

Museum of History and Holocaust Education Legacy Series
Charles Lamar Crawley Jr. interview
Conducted by Adina Langer
April 19, 2023
Transcribed by Morgan North

Born in Atlanta, on March 21, 1926, Charles Lamar Crawley, Jr. was raised in the West End neighborhood. After graduating from high school at the age of 16, Crawley joined the Georgia State Guard where he supported the U.S. Army as a Morse code radio operator near Brunswick, Georgia, with duty on the islands of Ossabaw, Little Cumberland, and Little St. Simons. After four months, the State Guard operation was recalled and Crawley returned to Atlanta, now old enough to join the U.S. Navy. Crawley served with the Navy in California as an air traffic controller during World War II and then as a Reserve officer in the Philippines during the Korean War. He recorded his Legacy Series oral history at the Museum of History and Holocaust Education in 2023, shortly after his 97th birthday.

Full Transcript

Interviewer: So today is April 19, 2023. My name is Adina Langer, and I am curator of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education at Kennesaw State University. I am here at the museum with Charles Crawley for a Legacy Series interview. Could you please state your full name?

Crawley: Charles Lamar Crawley Jr.

Interviewer: And do you agree to this interview?

Crawley: Yes.

Interviewer: Excellent. So, let's start by talking about your childhood. Could you please tell me when and where you were born?

Crawley: I was born March 31, 1926, in Atlanta, Georgia – West End portion of Atlanta, Georgia. In fact, it was at 838 Norcross Avenue. That's still part of West End, outside of Atlanta. And from – I think – at that point, I had one older sister, and of course mom and dad. When I was about a year and a half old, dad had been working with Southern – not Southern Bell, whatever the telephone company was at that time. He was laid off. He was trying to get work week for about three days, and a little after that they let him go permanently. So that was the reason for us to move. We moved back to a little country town, Milner, Georgia – about twelve miles below Griffin – and on the Old Highway 41 now. At that point in time, it was – let me see – they built the school right across from the house where we lived. It was a consolidated school – twelve grades, one through twelve – and in fact my grandfather's yard backed up to my father's yard, so we were real close, family style there.

Interviewer: And what were your parents' names?

Crawley: Pardon?

Interviewer: Your parents, what were their names?

Crawley: Well, my dad was Charles Lamar Crawley Sr. My mother was Alma Ruby Duke, and they met back in I think 1920, somewhere along there. My mother put me in school at kindergarten, they didn't have a kindergarten, so I went into the first grade at age five. And that put me younger than just about every one of my friends along the way. It was about 1935 that the telephone company hired my dad back again, and we moved back to Atlanta, still about halfway between the West End section and Capitol View section and stayed there about three months until dad had found a house to buy. That was the house over in West End: 935 Oglethorpe Avenue. I started there of course in the fourth grade – fourth, fifth, and sixth. The school system was not lined up the way it is today. Went to Peoples Street School, and then moved from there over to Joe Brown Junior High School for the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade. When I was in the seventh grade, halfway through my first year there, I started playing trumpet in the band. So, I played the trumpet a good bit along the way. And then when I graduated from Joe Brown, I moved to Tech High School, which was all the way across town in the Northeast portion of Atlanta. And along that line, my dad had been a legionnaire for a long period of time, and I played taps for all the meetings and miscellaneous activities that they took place with. So, I was well-acquainted with being in the military band over at Tech High School with the close-order drill and that sort of thing. It turned out that when I was fifteen, there was a colonel in Washington – of course, they were having all kinds of activities in 1942 – and this is how the American Legion got involved in this.¹ They thought that the veterans would be the ones to approach– to put together the Georgia State Guard camps. They appointed Dad a second lieutenant, and he was doing such a good job for that – I think he had about fifteen or twenty men at the time, I happened to be one of them at age fifteen – but he was doing such a good job that they promoted him to first lieutenant. Dad wanted to get back into the war, but he had five dependents – you can see the activity involved there – but this colonel was working to get him back in the Army. He said he didn't want to come in as a private, but he would like to be commissioned. Low and behold, the colonel made arrangements, excuse me [coughs], and appointed Dad to second lieutenant in the Army. Of course, this was a vital thing to organize the Georgia State Guard, because they were organized all over the country. All the veterans, they knew what was needed. In fact, a lot of sons of veterans, like me, joined up. We met in a church parking lot at Capitol View on Dill Street, or Dill Avenue, I forget which. But we paraded around in the parking lot there. In the evening, we had a seven o'clock meeting, I think. After about four or five attempts with some of the people that had to do the close-order drill, they looked at me and said can you do this?“, and I did [laughs]. So, I became the close-order drill instructor at age fifteen [laughs]. And, excuse me?

¹ **American Legion:** <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0000241/>

Interviewer: Yeah, no I want to hear more about your service. But before we get too far into that, I'd love to go back just a little bit and talk about how you found out about the war to begin with. Do you remember Pearl Harbor? Do you remember hearing about the start of the war?

Crawley: Yes, I was— it was on a Sunday, I think? December 7th, 1941? [coughs] But of course I was quite young then, and all of my friends were a year or two older than me. They were quitting schools, some had already quit school or graduated and were going directly into the military. So, I lost an awful lot of friends that way. My ambition was to get into the Navy. My dad wanted me to go to college and we didn't have any money to go to college, so I graduated at sixteen. [coughs] Excuse me. And as a result of that, I wanted something to do, I had a whole year to wait. I had been waiting on Dad's permission to join the Navy. So, Dad had already gone overseas, stayed there almost four years. His replacement was Lieutenant McConnell, and I asked him if he could make some inquiries about what I could do with the Georgia State Guard. And as a result of that, he told me "Go down to the state capitol and meet with Major Frank Fling." He thought he could help me, and the next day I went down there and met with Major Fling. Up until that point, nothing was ever mentioned about radio, radio operators or anything, but I mentioned to him that— he wanted to know what my qualifications were. I said "Well, I'm a qualified Morse coder— with radio." He said "I can use you." [laughs] And he says "Go home and pack your bags and meet me back down here tomorrow morning." He had three officers going to Brunswick at that point in time, and he told me to ride with them. Which I did, I was mostly quiet just listening to that conversation but we made it back to Brunswick without any problems. In meeting the people down there, the first sergeant came to meet me and he took me around and introduced me to a few people and told me what to do and what we'd be doing. I would interact with the military, and we had the base camp located there in Brunswick.² There's a long story about that camp. I believe that was part of the Roosevelt deal back in 1932 when Governor Roosevelt got to be elected president. Some of the buildings were— the buildings we occupied mostly were little square buildings about twenty-by-twenty and filled with bunks, mostly. I think we had five of those buildings, and one of them was a big bunk room and another one was a big bunk room with— half filled with supplies and that sort of thing. Another building had those supplies in it; ammunition, firearms of all types; some office space in another one. Jim Davis and his son ~~Junior~~ Jim Davis Junior; he was a sergeant, like me. I had been promoted to sergeant on arrival there. But Jim Davis Sr. was a first sergeant and he was sort of the king of the group; telling everybody what to do, where to do it. He made the assignments and that sort of thing. We had twenty-one sergeants, we had a Major— Vandevener was his name, and Lieutenant Jensen. All three of those are put on the in-charge list, which is a piece of paper that you have. So, the numbers don't match up really because I put Jim Davis Jr. up with the people in charge because he was really the one that was giving us all the orders. We had one room that was of course reserved for radio

