corrected on somethin', and that's kind of unique, 'cause, uh, as you go along you start getting better, right? And, uh, less, uh – less yellin' [*laughs*].

Hazen So in that room of 60 or so, would there be one officer that came through to inspect?

Ennis Uh...

Hazen How would that...

Ennis Yeah, it'd normally – you – you'd...

Hazen Would it take a long time?

Ennis No, pretty quick. You were assigned two recruit – recruit company commanders, and, uh – so for us, we had two chiefs. I think actually for us, one might have been a senior chief – an E[nlisted Rank] 7 and an E-8. So they're pretty senior, and, uh, yeah. It'd go pretty quick actually. Maybe, uh – maybe a half hour. But – so the whole session though was, uh, you get inspected, they get mad at ya, they exercised ya, and then you fixed, you know, what the problems were and then you went and, you know, did classes or something like that. yeah.

0:13:05 **Classes and training**

Hazen And then you talked a little bit about classes and tasks and you would do some class and then move onto the next one. Can you give me an idea of examples of...

Ennis Yeah.

Hazen Classes that you had to go through?

Ennis Yeah, so a lot of 'em were – were talking about firefighting, or different parts of the, uh – the ship. You know, how the ship operates. Um, different, uh – so – so the ship is, you know – they don't have addresses for the different rooms, right? So you have bulkheads and they start from the beginning of the – of the bow, and that's, uh, frame zero, and then, uh, as you go further back on the ship, the frames will increment up. So, um, you know, they – but basically the premise is, if you need to get to a compartment that's, uh, on the first deck, right? It's gonna be one and then the second number's gonna be the frame number, right? So you know what – you know what level it's on, and then the second number is gonna tell you how far from the bow, uh, the room is, and then the third number'll tell ya how far out, uh – out it is from the center of the ship.

Hazen Okay.

Ennis So – so, uh, it's a pretty unique numbering system, but it works on every ship. So...

Hazen Sure.

Ennis Yeah.

Hazen Can you give me any other examples of classes?

Ennis Yeah, so, uh, we talked about the firefighting. We talked about the, uh – I guess the, uh – the history. History was a big deal and, uh, that was kind of unique. So the Navy is big on tradition, right? And, uh, a lot of that was, uh – they'd go back

and they'd talk about, you know, how the Navy was first, uh conceived, who, uh – the first ship – don't quiz me on any of this, 'cause...

Hazen [laughs].

Ennis [laughs]. But, uh – yeah. So, uh, let's see. We had, of course, uniform standards, regulations, you know. You did all the stuff talking about pay, you know. It was just a – anything you wanted to know about the Navy and, uh, that you needed to know, uh, you'd get in those classes. Some of it was basic, um, you know, uh, classes maybe on English or math, and some of these were, you know, to make sure that the, uh – uh, people could – could beat the standards, I guess.

The other thing we did was a lot of in-processing[sic] for your different ratings or jobs. So for me, um, they would take you to the medical – a lot of shots, right? And remember, you had to get uniforms. So yeah. It was a lot of, uh – yeah. Now – now as I start to remember all this – yeah. The first week, I guess, was, you know, picking up your uniform, you're getting shots, you're going to medical, and just a lot of in-processing, right? And then maybe the, uh, you know, the – the, uh – I don't know – second, third, fourth week was a little more, you know, of the classes and stuff like that. So – but yeah. It – it was busy, and then maybe, uh – let's see.

So what was it? Boot camp was about, uh, six weeks, and, uh, in between – right in the middle of it, they had something called, uh, "work week," right? So what they would do is – so all the facilities on the, uh – on the base – you know, whether it was chow hall, the laundry, the admin – was normally run by the recruits with, uh, some – some other senior sailors, you know, overseeing 'em, right? So like, uh, for the chow hall, you had your cooks who were pretty senior sailors. They'd been in for four or five, six, years, and then of course, you had your recruits that would do all the, you know, washing the dishes, you know, cleaning everything, you know, running stuff from here to there, and then, uh – so we did that at about the, uh, maybe the third week, and, uh, did that for a whole week, and then, uh, you would fall back into training – training mode. Yeah.

Hazen And those kind of tasks were normal tasks? Not like punishment or anything?

Ennis No, no. So – so....

Hazen They were expected?

Ennis Yeah, yeah. Exactly. That was part of the routines. So you would learn, uh, you know, whatever.

Hazen Okay.

Ennis Yeah, everything had a purpose. You may not have known what it was when you were doing it.

Hazen Sure[?].

Ennis But as – as – as you look back on it, you kind of see that, you know, it was responsibility. It was initiative. It was, uh, all those sorts of things as a young kid you may not have, right? And, uh – so, you know, some people did good[sic] at it and other people – other people needed maybe a little more motivation.

Hazen Did the Navy use words kind of like that? As kind of...

Ennis Oh, yeah.

Hazen Key words to guide? What were some of those key words?

Ennis Yeah, so, uh – um, “Uniformity will prevail,” right?

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis Um, you know, obviously, looking sharp. “Sharp” is a – is a good one. “Professionalism.” Uh, let’s see. Um, I’m trying to think of some other ones. Uh, Yeah. Basically “teamwork.” You know, that’s – That’s another huge one that you – you’ll see, and then, the, uh – and remember, this was the first co-ed[ucational] boot camp too, so we had women, uh, that were, uh – obviously, we weren’t integrated, per say, but we had a sister company that, um, kind of had the same timeline, right? So, uh – uh, but yeah, but everyone was a shipmate, you know? You weren’t like a – or a sailor. Everything was kind of gender-neutral and, uh – so that was kind of unique, but yeah.

