Randall F. “Randy” Cooper ’69
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
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Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

[ANA A. “ALI”]

HUNTER: Hi. This is [Ana A.] “Ali” [Hunter] with the Dartmouth Vietnam Project. It is August 17th, 2017. I am in Rauner Special Collections Library at Dartmouth College, and I have Mr. [Randall F.] “Randy” Cooper on the other line.

Hi, Mr. Cooper. Would you possibly mind telling me where you’re calling from today?

COOPER: I am calling fro Eaton, New Hampshire, E-a-t-o-n.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.] Awesome. I just want to thank you so much for being here and doing this with me.

COOPER: Not a problem. Glad to help.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.] Okay, great. So let’s get started. I was wondering, just for a little bit of background first, if you could tell me a little bit about where you were born, where you grew up and your parents, that kind of thing.

COOPER: Sure. I was born in Rochester, New Hampshire. I was—my parents were Richard [F.] Cooper—Richard and Elizabeth [Wentworth] Cooper. I was fortunate enough that my grandfather, Burt Randall Cooper, was the Class of ’11, 1911 at Dartmouth, and my father was the Class of 1937, so I was one of those so-called legacies, and it was somewhat expected that I would apply, so I did, and I was the Class of 1969.

I grew up in Rochester. I went to the school system there. I then went for two years to Phillips Exeter Academy, and nothing—nothing super about my childhood short of just growing up in a small city in New Hampshire.

HUNTER: Did you have any siblings?

COOPER: I did. I had—I had one sister. Her name is Candace [Cooper Walworth]. She also grew up in Rochester, went to Smith College and then Columbia Medical School [sic; Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons] and then did her residency there in Hanover and became a physician in Lewiston and has retired from that (Lewiston, Maine).

HUNTER: Wow. Awesome. So if we could back up. [Chuckles.] I know you say there’s nothing very special about your childhood, but just a little background now. There was certainly a certain political moment happening at that time. Was there any sort of element of that that permeated through to your childhood or anything that you noticed, growing up?

COOPER: My father was very involved in the Republican Party at that particular point. He was a Republican national committeeman from New Hampshire and had been chairman of the Republican Party in New Hampshire and was also a [recording glitch; words missing; 2:38] and served in the Naval Reserve [sic; U.S. Navy Reserve] in—in—from his time in World War II through my childhood. So every week he would go off to Reserve training, so he was very involved in the [U.S.] Navy, and so that was a part of my life.

And politics, yeah. I mean, you probably aren’t aware, but—you may be, but one of the figures of New Hampshire politics was Governor [L.] Sherman Adams [Class of 1920], who became chief of staff to President [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. And my father was his friend and personal attorney here in New Hampshire, and he was governor when my father was president of the Republican Party, so we spent—the governor was—it was an interesting facet of our New Hampshire—of our life, and went through the scandal—the so-called scandal of Governor Adams accepting a vicuna ro-—coat, as they—and was forced to retire from the White House.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: Interesting. This day and age, there would be very minimal—the real story about it was that actually the—the person who gave him the coat called Governor Adams to see if he could talk his son into staying at Dartmouth, and that what it all

arrived out of, but that’s the story behind the story on that one.

HUNTER: [Laughs.] Well, thank you. Okay, awesome. So would you mind telling me—you said you—for two years at Exeter. Would you mind telling me a little bit about that? Did you play any sports? What were you interested in? That kind of thing.

COOPER: Well, I played a little football in high school. I did not at Exeter. It was basically hanging on, to a certain extent, at Exeter. It was quite an experience for me. I went in—I went two years to Exeter, which was sort of different because when you come in, the—the groups have sort of been formed by the—those people who had been there for two—two years. And so you’re somewhat of an outsider looking in.

But, you know, it was enjoyable. I had friends there. But not really that many. It was interesting: I had to—I’m awful at trying to learn other languages, and so I—

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: —I had taken—I had taken three—and three—you had to—you had to take up to three years of a particular language, and I had two years to do it, and I had taken three years of Latin in high school, and I didn’t want to do Latin anymore, and—and I wasn’t very good at it, so I tried to take a German course, which was two years of German, in one year, and after two weeks they said I wasn’t going to make it. So I had to take Latin I and Latin II at the same time in my first year in Latin III.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: And just trying to keep up with some of these things was—was interesting. But then I even took my Advanced Placements and missed by two points to be able to skip Latin at Dartmouth.

HUNTER: Oh, no! [Chuckles.]

COOPER: Yeah. So actually my freshman year at Dartmouth, I had to take Latin III again, and I think that Latin—the Classics

Department was in Dartmouth Hall. And I remember sitting in the back row of the—meeting the instructor and telling us what—what we were going to be reading, and I’m leaning against the back wall of books, and my hands finds one, and I pull it out, and it’s a—a word-for-word translation of the very book that we were going to be u- —being studying that semester.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: So interestingly enough, I did extremely well in Latin, enough so—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —that I was invited to dinner and asked to be a—a—to—to major in classics, which I did not do because I knew how I—my knowledge was really coming, but—not much happened at Exeter other than the fact I wanted to see—what was going on, as you know, at that particular point was [the] Vietnam [War] was gearing up. I was the Class of ’65. At that point, my politics were pretty much settled by my—by my family, and so I wanted to go in the Navy. I’d always been a voracious reader of [fictional character Captain Horatio] Hornblower and other things about the Navy, and so I applied to go to Dartmouth in what’s called the NROTC [Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps] scholarship program.

And the advantage of many of that was not only did they pay my tuition to Dartmouth but I got a telegram from the—which was interesting in those days—got a telegram from the director of admissions at Dartmouth two days before admissions came out, letting me know I’d been accepted in the NROTC program, but I—he needed to know whether I would accept that billet so that he could offer it to somebody else if I wanted to just go to Dartmouth not in the Navy, which I did accept, and I knew I was in, so that was good with me.

HUNTER: Oh. [Chuckles.] Great.

So if you don’t mind just rewinding to high school a little bit. You mentioned that you felt like your politics was settled by your family.

COOPER: Yes.

HUNTER: How did that go with moving to a new high school at Exeter, and was there any point at which you sort of felt like it was only sort of by your family, or was that a time in which you kind of got to explore a little bit more on your own?

COOPER: It’s hard to distinguish, okay? Put it this way: I felt good about it. I certainly was patriotic. I’m not sure if I was quite the [naval officer and commodore] Stephen Decatur [Jr.] person, as “My country right or wrong, my country,” but I think that, although we had opposed—it was interesting: The opposition to—we were—did not suppose—support President [John F.] Kennedy’s election. My family didn’t. But he—you know, he was the president, and we were now involved in a war in Southeast Asia, and so if that was their decision, I really didn’t question it at that point.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: It was interesting: I was playing basketball at Exeter on the day President Kennedy was assassinated, and one of the people I was playing with was [D.] David Eisenhower [III], so it was sort of like he was in our—you know, it was sort of like—it was just surreal.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: It was, you know, very—you know, I can remember just bawling my eyes out like everyone else during that whole time. It was very tragic. And I think most people my generation know exactly where they were standing when they heard of the president’s death, so— [unintelligible; 10:21]—

HUNTER: Oh, yeah. During the time was—oh, sorry. Go ahead. [Chuckles.]

COOPER: Oh, we weren’t—as much as there were disagreements, I—I never remember us, at least at that point, being as polarized

as we are now. Certainly, early, late ’60s, the country—I can speak more about this—became more pola- —that probably was similar to now, but I’m not—you know, I mean, at least the politicians were still speaking.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: [recording glitch; words missing; 10:54] polarized, but, you know, nowadays it’s like—I have my—I’m a Democrat now, so it’s, like, I—it’s—my father would roll over in his grave if he saw what the Republican Party was now, so—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.] Awesome.

COOPER: Yeah. [unintelligible; 11:16] much more about that. I’m somewhat of a—high school was not fun for me.

HUNTER: Well, during that time, you mentioned that Vietnam was gearing up. Was there a sort of sense that there was a war coming, or did you have that when you were thinking about joining the NROTC? Did you sort of have that expectation that you might be sort of involved in a war abroad?

COOPER: Yeah, but not—not thinking directly. I mean, I was going to—if I was involved in the Navy and how I was going to be, I mean—and I—so we don’t get—I never went to Vietnam, okay?

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: I was in the service in the Vietnam era, but I was never in Vietnam itself, so, no, I mean, we were—I mean, the war was not at its height, but it was certainly—there were reports of people dying and, you know. The real transition came during my Dartmouth years of—of—of what a—of not only the war getting more—we getting more involved in Vietnam but its impact on life in the United States. High school? No, not as much. I mean, it was there, but you’re still—I mean, you’re—it’s interesting.

I mean, as compared to this day and age, you know, we smoked cigarettes in the butt room of—of dormitories, and there were TVs. No one had—there’s no Internet. You depended on—so the—the—the—the media that we have

now—there wasn’t—you know, you basically either read your news if you got a newspaper or if you had TVs, which we didn’t have in the dorms, you saw it on the six o’clock news, and you got to trust Huntley-Brinkley [Chester R. “Chet” Huntley and David M. Brinkley] or Walter Cronkite or somebody like that, and there wasn’t what we have today of it’s in your face the moment it occurs.

