



MS 315. Veterans History Project

Eduardo M. Garza Transcript, October 25, 2007

Eva: This interview is conducted by Eva Garza-Segovia and I am interviewing Eduardo M. Garza Sr. United States Navy Retired 26 years. Hello Mr. Garza

Eduardo: Good afternoon.

Eva: First I want to start off by where were you born?

Eduardo: I was born in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas Mexico on June 18, 1946.

Eva: What was your home life like growing up in Mexico or did you move after where you born?

Eduardo: I lived in Mexico, Nuevo Laredo for 5 years, and my mother and dad divorced and we moved to Laredo, Texas.

Eva: And again what was your home life like in Laredo?

Eduardo: It was just my mother and I, she worked hard, to get me and education and care for me.

Eva: Are you the only sibling?

Eduardo: I am the only one no brothers or sisters.

Eva: No brothers or sisters.

Eva: Growing up in Laredo was your mom very...instilled very much in you education and it was important for you to have it.

Eduardo: She always did...yes.

Eva: Tell me about how you...I know you ended up in Vermillion, South Dakota. Tell me how you ended up there?

Eduardo: We started out as migrant workers in 1962, we went to South Dakota for the first time, and then we went back in 1963 and I was given the opportunity to go back to school. I had already quiet in Laredo. I started in the 9th grade and 4 years later I graduated from High School.

Eva: As much education as your mom tried to instill in you what made you decide to leave school to begin with in Laredo?

Eduardo: To help my mother because she worked hard and I was growing up and I just felt that I needed to work and help in the household?

Eva: So what was it that...how did your mom feel about you staying in Vermillion?

Eduardo: It was hard for her but at the same time she knew that it was an opportunity for me to get back into school, and graduate from high school.

Eva: And tell me about the family that you lived with?

Eduardo: The Hansen Family. Mr. & Mrs. Harold and Olive Hansen, very nice family Christian family. They had five kids of their own, and they took me in as one of their own. Instilled in me great family values and traditions that I learned from and picked up and use it in my life now.

Eva: What was it like to be an only child to go to into a family that had all of these kids all of a sudden?

Eduardo: It was different but it was enjoyable, I got to find out what it was like to have brothers and sisters. They treated me as a brother to the family.

Eva: Now your socioeconomic class with you and your mother was poor, but what was it like living with the Hansen's?

Eduardo: I would say middle class American conservative.

Eva: Were you the only Hispanic that was up there at that time?

Eduardo: I was the only Hispanic through my 4 years of high school. In a little town of about 8,000, people there at those times, early 60's there with a lot of racism in America, I fit in perfect. People up there were great, they never miss treated me or showed racism or anything like that. I was apart of them. I didn't feel...

Eva: No animosity?

Eduardo: No animosity or anything like that.

Eva: What is that made you decide after high school to join the Navy?

Eduardo: I got to meet a lot of farmers up there that had been in the service, and they always talked to me about joining the Navy instead of the Army or Marines, and because of the draft and all of that they instilled in me that it was better to join the Navy, then to be drafted and go into the Army or Marines, and I took that choice.

Eva: Had you already received any drafting card or documented information?

Eduardo: No because I was in high school, but as soon as graduated I received my first draft notice, but I had already enlisted in Navy. As soon as I graduated from High School I was gone.

Eva: Was there any...you said that you got to know a bunch of farmers, was there anyone particular person that sat you down and said the Navy is like this?

Eduardo: Yes...this gentleman by the name of Dwayne Thompson, and he talked to me a lot and kinda took me under his wings, and instilled in me, and talked to me, told me some navy stories, kinda nice.

Eva: Interesting.

Eduardo: It was nice thinking about going out and seeing the world, being in South Dakota, farm kid, I just wanted to see the world.

Eva: Do you remember what it was like when you had to call your mom and tell her that you decided that you wanted to join the Navy being an only child.

Eduardo: Yes I sure do...she was proud, sadden by the fact that those days of Vietnam, but she said that she knew what I was doing, she supported me, and gave me her blessings, and I went in.

Eva: And how did the Hansen's feel about it?

Eduardo: They were all for it whatever I wanted to do they supported me too.

Eva: When did you join the Navy?

Eduardo: I joined the navy on July 11, 1967.

Eva: And what was going on in that time other than Vietnam was there anything else were there people trying to say don't join?

Eduardo: Not that much up in South Dakota, everybody very patriotic they were all for it. They respected the military.

Eva: Where was your basic training held at?

Eduardo: San Diego, California.

Eva: And what was the name of the base that you were at?

Eduardo: Recruit training Center San Diego California

Eva: Do you remember what it was like when you first hopped on the plane and you go off in San Diego?

