

INTERVIEW

Wayne Sinclair

YEAR

2006

**GRAY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Wayne Sinclair

**DATE:** March 6, 2006

**PLACE:** Fort Dodge, Kansas

**INTERVIEWER:** Joyce Suellentrop

**PROJECT SERIES:** Veterans Oral History Project for Gray County

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

Wayne Sinclair enlisted in the Navy by forging his father's signature because he was underage. He went to Fort Leavenworth for physical and induction and had not yet graduated from high school. From there, he went to basic training in Farragut, Idaho. Sinclair had trouble taking orders in training and spent some time in the brig. He served in the Pacific on aircraft carriers and did a variety of jobs. He worked with Bull Halsey and encountered many adventures in the islands. On being discharged he returned to the Dodge City area where he worked and trained as a machine worker and toolmaker. He had his own successful shop in Boulder, Colorado, and raised three sons and a daughter. He now lives at Fort Dodge, Kansas, where he still studies and is an inventor and manufacturer.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Entering the service and training and life as a part of action in the Pacific Theater. His relationships with other crew members on the aircraft carriers and his return to civilian life were discussed.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:** 60 minute tape

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:** 1 hour

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:** none

**TRANSCRIPT:** 17 pages

**ORAL HISTORY**  
**Sinclair, Wayne**  
**Interview Date: March 6, 2006**

**Interviewer: Joyce Sullentrop (JS)**

**Interviewee: Wayne Sinclair (WS)**

**Tape 1 of 2**

**Side A**

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WS - My dad said dynamite comes in small packages and I've got a short fuse so be careful. I did have a Hell of a temper and I couldn't stay out of trouble, even when I was at home, I couldn't. But he was good about all that. I grew up in the Navy and it was the nicest thing that ever happened to me, probably. I learned how to respect people and take orders and just do what you had to do. That's what I did.

JS - When you left home you went to Wichita?

WS - Yes.

JS - What kind of work did you do there?

WS - I was a truck driver with Sonora Construction Company. They had a contract to build that big runway and I've hooked up to Boeing in different ways since then. I built lots of airplane parts for lots of airplanes for Boeing. The B52, I built all the landing gears and all the throttle stands for every one of those old B52s. I got to put the first one in the airplane. They were pretty proud of me when I got down there with all that stuff. I had a pretty good time with that. Then I got aboard aircraft carriers. I had two of them. The first one was the Shangri-La and they called it a baby flat top. Then I got on the Chesapeake Bay and she was a big ship. When I got aboard her she was number thirty-six but they made an atomic aircraft carrier out of her and I got off of her before that. She went through Hell and high water and back. I wasn't on her at that time. She got up to fifty-two knots. That is fast. She was a big ship. It had 800 and some flight deck and had a lot of airplanes on it. I made my first rate when I was a cable splicer for the catapult. I did all that on the Chesapeake Bay and the Shangri-La. That wasn't enough for me so I became a helmsman and I steered the ship. A lot of things happened in between all that. I was a bad guy. I've been in the brig several times. That's part of life.

JS - Tell me about it.

WS - It's just kind of a funny story. It really happened. Somebody gave me some orders that didn't know what he was talking about and I insulted him. I had a bad mouth and still do today. I say, "Jackasses are smart, but you're not smart enough to be a jackass." There are officers and there are ninety-day-wonders

who didn't know straight up from straight down, some of them. Some of them were pretty nice guys. I got busted three times and spent time in the brig every time. You don't hit a first lieutenant but he got in the way and I just knocked him down. At that time I was probably eighteen years old and I didn't weigh very much. They blackmailed me about always going to turn me in and I was going to get a court martial and get kicked out of the military. That's probably is written down somewhere, I don't know for sure. Can you get in that record at Salt Lake City where the Mormons have that?

JS - Yes.