They really wanted you to get the teamwork and the, uh – and – and the leadership, and they promoted the idea that, you know, when you’re on a ship, you know, it’s you, right? I mean, You don’t have anyone coming in there to help ya, so If something happens, uh, it’s the crew that’s gonna, uh, take care of the, uh – the issues, whatever they might be. So – and that was the other thing – talk about history – was they used a lot of examples from the past, you know, whether it be, uh, um, back in the John Paul Jones days or the, um, you know – in World War II or – or anything like that. So it was pretty cool.

Hazen Thank you.

Ennis You’re welcome.

0:19:08

Social life

Hazen Can you tell me a little bit about the recruits that you went through training with? What was your impression or your relationships like with the different recruits?

Ennis Yeah, so, uh, that was pretty cool, and it’s – it’s kind of funny how, um, you know, people that don’t know each other and are from different parts of the

country – But everyone has a characteristic or – or a trait, and, uh, I think the – the instructors were very good at picking out, um, you know, people for their different talents, right?

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis And then, Maybe – maybe, uh, they had some insight. but like, uh, we had an older recruit, right? I think he was like 25, and, uh, he immediately kind of, like, took charge. So they made him the, uh, kind of the leader of the group, right?

Hazen Yeah.

Ennis And then we had some other people that were, uh, you know – I don't want to stereotype people – but they had one guy with glasses, and I think he was very administrative. So they made him the yeoman. So you pretty much had the same basic tasks or the basic structures like anywhere, right? You have a – a leader. You have a secretary. You have a, you know, master-at-arms, and, um – so yeah. I remember the people that they picked were, uh – I'd kinda go *Yeah. That – that's interesting.* You know, and, uh, my claim to fame was, you know, to – to lay low and don't be noticed. So that worked out pretty well, and, uh, yeah. It was uneventful, and the memories that, you know – from – from boot camp – while – I don't really keep in touch them.

Hazen Okay.

Ennis I mean, it's a – it's – if you see them, it's an immediate, uh, bond, because it's something you got – you know, you've been through. Yeah. It was pretty cool.

Hazen What kind of social life existed among the recruit – recruits?

Ennis Um, yeah. Social life? Really none.

Hazen [*laughs*].

Ennis I mean, you know, the biggest thing was there was maybe – an always kind of an underground, uh, type deal with the – with the recruits. Like if the, uh – the instructor left, then, uh, you know, the recruits would – I mean, we were breaking the rules, but you know they – they would say, "Lights out. Go to sleep." And the next thing you know, uh, you'd start, you know, maybe talking to your buddy or, um, just kind of, you know, either, uh – just doing what you need to do, write a letter home or – or something like that, right? So I don't think it was like breaking the rules, but you always kinda had your, uh – uh, your – your little bit of time to yourself, right? And, uh, the funny part was, a lot of people, uh, um, kinda worked out, you know? They – they, uh – 'cause I forget what time the lights went out, but there was, uh – yeah. A lot of people were – were doing pushups and exercisin' and – yeah. I mean, it wasn't a lot of people. don't get me wrong. It wasn't like they turned the lights off, the place goes crazy.

It was just kind of unique, where, you know, certain people had their kind of routines and they kinda kept them. So it was kinda – kinda unique.

0:22:14

Co-educational training and Competition Week

Hazen Can you tell me a little bit more about the co-ed aspect of training?

Ennis Yeah, so the – the co-ed aspect wasn't a big deal. In fact, it was, uh, you know – I – I don't know. Maybe – maybe I just didn't, uh, take a lot of notice to it, but for the most part, they did what they did. Uh, we did what we did. There wasn't a whole lot of, uh, interaction between the two groups. Uh, you know, we'd pass each other. We, uh, you know – really there wasn't a whole lot of interaction.

Hazen Um, did the women have a woman leader and the – the men have a male leader?

Ennis You know, that's a good question. Um, I think it was, uh, both. I think, uh – I mean we – I had male instructors, but I think some of the females had male instructors and I think some of the, uh, male, uh, groups had female instructors, but I couldn't tell you for sure. I don't think they segregated it that much, but, uh, I can't recall.

Hazen Were there any activities that were done together, even like...

Ennis Yeah.

Hazen Eating or anything?

Ennis Yeah. In fact, uh, um, we did have a, uh, competition week, right? Maybe not a week. Maybe a day or two, right? And, uh, it was kinda like, uh – what do you call it? Your field day, and, uh, you go out and do sports and everything, and I'm trying to think how we worked that, but I think that was one of the integrated-type deals where, you know, you, uh, um – or was that – I'm trying to think. Uh, Yeah. well, either way, I knew they were out there. I don't think we competed against 'em, but, you know, we competed against the different companies, right? So, uh – and I think there's probably like 10 or 15 companies going on at one time, but I can't remember. I can't remember, but I know there was a lot of people. I mean, it was like a football field.

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis And the whole football field – it was probably a couple of football fields – and the whole place was busy, uh, with people doing stuff, right? From tug-of-war to sprints to, you know – I can't remember all the stuff that was going on, but yeah. so that was pretty cool.

0:24:18

Instructors

Hazen Can you tell me a little bit about your instructors? Who were they and what were they like?