Eduardo: Well I didn't go on a plane; I took a bus from Sioux City, Iowa down to Omaha and then went on a train all the way from Omaha to San Diego, California. It was a lot of

fun, it was long about, three days to get there. It was a lot of fun. It wasn't much fun when I got to San Diego and Boot Camp.

Eva: Where you the only person traveling that had joined the Navy at that time or was there a bunch of people?

Eduardo: Oh now there was a group of about 12 of us, young kids eager ready to go?

Eva: Do you remember what your Company Commander was like?

Eduardo: I sure do, he was about 5'3, very small in statue, mean guy I thought at the time, very very strict.

Eva: Very strict....so you got there to your basic training... what was the first thing they had you do?

Eduardo: Screaming and hallowing, it was ruff, not use to that type of environment.

Eva: Did you have to go through the whole standing in line shaving your head, and getting your uniform?

Eduardo: Oh yes, it was a different experience. A culture shock should I say.

Eva: Now living in Laredo where the weather was hot, and living in South Dakota where the weather was cold what was the weather like when you arrived in San Diego?

Eduardo: Beautiful, has always been, still is and Hill always be.

Eva: Did you think you could stay here forever?

Eduardo: Yes.

Eva: How long were you in basic training?

Eduardo: Eight weeks.

Eva: Eight weeks...and in those eight weeks what did they have you do, what did they teach you?

Eduardo: The basic military training going through the motions, instilling a lot of discipline, paying attention to detail, and go one with that.

Eva: Had they talked to you about what your job was going to be for the rest of your career in the service yet, or was that coming later.

Eduardo: No that came in later; with training it was just basic military structure that's it.

Eva: What did you do in your off time when you guys weren't training; did you guys get to go see anything in San Diego?

Eduardo: No, no it was just all training, for recreation we just stayed in the barracks, wrote letters, listened to music, there was not much time for that, just straight regiment going on, no time for anything.

Eva: Now having your mothers home cooking in Laredo with great Mexican food, and then going up to Vermillion, South Dakota and having American food, what was the food like at basic training?

Eduardo: It was typical military chow hall different very different.

Eva: Was it stuff that you could stomach or did you have to get use to it?

Eduardo: Well you had to get used to it...that was all there was and we had to eat.

Eva: What was your graduation service like?

Eduardo: It was nice, very formal, glad to get it over with, and move on with what I was going to do in the military.

Eva: Any of the people that you became friends with during your basic training, did you remain friends with them as you went through your 1st, 2nd duty station?

Eduardo: Maybe for the first duty station we stayed contact, and then after that we never heard from anybody again.

Eva: What was your first duty assignment?

Eduardo: It was aboard the U.S.S. Catskill MCS 1 out of Long Beach California?

Eva: What kind of ship was that?

Eduardo: It was a mine counter mission support ship. It was the mother ship to little mine sweepers...mine sweeper costal, basically logistics ship.

Eva: What was your job on the ship?

Eduardo: I went aboard the ship as a boiler technician.

Eva: How did you train for that type of position?

Eduardo: On the job training.

Eva: It was on the job training?

Eduardo: On the job training.

Eva: You didn't have any schooling you had to do?

Eduardo: Not at the beginning.

Eva: Really...that is interesting...how long were you on that ship?

Eduardo: About a year and a half.

Eva: What did your duties entail?

Eduardo: Being a boiler technician, running boilers, and standing watch, regular maintenance, and up keep aboard the ship.

Eva: Did you travel any were than Long Island on that ship?

Eduardo: Long Beach.

Eva: Long Beach.

Eduardo: We were there for training, I got on board and then we went over seas. We got ported in Sasebo, Japan. Upon arrival there three months, four months, I was transferred to a smaller Mine Sweeper, U.S.S. Woodpecker MCS 209.

Eva: Lets go back to where you got transferred to Japan...now that's far away from home, what was that experience like?

Eduardo: Well were aboard ship, we traveled from Long Beach all the way to Hawaii, to Guam, the Philippines, and finally Sasebo our home port, which I was there for three years.

Eva: What kind of people did you encounter...was it just other fellow American that were there in the service, or did you have a chance to get into the country?

Eduardo: We got into the country we toured one of my highlights of my career, was having gone to Nagasaki Japan, where one of the Atomic bombs was dropped in 1945, very interesting experience.

Eva: And the year that you were there again was what again?

Eduardo: I was there from 68 to 71.

Eva: So how did the people feel about you from 1968 to 1971 considering what happened in 1945?

Eduardo: The Japanese people were very nice, at least the ones I knew no animosity towards the United States, they were glad that we were there, and friendly.

Eva: What kinda of culture did you pick up while you were there?

Eduardo: I learned a little bit of Japanese which I have forgotten now, but it was nice, I love the country.

Eva: Have you been back since?

Eduardo: Yes...after we came back in 71 I got back in 76 back to Japan overseas, it was nice.

Eva: The three years that you served in Japan what all did you have to do with your job as far as being on the minesweeper?

Eduardo: Every 4 to 6 months we would depart Sasebo head on to Twain, and Philippines, and Vietnam. Stayed in Vietnam up and down the cost three or four months, returned back to the Philippines, Korea, and then back to Japan.

Eva: Now when you got to go to Vietnam what did you see there, were you nervous about hearing everything that was going on.

Eduardo: Well yes of course, but being on the little mine sweeper, the mine sweeper costal like I said the U.S.S. Woodpecker we go into the harbors, Danang, Cameron bay, sweep the harbors for commercial ships or larger United States vessels went into the harbor we would take three or four days sweep the cost, harbor, thank god we never did find any mines, and then go back up on the costal, sweep up and down...patrol, go on patrol up and down the cost.

Eva: Did you have to be armed considering that you were in the Navy?

Eduardo: Oh no...Then I changed my rating from boiler technique to enginemen. Became enginemen, and since we didn't have any boilers on the mine sweepers we had diesel engines I became a diesel mechanic....enginemen.

Eva: Now a lot of men during Vietnam got to see things experience things that when they came back to the United States they never talk about they never want to share...did you ever see anything that has never left your mind, because of Vietnam?

Eduardo: Yes...one time when we were in patrol in one of the harbors we had some Vietnamese immigration officers and I was down in the engine room and all of sudden the ship started maneuvering going and changing speeds, and I was wondering what was going on, so I came up top side, and we stopped to check this we called it junket for the Vietnamese Immigration Officer we had on board...he wanted to check the people on that boat and see if they were North Vietnamese and had papers and all of that, and I

remember that they were talking Vietnamese, this guy wanted to... the Officer wanted to see some papers some citizenship papers of the South so he went to the front of the little boat junket, and we called it he opened up and was reaching down for some weapons I guess, when they fired up on him, and that imagine has always stayed in my mind, never forgot.

Eva: Was there anything after they shot upon him, and he was diseased did they find anything to verify their first instinct?

Eduardo: Well they had a catch of weapons on their little minesweepers and I guess they were taken into the little harbors there in the cost.

Eva: You served a total of three years in Japan, after Japan, during Japan I'm sorry, I understand your father passed away. Where you able to return home at that point?

Eduardo: No I was not he passed away in 69 when we were in patrol in Vietnam, and by the time my mother had contacted the Red Cross it was late and he had already been buried. They just gave me the bad news that my father had passed away, and it was too late to come back home.

Eva: Would they have sent you home considering that was a time of war?

Eduardo: If they would have contacted us in plenty of time I imagine yes they would have, yes but it didn't happen.

Eva: So you did three years and after 1971 where was your next duty station?

Eduardo: We came back to the states and I was home ported in Seattle, Washington at the time the ship was decommissioned and put on reserve status, and I was one of seven enlisted, and officers that got to stay aboard ship on reserve status.

Eva: What ship was this?

Eduardo: U.S.S. Woodpecker MC209

Eva: For that time that you were in Seattle did you get to go home back to Laredo or did you go back to Vermillion?

Eduardo: I went home to Laredo to visit my mother, because it had been three years.

Eva: Did you remain in contact with the Hansen family?

Eduardo: All the time yes I did.

Eva: After serving in Seattle what was life like after you came back home after Vietnam? How were civilians treating you, was it hard did you find it discouraging, there are plenty stories of service men that were...

Eduardo: Like we always see in the news there was not a lot of fan fair for the military. It was just, we were just glad to be back on American soil, and move on from there.

Eva: The men that you worked with for the three years that you were in Japan, did you remain in contact with them?

Eduardo: Yes I did for a long time and we were very tight we were a small group 5 officers 30 enlisted, we were close, very close.

Eva: What ever happen to them?

Eduardo: Some stayed in the military and some got out. I just happened to be one of the ones that stayed in.

Eva: Do you know of any reunions that they ever had that you went back for?

Eduardo: None that I have known of...no.

Eva: I understand that you decided to marry while you were in the service.

Eduardo: Yes I did.

Eva: Did you meet your wife while you were at a duty station or where did you meet her?

Eduardo: On a trip to Laredo, and a year and a half later we got married, in 1972

Eva: Did you have family with her?

Eduardo: Yes, two kids, Eduardo Jr. and Eva, my son is 34 and my daughter is 32.

Eva: While your kids were growing up while you were in the service what was that like for you to know that you were leaving every so often.