² Brunswick: <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/world-war-ii-in-georgia/m-10375/>

equipment and that sort of thing. Everything was Morse code back in those days – there was no voice radio to be had. I believe that– this is just a thought that I had, but I believe that some of those older buildings that much had been done adding to those buildings, but much of those twenty-by-twenty size buildings, I believe, were part of the old CCC camps that the WPA put together back in, I believe it was maybe a year after Roosevelt became president.³ The basecamp there was an army post that was Company O of the 144th Infantry. Of course, the military provided for us– we ate in the military commissary, and these buildings were, I think they were added later on to accommodate the military. Of course, they had the mess hall, and they had the latrines, and one building had nothing but showers. I didn't go in the army portion of that group but one or two times. There were a lot of buildings that were improved over the 20x20 size buildings. Sergeant Davis told me what my duties would be and showed me around where everything was in case I needed it. None of the 20x20 buildings had electricity or water or anything like that, it was part of the old part of the group, but they were so close to the road, State Highway 17, the buildings that were used actively did have telephones, and electricity, and plumbing, and that sort of thing. My first assignment he told me would be a few days, he says “generally, we assign people to one of the islands.” Most of them would be a three-week duration, and then maybe something shorter based on the circumstances. But my first appointment was Ossabaw Island, and we had a radio station in– at the beginning, it was fourteen islands that were being manned. Seven of those islands were suitable for patrolling on the beach. Most of the islands that were not suitable, there was either water standing all the time or a lot of marshy areas. Over time, they eliminated seven of those islands from being actively patrolled. One of them was Sapelo, Blackbeard, Jekyll, and I think there was another one in there, but I can't remember the name of that one. But my first one was Ossabaw and that was just south of Atlanta– I mean Savannah. The northern portion of the islands, about half of them had a radio station in Savannah that they made contact with. The southern half of the islands, we made contact with the radio station at Brunswick. So the radio station in Savannah, I don't know of any military situations involved, but all of the– the island of Ossabaw for example, there were about maybe fifteen soldiers there. Each one of them had some kind of rifle– I think they were infield weapons, but plenty of ammunition to go around for whatever was needed. This was called Homefront: a situation where the original group of people there, they strung a telephone line – just laid it on the ground up and down the area they were patrolling. The larger islands that had that type of operation also had a Jeep.⁴ Our radios were used by 6-volt car batteries, and the military had their own distribution center – I was not involved with that because they took the men back and forth that they worked with, and the state guard people had three boats that was involved in carrying different people to different locations. One of those boats was sort of a yacht really – owned by Mr. Asa Candler who let the Georgia State Guard, on loan, have that boat and they got a good driver

³ CCC: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/civilian-conservation-corps/>; WPA: <https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/works-progress-administration-wpa-1935/>

⁴ Jeep: <https://www.studebakermuseum.org/blog/the-jeep-in-world-war-ii/>

with it, and took good care of it, but that was a real pleasure riding on that boat out to one of the islands. But the other two went up the inland waterway, basically when it was necessary. Those places usually had a dock on the inland waterway side, and of course the army had the Jeep, and they would meet us at the dock and take our supplies. At first, there was some gasoline involved to take care of the Jeeps and our alternators: the generator mechanism to keep the batteries on charge. Of course, we didn't need any gasoline once the alternators failed, they were just put out of use and forgotten about. We didn't have a lot of maintenance equipment or anything like that available. All three of my appointments there were with the Army, being I never got paired up with any of the state guard people so I was working directly with the Army at age sixteen— I guess that's the main focus of why I'm here [laughs]. Sort of an unheard-of thing, a kid sixteen years old would be eating in an Army mess hall or sleeping with the Army at night. But we got along quite well, but one disadvantage that was talked about frequently was the fact that the state guard people were all sergeants and the Army paid \$83 a month. All of the military people working with the radios like me, most of them were privates or PFCs, and it was quite an honor to be working with the Army at that point in time, and I got along with them real well.⁵ I got back from— well, I had a camera with me with no film when I went to Ossabaw, and when I came back from Ossabaw, about two or three blocks away from the basecamp, there was some kind of store that I don't remember what it was— I it was a combination of a grocery store and drug store and two or three other types of stores. But I was able to buy film for my camera; it made little small pictures about an inch and a half or something like that. So, I had a camera at that point in time, so from then on I took about I think ten pictures, and the copies of all those pictures are in the case that I gave you. It was quite a thing to have some pictures of items back in those days. When I got over the situation, it was on Jekyll Island— no, Little St. Simons Island. I had been there about two or three days and a Jeep showed up with Coast Guard people in it. They told us in a few days, we'd be replaced with Coast Guard⁶ people who had voice radios, they rode horses, and had dogs. We'd all be replaced, and as a result of that, on April 20 our work ended there, and I was able to get back home. The situation there was— well, working with the Army was something special for me, and when I got back home I was still— Let me tell you a little about Little Cumberland, and this deals with Ossabaw as well. The situation there was quite primitive — we had a building on Ossabaw that was maybe 20x30 overall, but there was a big room and two side rooms. One of the side rooms was where we kept the radio equipment and slept, and the other side room was where the Army slept. They had a big fireplace with the old-style iron swings and so forth — that's the way they did the cooking. The Army provided the cook and all the meals and so forth: a lot of canned goods, and we ate a lot of stew [laughs]. The last two days there, something happened to the boat coming up there and it was delayed until the next day, so our last two meals were peanut butter and jelly on stale bread [laughs]. It was not a fun situation to be in, at least had a well a couple

⁵ PFC: <https://www.military-ranks.org/army/private-first-class>

⁶ Note, although Mr. Crawley says "Navy" in the interview, he subsequently corrected this to be Coast Guard.

hundred feet away and an outhouse. The water did not taste good. When we got to Little Cumberland Island, just a short distance outside of the bay area from Brunswick, it was the same situation. There was a lighthouse that had been abandoned years earlier, and the house for the caretaker to live in was there, partially. It had been used; all the windows and doors and planks and what have it were used for firewood for cooking on the fireplace. While we were there, I had my seventeenth birthday, my mother had sent me a fruitcake, and we only had about maybe six or seven Army people there – it was a small beach to begin with, but it was something they could walk on. There’s a picture of it on there as well. The sand dunes were along the beach section and it went real high. The picture of the lighthouse is in there, but one of the men and me, we were on top of the lighthouse at that point in time, and you couldn’t tell really who was up there. They were a nice group of people to work with. The man in charge of each one of the islands were upper grade sergeants.⁷ There were several sergeants in there that were above the base sergeant situation. All of them had Thompson sub-machine guns, and my dad had a .45 Colt revolver that he had picked up from somebody after World War I. I brought that with me with a lot of ammunition. I asked the sergeant if I could borrow his Thompson sub-machine for a little, while he goes down to the beach, and practice shooting. And he said “Sure. Okay, go ahead.”, so I did. About all that was on the beach were little birds running around pecking something. I shot a few rounds, and of course the machine gun went all over everywhere [laughs]. So, I never did hit anything, so I quit wasting ammunition and took it back to him. I offered to clean it, but he wouldn’t let me. But the Army people that I worked with were such great people.