WS - You ought to look me up and see. You can get more there than I can tell you. Things happened that I don't know how to say to you, but I was a real good pistol shot. On the fantail of an aircraft carrier, I would shoot flying fish with it. With a '45, I never missed. Admiral Halsey was aboard and I was just sitting there hanging my feet off the fantail and a fish would flop and 'POW' it was gone. Pretty soon he touched me on the shoulder and said, "Sailor, I want to see you in my stateroom." I knew him by his voice because when he whispered, he almost broke your eardrum. He was a good man though. He said, "You be in my stateroom." I didn't go right away so he passed the word. "Now." I went to his stateroom and I tried to be as regulation as I could and I stood up and I saluted him and all that stuff you have to do. You had to do it. He said, "Just me and you here, it don't matter. You can call me Bull if you want to and I will just call you Sailor or Wayne or whatever. Don't make a difference." So, we got along real well like that. He said, "I'm going to ask you to make a decision. You don't have to answer me right now. Think about it if you want to." I said, "Don't hold me in suspense any more. If you're going to court martial me, court martial me so I can get out. I don't want a dishonorable discharge but if I've got it coming, I'll take it." He said, "That isn't at all what I am talking to you about." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Would you like to be my bodyguard?" You don't know what to say. I really didn't. I walked around the stateroom and I said, "I'd like to answer that two or three days from now." "Fine." He took a liking to me for a lot of other things now. This particular time he had a Japanese cook or maybe it was a Chinese cook, I don't know. When Admiral Halsey had steak, so did I. He was a Mormon, did you know that?

JS - No, I didn't.

WS - Well, Mormons aren't supposed to drink. Well, he drank with me and I drank with him so we're one on one in this case. You're not supposed to have whiskey aboard ship but Halsey had whiskey aboard ship. He would only pour you one shot. I became a real alcoholic in the military and I am not even going to talk to you about that because it is not worth it and I am ashamed of myself. He said, "Now that we are acquainted can you teach me how to shoot like that?" I said, "I suppose." I am a kid so I want to know what I can know about it so I laid a pencil on his desk and he didn't even bother to pick it up or nothing. He said,

"You think I can shoot like that?" I said, "I don't know, I haven't decided yet. I want to look at your hands." I looked at his hands. I said, "When I think about it you don't have eye and hand coordination to the brain. I don't think you can do it but I'll do everything I can to help you." I don't know how many rounds of ammunition we shot, several cases. There are a thousand shells to a case. We'd get that '45 out and I'd go down and check it out and he'd shoot, shoot, shoot.

JS - Where was he when he was shooting?

WS - Out in the middle of the ocean. If he missed a fish, I'd just shoot it because I thought maybe he had hit it or something and I didn't want it to suffer. I think the old Navy pistol held nine shots and he got to where he would kill one fish in nine. I did this for two years and I never missed a fish. I grew up and I would end up as a bull rider in rodeos. That's a bad game. I got my neck broke.

JS - Was that before you left home?

WS - No, I came back home to bull ride. I had done bull riding before I left home. I broke my neck and I came back to get better but I never did come back and live with my folks again after that. I just didn't want to.

JS - Did you learn to shoot while you were at home growing up?

WS - Yes, an old Indian by the name A. B. Largent worked for my dad and my grandfather. I grew up with old people and they always harassed me and I had an awful time in grade school. When you are in third grade and you get expelled from school for two weeks, it is pretty bad.

JS - What did you get expelled for?

WS - Embarrassing the teacher. I didn't do it deliberately but it was just that she didn't know and I did. We got into it over multiplication tables and I shouldn't even tell you this because it wasn't her fault. It was mine but I knew my multiplication tables from one through 12 fluent when I was in the 3rd grade. I knew them before I went to school. The men harassed me all the time, called me Dinky, and just pestered me half to death. I knew a lot about the world and people before I left home. I never was a kid. Where ever my dad went, I went. I was a cowboy and broke horses, too, to ride. Tommy Londberg, I grew up with him. He was a real cowboy and he was out here and he died. He was a real cowboy and he stayed with it. Did you by chance remember a man by the name Jim Shoulders, who was the best bull rider for seven years? He taught me some things about bull riding. He was a good man. He is still alive and he is in Colorado and he is getting old because I am eighty and he is older than that. If you just pitch into that old bull until he tells you what he is going to do, you can ride him. I got to where I was a pretty good bull rider. Anyhow, that didn't last that long and I had something else better to do. I took up driving a truck, and I

was a farm boy and drove tractors and overhauled them. When I was a kid, I overhauled magnetos when they wouldn't run right, I didn't think. So, I was mechanically inclined from the time I was born. I learned to fly here in Dodge City from Roy Mahon. Did you know him?

JS - I do know the name, yes.

WS -Well, he taught me to fly and he soloed me one hour, and in five hours I was spraying for him. I sprayed 200 hours and never hurt his airplane. I flew through a wire a couple of times. I have had a really good life, and it has been an inspiring life. When the wife and I got married, she decided I needed to go back to school. The Navy wanted me to go to school, but it wasn't what I wanted so I didn't go. I did have six years of school coming, so I took the GI training when I came home. Do you remember Bob and Winnie Rosebrook? Well, Bob and Winnie taught me to become a crankshaft grinding man, engine reboring man, valve refacer and ring gear and pinion and I don't know what all. I spent four years there, and decided I needed something else better to do. I took to being a tool maker. I did it for thirty-eight years. That was a long time.