Ennis Yeah, so, um, I remember I had a, uh, colored, uh, guy and his name was—he was a DCC[sic], and, uh, I want to say his name was, uh—what was his—Gibson, and Then, uh, I had a, uh— I wanna say an MMC, which was—so a DC [damage controlman] was a damage controlman, who was like a firefighter, right? Basically an equivalent of, and then we had a, uh, MMC, and he could've been—either way, it's not important, and they're both chiefs and they're pretty, uh—a little older. You know, maybe 45-50, or it seemed old at that time [*laughs*], but they were, uh, business. They were business. They were, uh—they were no joke. They were, uh, uh, very strict. They were, uh—didn't smile a lot. But, um, you—you understood that they were in charge, and, uh, they—they were, uh—they were good leaders, and to this day, I—you know, I enjoyed my time, I guess, if you—you could say that. Because, you know, you get a good leader and it really makes things easy, because there's not a whole lot of, uh, stuff you have to think about, right? So that—that—that's pretty good.

Hazen What does MMC mean?

Ennis Machinist[s] mate. They, um—they, uh—they do a lot of the mechanical stuff on the boat. They—they are, uh—they're kind of like a metal worker type deal.

0:25:57 **Marching and proudest moments**

Hazen What was the hardest thing you remember doing at RTC?

Ennis Yeah, I guess it was the—I guess it was the marching, you know? I mean, that sounds crazy, but, you know, I can't dance. You gotta have a lot of rhythm, you know? And, uh, in fact, this is a funny story. Our, uh, recruit, uh, company commander, uh—and that's the other part. So the recruit company commander is a recruit, just like all of u, but he's the leader of the group, right? He's, uh, designated. Uh, you really, uh—I didn't see too many people volunteer for it. So we went through a couple of guys, right?

Hazen Yeah.

Ennis Uh, I think at one point, I may have done it for like an hour, you know, till I got fired, right? But the, uh—the guy that stood out in my mind that had been the leader the longest was a—a tall, uh, black man, right? and he was pretty young. He was probably about the same age as most of us—about 20, and, uh—but yeah. he had it. He—he could do the marching. He had no problem calling off the, uh, cadences, and, um, yeah. He—so he—he was—he really, I think, turned our company around, because, um—I mean that was a tough part. I mean, if you can't march, uh, you can't get from one place to another, right? And it sounds ridiculous, because you go, *What's the, uh—I mean, Why are we doing it?* right? *How does this help us run a ship or be in the Navy?* But it's just one of those things where everyone has to do it. Everyone has to do it good[sic], and if you do

good[sic] doing it, you look good, right? So, um, yeah. We went from not being able to, uh, um – you know, everyone being in the same step to be, you know, doing a marching band type deal, and, uh, remember: everything's happening pretty quick[sic], right?

So at the end of the, uh, six to eight weeks – whatever it was – uh, we looked pretty sharp. That – that was a pretty big accomplishment, because I think that the day before graduation, we have a little private, uh – not private, I guess – but the families get to come and, you know, we'll march, uh, up and down, and it's pretty neat, you know? So good times.

Hazen In addition to that, which sounds like that was a – a moment of pride for you, can you tell me another moment that you felt most proud?

Ennis Uh, let's see. Hm. Uh, I mean, boot camp – I guess, uh, everything was just kind of go, go, go. So um, I mean, I guess – I guess pride being the – no. I don't know. Not – not really. I think the biggest part is just the accomplishments in the little stuff that you do, and nothing's really major. The only reason that I remember the, uh, marching was because that was – I mean, that was tough for me. I was like *Man. Step. Step. What?* [laughs] And then, uh – but no. the rest of it was, uh, fairly, um – I mean – I don't know – easy or – not easy. probably isn't the word. Maybe it's just you take each day, day by day. So yeah.

0:29:03

The Grinder and the USS *Blue Jacket*

Hazen What was the official purpose of the Grinder? And does it have any special significance to you?

Ennis Yeah, so – so the Grinder is where you practice most of your marching, and, uh, the Grinder – yeah. It was painful. I mean, you're just out there forever. You're, uh, practicing these maneuvers. You're, uh – um, and one of the key, uh, things that we went through was: you used to have to march with these old M1 [Garand] rifles, right? or maybe they were M14s. but if you can imagine, you know, a 3-4 foot long rifle that weighs 10-15-20 pounds, and you're holding this thing forever, you know, it gets tiring, and at some point, they decided to do away with it and, uh – right in the middle of our training, and I was thanking whoever made that decision, because that was the worst, right? So things became a little easier by not having to carry that. But, uh, yeah. for the most part, the Grinder was where you spent a lot of your time, just – just kind of learning the, uh – the different marching steps and everything. I – I'm not sure. Have you – have you ever done any marching?

Hazen No.

Ennis Yeah, I mean, it's...

Hazen Well...

University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project

A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences and Stories of Central Florida

- Ennis** It gives a – it gives a tr – like, to the band people...
- Hazen** Mmhmm.
- Ennis** While they're playing the music, and you just kinda go, *Wow*.
- Hazen** Mmhmm.
- Ennis** *Those guys are really – I mean, uh – Working hard. 'Cause it's – it's hard. So...*
- Hazen** My brothers...
- Ennis** Mmhmm.
- Hazen** Were in marching band.
- Ennis** Yeah.
- Hazen** So I've seen the hard work
- Ennis** Yeah.
- Hazen** But I haven't done it myself.
- Ennis** Yeah, yeah. Well, thank – thank goodness [*laughs*].
- Hazen** Um, the decision to march without the rifles, Was that...
- Ennis** I – I have no idea. All – all's I know is, um – I remember classes before me and classes after me, um, uh, did have 'em. So I'm not sure what – what the, uh – the issue was with that, but that brings up a good question of – yeah. Why? What was the, uh...
- Hazen** Was it like that week that – that you're supposed to stop marching with them? Was it something [*inaudible*]...
- Ennis** No, I mean, most of the time...
- Hazen** [*inaudible*].
- Ennis** People kept them the whole time...
- Hazen** Oh.
- Ennis** So I'm not really sure why – why they stopped that, and like I said, I think they brought 'em back too.
- Hazen** Mmhmm.