Eduardo: I enjoy my career; the hard part about it was the separation. When my kids were little and having to leave and come back, I just missed the kids.

Eva: How understanding was your wife of this?

Eduardo: Very...very understanding, very supportive of my career, always supportive of the duty stations I had, always there for me.

Eva: Your career did it have you travel a lot, or where you fortunate enough to be in certain locations for long periods of times.

Eduardo: Very lucky, to be in San Diego for 17 of my 26 years.

Eva: What kind of positions did you have while you were in San Diego?

Eduardo: Ship to shore, ships in San Diego back to shore, and I became a Company Commander, I was right there in San Diego...two tours.

Eva: Did your ship duties differ from what type of ships they were, they destroyers, were they aircraft carriers, what kind of ships were you on, tell me their names and what you did?

Eduardo: I started out on mine sweepers, then I went to harbor tugs in San Francisco, Hunter Point, then I went out on shore duty in Lemoore Navel Air Station to work in the jail, as a security guard correctional officer. Then I went aboard the U.S. Lang FF1060 then I went to ACU assault craft unit 1 in Coronado.

Eva: How did you go from being a security guard from going back on the ship?

Eduardo: That was my shore duty, I was on shore duty in Lemoore Navel Air Station where my daughter was born, my son was born in San Francisco in 73, two years later my daughter in Lemoore Navel Air Station then I moved on to San Diego aboard the U.S. Lang, then to Assault Aircraft Unit 1 in Coronado from there I did my tour there I went to become the first time Company Commander in 1983 got out of there went aboard the U.S.S. Reasoner FF1060 came off the U.S. S. Reasoner belay that, after Company Commander I went aboard the U.S.S. Acadia AD42 then I went to the U.S.S. Reasoner, back to Company Commander December 86 to 90 then I went aboard Seal Delivery Team One back in Coronado unit I retired in 1993.

Eva: Which did you prefer not that you had much of a choice, the shore duty or out to sea.

Eduardo: Shore duty.

Eva: San Diego what was your favorite thing about being out on the ship and out to sea in the Atlantic or the Pacific or the Indian Ocean?

Eduardo: I guess the fellowship with my fellow Sailors aboard ship we were very tight always team work stayed close.

Eva: What kind of other things did you see other than Vietnam you were in from 1967 to 1993?

Eduardo: I guess in 1986 we went over seas the first time, several ships from San Diego got to go into the Mediterranean at the time President Regan was the President and we went on to assist in some military action in Libya took care of business there then we went to go to go to Naples Italy Niece, France, and tour the Mediterranean for the first time, and that was very interesting.

Eva: When you were doing that did you ever think I am just a small boy from Laredo what am I doing here?

Eduardo: I always thought that, I was blessed with the opportunity to have gone over seas, and see parts of the world, had I stayed in Laredo, I would have never had the opportunity to do that.

Eva: I know while you were in the service and early on in your career and while you were married, with two small kids your mother passed away?

Eduardo: That is correct.

Eva: Where were you stationed at the time she passed away?

Eduardo: At the time I was at Assault Craft Unit 1 and they had sent me to San Diego school refrigeration and air conditioning, when we got the word through the Red Cross that my mother was sick.... I got home, my wife had already packed the kids and cloths and took off for Laredo, and by the time we got there, I had got the word that my mother had died...1977.

Eva: Was the military very compassionate with the fact of family leaves and when you needed to leave?

Eduardo: Always very supportive.

Eva: Since your where an only child did the military help you with the your burial services for your mom considering she was your dependent?

Eduardo: No.

Eva: So you go back to San Diego, and it is 1977, what kind of other things was going on that required you to be either on a ship or on shore?

Eduardo: Not much just doing work, not much going on in the world. That I can remember.

Eva: When you were out to sea and your were talking about you got to got to go to the Mediterranean was there any place that you didn't get to go, that you always wanted to go see.

Eduardo: Yes I always wanted to go to Spain, Role Spain I heard so much about it. We got up there to the Straights of Gibraltar up on the coast, but we never got to go.

Eva: Was their any reason for that or that just wasn't the plan?

Eduardo: IT was not the plan...I remember our Captain was trying to get us to go in for a visit for a couple of days of R&R, but it was not meant to be.

Eva: Is there any place that you got to see that you wish Oh man I just which I never would have seen that place?

Eduardo: Yes I did we went to a little place called Katina, Sicily, and I wish I had never gone there.

Eva: What made it so bad?

Eduardo: It was dirty, and not very clean, but it was alright, at least I got to go there.

Eva: In talking about the ship, what was it like the first time on the ship on your way to Japan and you were crossing the Atlantic what did that feel like?