JS - This was in Wichita?

WS - No, that was in my own shop. When I got out of the military, I came home and couldn't find a job, and I was an alcoholic. There were a whole bunch of things wrong about it. Anyhow, we got married and had three kids in one year. I had twins and a few months later we had another one. We had three boys and a girl, and they are all still alive and all got pretty good jobs and doing fairly well. We don't know for sure about the youngest boy, because he kind of disowned us. We haven't seen him in twenty years. He's kind of hot-headed like I was. He had a mind of his own. I told my wife, I said, "I can't blame him. He got that from me." As stubborn as he is, I wouldn't try to talk to him anyway. He's okay, but he got hurt by a horse, drug half a mile with a stirrup on a horse. It broke his skull and I don't know what all. They all three got aboard one ship in the Navy, which you weren't supposed to do. They broke his neck in the military. He was a wrestler, and did pretty good at it, but he did it and broke his neck. He came home and he never was quite right after that. My wife is a nurse and she forced me to go back to school. She said, "You know, if we have a family, you've got two or three things wrong. You have got a couple of bad habits you have got to break." I didn't think much about drinking. I drank all the time when I was a kid at home. When I was in grade school, I drank two or three beers a day and I thought everybody drank that way. Anyway, she said, "First thing you got to do is, you drink too much." I was drinking a fifth a day. I'm not proud of it. I'm sick about it. I laughed about it, and I was driving a truck and I never drank when I was driving a truck. I just didn't do that. Anyhow, I smoked real bad. I smoked four packs a day. I quit smoking cigarettes; I don't remember when it was. I started smoking cigars.

I got to where I was puffing eighteen of them a day, but there were sixteen hours in a day so that is not too many cigars. She said you have to quit them too and so I raced motorcycles. She said she didn't want me to do that anymore because we've got kids. If you get killed or hurt bad she'd have to do something with them. My dad insisted I quit that, so I did. Then I took up spraying because you have to have something to keep your mind busy. Even today, I don't want to put all that on tape, but I am doing some other things. I am a pilot and I have got a commercial license. You're not dumb when you can do all that. I am not even intelligent, that is what is bad about it.

JS - We got off the path. Let's get back to Bull Halsey.

WS - Okay, we got to shooting fish. Everyday he would call me and say when it was time. We had some things in common. He had admiral's bars and I was a boatswain's mate and took him where ever he wanted to go. We were in the islands for quite awhile.

JS - You are talking about the Pacific Islands?

WS - I spent all my time in the Pacific Islands. Probably no island in the Pacific big enough to get a ship to that I haven't been on or walked around on or done something.

JS - When you were leaving the United States on your first ship, when you encountered him you said to him, "Yes, I'll go with you and be your bodyguard?"

WS - He wanted to learn to shoot. He could shoot, but not as good as I wanted him to. He just didn't have eye, hand and brain coordination. That's pretty important to shooting. He was the nicest guy I ever met in my life. He always treated me fine. He said as long as he was on board ship and I was aboard ship I was going to be his bodyguard. I finally asked him why. He said, "If I needed you to shoot somebody, would you shoot him?" I looked at him and I said, "Now, Halsey, I got to say something." It was just me and him talking. "I would probably ask a question or two but if you want him dead I'd probably shoot him. I would have no trouble. It would probably bother me, but you are the boss so I would probably shoot him." He said he hoped it never happens. He said, "If you see somebody abuse me, what would you do?" I said, "Probably kill him. You're the man that looks after the Navy and I am in the Navy." He and I agreed on a lot of things. We had our differences too but he played chess. I kind of learned to play chess on board ship with him. That is a good game. I have a chess board over there that I taught my kids to play chess on and they are pretty good at it. One of my twins bought me that chess set and it is all hand made and it came from Hungary, I think. I do a lot of things that other people don't do. I have overhauled airplane engines. I have rebuilt airplanes. I was IBM's main trouble shooter for fourteen years in Boulder, Colorado. That's a pretty impressive job.

JS - I'm trying to get this straight in my mind. When you joined the Navy you had to forge your father's signature and when you told your dad, he was very angry. Did the Navy ever find out?

