

**BUMED Oral History Interview Synopsis and Glossary
HMCS (NAC/FMF) David C. Clipson, USN**

Date and Location of Interview: December 2nd and 9th, 2015, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), Falls Church, VA

Scope of interview: 154 pages

Interviewer: Mr. André Sobocinski, Historian, BUMED

SYNOPSIS:

Senior Chief Clipson was born in Wichita Falls, Texas, in 1974. He grew up in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Nevada, graduating Carson City High School, Nevada in 1992, where he played football and was a member of the Navy Junior ROTC. He had a love of the outdoors and aspirations of becoming a SEAL, and enlisted in the Navy in 1991. He completed Boot Camp at the Naval Training Command, San Diego, followed by Hospital Corpsman "A" School in San Diego 1993 and the Field Medical Service School at Camp Pendleton, CA, which he found much to his liking.

Over the next twenty-three years, Clipson would set forth on an eclectic career path, beginning in 1993 as a corpsman on the Labor and Delivery Service of the Naval Hospital Bremerton, WA. In 1994, he was transferred to the 7th Communications Battalion of the III Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa, Japan. There he was a corpsman for the security platoon supporting the 5th Force Reconnaissance Company of the 3d Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Intelligence Group. He also received specialized training in special operations with the Maritime Special Purpose Force. While in Okinawa he met his future wife, Heather Larson, who was assigned to the 3d Medical Battalion. They were married in 1995 when he returned to the States for duty with the 2d Amphibious Assault Vehicle Battalion, 2d Marine Division, at Camp Lejeune, NC,

Anxious to pursue specialized training, in 1997 HMCS Clipson completed the Naval Aircrew Candidate School at the Marine Corps Air School in Pensacola, Florida. This qualified him to become a Search and Rescue (SAR) corpsman, which would become his primary specialty, and he was assigned to the Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point in that capacity. While there, he would take part in the rescue efforts in North Carolina following Hurricane Floyd in September 1999, and in this interview he shares stories of the role he and the Navy SAR team played in this disaster relief operation.

From 2001 to 2004, Clipson served as a SAR Corpsman supporting the Naval Strike Air Warfare Command at the Naval Air

Station, Fallon, NV, where he underwent a death-defying moment. On July 18th, 2001, during a search and rescue operation, Clipson's helicopter crashed at 10,320 feet near the summit of Granite Dome in the Emigrant Wilderness of the Sierra Nevada mountains. He relates the harrowing story of the crash and its enormous impact on his life.

In 2004, Senior Chief Clipson was assigned as a SAR Corpsman with the Special Operations Training Group of the II Marine Expeditionary Force, and deployed with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom II where he participated in casualty evacuation operations during the second battle of Fallujah. Returning to the States he was assigned to the Naval Aviation Schools Command for duty as the Senior Medical Enlisted Leader for Naval Aviation Rescue Swimmers School, followed by assignment in 2010 as the Senior Enlisted Leader of the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) in Bethesda, MD. In 2013 he was an Honor Graduate of the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy Class 171. He currently serves as the Hospital Corpsman Force Medical Planner at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Falls Church, VA.

Senior Chief Clipson's Awards include: Navy and Marine Corps medal for Heroism, Air Medal (1st thru 4th Strike Awards), Air Medal (Meritorious), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (4), Navy Achievement Medal (4), and various other operational and service awards.

KEY ACRONYMS:

ASVAB-Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery
BUD/S-Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL
CASEVAC-Casualty Evacuation
CQB-Close Quarter Battle training
FMSS-Field Medical Service School
FMF-Fleet Marine Force
FSSG-Force Service Support Group
MARDIV-Marine Division
MEDEVAC-Medical Evacuation
MEPS-Military Entrance Processing Station
MEU-Marine Expeditionary Unit
MSPF-Maritime Special Purpose Force
MWSS-Marine Wing Support Squadron
NEC-Navy Enlisted Classification
NICOE-National Intrepid Center of Excellence
SAR-Search and Rescue
TrueX-Training in Urban Environment Exercise.

KEY FIGURES:

Boss, Sherman E. III, Force Master Chief, USN, Ret., currently (2016) Director, Regional Optimization Liaison, Wellpoint Military Healthcare Company, Norfolk, VA.

Campa, Joe, Jr., Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Ret.; a graduate of the Hospital Corps School, San Diego, who is celebrated as an exceptional Corpsman whose first 19 years were medical assignments at the National Naval Medical Center, San Diego; the Naval Hospital, Long Beach, CA, the Naval Hospital, Bremerton, WA, as well as a series of assignments with the Marines.

Coffey, Steve, Assistant Chief, Havelock Fire and Rescue, Havelock, NC. In 2014 the department received the American Heart Association Bronze Award for its implementation of procedures for treatment of patients with ST elevation myocardial infarction.

Koffman, Robert L., M.D., Captain, MC, USN, Ret; psychiatrist; major leader in development of Combat and Operational Stress Control in the Navy, with special emphasis on individual augmentees. In 2011, Deputy Director for Clinical Operations, National Intrepid Center of Excellence, Bethesda, Maryland; Retired USN, 2013, and then recalled to active duty at NICOE, retiring for a second time. Is currently a director of the Semper Fie Fund.

Larson, Lee, MCPO, USN, Ret; Currently, Emergency Response Specialist, