

**James A. Calascione**  
**Narrator**

**Lieutenant Colonel Robert von Hasseln**  
**Interviewer**

**Interviewed on February, 27<sup>th</sup> 2001**  
**Freeport Armory**  
**Long Island, New York**

RV: Can I call you Jim?

JC: Yes.

RV: Tell me where and when you were born.

JC: I was born in Brooklyn, NY back in 1916, December the 6<sup>th</sup> 1916.

RV: What was it like growing up in Brooklyn back then? Where in Brooklyn were you living?

JC: South Brooklyn, they used to call that neighborhood Red Hook, now they call it Cobble Hill. They changed the name of it. It was mostly Italian and Irish. The Irish were a few blocks up from us. More or less you know we used to intermingle. A lot of brotherliness very close people. I grew up went through PS twenty-nine, on Henry Street and Cain, and when I got out of there, went to Brooklyn technical high school. I went in for electrical engineering. I was there two terms and we had five different annexes other than the main building. We had to change periods and go from one period to another. About this time of year it was very cold. We weren't allowed to carry our overcoats with us and to keep them locked up in the locker. I used to wear a sweater, probably two sweaters so I could make my trip three, four, five blocks away to the other annex. I caught a dose of rheumatic fever from it. I woke up one morning, was stiff in bed. I couldn't get up out of bed, I was all stiff. I was in bed for nine weeks. After that I started to move around a little bit but I couldn't walk, I had a friend of mine used to come over every day, pick me up, take me out and put me in the sun so I could sun myself. He's dead now. He was a little over weight at the age of twelve. He was 291 pounds, but he was a model of a boy.

Well I continued with my education and I got to the point where I couldn't hack it anymore. Seventh term I got out. I started to look for work in the electrical business. I wasn't too lucky. In those days 1928-29 were bad, very bad, crash came and everything dropped out. I kept

getting odd jobs there I couldn't get electrical work no way, no how. In those days, the electrical union would only take on a member if his father was in the union. It was a father and son deal. It's the only thing I hold against local trade union. So I started working my way up and a friend of mine said to me, although I wasn't too interested in it, he said, "why don't you try for the police force." It's an idea, so I tried; I went to [Delahanty]. I went through the course, took the exam got a pretty high mark, but it wasn't good enough. In the meantime Europe starts rumbling.

I had been working in a department store, Fredrick Losher's on Fulton Street in Brooklyn. I was in protection there, and they asked me if I would do any undercover work for them. I said 'well if it pays I'll take a crack at it.' So they took me up into to personnel office and the personnel manager was there. A man from the protection department interviewed me and he said "look this is no baby job this is a tough job, were losing over three thousand dollars a month in one department alone over stolen dresses. We want to get these guys and we want to hang them. You think you can do it." I said 'I think so.' He said "what are you good at?" 'I'm good at painting.' "Very good that's just what I want somebody that would work at night." I said, 'I'll take it, I'll come to the bottom of it.' So I did I worked at it for eight weeks, six of them went to jail.

Next thing I knew, I got a call from the draft. I was navy minded; I wouldn't make a good soldier. If I was going to die, I was going to die clean. I talked to my father and my mother and said 'look I'm going to go into the service, I'm going to pick what I want.' My father said "why not", I said 'maybe you don't like the idea I go back in the navy, like uncle frank.' We had an uncle that had been in about twenty two years. So he says, "No look you do what you want, you want the navy go." So I went down to the recruit ting station to enlist and there was a chief, "What can I do for you?" 'I want enlist.' "How come?" 'I just got this card from selective services, I don't want to go into the army I want to go into the navy.' "Oh that's good, so alright sit down let's talk this thing over." Finally he starts "name, age." And he asks me a question "do you have anybody in your family that is in the navy? 'Yes I have an uncle in the navy he's been in the navy over twenty-two years I think.' "What's his name?" 'His name is Frankie [Magerana].' "That son of a B" I said 'what do you mean?' He said, "We used to play baseball together on the west coast in San Diego." 'Well he's not in San Diego now.' "Where is he?" 'He's in Che-fu. China, he's been there for ten years.' "What's he doing there?" I said 'he's chief optical machinist. He takes care of gun sights.' "That sun of a gun, he always went for the easy jobs." He said, "Look I'm going to give you a tip, he says you're in the navy you're not going to any army. If they offer you any school when you get up to Newport, Rhode Island, take it at any time in the navy if they offer you schooling take it! Because it's to your advantage." I said 'ok I'll take it.'