Eduardo: The pacific it was close quarters, just different. I got sea sick for the first time. I was a rookie, it was a neat experience.

Eva: Did the older veterans on the boat who had been out all ready make fun you?

Eduardo: Yes they sure did always teasing me making fun of me it was just me it was a bunch of rookies that was there; it was all a lot of fun. As I grew older I got to do the same things with the young ones. It was fun.

Eva: Do you remember how many times it.. takes you before you finally calm down in your stomach relax?

Eduardo: Days I'd say with in three or four days. I got use to it.

Eva: Then going from a small ship to a bigger ship, what was the biggest ship you had ever been on?

Eduardo: I guess the biggest one was a repair ship U.S.S. Acadia.

Eva: Your job on that was?

Eduardo: I was the division officer of Bolts and Crain's. I was first class at the time; I was in charge of 30 guys and ladies at the time. It was a good crew.

Eva: What was it like for you in your promotion experience, what was that like being promoted through the ranks what did you have to do, what was that all about?

Eduardo: It was just going through the schools, and having to become a leader of man it was a good experience and I enjoyed it.

Eva: What was the process like for you to be promoted from 3rd to a 2nd class to 1st?

Eduardo: We had to take test we had to have our qualifications and just move on from there and qualify take the test pass it and I passed.

Eva: Where there any times that you took the test but you didn't have the opportunity to advance?

Eduardo: Yes.. pass but not advance. It was probably there were not that many openings in the rating that I was in I just didn't make it.

Eva: Did you ever feel why not me. Did you ever feel any discouragement that you didn't want to take the test again?

Eduardo: Oh yes every time it was discouraging, but you move on you didn't dwell on it, thought about it for a little while, and move on.

Eva: What was your experience dealing with your CO's like?

Eduardo: I always lucked out, I had good CO's aboard ships good chief engineers, never had any problems good chiefs that I worked for. I always had good crews.

Eva: Was there ever a duty station early on in your career that you enjoyed the most out of anything that you ever experienced in the Navy?

Eduardo: The second ship that I was the U.S.S Woodpecker being that there was only 35 of us 5 officers 30 enlisted. We were very very close with each other.

Eva: Did you have that kind of relationship with anybody again later on in your career or never found it to be the same?

Eduardo: Never found it to be the same. Only on bigger ships we have our division, and maybe 3 or 4 guys were very close but not as close as we were on the smaller ships.

Eva: How long were you out to sea every time you were out?

Eduardo: During the Vietnam time it was 53 days aboard the little ships. Later on in my career I spent 97 days aboard the U.S.S. Reasoner, in 86. That was pretty cool. 97 days.

Eva: Where were you going for those 97 days where did you go?

Eduardo: We were up in the Mediterranean like I said when we took care of business with Libya, we were escorting the U.S.S. Enterprise plane guarding, and just being out at sea.

Eva: Now when you mention taking care of business with Libya would that be the time the United States bombed Omar Kadafi home?

Eduardo: Yes.

Eva: Because that was made public to the rest of the world. When you got to come home, how was it like you came home and everything that you got to see and experience did you get to share everything with your family or were there some things that you never got to say where you went.

Eduardo: Just like you say it was public later on, I talked to my wife and kids they were growing up and they understood and I shared my experiences overseas.

Eva: I understand that your son got to travel with you on the Acadia?

Eduardo: Yes on a tiger cruise.

Eva: Tell me about a tiger cruise, what was that like?

Eduardo: It was a lot of fun, he enjoyed it. I guess it made an impression on his life now he is a navel officer.

Eva: What is a tiger cruise?

Eduardo: It is where the ships go overseas and when we are coming back the families back home prepare for dependents to come aboard the ship and father and sons, on ships that only have male sailors on repair ships female young ladies get to come aboard. When we get to Hawaii, they fly over to the big island Hawaii and they come aboard and travel with us from Pearl Harbor back to San Diego. It was a lot of fun.

Eva: How many days does that take?

Eduardo: It was about 10 days, 7 to 10 days.

Eva: What was it like having your son with you on the ships those 7 to 10 days getting to see how he experienced the whole board?

Eduardo: My son enjoyed it traveling it was the repair ship and he wanted to work. He was out there working with the guys sweeping, and mopping, I remember getting teased by my guys in the division, because they thought I was mean with my son because I put

him to work. But he just wanted to do the work. He wanted to do the work be with guys, and he enjoyed it.

Eva: I know there was an experience where he got sick; can you tell me about that?

Eduardo: Yes he ate too much, all the guys were feeding him cookies all kinds of stuff from the commissary he eating, then we encountered rough seas he got very sick.

Eva: Was he like I want to go home?

Eduardo: No he hung in there, got over it after about a day or two.

