Interviewee: **Holloway, John W.**
Interviewer: **Angela Tomlinson**
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Tomlinson: This is Angela Tomlinson. It is October 3, 2004, and I am here with Mr. John W. Holloway at his home in Mobile, Alabama, and we're doing an interview today for the purpose of recording his recollections of his experience as an enlistedman in the United States Navy during the Korean War. Mr. Holloway, could you, um, could you give me a little background information on yourself. Uh, where were you born and, uh, where did you grow up?

Holloway: Uh, I was born in 1931, June 28, in Biloxi, Mississippi, Harrison County. I didn't live there very long, uh, maybe a year, year and a half. Uh, My father was a minister, and we traveled very extensively and moved a lot. Uh, I began school, elementary school, in uh, Escambia County, Florida, in uh, 1937, and I graduated from high school in McComb, Mississippi, in 1949.

Tomlinson: Was there . . . I know you said your father was a, a minister, was there any military tradition in your family at all?

Holloway: Uh, the only military tradition was just military time; my brother served in World War II in the European theater. Uh, and was discharged in 1945.

Tomlinson: Was he drafted?

Holloway: He was drafted.

Tomlinson: So that was your main experience with, or your closest experience with, military service?

Holloway: That is correct.

Tomlinson: Now, when you entered the service were you enlis . . . did you enlist or were you drafted?

Holloway: I enlisted but on advice of a friend of mine from high school whose father was on the draft board, in McComb, Mississippi. Uh, I was advised if I wanted to do other than be drafted, I should go ahead and join whatever service branch I desired because my name was up for to be drafted as well as his, he was a friend of mine. And a friend of mine in Pensacola, Florida, where we were living at that time, uh, Robert Harvey, decided that we ought to, um, maybe join the Marine Corps. And so we did, end of June, go down the Marine Corps recruiting

place, and there wasn't anyone there to recruit us, and across the hall was the Navy. And since we'd gone that far, we decided, "well, the Navy will do if we don't have a Marine Corps person." Turned out to be a very good decision, in as much as during the Korean War there were a lot of Marine Corps people killed, and there were not nearly so many servicemen from the Navy.

Tomlinson: Now did you say . . . you said in June, did you say what year that was that you enlisted?

Holloway: I did not say that, but that was 1950.

Tomlinson: 1950.

Holloway: The draft was still in effect at that time, uh had been since World War II. And with the outbreak of . . . well actually, I don't think they had started the hostilities yet, but there was a lot of posturing in Korea and the U.S. had begin to conscript a Navy through the, uh, draft . . . not the Navy, but the services, through the draft. And so that's how I happened to be in the Navy.

Tomlinson: Now what was your family's reaction when you enlisted?

Holloway: Uh, typically of, you know, typically I think of any family, there's one . . . there was no, uh, discouragement on anyone's part to say "wish you wouldn't or wish you hadn't." They knew it was going to happen, but there was a lot of apprehension, of course, because they knew that . . . uh, my mother and father had one son that had gone through the European war, theater of World War II, and got home okay, and they just kinda hated to see another son leave. But, uh, I would say that my family's approach to it was as much as it was for most of the families in the U.S. at that time. It was something that we had to do . . . our country, uh, had committed us to do . . . and, therefore it was an honorable thing for us to do.

Tomlinson: Do you feel like at the time the feeling in the country was still affected by the experience in World War II? In that there was, um…

Holloway: …Uh, I would say that probably so, but I would say also, uh, as a carryover from all of, um, all the preceding . . . almost since the beginning of time for the U.S. . . . there was still a large sense of patriotism in the United States. And largely, young men served in the service, and women, without so much questioning as to why we are there, as it became during the Vietnam War later on. So, uh, yes, I think that, uh, there was still a lot of patriotism and people really didn't question, but thought it was their duty for their country to do whatever it was when they were called to do duty.

Tomlinson: Now, once you enlisted, where did you do your basic training?

Holloway: Uh, I went to navel training center in San Diego, California.

Tomlinson: Can you remember what your first three days in the service were like?

Holloway: Well, not, not too much, but basically, it was, uh, coming in and getting rid of all your civilian clothes and taking your G.I. issues. Uh, getting your hair shaved, and assignments to your barracks, and basically, just begin to learn the regimentation that comes with being at training center and assignment to a company with other recruits just as yourself, and . . . it's kinda hectic, but really at that time it was probably still a little bit fun. Lot of skylarking going on. Making fun of everybody with their hair shaved and …

Tomlinson: . . . in basic? . . .

Holloway: . . . in basic, yeah.

Tomlinson: Can you remember any good stories?

Holloway: We didn't call it basic, by the way, it was boot camp . . .

Tomlinson: . . . boot camp . . . [laughs]

Holloway: Boot camp in the Navy. Basic in the Army.

Tomlinson: Do you remember any particularly interesting stories about your time?

Holloway: Well we had a company—a training company—that was kinda, uh, kind of a screwball company. We had a lot of misfits in it. Uh, myself excepted, of course. But when it came down to about the seventh week, which is close to the end, uh, normally you would have . . . the whole company would be on KP duty, uh, working in the mess halls and so forth. But we kinda got so far behind with some of our other training that they, uh, deferred the mess hall work and had us all do special training for that week and a lot of that week was spent on the ground or marching to try to accommodate our appetite for frolicking.

Tomlinson: Frolicking. So when you say misfits you mean that you were all sort of fun-loving, frolicking kinda guys—were always having a good time?

Holloway: Um, most of the time, yes.

Tomlinson: Most of the time. Was there anything that surprised you about military life?

Holloway: Uh, not too much and partially because of the fact that when I was in junior high school, and uh, actually beginning the high . . . through the 10th grade, I lived in Memphis, Tennessee, and I was in the high school ROTC. So, I got a pretty good feel for how military life

was through working with the ROTC. Uh, so, no there wasn't too many surprises.

Tomlinson: Did you have a hard time . . . I mean, it doesn't sound like you had a hard time adjusting to it . . . but . . . .

Holloway: No, I really didn't have much of a hard time adjusting to it. I knew ahead of time that . . . I knew about discipline, and I knew that it was exacting and if you didn't go along with things that need to be done, you had to pay for it. And I didn't buck it too much, I went along with the things that are required of me to do and tried to be a good sailor.

Tomlinson: When were you deployed?

Holloway: Uh, immediately after boot camp, which would have been the, um, early part of September, I was assigned to, um . . . hostilities had already begun, and they were needing troops and personnel, both Army, Navy, and Marines, in the Korean area. Uh, I was assigned to a fighter squadron in Air Group 11—fighter squadron VF 113—uh, I left boot camp and was sent to Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay, um, awaiting deployment. After some ten days to two weeks at Treasure Island, I was flown with some other people to—service people—to, uh, Japan by way of Honolulu and Wake Island and then to Opama Air Base near Tokyo. Then I went aboard a ship—the U.S. St. Paul—a cruiser, uh, to be transited out into the Sea of Japan and transferred to the U.S.S. Philippine Sea, the aircraft carrier on which my fighter squadron was stationed at the time. Uh, that process took approximately thirty days. Uh, we were transported to the ship which was in, at that time in, um, Yukysuka, Japan, near Tokyo, Naval Base, uh, went aboard the St. Paul, uh, went out into the . . . on duty . . . into the Sea of Japan, and at some point after maybe thirty days we had occasion to come alongside the aircraft carrier, uh, Philippine Sea, and were transported across by bo'sun's chair from the St. Paul over to the carrier, and there was something like twelve or fifteen people that went from the St. Paul over to the aircraft carrier.