So I went to Newport, Rhode Island, I was up there on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, I was supposed to leave there on December 13<sup>th</sup>, but Pearl Harbor came and I was company commander up there in Newport. On a Sunday afternoon I got a call to come down to the OD's office. He says "I'm going to give you a belt and a stick I'm sending you in to pull anybody back that's in Providence, they've got to come back to the ship. Just in case you don't know it were at war. Pearl harbor

was just attacked this morning.” I said ‘oh my god! Are we going to get leave next week?’ “Don’t count on it. Better make hay while you’re here, because I don’t know where you’re going to be going. But, anyways go out with this crew here, here’s your nightstick and your belt.” So we went down and I had my leggings on. There were four busloads that we brought back that night. They guys are all screaming, “This is my liberty what are you guys talking about.” I said ‘don’t worry about it just get on the bus and go.’ A lot of them were three sheets to the window ready.

The next week I get transported to St. Louis, Missouri. I spent three months there at electrical school and I used to fall asleep in the class. It was all old stuff to me. This one teacher wanted to put me on report. I had a chief of the company there, he was a chief order tender in the navy, and he had put in thirty-two years. He spoke to the teacher, and said “what you are putting him on report for.” “He sleeps in the class!” “Let me talk to him, Jim what are you sleeping in the class for.” I said ‘Mr. Benson this is all old stuff to me. Its kid stuff.’ “What do you mean its kid stuff,” I said ‘I went through Brooklyn tech, I got a good electrical education.’ “What! What are you doing here?” I said ‘it’s where I was assigned, so I took it.’ He said “I’ve got an idea, there’s a couple of guys in your class, that are not doing to good, would you want to tutor them.” I said ‘anytime sure, why not?’ I didn’t go on report. He gave me eight boys that were falling behind in their math. I took them over, out of the eight, seven made it. The other one couldn’t make it he just didn’t have it.

From there they sent me to gyro school, fifteen minutes away from my home in Brooklyn, at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I was supposed to be there for thirteen weeks but after nine weeks they said no way. From there they sent me down to, Portsmouth Virginia. I went there and I’m waiting for my ship the Charles Carol. It wasn’t coming, what am I going to do now, I kept asking and asking. Finally they said to me the “Carol is in, you go out tomorrow.” I said ‘ok good’, so I went aboard. As soon as I got aboard, a guy looked at me he said, “Sparky the captain wants to see you!” ‘The Captain don’t even know me.’ He said, “You’re the third class electrician” I said ‘yes’, he said, “You’re the guy he wants to see.” ‘Ok let’s go, where’s the captain?’ He says “I’ll take you there,” he took me up the captain’s office, stateroom really. Right away I saluted him. “Come over here I’ve got to talk to you,” he says “calm down this is something man to man I want to have a little confab with you.” He said, “You did just come out of gyro school didn’t you.” I said ‘yes sir.’ “You had pretty good marks there didn’t you,” ‘yes sir.’ “Ok I’ve got a key for you to the gyro room, this key is yours you don’t give this key to nobody, absolutely nobody. You are the only one who will ever be allowed on that room.” I said ‘that’s alright with me, I wouldn’t let anybody else touch my gyro.’ “That’s what I want to hear. You know I think you and I are going to get along very good together.” I said ‘I get along with everybody sir.’ “Very, very good sparky, here’s the key, he says this key takes this ship all over the world, were going to do a lot of traveling. That gyro must be tip top at all times.” ‘It will be sir.’ “Ok go on about your business when I need you I’ll call you.” “Thank you very much sir!” I saluted him and he saluted me back. “Welcome aboard you’re one of my boys now.” So I left, that was Captain [Bissmire], he was on board with me close to two years and he was taken off. He sat on the Pearl Harbor investigation Board, that’s the only reason they took him off the ship. The day he left, we all cried he was a really good man, a very good captain.