Interviewer: Were you paid for your work?

Crawley: Pardon?

Interviewer: Were you paid for your work in the Georgia State Guard?

Crawley: \$83 a month, yes.

Interviewer: So, you were paid that same rate, \$83 a month?

Crawley: Yes, they couldn’t afford to put people from the Georgia State Guard on duty without it being a permanent thing, because if somebody wanted to go home, they could just go home. And then trying to find a replacement like that, it just wouldn’t have worked out. There were about sixteen Army radio operators there, but we needed at least twenty-two to cover all the islands. If the Army had been able to scrounge up more radio operators, we wouldn’t have been involved, I don’t think. I always had an Army guy as a co-worker and we made our own schedule.⁸

Interviewer: And what were you listening for? What were you trying to get information out of

⁷ Please note, the interviewee removed some of the content here from the transcription for the purpose of clarity.

⁸ Please note, the interviewer added this last sentence as an addition to the transcription.

the radio?

Crawley: It had a headset. The Morse code was all—

Interviewer: And so, you were listening for signals from boats?

Crawley: What we did, the two of us worked together, and in the daytime, we had four-hour shifts, as long as the radios were working. Anyways, it was a lot more work at night because it's less visible. What happened during these calls, the main station at either Savannah or Brunswick would call each island individually, and they had a code that had to be used for twenty-four hours. Every twenty-four hours, it was changed, and they would call each station with the old code, and then they would respond at the end of the message with a new code. We had to pick that code up and sign off with that code for the next twenty-four hours. But it worked quite well. It was such a change for me to be ~~ing~~ in an area where there were no facilities. The picture that I gave you for Little Cumberland, the house is completely gone. It had been torn down later on after we were there. There was a lot of activity with the Washington people getting the military organized. There was a Colonel Lindsay Camp. I believe he must have been appointed by the governor. But he was the colonel in charge of all of the state guard for the rest of Georgia. It worked out to the point where fewer communications were handled. Some of the people that got there ahead of me were telling me that some of the fishing boats had picked up on the signals going in and out from Brunswick, that they got involved after we all got through. I don't know how that worked out, but I think they were having a lot of fun with that anyway.

My last assignment was Little St. Simon Island. There was a more modern house used by housekeepers before the war. It had plumbing and electricity.⁹ But it was quite a spell. Finally got back home on April 20. This started off— you may be interested in this, the original group was organized by, I think it was Order 509, that created the first group of state guard people going down to the islands. Just a few days later, our second order was sent out; I think there was seven more people added to that group. The state guard was involved for approximately ten months from beginning to end. I was only involved the last four months on the activity. When I got back home, I still couldn't join the Navy. I was only seventeen, and I was waiting patiently for my dad to send word that he finally approved. I think mom had written a letter telling him that he was going to have to decide on something pretty quick. By the time I got home, there was a letter that dad had sent saying to my mother "He's going to do whatever he wants to do, so let him do it [laughs]. That tickled me to no end. My mother drove me down to the Navy recruiting station. It was at the old train station in Atlanta, which is long gone now. I finally got to sign up for the Navy. They were in such a hurry getting us through the— they gave us a physical, but they were so hurried and wanting to get through and get that group out of there so another group could come in. The fella in charge, he was standing about twenty feet away and he

⁹ Note: the interviewee added this sentence to the transcription for clarity.

pulled out a watch and said “Y’all hear this?”, and everybody nodded. Of course, nobody could’ve heard it; he was testing our hearing [laughs]. That took place, and a lot of shortcuts were made in the military. The next day, my mother took me back down there, and I was fully packed. They swore us in and gave us orders to go to Bering Field in Pensacola, and that was about a twenty-five-mile location to the northwest, I believe, from Pensacola. This is where I had boot camp, and they had shortened, like they did on a lot of other things, they had shortened the nine-week boot camp to three weeks. We were away doing something most of the time, and we didn’t get much sleep. But they had a great big, enormous open field there. They had two buildings that were two-story buildings, so each one of them would probably hold about five to six hundred men. Of course, we would be out on the field most of the day, doing all kinds of exercises, close-order drills, and that sort of thing. I was way ahead of the crowd with the close-order drill, and right at the end of the day, they would line us all up and tell us that after the close-order drill would end, they would pick out those that made mistakes, and the last one standing would get a head start going back to the barracks so he could use a nickel and buy himself a coke. Big deal! But, low and behold, I did that several days in a row [laughs], because I had all the practice in the military with the band and all. Each one of us was assigned a washing space time, and my time to wash my clothes was I think 4:00 in the morning, or something like that. We had a half-hour to get in and get out so another group could come in. Everything was shortened very much. I had put in for radio school going to Jacksonville, Florida. The chief in charge of the group said the radio school had already started, and there was no way they could get me in it so they assigned me to work on the line there at the Pensacola airfield. My job was servicing and putting water in the batteries. They had a big squadron of photographic planes that were in the SNJ2 category, which were used for training and operations. While we were there, there was another fellow with me, we were together. The Tower Chief said they were sending people, one at a time, to Fort Worth control tower school. They told us that the chief wanted some help to clean up the place because the next day, they were having inspections. So this other fellow, a friend of mine, we volunteered to go over and clean up the tower, which we did. They showed us where all the materials were. We polished all the brass, there was a lot of brass to polish in the Navy. We had it the cleanest it could be. The following day, chief came over and told us that they were real proud of the grade that they got at the inspection because of our work. He said “I got something else I’d like to tell you about.” He says “They’re not sending our controllers”, which had other rates. They didn’t have a rating for control tower operators. “They’re sending our people over to Fort Worth, and now they’ve told us to quit doing that. They wanted new men, because of a need for controllers at Pensacola.” They wanted to know if we wanted to go to control tower operator school over in Pensacola. We both said yes, and we told the first chief there what was taking place, and he said “Good luck.” So they sent us out of that, put us on a train to Fort Worth. Of course, it took us forever and a day to get there because any train that had regular passengers on it, our train was put on a side track, and sometimes we waited four, five, six hours for whatever was on that to get clear before we got back on the main track. It took us, I think, three days just to get to

Fort Worth. But when we got there, we were met by a lieutenant, a Navy lieutenant, who took us to the building where we would— it was a hotel about six stories high. I think they put us all on the sixth floor for a purpose I don't know. He said "Breakfast's at 7:00, and we'll wake you up", and so forth. So we got up and had our breakfast and got out on the field and did all kinds of exercises; we were just up and down. We spent— I think it was a four-week school. In any event, when we got through with the school, they told us that they had assignments already, and that we would be choosing our own assignment in the order of our grades there in the control tower school. Well, my friend and I wound up right in the middle somewhere, so we both went to the same group, and they had vacancies in San Diego, and I thought "Well, San Diego is good. My wife's aunt and uncle live out there." That would be a good place to go overseas maybe, if I wanted to. So we chose San Diego. We had been sleeping on hammocks the first week in our system there at the airfield. They kept us with our hammocks and mattresses and all of our gear and all that. They could hardly be put on your shoulder, it was so heavy. We finally made it out to San Diego, and they had— I don't know if they had a special boat to pick us up out there or something. It was late in the afternoon, and they were waiting on us. We got on the boat and they took us over to North Island, where the airport was.