Tomlinson: So your time on the St. Paul was more just sort of transport time?

Holloway: It was transit time.

Tomlinson: And then, how did you feel the first time you stepped on a Navy ship, big Navy ship?

Holloway: Um, I was somewhat in awe at the size of 'em. However, I spent a lot of time on the Gulf Coast and been to sea a good bit in pretty large boats, so I had some feel from, you know, being out on the water, uh, I had never been seasick, never have been, so it wasn't, uh, it wasn't that big of a deal. However, an aircraft carrier is a very large vessel. At that time, the Philippine Sea was one of the largest. The Essex class carriers comprised of I guess six or seven carriers . . . in the Philippine Sea, Valley Forge, um, Bonhommie Richard, the Lexington, some of the others . . . they were all, uh, 880 feet long, and about, uh, uh, about fifty feet of draft and

about forty feet above the water, fifty feet below, uh, forgot the tons displacement, but they are very large, and when you had some 3,000 people on the aircraft carrier when . . . actually when we first came on, there was an over-complement of people, and uh, when we . . . until we got our permanent assignments in whatever our duties were for that fifteen people, or 10 to 15 people, we had to sleep on the mess deck, in hammocks, and because we didn't have permanent, you know, berth assignments to us, and so, we would, have to stay up til after the last mess and the clean up, and then we would put our hammocks up, and then before breakfast every morning, we had to be out of our bunks and triced up and so forth. So that was kind of an, um, unsettling period. But didn't last very long and we got out bunk assignments with our squadrons, and wherever the other guys went . . . there was only two of us out of that fifteen, 12 or 15, that, uh, actually went into 113—VF 113. And we got our bunk assignments and then we got into a kind of a routine, and everything was fine.

Tomlinson: What was your routine like?

Holloway: Well, I was, uh, assigned at the time . . . I had not, uh, I had no rating. I was . . . of course, when I first got out of, uh, out of boot camp, I was Seaman Recruit, and shortly after boot camp, I became, um, Seaman Second Class, and at that time if you . . . you got a stripe for something, some, uh, craft . . . what, you know, whether you're gonna be a radio, an ordinance man, or you're gonna be, uh, radar man or mechanic, uh, ordinance storekeeper, what have you. Well, they needed someone in the parachute loft and so, I was assigned to the parachute loft, and the guy that I worked under, was, uh, Chief Petty Officer Wilson, who was a, been a, was a parachute rigger, and at that time, I didn't know if I wanted to be a parachute rigger or not, but I had no choice. They needed help there and that's where I went. So, parachute riggers in fighter squadrons, take care of all of the safety gear for the squadron. They take care of the oxygen, oxygen masks, the life rafts, life jackets, the . . . whatever involves anything to do with safety for the pilots . . . the parachute riggers have that for their responsibility and every thirty days, parachutes have to be repacked, if they haven't been used, and, uh, so that was kinda the routine. During the course of a month's time, we would . . . we packed all the parachutes that we had, which was, uh, about twenty-seven parachutes. We would inspect all the, uh, survival gear—the life rafts, the life jackets—test 'em, make sure they were still operable. Uh, we would check the oxygen diluter/demand regulators in the cockpits of the planes. We would check the masks, uh, to see that all parts were not only functional, but didn't have any defects that looked . . . that were apparent, and would change out oxygen cylinders, uh, that supplied the oxygen to the pilot through a diluter/demand regulator. That was just kind of our daily routine, and uh, and…

Tomlinson: Did you feel like because you were responsible for safety, um for the pilots, that you felt sort of extra-responsible in your job, or…?

Holloway: I don't think so. Um, I think you realize that every job is a key job, no matter what it is—whether it's in ordinance, radio or anything else—so you try . . . you knew it was, um, special times and—war time—and you try to give it, you know, your best effort. So there was a lot of, uh, double-checking. I don't think we had many slackers in the, in the service, that

I knew of. Everybody tried to do the very best job that they could do, and they knew, no matter what job it was, that somebody's life might be depending upon . . . you know, if a gun doesn't fire, or a bomb doesn't fall of the rack when it's released, uh, if the radio doesn't work, the parachute doesn't open . . . just everything is key and it has to function properly, and I think everybody that I knew of took it very conscientiously and tried to do the very best job they could.

Tomlinson: Well, you told me what your duties were; can you tell me a little bit about sort of general living conditions on board?

Holloway: Living conditions on board, uh, was crowded. Um, to go back, to digress a little bit and go back to the time spent on the St. Paul, uh, it was really crowded. St. Paul had a full complement themselves, but they were also transporting some people who were replacements and not necessarily replacements but new, uh, recruits to fill billets on, uh, other ships or in other situations like in the squadrons on a carrier. So, we found ourselves, uh, in fact pretty crowded in the bunking areas. I know, uh, where I was at at night, uh there were, there were nine sailors stacked floor to ceiling, on bunks. And a bunk is a tubular aluminum frame, about the size of a sleeping bag, with a piece of canvas stretched in between the frame, and then on top of that, was a mattress that was about, uh, two inches thick, and a mattress cover that you slip . . . that's like a big pillowcase that you put that mattress in, and you had, uh, one blanket, and one pillow. Uh, and you had to . . . at night, you would sleep on that, and when you got off of that, you made your bunks and then they . . . the racks would be pushed up against the bulkhead so that they were resting vertically, but then when they would drop at night, when they'd release the chain that was holding them up, then they would drop to the floor, and they'd just be stacked, uh, one above the other. So you can imagine, you had about, uh, you had about 12 to 15 inches between each bag—bunk, and you were up to the top. The top guy had a lot of climbing to do to get in his. And we were right at the water line, and what made it interesting on that ship was that . . . I didn't stay very long, but we had during that thirty days, approximately, we had two soundings of general alarm in the middle of the night when there was unidentified, uh, objects picked up on the sonar, uh, the thought being that they could have been submarines, and we had to, uh, man battle stations, and of course, the battle stations for recruits was to, is to get above decks and get out of the way. [laughter] But, uh, at any rate, when you're laying in your bunk and you can hear the water splashing against the bulkhead, and you think about a sub being out there somewhere, and that's about where the torpedo'd come in [laughs], it, it got to be a little scary on that . . . I was glad to get off of that ship. [laughs]

Tomlinson: What was it like the first time . . . I mean how did you feel the first time general alarm was sounded?