We started the North African invasion, went there came back. We didn't lose any men there; we lost a lot of boats. Out of thirty-six landing craft on the Charles Carol, we got about thirty of them back the rest are all broached up on the beach. So we made our way back to the states. When we got back, they started putting radar on the ship and they wanted help with the electrical circuits. I had a nice little electrical shop; I also take care of all the sound power telephones. They put an automatic telephone system in, so they needed room to put the jeeps in those were the control panels. They put that in the back of my electrical shop. We went along next thing you know, were told the Charles Carol is going to leave in a week. 'Ok where are we going?' "I don't know yet." So about four or five days before, the navigator, Mr. [Kazumus] calls me up. "Sparky," he said, "I've got to talk to you, you've got to make sure that we get all the settings in the gyro before we leave, but what I'm going to tell you is top secret." 'It's all right with me; I'm Sicilian I've got a deep stomach. Whatever comes in doesn't come out.' "Very good." So he gave me the routing we were going to go to the Panama Canal, we were going to deliver some troops down to New Zealand. On the way into the Panama Canal, they had anti-submarine gates there. They opened the gates for us and there were bombs that were attached to the chargers. We were just about getting into the gate, when there was a blast underneath the fantail. Wham! We lost two men, they were mess cooks, and they were sitting on the fantail sunning themselves. When the bomb went off, they went over into the water, they tried to back the ship down but couldn't. The two men were gone, never found them. The ship had to be towed; it has the distinction to be the first ship ever to be towed through the Panama Canal. They towed us through on to the pacific side and put us on dry-dock. We stayed there for two months, waiting for a piece of the shaft the last section of the shaft going out to the prop and a new rudder. They had to come down from Northern Virginia. So we waited there for it, we were going ashore back and forth. They took us out of dry-dock and put us on the side. Finally the parts came, from Northern Virginia. Final repairs, to get ready for something else. Little did I know what we were starting to get ready for.

The Sicilian invasion, we picked up the 45<sup>th</sup> division and we were on our way out, a lot of pictures were taken of the ship. In fact I've got a picture at home with men all lined up on the ship on our way out to Sicily. We made the Sicilian invasion that was a breeze. We walked in, put our troops in, it was one of the easiest invasions we had. So we went back to North Africa and we picked up troops there. The troops, were wondering where we were going now. Everyone was hollering "Sparky, you know where were going to go!" I don't know anything; so I get a call from [Kazumus] and he told me where we were going to go. "Please don't let it out." 'Don't worry about it I won't.'

We're going to Salerno, it was a bad deal, a very bad deal. There was a meeting in the wardroom, a briefing before the landing. There was a Major General on board and he said, "It's going to be a surprise attack." The commodore, he was kind of tough and he said, "Absolutely not this is not going to be a surprise attack." "Why not?" "Because last night we picked up some boys that were in there." "What about it?" "Don't send your boys in there unless you shell the beach." "Oh no, no, no, this has to be a surprise attack." "It's going to be a surprise attack on you. Those Germans have eighty-eights lined up along the beach and up into the hills, they'll be taking shots at the landing craft going in and they're going to knock them right off." And

