

Red Wagner/Sam Guill
Memories of Coast Guard life

(transcribed on Mac (Works 4.0) -by Pat Gunning 8/2/98 from Video 32M taken by Sam Guill)

A. C. "Red" Wagner (42)
VADM Ret

Sam Guill:

Well, today is Thursday, the 28th?. I think it is? 27th? 28th?

Red Wagner

27th

Sam Guill:

27th of April. Time's getting away from me. I should keep a calendar on my wrist. And I'm visiting Red Wagner at his home in Miami, and we've been gossiping a little bit, and now it's time for me to just turn this camera and the tape over to Red, and tell us a bit about your career.

Red Wagner

Well, I suppose everyone says about the same thing, Sam. Where do you start?

Sam Guill

Well, your career...some careers started even before they got to The Academy, but most of em, upon graduation.

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Red Wagner.

Naw, that's too long ago. I can't remember what happened yesterday. I do remember graduation though of the class of '42 and that Pearl Harbor came December 7th and 12 days later they graduated us (very much of a surprise) and they made us take all the exams, just like they always did. They even made us take re-exams the day before graduation, when obviously they were going to graduate us anyway, but still they went through all the motions. There was much confusion in those days, as you probably know, and we graduated on the 19th of December and I was assigned to the ^{Campbell} Cambel and nobody knew where the Cambel was, but they sent me to New York, because the last time anybody had seen the Cambel, it was in New York. And it turned out she was in Argentina.

Sam Guill:

Argentina

Red Wagner:

And it turned out that Argentina was Argentina, but since Argentina, New York was closest to Argentina. They sent. They went to New York rather than Boston, which was the home port. And I went to New York and, well,

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everybody tried to find the **Cambel**, as I say nobody had any idea where it was. Coast Guard hadn't any idea where it was.

They put me in recruiting and I would sit there and work for Joe **Mazadick** (He was an old timer...still living on Staten Island) and we would sit there and these fishermen would come in and they'd tell us what their qualifications were and we'd say 'Well, OK, JG, or ensign, and some even lieutenant.'" I mean that was it, and immediately they were in the reserve at that rank, and that went on for a couple of weeks 'till I began to realize that these people that **I** were putting in were senior to me. That seemed kinda dumb, so from then on, everyone came in as an ensign as far as I was concerned. I don't know what Joe did.

But, we finally found the **Cambel** in Boston, and I was sure as I think most everybody was then too, that the United States fleet was going to go back and sock the hell out of the Japanese and the war would be over before I'd ever find the **Cambel**, and I wanted to get in the war, at least a little bit. Little did I realize that little bit was going to be an almost 4 years. .

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But, we found the Cambel, and at that time, MacNeil was the skipper (I can't think of his first name... isn't that terrible?) and the Exec was Trestor, Glenn Trestor (great fellow). I had met Sally by then and every chance we got or I got, I went to shore on liberty, and sometimes Glenn Trestor would stand by for me when I had the duty. He was a real nice guy, and I stayed on the Cambel for a year and about 3 months until '43, the summer, well June of '43, which is right of course we had a big problem with it on Washington's birthday of 1942, when we '43 when we rammed the submarine. I still have a bet with Jimmy ^{Hirstfield} Hersfield on the fact that there were at least 2 submarines.

One of the problems was that I was Damage Control Officer at the time, and the Damage Control Officer at that time was on the bridge. He wasn't below. He was on the bridge, waiting for where the damage was going to be, and then he would go to the rescue and save the ship.

And we were with this convoy, and would have been 2 or three ships torpedoed. We were assigned to pick up survivors ..which we did, and then as we went to rejoin the convoy, we got at the stern of the convoy at about 5 miles astern, just at sunset, and the subs had just the Wolfback

pack

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had just made an attack on the convoy and they'd had come up astern and there we were, and the ocean really was just full of submarines. And us. There was much confusion on the ship. I'm sure you got all this from Jimmy (who doesn't have his facts exactly right... that's the \$10 bet)

I was on the bridge wing and I was with a young'un who had a submachine gun, His only ...Well, he had 2 functions: One was to take down the facts from the dying words of the commanding officer: "Don't give up the ship" and the second was "whenever you saw something, shoot at it with that gun." And he and I were on the starboard bridge wing and everyone was in action on the port side and this submarine comes running along the surface with just the conning tower showing and ran right into us.. Ran right into us.. The ship keeled over and we'd have pieces of the submarine... I still have a piece right here in the house that was left in the fuel tank.

But the only ones that saw it were Pastorage and myself. Well, when the ship keeled over, Jimmy Hersfield came running over on the starboard side and said 'What's going on?' Well, Pastorage was torn between putting down what's going on and shooting at the submarine, so he opted to shoot at the submarine. He forgot we had a splinter shield and he shot right into

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the splinter shield, hit him just like the old wild western. And the bullets were flying all over the place and so that's how Jimmy Hersfield got injured from it. Bullets flying off the splinter shield.

Sam Guill:

Around his face

Red Wagner:

And Aback. .. and his back, too. So obviously , there were two submarines. Well, there was more than two, because some guns were flying from off the port bow and some were flying off the starboard quarter. I saw the sub, I know damn well I saw the submarine with Pastorage. Pastorage saw it too, because he fired at it. And yet they were ⁱⁿ action ^{to} port.

Sam Guill:

And this is the one that rammed you? on the starboard?

Red Wagner:

Uhm mmm (with a nod)

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Sam Guill

But the action prior to that was...

Red Wagner:

The submarine that we ...which submarine that was. The one that ended up dead in the water... We find we were dead in the water too. Because the rip went right down the side and in the engine room and flooded the engine room. I'll never forget that either. The engine room buzzer sounded and I and I, as Damage Control Officer, ran in and picked up the phone and I said "Bridge, aye" The report was "We're making water, Sir"

Well, in those days, whenever you had the evaporators on, you reported to the bridge that you were making water and you logged "evaporators on, are making water" and when they stopped they would log it in. And I said "What a god-damned time to tell me that you were ^{making} taking water" What he meant was that they were making water all right, that the engine room was open that it was flooded. At any rate, as you well know, we escaped and we were towed back to Saint John's.

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The Germans, I always figured made a mistake before that and after that by going after the merchant ships instead of going after the escorts. If they had gone after the escorts, it would have been an entirely different war. We had very few escorts. I'm sure you were out there, too when, and you know. Later on in the war, we had inner screens, outer screens and pickets. Out front. But at the beginning of the war, five escorts and seventy ships was normal. And they always went after the ships. Going after the escorts would have been bad. Bad news.