Holloway: Well, there's, uh, a little bit . . . I really wasn't prepared too much for it. I knew what general alarm was like, and uh, the bo'sun's pipe comes on, and uh, and they says "All hands man your battle stations," you know, but I didn't have one. But we had been told where to go. But it was somewhat, it was somewhat frightening. Uh, you know, when you're nineteen

years old, you don't get maybe as alarmed as you should, and it's always in the back of your mind "well they're doing this as a drill," which they did do. So you would know what to do and have it practiced. But, so you was always thinking, you hope "well, this is a drill," but, you know, it turned out we actually never had any problems, but, uh, I was glad to get on a big aircraft carrier, because when you, uh, go from a, from the, uh, St. Paul to an aircraft carrier—cruiser to an aircraft carrier—it's about like getting off of a fifteen foot boat onto a fifty foot boat. And, uh, there's a lot more room, like . . . I don't remember what the complement of the St. Paul was, but it may have been 'round 600 people, uh, so but, uh, like I said, there were over 3,000 people on a aircraft carrier, so it was like a small city. Uh, you didn't know many people because you didn't have time to meet everybody there was so many in different departments. You usually knew the people in your squadron okay and some of the other aircraft squadrons you interfaced with. All the parachute riggers from all the squadrons worked in the same loft, so we knew each other well, and we usually knew the gunner recruits pretty good because that's were the poker games were, in the gunnery, ordinance department. They had a bigger room than everybody else, so you'd just drift over there at night and play poker.

Tomlinson: What other kinds of things did you do for entertainment, when you had the chance?

Holloway: Uh, entertainment consisted of Acey-Deucey, backgammon, as you might call it, and um, pinochle, and gin. And some, uh, cribbage. But, you know, and of course cards, poker. Black Jack, whatever. There was plenty of entertainment.

Tomlinson: Well, what were your sleeping quarters or your living quarters like on the, um, Philippine Sea, once you got on the aircraft carrier?

Holloway: Well, the squadron's sleeping quarters were, were, uh, in the bow of the ship, up forward. And—right under the flight deck—and they were quite roomy and, uh, they would have like, uh, maybe four bunks stacked above each other. Uh, and but it was the same procedure. You . . . in the morning you would lace up—that means tighten up your bed with a rope that held it in—and then trice up was when you would push up, push up the beds to the wall and hook 'em with the chain that held 'em in place up against the bulkhead. So every morning you would do your lace up, trice up and, uh, then go to take your shower, brush your teeth, etc. Get ready. As soon as you finished that, you went to mess, and then when you finish your mess, you came back, uh, to your, uh, quarters, and, and prepared yourself for whatever you had to do for that day, and then you went to your workstation. There's where you stayed until, uh, say five o'clock, whenever, uh, blew, uh, the end of the day. Uh, and at lunch time you went down of course to mess hall and got something to eat. Uh, but it was just pretty routine. Everyday was the same. Not a lot you can do. Uh, when we weren't in actual combat conditions, like we were traveling, you could go up on the flight deck and on pretty days you could sun and rest and take it easy. Uh, but, uh, when you were in the battle zones, you had your, your duties to do, take care of, and you . . . pretty much routine . . . uh, everything went along real . . . like clockwork.

Tomlinson: Well, what was it like when you, once you were on the aircraft carrier, when the first time you had general alarm sounded on the carrier?

Holloway: Well, it was much the same. It's, uh, when general quarters sounds, everybody has a station that they have to go to. And it so happened that whenever general alarm would go off, the parachute riggers would go to the parachute loft, no matter where they were, and then they would, they would be in a position to render assistance to damage control groups that needed it if we had any problems. They were on, basically on stand-by. Uh, one other thing that the, the, uh, parachute rigging crew did, uh, early on was take care of a lot the medical supplies for the squadron. Uh, we kept 'em under lock and key. Uh, they were, you know, morphine surrettes and things like that. That was at one time . . . later on they started, they moved 'em other places, but it was felt like that, uh, they had to keep their survival . . . we had a piece of equipment that we had to maintain. It went out with every . . . it was about four of 'em per aircraft squadron that had to carry it with them—survival bomb. A survival bomb, inside of it . . . it was just a big hollow bomb with a fin on it . . . but inside of it, and it was packed with a parachute so that it would be, could be dropped to a downed aviator, was the purpose of it. And it had, uh, it had, uh, a morphine surrette, it had a carbine in it, it had a, uh, some, uh, clothes, uh, and you know, flare pistols for you know . . . it was just set up so that if we had a downed pilot, somewhere that we could drop that bomb to, including in the water if necessary, and it had a, uh, life jacket and life raft in it. That it, it could be dropped anywhere and give him some—it had food in it and if he'd been hurt he could take, give himself a morphine shot, and uh, you know, so we had responsibility for those to keep them updated. And they, and as part of that, we kept some morphine under lock and key, and so when we had GQ, part of our deal was that we needed to support any of the, uh, the, uh, damage control or any of the people—medic people—we could be there to come by to dispense with some of those things to people to pick 'em up. They were kept obviously under lock and key and accounted for very carefully.

Tomlinson: You mentioned earlier that a lot of times the alarm would be drills, and you didn't know whether it was a drill or real?

Holloway: Well if you knew, it would take away the effect of it.

Tomlinson: Did you find that most of the time it was drill?

Holloway: Yes. Most of the time it was a drill.

Tomlinson: And then, did you experience live combat situations?

Holloway: Uh, not, not so much so as, uh . . . most of the combat situations . . . of course, on an aircraft carrier, you're far away from land, and, and the planes are the ones that actually get into combat, and as they fly back, then you rearm 'em and, uh, get 'em ready for another sortie over land. So, you're more or less an ancillary group that's support of the combat missions for the airplanes on the carrier. Uh, I will say that on one situation on the St. Paul, and I had a lot of

experiences on the St. Paul, uh, we were up . . . it was in the early part of the war, and it was looking . . . we were at that time pushing, pushing the North Koreans, that's before the Chinese entered the war . . . we were pushing them up very close to the Yalu River, which is the separation line between Manchuria and North Korea, and it looked like, in MacArthur's words at least, we would be home for Christmas. Uh, but, we were very far up to the north, and we were on . . . the St. Paul was resting out maybe three miles . . . three to five miles from shore . . . but you could clearly see the shore and you could see objects. And what had happened was, a train had come down the coast, and the gunnery people on the St. Paul had, had disabled the engine, and uh, and we were sitting there picking off boxcars with, uh, nine inch guns on the St. Paul, and uh, a lot of people were kinda topside watching, and uh, there really wasn't much thought of what could happen to us when all at once, a shell shot from the shore battery come, came flying over the ship and landed on the starboard side. And then one came in and landed on the, the uh, portside. Not near the vessel, but they were . . . and then there was one that came in and landed very close by so that shrapnel from that shell wounded, uh, I can't remember, but I think somewhere around 10 or 12 people, and splintered up some of the, uh, life rafts that were on, were on the ship. Uh, as soon as that happened, of course, uh, uh, the the ship took evasive actions and the uh, the guns on the ship destroyed the shore battery that lobbed the shells at us. But that's about as close as I got to being fired at personally, and uh, and they weren't firing at me they were just trying to hit the big ship. Thank goodness they missed from a direct hit. However, later on . . . now I wasn't there . . . the St. Paul did take a direct hit from, uh, from a shore battery.

Tomlinson: But on the, uh, Philippine Sea, you never had any sort of situations like that?