Eva: As a kid I remember taking you to the ship, it was always early in the morning it was dark it was gloomy, and you always just went on the ship. But when you were coming home it was huge fan fair of seeing all the men standing on the ship as they roll in. What was it like for you preparing to see your family after months?

Eduardo: Well it was exciting not just for me but for all of us. I remember coming back, the day before the night before we used to call channel fever. Nobody slept; no body went to sleep everybody up all night long watching movies going to the chow hall getting something to eat. We just stayed up. We were anxious to get back home the anticipation to get back to the family.

Eva: When you got back home and you got to see your family everything did you get to leave did everyone get to leave that night or did some have to stay?

Eduardo: Some of us had to stay, for duties and all that but we got 30 days stand down. Some people went on leave, and we kept duty station support. We had duty and then we would go, get a couple of days off and come back. Then some of us took leave.

Eva: What was the adjustment period like for you for being on a ship for 7, 6 months at a time, but then yet coming home to your family, where have already got their lives set up and their daily routine. What was that like for you to kinda fit into that routine?

Eduardo: I fit right on in. It didn't take long.

Eva: Did you miss anything while you were out to sea that you wish you could have been there to see. Was there any specific events that you missed?

Eduardo: Oh ya my son when he was in school playing baseball and football I missed some of that, watching my kids growing up and being there for them.

Eva: Did you, still get to see parties and stuff like that?

Eduardo: Oh yeah.

Eva: Did you and your family every take trips that had to do with going back to seeing your family in Laredo or seeing your family in Vermillion.

Eduardo: All the time yes.

Eva: So you remained in contact with the Hansen's?

Eduardo: Yes we did.

Eva: To this day are you still contact with them?

Eduardo: Now the mom and dad have passed away, but the siblings are still there, and we stayed in contact and....for over 40 years yeah we are still on contact.

Eva: Going from leaving the whole ship and sea and traveling behind and staying in just land and having your duty stations you were a Company Commander, what was that like. What did you have to do, what kind of experience or preparation did you have to get ready to be that Company Commander, you were the first impression these kids were going to see, what was going through your mind.

Gregory: Well of course we had to go to company commander training, instructor training, and was everything that I was told it was going to be. Then I remember when I was a recruit what it was like. I always thought to myself that would be something I would want to do later on in my career if I stayed. I was blessed and I got to do it. It was very challenging, very challenging job because we did 80 to 90 recruits from all over the country Puerto Rico, the Philippines and tried and mold them into one. That was a job. I got to do it in a short eight weeks, and seeing the product that I had worked on and seeing the recruits out there all spurt away after seeing them get off the bus, all long hair just the way the talked "yeah man" and all that to "Yes, Sir".

Eva: Did you do this by yourself?

Eduardo: The first time I went yes, one Company Commander. The second tour I did 86 to 90 there was two Company Commanders. So that was a little easier, and not as stressful.

Eva: What was the difference like being on ship and then working go to work but still being on the ship as apposed to being a company commander you there but did you get to go home, did you travel back and forth, did you see your family as much or not as much.

Eduardo: As Company Commander the first two weeks it was long hours, and getting the recruits trained, and getting set up. Then it got a little easier as training went on. It was tough.

Eva: Did you ever have any one where your were like "ok this guys is just not going to learn how to march"?

Eduardo: Yes, that is what was challenging about it, and then they made it. I had some chubby guys that were fat, and had to lose weight, and got to graduate.

Eva: Did you have anybody that just broke down crying that that was not what their recruiter told them it was going to be about?

Eduardo: All the time. Then they changed their minds. We had to be motivation to them, somebody they looked up to because they didn't anybody else. The cc was it. Like people had heard ship or ship out, and they stayed. They were motivated, some went into boot camp with good schools, and they didn't want to jeopardize that. Either get with the program or your going back home. One of the saddest parts about it, there was some of these kids before they went into boot camp they go out with their partners, and party and when they came into boot camp, they got urinalis test, and they became positive, and at the time when I was there our admiral Hayward said their was zero tolerance and they came positive they were gone and I lost a lot of good prospect for the Navy. Just because they went out and partied the night before they went to boot camp.

Eva: By testing positive for drug use?

Eduardo: Drug use. They were gone. No question asked they were gone.

Eva: Was that the whole policy of the navy in general or just this particular admiral at the time?

Eduardo: No that was the Navy that was it. A lot of young kids stayed and it was rough for them it was a culture shock, and the change of environment. I remember this one incident where this one kid his dad told me chief I don't know how you did this, I had this kid for 18 years and couldn't do anything with him you did it in 8 weeks, how did you do it. And I kind of grind and smiled and told him a little motivation.

Eva: Did you ever smile for your recruits?