After I got off the **Cambel**, I went to a DE ^{as} ~~versus~~ Executive Officer under Gene **Kauffman**. And then as a Commanding Officer, we went to the Pacific in 1945. I was with.. At that time we joined the Mighty 9th Fleet. which consisted of three World War I cruisers called "Helpless, ^{Hapless} ~~Helpless~~, and Harmless" which with 4 piper WW1 cruise, and an oiler; 6 of the new 2200 ton destroyers, and 6 coast guard diggies. That was the Mighty 9th Fleet. And the Japanese were scared to death of the Mighty 9th fleet because they knew it was going to swoop down from the Aleutians on them. We were based in the Aleutians. They got much difficulty, and when we did get down into the Curios and to the Sea of Japan. We took the oiler. The three cruisers went off at 35 knots, fired 3 shots, came back at 35

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knots. We just sort of waved as they went by both ways... very very poor admiration. But when we went down , we adopted the 5th Fleet or the 7th Fleet's time, so that the Japanese wouldn't know it was the 9th Fleet that was coming down. It was very confusing because they were on another day. We were still on our day here...not the next day. Date line. And the time was all screwy and everything was just a mess. I was relieved on ~~V~~J day by Bill Earl. God help him, God love him. Bill came on ~~V~~J day and he ran into a pretty drunken crew. As you can imagine, we were in Dutch Harbor at the time, and we went out and did the trial somehow for him.. Full power and the whole works.

Sam Guill

When did you get to Dutch Harbor?

Red Wagner

We were on our way to Dutch Harbor when ~~V~~J day ...when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. So it would be.. August ... What was it August 7th.? was the ~~V~~J day..Beginning of August

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Sam Guill

About the 12th I think it was

Red Wagner

Yeah... It was the first part of August, but normally we were based on that too. We stayed in that too.

Sam Guill

I asked because I left Pocatello (PF) in San Francisco and flew up to ^{Adak} Adack to pick up another PF, Jack German... (that was the gallop) and I tracked him out to Dutch Harbor, and that same afternoon, Jack had said "Oh no hurry wait until we get back to Adack"... then he learned that there was a flight that afternoon.. "Can you relieve me?" That's one of the fastest reliefs ever.

Red Wagner

Well, it was difficult getting home, too, and I, of course, so I was relieved. Everybody ^{with} necessary points was released. So everybody was headed on back to the States, me included. I got to Edmonds and Alberta and there was and it looked like I was going to be there for the next 15

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years. I mean, there were 50,000 people there, and 2 or 3 planes, no there was more than that.. 5 or 6 -6 planes a day, the new C 54s, the 4 engine... but then McArthur called all of those out to the Pacific, out to Japan, so we lost the 54s, so all we had left was the 47s. Of course, they didn't carry any ?? and it looked like we would be there forever. So I even called Veterick. He was Officer of Personnel in Washington at the time, and I asked him if he couldn't... You know, it says on my orders that I have 10 days leave "Take the leave off and give me the leave when I get home because the leave is killing me and I can never get outta here" Well, he said he didn't know if that was possible but that he'd look into it. Well, I never heard from him and so my priority was zero...practically. Way down at the end.. at the bottom, but I got off by luck by meeting the Air Priorities Officer who was Army Air Force at the time, and he got me aboard.

But after the war, of course, we went to Korea, as you know, Sammy. we were there together. You were in Seoul and I was in Chinank. and I stayed because I loved Korea and I knew I wouldn't be able to describe it to Sally. So I figured the only thing to do was to get her over and that took a long time. Also, we all went over under orders, as you know, for 6 months,

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temporary duty, and I remember, during the war...

Sam Guill

I don't think there was any time limit

Red Wagner

I think they were.. They told us 6 months. But that didn't mean a damn thing. We were liable to be there for 5 years, still on temporary duty. So I put in for permanent duty right away and sent for Sally... but I couldn't get a house assigned by the army. We were under the 6th Division Artillery, with an old Colonel by the name of "Gunby". (He's dead now) who was only at home riding a horse.

I mean he was one of the old time calvary officers. He didn't get tanks and all that stuff, he just wanted a horse. But he was a very feared man. .. must have been very much like General Patton. I never met Patton, but the same type of jacket, build, same build, and the same swagger stick. Always. Everybody was deathly afraid of him. Deathly afraid of him. Except the Coasties who were there. We didn't give three hoots in hell about General Gunby, or anybody else in the Army.

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They didn't know who we were, really. Coast Guard assigned to them. All they did was pay us and feed us... what there was sea rations when we first got there, as you know. There was no fresh food of any sort, but they paid us and took care of us that way, but when it came to getting a house assigned, that was next to impossible, because as soon as the house was assigned, and some other army officer got their orders there , immediately I dropped down on the list, and no matter what I did I could not get Colonel Gunby to do anything about it until....

We ran the Chenae naval base...Koreans ran...(with Koreans) we were advising them. Chenae is a very long ^{way} ~~was~~-from Pusan..which is the 6th Division Headquarters, General Ward. Major General Ward.. over the mountains. I had to go over 2 ranges to get to Chenae. But by boat, it was only about an hour and 20 minutes., and we had the boats. So whenever General Ward would come up, we would send the boat for him and bring him in, and Mack McGowen was the head of the unit, as you know, and he didn't want to get in too much hot water with Colonel Gunby... and we worried about you people in Seoul, too.

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We were kinda flying free and high and wide down there, you know. And he went to Seoul for something, and I was in charge, and that was the day the dock sank. Colonel Gunby's dock. He had a dock there that we brought General Ward into. Ward and some of his LCI's up from Pusan with supplies and so forth. It was an army dock and it was a float, and it sunk, and General Ward was coming the next day. This was on a Saturday. He was coming on Monday. Colonel Gunby called me on the phone, and I'll never forget it, because when I picked up the phone he said "Red" and whenever Colonel Gunby called me Red, there was obviously, something very definitely wrong. Well, it turned out the dock had sunk and was there anything that I could do about the dock. and I said "Colonel, there's not a damn thing I can do about the dock.. It's the weekend, and your people are off, and my people are off. I can't do anything" "Well, he said "General Ward is coming on Monday". I said, "Yes, I heard, but I guess he can come over the mountain a jeep or a staff car". He couldn't use a staff car, he had to use a jeep. He said "Well, I'll tell you it would sure be nice if that dock was up." I said, "Incidentally, Colonel, have you heard anything more about the house that I put in for?" He said, "You mean, you mean, you haven't got that house yet, Red?" I said "No, Colonel, I haven't" He said

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“Well I told Major Gorsky to give you that house”. I said “Major Gorsky hasn’t said a word” . “Well, now You just hang there right where you are now Red, OK?” I said “OK”. So, five minutes later, the phone rings. It was Gunby again. He says “I got a house for you.” I said “Which one?” “H-5.” I said, “Well, Colonel, let me go take a look at it and I’ll call you back”. I went and took a look. It was terrible. It was the worst house the army had. So I came back and I said, “Colonel, that house ^{is} ~~us~~ just not satisfactory, I want my wife here pretty badly, but not to live in a place like that”. So he says “Well, is there any particular house you had in mind?” I said “H-2”. He said “Well, I don’t know about H-2, but how about that dock? I said “Well, Colonel, I probably could get it up by Monday. I can’t promise..but I could probably get it up ^{by} ~~my~~ Monday... much like the house. You can’t promise the house and I can’t quite promise the dock.... but maybe... so he said “Hold on” He called back and he said “You got H-2.. I said “You got a dock”

You know, he never forgave me. He never forgave me. And when we were gonna to go back on the ship. He was assigned to the same ship. And do you know, he got himself reassigned because he said he was sure one of us wouldn’t make it.

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Sam Guill

I'll be damned!

Red Wagner

Can you imagine that? He never forgave me. I was the only one, in probably his whole life who ever crossed Colonel Gunby. But, anyway, Sally came over and it was wonderful and we had our oldest child with us.