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: It was much more “it’s over; it’s something else is happening, and we are here in downtown Exeter, New Hampshire,” and I was the manager of the crew, and we’re just trying to get ready for another season kind of thing.

HUNTER: Gotcha.

Okay, so we can start to talk about the transition to Dartmouth. You said that you always sort of knew that that’s where you were headed. Was there any point where you considered maybe going to another college or maybe not doing NROTC?

COOPER: Only now. [Laughter.] No, I mean, that was—you know, it—it was, like,—it was—the tea leaves have already been dropped for my life. At least that’s how I presumed. And I was not very independent in my thinking at that point, so, no, I was going to go to Dartmouth, and the only independence was probably the Navy, as I was—because I wanted to be what’s called a line officer, and my father was in the intelligence. No, I wanted to serve and be on ships, and that was—probably all of that came from my reading as a kid about the Navy.

No, I—so, no, I was excited to go, and I used to go—in the summer I was at summer camps, and I can—and I would—I was a counselor in a, you know, hike leader at some camps and so on, so I was very involved in summer camping, and I was—you know, that summer—those two summers that I was at Exeter, I also work for the New Hampshire Highway Department [sic; New Hampshire Department of Public Works and Highways, now New Hampshire Department of Transportation] as sort of a summer intern, shoveling dirt and on the weekends going to the summer camp that I went

to, so I was just gearing up in my own mind to going to Dartmouth and being in the ROTC.

HUNTER: Hmm.

COOPER: So then I went. And I can remember going there. My father came with me, and I was sworn in as a midshipman the first day I arrived, and I still have a picture of my father giving me the oath of office.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And at that particular point—a midshipman is a rank in the Navy. It is a—you’re [hold? 16:00] a warrant from the Secretary of the—it’s an ancient old rate or rank of being—so I’m sworn in as a midshipman on the Navy, and—and I think College Hall [now Collis Center for Student Involvement]—I don’t know what’s there now—is—the Navy ROTC I think was on the—what we would call the second deck but on the second floor, and that was the original—Kiewit [Computation] Center was the original—computers were on the first floor of College Hall, in a back room, and they were these great big IBM [International Business Machines Corporation] machines—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —that you learned a thing called BASIC [Beginner’s All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code] and these clattering kinds of things that—key or punch cards that went into ‘em. On the second floor was the Navy ROTC, and I think up on the third floor was the [U.S.] Army and the [U.S.] Air Force. And we had a—a full captain, which is equal to an Army colonel, who was the professor of naval science, and he was the head of the unit. And I think that was some of the—what occurred over the next four years was some of the difficulties between the academics and the ROTC, was they did not understand how someone with—based upon their assignment from the Navy to be head of the ROTC program, was now recognized as being a professor. There was a lot of bad blood between—as the war went on, which eventually had the ROTC kicked off campus.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And [unintelligible; 18:09] contribute to Dartmouth because of that. Foolish thing they ever did, but—but I remember that was up there, and they had various other officers. There was a [U.S.] Marine Corps major by the name of [Orio K.] “O. K.” Steele. He later went on to be a lieutenant general in the Marine Corps, but—and I can remember—I’m trying to remember the—the executive officer, the number two guy. I can remember one of the first introductory sort of lectures about our uniforms and so on, teaching us that we were one of the three original professions in the world, where a profession is—is—one of the hallmarks of profession is having peer review magazines, and there actually are peer review journals. Ours in the Navy is called the Naval Institute *Proceedings*, where you write articles for it and—you know, all of the etiquette that went with it of how to carry your gray gloves in your left hand and—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —calling card [recording glitch; words missing; 19:26] you would leave at the—on the front desk, in the calling card thing of your commanding officer’s house. It was—you know, back in the waning moments of—of—you know, that we were gentlemen (now gentlemen and gentlewomen) of honor, and that our word was our bond, which is still true in the—which was not understandable, I think, to those necessarily outside of the military at the time, that you can’t make very good decisions on the fire, in wartime or anything, without people telling you the truth, even if it’s bad news.

So you were always taught that it was—you just—you—you—you had to let ev- —you had to let—you had to speak the truth, no matter how bad it was, so that correct decisions could be made. And you didn’t mollycoddle your superiors with what they wanted to hear. And [unintelligible; 20:42] some of the military ethos was, you know, that no matter—you know. And if you screwed up, you told somebody you screwed up; you didn’t try to hide it, which—you know, which was interesting, to say the least, as we—but—

So any event, I arrived and got sworn in, and Dartmouth—it was welcoming at the time. We had—I can’t remember the day necessarily, Wednesdays or Thursdays—you had to—

being in the NROTC program, you took a certain number of courses that dealt with subjects pertaining to your future service, such as navigation or—it wasn't as simple as knot tying and so on, but you had to take a certain number of courses that were—I eventually became a navigator in the Navy and it was quite helpful, but—

And you also drilled, which was to learn the—learn how to give and take commands and learn how to act as a group and, you know, the whole idea of marching and so on. Well, that was—whatever afternoon that was, you ended up showing up down at the—behind the gym. There's a roadway that's behind what was the gymnasium then and the football stadium.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And [recording glitch; words missing; 22:24]. This—what I want to say is that the dormitory end of that—of the gymnasium—there was a door. You went in there, and inside there, there was actually an armory, which had all of our rifles. And I'm not sure if they actually shot, but that's where you picked up your—you were issued a rifle to drill with, and you would go marching around town and so on. And I was—I was—and I volunteered for what was the drill team, where you learned to flip rifles around and so on, like that, and you march in precision and be in parades and like—I eventually, my senior year, was the drill team commander, but—

And then I got—you know, I was in I think—I think I told you I was in Little [Hall] or Brown [Hall]. I can't remember which. The closest one to Gamma Delt[a Chi].

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And then I eventually was in recording glitch; words missing; 23:22] Chi. Go ahead. I'm meandering. Yeah.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.] Great. So if you wouldn't mind, I would love just to rewind a little bit, so to your freshman year. You mentioned that it was very welcoming initially, and your swearing-in ceremony. Would you mind sort of taking me on the trip of, like, how you arrived and what you were feeling

when you got here? I’m sure the climate was very different, but even I remember being sort of a nervous freshman. I’d love to hear a little bit about that.

COOPER: Well, you’re asking—that was almost 50 years ago, but—

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: —of course, I was excited. It wasn’t the first boarding school I went to. I was rooming with somebody who came from Exeter, so I knew who my roommate was going to be. I was—because I had managed the crew at Exeter, I got involved for the sake of—for something to do as well as the Navy, is I did get involved with the—my freshman year, the crew program here and volunteered to be a manager as well. And because I had spent so much time at Exeter in driving a motor boat and listening to the coach, I knew a lot about it. I hadn’t really rowed, but I knew a lot about the sport. And I can remembering—there were—everything was a sort of [club? 24:57] thing at the time. There was only one paid coach for the crew team, and there was the heavyweight coach. And they were saying they could groom me to be the lightweight coach, but I had to row for a year, but—so I knew what it was to be a rower, but I seemed to have a lot of knowledge about it.

The one thing I do remember about that was it was—I don’t know if anyone ever told you, but there was a great blackout in the fall. I think it was in October of 1965 that some switch went down on someplace, and from New York City all through New England the power went out for, you know, eight hours or ten hours or twelve hours, all the way from Québec [Canada] to New York City. The electrical grid went down.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: And I remember I was leading a shell, holding on—holding on to an [unintelligible; 25:51] shell at the bow, walking up from the Connecticut River up to the boathouse, at about five thirty, six o’clock at night. It just had gotten dark. Got the boat off the water, and all of a sudden all the lights went out. [Laughter.] Yeah. And it was an interesting night in Hanover that night—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —with all the lights out. Everything out. All the power gone. And—and most people also can tell you where they were when the lights went out. [Laughter.] Nothing was—nothing was on. I don’t—I don’t—I don’t think the college had any generators at that point, so the whole world went dark. Very interesting time. No, it was exciting. I mean, I—I—I had visited the college, obviously, as a kid and so on, so it was—everything was [wrapped up? 26:52]. If you remember—I don’t know. Do you still matriculate by going up into Baker Library [sic; Fisher Ames Baker Memorial Library, now Baker-Berry Library] as a freshman?

HUNTER: Yes, and then we shake the president’s hand in his office.

COOPER: Yeah. In his office? Okay. Well, no, we would go up to—the president would be up almost in the bell tower in Baker Library .We’d go up there, and we’d shake his hand, and we would matriculate, and he would give us this little thing. So I’m glad that didn’t go away. So I can remember matriculating. At that point, of course, all books were books. There was nothing—we had no computers, so—is the bottom floor, where the murals are, still a reserve book area?

HUNTER: Yes.

COOPER: Yeah, same thing. That was where particular books were kept that everyone would have to read assignments, so you’d go there.