WS - I let Bull Halsey take care of that. I enlisted and I never turned myself in to the draft board. When I am in Guadalcanal, I get a letter from the Selective Service telling me to be there in 24 hours. I said to Halsey, "I can't be there in 24 hours when I am in Guadalcanal." He said, "Give it to me. I'll take care of it." So I just gave it to him. In about 24 hours he said I could forget about it and not worry about it no more. I never even worried about it after that.

JS - So you joined the Navy in Leavenworth?

WS - Yes.

JS - Where did you go to boot camp?

WS - Farragut, Idaho, four weeks.

JS - What did you do there?

WS - I learned to swim. I learned part of the Morse code. I learned you had to take orders.

JS - Was that hard?

WS - For me, it was very, very hard. I didn't know straight up from when the sun was shining and I am not intelligent, but I know right from wrong. The Chief in the Navy at Farragut, Idaho's name was Chief Carrs, a little guy. He and I were about the same height. He picked on me something furious, and I had a temper that was too bad. I always was prissy. I always shaved good and combed my hair good and I was always clean, but I had oily hair. We were standing inspection and he took my hat off and stomped on it on the ground. There were several hundred, of us and I had to wash everyone of their hats by hand. I hung them on the clothesline and Carrs said he didn't ever want to catch me with a ring of oil around my hat like that. I shaved my head and let my whiskers grow. I laugh about that, but it is all right. For a year and a half I shaved my head but not my face. I just shaved my head and a lot of things happened, but it was all for fun.

JS - Why did you want to join the Navy?

WS - The Navy had a sign in front of their office at Wichita. I stayed in the New Wichita Hotel then when I worked for Sonora. I slept in the truck for a long time and finally got enough money together that I could sleep in a hotel. The sign out there said, "Uncle Sam Wants You." I told Chief, "if you don't take me, I am

going to start a law suit because the sign says you want me and you are going to take me. You don't have a choice. You've got to take me in the Navy."

JS - Why the Navy and not the Army?

WS - I just wanted to go somewhere and be somebody important. I thought they needed me. I volunteered for subMarines because I was little. They didn't take a one of us in subMarine which is all right. When I got out of boot camp, I came to Farragut, Idaho, and I went to Sand Point, Idaho. I wouldn't go on because dad said steel don't float and slide that much steel down the ocean and if it floats, I'm not going to be on it to get wet. There were twelve of us that just wouldn't go. That's another thing I got in trouble over. I couldn't accept things like that. Anyway, it slithered down the gang plank and she just went out there blub, blub, a few times and I got on her and away we went. I took a shakedown cruise and was gone two weeks, I think it was, and came back and we went through some pretty rough water and she cracked on the bottom. One of the guys on board ship went underneath of it and welded it so it stayed together, and we came back to Bremerton and we went into dry dock and fixed it. When we left the United States I didn't think we would ever come home. We were gone eleven months, a long time. As time went on we saw a lot of things, and did a lot of things, and we had a squadron of airplanes, and I don't know how to say all that. Sometimes they would come back and sometimes they wouldn't.

JS - Now, you were always in the Pacific?

WS - Always in the Pacific, no where else. The Pacific was my home and I would still like to go back. I am building an airplane that don't burn fuel. I have created this and I have made one motor already, and it has been running for twenty years and never been shut off. I did this, and it is in Boulder, Colorado, in Bill Sherfano's basement, running his machine shop and his injection motors. I had become a toolmaker, but I am more than a toolmaker. I am a designer. I ran a shop and had fifty-four people working for me for fourteen years. I made lots of money and had a lot of fun. We had a wonderful time.

JS - Let's get back to when you were on that ship and you thought you'd never come home because it was such a big ocean?

WS - Oh, yeah, because I couldn't swim across it.

JS - Even though you had learned how to swim. Was this when you met Halsey?

WS - On the ship, but not the first one.

JS - The second one. Where were you going the first time? Was this a troop ship?

WS - No, it was an aircraft carrier. We went down around San Diego and Guadalcanal. We were at Midway and we were at Wake and we were at Fiji Island and the Carolinas. I don't remember all of them.

JS - You said you were over there eleven months and came back. Is that when you got the second ship?

WS - No, I'm a kind of funny guy. I traded ships, I think, in Guadalcanal. I'm not sure of that.

JS - Could you do that? I guess so.

WS - Halsey fixed it so I could. So anything I wanted, why, he did for me. He did a lot of things for me. I won't go through all that BS because it's not that important, I don't think.

JS - I think it is.