University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project

A RICHES Project: Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences and Stories of Central Florida

Ennis So I'm sure it was someone's, uh, good idea, or maybe someone got hurt, or – who knows? So...

Hazen Um, can you tell me about other areas on the base, in addition to the Grinder, that were of particular importance...

Ennis Yeah.

Hazen To you?

Ennis So – so the pool was a big one, right? And, uh, that was a good time and, uh, it really amazed me by how many people couldn't swim. That was, uh – that kind of blew my mind, right?

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis And, uh – but that – was a lot of fun, and then I remember, uh, Perimeter Room, and I'm not sure if it was called "Perimeter Room," but it's where we did our timed, uh, runs to make sure you're, um – you could pass the, um – the PT, I guess, and then there was the – the gym, you know. So the gym – we worked out in there a few times. You know, I'm trying to – I guess we did have, uh, PT uniforms, but I can't – I can't remember putting them on all that much. I think we only did for the, uh – the out-test and the in-test. Either way, um – and let's see.

Oh, you – you had the, uh – we had the, uh, firefighting trainer. The, um – and a lot of this I remember were – 'cause those were, you know, the – the shooting range, where we'd have to shoot the guns. Um, the chow hall, of course, because we ate there a bunch. That was good times, and then, um – yeah. I just – I just remember this strip, you know, where the barracks were, right? It was kind of like – it almost – it's a similar lay out of this building, you know? Kind of the long, narrow, um – I forgot how many stories it was, but you would come out of there and we walk down a – a street – marching down a street, and then, uh, based on, you know, kind of left to right, you may have some classes or classrooms, and then, uh, down at the very end, you'd have, a, uh – the chow hall, and the – the Grinder, I guess, was on the far, far right, and I can't, you know – like I said, I can't – if you go there now, none of it's recognizable, and the other thing too is have you heard of the [USS] *Blue Jacket*?

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis Yeah. So I don't know where that was in relationship. For us, it was right next to our barracks, but where – where it's at now is unrecognizable, so it's pretty unique.

Hazen Can you tell me about the *Blue Jacket*?

Ennis All's I remember is we didn't go on it and, uh, we took a picture in front of it, and, uh, to tell you the truth, I don't know why we didn't go on it. Yeah. It was kinda – kinda strange. I think maybe it was getting a little – a little older, you know? But yeah.

0:33:54

Graduation

Hazen What did it feel like to graduate?

Ennis Yeah, so that was pretty – that was pretty cool. 'Cause, um – I'm trying to think. What – what was the final thing that we did? Uh, let's see. All's I know is, uh, at the very end, they, uh – they bring out the flag and they start, uh, playing "America the Beautiful." Or what was it? "[I'm] Proud to Be an American." And, uh, yeah. So everyone got real emotional and it was pretty cool. But, uh, that's what I remember, and, uh, I'm trying to think what – what culminated, uh, before that. You know, what – what lead up to that point, and, uh – hm. That's – that's kind of strange. I can't remember what the, uh – But all's I remember is when we were done, it – it was pretty awesome. Yeah. So it was pretty cool.

Hazen Was there a lot of people there watching?

Ennis No, no. In fact, it was just our group. So...

Hazen Oh, really?

Ennis Yeah, so – so that was, I guess, the, uh – the – the recruit phase kind of ending, right? That's when, you know, you're done being a recruit, and the next day you graduated, and that's when they had, you know, all your friends and loved ones, whoever in the stands and you did the, uh, parade, the marching through and everything, but yeah. as far as a lot of people watching, for what we were doing before – I – I mean, honestly, I can't – I can't remember what we were doing. I mean, I can't remember if it was drills or – hm. Yeah. I guess it's been a long time. It's pretty – but I do remember, like I said, when it was done, it was, uh – they bring the flag out and everyone was like "Whoa" It was pretty funny. Not funny, but it's pretty – pretty, uh, neat to see everyone kinda, ya know...

Hazen And you get your hat, right?

Ennis You know, we...

Hazen [inaudible].

Ennis We didn't get a hat. It was kinda, uh, yeah. Like I said, there's no hat. There was, uh – like I said, I just remember a pep talk, the flag, the music, and then, uh, the next day, I think we, uh, graduated.

Hazen And that took place on the Grinder, right?

Ennis Um, no, what – what you talking about the, uh...

Hazen The graduation.

Ennis So the graduation took place on the grass, which, um – I’m trying – I can’t really remember where that was at either, but no. the Grinder was – was separate. So yeah.

0:36:14 Navy career after RTC Orlando

Hazen And then what did you do for the Navy after you left RTC?

Ennis Yeah, so after the Navy, Uh – and this is kind of funny, ‘cause when I – before I joined, I was lookin’ at the different jobs, right? ‘Cause they have all kinds of jobs, and I was talking to the recruiter and he handed me a – a couple different, uh, cards, right? That listed the jobs and what they did, and, uh, you know, one of them was like torpedo’s mate, and so I looked at that one, and it says, “Must work in a,” uh, you know, “hot,” uh, “greasy environment,” right? So I was like *I don’t want that one, and* then I saw one that says – and plus, the school – the A school, which is the – the school that teaches you to do the job, it’s like in – I don’t know – somewhere – somewhere in the United States, and I see this one that says “EW,” which is Electronic Warfare, and, uh, it says, uh “Work in cool,” um, you know, uh, “dark climates,” you know, “in a – in a room with,” uh, you know – I don’t know. Anyways [sic], it sounded cool, right? ‘Cause it had the – It was Combat Information Center, so I didn’t – had no idea what it did, and then the bonus was the, uh, school’s in Pensacola. So, you know, I didn’t – that’s where I joined the Navy at, and that’s where my family was at. So I was like *I’ll take that job, right?* Had no idea what it did.

So, uh – and the other reason I joined the Navy is ‘cause I didn’t want to go to school, right? Which is kind of funny. So the first thing the Navy does – the Navy does after graduation is they send you back to school, right? Which is this Electronic Warfare, and it – you can imagine your – your radar detector in your car, or if, you know – you know the concept – and it picks up the emissions from the cops’, uh, radar gun. this is the same thing that – that the ship does, but it picks up the radars from airplanes, from other ships, from, you know, missiles, from whatever, and those signals are analyzed and you can actually tell what kind of car it is or, you know, what type of ship or airplane. So the whole time in school, they’re teaching you about these radar fundamentals. They’re teaching you about the propagation. Blah, blah, blah, and then they want you to memorize – like a telephone book – of all this parameters, right? And I’m not saying it – I mean, it’s rote memorization. There’s just no way around it, right? So you’d spend your nights trying to figure out how you’re going to memorize all these numbers, so if they popped up, you could, you know, say what it was. So that’s what would happen is, uh, you – you – you’d get with a buddy and figure out these ways to memorize stuff, and, uh – so yeah. We, uh, did that, and then

after that, um—I guess that was maybe another eight weeks and then was off to Virginia, uh, for my first ship.

Hazen Can you take me from Virginia somewhat quickly to NAWCTSD? Can you walk me through?

Ennis Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. So it's pretty easy.

Hazen How you got from one to the next?

Ennis Yeah, so I did three years in, uh, Virginia, and uh, you know, the job was okay, but it was on a ship, and I saw a helicopter flying and I says[sic]. "That looks like a cool job." I was coming up for reenlistment and I talked to one of my, uh, leading Petty Officers, and said, "Hey. This is, uh—I'd like to look at doing a different job." He took care of me. He walked, you know—walked me through the whole process. Put a, uh, a package in, got accepted, and then, uh, for AW, which is Aviation Systems Operator—and then I get sent to Pensacola for Air Crew School, and, uh, I had no idea, but then I got sent to Rescue School—Swimmer School, which is in Pensacola, and, uh, I'm not sure if you've seen the movie [The] *Guardian*? With, uh...

Hazen No.

Ennis Who was it? Anyways[sic], so that's the Coast Guard.

Hazen Oh, yeah, with...

Ennis Bruce...¹

Hazen Yeah—no. I think you're right, and...

Ennis Yeah, yeah. The, uh, young kid, right?

Hazen That kid.

Ennis Yeah, right? [laughs] So like...

Hazen [Christopher] Ashton Kutcher.

Ennis Yeah, yeah. Right. Exactly.

Hazen Yeah, seen it.

Ennis Yeah.

Hazen You did that?

¹ Correction: Kevin Michael Costner.

Ennis Right.

Hazen Oh.

Ennis So, uh, yeah, I mean, once again everything—I mean, Hollywood makes everything look like Hollywood, right? But it's pretty intense. I mean, you know, you're doing stuff and you get pushed underwater and what not. So I did that then went to my first, um, Aviation Squadron in Jacksonville, and then, um, did five years there. So while—when I was on the ship, I did a six-month cruise, plus all the workups, you know, hit the Med[iterranean Sea], Um, you know—Greece, Spain, um—where else? I mean, uh, Croatia, and then, uh, you know—then I cross-rated. Then I went to my first Aviation Command. We did the same thing. Hopped on a carrier, did our six-month cruise right over to the Med. Uh, we did the [Persian] Gulf. Uh, you know. So that whole Europe and, uh, the rest of the area. Yeah. We just hit different ports in there.

Hazen The Gulf? As in the Persian Gulf?

Ennis Yeah, the Persian Gulf. Right, and then, uh— and then I did that for five years. Did three cruises, plus all the associative workups. You know, we did Fallon[?] detachments in Nevada, and, um, we did Andros Island, Bahamas, and, um, yeah. It's terrible duty, but you know, you're gone a lot, so you take, uh—you take your good points with your bad, and then uh—oh, yeah. Then I went to the wing as an instructor in Jacksonville. So I was still working with the Aviation Commands, except I didn't have to go on a cruise, and then, uh, after three years there, picked orders to, uh, [Naval Air Facility] Atsugi, Japan, which is right near Tokyo, and, uh, went over there and did four years in Japan on the [USS] *Kitty Hawk*, and, uh, we hit Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, um, and, uh, did some work in the Philippines for the, uh—the work on terrorism there. They have a big terrorist cell there that many people don't know about, and, uh, we did, um—uh, it wasn't tsunami relief. I guess it was, uh—I guess it was typhoon relief in the Philippines, but after I left, they did do a lot of tsunami relief, 'because that was the—the area. So, uh—and then, uh, after Japan, came to NAWCTSD, Orlando, and did four years there and retired.

0:42:49 **Assignment with the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division (NAWCTSD) in Orlando**

Hazen How did that assignment come about?

Ennis The Orlando one?

Hazen Yes.

Ennis So, um, they have a list of assignments that you look up on a computer and, um, I said, *Boy, that would be a good one, if I ever plan on getting out, and, uh, at that point, you know, it was pretty stressful. It, you know—I did the instructor duty and then I did the duty in Ja—in Japan, and, uh—so yeah. I was looking kind of*

for a, uh—a, um—actually, I—I loved the trainers, right? I loved the computers. So I thought that'd be a good fit and, uh, so I applied for it and it was open. So...