Yeah, I mean, it was—the dining hall was probably in the same location, but behind College Hall.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And, you know, you remember the cold winter days where it’s cold but very dry, so that you’d be walking across in the morning and watching your breath freeze [unintelligible; 28:19] go to the dining hall for breakfast.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: It was—yeah. And, of course, there was no—we were still single sex at that particular point, so your only way to meet women was either to travel or—it—it—it was awful.

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: Yeah, [Interstate] 89 was built—I think 89 was built as far as New London [New Hampshire], so you had to go cross country to go to—and Colby Sawyer College was then called Colby Junior College [for Women, now Colby-Sawyer College]. That was the closest women’s school. Or you would go across Vermont to Green Mountain College and Swarthmore [College] or a very long road trip down to Smith [College] and that area.

And then on weekends they would—there would be buses that would bring—I can remember at one of our things of our freshman year is so-called mixers, that they would bring freshmen—girls from other colleges up by bus on a Friday night or something, and they would bring them to the back door of the gymnasium and [unintelligible; 29:44]—talk about a perp walk.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: They would have to walk up the floor to wherever the basketball gym was at that particular point. They would come through the back door, and there would be these lines of men on either side that they would walk through, trying to—you’d try to catch their eye, and you’d come to realize that they were just walking through you to go meet the guy they were really going out with—

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: —who was [cross-talk and recording glitch; words missing; 30:14], who was out on Fraternity Row, and you were purely the means of them getting a free ride to Hanover. But it was just sort of crazy, interesting times. It must be—and I’m sure this—all the interesting things or different things—but I’m very different experiences [sic]. I had been with—if both [unintelligible; 30:42] in the college had been co-ed, it would have been—but there was also a—there was something also

very unique about it too, so they were pluses and minuses, but—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —I remember the minuses—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —more than the pluses.

HUNTER: Well, that’s always how it goes, isn’t it?

Okay, you—

COOPER: [cross-talk; unintelligible; 31:08]. Where are *you* from?

HUNTER: Me? [Chuckles.] I’m from London, England.

COOPER: My—my daughter-in-law is from—also from a suburb of London, Wimbledon.

HUNTER: Oh, lovely. [Chuckles.] That’s close to where I live. [Chuckles.]

COOPER: I recognize the accent, so—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: In any event, yes.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: [Recording glitch; words missing; 31:40] very different kind of life than you might—

HUNTER: Yeah. Great.

So you mentioned that some of the courses that you were taking were sort of Navy courses to do with the NROTC, in navigation and stuff like that. Did you enjoy those, and sort of did you do—what other courses did you take? What were you interested in while you were here?

COOPER: Well, I planned on—I had two plans in my mind. One, I planned on being in the Navy for my life.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: Or else [recording glitch; words missing; 32:16] my father planned on me being a lawyer. [Both chuckle.] Without ever necessarily saying that. So I majored in political science, but I also took, during the course of my four years—I loved all my Navy courses, and I did well in them. I was preparing to be a professional naval officer, so, for instance, although I could do nothing about learning languages, which I was awful at, our big enemy, so-called enemy at the time was the Soviet Union.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And so there was a war going on in Southeast Asia, so I remember taking as many courses as I could about Russian history and Russian social- —you know, whatever I could about Russia and also about Southeast Asia, that I took: history and politics and the like, so that I could learn as much as I could about potential enemies of our country. So, you know, it was a—that was the career I was—I never thought of it in the terms of killing people or dying; it was just being prepared.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And so—yeah, and I can’t tell you which course I took then. I mean, you know, our freshman year at that particular point, almost everything was pretty—there were—unlike reading—my son went to the University of St. Andrews, so he read—you know, after going to Exeter—he—you know, he goes over there [Scotland] and just reads philosophy, and I’m sure Dartmouth may be [recording glitch; words missing; 34:14]. I guess our first trimester at Dartmouth were basically required courses so that you could get done all the liberal arts requirements.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And you started becoming more of a major and then—you know, I don’t have too much of a recollection other than, you

know, we were—we were in this brand-new dormitory at—at Exeter [sic], which had this living room set up with bedrooms around it, and by the end of the year, somebody had taken over the living room to turn it into a bedroom, and, you know, there was—yeah.

And I was off for my first cruise my freshman year, which—that was the other part of the program, as you studied summer, six weeks of it, with the Navy. And that particular summer, I spent three years on the—three weeks on the USS Wasp, which was a aircraft—submarine CVS [hull classification symbol meaning “antisubmarine aircraft carrier”], which was an antisubmarine warfare carrier stationed out of Boston, which is—and another three weeks at Naval Air Station Brunswick, just north of Brunswick, Maine, where they flew patrol bombers, P-2s [Lockheed P-2 Neptunes] and the beginning of P-3s [Lockheed P-3 Orions], which were—which were antisubmarine warfare planes to track Russian submarines in the North Atlantic [Ocean].

So—which was a—the Cold War was going on at that time, and that was a real-time thing that was happening, was we always had nuclear [which he pronounces as NU-cue-luhr] armed submarines off the Russian coast, and they always had nuclear armed submarines off our coast. Probably still do, so—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And we would track them, so—

HUNTER: Wow. I’d love to hear a little bit more about those summers, your freshman summer. Did you sort of—like, how did that fit in? Were you with other NROTC people on that ship?

COOPER: Yes, we were—we were called plebes or third-class—third-class midshipmen, and I guess just at that point, and, you know, they were—it was interesting—I know more so the next summer, but, yeah, you were—it was just not the students from Dartmouth. All the—all the Ivies [Ivy League schools] at that point all had the NROTC program, and, you know—and I can remember Villanova [University]—but anyway, you were—there’d be a group of you from multiple colleges that would be there, and we were now—that

particular summer, we were—we were serving almost as an—in an enlisted man capacity.

We had the same uniforms and the like except our little white sailor hats had a blue stripe across—around the top to show we were, you know, third-class midshipmen instead of a—you know, a seaman or something. But—and so we stood the same kind of watches, where you—you would rotate to whether being in the engine room or—or up on the bridge or as a lookout or the like, so that you got to understand from the bottom up what it was like to serve on a ship.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: So—and so I remember on the aircraft carrier, which was big but nowhere near as big as they are now, I can remember serving—standing watches on the—as a lookout on the fantail, which is the aft of the ship, where you’re basically looking out to see if there’s somebody fell in the water to let them know there was a man overboard.

And, you know, being—working in the arrester gear room underneath the flight deck, so that when planes landed with a bang, it would, you know—[Chuckles.] I don’t know if you know how carriers work, but there are—there’s a—in order to land a plane, there are four cables that stretch across the rear of the flight deck, and when a plane lands, it has on it what’s called a tail hook, and it has to hook one of those four cables to stop it. And they’re hooked up to this hydraulic system so that the cable will give some and slow the plane down very quickly and then stop it. And if the plane misses the cable, it’s already on full power so they can take off on the angle deck and come around again. They normally don’t miss the hook, but being a pilot and trying to hit this postage stamp in the water in the middle of the night—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —[unintelligible; 39:45] exciting. But I was in the room underneath it when the plane would hit, and, you know, I mean, there’s a lot of ways you can lose your life on an aircraft carrier, just because of all the things that’s going on.

I do remember that we would go up on the flight deck, and it is interesting: In those days, you know, sailors were—I don't want to say expendable, but there were things that safety wise, although they could use a sailor—put it this way: In order to be able to figure out if an arresting gear, which is—if an arresting cable is getting worn—it's a wound-up—you know, it's, like,—it's a metal cable, which is made up of small metal [twines? 40:38] all woven together, like a piece of rope except it's out of metal.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And the only way to figure out—the only way to figure out if a—if it is getting worn is to see if any of those little, small pieces of metal is—are broken. And the best way of doing that is to have a midshipman cover his hand with grease and run it along the cable, and when he gets stabbed, he knows it's—

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: —broken.

HUNTER: Oh, no!

COOPER: So, no, yeah, it's—[Laughs.]

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And then when they—when they have a broken cable like that, when they are going to replace this cable, which is, let's say, 400 feet long because it goes around the deck and underneath, they put it in the catwalk, and they start one end into the ocean, and then as gravity takes over, the things goes off at 100 miles an hour, sliding down the catwalk into the ocean, you know, like a hose, you know, all of a sudden filling with water. And they let everyone—let everyone to know to get away from it. But, of course, if you were too close, it would cut your leg off or something as it went over.

HUNTER: Oh, wow.

COOPER: You know? You know, and you don't—you're on a flight deck, and there's jet engines running, and you don't walk

behind one or you get killed. And it’s not—it’s—an aircraft carrier can be a very dangerous place, and you have to be very careful.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And the Navy drums that into you, but, you know, if you’re not conscious of what you’re doing—so anyway, that was my summer. I enjoyed it. I—it was—we’d work out with the Marines when they had an empty flight deck, so they would go up there and run us around, and that was not necessarily what I wanted to do,—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —so I made—I’d be on watch as much as I could to avoid having to run five miles on the flight deck.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: I became a qualified helmsman on an aircraft carrier, which I wanted to do, which was, you know, you got to steer it. You took orders, but it was interesting to be up there on that big helm. And when the officer of the deck told you to, you know, steer right, you could and steady the ship on a course and do it. So it was—you know. Hey, it was—it was the life that I wanted to live, and I was living it, you know, and it was all very exciting to me, and it was—I—I—there were other midshipmen that were doing it.

