

I was a squadron man, you see. I was not stationed in Guantanamo. We went there and we would stay only for six weeks. The base itself was an excellent fleet training location. What I can remember about the base is hard work, but excellent weather. One of the things that base had was probably the best feeder in the navy. I could remember the chief's name that was in charge of that; his name was Drummond and I can remember him from being in Oceania.

The food was excellent. One example was like if you had Boston baked beans you got them in little... they baked them in little containers and that is the way they served them and normally they do not do that, you know in any of the messes.

One of the things that I did down there was... I had a sister who was not married then and I could remember buying perfume and always bringing it home for her. I did not have any girlfriend then. The one thing I can remember buying is I bought a belt, alligator purse had a small baby alligator on it and it really was something... and a pair of shoes. Found out our size and got that, I bought that and I do not think it cost more than thirty dollars if I can remember right. I do not think you can buy that for that price today. And I can remember the perfume she would like was a *gor la pege* which was by a company by Lanvin.

Everybody was granted on weekends to use the base facilities. We got liberty to Guantanamo City and Caimanera; you had to put a special request in and only a certain percentage of the sailors would get liberty there. All the liberty was daylight; there was no night liberty. They stopped that of course when Castro took power. Base visits worked with enlisted clubs in the base recreation areas. I think I can remember the best seller at the Yam Club was a beer called Hatuey which basically was manufactured by the Cubans. It was an old standard if you could drink a case of Hatuey you did not have to pay for any beer. Not many people could do that. If I remember there was sixty bottles in a case. Not too many people could do that.

Liberty in the cities was inexpensive and a good place to let off steam. Liberty was up at midnight and everyone had to be on the train to go back to the fleet landing and ride to their respective ships. Kip once said he had a... that when liberty was up, would run all the sailors out of the bars to the train station so no one could stay overnight in town. The fleet landing was an area where the tin can sailors and the carrier sailors would sometimes fight it out while waiting for their boats to take them back to their ships.

When on base liberty cattle cars were used as buses to transport sailors from the fleet landing to the clubs. There was usually shore patrol on each cattle car to handle the men who had too much to drink at the enlisted clubs. I witnessed many fights on the cattle cars. When you stay on shore patrol there you had literally take those sailors and push them back to the train stations so they would get the heck out of town.

What I did in the navy was I was a ship serviceman. Service is basically we start out, you are working in the laundry, a cobbler, a tailor, a barber, and then I did the accounting but a lot of

people do not realize it is like a small city. You do everything... you have to take care of 4500 sailors.