WS - It seems like I am having a dream and I will wake up one of these days and it will all be over with. From the time I got on board ship and I got discharged. You don't know what goes on in the military, but we had a point system and we go out from certain things we had done. I had seven more points than what you needed to get out. I told Halsey, I said, "When it gets to Guadalcanal, I am a civilian, I am getting off." He said, "No, Wayne, you are not. The Marines will look at you and you'll be in Washington, DC and they will beat you to death. Don't go." So I didn't.

JS - Was he almost like a father to you?

WS - He was a father. Anything I wanted to do, I got to do. He had a family of his own that I didn't even know about. His wife is still alive. She's in Salt Lake City, but he had two sons and I am going to go see them yet before I die. I'd like to talk to her because he was something else. He died, and if I had known when he died, I'd have been there. But I didn't know it. We had kind of lost track of one another. There was a girl in New York City, Elaine. I can't remember her last name, but she lived in Hyde Park, New York. She lived next door to President Roosevelt and when we'd go to another island, she'd always be there. I never knew how she knew where I was going to be. For every island I was on she would be there sometime or somebody would tell me she had been there. We got kind of buddy, buddy and she was a very, very wealthy lady and I didn't like it.

**Interviewer: Joyce Sullentrop (JS)**

**Interviewee: Wayne Sinclair (WS)**

**Tape 1 of 1**

**Side B**

WS - After I got out of the military she said, "Don't let him get married." I went ahead and got married anyway. You know, she lived in New York and I was a Kansas guy and it wouldn't have ever worked, I don't think. She was a nice lady. She was a kind lady.

JS - Was she in the service?

WS - No, she wasn't. She was a civilian.

JS - How did she get to travel all those places?

WS - I don't know. She just went wherever she wanted to, I guess. She had the money and she found out from Roosevelt, where I was at because they were next door neighbors. I was always going to go up there and see that place. I have been in New York City several times, but it is like a foreign country to me. I don't know how people live there, but that is beside the point.

JS - When you were on the ship in the Pacific Theater, you were the helmsman for Admiral Halsey?

WS - On the ship.

JS - What else did you do?

WS - That's what he always got on to me about. I did anything that was necessary. I made a rating as a cable splicer. You have heard them talk of R2800 engines. That was a fighter plane engine and it was a 2000 horsepower engine. Because I was mechanically inclined, I would wind up in the shop where they were working on them so I would work on engines. The chiefs got to know me and I could grind valves, put rings on pistons, put them back in and put the connecting rods on. I did a lot of things like that. I did that because I didn't want to stand watch. I shirked that duty and did other things. Halsey said to me one day, "What can't you do?" I didn't like the way he worded that. It's what can't you not do. There are so many things I can't do it would make a big book. He laughed about that. He thought it was funny, but I took care of his barge and that was pretty impressive. We put it up underneath the flight deck and it had two diesel engines in it and I am a diesel mechanic, too. After I came out of the military, I learned to be a real diesel mechanic, but I learnt to be a diesel man in the Navy.

JS - Did you make friends of the other young men in the Navy?

WS - Oh yes, I had a lot of buddies. Since this going to be in the Library of Congress, I would like to know if I could get all my ship buddies together off the Chesapeake Bay. I would put a letter in for every one of them and there were 180 of them in that bunch. I have all their names, but I don't have their telephone

numbers and addresses. I was going to write the Navy to see if I could get them, but I thought they wouldn't make sense of it.

JS - Probably a lot of them are gone by now.

WS - Yes, I know a whole bunch of them are already dead.

JS - Was it hard to make friends?

WS - Not for me I mixed with any of them.

JS - Did you keep in touch with any of them?

WS - Some of them, one from Wichita, Buddy Hyde, Otis Miller, White and John Johnson, New York City. He was the grandson of Johnson Bandage Company. I knew him really, really well. I boxed in the Navy, too and that was real bad. I loved the Mexicans, no offense now. We had matches twice a week and I was a pretty good boxer. I had never been knocked down until this Mexican came along, and he was a real boxer and he just pecked, pecked, pecked, and I didn't get up, and I woke up in the hospital. He pecked me pretty hard. After that I said I wasn't putting gloves on again. If the rest of those guys hurt as bad as he hurt me, they didn't need to hurt like that. I didn't box anymore. I had to do something else so I did other things. I was even a mess cook. I scrubbed dishes, too. I peeled potatoes. It didn't make any difference.

JS - When you were in Guadalcanal and you got on a different ship, you stayed in the Pacific?

MS - Oh yes.

JS - This was an aircraft carrier and the aircraft would then go on bombing missions from the ship?

MS - We had fighter planes on board. They did their thing. We went through Hell two or three times.