After Korea, we went to Chicago, where I worked for Nat Fulford.. recruiting and Auxiliary...my first tour with the Auxiliary. I worked for Russ Waytion. He was the director of Auxiliary of Cleveland, and I was the Director for Michigan and Superior M &S

Sam Guill

When would that be?

Red Wagner

1948 to 1950. Just as the Korean war started we were transferred to the Dexter. As Executive Officer under Gus Land. Gus Land. Gus is still alive,

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I think?

Sam Guill

Oh yes. He is on Monterey? Santa Cruz now..

Red Wagner

Santa Cruz? We saw him in Monterey when I was Area Commander

Sam Guill

He has divorced and remarried.

Red Wagner

No. Gus Land? (To his wife)... "Doll, Gus Land is divorced? Did you know that?..and remarried? Can you imagine that? What was her name..

Virginia?

Sam Guill

Wasn't she Wooly Cass's sister?

Red Wagner

Yeah. Wooly Cass's sister. Huh? When did that happen?

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Sam Guill

I can't put the dates on it. I was taken by surprise also, but I knew before I had contacted him, that a family change had occurred.

Red's Wife, Sally

The last time we saw them, they were still together.

Red Wagner

Sure. That was in '78. That was 11 years ago, you know.

After the Dexter, I went to the Academy for four years and worked for Carl Bowman.

Sam Guill

He's on tape.

Red Wagner

Yep, and Tony Wang. He's dead. Chet Steele. He's dead.

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I was coach of the sailing team for four years. We did quite well. And made a number of cruises .. I guess three on the Eagle...summer cruises Then went to Boston, to the Castle Rock as Commanding Officer.

Sam Guill

That's one of the AVP's?

Red Wagner

Yeah. I relieved.. Well I didn't really relieve anybody. I relieved the Exec. They didn't have a CO. She was in the yard.

There was a Navy Big. Then from '57-'60, I was on the district staff, and the 1st district, again as Director of our Auxiliary, and as Public Affairs with Eddie Welk, as a district commander and Barramy, as the Chief of Staff. Miles Emily was Operations Officer and he retired.

Sam Guill

You'd been shipmates with some rather powerful people.

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Red Wagner

Yeah.

Sam Guill

Strong characters.

Red Wagner

Yeah. I'm trying to think the International Ice Patrol... Tidlack

Sam Guill

Tidlack.

Red Wagner...

The Operations Officer that relieved him. I can't think of his name. He had no sense of humor whatsoever.

And then we went to Washington to PS.. Personnel Services as Exec... Well, not even as Exec.. just assigned there. Kerr was the... Bud Kerr.

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Sam Guill

Ivor Samuel?

Red Wagner

Yes. Ivor Samuel Kerr. and he was the head of it. and there was a gal by the name of Ball, who was sort of the Exec. She only lasted with me about 6 months, not with me for 6 months, but with me for 6 months, and then she retired, then I became the Exec. PS took a big jump in the four years that I was there.. not necessarily because I was the PS fellow, but I ended up as the head of the family.. We expanded quite a bit. We got security and the whole works.

An interesting thing was 1960.. the Inauguration of John F. Kennedy. I was assigned to the Pentagon for a period of 3 months as the Coast Guard Liaison to the Inauguration Parade Committee, which was headed by a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army, and I was Second Senior as a Commander in the Coast Guard.

And after about a month and a half, he was reassigned to the Inauguration Committee, itself, which was a step up for him, and I became the head of

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the Inaugural Parade Committee. And I was the one, well, I and my committee was in charge of the spotting of the troops around, and times for step off and the whole parade. And just before the inauguration, Kennedy came to the White House to meet Eisenhauer. There's a famous picture of them standing on the front portico.. of the... on the outside of the White House shaking hands with Eisenhauer standing in the doorway, and on each side of them is a Coast Guard enlisted man with a rifle and frosh ..Honor Guard.. Well, that came about because when this was going to happen, the word came down to the Pentagon who put an Honor Guard up the driveway, around the whole driveway going into the White House. Of course it came down to the Inaugural Committee, because we had all the troops, and I said "Who's going to be in this thing?" and everybody said "Well, the Army, the Navy, Marines and the Air Force, just as it's always been".. and I said "Yeah, but we're going to have Coast Guard at this time, too". So I called Jim Waters, who was Exec at Cape May. This is not Muddy Waters. This is Jim Waters. Gibby Lynch was the CEO at that time. I was afraid of Gibby and what he would say and I never told anybody who except Admiral Wench, who was Chief of P what I was doing. I didn't dare tell the front office, because I didn't think Admiral ^{Richmond} Richman would go for it. Jim Waters sent them up on a bus. And we sent them up... One, two,

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three, four, five; one, two, three, four, five, and just by accident, there was a Coast Guardsman on each side of the front door.

After it was all over, Admiral Richman got a call from the Secretary Treasurer, who said that the President had noticed that the Coast Guard had been in the Honor Guard line, that it was the first time he'd seen it, and that he was pleased to see that, and that he hoped that it would continue in the future. Admiral Richman was groping for words, because he didn't know anything about it, and he asked Waldron, who was his administrative assistant, Bobby Waldron. He thought awhile, and he said "I bet it's that red-head..." He'll tell you that, still. And he called me and asked me and I said "Yes, that was..."

From that, because the Secretary had indicated an interest in the Color Guard, we had an Honor Guard because we had used Cape ^{May}Maine all the time, and it went from there to what it is today.. which is an Honor Guard actually. assigned. It used to be it was at the radio station in Alexandria. I don't know where it is now... It could still be there. I thought that was a great accomplishment.

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Sam Guill

It sure was.

Red Wagner

The Coast Guard was finally one of the armed forces for sure

The next big memory, of course, was the death of President Kennedy.

Since the PS buried people.. I was known as "Digarow Wagner" for four years. I went to so many funerals... I, I just can't tell you how many

funerals. Big funerals... Doug Fabix^{Fabrics}' wife was a big funeral.. Jeanette, to a single widow who would come from Tampa, who would stand there at the grave site with me...with the full case on^{caisson}...and the whole works...for just one person. Very interesting assignment. Very interesting assignment .

The death of President Kennedy, of course, fell to PS, and, at that time, I was the head of the PS. Edward Rolland^{Roland} was out of the country in the Philippines, making a tour of the Pacific, and opted .. well, he couldn't get back in time.. just couldn't.. In those days, it just wasn't that quick. And so Donald McGreg Marsten just died...

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Sam Guill

I knew he was awfully ill,

Red Wagner

just died..

Sam Guill

I had talked to him on the telephone. Oh, it was last November, and he did not want to appear. It was obvious why. His strength was gone. He was bed-ridden. But we talked for maybe 4 or 5 minutes and his voice was fading rapidly.

Red Wagner

He was the Acting commandant, and was in the parade, and it was a very difficult 3 days, very difficult 3 days. You know, I've often heard, if you were living when President Kennedy was assassinated, you remember exactly what you were doing that day and I think that is very definitely true. You will never forget what you were doing that day. That afternoon, It was about 1:30, Mrs. Mayer, who was the head of Medals and Awards

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Group in PS, came in and said that she heard that President Kennedy had been assassinated or shot in Dallas. And I said "Oh, come on Mrs. Mayer, it can't be such." They had a little radio on her desk. But it was so, of course, and I remember just a hush went over Washington. Just unbelievable, and nobody spoke. Sally, at the time was teaching school, and, of course, they called school, and she came over to the office. She mentioned how there were no honking of horns, no people talking, or nothing. Just shock, great shock.