Hazen And when you got here, what were your first days like at NAWCTSD?

Ennis Yeah, it was pretty cool. It was more of an office environment, and, uh, it was very different than, uh—from the Navy buildings. I mean, even though this is a Navy building, it's predominantly filled by civilians. So the military's a very small part of that, and, um, but for—for the most part it was, uh—it was nice, because, um, everything was ready for you when you got there. The, uh—all the, um, computers, the—the furniture, everything was very new. Very, uh, kind of, uh, high tech, you know? There—there's just a lot of resources available for you to do your job, and, uh, back—in the—in the fleet, you know, you may not have that. You may have, you know, one computer for five or six guys, and then, uh, there's just not a lot of space. So space this size that we're in, you'd have up to 30 people trying to work out of there. So...

Hazen And speaking of your job, what were some of the things that you did? What were some of your primary responsibilities?

Ennis So, uh—um, I guess, uh, for the aviation, the air crewman was being a rescue swimmer was the, uh, big one. So no matter when we flew or where we flew, you always had someone that had their—their gear with them, you know? You're always SAR capable, which is Search and Rescue. So someone had to go in the water, you'd always have someone available. Um, so that was the number one, uh, thing that you did. The other part was, if we're under way, uh, on the carrier that we were anti-submarine, uh, mission—meaning that we had a, uh, big sonar dome that would drop out of the bottom of the helicopter in a hover and you would stick that, you know—a couple hundred feet down in the water, send out a big sonic pulse, and see if you get any returns from the submarines. Uh, so that was another one, 'cause that was pretty unique. You do that day or night, and, um, whether a sea state was 10-15-foot and the pilots are trying to stay in a hover, and, uh, so, yeah. that was pretty—pretty interestin'.

Hazen That was—was that at NAWCTSD?

Ennis No, no.

Hazen So that was before?

Ennis Yeah, so at NAWCTSD—the good thing about NAWCTSD is the needed the people from the fleet, because they would built the simulators that would act like, uh, you know real helicopters, right? So you'd go in there and you'd give them the subject matter expertise to say "Hey. This looks good," or "This doesn't good[sic]." Or you'd just liaison with the fleet and then go from there. So at NAWCTSD, the primary responsibility was program management or, uh, subject matter expert. So you'd kinda—kinda blur those lines a little bit, but, uh, for the

most part, we were only there for 3-4 years, and the civilians have been there for a lot longer. So you'd come in and – and kind of assist them.

0:46:29

Simulation at NAWCTSD

Hazen Um, you might have already answered this a little bit already, but can you tell me about the types of projects that you worked on with NAWCTSD and what they were trying to accomplish?

Ennis Yeah, so – so, the funny this is – is, uh, I transferred from Japan, right? And when I first got to, uh, NAWCTSD, I meet my boss, and he's a civilian guy, and, uh, he's a UCF graduate – electrical engineering, so he's a great guy.

Hazen Who's that?

Ennis Uh, Jonathan Glass. So – In fact, he's still my boss right now. He's probably wondering where I'm at..

Hazen [laughs].

Ennis But if I tell him I'm here, he's good, and then, uh – but yeah. So I get – I get to NAWCTSD, and I just, you know, been probably gone from Japan for maybe 2-3 weeks, 'cause I took some leave, and they – they go, "Hey. We're getting ready to deliver a trainer to, uh, to Japan." and it happened to be a – a simulator – a desktop simulator of the helicopter, uh, that I just, uh, got done flying it, and, uh, so – so in Japan, they don't have the resources for new construction and for a, uh, new trainer. So they had this, uh – this desktop, um, simulator that would give you the tactical display and all the button pushin', and, uh, we – we ended up delivering that right back to Japan, the squadron I'd just left.

So it was kind of funny that, uh – which brings up another funny story, 'cause you got Mount Fuji in there, right? You've seen pictures of Mount Fuji? Well, I took my daughters up there. I think they were eight and ten at the time, and it's pretty – it's a pretty good climb. It's volcanic rock, right? So, uh, I didn't want to be the dad that pushed them and scarred them for life. So I was being positive, but I would kind of let them do what they wanted to do, right? Meaning that, you know, if they couldn't make, uh – um, I didn't want to push 'em too hard. Anyways[sic], we ended up not making the top, and the rumor is, if you don't make it to the top of Fuji when you're there, you'll end up coming back, and yeah. I never believed that, but low and behold, you know, after reporting to NAWCTSD, I end up going back. So isn't that funny?

Hazen [laughs]. That's fantastic.

Ennis Yeah, it is fantastic. So, um, yeah. So basically we delivered a simulator back to Japan and, uh, that – that's kind of what we do. Whatever, uh – so the ASW – the Anti-Submarine Warfare – Uh, the other part of, uh – I told you about the dome that lowers in the water. the other thing that we'll do is we'll drop microphones,

and basically, uh—it's called a sonobouy, but basically that's what it is—is a microphone that you drop in the water, and you're able to see the, uh, signature of the sub or whatever you're listening to, and identify it, and if need, you know—if need be, drop a torpedo on it. Yeah. So...

Hazen Can you explain a little bit more about what a desktop simulator looks like and is?

Ennis Yeah, so if—if you use your car as an example, and, uh, if—if, uh, uh, all the controls from the gear shift to the steering wheel to the, uh, radio station. So all that we put on to a computer, and, uh, we try to simulate the environment. So for us, it's the ocean mainly, and, uh, the ocean is, uh, you know—it's pretty complex, right? And then especially when you throw sound in there, the propagation paths can get really, uh, really difficult.