that's what happened. We had a bad time there. For the first day we took on wounded, coming on like mad. We used to convert her into a hospital ship. When we were on a transport area like that the boats wouldn't come back empty they'd come back with the wounded. I was floating on the ship and I had access to any part of the ship. Enlisted men were not allowed in officer's country but I was because I had my gyro right in the middle of officer's country. I could go anywhere on the boat. I'd always get calls "sparky I need a hand." Especially out on the outer deck. They'd be bringing wounded back they'd bring the landing craft up the main deck level. With the canvas stretchers they'd pass them in and we'd take it lay it on the deck. You would have to transfer those men that were in the canvas stretchers that were bleeding and the blood was all over the canvas, put your arms under and pick them up. Lift them up they'd pull the stretcher out and put a Phillips stretcher and lay the man down there. Blood all over blood would cake; get that dry feeling, dried blood just pulling your clothes. It's a lousy feeling. I helped many men. Up till very recently I dreamed of it, I always dream of it. My friends tell me, "It was the war forget about it you don't want to remember things like that." I can't forget it it's indelibly marked up here in my brain. Do you know how many boys I helped in there, I said one night during one of the bombing attacks in Salerno, I was getting ready to put the stretchers over the side because the Germans were bombing the hell out of us. Finally the captain says, "were not staying here, were getting the hell out of here, cut the anchors away don't wait, let's get the hell out of here" and they put the wounded that had come aboard already were all in Phillips stretchers in the passage way, and they had one boy right next to my gyro room. During action I had to stay in the gyro room constantly, in case the ship would get hit the gyro would start rocking and I would have to tend to it right away. I had my door to the gyro room open, right in the passage way there was a young lad there all I could hear him say was, "ma." He would take a breath and a whistle "ma." I was looking down at him lying on the deck; he looked up at me "ma". Then I realized what was happening, when he was taking a breath his lungs were filling up with air and leaking out the back. He had a little hole in the top of his lung and it came out and it ripped a couple of his ribs off and knocked a couple of his vertebrae out of line. He had a hole in his back they couldn't nothing for him all they did, was padded him up with absorbent cotton, bandaged him up and just wait for him to die I found that out later 1 of the pharmacists mates told me his name was Rodriguez. He came from the Bronx. He died the day after. When I was there with him I knelt by him and I held his hand. He felt that I held his hand, it tightened very tight. I knew he was still alive. Those things you can't forget, you don't forget. I thank god that I was able to help some of those boys. Whenever there was an operation going on in the sick bay, staterooms would be turned into operating rooms, doctors all over taking arms off. One day, I'm called into a stateroom In Salerno; they were amputating a boy's arm, his right arm. I happened to be passing by "sparky get in here give us a hand c'mon hurry up!" "What's the matter?" "Hold this man down!" they had him on the operating table they had to take his arm off. But the ether ran out, they had to send one of the pharmacist's mates to the storeroom. This guy started going wild on the table. "You've got to hold him down he's going to hurt himself more than what he is." So I got across his legs, so he couldn't kick, finally the man came up he gave him more ether. Put him out "alright sparky, c'mon stand by here, don't leave just in case anything else happens please stand by with us." 'Ok' so they took the arm off. The pharmacist's mate is holding the arm as the doctor is cutting it off; he turns around and hands it to me. Like a

jerk a grab it, the doctor says “put that over there and get back over here sparky.” So I put it over in one of the bunks in the stateroom. I came back, he says, “he’s starting to move again, hold his legs down.” I held his legs down and he started to calm down a little bit. They gave him more ether knocked him out completely. “Alright sparky thanks a lot.” That was Salerno.

From there we went to Normandy or Omaha beach, Blue beach. Normandy was a horror for me I wasn’t allowed off the ship, but I had to go down with some batteries. I didn’t have any more men on board I was chief at the time, chief electricians mate. I had made chief in three years from apprentice seaman. I had to go in with couple of batteries, ninety amp power 225 volts. The boats are on the beach but the batteries are dead. I grabbed six batteries and I go in. I left one of my boys ready we were on anchor I figured the ship isn’t going anywhere. I got permission from the captain to go, so I went. On the way back, I took care of three boats, two batteries in each boat. The men got them off, on the way back looking out into the water and I see this hand come up out of the water. I say ‘hold up!’ “What’s the matter chief” ‘there’s a wounded man here, we just passed him, get around let’s get him’ “are you sure” ‘look, I’m sure I know what I’m talking about. I saw a man waving his hand. He’s alive.’ We bring the boat around; sure enough we picked him up and brought him back to the ship. He was pretty well shot up machine gun right thru the mid section and he was bleeding in the water, we got him into the boat but he died the day after.

We went to Southern France; Southern France was a little bit of a horror. We were on our way into Southern France. There’s the USS Richelieu, the biggest battle ship that France had. It was coming off the beach, it was intercepted by the destroyers, and it was taken. The Germans did a rotten job; they massacred the people there. There was a barn right at the edge of the beach. They had captured a lady that was involved with the underground, they killed her and they hung her up on this barn door, with her hands out stretched and her legs out stretched and she was cut from private all the way up to her neck, all her guts were hanging out. From the ship without glasses we could see it, it was a horrible sight, seeing her guts hanging out. I can’t forget these things; thank god we got through it all right. From there we came back to the states. Go into the yard, we were supposed to be there for sixty days, twenty-eight days and you’re on your way boys. You got to leave right away within three days you’re going to be out of here. Set the gyro and all, we went through the Panama Canal this time we got through all right, no bombs blasting. We went to Hawaii, from Hawaii we went to Hulu Island, just away from the Solomon Islands. We picked up some marines there; we went hoping and picked up more marines on other islands. Next thing you know, were on our way to Okinawa. We made the Okinawa invasion and we had what they called the 5<sup>th</sup> marines. That was a bad invasion, bad in the sense that the japs would come in with these kamikazes, we lost a few ships there. Thank god the Carol made it all right and we came back to the states to San Francisco. On our way back we picked up a man on a little island there, Iwashima. He was on board with us, he had gone in to Okinawa we brought him in there, and his name was Ernie Pile. When we left he said, “Sorry, I’m not going back with you fellas.” He used to spend a lot of time with enlisted men, in the chiefs quarters, he was always writing. “Let me have your name and address, I’ll get in touch with your parents, your family” We were about two to three days out of Okinawa, we found out he was sniped, he was

