

About the time I was in Guantanamo I was an E3 and later E4, third class petty officer from February 1962 until January 1963 so actually it was a little less than a year, but it was an exciting year. Most of the time I worked at these film library and small devices library. Two days a week I was an instructor on an F8U crusader flight simulator. That was over at the Leeward Point side of the base so I had to take a ferry, half hour ride to get to work, and a ferry half hour ride to get home.

It was like being in my backyard at home. It was not just safe, it was so enjoyable. Between my barracks and the [Kit-Shaow Hall?] we had what was called the Barrel Club, set right on about a thirty foot cliff above Guantanamo Bay. It opened up at 3:30 every afternoon. You could buy a beer for fifteen cents but we would rush down from work, go to the Barrel Club, get a beer, and sit there and look out over this bay and it was often said, "do you realize rich folks pay thousands of dollars to live like this?" We were sitting there having a beer, maybe a cuba libre - it was really great. And we would have a few drinks, go back to change clothes, go down and maybe fish, had a little fishing pier right down behind the barracks or go across to Little Bay on the other side of the air station. We could rent a boat all night long and we would go out and capture longusta, clawless lobsters and bring them back in and right there they had hot grease and you could just go in and deep fry your lobster. I mean, how fresh could you get? It was a wonderful life.

After I got there when Fidel had taken over, there were funny things happening that should have been a clue something was going on but we did not know what. Right before the whole thing really broke we had a bunch of marines come in. There were funny things happening that should have been a clue something was going on but we did not know what. Right before the whole thing really broke we had a bunch of marines come in, flown in. Another precursor to it, they loaded up all the women and children and they flew some of them out, put some of them on ships and took them up apt. We did not know where but they evacuated them and then we knew something was happening. We did not know what yet. That is when they grabbed us up. Nobody needs to check out movies anymore or projectors. They took us down to this sea plane ramp and they were loading these landing craft with ammo and bringing it in to the seaplane ramp and we were unloading the ammo and the marines were going to come down and take it in their trucks but we loaded for over two days without more than twenty minute maybe break. The corps men would come down and give us our drugs to keep us awake and every now and then they would give us 15 min to go to the galley to grab something to eat. Sometimes the cooks would bring us food down there. But there was no sleep for over two days. The base was not set up for that much air traffic so they decided to institute an air traffic control center. They did not have enough air control men. They still got to operate the tower over here, got to operate the tower on the jet side so these training device men, they pretend to be air control men all the time in simulators. They know how it works. We will use them. I worked up there at that air traffic control center, had never been in a tower before in my life and I was controlling aircraft from the time they got halfway down from Miami until they were safely on the ground, or when they left the ground, until they were halfway back to Miami and I had never had any actual training for this, never. but these guys in the airplanes did not know it. I was glad to get on. I was glad to have the experience and I am glad I was there at that time.