There were not only those that who were doing it in the regular program that I described to you, but there was also a contract program so that particularly as Vietnam geared up, you could sign up to be in the ROTC. Your tuition wasn’t paid for, but if you complied—if you were accepted and were in the program, you could be commissioned in the Naval Reserve [sic; U.S. Navy Reserve] for a three-year commitment. In other words, you avoided the draft and you were in the Navy.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: So—so I think there were 13—I think we had 13 regulars, maybe 10 regular billets in each class, 10 to 13, that the

government paid tuition for, and then there were maybe another 10 or 20 contract midshipmen in each class. So—and that’s how it filled out, and my—my disappointment in the college at the end of it all was the fact that all of your—you didn’t have much varied thinking going into the professional officer corps of the Navy, as it all came out of the [U.S.] Naval Academy.

And what was interesting is that at that time, as you had professional naval officers coming out of the Ivies as well, who grew up in a—who went to fraternities and were in a different climate,—

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: —and weren’t just learning the party line. And I thought it was always important that—I thought the college lost sight of what they were offering and what was important to the country of offering this, and for the sake of appeasing, in my mind, at least at the time, a disgruntled and—as much as I’m now the liberal, a liberal-leading [sic; -leaning] faculty and student body. It was just kicking them off campus or getting rid of the ROTC as a political statement instead of understanding that maybe for the greater good, they ought to have Dartmouth-trained people in the military.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: Our military got blamed for the war when nowadays, fortunately, we’ve grown beyond that, but—but in those days it was done.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: So what was interesting: Before my freshman thing—I wanted to—this is what was interesting about the time at Dartmouth is I think Armed Forces Day is in May each year. I’m not even sure if they have it anymore, but they do. What happened each year—and I will tell you about it each year—is each year on Armed Forces Day—at least my freshman year, and it happened in years before—is the three NROTC programs would form all their midshipmen up, which would be—would be midshipmen and cadets and would be—there would be a Navy contingent of, let’s say, 100 or 120, and

100, 120 Air Force, and maybe 200 and 250 in the Army—all behind the gym. And we would march out, take a left, go by the football stadium, take a right, go up to Main Street in Hanover, where everyone would be on the sidewalks with flags and so on, and we would march down the Main Street of Hanover. I can’t even remember whether the—the college band led us or not.

And we would march out, in front of College Hall, take a right under Dartmouth Green, and form up there in formation, and someone would give some speech about Armed Forces Day and the place of the college in—the college used to be a Navy training facility during World War II. And any event, there would be a celebration of that holiday with a—with those who had—who were going to serve being honored in that process. And that was in May of 1966, okay?

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: That’s what occurred that year.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: And I went on my freshman cruise. I think it’s important to get these in the timeline. I had my first three weeks on an aircraft carrier, and my next three weeks were on—up at Brunswick Naval Air Station, where I got to fly on—in patrol planes.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: What they’re trying to do is get you to experience—get you to experience all of the facets of the Navy so when it came to you later saying what you wanted to do, you had some idea what everyone did.

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: so—and that [recording glitch; words missing; 48:42] three weeks, as I would—I got to fly a 12-hour patrol on a P-2 aircraft at the time, which was this small airplane—well, it was small as compared to P-3s, where you literally had to crawl from the front to the back—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —over the wing. I mean, it was only a crawl space to get there. And it still had a—what was like a bombardier’s nose, a glass nose that you had to go down a hatch and get into, and we would go out in the patrol and drop sonobuoys and so on and had one of the best steak meals in my life. It was interesting—

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: —how the air—how these sailors, who made of the crew—it had, like, a crew of 10 or something—could cook up a hell of a meal in this small, little galley, and it was just—you know, you could—it was a very—I know I was in—in the—the pilot was showing off, and I can remember him flying very low over the water, and his copilot, who was, let’s say, a little more trepidatious, was quite concerned.

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: I was in the glass bubble as we went over this plane and so on. This was—it was an interesting experience.

And then I got to do another patrol in a P-3, which they were using from 1968—I think they’re still flying. Maybe they changed over. But I know they were flying P-3s up until maybe a few years ago, so they’ve been the workhorse of the patrol Navy for a long time, which was in—in—a much bigger airplane, [as opposed to the P-2] , where there was no crawl space and all sorts of room, and bigger crews and electronics and—kinds of stuff. But it was—it [unintelligible; 50:51]—it was a different part of [unintelligible; 50:53]. Brunswick Naval Air Station is now closed. There’s no Navy in Boston. There’s no Boston Naval Shipyard.

Matter of fact, where I spent most of my time at Newport Naval Shipyard [sic; Naval Station, Newport, Rhode Island], that’s closed. A lot of these things have gone, but during the—during that point of the year—in the ’60s they were still very much a part of the—of the Navy.

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: So I get back to Dartmouth.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: Fraternity rush. I don’t know if it still happens in your sophomore year now or if there’s a reason [unintelligible; 51:28].

HUNTER: Yeah.

COOPER: Okay.

HUNTER: [unintelligible; 51:31].

COOPER: Pard’ me?

HUNTER: It’s still sophomore year as well.

COOPER: And they were a significant part of the social life at that point, and there was a fraternity rush. And I rushed Gamma Delta Chi, which was, again, a third-generation thing. And, you know, in some respects—you know, I look back on a lot of things and this, and it’s really easy for me to think that I did a lot of things because of and for and so on because of my father, I’m sure. He was the alumni clerk of the Gamma Delta Chi [Alumni] Corporation, which I went on to serve as—so who know—I—I suspect that—I will always suspect that I was pledged by Gamma Delt not because who I was but because who my father was, you know?

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And that’s one of those regrets, but it became a significant part of—of my life at Dartmouth, enough so that it was a very interesting class. I basically gave up any involvement with the crew team and any of that, and I just was a—the Navy and the fraternity. I can remember my freshman year—my sophomore year, Gamma Delt was on tap every single day that year through graduation.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: [recording glitch; words missing; 53:08] your crowning achievement was being able to drink beer every day.

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: That was—that was—some of the—what the college was about at that particular point.

Vietnam started racking—Vietnam then started becoming more and more prominent in 1967,—

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: —more and more [depth? Death? 53:38]. There was the buildup. There was, of course, the—I'm trying to remember the election coming. [Richard M.] Nixon was—we were—President [Lyndon B.] Johnson was—you know, you were—things were building up and building up, and the—and the protests were starting.

I can remember that the president of the fraternity at the point, Harold Bernt [Class of 1967], unfortunately since died—was in the Army ROTC, and I remember he refused to serve after graduation and I think went to Canada. So there was a—

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: —there was a division within the fraternity.

HUNTER: Were there a lot of reactions to that?

COOPER: You know what? It was—when you know somebody personally, you can—as much as you disagree with them, you can understand what *they* are. So while I could be very angry at people who—or I could feel, you know, anger at people who disagreed with me because I didn't think they were thinkers, my fraternity brothers who I knew, I understood that they were entitled to their own opinions and they were making hard decisions, or at least instinctively I knew that.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: We were very much a—it was an interesting transition at the time. We were very much a drinking house. As I told you, we were on tap 365 days a year.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: By the end of my senior year, I was one of the few drinkers left in the house, although everyone drank, but it became a big marijuana house.

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: I mean, just as the whole transition occurred. We started—it was—it was a—Gamma Delt was a—was a fraternity that was built for being a fraternity, actually at the time when my father was president of the fraternity. And they built this new house. And all of the rooms on the second floor were the—I want to say the living—and it was set up in that way that if you were one of the 18 people who were boarding, which I did my junior and senior year, you were—you had a room on the second floor, which was where your clothes were kept, and you had a desk, and there were one—there were two of you in each room, and there was what’s called the bridge, which was like a Navy term up on the third floor, which is where the president and three people had—and then up on the third floor there were sleeping rooms, which were just rooms with beds.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And so you had a living room, or a room that you lived in, and then when you went to bed you went to the third floor, and it was like a bunk room.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And by the time of my senior year, people had rearranged everything so they could have their own little, single room so they could be isolated by themselves, because at that point we were thinking that marijuana caused people to isolate, as compared to drinking, which seemed to be much more social. I did not smoke, so I really didn’t know, but that was my analysis.

HUNTER: Ah.