So the claim to fame for us is how much, uh, simulation do you need to do of the ocean to make it realistic for the acoustics? They start talking about fidelity and, uh, you know, then, um, realism and stuff like that, but—but that's, uh—it's a big trade off. Because if you have enough money, you can do anything right? Well, of course, we don't have enough money. So, uh, we—there's always a tradeoff. So a lot of that's compromises, right? You make compromise in the visual system, or you may have to compromise in the size of equipment. So we would make our system mobile, put it on laptops, and, uh, the laptops, you know, in it—in itself, would compromise the, um— or maybe not. Yeah. I guess compromise the visual part of it. Meaning that you're not gonna get real good visuals, but we're not training the pilot how to fly the aircraft.

What we're trying to do is train the crew to work together, right? So—so each computer would be a different station. You'd have the pilot station, the co-pilot, and then you'd have your sensor operator, and all three of those, uh, computers would be networked together to, um—to talk, you know, back and forth, because in the aircraft, same thing. Uh, You're able to split duties between a tactical display, um, you know—so if, uh—if I send a contact, via my gear, to the tactical plot, The co-pilot can acknowledge that, and then you'd get a course and speed on the sub based on, you know, uh, different positions and time. So if—if you send a position over—position A—at a certain time, and then you send over position B at a different time and you, you know—you line it up, you know, you're gonna get a course of speed, right?

So the gear would do that for us, but of course there was always some type of, um, uh, error built into the system whether it be, you know, the contact that, um—that you've entered in there was maybe a little off, and, uh—so you had to comp—you had to compensate for all that, and, uh, of course, the more context you had, the—the more the error would be averaged out, right? And, uh, so all that's happenin' pretty quick, right? And you may have a submarine that's sending out counter measures, you may have equipment malfunctions, you know, you may have, uh, an inexperienced crew. So—there's[?] just a lot of

different, uh, aspects that go into training. Hey[?], and remember, you know, when the contact, or the sensor, uh, data that you're looking at is – is just a line on the scope, you know, It – it may be a line that falls at 300 hertz, and then you have to determine what that is or, you know, put a bunch of different pieces of information together.

Hazen Um, what, what's the primary mission of NAWCTSD?

Ennis Yeah, so the primary mission of NAWCTSD and, uh – we have a missions statement, I'm tryin' to, uh – it's basically to support the fleet in, uh – in simulation, and, um, yeah. That's probably the easiest thing.

0:53:22 **Future of the simulation industry in Central Florida**

Hazen Okay, and what do you think the future holds for simulation training here in Central Florida?

Ennis Yeah, so simulation, uh – I mean, we are the, uh, um, center of excellence for modeling and simulation. Uh, we are the Navy's central resource, when it comes to, uh, modeling and simulation. We have a lot of the, uh, companies around the area that support the, uh – the industry, and that bring a lot of capability to the, uh – to the training, and, um, the, uh – the future, I think, is, uh – is pretty good. Just because, as new technology brings better, uh, fidelity and higher realism, you know, you're able to kinda blur the – the concept between real and fiction, or – I don't know how you say that.

So, If I can, uh – I mean, we're getting to the point now where you put on the – the virtual, um, reality headset, and you're now, as you turn and look – I mean, the – the – the screen is moving with you. So in this room, I could put on a virtual headset, and, um, it would give me the same, uh, dimensions, but of course, I could put a fire in the corner, right? And then I could react to that fire, based on, uh, where it's at. So it's getting really, uh, really good now.

Hazen In what ways would you say that the simulation projects at NAWCTSD have impacted other branches of the military?

Ennis Yeah, so I think the, uh – the impacts, uh – and I can't say, you know, how we've maybe impacted, but I think the synergy of all the different components of the services working together, and the lessons learned from each of the components all kind of being centralized in this area. There's really no, um – uh, no other place where that happens.

I mean here you have the Marines, the Air Force, the Coast Guard, the Navy, uh, all working together, and in fact, uh, we're now starting to include some, uh, state, uh, local, and other government, uh, organizations that can take advantage of, uh, the, uh – the training and the products that we've, uh, built here, and, um, so yeah. That[?] – I really can't say. It – it's really just the synergistic effect of everyone being together and the ability to, um, learn from each other.

0:56:03

Most valuable lessons learned in Navy

Hazen Thank you. Um, what would you say is one of the most valuable lessons you've learned from your time with the Navy?

Ennis Yeah, so it's going to be teamwork. You know, No matter what you do in the Navy, no matter what you do in life, uh, normally it's, uh – it's not just one person that makes something happen, and, uh, the other good quote that I learned was to be a good leader, you must be a good follower, right? And, uh, I can't – I can't, uh, say enough of that quote, because somebody always thinks, uh, that the leader has it easy, right? Well, guess what? that leader has a leader, that leader has a, you know – so it goes – it goes, uh – someone always has to answer to somebody.

So – and that's probably the one thing that the Navy's taught me is I used to always say, *I can't wait till I'm in that guy's position, and then I'm in that guy's position, and go Man, that's a – that's a lot of work.* So – but it's good stuff. Yeah, and – and the other thing I learned to is, uh, if, um, there's something that you want, you know, normally, you'll have people that'll help you out. They just need to know that's what you want to do. So the people aren't mind readers. You need to talk to them. You need to let them know what your, uh – what it is that you wanna do, and, uh, for the most part, I've never had a – a bad command or a, uh – a bad boss. I mean I've had some I've liked more than others, but for the most part, everyone have their certain characteristics that you'll either agree with or disagree with, but as long as they're – what they're doing is honorable, then, uh – then yeah. That's – that's easy to, you know – person to follow. I tell ya, for the most part, I haven't seen a, uh – a bad person in the Navy, you know?