killed. It caused heartache on board; he was so close to us, close to everybody on that ship, he was always with the men. What a wonderful man he was.

So we came back to the states, we picked up troops, they were all PW's, and they had turned bad under fire. We had to take them to the Philippine Islands. We went to Samar, dropped them off. On that trip all the chiefs were given forty-fives to keep in their lockers at night, lock them up. Make sure that none of those guys could get a gun. So I had mine I used to keep mine in the bunk above me, in-between the spring and the mattress. We got to be careful of the PW's; they had thirty caliber machine guns all around the upper deck in case they would act up. Those guns were manned twenty-four hours a day

RV: now were these Japanese prisoners of war or American military prisoners?

JC: American military prisoners, they were all American servicemen that had turned back into action didn't make it. They wanted to take me back out again; it was the month of October in 1945. I had gotten a letter from home that my father wasn't doing too well, he was starting to have a heart condition. When we got back to Seattle, Washington, I said 'I'm going to leave the ship.' Captain said, "You can't leave the ship." 'What do you mean I can't leave the ship? I've got forty-eight points here, they're letting them out with less than forty.' "You have the points but I can't let you go I don't have another gyro man" 'that's tough get one' "no, you've got to get one" 'I've got to get one?' "Yeah you have to get your own relief" 'where am I going to get one? You could call up on get a man if you want' "I can't do that I'm going to hold you" 'you're not going to hold me' "why not?" 'I'm going to get off this ship because my father isn't doing too well and if something happens to him I want to be there.' "I can't help you chief, I'm sorry." 'Well I want a commission to see the commander of western sea frontier' "I don't know what good it's going to do you." 'I want to see the commander of Western Sea frontier, maybe I can get a relief from him' he said, "go ahead go." There was another chief who was very close with me, [Calsyck], he came from Brooklyn also. He was chief machinist; he took care of the evaporators. They wouldn't let him go either, 'I'm going to western sea frontier, you want to go with me' "yeah" he said "yeah sure I've got to get back home my mother isn't doing too well." 'Ok let's go.' So we there to western sea frontier and there was a first class yeoman there, "yes chief what can I do for you." I said 'I'd like to see the commander of western sea frontier please.' "What's this about?" 'Well I'd like to get off the Charles Carol but they won't release us. "Let me have your name, serial number." Took it all down, he says have a seat here a moment. Beautiful mansion it was, big door round eighteen foot high. Opens the door, all of a sudden I hear "get those two guys in here!" I recognized the voice, I said '[Cal] you recognize that voice', he said, "No who is it?" I said 'I'm willing to make you a bet right here that that's Captain Bissmire' "You kidding?" Door swings open and here he is coming out from behind this big desk, "sparky here you are", he remembered us, "Come on in have a drink with me. What can I do for you boys?" I said, 'Cap we want to get off the Carol, it's not that we don't like it, it's that my father isn't doing too well' I told him the whole story, I said how he's got trouble with his mother. "What do you mean they won't let you off?" I said 'I'm the gyro man they can't get a replacement.' "Yeoman get in here", he comes in, "I want you to write two letters, I'll dictate them too you different names, on one you put chief Calascione and the other