Holloway: Uh, aircraft carriers, uh, never got too close to land. They didn't have to, of course. Occasionally, we'd get close enough to see something in the distance—a skyline—that reflected land, but basically, all we ever saw when we were out on the line was just more ships and water. We operated most of the time in the Sea of Japan off the east coast of Korea. Uh, early on, uh, we were on, uh, the west coast, uh, either during—I can't recall if it was during or right after the Inchon invasion, which was in the very beginning of the war, I think in September, about the time I got there, uh, the Koreans, North Koreans, had pushed, uh, the South Koreans pretty far down—past Seoul. They were getting Kasun, I guess, Kasun's down at the bottom, as I recall, I'm not sure now. But, uh, they were pretty far down to the end of the peninsula, and uh, the U.S., the U.N. forces, which I always considered to be basically the U.S., because we made—we comprised about 80% of it—uh, made a landing at Inchon, which was near the, actually near Seoul, which is not too far from the 38th parallel now, kinda in the middle of the Peninsula. And, uh, landed and cut off all of the North Korean soldiers that were south of that line and was able to stabilize that end and begin to make some inroads into pushing north. Uh, so, you know, that was, uh, that was about the size of . . . we didn't get much into any, close to land as an aircraft carrier, really have any contact much. Uh, occasionally, we'd get a blip that there was an unidentified plane coming in our direction, and some planes would take off to go intercept, and most of the time that turned out to be, uh, a friendly plane—just didn't identify. Uh, there was, uh, occasion for—we had in our airgroup, uh, on the ship, we had five squadrons,

two panther jet squadrons, two corsair squadrons, and one AD squadron. Uh, but two panther jet squadrons were basically for fighter coverage, and they did some strafing, but they were for intercepts, if any planes come. And the first, uh, MIG, I guess, to be shot down by a Navy pilot was a, from a pilot in one of those, I think it was, uh, VF 112, uh, Panther jet. He shot down a MIG plane, uh, in the very early stages, uh, Lieutenant Commander Amands, I believe was his name. It's been a long time. But at any rate, basically, uh, the fighter planes and the dive bombers just flew sorties over Korea and used Napalm and bombs and strafing of the enemy, you know, to give support to our ground troops so that, uh, you know, we could, uh, keep, make charge, take charge, and uh, make progress in the war effort.

Tomlinson: When you were on board, did you make any really good friends?

Holloway: Well you make a lot of good fiends, in, uh, in the service under those conditions. Uh, you want to make . . . you try to work very hard to make sure that you don't make any enemies. That's the wrong place to have enemies [laughs]. So you want, you want everybody to be your friend if you can, but you certainly don't want anybody to dislike you. So, and that's generally the case with everybody. When you've got people together in those . . . that close of quarters, uh, it doesn't take very long to find out the people who have problems being . . . socializing with people because it's so close. Those people, you know, pretty much are left alone. Uh, and the truth of the matter is, you kinda were able to develop the friendships on your terms. People tended to, uh, look after themselves and the people that's very close to them, and working everyday. Uh, and then, people could come into those groups, but they usually had to take the initiative, and that happened a lot. Friendly people have friends, and reticent and reserved people, uh, sure have friends, but they don't, they don't have as many close friends. Uh, everybody may like 'em, but they just, you know, it's not like it—but yeah, you can have some friendships, uh, that are pretty close. Uh, unfortunately, uh, friendships you develop in the service, uh, when you finally do your time, and you've maybe transferred through to, uh three or four different units, in the course of four years, when you're finally discharged, uh, uh, you don't really maintain, uh, any relationship with most people that you've met during the service. Uh, maybe for a while . . . I did it for a while . . . but over time, uh, it just kind of slipped away. Uh, so, but I did have some really good friends, uh, when I was in the service, uh, people that you went on shore leave with, uh, and we had liberty passes. You went with the same guys usually, you did the same things, uh, you got along together real well.

Tomlinson: Did you find that you mostly were friends with other parachute riggers, or…?

Holloway: Well, you tended to spend more time, uh, with the people you worked with, uh, but my closest friend while I was in the Navy on the aircraft carrier was a, was a parachute rigger in another squadron. One in VF 115, the AD squadron. The name was Joe Mora; he was from Chicago. He and I, uh, got along real well together, and we usually helped each other do our duties to get it done a little quicker. And, uh, we spent a good bit . . . every time we had shore leave, we were, usually went together. We were in the same, uh, section—liberty section—so, uh, we, uh, spent a lot of time together.

Tomlinson: Did you find that there was a lot of, um . . . you mentioned that you would help each other out, did people do that a lot on board?

Holloway: Oh yeah. Uh, if you were, uh, you know, if you work in a work station, you got five squadrons, and every squadron has a technician that's taking care of that specifically that squadron's planes. But they all work on the same stuff, just different planes. So, it happened all the time that they . . . people would team up and from what . . . like from a . . . two from two squadrons would work together on one and then work together on the other, and it, it made it easier that way. There was a lot of, lot of help, uh, from each other, one another in situations like that.

Tomlinson: And what, where did you go for . . . you mentioned shore leaves and liberty passes, things like that?

Holloway: Well, in, in Korea, when you were on ship, you would go out on the line, uh, with your ship and stay anywhere from, uh, I think the longest we stayed at one time was about seventy days, and probably the shortest time was around thirty days. So, somewhere between that, uh, we would, we would be at sea, and obviously you don't do much at sea except, uh, work, and uh, play cards and sleep, go to meal three times a day if you wanted to. Um, but when we would rotate back to Japan, we had basically two places that we went to. Uh, Sasebo was on the Island of Kyushu, uh, which is the southernmost large island of the, Japan, and it was also the nearest seaport to, uh, to, uh, where the action was. So we would rotate back there. Uh, it wasn't a very large seaport, although a lot of ships came in, all the big ships had to anchor in the stream. That is to say, they anchored to a buoy that was out in the channel and then, when you went into liberty, into town, Sasebo, you went in in a personnel vessel, uh, just something like a landing craft, that you've seen on TV, with troops in it. And you would go in on that and, and during the war, the Korean War, most of the time, we had, uh, liberty, what we call Cinderella liberty. Liberty was over at midnight, and you had to be back into your place where you left from, even though you might not get back to your ship til 2 o'clock, but you had to be back in the, uh, base area where they picked you up and took you out to ship by midnight. Uh, and when we would come into Sasebo, which was close by and was the one we would come to most of the time, we would usually stay there for maybe ten, fifteen days, while, uh, provisions were taken on, uh, special kind of work might have to be done, uh, so forth. And then we would rotate back to the line. Uh, after we'd been out on longer trips like, uh, sixty days or so, uh, we would come into Yukysuku, which is near Tokyo on the Island of Honshu. And that was, uh, a period . . . we would usually be in port somewhere between twenty, twenty, about three, four weeks at the most. Somewhere in the twenty days, and uh, then we . . . same sort of liberty situation, but you know go over, and uh, tour Japan, you know, you couldn't tour very far and be back by midnight, but uh, you could, uh, go down and uh, and uh, see some of the sites. You could go to Kamakura from there and see the big Buddha. Uh, you could go into Tokyo, and uh, see some of the sites there. However, in 1950/51, Japan was still very much a destroyed country. It was signs of buildings down, and they, uh, they hadn't nearly been rebuilt even though the process was taking place. So, it was still an, uh, uh, pretty much a wreck. But there were a lot of things

to see, and it was interesting.