Interviewer: Did you take a train all the way across the country, or was it an airplane?

Crawley: Train.

Interviewer: Train.

Crawley: Train. Slow, slow train. A lot of sidetracks. It took us, I think five or six days to get out just to Fort Worth. But once we saw— they had a chief. He was Master of Arms, I think. He showed us where to sleep that night and gave us a pass to get in the mess hall. They had so many people on the island; they had two times to have meals. They had a third ticket that would let you eat any time you went into the mess hall, so they gave us one of those passes. We took our hammocks and mattresses up and put them in the attic, and of course everything had our name painted on there with black ink. We slept there that night, then went to breakfast in the next morning, and then went directly to the control tower where we would be working. The personnel officer was there, his name was Schumacher. He was one of the nicest people I ever met. He told us what to do from that point on, and the control tower officer was generally a person who had been overseas and had been wounded and had been sent back. They knew very little about control tower operation; we had a very busy field there. So, some of the control tower officers were the local people; they would space them out a little bit until some of these other people could get everything together so they wouldn't do anything wrong. The control tower was located at what was known as the operations area. We had probably about ten planes there that were all types of seaplanes, amphibious and regular, long runway planes. As a result of that, they put us out on a line to work with the planes and wash them, clean them up. Some of the people had assignments to crank them up and run them. The ones that didn't run every day

were in trouble, so they needed to be ran to create a base for the engine to operate. I got to do that a time or two, just trying to learn how to do everything. All of the younger people were basically just in the beginning part of their service, like a private. We had to work on a line, and that was fine. I had been there probably about three months; I could work in the tower maybe in the morning and then go on the line and work there the other half of the day. All of the lower-level people had to work the full day. Most of the senior people in the tower, when their tour was up, they were so busy there that they got off; they could do anything they wanted to. Well, about two or three months after I had been there, the tower also said that they were going to begin giving out exams for promotions the next day, so study up! I didn't know what that meant, of course I was on the bottom grade. Well anyway, I sat down in the group— I didn't know what kind of test I was taking. When I got through taking the test, the next day the tower officer told me I had been promoted to third class petty officer, and that meant I had skipped some of those on the bottom [laughs]. But anyway, that made me feel real good. I found out there was a time element, where you had to stay in that level before you could go to the next level, so I obeyed by that rule. While I was there, I went on to make first class petty officer, and by that time, they had— they had put out a specialist Y-arm insignia to indicate control tower operator. And then somebody upstairs, of the whole Navy, decided that they needed a special rate, like what everyone else had, to indicate control tower operator. So, they put a set of wings in the middle and left off the specialist Y part. We had a shift in the morning at 8:00 to 12:00, that crew got off and another crew would come in at 12:00 to 4:00. Those were the busiest hours of the day. Another group came in at 4:00 and stayed all night to the next morning. There was a bunch of us doing that rotation. Of course, once I got to be third class petty officer, I didn't go on a line very much. I did because I had some friends out there that I had made while I was working. It was a good time, we had tremendous traffic. When I first got there, we had probably two thousand landings and take-offs a day. I heard, on several occasions, that this tower was one of three in the world busiest. When I got to be first class petty officer, the job fell to me. I took myself off the watchlist and just went out every day to stand duty, and make assignments, and so forth. All the men reported to me at that point in time. We had 5 waves and about fifteen controllers, at that point in time. We had five people working in the tower at all times, especially during the daytime hours. The nighttime hours, not so much, unless we had something scheduled. At one point, I was given the responsibility of filling out a form that had all the take-offs and landings on it, by count. It varied anywhere between 2,000 and 2,200 landings and take-offs per day. I think we probably wound up over that some of that time, to be able to average out, you know, the 2,000. It was just a lot of traffic. We had a lot of different training fields to give you an idea of what the maximum situation was. I was on the mic, and we had a carrier, the Old Ranger, that was sitting out about twenty miles or so, or something like that. Twenty, thirty, forty miles, whatever. I think they moved out a little bit. But the planes would fly out to this carrier and stay two or three weeks. One day when I was on the mic, I got a call from Air group commander. He wanted landing instructions for 150 planes [laughs]. So we had our regular traffic to deal with,

and the 150 more planes to land. We had two runways that crossed like this, 6,000 feet long. They could accommodate all the planes that were available at that time. On the flattop mat itself, we had about a mile, it was not exactly square, but it was divided in four quadrants, and one landing and one take-off. So, the smaller planes, ninety-nine percent of the time, were on that field path, landing and taking off. We had about fifteen fields outside of San Diego, some of them twenty-five, thirty, fifty miles away. They had training at all these places, and they sent those people to the different locations, just to mix them up a little bit; to give them enough training, so they could find their way no matter where they were. We had a lot of accidents. A very unfortunate situation was so many new pilots in training. They would forget where they were, or something would happen somehow or the other. Something would go wrong with a plane and all. But, it was accident time almost every day, and we lost probably about one pilot a week. A lot of activity crammed into a small space just resulted in that. It couldn't be helped. They had all of these people in training, and tried to get them out and qualified as fast as they could. So, it was something we all understood. We had two Crash Jeeps. One had square, black and white checkers all over it. That was the only one we had when I first got there. Later on, for just general information purposes, they got a Jeep that had a pilot radio-type equipment in it, so I could get in either one of those Jeeps and go out. The end of the runways on both north and east, west runways were hidden by buildings. They had buildings everywhere, so from the control tower, they couldn't see the lights on the planes on each one of these runways. So, we had a lookout spot on the ends of each of those runways with communication back to the main tower. But the tower operator needed that information. When at nighttime, it was a little different, but I would get in the Jeep all the time at night and go to the runway that we were using, or wherever. Whatever we were using to check the pilot's navigation lights and things like that, to make sure they were over. We sent a lot back to the hanger there to get something fixed. It was just dangerous for planes to land on top of one another, which happened occasionally. Well, it was a sad situation to go through all of that, but it was necessary. The pilots would call in every night in and tell us there's some junk on the runway, and we'd have to close the runway down and send a Jeep to run down the runway to pick up all the trash. And usually, they were little smoke bombs, about that long, that weren't physically positioned properly. They would drop off when the plane landed. Not too often, but there was enough every day that we would make a run, early in the morning, down the runway to catch all of that. The admiral had his headquarters over in the main part of San Diego. He had a special plane, and he let us know early on— he didn't say "Close the field", but he meant "Close the field" [laughs]. He worded it in such a way that time was limited, and he needed to get to his office as quickly as possible. So, we closed the field. He didn't want to say that, but we closed the field every time. He had a captain pilot, and with usual activity we would close the field and let him land anywhere he wanted to land. He'd get out and just go down the middle of the flattop and go whichever way he wanted to go. Otherwise, we had some mornings that the clouds were real low, and we would have to coordinate our traffic with the Lindbergh tower, which was across the bay from us. Of course, we had telephone contact with them. It was a radio-