Eduardo: Later on in training to let them know I was human. I had a lot respect. They respected me.

Eva: When they first came off the boat and you where getting ready to utter your first words, did you have a mental flash back of you getting off

Eduardo: I sure did.

Eva: What was that like?

Eduardo: It was kinda like I said, a culture shock, I remember early what you said about what I thought about my cc something I will always remember. He told us he said I don't

want you guys to fear me I want you guys to respect me, and in order for me to get your respect I am going to have to earn it". And I never forgot that.

Eva: Is that what you told all of your companies after that.

Eduardo: Yeah pretty much. Yes

Eva: The gentlemen I remember you with a lot of different gentleman while you were training companies what was that like having that person you talked to every day, to be able to have them to bounce ideas off of, and to lack of better words to bitch and moan about the guys.

Eduardo: You mean my fellow Company Commanders?

Eva: Your fellow Company Commanders.

Eduardo: I always lucked out. I always got good partners, and got along great. Share our experience and ideas. What was best for the company the recruits and the navy.

Eva: So when you trained them you trained to obviously how to march was their anything else they had to know before they got out.

Eduardo: First we had to get them to pay attention to detail cause that is the way it was going to be in the Navy. Instill in them Navy policy. What the Navy was like and what we did in the Navy as a team. Always instill in them the team concept. No individualism, team concepts.

Eva: I remember seeing pictures in your year books of guys wearing gas mask, and having go into buildings what were you teaching them there?

Eduardo: There were other CC that specialized in that we just take the recruits to that kind of training, and they took care of the hall techniques, and of ship life, if they had to fight fires, if they had to go shot at the range, we mates that took care of that we were just the Company Commander. Get them from point A to point B. When we were back in the barrack, and marching and all of that that is when I come in and taught basic ship board life, type of environment, what it would be like for them aboard the ship.

Eva: Is there any recruit that you remember, that just, that you still remember that some kid made an impression on you?

Eduardo: Oh I am sure there is quite a few, I can't think of anyone specific right now but there is quite a few...good kids.

Eva: How long did you do that for again?

Eduardo: Seven years...3 years my first tour 80-83, then second tour December 86 to December 90.

Eva: Is this all at the same location?

Eduardo: San Diego.

Eva: What was the name of the base on that?

Eduardo: Recruit Training Command San Diego.

Eva: Finishing out your career obviously in the Navy cc and being on the ship what was your final duty station?

Eduardo: It was with Seal Delivery Vehicle Team 1 in Coronado working with the Navy Seals.

Eva: What made it interesting?

Eduardo: Just having to be with the Seals.

Eva: You say that with such an exciting look on your face, what did you do that made it that way?

Eduardo: It was just a lot of fun.

Eva: You read stories, and hear about them being crazy in the sense of that they will just do anything for excitement and fun, is that what you got to experience?

Eduardo: Oh yeah, they were very diligent, very smart good guys, decent guys.

Eva: What did you do for them; I mean I know you weren't a seal?

Eduardo: I was a division officer, I had 14 guys working for me, and we took care of the seals, by that I mean what ever they needed, we got for them and sent them on their mission. That is all I can say.

Eva: Did your family know that you were doing that at the time working with them?

Eduardo: Oh yeah/

Eva: You just weren't allowed to discuss exactly what it was that you did?

Eduardo: That correct.

Eva: During what year was this?

Eduardo: December 90 to May of 93 when I got out.

Eva: Then this would have been during the first Gulf War?

Eduardo: Yes, I didn't get to go I stayed behind.

Eva: You use the phrase "Taking care of business a lot", is that a navy term or is that something that you say?

Eduardo: Something that I say, if I don't want to divulge anything, information.

Eva: What was your best experience about being in the Navy? Think back to your life in Laredo living, on the farm in Vermillion South Dakota to deciding, you were going to enlist, go back and look now at your whole 26 year career, what was the most exciting thing for you?

Eduardo: I guess, my cc tours that I did, cause I had the opportunity to help kids, and I always liked that. I showed them what it was like, and just being a witness to them of my life of what I have done, where I come from what I did, where I was at the time, and that they could do the same. It is there for them whatever they want to do. Pick up the ball and run with it like I did.

Eva: Was there anything or any one event that happened that made wish, I wish I didn't join?

Eduardo: Not really no?

Eva: So you would say overall it's been a great experience for you.

Eduardo: Yes, it was.

Eva: It was a great experience.

Eva: Would you have...now you mentioned being in Vietnam and Japan, and going through the Mediterranean, did you get to cross the equator, did you get to do all of that?

Eduardo: Yes, I did, it took a long time in my career but at my 19 years service, I finally became a shell back. It was an experience; it was everything that I heard.