And after the funeral was over, Sally and I went out to Arlington.

I was not at the funeral, itself, of course. I was with the group that was arranging it, and walked to the grave site. I bet you we were the first ones there after the funeral, with the flame going and the torch and all of the big cables were still laying all over the hill from the television cameras. That's something I'll never forget, either. It was a very difficult time .

After PS, I went to the Academy as Commandant of Cadets, which is probably.. you know, if you think of your most rewarding assignment.. you really can't. To me, they were all rewarding. You know, I didn't think I

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could talk this long, and here I am.. so take your time.

As Commandant of Cadets, I'm proud of some things that were innovative. It occurred to me that ... I relived Chet Steel just at the time that President Johnson came to the Academy for graduation. President Kennedy had promised to come and President Johnson kept the commitment... It was the only one he ever went to in the time he was president. He never went to the other Academies. Kennedy had been to 3 others and was going to the Coast Guard Academy in 1964. I have a picture I'll show you, of me pointing out something to President Johnson. He was so dumb, he couldn't understand it, I had to point it out.

Sam Guill

Well, I won't ask your politics.

Red Wagner

Well I'm a Democrat. But, it's an interesting picture I'm sure.

It occurred to me... that we took the cadets. It was the same when you and I were cadets. And for four years, or three and a half in my case, we coddled them. We gave them demerits and rewarded them and punished

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them, and then at the end of the four years, we exchanged the little stripe for one big stripe and we said "Go forth and sin no more". And that we went to the ships and we didn't know the first God damned thing about how to stand a watch or anything as an officer. We knew as a cadet, but there was always an officer standing next to us. How could you go wrong? And it occurred to me we were doing that at the Academy, and there was no need to do that. It seemed to me that the first class should have more responsibility. As first classmen so that it would be a natural step from first classmen to officer... ensigns.

Admiral Smith, Colbert Smith was the Superintendent, and he gave me the green light. Eddie Elm was the Assistant Superintendent. Classes used to come in June. We'd maybe take in 350 and 50 would leave the first week, or 60 or 70 of 'em would leave the first week, and this was all pushed in, figured in ... so that you took a lot of extras because the first week they were all going to fall by the wayside. And we didn't swear 'em in. They came in on a Monday and we swore them in on a Friday and that's how we lost 'em all.. I convinced Admiral Smith to bring 'em in on Monday, and swear 'em in on Monday, which we did. And we only lost 3 in that class. It was the class of 1968. .. which is still one of the best classes the

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Academy ever had. Don't know if they trusted me, but it just is. It was a big class. I mean it was 50 more in it than it was supposed to have. And they didn't go. They stayed. One reason for that was that I got this 2nd class to lay off this hazing. I mean educational hazing, OK, but no, knock off this running that knocks them out, because who the hell wants that stuff? It was difficult to do that, but they did very well with them and so the class remained large. Well, from that, it occurred to me ... At night, we brought a lieutenant or JG in to ^{Chase Hall} ~~chase~~ all, and he slept there with the idea being that if he was there, no cadet would dare do anything wrong, which ~~is~~ was ridiculous. We had 600 cadets at the time, and one little officer would sleep the deep, and what good was he? So I convinced Admiral Smith to withdraw him, and put him over in Amden Hall, and make the cadets take the responsibility, and I invented the term "Command Duty Officer", and he was it for 24 hours, and if anything went wrong, it was his neck... He got it! And if any of his classmates went over the hill and they were caught when he was ^{CDO} ~~CDO~~, he was guilty, too. Cause he should have known that they were going to go over the hill. He probably did know....and it took a couple of years for this system to take effect, but they're still using it today and I'm sure its been refined and improved. But now the cadets come out in .. They have a much better idea of what's

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expected of them. They've had a taste of responsibility. They've been forced to accept responsibility as first classmen, rather than waiting until they were officers.

One incident that caused me to think this way, was that in the class of '64, 3 of 'em one of them were assigned to one of the ships, and one of them was OD one night soon after graduation. When one of his classmates came aboard plastered. An Ensign, and he tried to convince him to get below; he was a friend of his, and so forth, and the guy went below, but he went through the whole damned ship before they finally got him in a bunk. Well, he did not report.... The OD did not report this, and the next day when the Exec was making his rounds, and they went to the mess-deck, the Chief said "Woah..We had a time with Mr. What's His Name, last night"in the mess-deck here, I'll tell you, boy, it took 5 or 6 of us to get him in his bunk. And of course, the Exec asked the OD and he admitted "Yeah, it had happened, but he didn't think he should report it" Well, he caught it, too. It had seemed to me they better learn that as first classed cadets. If you've gotta turn your classmate in for going over the hill, well you God damned well better learn it now rather than when you're an Ensign, because as an Ensign, you could be court martialed....much more serious...

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That was the reason for the change.

It's a very rewarding tour of duty. You're living on a keg of dynamite. You never know when it's going to blow up...but it's going to blow... there's no doubt about it... like the time they put Chet ^BVender's Volkswagen on top of the band stand. He did not appreciate it.

Sam Guill

No, I don't think he would.

Red Wagner

^{W. Hard}
Well, Woolard Smith was there for 2 years, and Chet was there for one, with me. Eddie Alm stayed all 3 years and

Sam Guill

Did this Volkswagen this incident occur while Chet was Superintendent?

Red Wagner

Yeah! Then they went and took his Volkswagen and put it on top of the band stand. Graduation week.

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Sam Guill

Chet's never spoken about that. I'll have to ask him

Red Wagner

Oh yeah? (To his wife) Doll, do you remember when they put Chet ^BVendor's Volkswagen up in a band stand?

Sam Guill

Yeah, I can imagine reverberations, for sure...

Red Wagner

We went from there to St. George.. CO.. It really came about because... and Ben Chiswell had been there. CO. Ben's still alive, I guess. I haven't seen anything of him.

Sam Guill

Oh Yeah. He's on tape.

Red Wagner

And then after a year at St. George we went to .

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Sam Guill

Wasn't the District Commander still resident on the base?

Red Wagner

No, no, no. We were.. CO. Chiswell's lived there, too. So it's just before Chiswell..Chiswell was the first one to live there and not the District Commander.

Sam Guill

Did we have the Governor's Island?

Red Wagner..

Governor's Island in '67. Art ^{Pfiffer} Fiffer was the first Mayor of Governor's Island.. Then I came in '68, a year later, and we were mayor and mayoresses for 2 years of Governors Island ... which was known as Fun City South.

At that time, New York was known as Fun City , not the Big Apple, but Fun City. Mayor Lindsay was the mayor, and all the problems he had as I had...