type message. But we would call them on that and tell them we had one, two, or three planes ready to go and we'd need a direction. They'd give us an east-northeast or so and so; a particular lane to get these pilots in as they took off. So, that gave us good coordination with the Lindbergh. We dealt very closely with them when we had some low-hanging clouds. Couldn't stand to have anybody run into one another, between the two airports. The place over at Lindbergh, during this course, were over there building B-24s over there.¹⁰ When they got the B-24s all checked out and ready to go, they would fly them over to our location. We had a special group over there that would equip these planes so they would fly over into the South Pacific. They put drums of oil in the bomb bay areas, where they would normally hold bombs. I think, sometimes, they had three crews on the planes. Most of the time, I think they just had two crews. It was a necessary routine to learn all that, but it was a hard job for a new fellow coming on board and pick up all of that. It took months to really understand all that. Especially, when you were right in the middle of a bunch of planes – maybe fifteen to twenty planes landing. We had a test lab crew there that, when the planes that needed repaired got tested, they would take them out on a test flight, sometimes more than one if more than one item had to be tested. Then they would call in and say “This is test pilot” so-and-so. “Engine problems, losing speed”, whatever. We didn't have brake fluid, or something like that [coughs]. Excuse me. Of course, we didn't know where they were, but they'd tell us while we were doing this, but [clears throat] we would clear the field [coughs] where we could let these people land wherever they wanted to.

[fade to black 56:07]

Crawley: We had another situation where the people that were doing target shooting would be probably already out in the area where they needed to be, and they would have one of the small planes, usually an F6F. They laid out a target on the ground, and part of that plane would be maybe 500 feet down the takeoff area already [clears throat]. He would take off, and of course that thing uncoiled as he took off. We had one or two situations where the plane couldn't get air speed, and it fell and burned up.

[fade to black 56:54]

Crawley: Most of the factories building planes were in the– well they were scattered all over the country, but the bulk of them were in the Northeast portion of the United States.

[fades to black 57:07]

Crawley: They hired a lot of women pilots. Men pilots were almost unavailable; they were in the military. But this one, she called in for landing instructions, and I told her the runway to use to follow all of them coming up the bay were from east to

¹⁰ **B-24:** <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/visit/museum-campus/us-freedom-pavilion/warbirds/consolidated-b-24-liberator>

west. One of the pilots, and another plane – of course, they were all on the same frequency – were listening to what was going on, and he made some crazy comment about “I wonder who that is?”. The lady pilot, once she got on her final approach, I cleared her to land. Of course, there were probably fifteen other planes there, so they couldn’t tell which was which. She was in a B-47, which was a heavy-duty fighter-bomber aircraft that was made available about that time. But the guy didn’t say a word after that. I heard some murmur, like “uh-oh”, or something like that, but it was not unusual for the people that were flying these new planes– just been built and checked out and all, they would fly them across the country and land at San Diego. We would tell them how to taxi down to– we had five docks, and usually had transport carriers (mostly Jeep carriers) which would load these planes, and they’d be off to the South Pacific or someplace. There were several situations there that we got a laugh from– it was just funny. But to me, it wasn’t funny at all because they had to have pilots! It was one of those things, but– this wasn’t a lady now, but one of the pilots called in one day and he said “Tower, I’m about here and all I see is ocean.” I said, “You bypassed your landing spot”, he said “I sure did.” I said, “Backtrack and give us another call when you get within range.” He had been asleep, and he put it on automatic pilot, and if he wouldn’t have woken up, he would’ve gone into the ocean, and we would’ve never known about it. But having to keep track of all this– we would even have pilots that would land at one of the other airports that were in our radio listening distance, and call us and tell us where they were, so that we would know how to close out their flight plan, where they were, and so forth. Anything was possible back in those days. I spent two and a half years in San Diego. We didn’t have a chief when I got there, but the senior man made chief about the last six months of his duty there. You could tell it was slowing down just a little bit. Anyways, they didn’t replace him a chief, they gave me the job of handling the men and the waves that we had. The waves, by the way, they didn’t have room for all them on the base, so they bought a house with the money that they got from homes and housing, and bought a house over on Coronado Island. They bought a car so they could use it for transportation back and forth. I forget now, but they named the car “got-to-run” or something like that. I don’t know, it was something they were familiar with. Right there at the end, we had a party on the beach. Of course, everybody was drinking– I didn’t drink beer, it was lousy-tasting to me. Anyways, they knew I was getting ready to go, and the waves invited us back to their house and they fed us all kinds of odds and ends. But the time came for me to leave. I was able to come home twice the last two and a half years. The first time, I caught a flight from San Diego– let me back up and say that one of the men that I had worked with for a long bit of time, he had an eye problem, and they took him out of the control tower and put him in the cargo transport group. That was a transport group where they were loading and unloading planes. In my spare time, since he was a good and close friend, I went down to help him load and unload. By having him down there, I could find out when the next plane was due in. We had a lot of people returning from overseas at that time, and a lot of these officers would come up in the tower and want to know what kind of rides they might be able to fly on. I didn’t have to do any telephoning, because I knew when the planes were coming in, and I would call in