Eva: What is a shell back?

Eduardo: It means when we are aboard ship, and we go below the equator and it is a navy tradition it was we do certain things aboard ship.

Eva: Kinda haze them?

Eduardo: Uhhh I wouldn't call it that. It was a lot of.

Eva: You say that with excitement.

Eva: Did you get to visit the majority of the contents in the world, or was there anywhere you didn't get to go?

Eduardo: Yes, always wish that I got too got to Australia and Thailand, those two place I never got there.

Eva: Do you think that you would ever go back as a civilian?

Eduardo: Maybe there is always a possibility.

Eva: What made you decide to get out of the service? You had served 26 years I know it was the retirement stage anyway, but you had served 6 years past the 20, what made you decide at 26 to get out?

Eduardo: I can't point one finger at any particular thing, I just remember the guys telling me "Garza you will know when it is time to go", and I sure did. 26 was it it was time to get out.

Eva: Where you in San Diego at the time?

Eduardo: Yes I was.

Eva: Finishing up and getting up, while you were in the service did you receive any accommodations, medals, any honors, that you got to take with you?

Eduardo: Yeah, I got my good conducts, my humanitarian, my Vietnam medals and ribbons, the only thing I never got was a navy achievement medal but that's ok.

Eva: That ok because you did your 26.

Eduardo: Yes I did

Eva: Did you decide to stay in San Diego after your 26 years, or did you move on after that?

Eduardo: No we came to San Antonio

Eduardo: Due to San Diego being very expensive.

Eva: Moving to San Antonio, what was that like after being in San Diego for those 17 years?

Eduardo: It was great fit right into San Antonio.

Eva: Did you have any withdraws from not being in the Navy anymore when you got out?

Eduardo: No, I enjoyed it; I didn't have to worry about going back on ships, going overseas enjoying my life.

Eva: So you got the chance to enjoy the 26 years, but yet you get a chance to enjoy your retirement?

Eduardo: Yes I did.

Eva: Have you continued to work after your retirement from the Navy?

Eduardo: Yes I am now a correctional officer for the State of Texas, stationed right here in San Antonio, at Dominquez Unit. A lot of fun I enjoy it.

Eva: That would almost that you took your cc status in the navy into this new cc officer...

Eduardo: Yes and no obviously we can't treat inmates as recruits. But my experience has helped me, in dealing with the criminal element.

Eva: Going back to your family, how did they feel about you getting out of the service?

Eduardo: It was time to go.

Eva: So that whole when you knew it was time it was time to go.

Eva: And looking back on your career in the navy is that something that you would have wished for your kids...an enlisted service?

Eduardo: It was up to them, whatever they wanted to do.

Eduardo: My son is a teacher and he went into the Navy reserve, and now he is active, and he finally became a Navel officer intelligence, and doing pretty good he like it. He is active as we speak.

Eva: Speaking of Eddy you got to have the opportunity to do something that was pretty great for him when he became an officer can you share that with me?

Eduardo: Yes he wanted me to be at his commissioning ceremonies, so that I would be the first to salute him and as a tradition and it was an honor for me to be there for him.

Eva: Where you the only father, son team....

Eduardo: Yes I was.

Eva: How long has eddy been in the service?

Eduardo: 8 years. Reserve and active now together.

Eva: Enlisted vs. officer how does that...how do you feel about that, are you glad that he did it as an officer, and not as an enlisted?

Eduardo: Well he did both, he started out as an enlisted, he saw what it was like to be an enlisted, and now he appreciates, being an officer, after having been an enlisted. He knows what it is like to be an enlisted, he lived it, and now he is an officer, and he is very understanding of the enlisted ranking.

Eva: Has the changed from what you see when you entered, and the 26 years and to what your son experiences...

Eduardo: A lot yes.

Eva: What are those changes?

Eduardo: Well I am not living it right now but I see it. We have good kids now that we didn't back then its pretty strict now.

Eva: Now a days with September 11, and post September 11 and how patriotic everybody is and how America is again very patriotic did you see that patriotism while you were in the service your 26 years, or was it more of a scattered kind of a feeling?

Eduardo: Yeah more of a scattered, I think we are more patriotic now. We were back then, but its more now. The country unites together, and course we still have the liberal crazies out there that don't like the military but the majority of the Americans are military supporters.

Eva: As a small boy from Laredo, and being encouraged by this Mr. Thompson in vermillion South Dakota do you see, did you get to experience everything that he told you it was about?

Eduardo: Most definitely yes.

Eva: Anything that you would have changed at all?

Eduardo: I would have done it better, if I had to do it over.

Eva: Mr. Garza I thank you very much for your time.

Eduardo: My pleasure.

End.