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on a smaller scale but the same damn problems. Electrical problems, ~~old~~ systems, water problems, and 720 families on the island. He-in and a She-in and a she-in and a he-in... not necessarily with your own wife... all those problems, and it was a circus. It was a circus, literally. The ferries. Of course, we had the ferries running. Sally was teaching school in Staten Island the two years we were there, and she used to take the ferry at 7:30 over to the Battery, and then get on the Staten Island Ferry, go over to Staten Island and then take the bus to school. And the 7:30 ferry always went at 7:30. Sometimes it was 20 minutes to 8 or 25 to 8 or whatever, and if we were late, we'd hear the whistle, "Boop Boop Boop boop boop",but she always made the 7:30 ferry to go to school. There were some advantages to be the owner of the ferry boats.

Red's wife:

I was never late.

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Red Wagner

No. You always went at 7:30... always. But that was a lot of fun. There were snow storms in the winter. We had to run plows. We had the visiting firemen all the time. I remember when General Wesmoreland came...Admiral Wayland was then the

Sam Guill

Mark.

Red Wagner

Mark. District Commander, Area Commander... both.. then they were both They were then Rear Admiral. He became ^{Vice}Vise-Admiral in 1979. 1980 was when Vise Admiral first came in for the Area Commanders. In 1980 we made Admiral, and went to Washington as Chief of Officer of Boating Safety.. relieved Joe -Joe Mc Cahn

Sam Guill

Are your dates correct, because that represents 40 years of duty. 1980. well, 38 years. and

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Red Wagner

No, I retired in '78.

Sam Guill

Yeah, well, you just said 1980.

Red Wagner

1970.

Sam Guill

1970. O.K.

Red Wagner.

1970. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. We were at Governor's Island from '68-'70

In 1970, I made ~~flying~~^{flag} and went to Washington as Chief Officer of Boating
Safety.

Sam Guill

Right

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Red Wagner

Relieved Joe -Joe McCahn. And at that time was when we got the safe boating act of 1971 passed and was my first initiation as to how the US government operates the Senate and the House. I had never had any idea, and I don't ever think you want to take your children to see it because it is very disheartening, very disheartening. I suppose it's the only way it can be done in today's world with so many bills and so forth. It just wouldn't possibly be any other way. But the Safe Boating Act, it took a lot of *counsels* behind the scenes, negotiations with the councils of the Senate Committee and the House Committee, the House Merchant Marines, Fisheries, and the Senate Congress Committee, who were never agreeable on anything. No matter what the heck one said, the other always said the other way. But you had to go step by step, and we got it through the House. One day the phone rang in the office and it was the *counsel* Council of the House of Merchant Marines of Safety, and Merchant Marines of

Sam Guill

Fisheries, wasn't it?

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Red Wagner

Fisheries Committee. Carlton said "They're going pass the Safe Boating Act tomorrow at noon. Do you want to come?" I said "Sure. Well, probably Sally wants to come too. So he said "I'll get you two tickets. I said OK.. So Sally took the day off from school and we went. And we got there, 5 minutes to noon, and we went up in the gallery at noon, and there were 3 people on the floor. There was the Speaker, and 3 guys on the floor and 2 of them were reading the newspapers, and one of them had his kids with him, and they were running all around the place. ... little kids. And at precisely 12 o'clock, the Speaker, which was Ray^yborn, banged the gavel, and he said "The House will come to order". The Chaplain went up and he said a prayer, and then immediately Rayborn started with "HR1316..... All in favor aye, all opposed, nay... passed." and he went through about 15 of these things and till he was just about to get to the Safe Boating Act, we knew the number of it, but it hadn't come up yet when one of the fellows on the floor stood up and said "Mr. Speaker, I suggest a ^{QUORUM} forum". Well, I would have suggested a forum, too. There were only 3 of them there, you know, out of 400 and whatever the hell it is. So everything had to stop while they called the roll, and it takes about 40 minutes to call the roll, and when then call the roll, everybody comes and they stand in the

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doorways. And when it comes to "Mr. Garmax of Maryland"... "present"...and he disappears again, and they got all done, then there were about 6 people on the floor. And when they went back to that bill again, and again that fellow stood up and said again "I suggest a ^{QUORUM} ~~forum~~", Well, as it turns out, what happens is that hour between noon and 12 noon and 12:30 every day they pass all these bills which they call "wired". They were placed in a hopper. Nobody has raised any objection to them over a period of 3 days, and if not, then they passed, in that 1/2 hour period. Because, obviously, and as I say, there were just so many bills that you just couldn't go through all the parliamentary procedures for each and every bill. And this one was supposed to have been "wired" and this guy wasn't going to let it be "wired".

I forget who this Representative was, but this guy wasn't going to let it pass, and I'm sure he was in the doghouse after this was all over. And this took about 2 hours before he finally got that thing out of the way. And they had to post-pone an actual meeting of the House and as a matter of fact, members started drifting in and they found out they were still at the noon thing, they all went out again. They didn't even stay there. Well, they finally passed the Safety Boating Bill the same way "HR-131613 all

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in favor, aye, all opposed no, passed” and the next day, in the congressional record, there are 6 pages of speeches that people made in favor of this bill. It’s amazing. So it got passed.

And I called the Council of the Senate Congress Committee. His name was Manny Rubellis. I’ll never forget him. And he said “Yeah, I know it has passed, but we don’t want any part of that bill” I says “What do you want?” He says “Well, you come on over and we’ll talk.” So I went on over, and we talked. and he wanted it completely different. He wanted a penalties and all that.. which the House bill really did not have. So, I spoke to the House Council.. He says “We’ll never buy that. Tell Manny he’s dreamin’ He’ll never get that bill issued or any other year that I’m the Council. So here you are, back and forth between the two, trying to get them to even talk to each other, which they don’t even want to do. And one day, Manny Rubellis called me, and he said “Admiral” I said “Yes” “Good News.” I said “What’s that?” . He says “The Senate just passed the Safe Boating Bill.” So I said “Is it like the House Bill?” He said “Oh No, No, not like the House Bill at all.. like the one you and I were talking about.” And I said “Well, that’s great, Manny. Can I get a copy of it as soon as possible so I can compare it to the House Bill?” Well, he says, “It

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hasn't been printed yet, but as soon as it's printed, I'll get you a copy"

Now, they passed it without it even being printed in their great wisdom on the Senate side. Well, it took 3 months to get the two together, and we finally got it through. But then the August recess came along, you know and there was this struggle to get it through before the August recess which we didn't do it, and finally we got it through in September. But it was a real lesson, and probably one I'll never forget.

After that I came to the 7th District as District Commander. Again interesting. We relieved ~~Sweed~~ Sweed Smeeter. Sweed. When I came here, we had just passed the Anti-Hijacking Bill, signed the Anti-Hijacking Bill with Cuba. At that time, if you remember, planes were being hijacked to Cuba and Castro was taking them in with armed round and so forth. We had They got a treaty between the two countries, which Castro said he would return the hijackers. Return. He wanted the United States to do all it could to stop the hit and run raids that this Alpha 66 Committee here in Miami was making on the Cuban Coast. You know, this is only 1973, and Castro has been in power about 13 years, and we really were just pin pricks, but he didn't like it, and that was quid pro quo for the other part of the treatment. So, I was given the job of stopping the Alpha 66 bunch

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from making any runs..... so the only thing I could think to do was to board anything that moved out there, and confiscate all their weapons. So I sent the ships out, and we boarded anything that moved out there. We never found one weapon, but we found an ocean full of marijuana, and that's the start of the Drug Program, believe it or not. That's the way it started, and from there, of course, it has evolved today.. The President is here today to dedicate the C-3, which is a highly computerized communication center over at the radio station, right over here, about 2 miles...jointly run by the Coast Guard and the Customs. Matter of fact, Customs runs it this year and next year, and then the Coast Guard runs it for 2 years.