JS - Can you describe that?

MS - We were sunk three times according to news reports. I got my knees messed up. A bomb hit, and I fell down the ladder in the Navy and ran into the bulkhead, and it messed my knees up pretty bad, and it still bothers me. I have never done anything to them and they wanted to operate on them. They didn't want to discharge me from Oklahoma on account of my bad knees. I said, "Whatever I have to do, I will sign a paper and forget it." That's what I did. They never hurt so I can't live with it so I have lived with it since then. Now that I am getting older, they are beginning to hurt.

JS - You were close to the fighting when you were in the Pacific?

WS - That's what we did.

JS - What were some of your feelings when you were in the thick of it?

WS - I think I am meaner than most of them. Those Japs aren't about to sink us. I was a twenty-one-inch gunman and I was a five inch gunman. That was a forty millimeter gun and I got to where I could fire any of them. I was second powder man on a five-inch thirty-eight. We did a lot of damage. We would stand off the islands and fire on them. When we went to Guadalcanal, I don't know how that island can still be a rock. Sometimes they bombed it twenty-four hours a day for weeks and couldn't kill them. And there were other things that went on. Subs were after us and we had sub protectors, airplanes that would sink the subs or at least they wouldn't chase us anymore. We had a whale that followed us for two months, always on the rear. They thought he was a subMarine. It was just this big old whale, so that was an exciting thing. We all watched him surface and come up. You aren't supposed to feed the fish, but I fed him anyway. He was big and he opened his mouth and I just had meat, and I would throw it out, and he would eat it. You aren't supposed to do that. I was a good sailor, but I had my own way of doing things.

JS - Were you ever scared? Did you think you might lose your life?

MS - I know you have to die sometime, and I have already programmed myself for dying. If it is your time, you are going to die. It didn't enter my mind. I told my mother and dad when I came home, "If I get shot up with my arms or legs off, I am not coming home."

JS - When you were over there, were you able to receive mail and write to your family?

MS - Sure, I didn't write my mother and father for several months so they called the Navy department and Halsey got the message. He called me to report to his cabin immediately. When I got there, he said, "Stand up. I have got something to say to you." You are supposed to stand at attention. I thought what have I done now? He said, "When did you last write your mother a letter?" I told him it was several months. He said, "You will be in my stateroom at 1600 and write a page to your mother every night. You say anything you want and I will sign it and nobody will ever care." I did it and I just told them we were killing Japs and on islands, and we had been bombed and we had been strafed, but we weren't sunk. I saw several ships sink. If an aircraft carrier gets hit in the fuel tanks, in ten minutes, it isn't there. One was a sister ship. One task force had 280 some ships. They were all driven by trigonometry problems. They made course changes and ran a zigzag course. You had to stay on course or you would run

into another ship. I got to where I could just steer anywhere, anytime. In combat, I got to be the helmsman. I had earphones on and they would say, "Steer twenty degrees left or five degrees right." or whatever it was. I survived all that all right. I really didn't even worry about dying. It entered my mind, but I guess I felt that if it was my time, it was my time.

JS - Where were you when the war ended in Europe or did you know about that?

WS - We knew about that. When the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, I was within 100 miles from that. I saw the mushroom and I knew I was going home. Being I was a guard on top of the ship, I had binoculars. When we came by after they had dropped the bomb, that island was as smooth as a table top. Not a tree was standing. I don't know how many people were on the island, but they were all dead. I said to Halsey, "That was a Hell of an explosion, wasn't it?" He said, "Yeah and we will drop another one." When they dropped the second one, we weren't as close, but we still saw it. Did you know they dropped one in the center of Tokyo and it went down the street and didn't go off? They don't know why.

JS - What did everyone think when the bombs were dropped?

WS - Happy, because we knew the war was over. It had to be over because they couldn't stand anymore of that. I knew Jimmy Doolittle personally. Halsey knew him and I met him. He was quite a guy. I did other things too. I built the radio shack and could listen in. He told Roosevelt, "I'm right in the middle of Tokyo. Give me the word and I will drop the bomb. Roosevelt said, "Congress will take care of that. They know how to fight the war." I told Doolittle, if I had been aboard that ship, I would have dropped that bomb and the war would have been over before that. You can say what you want to about Truman, but I liked him because he made the decision. He said it was the hardest decision he ever made in his life. He had to think about all the people that would still get killed and that stopped the war.

JS - When they dropped the bomb, did you think you were going home?

WS - Yeah, I knew I was going home. Halsey and I talked about it.

JS - Were you glad to be going home?