COOPER: So it was—it was—it was—we were also very famous at the time. Gamma Delt was the place for the Sunday afternoon bands.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And because—again, women only came for the weekend—the buses usually left around three to five o’clock on Sunday afternoons, so on any big weekend—whether it was Green Key or whatever it is—Gamma Delt was the place because we had the best band on Sunday afternoon. And everyone would come, and we would move out all the furniture on the first floor, and fog cutters would flow. I still have the recipe someplace, which was—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —[recording glitch; words missing; 58:01] awful thing of all—liquor. And you would dance, rolling on the floor, and everyone would get hammered and bring their date back to the bus, and off everyone would go, and you would move on with life and clean up the next day, but—

So my—my—my—as we—as the war became more prominent, my—my—I began to isolate more, and I was in the Navy and I was in the fraternity. I later became an actor, as I did in high school way back in—and—but the idea that I would get involved outside of the fraternity just didn’t feel comfortable to me. So I didn’t. And I did what I had to to be able to graduate.

So any event, what occurred—and I want to distinguish this—we had come—now I am in my—let me think of this right—no, I’m sorry, we had the same—we had the same—let me think this out—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.] No worries.

COOPER: We had the same Armed Forces Day parade my sophomore year. No, no. No, no, I’m wrong. No, I’m right. I’m right.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: We had the same Armed Forces Day parade my sophomore year. That was in 1967. Things were heating up, May of 1967. I then did my second class cruise in the summer. Now, that is—they now introduce you to the Marine Corps, of which 15 percent of the—the size in the Naval Academy—15 percent of the midshipmen are entitled to become—become part of the Marine Corps, because the Marine Corps is part of the naval service.

And—and so that six-week cruise, we went—spent three weeks at [the Naval Amphibious Base at] Little Creek, Virginia, learning how the—what the Marine Corps was all about. And we met members of SEAL [U.S. Navy **Se**a, **A**ir and **L**and] Team 2 at the time, and they showed us their stuff. The SEALs were just starting at that point. They were operating in Vietnam. And we did all sorts of things as Marines, and we did an amphibious landing.

I can remember we would—we went out on what was called the landing ship tank, an LST. There was no air conditioning or anything out there for a night in the middle of the summer, so we’re going to do this landing the next day, and we are sleeping down in berthing compartments that Marines would live in, which were stacked about four or five bunks high, with about a foot between each bunk. And I can remember you could not turn over on them. You got into it and you lay down on your back, and it was so hot that I can remember perspiration filling up my eye sockets. It [sic] woke up with all this water, you know, in my eyes and everything. I didn’t know where I was. It was, like, wow!—I mean, the idea that people lived there.

And get up, and we would get into—we did this amphibious landing, and I was in what was called an LCVP [landing craft, vehicle, personnel]—not an LCVP but a—a tracked vehicle which was an enclosed shell with a track on it that when it went in the water, there was only about six inches it above the water. And they would use these tracks like a bulldozer to propel you to the beach, and then it would climb up on the beach.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

HUNTER: And we were the first one due to go off, and, of course, everything about the Marines is doing thing [sic] on time, and whoever the officer was in charge of getting the tracked vehicles off the vehi- —off the deck was quite upset that it wouldn’t start and was threatening to just push the thing off, and if you didn’t have power, you would sink, which was always a—not a good feeling, since the people near the hatches were the one [sic] that were going to get out, but for the rest of us, if we got pushed off, we had about no chance of getting out. But fortunately, the engine started. We got out.

We eventually made it to the beach. The vehicle charges up on the beach. The doors open, and right in front of us is an opposing force machine gun firing, and I knew I was dead. I decided at that point I wasn’t going to be a marine. [Laughter.] It was, like, you know, I had—you know, no—no chance of living on that beach that day, and it was, like, *Wow! That’s awful!*

But it was, you know, it was a—it was a lot of camaraderie. We lived in this—this hut system out there, where they had this beer garden, and we sat, sitting there in these fatigues, in the rain, with ponchos on, drinking beer on any particular night, and, you know, chatting. And it was just, you know, boys camp almost. It was fun.

And then the next three weeks we went to [the Naval Air Station at] Corpus Christi, Virginia, to learn about flying in the Navy—I mean, Corpus Christi, Texas. And we spent three weeks there.

In both of these things there were midshipmen from all over the place, even from the Naval Academy, in both of these experiences. No, we weren’t with the Naval Academy. They—they came at different times. They did the same things, but—but we were there with midshipmen from all of the colleges from the South and from the Midwest and everything. And they would break it up. About half the midshipmen would—went to Corpus Christi first, and then half would go to Corpus Christi the other half. And we were in the other half.

And—and there, we got to take flights in training planes and got to fly a little bit and got to take one flight in a training jet and go through the—you know, ejector seat training and go through the training where you are—you’re—you crash land in a swimming pool and you have to get out of the plane, in case you crash land in the ocean. It was all of the training stuff that you would go through as a pilot, to see how you liked being a pilot.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And one of them is that you go in with an oxygen mask into a—a room that they can depressurize, and they bring you up to 25[,000] or 30,000 feet, and you take off your oxygen mask so that you can feel what is the effects of the lack of oxygen on you. And about 90 percent of the people end up having the feeling of giddiness, so that there are always somebody in there that, as people started getting giddy and start doing crazy stuff—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —they can hold them and put the oxygen mask back on so they don’t get in trouble. And then about 10 percent of the people get nauseous, not giddy, and I was one of the 10 percent, unfortunately. [Laughs.]

HUNTER: Aww. [Chuckles.]

COOPER: Yeah. I never got to experience the giddiness. But that was one thing I remember.

So we get done with that and we come back to Hanover, and that’s when things really started to get exciting, 1968—’67, ’68. Sixty-eight was the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, where [recording glitch; words missing; 1:07:01] army. I don’t know if you read anything about that, but.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: They asked—go ahead. Yeah?

HUNTER: Yeah, I—I—yes. [Chuckles.] But I—I would rather hear sort of what you thought about it at the time.

COOPER: Well, no, I mean, we only thought about what we heard. I know there was a—it was both a political and military statement by the North, and we were not prepared for it at all, and the Marines—I'm trying to remember the city that—any event.

So there was the Tet Offensive, and with that, the—and also you had a political election coming up, and you had, of course, [Robert F.] “Bobby” Kennedy being killed in that summer, [the Rev. Dr.] Martin Luther King's [Jr.'s] death, a number of other things that were—that was occurring.

And the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society]—I think it was Social—I'm trying to remember what it stands—it was—that was sort of the left-wing political action group through the country, in colleges. Was—was organizing for protesting, and there was word out that the—the Dartmouth College Armed Forces Day parade was something to be protested.

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: And so the word was out on all of the campuses of—at least *we* were told that the word was out for everyone to appear at Dartmouth on Armed Forces Day for the Armed Forces Day parade. And so the New Hampshire State Police turned out a number of other things, and the Armed Forces Day parade was no longer to the college Green, and instead, we marched from the back of the gymnasium down the road and into the football stadium and formed up on the football stadium so that there was little, if any [unintelligible; 1:09:39] the police could protect the—the participants from—no one knew what these demonstrations were going to be about.

You know, it was—we were told not to take any action whatsoever, no matter what anyone did, except we were not to surrender our rifle. But short of that, [recording glitch; words missing; 1:10:11] come up and throw water on us or stick flowers in our rifles or whatever, we were ordered not to do anything. And we just had no idea what was going to occur. And, you know—I go back to the—the difference of knowing people and not knowing people. I mean, I would know no one in my fraternity would hurt me, but I had no idea who—who these other people were. And at that

particular point—as you study the war, you will know that the military was the target of the war.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: We were the “baby killers.” I don’t know when [the] Mỹ Lai [Massacre] happened, but—so that protests were—were against the military, and it felt very personal.

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: And so it—it—and it felt very different. You went from being respected for what you were doing to being—now being marched into the football stadium and surrounded by state police so that the demonstrators, whether in the stands or so on—to be protected from them.

HUNTER: Did you—did you have any close friends or fraternity brothers who perhaps were in the—I think SDS is Students for a Democratic Society?

COOPER: Ah. Oh, I think [cross-talk; unintelligible; 1:11:45]. I don’t know if they were in the SDS directly, but, oh, I certainly had friends who were demonstrating, who were—I can remember that Parkhurst [Hall] takeover my senior year. There were those of us who were on one side and those who were on another, but it was, like,—yeah, but they were still—guess what: We were all in the same college. And, you know, no one would have driven a car into a crowd at that point.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: I mean, that was the furthest thing, I think, from at least the college level. But you just didn’t know what was going to occur when people were coming—when—there was a lot of fear, not fear that you couldn't take care of yourself but fear that—of the unknown. You just didn’t know. I mean, this was all new. So, I mean, I can—and so that’s what occurred in that particular year, and that’s my biggest recollection of that.

And it was—my first class cruise was on an oiler, which was a—an AO [U.S. Navy fleet oiler]. An oiler is a—a ship that oils naval vessels, warships under way so that a carrier on

one side would come up and a destroyer on another side, and you would put across literally gas hole and fill them up with oil, as we were all going along in 12 knots. And so—and the commanding officer of a oiler was normally a four- —a four-stripe captain, which is a very senior pilot who is getting his legs on commanding large vessels, because only pilots could command aircraft carriers. So you had to be a—go through flight training to become a pilot in order to command an aircraft carrier, which was called the [unintelligible; 1:14:27]. You know, any event, that’s what I was on.