Sam Guill

I hadn't heard news for several days, so this is news.

Red Wagner

Yes, Mr. Bush came this morning... Came last night; stayed over last night, and is dedicating that right now..It's 12 o'clock... Right now. It's become very sophisticated and technical. All kinds of resources.. have been put in use.. Resources I could have only dreamed of when I was District

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Commander here. Planes.... I had planes, and helicopters...I had helicopters. But, you know, they've got Navy ships and

Sam Guill

Is the Air Force involved?

Red Wagner

Yes, the Air Force is involved, yes, there is a joint task force that operates at the District Office with Air Force, Marines, Army, Coast Guard, and the Navy, of course... with officers assigned to it... permanently. Permanent duty with regular watch rotation. Each service is in charge of it for a year, and then another service, but they're still under the overall direction of the District Commander. But it's become even more elaborate than that. Of course, the Navy is in it now, because the Department of Defense is in it, by Congress required that the Department of Defense to take it. They didn't want it. They fought it, but they have it.

They've done very well, by deciding two fleet commanders: Atlantic Fleet Command and the Pacific Fleet Command, who, as in turn, got an assistant... each one, a Coast Guard Officer. One is down at Key West, Vice

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Admiral Erwin. He was the Atlantic Area Commander, retired March 31st.

The First of April, was recalled active duty. He's now working for the

CINC

Sink-Land Fleet. And out in the Pacific is a Rear-Admiral. Coast Guard.

I can't think of his name. I remember that you used to know when you were getting old.. You can remember, Sammy that when cadets took the exam for the Academy, they were then interviewed, and we used to do the interviewing. Remember that?

Sam Guill

Yes.

Red Wagner.

The District was told to provide 3 officers, and they brought the fellows in, and we interviewed them, and we gave them a mark. Well, I realized how old I was getting the first time I interviewed a kid who wasn't even born when I graduated ^{from} the Academy. That was the first time I realized I was getting old. Now I know I'm getting old when they're making Admirals I've never even heard of.

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Sam Guill

That's been going on for years.

Red Wagner

Well, of course, and when you think back on it, I've been retired now for this is the 11th year. Anybody making Admiral now, 11 years ago, was lucky to have been a Commander.

Sam Guill

Well, you'll grow into it, and get used to being retired. I am now in my 25th year.

Red Wagner

25th year, well. Yeah. I suppose. I suppose. That of course was a very wonderful 3 years '73 to '76 as a District Commander. We also did the first finger printing of oil. An oil-spill in the Keys, and the Institute, which was then at ^{Grotten} ~~Grotten~~. I don't know where it is now. Research and Development at ~~Grotten~~. ... Training Station ...had developed this finger printing technique after everybody said "Come-on, find someone that

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spills oil". We finally found them. ... Big oil spill south of the Keys. And we got some samples and we went over to Port Arthur and Corpus Christi you know, those places; sampled everybody, and we matched it, and that was big news. It was the first time with that type of news.

Then '76 of course, became Area Commander. ... Was Vice Admiral in the Pacific, and that was, of course, very interesting. No one knew of the drug action out there. Too far away.

Sam Guill

Things were picking up.

Red Wagner

Yeah, sure. Well, we made things difficult for 'em here. Coming up through Mexico too. Coming up. ..A good many of the Nicaraguans that are coming North have got drugs all over them. You know, there's just. ...

There's way to get it in there's a demand for them it. You're never going to stop it if as long as there's a demand for it..and there's a demand for it.
People like it.

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Sam Guill

Well, we've learned that lesson, not very successfully, in Prohibition.

Red Wagner.

If you want to have liquor, you're gonna have liquor. That's all there is to that. If you wanna have drugs... that's all there is to it.. You've gotta stop the demand. How you can do that, I don't know. Education is about the only way. That it is bad for you. You might not think so. We have some very young neighbors next door to us... moved in about a year ago. It would have been about a year ago. He said that at parties, half the people are sniffin' cocaine... not him of course... but the other half of the party. It's just routine... It's what you do at a party.

Sam Guill

Isn't that a shame

Red Wagner

So as long as there's a demand for it, it's gonna be. Somebody's gonna bring it in. They're smarter than we are. They've got unlimited resources.

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We're always playing Catch up. They invent a new way, and we gotta catch up to it. And when we catch up to in they invent a new way, and we're always catch up ball. You never get ahead. But it's good for the Coast Guard, of course, and it's good for protection from it. Coast Guard is the only game in town, here in Miami. There is no other service, really. The Air Force is down in Homestead, but the Air Force is like the Air Force, anywhere. They're behind the fence. They never come out. They're born there, they live there, and they die there. They never see the outside, and that's it, so they're not anything in town, though they're very much larger of course, than we are.

There are lots of changes in retired life... as you well know, and everybody else who's been retired knows, ...It used to be that you were a fool not to retire where there were facilities...PX's, Commissaries, and Medical. Now, you might just as may well retire in Podunk, Idaho, because you are going to get the same benefit of your retirement as you would right here in Miami which has Homestead Air Force Base, huge new Commissary, a huge Exchange, and a Medical facility, and I don't go to any of them. Don't go to any of them.

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Sam Guill

I saw two of them, yesterday. I was not very favorably impressed with the Exchange.

Red Wagner.

Well, the Exchange, you see, is made for... I don't know how..

Sam Guill

Young People. It's made for young people

Red Wagner.

Yeah. And how can they afford.. How can enlisted people afford that those prices? I mean. We can't afford them. Dresses \$70 or \$80. I mean, Sally won't buy a \$70 or \$80 dress. If you gave it to her as a gift, she'd take it back. And that's what their dresses are down there. It's just ridiculous. Commissary.. I can do just as well at ^{Publix} ~~Publics~~, and Dixie. And medical, even as a retired, Vice-Admiral, I may just as well be Joe Blow from Ko Ko Mo, and I sit and wait like everybody else... not that it matters, I don't mean to pull rank. But it doesn't matter what you are, you're gonna get down there and you're gonna sit and you're gonna sit for 2 hours, at

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least. And then you get to know a Doctor, and he gets to know you, and you get to understand each other. And he's passed over to Germany, and you're left here, and then you start with a new guy and you don't like him at all and well, that's just too damned bad. That's the Doctor assigned to you, and that's the way it is. So we went on Champus...oh 8 years ago, at least.. 8 or 9.

Sam Guill

Well, we went to private doctors even before I retired.

Red Wagner

And now, of course, I'm on Medicare, and anyway, you might just as well retire in Podunk.

Sam Guill

Now you were Western Area Commander, you told me earlier you revisited in Korea and met some of the people that been trained by us

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Red Wagner

Yes.. yes. That was of course, 30 years later. And the... Song Wan Heiu, who was head of the Korean Coast Guard when you were there and I was there in 1946, and who was paid, if you remember, the equivalent of one carton of Lucky Strike cigarettes a month.