and tell them that I had somebody that wanted a ride. Anyways, my first trip home, I caught a ride to Kansas City, and then I had to catch a train from there on back to Atlanta. I was living out in College Park at that time. But the second time around, one of these photographic-type planes, it was a SNB plane that held five passengers— two pilots and five passengers. He had come in and I knew it, and I went over to the line where he was talking to somebody over there, and I told him I was going back to Atlanta, and could I catch a ride with him? He said, “Well, I’ve got to go up to San Pedro or somewhere “and take care of some business up there, then I leave there and go back home.” He said to just be here and be available, so I got all my gear, and I went to the line shack to wait on him and they finally got through with their business there and came. He had picked up a woman marine from some place, I don’t know where he picked her up. Anyways, we left Miramar and headed home. We stopped at some place around Phoenix, then went to New Orleans, then on back to Atlanta. As a result, I didn’t have too much money to hand out for the ride. I got halfway home anyway when that was over with. But they got to discharge me; they gave me a date, and another friend of mine – they lived up in Ohio – we bought a car, a 1935 Ford, and we were going to drive home. About that time, two other people showed up wanting a ride, so four of us were going to ride, but I was going to be discharged a week ahead of them, so I just didn’t show up at the loading place. I knew I was upsetting people, but I thought it best to do the right thing. So, the day before we were to— I met them at the right time. The day before, a fellow named Lyle Lowe and I that bought the car, we drove up to San Pedro where we were to be discharged, and parked the car up there and caught a ride back home. The ride back home looked like a brand-new Chrysler driven by a chauffeur. We had just walked out on the highway and stuck our thumbs up and he slowed down and we caught up with him and he said “Sons, I’m just a chauffeur here” and said “I can’t take you unless you pay me something. We said, “What do you want?” and he said, “Five dollars will do.” So, we each paid him five dollars and got a brand-new Chrysler all the way back to San Diego [laughs]. We hit it really lucky there. Anyways, we rode a train hours upon hours to get up to San Pedro, but we went through the process up there. It took, I think, four days to be processed; they put us to work doing all kinds of odds and ends, just to use up time., more or less. We finally got discharged, and we were able to go out and get in our car. We started driving in the late afternoon and we drove all the way to Las Vegas and spent the night there. We talked the guy that owned the place down to a half-price situation; we told him what we were doing and all. He said “Okay”, and he said “All I’ve got to do is put some new bedding out and I can still rent it out to somebody tonight. So, we slept there a few hours; it wasn’t long. We got up and went to— I forget the other place we went to. We got up towards Chicago; one of the men lived in Chicago, so I insisted that we drive in that direction to put him— pouring down rain. He wouldn’t let us drive down to his house, it must have been a mile or two, but it was pouring down rain. So, we kept going along the outskirts of Chicago and on down to Ohio, and we met with Lyle’s family, and they were glad to see him. I spent the night there, and the next day, I was just so anxious to get home. They had a cherry tree out back, and I picked a sack full of cherries, got in my car, and headed south. I was just a little bit north of

Memphis— I was so sleepy, I just had to go to sleep, so I pulled off the road, parked the car, got in the backseat, and went to sleep. About 5:00 the next morning – I had parked alongside the railroad track – there came this train and blowing his horn. He scared me to death; I didn't know where I was really. He went on by, and I decided that today was it. I had to go home. So, I went on down further to find a place to eat breakfast, and then I drove the rest of the way home. I got home late in the afternoon, and my brakes had given out, so I had to go real slow to get to my house [clears throat]. And it was just right; it was time to go. But at the discharge location, I had volunteered to stay in the reserve.

They were glad to have me; experienced, staying in the reserve as a first-class petty officer. I didn't have time then for chief, but I said I'll just have to wait my time. The situation in Korea developed in October of '50, and I didn't really think in the beginning that I was going to be recalled. It just didn't come to my mind, but they had us scheduled out of the local air station for Pensacola, where the pilots would just keep it up there for situations— it was an F6F squadron, and I had become a member of that, keeping the pilots logged. Anyways, that broke loose, and we had flown into Pensacola and were going to spend the night in empty barracks, really. The officer came in and yelled out my name, Crawley, and I raised up my hand. He comes over to me and says “Crawley! You have been recalled into active duty. You need to get back to Atlanta as quick as you can.” Things hadn't changed very much, so I thought “Well, I'd have to go back to the operations officer and find out where Commander Wren was – our group commander. He was still there, and I told him I had been recalled to active duty and I needed to get back to Atlanta. He said, “Well, you've got to go to Atlanta right now.” He said that they carried a lot of odds and ends, but “Get your stuff, and come back over here”, which I did. So, we flew back to Atlanta, and we got there real late; I don't remember the time. I had a brother-in-law visiting us with his family. Well, I called, and he was there, so he came out to the airport and picked me up. I was finishing building a house, and of course, I couldn't do anything in five days, but I had the roof on it, and it was a second addition to the house. But I hadn't moved in; we were working there every day trying to finish it up. But anyways, I packed up everything the next day and all of my sea stuff that I had and went out to the airport there at the assembly. They had us all together and told us to spread ourselves out, and we'd have to have a full sea-pack. I had about half of the stuff already for the summertime, and I wasn't about to buy a lot of stuff not knowing where I was going. So, I asked him and said, “Do you know where we're going?” He said, “No, you need your full sea bag.” I said, “Well, I'm not going to carry a full sea bag, I'm going to wait and find out where I'm going and buy what I need.” He was really upset with me, but he told me to go into the personnel office, sit there, and wait on him, which I did. I was waiting until he had given all the instructions out. They were so run down; nobody was doing anything. At that point in time, the guy in charge was at the doctor's office and out playing golf, and the personnel officer— I don't think the guy that was there was the personnel officer. Anyways, I went in there and told him that I was

told to come in here and sit, and he said, "Sit over there." So, I waited, and waited, and waited. The chief outside got rid of everybody, came in, and got me, and he says, "Are you ready to fill up your sea bag?" I said, "Well, if I know where I'm going, fine, I'll do it." He said, "Well, I don't know where you're going", and I said, "Well, I think I'll just go home." He looked at me like he didn't know what to do with me, really. He said, "Well, you can go home if you want to, but I'll send somebody after you." So, I started to walk away, and he called me back. He had already called the rest of the people back; they were sitting and standing by. He said, "We've got your assignment. You'll be going to the Philippines." A lot of this other group were going to other places; just two of us were going to the Philippines. Anyways, they put me on a ship; it was the USS Aultman, I believe that was the name of it. It was an old transport that had been reworked to a very spacious place to accommodate a lot of men, say about 5,000 [laughs]. Hundreds and hundreds of them, I don't know how many. But anyways, as we were getting ready to board the ship, they put all the first-class petty officers up on the upper deck, and we had a room all to ourselves [clears throat]. They told the fellow that – he had about six stripes on – that he was in charge. So, he passed all of that on to us when we were to eat and that sort of thing. The rest of the time, we were just roaming around the deck, watching. We got about half a day's ride out of San Diego and a storm hit us, and it was a terrible storm. It had come in from the South Pacific area to just below Hawaii and it was swinging north. It was a big, long storm. We were driving straight into it, and we were going like this; the front end would go in the air about forty feet, and then the tail end would go up about forty feet, and the engines were still going, and the thing was shaking the whole ship. Anyways, as we turned to go into the Hawaiian area (several hundred miles), the ship was rolling from side-to-side about forty-five degrees. I thought we were going to take on water every time we did that. That took place probably about four or five hours before it lightened up a little bit, then we were just bumping around about the last two hours going into Hawaii. There were a lot of sick people on that ship [laughs], me included. I lasted three hours before I got sick. They told us we'd be in Hawaii; I think about eight hours. They had to unload a lot of cargo and take on a lot of cargo, so everybody was they had told us ahead of time that this was a final announcement we would have; to get back in the ship on time; "we're not coming back for anybody." So, we had to stay close to the ship and keep an eye on our watches to make sure we got back on the ship in time. But we did; no problem there. Then we went from Hawaii over to Guam, and we had pretty much the same thing at Guam, except most of the cargo that we took off was replaced by men. They had a lot of workers they had been hiring to work on, I think it was a pineapple plantation. It was just hundreds and hundreds of them, and it took a long time to get unloaded and loaded. The same thing happened there, though; they weren't going to put out any calls for us and be back on the ship or we were going to be left behind. We all got back on the ship on time [laughs]. We left Guam and headed to one of the islands in the South Pacific, it was one of the islands that the atomic bomb had been tested on and all; I forget the name of that one. They didn't have dock facilities; it was a low-lying island, water all around, and no docks, and it wasn't deep enough around for a ship to come into dock, anyway.