It was interesting. I got to stand watches, and I—I can remember once out in the middle of the Caribbean [Sea], we—just [unintelligible; 1:14:39] in the middle of nowhere and had swim call and a barbecue on the fantail and everything.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: So, you know, we were on the Atlantic side, so—it was good. It was good. It was preparing me for what I wanted to do.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And—but, you know, I was still this New Hampshire kid, and so when my senior year came, I—I wanted to be on small ships. I wanted to be on destroyers. I was—I stood in relatively high ranking in—in the pecking order, so that I could probably pick what I wanted to do, so I wanted to be on destroyers. And the closest thing to New Hampshire was Newport, Rhode Island, so I wanted to be on one stationed in Newport. So that’s what I put in for. And to do it all over again, I would have probably asked to be, you know, in San Diego or Hawaii or someplace exotic.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: You know, and what turned—so that’s what I put in for. And then came the Armed Forces Day parade my senior year. And now it’s 1969. The country is very polarized. “Tricky Dick” [Richard M Nixon] is now our president.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: We have gone through our first lottery. I can remember sitting in the draft lottery. I’m not sure if that was my senior year or my junior year, but it was right around there. I think it was—the first one was in 1969, I think, but maybe not. I remember being in the—with all of the seniors, being in the TV room at the—at the—at the fraternity. I was going in, but I was certainly aware of what everyone else’s feelings were as the various bouncing balls were pulled and names were—you know. And if you were in the top hundred, you know, you were going to be drafted, and if you were in the bottom 60, you probably weren’t. At least it was now a fair system. Prior to that time, it was local draft boards, and lo and behold, it was the poor and the black who got drafted, and the folks like me, who knew somebody in politics, didn’t. Much fairer system.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: I am a proponent of—of—I think we ought to have mandatory service in this country, but not necessarily in the military. I think everyone ought to go through the same boot camp, so to speak of, and that’s where you get to know and get acclimized to all sorts of people from different walks of life, and then you go do your own two years, whether it’s in the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps or whatever, but you give two years back to your country. But that’s diverging.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: So let’s—on Armed Forces Day, the college then decided they will not let us march. We can’t—oh, I missed one! The SDS parade I think—the one in—no, no, no—okay, I missed one; you’re absolutely right. It was my sophomore year. That’s where I got confused—’67 was in the football stadium, okay?

HUNTER: Yes.

COOPER: Sixty-eight, my junior year, was we marched to the soccer fields down on the other side of—out the gym, go the other way, take a left, the practice fields. Go down—I can’t remember the road that’s on the—I—I don’t know if you know where I’m talking about, but you—the road—you have

the road that the main football stadium entrance is on. If you go on the other side—

HUNTER: Lebanon Street [in Hanover]?

COOPER: Pard’ me?

HUNTER: I think it’s Lebanon Street?

COOPER: Lebanon Street. Marched down Lebanon Street and took a left down a driveway there, which went out to some practice fields, okay?

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And there, there was, in my junior year, an area set aside for the ROTC to form up and an area, an equal area set aside for the demonstrators to be in with I think the state police in between. So now it was—everyone was given their equal place to be, okay?

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: And so we went from the parade group to the football stadium to the practice field. And my senior year, we weren’t allowed to march, and instead, we just had the ROTC just met up in the lecture hall in Dartmouth Hall, where the—our bosses spoke to us. So from our point of view, no one was proud of us anymore, and instead, we were something to be scorned and to be hidden.

And that’s how I felt, that—that—those four days epitomized to me the whole transition that occurred in my college years of how we were observed as being in the military. And so we were—one of the guys in the ROTC with me was [Richard L.] “Sandy” Alderson [Class of 1969]. I think his father was a Marine who came up and spoke to us, but Sandy is the general manager, baseball operations, for the New York Mets.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: Yeah, I mean, there were—New York baseball Mets—you know, it’s not cricket; it’s baseball.

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: But, you know, there were—there were, you know,—and so on the day before graduation, we were actually commissioned officers into the Navy and the Marine Corps in a ceremony that was held in the BEMA [“Big Empty Meeting Area,” a popular name for the amphitheater in Dartmouth’s College Park] where, again, the state police could surround the BEMA and protect us from—from protests. And I remember we would go in there when we were commissioned and throw our hats in the air and all that kind of stuff. Other than that, we participated in all the graduation stuff at the college. I don’t know if they still do canes, so we would—

HUNTER: Yes, absolutely.

COOPER: —and would raise our—and we’d break our pipes up on the pine tree on the top of the—up by the tower. Probably with no smoking nowadays, the idea of having a clay pipe and breaking it may not be—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: — a tradition anymore, but there were those traditions that, you know—but—but the military part of it was all very secretive or protected.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And so I couldn’t wait to escape what I felt like a—a country that no longer wanted me and get into the Navy, so I went home, and I was—and I received my orders to—to report on board the USS *Zellars* (DD-777]. She was now in the Mediterranean [Sea], and I took my sea bag and my suitcase and my sword. At that particular point, you had swords, still do, but—which was part of your dress uniform. Was interesting.

And you took all of that and took a bus, I think, or something down to a Air Force base in New Jersey, flew on July first or second over to La Roda, Spain. Stayed in a bachelor officers’ quarters there, and I thought I was going to have to

spend the whole Fourth of July weekend there when all of a sudden they said, “Come quick. There’s a plane to”—I think Nice [France] or—France, where I was picked up by SK-2 Clark, I think his name was, was a storekeeper, and in a truck, brought to Sanremo, Italy—and the Riviera was relatively small from the point of view of driving it—Where I then went to a pier and got on a motor [wheel? whale? 1:24:21] boat and was driven out to my first ship.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: And met—who is still a friend of mine, who was my—was my boss there, Peter White. Toured the ship that night. Lived up in what’s called forward officers’ quarters with a guy by the name of Bill [Keene? Keating? 1:24:45]. There was another guy on board who is a close friend of mine still, David Partridge.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: He went—I tell you, the wardroom was made up of two guys from Princeton [University], two guys from Harvard [University], one guy from Dartmouth, one guy from Cornell [University]—you know, you—it was a very different—you—you—it would be very hard for you now to go on a Navy ship and see that kind of makeup,—

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: —which is why I’m saying that—so that’s where the debates—I mean, we were—that’s where you—you maybe would start to question things, because you had other people who believed what you believed but also were—and were willing to serve, but who you also felt were—could speak to you about it.

So it was a good cruise. I was in the Med, and went through a change of command and actually—that’s—was in the end of 1969 that the military started to wind down, and that was the first decommissioning of ships. The *Zellars* were [sic] sent back early in September to become a Reserve ship. My friend, Dave Partridge was given an early release from the Navy. Instead of having to serve for three years, he only had

to serve for two. And I was in for the long haul, but that’s when they started to wind down some things.

And what was interesting is the *Zellars* was—was then sent to be a Reserve ship in New York City, and we were sent to Brooklyn Naval Shipyard [sic; Brooklyn Navy Yard]—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —which was still in the Navy. And I was there from I think December to May or June—June or July of 1970. I was in Brooklyn. And there was there a little bachelor officers’ quarters, where the Navy officers who—who was—a friend of mine from my hometown was there. He went to the Naval Academy. There was a nice little bar there. And what you discovered was you felt so isolated from the world that even though New York City was at your fingertips, you never went into the city.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: Never went to a play. Never went to Broadway. That was just another world. You were—you stayed right there on the naval base. In the spring of 1970, the United States Postal Service went on strike, and President Nixon ordered the military to break the strike. And—and until they could call up the Reserves to do so, I was called to the CO’s office and said, “You’re gonna take 60 sailors. There are gonna be two buses here tomorrow, and you’re gonna go to the Brooklyn post office and report to somebody.” And I had command of the second deck of the Brooklyn post office and started—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —to sort the mail.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: All the mail—all the mail from overseas that came through JFK [John F. Kennedy International Airport] all went to the Brooklyn post office. And it was interesting. It was all sorted by hand at that particular point. So all these sailors were sorting mail. And the Marines showed up the next day and started to deliver the mail, and as soon as they started to

deliver the mail, the postal workers came back to work. They didn’t think we could do it, but we did.

HUNTER: [Laughs.] Well, I’d love to—

COOPER: Go ahead.

HUNTER: Sorry, go ahead. I was going to say, very quickly, if you wouldn't mind, just before we start talking about all this super interesting stuff also, just rewinding a little bit back to Dartmouth. You mentioned the Parkhurst protests. Obviously, that was—

DO: Oh, yeah.

HUNTER: —a sensational event at the time. I was just kind of wondering in the weeks or months leading up to that and on the day how you felt and whether it was sort of a strange thing to deal with while at college. It was definitely sort of a big deal, if I’m interpreting it correctly. [Chuckles.]

COOPER: Well, it *was* a big deal. And—and I certainly was on the what—you want to say the—I could differentiate, and I think most of us could differentiate at that point between what were feelings about the war and the government and what were feelings about the military. And the demonstration at Parkhurst was about the war and the government and not about the military.