WS - I can't really say that. I wondered what was going to happen to all those people on all those islands where all that bombing and strafing was going on. Halsey insisted I stay in the Navy. If I had stayed in four more years, I could have been a First Lieutenant.

JS - You decided not to. Why?

WS - I wanted to go home and get married and have a family. That's what I did. It's kind of funny how it happened. When I left the ship, they treated us like a bunch of cattle. They took me to Norman, Oklahoma, in a box car that didn't even have beds. We had to sleep on the floor on a cardboard box. We got down there, and I was used to going on leave when I wanted to because of Halsey. I had the Halsey card until I got down there, and they took it away from me at Norman and said I wouldn't need it anymore. I would just go on liberty anyway and sometimes not come back when I was supposed to and the SPs would pick me up. They wouldn't brig me, but they would restrict me to base. I was supposed to get discharged and when I got ready to be discharged, they shipped me back to Leavenworth. When I got to Leavenworth, the chief that wouldn't accept me in the military was there. He said, "Sinclair, Sinclair, that name rings a bell." He was a pretty big man but I was bigger than he was. He said, "I know who you are." I said, "You're supposed to." I remembered him because he helped me lie about my height, helped me lie about my weight and forging my name and he said that was okay. It was already straightened out. If your head touches that piece on top of it, you are in the Navy, even if you have to stand on your tiptoes. They shipped me to Farragut, Idaho from there. I didn't even get to go home. I wrote and told my dad about it. Even till he died he never did forgive me for that. He said, "You should have stayed home." I told him I didn't want to because I had had enough.

JS - You got out at Leavenworth and you came back to around Kalvesta and got married?

WS - I got married in Dodge City. We lived in Dodge City. I went to school at Winnie's for four years and worked at Mayrath's for two years and then went to Illinois so we lived about seven years in this area. I never did go back to live with my folks. I'd go see them on weekends, but it was never the same. The people weren't the same.

JS - Do you think your experience in the Navy changed you?

WS - Oh yes, that was the biggest experience I ever had in my life and the best experience I had in my life. I can't say enough good things about it. In fact, I forced two of my own sons into the military. I said, "When you graduate from high school you can choose to go to college or go into the military. That is the only choice you have got. I want to know before it's too late."

JS - What do you think you learned?

WS - What do I think I learned? I couldn't answer that if I tried all day long, probably. I learned a lot about the world.

JS - What did you learn about the world?

WS - It is a big place with lots of good people. When I started my machine shop, everybody said it was the worst thing in the world I could do. I think if I work for people and they make money by me doing it, I ought to do it for myself, so I opened my own shop. I only had \$3000 ahead. Betty, my wife, said we would be able to pay the rent. I rented a building on 47th Street, in Boulder. I rented five block buildings because we had all those people working for us. I had 800 thousand dollars worth of equipment that was all ours.

JS - You were using some of the skills that you learned in the Navy?

WS - Because I went to school after I got out of the Navy was the only reason it ever happened. I could have flown in the Navy, but the war was on, and I was not a pilot then. Halsey said if the war stopped tomorrow he would see that I could fly an airplane and get on an aircraft carrier. I said anybody can do that. I could do it today, but I have had two strokes and they took all my licenses away from me. I am about to get them back, though. I can still fly because I have got two sons that fly. They both have their licenses. I got a commercial license to fly to Old Mexico in twin engines. I've got 5000 hours flying airplanes.

JS - What else did the Navy or your war experience teach you?

WS - That is a hard question, and I am going to try to answer it as well as I can. I learned respect, discipline, loyalty, and you have to be able to do your work. If you do your work, you get along pretty well. I got along pretty well in the Navy. I had my bad ups and downs, but they all kind of washed out. Probably the biggest fear I had in the Navy was when we had man-overboard drill. I was a little guy at that time and three of them grabbed me and threw me in the ocean. They yelled, "Man overboard!" The ship made a big turn and you are back there just paddling in the water. They just drive on, they can't stop. Pretty soon, here comes a big whale boat to pick you up. This one time I will never forget. The ship went over the horizon, and I am supposed to be on board. I'm out there in the ocean in 10,000 feet of water, maybe 2000 miles from nowhere. I didn't know where I was at. I was a good swimmer. I took my time and I never panicked. I was more worried about sharks. If you see porpoises in the water, there are no sharks around. A mama porpoise and a little porpoise came up and let me touch her nose. They just stayed around there until they came back and got me. That was as scared as I ever was in the Navy.

JS - Did it help you grow up, do you think?