Sam Guill

A double hand full of rice every day

Red Wagner

If you had a carton of Lucky Strikes on the black market, that's what San Was Heiu got for a month, and if you remember, also, when we went up in a train from Chenae to Seoul, or you went down from Seoul to Chenae, he rode in the back. He was in the last car. He was not allowed in with us people, and that was because General McArthur, in his great wisdom... Emperor McArthur of Japan, made the same rules for every bit of his command in Korea, and that would be part of his command. And so we weren't allowed to associate with Japanese. We weren't allowed to associate with Koreans. We did. Because we were Coast Guard, nobody knew the hell who we were or what we were, and we could get away with

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murder, whereas you couldn't, if you were the Army, the Air Force or the Navy. But, yes, we went back in '78 on a trip to the WestPac, they called it, where we went to the Mariannas, the Islands of Saipan, and ^{GUAM} ~~Quam~~, and Wake, and the Philippines, Hong Kong, Korea and Japan. When we got to Korea, they knew we were coming; they had an Honor Guard for us. This is 30 years later. I met Kee Meel Bien, who was the Superintendent of the Academy back in '48, '47.. ' 48.. I think you'd already left, so you wouldn't.... He came as a little fellow. We had Kim Song Song down there. Big Kim and Little Kim.

Sam Guill

Big Kim and Little Kim.

Red Wagner

Big Kim and Little Kim... This was Little Kim. He was still alive. He looked the same... identical... They don't seem to change in my opinion.. the Orientals.. He was there. Chae Yu Nam was there, who was at that time, a lieutenant when we left, and retired as a Vice Admiral. I was telling you before we started this about Lee He Jong.

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To give an example, the Japanese Armed Forces and the Korean Armed Forces, which were, of course, under the Japanese control for 42 years, used the ^{CASTE} ~~cast~~-system. You were either born into the ~~cast~~ system or you were born into the enlisted. There was never anything in-between. We had one enlisted man, who was..I remember, my interpreter, who could speak perfect English, and my teaching of the Koreans, and was very smart, anyway. And we wanted to make him an ensign, and we had an awful time, particularly with Kim Song Song. We'd say, "Big Kim and Little Kim" ...

Big Kim was Kim Song Song. We knew him as "Kim God Song". .. because when Kim spoke, it was the same thing as "God has spoken". I mean, no argument, that was it. Colonel Gunby...god.... He was god to the Army. We wanted to make him an ensign. Kim said it was impossible... it couldn't be done and he wouldn't even call Seoul and ask Song Wan Heiu about it, and so we said we were going to go out hunting.. This was McGowan and myself..... For pheasant. When we came back, if he still felt the same way, we would have to tell Mr. Truman, that apparently the Koreans did not need our help any more and our ^{ADVICE} ~~advise~~.. that they had their own way of doing things, and that was fine; there was nothing wrong with that; we'll all

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part friends, but that we were going home. So we went hunting, and in the middle of the hunt, somebody came running out .. a Korean Seaman, and said "Kim God Song... wanna see you" and so forth, so anyway, Kim made a giant ensign. And he ended up as Chief of Naval Operations, the head man and full- Admiral.

I remember he came to Boston. (To his wife) "Doll, what year was it he came to Boston? Lee Hee Jung . About '57. '58?" As we say, Song Wan Heiu had the equivalent of a carton of Lucky Strike cigarettes a month salary. You know, our servants in the house..would go through our garbage, 'til finally we just didn't need to put out garbage.. We just gave them the stuff.. We didn't have any garbage. They took it.. very very poor nation. But when Le Hee Jung came, in 1957, he took out a roll of bills that would have choked a horse. I mean money they had, and of course, they were our ally in Korea, South Korea. He was killed in an automobile accident right after he retired.

Sam Guill

Oh, that's too bad.

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Red Wagner

He was a great.. really wonderful person..

Sam Guill.

Let me tell one little story here on Song Wan Heiu. There in headquarters in Seoul. We had one big room with a partition down the middle, and Song and the other Korean officers were on one side. McCabe, and I think we had either the yo'man or storekeeper, and me were on the opposite side. And McCabe had the only telephone.. a field telephone. It was on his desk. Well, invariably, the only people using the telephone were Koreans, (incoming calls) so, Mack devised a system of notifying the Koreans that they were on the telephone.

When a call came in and it was in the Korean language, which Mack didn't bother to understand, he'd set the phone down and raise his hand, which was the signal for the yo'man and me to, on the count of three..yell out: Everybody yelled out: ^{Yield} Yield a sail, you all". And moments later, a Korean would come through, and look around, pick up a telephone and you'd hear talk going on. And this went on for several days, when Song Wan Heiu came over and he walked past my desk, two, three, four times and we

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knew something was bothering him. And he says "What means... this 'you all'.?".. Trying to explain to him the South and the South Korean. It went flat.

Red Wagner.

I remember when the USO show came, remember the USO show? And they sang "Strummin' on the Ole Banjo" "Fee fi Fiddleio".. and so on., and we had Kim Song Song...Kim God Song, and his wife, at the show. and you know, "banjo" in Korean was the bathroom. After "strummin on the ole banjo" he would turn to me and say "What is this?"bathroom?"

Sam Guill

There were many things. I sent quite a few letters to the alumni bulletin and I never kept any of them, but I wish I had. There was a request for fondness for the 3 story beds. They wanted to pile up the bunks in the barracks. That one I remember, but there are others that have faded out of memory, and I just wish I could get my hands on those things. They were delightful.

Red Wagner/Sam Guill
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Red Wagner

Oh, I remember something about Korea, too. At one time, I owned the 6th largest Navy in the world, because the ships came up from the Philippines,... remember we sent Henry Keene down to the Philippines.

Sam Guill

John Day.

Red Wagner

Henry Keene before John Day. Or John Day before Henry Keene? Was John Day out with us originally? Did you know Doc Lawrence just died? Doc Lawrence. He was down in Korea in Chenae with us.

Sam Guill

No I didn't

Red Wagner

Well, anyway, the ships came up from the Philippines, and the were loaded in the freezers with meat. We used to strip them, of course, of the meat. We never sent any to Seoul. We just kept them at Chenae for ourselves.

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But I would sign for one ship, complete. It was the Navy Ferry Crew. And then they were to get back to the Philippines as best they could. And so at one time, I owned the 6th largest Navy in the world, because I'd signed for all these ships, the YMS's; one of them was an ALG, an oiler;

Sam Guill

OK, John Day was the head of Teak. We sent Day down there very soon after we arrived.

Red Wagner

I guess Henry relieved him

Sam Guill

And then Henry, ...The Koreans preferred not to have him around and

Red Wagner

Well, he called them a "god-damned gook", so they thought he could speak English

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Sam Guill

Sent him down to get more ships, and in the meantime, I was over in Japan, and I brought back 2 Japanese troll boats... Christmas Eve. That's another story. That's an entirely different story. That's when McCabe took Bill Rae with him to Shanghai. I don't know whether I've mentioned this one on the tape previously, but Mack wanted very much to go to Shanghai.. see what the Navy was doing and to trade in there the Chinese, and felt he couldn't go until I was back at the office in Seoul.