chief [Calsyck].” Dictated the letter to him, it was a letter to the commanding officer of the Charles carol. Each one of us had one, he said “I want you to go aboard the ship, soon as possible and give this”...the ship was going to leave the following morning at nine o clock...he says “I want you to deliver it to the captain, if the captain is not aboard then to the lieutenant commander in charge.” ‘Ok I’ll take care of that captain.’ “But there is something else involved” I said ‘what is it?’ He said “tomorrow morning at 7:30 I’ll be on the dock, I’ll come there with my limo, and I’ll have a pick-up truck following me. You two guys better be at the foot of that gangway when I get there, because if you’re not there, I’m going aboard and I’m going to raise hell on the Charles Carol. I’ve never done that before but I’ll do it now. You guys are getting off that ship you have done enough, I don’t want to hear any more about it.” I said captain ‘that’s kind of rough.’ He says “don’t worry Sparky, I’ll be there it’ll be alright.” Next morning twenty-five after seven, he pulls up I had my trunk, [Cal] had his trunk and sea bag right up on top there. Up comes a big Buick limited limo, seven passenger car. He said “I’m glad you guys are out here, he says I was going to go up there on a rampage, I was going to tear that ship apart. I put it together; I was going to tear it apart. I’m glad you guys are here! Let’s go to the receiving station.” He dropped us off. He kissed me; “good luck to you Jim” Did the same thing to cal. “God bless you both, you guys went through hell on earth, now you know what hell is like.” He said “have a happy I life” I said ‘you too Captain,’ I saluted him. It was the last I saw of him, then I found out he passed away.

RV: so when you got out did you have a happy life?

JC: I got out November 11<sup>th</sup> of 1945 and for 1 year I had been writing to my wife making plans. I knew what I wanted. A real home, get a nice little job in the electrical field and to get married and settle down. I didn’t want any more protection work, nothing like that, because I had learned how to kill with my bare hands. Somebody would come at me and try to throw a fist at me, he was gone. I would grab him by the throat and by the nuts and pull him apart. That’s the way I was taught, I didn’t want to go into protection. My father asked me, “why don’t you try for the police force, he says you know they’re taking on cops like mad.” ‘Pop I don’t want no part of protection no more, I’m an electrician by trade and I’m going to stay with it.’ “Son” he says, “You do what you want it’s your life.” Ok it’s my life, I want to get married, raise a family and work like a human being, not like an animal. Having to go out and hit people I don’t want that no more, I’m through with that no more. We made plans and we got married in 1947, and I couldn’t get a job in the electrical business. Local trade said “no, no , if your father was in ok” I said ‘so what my father was a barber, what has that got to do with me, I’m an electrician by trade, if I was barber and came to you for a barbers job that’d be a different story. I’m an electrician by trade, I was chief electricians mate in the navy. I could take motors and generators apart, my electrical equipment never suffered while I was on board. I was a gyro technician on board, it’s a fine instrument, it’s even finer than a wristwatch’ “sorry.” Finally, one day a guy says “you know I see you here every day, he says maybe I can do something for you, what do you want?” ‘I want a card so can get work in the electrical trade.’ “Well you know I could work something out, but it would cost you a thousand dollars.” I said ‘a thousand dollars for what.’ “For a temporary card.” ‘What good is that going to do me?’ “Well he says you could go in on a job, and he said if a union man comes in and bumps you he’ll tear the card up and that’s the

end of it.” ‘I’m going to give you a thousand dollars for that, I’ll be on the job two hours, some guy will bump me and I’m out a thousand dollars. What do you think I was in navy to make money? I didn’t make any money in the navy. I want to work like a human being at my trade.’ “That’s the only deal I can give you that’s it.” ‘Forget it, shove it,’ and I walked out. I went to work, doing a little bit of everything. Peddling, I bought a truck, peddled for a while, I knew fruit and vegetables, and I was pretty good at it. Anne and I were traipsing around and I got a couple offers, to go with this guy go with that guy. No I don’t want to go nowhere I’ll take what I got.