So, they had a tugboat; a big, flat boat out to do loading and unloading, and there wasn't too much of that. I think we were there probably about three hours, but once they turned us loose, we went on in, and within a few days, we approached the Philippine Islands. We were going to Manila, but the islands that we went through had a lot of remains of the World War II ships that had been sunk: a lot of them sticking out of the water, some on their side, tanks, and all kinds of equipment. The local people there would go out every day and use welding equipment and all that to tear up as much as they could, and take that back in. Well, they were selling it, you know, for cast-iron, and it wouldn't surprise me if some of that hadn't been sold back to the Japs over there, but I don't know that. Anyway, we went through several islands over— a number of islands, and finally wound up in Manila. They had a boat there waiting for us, and they took us... well let me see. I forget how many men we had on that boat, but anyway, they carried us back to the Sangley Point, which was the naval station located there. After we checked in, I found out that one of the chiefs that had been sent over there was a radio operator; he was not a control tower operator. He told me that he was going to transfer out of the group because he wasn't qualified to do that work, and since I was first-class, they left me in charge of all the control tower operators. We had, I think, seventeen to eighteen, at that time. There was a small station, not a lot of traffic. The runway was about a mile long, and it was made out of matting: interwoven sections of metal, about this wide and about six feet long. They would snap them together and they would stay in place, once it was level and all. Anyways, somebody had told the lieutenant commander operations officer that the chief was not a control tower operator. He needed another chief and said, "I've got too many chiefs already, I'm not going to send for another one." So, they left me in charge of all the control tower operators, and we had two places to man: we had the tower — just one person in the tower at a time; we didn't need two since there wasn't much traffic and most of our traffic was seaplane traffic. The operations desk was the next place that had to be manned. I decided that I was more qualified to do work down there — that's where the pilots came down to file flight plans, to get the weather, and any briefing that they might need — so I stayed there most of my time. Every night when we had the seaplanes coming in, the operations officer would send for me and keep me there; he didn't trust some of the other operators because they hadn't been used to a whole lot of traffic. But our effort at Sangley Point was a multifunction situation: we had three groups of PBMs [clears throat]. One group was at Sangley Point for rest purposes — still in training, but rest-purposes, or keeping in training — one of them had a seaplane tender that would move around, and seven PBMs would be located there. And they had another location that was near Okinawa. I think I stayed near Okinawa most of the time, but they also moved around with the seaplane tender. So, every week, they shifted positions so that the two most in-danger locations would wind up at Sangley Point for a week before they had to go out again. We lost one plane there: the plane was coming in at night and hit a log, and like that there were dead trees that would find their way into the bay and float downstream. Anyways, the pilot hit that log — he couldn't see it, and there was nothing he could do — but I think we lost three men out of a group of about seven or eight. On another occasion, we had another

PBM (our PBM that was amphibious: land, water, and sea). They had a colony there of lepers on an island just south of Manila, and they used to fly down supplies and things like that, and unknown to them, there was a great, big rock (about a 1,000 pound-sized rock) that was submerged, and the tide was low, but they still couldn't see the rock. Most of the time down there, they were able to get up on the land with their wheels down and unload and load, but this time around, they hit that rock [clears throat], and punched a big hole in the middle of it, and they had to send another plane down to pick up the passengers. They sent a tugboat down with a crane on it to pick up the PBM and bring it back. Of course, it was damaged so much that it was out of service. They sent a pilot crew back to San Francisco to pick up a new PBM and flew it out. Anyways, the flight crew told us about it. One day, there were three chiefs in the division, supposedly. I happened to be first-class, and wasn't going to make chief anytime soon, so these other two chiefs treated me like they treated one another. I really appreciated that. I got flight pay; we rotated the flight pay around. I had to fly thirty minutes each month to qualify for flight pay. Most of my flying time was done between where we were located there and up to Clark Field. Our mail was sent from somewhere overseas, up to Clark Field. Usually, it was eight, nine, twelve hundred pounds; it was a lot of mail, so we needed to know what plane was needed to fly up there and get the mail. I usually took care of that, to tell them how much mail was waiting on us, but that's how I got my flight time in. The last time around, I needed— I didn't need thirty minutes. It was under thirty minutes that I needed for flight time, and on the way back, an emergency broke loose and they were notified that somebody had seen what they thought might be a Jap sub. We were all ordered to zigzag our course on our way back, just because of some territory, get back and the next day, go back out again for a full day or whatever was necessary. Low and behold, I volunteered for that; all I needed was twenty or twenty-five minutes for my flight pay, but I volunteered the next day, and I was one of the crew on the PBM. I think they had eight of us on there; we took rations with us to spend the day, and we spent fifteen hours flying all over the Philippines, and we never did see anything. We saw an awful lot of fishing boats, we saw an awful lot of— the local people had built a lot of huts on top of walkways that they could go from one to the other, and they lived there, and fishing boats would be there close by. We saw a lot of those people out working during the day, but we couldn't pick up anything that could halfway be considered an underwater submarine. But that was the end of my flying time. One of the chiefs called me one day and said, "I've got four too many men that I don't need. Can you use them?" [laughs] I said, "Yes, I'll take them." So, I got those four men and assigned them to one of my controllers so they could get some experience with him before I got involved. On one occasion, they told me that they had a fire alarm tripped. Well, I forget where the ship was, but it'd be due at our location probably in the next day or two. We were going to send the ship over to Hong Kong to give us some relaxation time, so I chose four of the younger people that wanted to go. Some of those hadn't accepted me too well; I didn't take them with me. I didn't want to be bothered by them [laughs]. Anyways, we spent, I think it was four or five days over in Hong Kong, and we did a lot of photographic work over there, and shopping, and what have you; we