WS - Very much, in fact, I was probably grown when I was fourteen years old. I could do about anything that had to be done and do it well. I worked all my life. Sometimes when I had my shop, there would be three days at a time when I wouldn't leave the shop. I'd sleep on my cot in my office. I worked five years and didn't take a day off from the shop.

JS - A workaholic. Is there a particular person or a particular officer that you have a story about, when you are thinking about it, something pops up in your mind?

WS - There's a friend. His name was Addie Kay and he and I drank a lot together. He was second class like I was. That's next to the lowest creature in the Navy. He had hash marks from here to there. He was older than I was. He had 20 hash marks on him.

JS - What are hash marks?

WS - four years in the Navy. They sewed them on his uniform. What I liked about Addie Kay, he never got excited about anything. I would sometimes take a fishing string and tie a fifth on it and hang it over the dock and when it got dark, I'd go get my whiskey and bring it on board ship. Wasn't supposed to do that, but we did. Addie Kay would tape it to his leg and the Officer of the Deck, bless his heart, I can't remember his name, would bounce his leg and say, "Kay, I can't let you on board with that." Addie could probably have been an Admiral. He knew that much about the Navy. The Officer said, "Addie, if you go back there and I hear two splashes in the ocean, I will let you on board." Addie had a fifth on each leg. He went back there and took his shoes off and threw them in the ocean. This is really true. Those are the things I remember. He said, "OK, Addie, I know you have got it but come on." I sometimes stole torpedo juice out of torpedoes so I could have my alcohol.

JS - What's that?

WS - Torpedo juice is alcohol, 180 proof. That's what a torpedo ran off of. Each torpedo had about fifty gallons on them. I'd tell the torpedo man one of the torpedoes was leaking, and I would tell him which one was leaking. I'd set my bucket underneath it and take about a half gallon out of it. I said we ought to check it to make sure because we don't want to drop one that won't go off. I pretty near always had a half gallon of 180 alcohol in my locker. Some of the guys like Addie Kay knew where it was at. I stayed sober, but I had to have a drink now and then. Don't know as I ever was drunk aboard ship, but we drank a little.

JS - Can you think of anything that we haven't talked about that you think is important enough to be on the tape?

WS - I think any young man that gets out of school should spend at least four years in the military. I believe that 100% because he can learn things that he can never learn anywhere else. I know we had some bad things going on, but I survived them and that is part of growing up. I still go back to reading, writing, arithmetic and hickory stick. I still believe that. I was hard on my kids, and I have got some pretty intelligent kids, now. I didn't go to high school, but I did go four

years to junior college here in Dodge. I went to one semester in Galesburg, Illinois. The military caused all this because I wanted to learn more things and more things. I have taken probably fifty or sixty correspondence courses in my life because I wanted to learn more. Some of them I didn't finish. I became a world photographer, and I have had a lot of fun.

JS - It sounds like it. When you joined the Navy, were you motivated by patriotism or was that talked about then?

WS - I wanted to protect the United States to make it so it was a free world for the rest of the kids. That was my biggest thing.

JS - And see the world?

WS - Yes, but I have seen the world more since I got out of the military than I ever saw in the military. I got to go to more places. When you circle the earth when you are twenty-one years old, that is quite a bit of ground.

JS - When you were in the Pacific, did you get leave so that you could leave the ship?

WS - I only got one leave. When I got out and had been home two or three months, I got all the back pay from my leaves in one check from the government. They knew I didn't get to go home when I wanted to or when I was supposed to. They were pretty fair to me. The thing that I admire the most was they set up the program for veterans if they wanted to go to GI training. I wouldn't be the person I am today if it hadn't been for the military. I would have drunk myself to death or smoked myself to death. I had real bad cancer that you don't know about, and I cured myself. Did you ever hear of Tesla?

JS - Didn't he do something about the first computer?

WS - He did more than that. I have a whole bunch of his books. Because of him, I created that.

JS - What does it do?

WS - It cured my cancer in less than twenty-four hours and I have no cancer. I took no radiation or chemo.

JS - Is it an electric current or something?

WS - Do you know what ozone gas is? Pick up that hose and smell it. It won't hurt you. I smell it everyday. I drink two or three glasses of water a day and sniff that ozone gas everyday. I haven't had a cold since I got out of the military.

JS - It must be working.

WS - It is more than working. About fifty other people have them, too. I manufactured them.

**Interviewer: Joyce Sullentrop (JS)**

**Interviewee: Wayne Sinclair (WS)**

**Tape 1 of 1**

**End**