I started working a machine business. I could take a machine, pull it out and put it together with nothing flat. Guys went out of business. The last thirteen years, I set up with a plant with twelve injected bolt with molding machines. Machines were built up in Canada. We were making bottle caps for the milk gallons out of plastic the first ones to come out with the tab end on it and the ratchet would come off. I set the plant up with the thirteen machines. No, twelve machines. Thirteenth machine was in another department. We were turning out twenty-one million caps a week out of polyethylene. We were shipping caps all over to. California, Nevada, Florida, Delaware. We had sixty-five percent of the dairies in the country. Finally, the company was taking over by a young guy, wise guy. “I’m the boss here.” He bought the company, bought it. He ruined it. He ran it to bankruptcy. They stripped it dry. “I’m the boss. I give the orders here.” Customers didn’t even want to know him. When they had complaints about the caps, they used to call me. ‘Yes. What’s up?’ “Jim, what’s going on down there? These caps don’t fit. They’re shrunk. They don’t fit on the gallons.” Naturally, they were speeding up the machines. They weren’t giving the plastic enough time to cool and the mold before it would open up. I started out with the mold with eight caps, but it was slow. Maybe around every twelve to fifteen seconds, it would open up and eight caps would fall out. “That’s no good. We got to put more caps on these machines that could take bigger molds. What’s the largest mold we could put on these machines?” ‘Well, we could put a sixteen.’ “No, sixteen wouldn’t be enough. We got to go more. We got to go thirty-two, at least thirty-two.” ‘Thirty-two? How are we going to get it?’ “We’ve got a lot of thirty-two.” Sure enough, people up in Canada told us, “Yes, you could put a thirty-two cavity mold, but they got to be spotted just right.” I had heard about it up in Canada when they sent me up there about the machines, but a thirty-two cavity mold, I mean every seven seconds with a double face mold. Two sides of the mold with the claws in the middle come in. Boom! Every seven seconds, thirty-two caps would fall out and two onto a conveyer and an elevator going up into a [inaudible] machine that would orientate them to come out cap up, through the labeling machine and it used to labels 250 caps a minute. We were starting to really, really hit them and hit them good. Good and this guy came in. He bought the company. “I’m the boss here and I don’t want that machine to go this color and you got to change.” White color is bad; don’t fool around with the white. The only other colors go ahead, but don’t, if you got a white machine leave it white because you’ll never get the other colors out. I don’t care how many times you take the mold apart; you’d never take it out. You would always streak. If you have purple in there, you’d streak purple. If you have red in there, it would streak red. It is always a certain amount of it left in there, even if it’s just a plot on the mold, it will take it off. Sure enough, that’s what happened. The companies would be getting caps with streaks in them.

They'd call up and say, "Hey Jim, what's going on?" They're speeding up the machines too much. Plastic doesn't cool off, it comes out and they're hot.

RV: What have you been doing since you left that firm?

JC: When I left that firm, I retired and it was in 1981. I retired and I was home for three weeks. I was piddling around the house, doing this, doing that. I could not take it. Finally, my wife says, "J, there's an ad in the paper here. A man wants a man who is mechanically inclined." He's right by here up on Brooke Avenue. Fifty Brooke Avenue that's where it was. I looked at it and said, 'Yes, let me call this guy up.' I called him up. "Hello." 'I am answering an ad in the paper.' "Oh, yes hold on a minute." This was a girl. "Hello." 'Yes,' I said, 'I'm replying to the ad.' "You, are you electrician?" 'Yes, I'm an electrician.' "Mechanic?" 'Yes.' "Where do you live?" 'I live here in Deer Park.' "You come. I talk to you." 'Yes, alright, you're Fifty Brooke Avenue.' "Right, you come. You come now?" 'Yes, I could be up there in about ten to twelve minutes. You're right by my home.' "Okay. I'll wait for you." I went there and I see this little guy. He stood maybe about 5'4" little mustache, dark skinned, a little dark. 'I'm here to answer the ad.' He looks up at me. "Are you electrician?" 'Yes.' "Come I'll show you." He says, "I got a couple of machines here, you got to hook up. You see?" 'I can hook it up.' He says, "Okay. Are you going to work? Do you want to work now?" I said, 'Wait a minute. What do you pay?' "Oh yes, yes, sure, sure. Six dollars an hour." 'No, I retired a couple of weeks ago. I was making a hell a lot more than six dollars an hour. I wouldn't even try to get out of bed early in the morning for that kind of money.' "Okay, you take eight." 'No, the least I would work for part-time. Believe me part-time. Ten dollars an hour.' "Oh that's too much." 'Listen here, so long.' "Wait a minute. No go, no go. Okay, I'll give you ten dollars." Then he says, "You see, you see this? This is, this I need a machine." He had all four wheels, all four alternators, and all four starters that were bent that were stripped off, all broken up. He says, "You've got to make me a machine to make these good again." I put in enough energy and I said that I was a supervisor up in the laboratory for about six years. He says, "You do it." 'Yes, I'll do it if you get me the parts.' "I'll get you the parts, you tell me what you want. I'll get you." I said, 'Okay.' I laid it all out. It worked out pretty well for a couple of weeks. Finally, I came up with the list that I named. "What's this? What's this?" 'Look, stuff that I need. You want me to make this machine for you?' "Yes." 'Okay, I'll make a machine, give me the parts.' "Okay, I'll get you the parts." He goes and brings me what I wanted just a couple of things I didn't have that guys had sent in before me. I went to work, doing it. In the meantime, he says, "You know this. I have to have somebody to take care of this hand machine." I got a friend of mine to come in with me. Got him the job. He was getting eight dollars an hour. I built a machine for him. It worked beautifully. See, when you rework metal you harden it, new ones are very flexible, but once they're put into the machine, with hydraulic pressure holding it. Then you're forging it and then toughen it. He started to ship these out, people would say "Elliot send me more" So he goes around and he starts picking up drums of these wheels from all over the eastern seaboard and everyone's shop from Maine down to Florida. They're all lugging in their trail boats and he got me building machines for him. It got to the point where he got a little obnoxious. I used to open up for him in the morning. He wouldn't come in until ten, eleven when he was in town. He was starting to get a little too bossy. One point, I was like, 'Look, I had enough of this. I'm going to quit.' "No, you