Tomlinson: As someone from the southern United States, you probably hadn't traveled that much. What was it like to be somewhere like Asia?

Holloway: Oh, it was just a good time. [laughs]

Tomlinson: I mean, do you, did you….

Holloway: I'd traveled a lot, in my situation, but all in the—basically all—in the southeast, and maybe to Texas, and maybe to . . . I'd been, you know, eastern part of the United States. I had an uncle that lived in Cleveland, Ohio, and we'd visited a good bit, so I'd, I'd been other than just in my hometown and in the county, nearby. But, uh, I'd, you know, I'd never seen, uh, the culture that you see over there with . . . the biggest thing, not so much where you were, but the culture of where you were . . . that was an interesting thing, uh. It was totally different from anything, uh, uh, that you could imagine, uh, you know, coming from the States. Uh, the Japanese, uh, up until World War II, uh, and MacArthur kinda helped change things around for 'em, it was a very much male-dominated society. Uh, Japanese women, uh, were, they, you know, walked three paces behind, but at the same time, even though they had recently, you know, within the last, uh, five years, four and a half years, uh, been defeated and been occupied, by and large I found the Japanese to be, people, to be very friendly, and uh, a nice people. Uh, I don't know if they really felt that way inside, but they put on a good face. And, uh, I enjoyed visiting with them, uh, when I was there. But the culture was really different. Uh, one thing about the culture that we didn't understand coming from the South was my first experience with unisex restrooms. I had a hard time getting used to that. Another thing, I could admire their vegetables . . . they always looked really great . . . but I also found out that one reason they looked so good, that they used human excrement, and [laughs]….

End Side A

Tomlinson: This is Side 2 of Tape 1 of Interview with John W. Holloway. Before the tape ended on Side 1, you were discussing the vegetables in Japan. Would you like to pick up there?

Holloway: Uh, yeah. Again, I noticed that they had really large and good-looking vegetables. And I found out that one of the reasons for that, that they used, uh, human excrement for, uh, fertilizer, and you could see, uh, little Japanese guys, uh, for the . . . with a stick, with a bucket hanging on each side, across their shoulders, running down the streets, and uh, they were collecting this up from depositories. Uh, we called those "honey buckets."

Tomlinson: So you didn't eat any of the vegetables? [laughs]

Holloway I, I didn't eat any of the vegetables because we were warned not to, that we might be able to get some bugs out of those, uh, vegetables if we did.

Tomlinson: When you were on board, can you tell me a little bit about the way that officers and crewmen interacted?

Holloway: Uh, what?

Tomlinson: Officers and crewmen interacted with each other.

Holloway: Uh, actually crewmen and officers interacted real well, not that . . . when you, uh, when you're on a landbase and everything is so formalized, uh, there seems to be a fairly good separation between enlisted and officers. But on a ship, and especially in a squadron, uh, you have, uh, much more interaction on a kinda one-on-one, informal basis than you do in, on, anywhere else. You can imagine that, uh, the officer, uh, of course, he knows that he's the officer, and you know that he's the officer, but he also knows that so much of his, his, uh, ability to do his job and everything is reliant upon how you do your job. You work together much closer and more in terms of almost in some cases of being equal to solve problems and to make things work better. That would not be expected back at some landbase, where it's entirely different. Uh, I know that, uh, the officer that was over my squadron's parachute . . . the guy that I reported to, uh, as an officer, actually came into our squadron right out of Pensacola, where he got his, uh, wings, and he was still actually a midshipman. His name was Jerry Brown, Ensign Jerry Brown later on. He had the misfortune of, uh, being killed on the, on that, uh, cruise, but he was, he was a very nice guy. But when he was, uh, first joined the squadron, uh, by being a midshipman, he was, really didn't have any status in the officers' country too much. He was low man on the pole. So he actually spent more time in the parachute loft with me than he did up front. Later he . . . and in a short time he got his, uh, Ensign stripe and bars, but we still had a close relationship. Uh, so at sea and under those conditions, there's not, uh . . . I mean everybody's aware of the . . . of rank but that really doesn't hinder the interactions between the enlistedmen and the officers, uh, very much. They're still a team, and everybody feels like that they are working together for the same objectives.

Tomlinson: When you were in the war, um, did you get a sense that you and everyone else you were with sort of understood, or had a real sense of what you were fighting for?

Holloway: Uh, I think, uh, most everybody understood why we were there and really felt like that we should be there. Uh, we were a little bit, uh, unsure of how the role of the UN played. Uh, and especially since, uh, we called it a UN effort, but the US was, you know, bearing the brunt of the war, not that others didn't do well and fight just as hard, but the main brunt of it was on the US. The British did a good job, and the Australians did a good job, uh, and I'm sure others did too. I'm sure everybody there did, but we felt like it was a US, basically, a US War, even though it was, uh, defined as a police action of the UN. Uh, we knew that what we were trying to do was contain, uh, we felt like, contain communism, but we felt that communism and Russia, and aggression by Russia, which had been evidenced all over eastern Europe and all of the countries around, uh, Russia, as far as expanding their, their philosophy as well as their, their, uh, military might. We felt that this was a step to try to contain that. Uh, we believed, uh,

even though it was North Korea—they were communists—and they were trying to, uh, take over the whole peninsula of Korea, and we felt, and we not only had to feel that because we actually knew, we shot down some MIGs that had Russian pilots in them, flying for the Chinese—so we knew that Russia was behind, pretty much behind it at this time. They were the other superpower at the time—US and Russia—and, and they were trying to expand their sphere of influence, and which they had done quite a good job of that at . . . up to that time. But we felt that we were containing that, and by doing so were actually going to save . . . we felt that Japan would be the next step, once Korea fell to the communists and a Russian influence. Russia had had its eye on Japan ever since the time of the Tsar, when the Sino-Russian War took place, so we, we felt . . . the ones that really thought about it when we would discuss it . . . we felt that we were there, really to stop communism, and from encroaching any further, uh, in Asia. It turned out of course, we, we didn't do it, and because the next move was into Indo-China after France was run out, uh, and we got involved and we finally had to capitulate. Uh, the only thing I guess that finally stopped it was that they found out that they couldn't get by without capitalism. But at any rate, that's . . . when we would have discussions about why we were there, uh, I recall, that we were there basically to keep, uh, communism and the influence of Russia from taking over everything in, in that part of the world, feeling that if they did that, the next logical thing was to try to come toward us and the United States. So, uh, we felt like it was a just war. Uh, we were able to do, I guess what we were supposed . . . went over there to do. I don't think anybody that I know of that was in that war felt like we should have stopped at the 38th parallel. I've always said and felt that that was the first war that the US had entered into in which a draw was okay. We didn't have to win. We, we came to a point, said we won't go any further, and we quit and you quit and we'll leave it that way. But in order to maintain that draw, we've had to keep our presence in Korea for fifty years, plus, and will have to continue doing that for another fifty, plus, in my opinion…

Tomlinson: So…

Holloway: **…**So, what I think that what we should have done was taken all of Korea.