And, uh, it's too bad when you hear a lot of the stuff that goes on, because they're – for now, or in today's Navy, the Navy is almost zero defect, right? And, uh, back in the day – yeah. You – you did stuff that – that maybe wasn't, uh – you didn't want your mom to know about, you know? But, uh, the fact is is that, um – uh, how do I say this? You were, you know – you're doing some pretty tough stuff, right? And that doesn't give you a pass for – for – for being, uh, bad, but what it – what it did mean was that you could, uh – you could definitely have a good time, right? And be a little rowdy, but what it didn't mean was you couldn't be disrespectful, and – and definitely, uh, some of the changes we made are pretty good, but some of the changes are getting a little to, uh, you know, PC, right? Too much politically correct.

0:58:58

Photographs

Hazen We've got about two or so minutes left. is there anything else you'd like to share about your Navy experience. Maybe...

Ennis Yeah [*laughs*].

Hazen Photos for the last two? Alright.

Ennis So...

Hazen [inaudible] And move it towards you.

Ennis Alright. So the cool thing about the Navy is all the different experiences that you get to, uh – places you get to visit, things you get to do. In fact, uh, when I, uh – I guess it was my second cruise when I was with the helicopters. We went to Cannes, France, and they were doing the Cannes [International] Film Festival, right?

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis Well, of course, we don't get to go inside, but we get to see everyone that walks in, so that was pretty cool, and we saw Henry [Franklin] Winkler. You know who he is? The Fonz. So we yelled to him and – and we were like, "Hey, Mr. Winkler!" And he gave us a – real, real good pep talk, but that was kind of cool, uh, but this is my buddy, and, uh, I'm actually the one taking the picture of this, and we took a – a we were in Australia, and we took the Australian, uh, Special Forces, and we were taking them up to, uh, Fasthrow[?] – and a couple of guys to go parachuting. So, this just happens to be, uh, one of the dogs they take with them and we actually, uh, lowered the dog down, and, uh – but yeah. He went flying with us so, and – and He looks to be having a good time, right [*clicks touchpad*].

So the, uh – the next picture – this is, um – so – sounds pretty exciting everything I've told you, right? Flying in the helicopters, huntin' the submarines, uh, doing the rescue swimming, and all that, but a lot of it is – just imagine driving in your car or around the block, you know, like a hundred times. Because with the, uh – the systems we have in place now on the airplanes, they're really safe, and, uh, mishaps, uh happen very rarely. So we would fly in what we'd call "Starboard[?] Delta" for up to three hours at a time and doing circles, right? And this is one of those times where, uh, we're just kinda sitting at the back and it's a good view and everything, but we're just, uh, doing circles around the boat. Just waiting for something to happen so – but, you know, the whole time you're talking, you're training. It – it – it – but it does get a little monotonous.

Hazen Can you share the one of you guys coming out of the water?

Ennis Oh, yeah, yeah. So this one's in Japan, and, uh, we're just doing training, and, uh, once again, it's – it's pretty fun when you do that. But, uh, that's – that's a yearly quall. So we don't get to do it all the time, but when it – when it does, um – and – and o this was, uh, maybe six years ago. The kid I'm coming up with, uh, he's a 20 year old and, uh, pretty new to the Navy, and, uh, the cool thing about that is – is, uh, kids that join the military now – I mean, they're expected to do some pretty awesome stuff. You know, either jump out of a helicopter, you know, patrol Afghanistan, and, uh, it really is amazing the quality of people that

we have, uh, in the services today. So I – it's – it's – makes proud thinking of people, uh, you know, joining [*clicks touchpad*].

And then so – here, uh – me and my Navy buddy Harold, uh, Lavine[?]. He's, uh, retired Navy, works at Publix, I think, in Ocoee, or somewhere around there, but we're just trying to promote the, uh – promote the Lone Sailor Memorial, and, uh – and pass the word. So that was that.

Hazen Great.

Ennis [*clicks touchpad*] Oh [*laughs*]. So this – this is on the, uh – the – I think the [USS] *John C. Stennis*, when we were crossing the, uh – the Equator, and when you cross the Equator, you – you do – you do something that's called a "shellback ceremony." And if – if – if you're not a shellback, you're a wog, right? So this is one of the traditions in the Navy that's maybe got a bad rap, because, uh, we're out at sea and, uh, you know, we – we, uh – you know, they make you walk like ducks, they spray you with fire hoses. It – it's really, uh, kinda hazing, but it's a – it's a mariner's – a sailor's tradition, right? So you get to dress up and, uh, just have a good time and, uh – but you know. Uh, Yeah. So anyway, that – that's a shellback ceremony. So That's where we get to dress up and do all that and that – that's why we look the way we do [*laughs*]. Let's see. Yeah. I think that's it.

Hazen Mmhmm.

Ennis Yep.

1:03:31 **Closing remarks**

Hazen Great. Thank you.

Ennis So...

Hazen Any last comments?

Ennis No. I, uh, appreciate the opportunity, and, uh, you know, I think today's Navy is – is a better Navy than when I went through, and, uh, I just – I just hope that it continues to, uh, you know – people understand that the Navy is – is the people, right? You know, you can have the best ships, the best aircraft, but the – the people – the men and women in the services, uh, need, you know, our support, right? And as long as we remember history and remember, you know, what's, uh – what happens, uh, I think we'll – we'll be good, but that's it.

Hazen Great.

Ennis Yeah. Well, thank you.

Hazen Thank you.

Ennis Yeah.

End of Interview