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: You know, let me put it this way: If the demonstrators had said, “We are going to take over the offices of the ROTC,” there would have been a lot stronger feelings and probably a lot bigger chance of violence between students, between—that would have been something very personal to some of us.

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: But with respect to taking over Parkhurst and being able to say to the State of New Hampshire and to the government, that, you know, “we have very strong feelings about this war”—not that I condone what was happening. I didn’t. And I

was certainly in the group that was probably the one side saying, you know, “Go home, communists” or whatever we were thinking—is—there was no—you know, it was much more—less personal.

So I can remember, and I can remember being out there. I can remember the takeover. I can remember seeing how—I do remember how very, very—I remember from a military point of view how extremely professional the New Hampshire State Police were in removing the protesters, which probably isn’t recorded as much, as there wasn’t Mace or beating or billy clubs or any of that kind of stuff. It was very well put together. I was from New Hampshire, so I knew the state police and so on—of how they had—had thought it through, and they were going to have—I could observe it—is two troopers go in, pick up one protester, carry them out, bring them to a bus, put them in it—you know, and no need to beat on them. I mean, they were students. They were Americans. You know—and, you know, even though they would struggle, there was no—the students also weren’t throwing their fists or, you know, attacking the policemen, so it was—it was a—that’s what I recall about it. Let’s put it that way.

HUNTER: Awesome. And sort of—you’ve mentioned this kind of pivot throughout your times there. Did watching your classmates’ opinions change over those four years—did that have any bearing on your own personal opinions about the war or your sort of decision?

COOPER: No. No.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: I mean, everyone was entitled to their own opinion. I mean—it’s interesting: I had one classmate—I won’t say his name—who volunteered for Vietnam because it was going to be his only opportunity to kill somebody legally, which is strange, very strange. Now, I don’t know if he was telling me that as a ration of crap, but—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —you know, it was still, like, *Wow! That’s the last thing that I want to do.* But, you know, everyone I think was entitled to their own opinion. I disagree with them. I felt as though—that if the national leadership had decided we had to be there, then it was my job to go ahead and obey that. I respected people who would not go and would take their lumps. I did not respect people who ran to Canada.

CHIN: Mm-hm.

COOPER: Yeah, and I guess that’s where I drew *my* line, is I said, You can be a conscientious objector and you can take your lumps, and you can get picked up from the police in Parkhurst and you can go to jail for it, and that’s your choice, and you’re showing your own personal courage on that. Running from it”—retrospect—I mean, I understand, you know, but at that particular point—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —I said, “You’re—you’re—you’re doing it out of personal cowardice.”

HUNTER: Right.

COOPER: Okay? “You’re not doing it because of some antiwar belief.” Now, I—I—I had a friend from high school who went to the war and came back screwed up and went to prison, eventually was killed in prison, and his father never forgave the service and would have—and I certainly could have easily said—my wife would have said—because she was on the opposite side of this—“I’d have sent my kids to Canada so that I would not lose them in this war.” And I can understand that now, but at the time, guess what: It was—to me, running from it was not appropriate.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: Refusing [recording glitch; words missing; 1:35:42] go to the brig; that’s your choice. And I could respect that. So, you know, when I told you about the fraternity brother who went to Canada, I didn’t have much respect for him.

HUNTER: Right. Great. Thanks.

So, then, as we talked about Armed Forces Day senior year and graduation—was—sort of can you take me through how you’re feeling? We talked about how there was a little secrecy, and you just kind of wanted to get out. Was there any kind of apprehension about going to serve, or were you just excited, as you mentioned earlier?

COOPER: Oh, excited.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: Because of what I looked forward to for a long time. I couldn’t wait to be on a ship. I loved the Navy. I really did. Still love the Navy. So I couldn’t wait to serve, you know. And—and—and so that, you know—and, you know, there are people who like it and there are people who don’t, you know? And I was looking forward to it. I was looking forward to getting away from, you know, what I felt was a very dis- —discomforting place, of—you know, so—but, no, I just—that was when I just couldn’t wait for it to—to come.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: You know, we got—our—our—our graduation ceremony got rained out, so we ended up picking up our diplomas on a chair in the—in the field house, so, you know, graduation was not a—was not as big a deal as it could have been. And my family was all there, and it was—you know, hey. It was an important day.

But the day I have more recollections of is the day that I was commissioned. That was more important to me.

HUNTER: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Great. So then we can pick off—pick up what we were just talking about. You were sorting mail in Brooklyn? [Chuckles.]

COOPER: Yeah, I was sorting mail in Brooklyn, and I—you know, I wanted to be in the Navy, not in the Reserve Navy, training Reservist, and I was pushing what’s called my detailer guy to get me—get me on a ship that was on active duty. And that’s when I—I didn’t go through an epiphany, but what occurred at that particular point in—that would have been in the spring

of 1970, and I’m push— is—what was occurring is there were—you had a—in the Navy, you had a detailer based upon your alphabet or whatever it was, whose job it was that the Bureau of Personnel—and that would have been another job that was a sure job for a naval officer, was he would be getting what your cards were of what you requested to go to. And, of course, nothing was computerized. And he would have a bunch of jobs that he would have to fill and what your fitness reports were, and he’d start filling jobs.

But before he got to it, there was a thing called the Vietnam desk, and on any given day, if there were—for example, if there were 12 jobs he had to fill in Vietnam, for in-country Vietnam jobs, whether it was on river patrol craft or on a—a naval gunfire support liaison with the Marine Corps or the like—there would be maybe 12 jobs on his—his desk.

And I forgot to tell you that on the ship that I was serving on, the *Zellars*, I was the—the gunnery assistant and first lieutenant, and as gunnery assistant I had gone to gunnery school, and I was a qualified naval gunfire observer. So other words, I could go off and be with a Marine Corps group and be on the radio, and I was qualified to be able to call in naval gunfire from a battle cruiser or a destroyer. So I was all qualified to be able to go be on one of those.

So there was this Vietnam desk, and if there were 12 jobs that hit his desk and there were 12 naval officers due for reassignment that day, guess what: All 12 got to Vietnam because there was the priority. If there was only one job for Vietnam and there were 12 jobs that hit his desk, he would pick somebody for that job and the other 11 that went on.

And all of a sudden it came to my realization that I was going to hit the Vietnam desk. And I think I was driving to see my friends, the Partridges, who lived out in New Jersey, and I started to think about it, and all of a sudden I got terrified: maybe of the unknown, maybe of dying. But I said, *Holy moly! I could be going to Vietnam!*

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: *Without asking.* I did not, but, you know, for the sake of this taping (or whatever it is), that was certainly something that

crossed my mind and I did not have good feelings about. At that particular point, it was certainly—it was a—that everyone was questioning why the hell this war ever started and why we were there, and the domino [theory] stuff and all of that kind of stuff was old news. And we were involved in a civil war. We were going to have to live with our consciences of what the people of South Vietnam were going to have to pay for our abandonment of them, for the lack of a better term, but—

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: —it was time for us to get out. And—but at that point, I wasn’t thinking necessarily that clear, but I certainly knew that you [sic] could be a dangerous situation I was going into, of being out there with the Marines someplace, and that’s all I could envision, and I didn’t have good feelings about it.

But I got through the desk, and on the other side of it, I was picked for what was called the “Mod Squad” [Destroyer Squadron 26]. I was doing well in the Navy, and Admiral [Elmo R.] Zumwalt [Jr.] became the CNO [chief of naval operations]. There’s a series of destroyers named after him. He was a very progressive thinker. He had been in command of naval forces in Vietnam and had come out and become chief of naval operations.

And one of his experiments on the East Coast was having a squadron of destroyers put together called—the nickname was the “Mod Squad” because that was a TV show at the time, of which all of the officers of the ship were one rank junior to what they would be. They got—so when they were normally commanders on that ship, there were lieutenant commanders fleeted up—other words, early promoted to commander—who were deserving of it and so on.

I was a lieutenant JG [junior grade], and I was fleeted up [unintelligible; 1:43:29], and I became a department head on the USS *Du Pont*, DD-941, and I was administration—I was navigator and had been department head.

And I went to—it was interesting—I went to navigation school down at Little Creek and updated what I had learned

at—I mean, down at Rosy Roads [Roosevelt Roads Naval Station; Ceiba, Puerto Rico—frequently called Roosey (pronounced “rosy”)]—not Rosy Roads, at NAS [Naval Air Station] Oceana, and Norfolk—which updated what I learned at Dartmouth—and what was interesting in that training was here I am, a JG going through with all these commanders and captains who are aircraft—who were pilots, who are learning how to navigate before they could—before they could take command of a oiler or a carrier, they had to serve as a navigator on a carrier to get their time in, learning what a ship was about.

And it was sort of funny that I’m sitting there, [unintelligible; 1:44:35]—you know, I had this tendency to look down on anybody who wasn’t doing what I was doing, saying, you know, *These guys are flyin’ airplanes, and they don’t know the first thing about a ship.* But in any event—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: So I go off—I go off to this ship, and we were—the Navy had set it up that we couldn’t fail. I had four different—I had—it’s three [unintelligible; 1:45:07]—no, I had four different groups that sort of worked for me: the hospital corpsmen, the quartermasters that were navigation, the personnel men that dealt with enlisted men’s service records, and yeoman that were the ship’s secretary and dealt with officers’ service records.