Tomlinson: So you didn't necessarily agree with the Armistice being signed?

Holloway: I didn't agree with stopping at the 38th parallel.

Tomlinson: At the time you felt that way, or is that…?

Holloway: **…**I felt that then and now.

Tomlinson: Well did you feel like…?

Holloway: …We fought the last two years, we didn't actually do much fighting, we were just maintaining. At the . . . it took two years of peace negotiations to finally get everything settled out. If we had spent that two years kicking ass, it wouldn't be a problem . . . we wouldn't be

worried about North Korea with atomic bomb now. It would be behind us.

Tomlinson: Did you feel like at the time that knowing that Armistice talks were ongoing, did that affect morale, at all?

Holloway: Uh, I don't know that it affected morale. Uh, I, I dare say that there weren't too many of us, of the enlisted people, that were over there that were that involved. Uh, we knew that after . . . I say the first two years, we pretty much attained the end-point, even though there was continuing, uh, flare ups, and so forth . . . but after the two years, we pretty much had established the 38th parallel, and it had kinda drawn back, and everybody was doing other things, basically. Uh, I was out of Korea, back on the east coast, uh, by that time. Uh, for me the war was over as far as Korea was concerned. My time in the Navy wasn't, uh, I didn't get out until May of 1954, but my whole time, the morale was fine. I don't think anybody had a bad morale. I think there was a lot of people that felt like that we should have done a better job. Completed the job.

Tomlinson: Completed the job. Um, going back to what you were talking about earlier with communism and Russia, did you feel like, or where did you feel like China fit into the situation as far as their aggression in North Korea? I mean…

Holloway: …Well, China was the, basically, the aggressor from that side. The, the uh, North Koreans had made a push to push, to take over South Korea. But behind them, they weren't personally strong enough to have it, the communists were really the ones that were pushing it, and I think that the Chinese communists had a design to have all of Korea under their control, for somewhat the same reasons. But at that time, China was not nearly so strong as China is today. China largely was not a very technical country, but had an inexhaustible supply of cannon-fodder that they could keep running across the border. Uh, you know, when they finally crossed the Yalu River, there was over 300,000 troops pushed in and pushed us back, and uh, we had to go through the, through the **Hungnam** evacuations, uh, when we took a Marine division out and an Army, US Army division, out, uh, from the shore, you know, to liberate 'em—they were surrounded. And that's all because of a sudden surge of, of these huge number of Chinese that crossed the river. Uh, I think China was, uh, was as much Russia, and for part of the same reason, was the spread of communism, but I still think it was a power grab by China and the same thing could be said for Russia, to get all of the Korea peninsula, which gave them just a small distance then to get to Japan. Uh, and once Japan would have been taken over by them . . . and you never know if it had happened how settled . . . Japan had just had a complete defeat five years earlier . . . they didn't, they were zero and beginning to rebuild with the help of the United States, and uh, MacArthur's policy of putting in democracy, somewhat of what we're trying to do now with Mr. Bush over in Iraq. He was, MacArthur was very successful at it, don't you think? Such that in a relatively short time, Japan has become one of the great powers economically, and all because it became a democracy, rather than being ruled by an emperor. But, uh, I think that either one of the China or Russia would loved to have got communism all the way into Korea, and I don't think it would have stopped. And I think when we had

discussions in the service when topics like that came up, we all agreed that what we were doing was trying to preserve, protect Japan as much as Korea. And China, though, was, had a great influence in it, but like I said, at that time China had just won China. They had not too long before pushed nationalist China out and onto, and retreated onto Formosa, uh, Taiwan now, and uh, so, they weren't, they were flexing their muscle, but they weren't, they weren't a military might, except they had an inexhaustible supply of people, soldiers.

Tomlinson: So, so, on board when you would talk about these things, you, you would feel like Russia, the Soviet Union, was really the driving force behind it?

Holloway: I, I believe that that was behind it, and I know that they were sending military aid and personnel to train. In other words, I, I certain . . . Air Force guy, and Navy guys in fighter planes shot down many MIG fighters, and several of those MIG fighters were piloted by Russians. They were all supplied to China and to North Korea by Russians. So there's no doubt who was behind, behind it, but there was a, I won't call it a conspiracy, but there was a joint effort between China and Russia to assist North Korea to actually take the whole peninsula.

Tomlinson: When you were fighting, was there sort of a fear or a feeling that you were, among you and your comrades that there was, could possibly be nuclear deployment? I mean…

Holloway: No. We didn't really think that anything, that that could happen, beca . . . and one reason being . . . see in 19 . . . you gotta remember the time . . . in 1950, Russia had just got the bomb. And they didn't have a lot of bombs. But they had the technology. US, in 1945 was the only one that had the bomb. Technology was given to Britain, France, and some others. But, at that time, we kinda have the held the vault [??] on the most, biggest number of bombs, and we just never figured that anybody at that point in time would be, uh, unreasonable enough, uh, stupid if you will, to unleash a bomb. And we didn't ever think we would, except in a retaliatory way, but we also felt that if it happened, we would release lots of 'em. So, no, we didn't worry about that, because we thought that even the Russians, and the Chinese didn't have a bomb at the time, the only . . . at that time the Russians had it, but just had gotten it, and had gotten the secrets from, uh, through their spy efforts to be able to build it, but uh, they weren't in a position to start a nuclear war then. Now later on, they were in a position to start one, but at the same time, they had to always think about retaliation. Uh, sometimes a good defense is the best offense.

Tomlinson: How did you keep up with progress . . . how did you receive progress of the war on ship?

Holloway: Well, first hand and through the, and through, uh, communiqués that were written, you know. We got a lot of first hand information because our pilots were flying over the war zone the whole time, and seeing it first hand. They knew when we were going ahead, and they knew when we were backing up, and they'd come back and tell you what they saw. So you had a pretty good idea if we were winning or losing, uh, you know, when I say "winning or losing,"

I'm not talking about battles, I'm talking about if we were advancing or backing up or holding or what. We could tell how it was going by just talking to guys that looked at it every day. We were, we would have pilots maybe fly three, four missions in one day's time over Korea. You know, he would take off in the morning, he would go drop his bombs, his Napalm, or strafe, whatever it is; he'd come back on ship, and he would go down to his ready room and refresh himself while the plane was being re-, re-loaded with armament, and you know, two hours later, he was off again. Well, it doesn't take long to fly some thirty or forty miles to land, to a target area, and discharge your armament, come back and land again. He could, you could get off several times . . . you know, normal would be two missions a day, you know, for a pilot when they were flying. One in the morning, one in the evening, but then it depends on what was, what kind of activity . . . we were in a, if we were in a serious situation, where they needed air support, the ground people, troops did, well then we may fly more . . . each guy might fly more missions in support of that effort. Uh, but when the Chinese had our Marines and Army people surrounded at Hungnam for evacuation, we were off-shore with three other aircraft carriers and the, the planes were going continuously, holding the perimeter to keep them from coming, the Chinese communists and North Korean communists, from coming in and attacking our guys, and we were able to get all of our troops out that we wanted to get out, and most of all the equipment we wanted to get out. Uh, not only just the people, we were able to hold 'em back with just a constant barrage of, uh, arma . . . from the air and from the ground and from the shore. Uh, the guns on the ships would be firing. So, we kept that perimeter safe for our people to get off, and then blew up what was left, the SEALS did, and then they left themselves. And left them nothing. And, we lost several lives there, but the Chinese communists and the Koreans paid dearly for it in loss of life. You know, almost a hundred to one, maybe not a hundred to one, but certainly a lot to one.