can't quit." "What do you mean I can't quit?" "No, I need you." "Hey, my family needs me more than you." I said, 'I'm done.' I straightened out the lighting for him with all the lights all over the machines, everything. He says to me [inaudible], 'Here take it. Goodbye Elliot.' It was about three months ago, he drove by in front of my house and he hadn't known where I lived. He knew the house, but he passed by and saw me in my driveway and stopped. "Jimmy!" "Oh hey Elliot. How are you? How are you doing?" "Yes, I'm doing very, very good." He was in a big white Cadillac he's got. I had heard that he was doing very, very, good. He's a multimillionaire today. He said, "You can come work for me again." I said, 'No absolutely not Elliot. I'm not going to work for nobody. I'm retired.' "All the years you have been retired, you wanted to go back for work." I said, "No, I'm not going back to work. It was my wife's idea." He said, "That's your wife?" She pops out and says, "Oh that's Elliot? Elliot how are you? How are you doing?" I said, 'He was telling me he wanted me to come back to work for him.' "No way. He isn't coming back to work for you no more. He's got to take me out more."

RV: We only have a couple questions left. First did you have kids?

JC: Yes. I have my son. My son is involved with a very, very good program. You've probably would know him by the program. [Inaudible] My son is one of the designers of it. He worked in different industries. He is the vice president of the product management. He's been working for that company now for about thirty years. My daughter has her doctorate in pastoral science. She teaches. She works in the diocese in Portland, Main. Past two weekends, two weekends ago, her daughter is now a medical engineer and is working in Columbia, Maryland. She is getting married April 21<sup>st</sup>. We will be going back down to Baltimore, my wife and I with my son and the family.

RV: Just the two kids?

JC: The two kids I got. That's right.

RV: Let's go back to Okinawa for a moment.

JC: Yes

RV: Were you there when the typhoon hit?

JC: When the typhoon hit? No. No, we were on our way back.

RV: Okay. Do you remember the navigating officer from the Charles Carol? Lieutenant J. Gene. [Inaudible] Do you ever keep in touch with your old shipments from the Carol?

RV: We interviewed him.

JC: You interviewed him. That's where this Charles Carol came in.

RV: We interviewed him about two weeks ago.

JC: Yes lives out here in Long Island.

RV: No, he lives upstate I think.

JC: Yes, it's upstate. He wasn't with us in Mobile. He was with us in Philadelphia. He was with us in Philadelphia with his wife and for the reunion.

RV: Looking back, anything you want to add to sum it all up?

JC: What can I add? I thank the good Lord that I'm still here, still living. Enjoying my family, my wife, my children, and my grandchildren. I got two little ones. I got big ones with my daughter in Maryland. My son married in 1995. He got two little boys, ages one and two. They're two little joys that they live right within three miles of my home and we see them a little more often. The other children, we don't see at all.

RV: So you are glad to still be here?

JC: Yes, I'm glad to be here.

RV: Well, we're glad you're here too. Thanks.

JC: Thank you very, very much sir.