Well, the leading petty officer in each of my group all were first-class petty officers, but by the end of my tour on that ship, they were—either became warrant officer or became chief petty officers. Other words, they were the cream of the crop.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: So I—I couldn’t fail. And that was true with all of the ships. And we went off to the Mediterranean and had a cruise out there. And so our job was the Russians while the rest of the world was taking care of—the rest of the Navy on the West Coast was taking care of Vietnam, our job was still dealing with the Soviet menace at the time. And that was where I spent my time.

HUNTER: Could you maybe elaborate a little bit more on that? What were you sort of looking out for or doing while you were on the ships?

COOPER: Well, there were two battle groups in the Mediterranean at all times, a battle group being a carrier group, and an aircraft carrier with a cruiser and maybe six or seven destroyers. And there was one on the eastern Med and one on the western Med, although they would be supportive of each other. And if need be, we could go up to the Baltic [Sea], although I never did.

And the base—other than Soviet submarines coming out of the north of Russia and around—and how the Navy tracked them at that point is they had underwater listening devices called SOSUS [sound surveillance systems], and they could track submarines leaving Russia and coming through, between Iceland and Greenland, and track them that way. And then we would put either submarines or P-3 planes on top—on them.

The surface forces of the Soviet Union—for the most part in the Black Sea, and they would come out of the Black Sea and through the Mediterranean. And we would track them, and they would track us, but, you know, we always had a—a Soviet trawler following us around, and we were just there as a deterrent. You know, you had—the Middle East had not hea- —heated up as of yet, by any means, although we were supposed to go into—I think it was—oh, yeah, it was 1969, my fir- —we were supposed to have a port visit to Tunisia, and we were due in—when this guy, this local military guy by the name of [Muammar] Gaddafi had done an uprising and took over the week before, and our port visit was cancelled. And so Colonel Gaddafi took the country over in the summer of 1969, and, of course, he was there until what? Two thousand and—I forgot what. Hillary [Rodham Clinton] was—

HUNTER: Very recently. [Chuckles.]

COOPER: [recording glitch; words missing; 2:48:44], time, so—she was secretary of state at the time, so 2000 [unintelligible; 2:48:51]. Quite a while, so—

We were also, I can remember—one of those things is we were one of the standby ships for the Apollo [program]. They didn’t know where—you know, Tom Cruise and all that?—

HUNTER: [Laughs.]

COOPER: They weren’t quite sure where that would—and so we went steaming off to be in a particular place in case they came down in our neck of the woods. So, you know, you had these little parts of history—

HUNTER: Oh, wow.

COOPER: —that, you know, I was tangentially, you know, involved in, but nothing as dramatic, however, as the second deck of the Brooklyn post office.

HUNTER: [Laughs.] Of course not.

COOPER: Of course not. I told that story to a client of mine. I’m a lawyer, or was, or still am. And he—he was from Brooklyn, and all of a sudden he sent me—mounted on a piece of wood was a—a old post card of the Brooklyn post office to commemorate my day in charge of the second deck of the Brooklyn post office, which was—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —nice.

So, you know, it was—you know, the—the war sort of went on and wound down. And it was winding down, and at some particular point—and I guess someplace towards the end of that second cruise, I decided I probably was not going to make a career of it and—and put in for being on a ship out of New England again. I was out of [Naval Station] Norfolk, [Virginia]. And I—for my last year, I was the weapons officer on the USS *Gearing*, a DD-710, which was actually stationed out of the [Naval] Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut, where that was a Reserve ship. And we trained Reserves.

And that was sort of a wind-down to me now thinking in terms of leaving and going to law school, because as this, my whole interview started, I was going to be a lawyer,—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —as my [recording glitch; grandfather? 1:51:29] and father did. There wasn’t—the only thing of interest, in retrospect, was there was—at the time, each squadron in the Navy, destroyer squadron, had a ship handling competition. There was still at the time a—a—some value in officers knowing how to con ships, to be able to do things with them so that you weren’t always taking a pilot into port and you knew how to, you know, do different things. I won the ship handling competition for my squadron,—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: —and—and with that came the ability to pick my next duty station.

HUNTER: Wow.

COOPER: You know, when I was competing against all of these guys who were going to make it a career, who were upset because they knew I was going to probably leave and they were trying to all [unintelligible; 1:52:43]—“[I got to pick? 1:52:45] postgraduate school in Monterey,” “I [unintelligible; 1:52:46]”—you know. I could have done anything. Which I stupidly never thought of, in retrospect, saying, “Why don’t *you* send me to law school and I’ll be in the Navy as a lawyer?” But, oh, no, I was going to be a New Hampshire lawyer.

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: [cross-talk; unintelligible; 1:53:00] should have done. So it was interesting. BU [Boston University law school was the only one who still recognized—back when I was a senior, I took my LSATs [Law School Admission Tests], and I applied for law school because guess what: I was going to be a lawyer, as backup. And I had got accepted at the time at BU, and I said, “I’m going into the Navy. Would you consider—would you save my acceptance?” And at the time, they said

they did, and when I reapplied, they said, “Well, you’re gonna have to do everything over again.” And I said, “Here’s this letter you guys sent me four years ago.”

HUNTER: [Chuckles.]

COOPER: They honored it, and I went to law school and went back in the Reserves in 1980, but that was my active duty naval career.

HUNTER: Wow. Well,—

COOPER: So the Vietnam years were formative for me in the sense of feeling as though my country had isolated me because I was in the Navy and feeling as though my college had let me down because I was in the Navy.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And I will tell them, and I tell them every year when they ask me for money, “I will contribute to my fraternity, but I will never contribute”—as much as I love Dartmouth—is until they put the ROTC back on campus and allow people to have full scholarships to Dartmouth, which the Navy still offers to Southern universities, you know. Why—you know, when we talk about this whole thing of Charlottesville [Virginia] and everything else, is why should those that still believe that the Confederacy [Confederate States of America] should rise again—should make up the officer corps of our—our military, when—when the Northeast is not doing its thing when it should? It still flabbergasts me.

HUNTER: Yeah.

COOPER: And I don’t think there’s a real discussion of that at a—at a serious level. I think someone from another country, like yourself, could probably pose the question very well. You know, why isn’t—why don’t you invite back—you know, I know the Army is there, but it’s somewhat—what is it?—out of Norwich [University] or something like that? Yeah. But, you know, there is a place for liberally educated people to be in the military, and there should be.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: There’s civilian controlled military.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: That’s why I never liked the idea that if you became a professional military, because when everybody has a stake in it, things get done, and the military doesn’t feel isolated. And they shouldn’t. And thank God in these wars that they haven’t been, but—dangerous situation, though.

HUNTER: Yes.

Well, if you don’t mind me asking, but I was wondering whether on your sort of return from active duty, whether you felt any difference between sort of being treated by civilians for being in the military but not having served in Vietnam and whether that was sort of an interesting juxtaposition.

COOPER: The only—no, not in the civilian world. The only shame, you know, in which people can tell me not feel it [sic], but the shame that I feel is I *didn’t* go to Vietnam.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: Because why should—you know, when I went through that point of being terrified, is I also went through a point of being ashamed because so many other people took that risk, you know, and—oh, I have seen what Vietnam has done so badly to people, and I’m in a men’s group where we have seen survivors and so on, but—and I can tell myself as much a I want, *Don’t—you should not feel ashamed in doing so.* Guess what: I was on the East Coast. I did not—what [recording glitch; words missing; 1:58:07] in the Navy, because of the cost of travel and so on, short of you having a special job—if my ship was on the East Coast, it was going to stay on the East Coast. It was not going to go to Vietnam. And vice versa. So I—that’s—so as much as I’m a veteran of the admin- —of the Vietnam era, I do not feel I deserve the same thing as somebody who took the risk.

HUNTER: Mm-hm.

COOPER: And I guess that’s what’s nice talking at the phone because you can be real. [Chuckles.]

HUNTER: [Chuckles.] Well, I thank you very much for that, truly.

Okay, well, I don’t want to take up too much of your time. Is there anything else that you would like to sort of add to the tape or that you feel like I haven’t asked about? [Chuckles.]

COOPER: I think you—I have bared about everything that I remember, so—

HUNTER: [Chuckles.] Okay. Well, I want—

COOPER: [cross-talk; unintelligible; 1:59:30]—

HUNTER: Excuse me?

COOPER: What happens at this point?

HUNTER: Well, at this point the tape is turned over to our archivist and it is stored as a part of the Dartmouth Vietnam Project, and it’s accessible online. [Transcriber's note: She did not mention that it is also transcribed and that the transcription is online as well.]

COOPER: Anyone ever accesses—accesses it? All they all two hours? [Chuckles.]

HUNTER: [Laughs.] Well, it was particularly interesting talking to you, so thank you very, very much. I really appreciate it.

[End of interview.]