Tomlinson: So you learned about what was going on from the pilots?

Holloway: Well, I told you we had communiqués. You know, we would get, uh, news, uh, would be the official news, and let us know how things were going. It's like when we first got over there . . . I got there in September sometime, and it wasn't long to where we were already pushing the North Koreans back into China, and the Chinese hadn't got into the war yet. And that's when we got news we were gonna be home for Christmas, the war'd be over. Well, in November, the Chinese came across the border, and uh, you know, like I said 300,000, and started pushing strongly, uh, pushing our troops back and surrounded 'em, and that's when we had to do those evacuations. And it took awhile to stop that onslaught, but we did. And we stopped it, and could have turned it and gone further if need be, but it was . . . that's when they decided that, that the 38th parallel was a good spot to, uh, to uh, stop it . . . we'd keep a South Korea and we'd keep a North Korea, so that's what happened. And uh, and after two years of negotiation, we finally got it set up to where it's just like it is today. We've got a DMZ, and we keep troops there all the time, and they keep troops there all the time, and uh, and we patrol.

Tomlinson: How did you get news from home? Mostly through letters, or…

Holloway: Oh, we got the mail . . . mail came, uh, you know the mail would come, uh, it would come out to sea usually, but you know, you usually got, when you got letters, it might be two, three weeks old, sometime older. I remember one time [laughs], my mother fixed me a cake and sent it to me. And I, when I was a young guy, kid, I enjoyed eating a lane cake, and a lane cake has got a lot of things that really don't last very long if you don't keep 'em, uh, refrigerated or something. It's raisin and, uh, coconut, fresh coconut that's been grated, and pecans that's put in there, and make up a nice filling, you know a caramel-type filling, and it, it's a layer cake, and it's pretty good. Well it took so long for it to get there, that it was a green cake when I saw it. [laughs] And, uh, the fish in the Yellow Sea got to eat that. I just had to dump it overboard. But mail, mail would come, you know, you could get it as early as two weeks, you know, it would be flown over, and, uh, generally speaking, mail would be a little slower than that. It might be three weeks, and then some, you know, you always would have some lost letters. You might one day get a letter and look at it, and it'd been postmarked three months before. You know, it just got directed around, but mail call was important to hear from home and to see how things were going, and how you relatives were and everybody was okay. So, it was nice to get mail from home, and uh, my mom and dad, mostly my mom, but—dad didn't do much of the writing—but he would, uh, he would tell her what to say sometimes. So, but anyhow, I got letters later from home, my brother and family, and I, you know, I enjoyed hearing from everybody. But mail call was pretty important.

Tomlinson: What, what did you miss most other than just sort of contact with your family—loved ones—about being away from home?

Holloway: Well, you know, my brother and I were pretty—really not pretty close—we were real close. What I, what I missed a lot is, you know, I like to hunt and fish. And so did my brother, and we'd hunt and fish all the time. And uh, so I guess I missed that more than anything. And uh, I've always love the outdoors, and uh, so, you know, during the summer we fished and the winter we hunted. So, every chance we got. I missed my dogs, my bird dogs, and you miss your family too when you're off the other side of the world, but, uh, there's usually a reason . . . I guess there's a reason why young, basically young people fight wars. They, they're not, they're not quite so tied to apron strings and things. They're, they're more wanting to see the world, and they kinda get, enjoy doing that, and they certainly don't see danger as much as older people do. But, uh, while I missed a lot of things at home, like hunting and fishing, I had, I had a very good time while I was in the Navy, even though some of it was, uh, trying. And uh, it wasn't a bad experience at all for me. Uh, I wouldn't have volunteered to go into any service, but I, since I knew . . . except knowing that I was going to be drafted, and I didn't want to be in the Army. My brother was in the Army, and he just kinda told me that "you go anywhere else; you go, but don't go in the Army."

Tomlinson: Did you find that a lot of, uh, your fellow shipmates were in that same position . . . they had been, they had enlisted as opposed to drafting . . . being drafted?

Holloway: Well, most everybody in the Navy was in enlisted service. There was some

drafted to the Navy, but most people joined the Navy, Coast Guard, I don't know why . . . I think they joined the Marines 'cause they . . . I don't know why, because they was no better off than the Army, except it was touted to be a little bit more of an elite group, you know, everything. But they basically mud . . . slogging through mud, cold, and rain, and everything else. See, I, I joined the Navy because I felt like . . . I did try to join the Marines and I didn't go in, and I was glad that I didn't . . . but the Navy wasn't bad, even on ship. It's better on a land base, but on ship, it's nice . . . you got a warm bed to sleep in at night, clean, three square a day. And, you know, it was, it was pretty nice. You didn't get to do a lot of things, there's just so much you can do on a ship, but you, uh, you weren't, uh, getting shot at, and you weren't having to shot at, and you, and you . . . It was a pretty good duty to be in the Air Force or the Marines I think, basically. Uh, my hats off to the dog-faces out there walking, and carrying that gun, and slogging through mud, and getting shot at, and shooting. I wouldn't want to do that.

Tomlinson: When did you…[Holloway coughs]…When did you return home?

Holloway: I was discharged from the Navy, uh, in the first part . . . I've forgotten the date . . . in the first part of, uh, of, uh, May of 1950. Uh, I had a four year enlistment, and uh, we were all, all of us that were working on a four year enlistment, they let us go home two months early, so I was two months before my mission was up. Uh, I went in July, sworn in July 5, 1950, and got out, I guess, around May 5, 6, 7, 8, something like that, of 1954.

Tomlinson: And you said earlier . . . I think you had left Korea before then.

Holloway: I did. I, uh, I, we, I had made two rotations. Uh, the squadron I was in went over and they stayed about seven months. And then we came back to San Diego, where our home station was in the States and stayed for about six months. And then we did another rotation in Korea. And then we came back the second time from Korea. And on that rotation, uh, I got in a car wreck and I got my back messed up—broke. And I stayed in the hospital from that for several months, and when I got out of the hospital, instead of going back to my squadron, I was sent to the east coast, Sanford**,** Florida, to, uh, a squadron that was called, uh, it was VC 9, which was a composite squadron, but we flew AJs. Uh, AJ was a plane, a twin engine plane, designed for carrier take-off to carry the atomic bomb. And it was not designed necessarily to come back to the carrier. It, at that time, we were trying to get close enough . . . this was time before SAC had long-range bombers . . . this is still in the 50s, but we were trying to get close enough to potential targets in case of war, basically, with Russia, that we could take a plane with atomic bombs on it, if it got to be that bad, to a target inside of the enemy territory, drop the bomb, and hopefully fly to a safe or neutral country. That's what the AJ did. Well, I was in that squadron until I was discharged.