bought all kinds of stuff. We had one fellow out of– some of the older people, you can't tell how old they are; they look much younger than they are. We had asked somebody where we could buy some... I forget now what they wanted. He wanted to guide us around I think, and [clears throat] one of the men was about ten feet behind us, and he heard that. He came rushing up and bumped into us, and said, "I can take you anywhere you want to go!" [coughs] So, we said that we wanted to buy– over there, they had buildings upon buildings that were sort of like our mall situations: they would have this building, and they would have twenty-five places in there for different people to have shops, and you could spend your day in there and not see it all [laughs]. Anyways, he took us through two of those, and I didn't buy anything there. I wasn't interested in that, so we just went along with the crowd. We spent, like I said, four or five days out there, I forget which, and finally got back on the ship. When we went down to get back on the ship, somebody's bosses had bought furniture – home furniture [laughs] – and they had big cranes down there loading all that furniture in the sub-part of the boat. Then we made it back, and things went back to normal pretty well. Australia was sending flying boats up to Okinawa, or wherever these ships were stationed up there. They were seaplanes, and they would always land over in the ocean area away from the island. They had people over there, and they could run out and get them, and bring them back in where they could stay overnight. They brought them to us, they stayed with us and ate with us overnight, and they went back out the next day. Those planes were so loaded with gear – wartime stuff – I don't know what all, but they were so overloaded, that sometimes it would take two or three trials for the planes to get off the water. They fly so low that you could see the stream for a mile, then they would fly and leave the stream – you could tell just where they left it – they would fly low for just another couple of miles and gain altitude to get over to Australia– I mean to get up to the place where their boats were, or wherever their boat was. Well, it was an interesting thing. We always managed to give them provisions to eat along the way, and most all of them had long mustaches that twirled up on the ends [laughs]. You could tell they were from Australia just from looking at them, but they were just nice people to do business with. I got to know one or two of them pretty good, but we always got along quite well. On one occasion [clears throat], one of the chiefs came to me and said, "Now, I've got a job for you, okay?" Now, this was rare. Very, very rare, but he said, "Once a year, we give the people in the division a party", and said, "You're next." I think he gave me 400 pesos, and he said, "Do whatever you want with it. Provide a party for the division group and let us know." So, I checked out a truck and went out on the beach, which was seldom. I only went on the beach two or three times. If you had a wristwatch on, you wouldn't come back with it, because there would be about ten to fifteen young boys, this high or lower, and about four or five of them would gather around you and one of them would pull your watch off. I was warned ahead of time: don't take my watch with me. Anyways, I checked out a truck and started looking around for– and I recognized a name, one of the fellows in my group would be going to. I went down and asked him and said I wanted him to close the place down for a couple of hours where our people could come in, and he said, "Well, there's no way I could close it down", but he said, "I can give you a place where

they can go to get their beer, and the other customers would go to the regular place.” I said, “That’ll be fine.” I don’t think I gave him all the \$400, I think I kept 100 of it, and I thought I was doing pretty well to get that for \$300– 300 pesos. Anyways, I went back and notified everybody that needed to know the party would be held that day, and if they got there before 11:00, well I normally expect too much. Anyway, when that day came, I had to go on by the mess hall and I got big, this deep pan that square with baked beans. I got one with potato salad, and I got one with– I think I had something else there, but I don’t remember what that was. I think it was some kind of meat, or mixture of meat. Anyway, when I was loading and unloading all that stuff, I saw what we had and thought, “Well, our people aren’t going to eat all that.” What really happened, next door to this place, somebody had a construction crew building a house, and in the latter part of the day, probably about 4:00, most everybody had gone. A bunch of the local native people were still there. Anyway, all the other people in the other divisions pretty much had gone, so I went next door, and we had a lot of food leftover, and I told the guy there – only one or two of them were working – [clears throat] that I had some food left over from my party. If they wanted any of it, they better come over and get it before I throw it away. Everybody in that group searched and found their hats, paper sacks, whatever they could find, and they rushed over there and started putting all of that food in their containers. About that time, the supervisor noticed that he didn’t have any employees, and he came over there and in a language that I couldn’t understand, thank goodness, spoke to them so abruptly that they very slowly started going back over there mumbling all the time. I had about four people from our division left there, and they said, “Well, we’re not through yet!” So, I gave each one of them ten pesos and I took off home. I think I had forty, fifty, sixty, or some number of pesos left. I gave it back to the chief and checked the truck back in, and I was through with the party. I didn’t have to go through that but once, but that pretty well told a story there. Right at the end, I got word to go down to the personnel office. I went down to personnel to see him, and they offered me a commission Warrant Officer if I would sign up for another four years. I had been gone twenty-two months at that time, and I had a son back home that was nineteen months old that I had never seen, and I said, “No thank you, I’m going home.” [laughs] So, that put an end to that, and I went back. Just shortly after that, I got word to do the checkout process, so I had to go around to the mess halls, and the master of arms, and all the places where we ate and all the places I had worked, and sick bay. I had to sign out at all these locations, and if you never had been there, you had to sign out anyhow. It was listed on the chart, so I went around and checked out at all those places, got my gear together, and was told the boat was in-dock in Manila. It had taken three weeks in this same boat – the USS Aultman. Three weeks there they spent time loading and unloading, and then three weeks back to San Francisco, so we went back the same route we came out from, but we didn’t have near the crowd. We had a lot of people that were there at other locations that had been discharged, so we had a good bunch of people on there. One thing I’ll remember quite well was, in the mess area, they had cases and cases and cases of milk in cardboard containers, and when the officers complained about it being stale, they moved a lot of the cases out on the deck for us to use, and all of

them got chucked overboard [laughs]. So, that's what I'll remember about the Philippines. When I got back to San Francisco, I found that the Delta and— I forget now the airline. It was Western something, I think. Anyway, they flew from Atlanta to New Orleans, and from New Orleans to San Francisco, and then the Delta pilots would fly— they stayed overnight, or whatever. They stayed the night there, and then would fly back to New Orleans, and back to Atlanta, and it cost \$800. But I had \$800, that's what I had. The plane fare cost \$300, and I bought me a ticket and got on the plane. In New Orleans, I found a USO house there that they let me stay in a room; it cost two dollars.¹¹ I've still got that receipt, by the way [laughs]. I was a little uneasy staying there, because of the size of the place; there must have been fifty people in there. It was a great big room full of bunks. Anyways, the next day, I got up and got breakfast, then went and got on the plane, and came around to Atlanta. When I got to Atlanta, the Atlanta airport had covered walkways and areas that went out from the main terminal, and that's where the planes would load and unload, at the ends of these ramps. I got on one of the ramps that was open, and went back to the ramp that was covered. Then I saw my wife and Lamar, my son; she was pushing him in a stroller. He didn't recognize me, that's for sure, but while I was in the Philippines, I had bought a camera, and I had taken pictures over there and sent them home. Sue had bought a projector, so she would show our daughter Linda that we had earlier, and Lamar the pictures. And Anne — her name is Anita — but she came along later on, so she's not in those pictures. But I got back home, and it felt so good.

[Break]

Interviewer: That's wonderful. Well, I'm so happy we can preserve your story here at our museum and share it with our students and our entire community.

Crawley: Thank you, thank you, thank you. I appreciate all of the effort here. It's really nice of you to do this.

Interviewer: Absolutely! Thank you so much for your time and for sharing with us.

¹¹ USO: <https://www.uso.org/about>