Here I spent a month in Japan, part of it waiting for these two ships to come, and McCabe was on the dock when I arrived. He shook his finger at me, and said: "You're in trouble, and I'll tell you about it when I get back" But he had to hustle to catch a ride on a destroyer, and he took Bill Rae with him. Well, I went on up to Seoul, and I knew I was gonna have some words when he got back, but he found, after he got over to Shanghai that he could not get a trip either by destroyer or by air back to Seoul. So he sent a message to the Commanding General "Stranded in Shanghai...will return by way of Tokyo". The assumption was that Mac was pulling a fast one. He got such a ribbing when he returned that he didn't have the heart to say anything further to me, and that subject was dropped.

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Memories of Coast Guard life**

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Red Wagner

Who was that??.. Colonel Price wasn't it?? .. was head of in Seoul

Sam Guill

Internal Security,

Red Wagner

Internal Security...Which the Coast Guard was part of...

Sam Guill

The Coast Guard was one part and the Constabulary was the other part.

Constabulary only had a small army.

Red Wagner

He was a nice fellow. Nice, personally, I don't know how he was professionally. If he was like any other Army officer I ever knew, he was terrible.. usually impossible.

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Sam Guill

I don't think he was very effective.

Red Wagner

Very funny breed. I don't know how they get things done. I really don't.

General Ward was nice. General Hodges was nice. I went with those two.

Sam Guill

We had that little General commanding the troops.. I don't remember his name right off... maybe it was Hodges.

Red Wagner

Hodges.. It was the 24th Corps, and the 7th one, 7th Division

Sam Guill

Yeah, yeah! He saw to it that everything the troops needed, that's what they got.. Military, government, don't bother him,

Red Wagner

Well, that was McArthur.

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Sam Guill

And here we're not only military government, but we're strangers. If there's something left over... maybe you can have it.

Red Wagner

Yeah, well, you know, Gunby used to say.. We used to go to the Korean weddings ...young officers and so forth, and Gunby would come in and would say: "That's very bad, you can't do that", I says: "Why not?" He said, "because General McArthur says that you can't." and I said, " But, General McArthur is not my boss. He's in the Department of the Army and I'm in the Coast Guard, Department of the US Treasury. He has nothing to do with me. He'll need to speak to me through Mr. Truman. And he'd scratch his head, and we'd get away with it. He never could figure that out. He never knew what the Coast Guard was. (to his wife)... Isn't that right, Doll, that ...Gunby never forgave me for that dock thing? ..

We got H-2, though, and he got his dock. It took about 40 minutes to get it up and I knew it. If McGowan had been there, he'd have done it. I used to tweak his nose all the time, but McGowan didn't want to do that, and he

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went to Grace and he was killed in an automobile accident, wasn't he, .or
she was?

Sam Guill

This is Gunny.

Red Wagner

This is Gunby. She was a pill, too, and they had a New Year's Day reception
which you were told to come between 10:15 and 10:22. That was it.
Everybody that had an invitation it said "10:15 and 10:22" or 10:22 -
10:26, whatever the heck it was. That was it and we used to just come,
and they'd scratch their heads.

Sam Guill

Well, I'm gonna have to chase down to, or up to Pompano, and I think my
best bet is to get up there, and if I've got spare time.

Red Wagner

It'll be only 2 minutes for this...

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Since I retired..

I got into the tax business, because when I retired, I saw on television an advertisement from a tax correspondence school that said that there correspondence course was recognized by the GI Bill. And I'd never used the GI Bill in the 36 years in the Coast Guard, and so I decided to use the GI Bill. The tax course was incidental to the fact that I was using the GI Bill. And they were right,... The GI Bill paid 95% of it, and I took the course and I got interested in it.

I put an ad in the paper.. the local paper down here in South ^{Dade}Day, and I picked up some customers, and I still have 2 of the original customers, and that was 9 years ago. I have about 25 customers. I don't advertise anymore because I don't even want 25 any more. They've learned to know me and they don't want to change, and I don't have the guts to tell them "No", so I continue with it.

Sam Guill

Are you computerized?

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Red Wagner

Yes, I've got a computer. And the only one I never get done on time is my own. Either do your own in January, if you expect a refund, or you say the heck with it and you put in for an extension and you do it later. I was doing mine this morning when you came. I'm in no great hurry because I owe them a lot of money, but I had to pay them, anyway, April 15th, which I did, so I'm now looking for ways to get a little refund out of that.. out of the money I paid.

I got interested in the Coast Guard Auxiliary, mostly because when I retired they were looking for somebody to teach piloting. And I taught piloting for a couple of years to the auxiliarers. And succumbed and became a member; became a Flotilla Commander and a Division Captain. I wore 3 stripes with scrambled eggs and white scramble eggs; silver scrambled eggs on my cap. I decided to go no further. I could have. I'm sure... become a Rear Commodore. At first, I thought maybe I'd like to become Commodore. That would have been interesting. But it's too much traveling. We're very active in the Navy League. I've been President twice. Once for two years, and once for one. We're very active in that. I

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mentioned the Auxiliary. I do occasional expert witness cases.

Sam Guill

Maritime?

Red Wagner

Maritime, mostly small boat, and I teach still for the Auxiliary ...the public education courses. I teach Piloting, Weather, Aids to Navigation and Rules of the Road, on every course. We have 3 courses a year, on our Flotilla and I make it a point to teach those core subjects. I enjoy that very much. I enjoy teaching.

Otherwise I keep in touch with the Coast Guard through the various District Commanders. As an example, the present District Commander Admiral Danielle, remembered me well, because when I was Area Commander, I visited his ship, the Acorn, when he was the Commander as commanding officer. In Oregon I guess...I don't know where the Acorn is

Sam Guill

The Acona... Astoria!

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Red Wagner

At Astoria! But he was the Commander. But I remembered him when I was at the Academy when I was Commandant of Cadets and he was a lieutenant and teacher, a striker, there at the time. But otherwise, the District Commanders prior to him, I happen to know them all... Admiral Thorson was his immediate predecessor. Of course he knew him, since he was Commandant of Cadets at the Academy, too. And ^{Stabile} Stabel and Dees Thompson and Bob Durford, who relieved me. He lives here.

Sam Guill

Well, it's good to know that the service is still around and that you've got contacts with it.

Red Wagner

Yes, we've bought another house up North, as I told you, and brought the boat up there, but we have no intention of selling this one because what friends we have are here. What contacts we have are here. Our doctors are here. Our dentist is here, and Paisley's in the middle of not nowhere... but almost nowhere. And although I said to Sally, "It's time to move on

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again, because if damned, when they knock on the door, their going to put cable TV through there" . And Paisley has one stop sign and 600 people. And they've gotta put cable TV...can you imagine that? So when the Cable TV is going up, it's time to move on.

Sam Guill

It's almost like Tom Mitley's story about the neighbor there in Montana who loaded up lock, stock and barrel and moved to Umnack Iowa, which is the next island west of Dutch Harbor. When the newspaper people heard about him moving up, they asked: "Why? You're out here in the bleachers of Montana... Why do you move to Umnack?" He said "Well, when you can hear your neighbor's rooster crow, it's time to move.

Red Wagner

A bit too close, huh?

Sam Guill

Yeah. the place is crowded... So, Red, unless you have something more, you started to say something

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Red Wagner

No, that's all. That's all

Sam Guill

I very much appreciate you dredging up your memories, and I want to thank
you.