Tomlinson: And what did you do while you were there in that squadron?

Holloway: Same th . . . basically the same thing. Parachute rigger. When I got out, I was Second Class Petty Officer. Uh, and was the, as such, was the, in that squadron, I was the head

guy in the parachute loft.

Tomlinson: When you returned home, or really I guess back to the States, how did you feel that the public generally received, um, Korean veterans?

Holloway: I think well. I wasn't anything like Vietnam.

Tomlinson: Did you feel that they were really aware of your coming and going, as compared to maybe World War II?

Holloway: I don't get that question.

Tomlinson: Well, did you feel like . . . or I guess how would you compare Korean, um servicemen's return to World War II servicemen's return?

Holloway: I would say about in the same way. Uh, people were glad to see their sons and daughters come home, and uh, their sons and daughters were glad to be home. And uh, I don't think that anybody, uh, at least in my part of the country, I _________ [??] in other places, there were no recriminations against 'em for being in the service. They were actually looked upon as they had done an honorable thing. To be there and to defend the country. And most people, I think, certainly where I, I'm from, felt the same way I did about why we were at war. They felt the war was a just war. And, uh, a lot of 'em, I think, felt also that, uh, we, we didn't do the job.

Tomlinson: Did you perceive that the American public had kept up with the course of the war, um, fairly well, or maybe compared to what they would have done in World War II?

Holloway: Well, in both cases, they relied largely on, uh, papers. There was a little TV around in 1950, but where I was from, it was still radio and papers that you got most of your information from. Uh, I'd see some TVs, but by and large, reception was so bad that it'd give you a headache to look at it really long. Uh, but, it was, it had been out, and there was some people . . . we didn't have a TV set, and most people didn't that I knew. Uh, most of it came through your newspapers, and uh, from the radio, and I think everybody pretty much felt that they got the, got the news and got it right, and things, were you know, pretty much . . . I think there was a different feeling in 1950, and I think it was a carry-over from World War II, 1945. There was a lot better feeling among everybody towards patriotism than it got to be later on. It was still, it was still, uh, for a lot of people, it was still hard times in 1950. World War II kinda ended the Depression, and, and a lot of war time jobs, but you gotta remember that when the war was over, a lot of people didn't have jobs because the war effort had been employing so many people. So there was an awful lot of unemployment from, from '45 to '50, even though the economy was coming back. It wasn't necessarily just really great times, uh, you know, I don't recall exactly, but I think like the minimum wage still in 1950 was $0.75 an hour, I think. But it's close to that, so, when you think about it, uh, when you work 8 hours and you don't have but six dollars, uh, that ain't a lot of money on the hip. However, you can still buy a gallon of gas

for 15 cents. [laughs] That's a little bit different from what you can do now. So everything's relative. But, uh, I think that through the Korean War and, you know, probably even until we started the Vietnam War, uh, there was still a lot of patriotism. I think a lot of that died, for whatever reason, uh, during the Vietnam War.

Tomlinson: Did you take advantage of GI Benefits when you got back?

Holloway: I did. I did take advantage of it. I, uh, first thing I did was get a job. And uh, so I'd have some money—didn't have any. And, uh, uh, after I'd been employed for about a year, I started going to night school at Pensacola Junior College, Pensacola, Florida, on the GI Bill. And uh, I went there, I actually went there, got enough credit hours for a full four-year degree. Unfortunately, I didn't get but a two-year degree. And one reason I did that, by the time I'd finished about four years—it took that long to get a two-year degree—they kept talking about having a four-year school. So I just kinda kept hanging on wanting to go right on into the four years, and uh, I did that for about four more years and just finally gave up on it and graduated. And I think the next year, they announced West Florida University, and uh, so, they just was, they were too slow, and I just couldn't hang out any longer. But that's what I got, and I used the GI Bill for that.

Tomlinson: Did you, do you think in the years after the Korean War . . . I think a lot of people have called it the "Forgotten War" . . . I mean, do you, how does that make you feel?

Holloway: Well, I agree, uh, you never heard any mention of the Korean War. And the reason being is that, uh, in my—at least in my opinion—it was such a, it was such a difference between the Korean War and World War II that, you know, there was no comparison. And they came so close together, that World War II overshadowed it so much, in it's importance and scope and everything. And then, when it might have become time to where we would be talking about it a little bit and thinking about it, the debacle in Vietnam came into being. And then once it got started, that's all you could ever hear. It, it shut out everything. What was going on at home and over and everything else, you know. So it just, it just got pushed aside. And there's no doubt it was the Forgotten War, and basically the only people that remember the Korean War were the ones that were actually in it. Because nobody else ever talked about it. Uh, there's been a lot of resurgence of the meaning of it and remembrances of it and the memorial to it and so forth, but that's all taken place in the last few years, you know. So, but for a long time it was truly a Forgotten War. But it was, it was a big war and there were a lot of souls lost, not souls lost, lives lost, and souls that went somewhere, you know. And it shouldn't be. It ought to be remembered just like all the rest.

Tomlinson Do you feel like, um, the Navy has gotten the recognition for its part in the Korean War that it deserves?

Holloway: Oh, probably so. Uh, the Navy, uh, the Navy's role was not so much, you know, by and large . . . certainly, we got pilots shot down, and pilots lost their lives, and we lost a lot . . . but by and large, the Navy's role in the war was, uh, was as, uh, is a benefit, was a benefit or

aid to the ground forces. The war was actually fought on the ground. Uh, there wasn't any significant air power from that, from the communist side, that came anywhere except over Korea itself. So, it wasn't engage . . . naval battle engagements. Uh, it was basically a land war and with support of the Navy's fire-power, and uh, and largely their aircraft. Uh, and the same way with the Air Force. The Air Force had bases in Korea and other places, and flew missions over enemy territory, but it was largely a war that was fought by the Army GI and the Marine Corps GI. On the ground, and it was a bad hard war, under bad conditions . . . mountains, severe cold, freezing conditions, you know, it was a bad war.

Tomlinson: How do you feel like for you personally, your service in the war and in the Navy, maybe particularly in the war, um, affected your later life, if it did?

Holloway: Well, you know, you don't . . . even though, you know, I didn't have to fight per se, but any time you're in combat situations and you interface with people who have. You know, anytime we went back on leave, we would meet people who had been on the ground fighting, and I had friends who were in—from childhood friends—that were in the, uh, Army and Marine Corps, uh, that fought. And, we talked and have talked before and since about situations. Uh, but uh, I don't, you know it hasn't affected me except like I said before, I have a certain or good appreciation of what wars can do. And I don't think we, I think we're better off without 'em. But I think if we need to go to war, then we ought to do it. If it's our duty to take up arms for whatever the reason is it's our duty, then I think we should do it and do it with honor. Uh, to turn the other cheek is gonna, you know, would have, you know, is going to allow somebody to dominate you. That's the way the world is, you know, unfortunately. But, uh, the meek will inherit the earth, one spade at a time when they die, you know.

Tomlinson: Well, I thank you for this, you time, and um, this is now the end of the interview.

End of Transcription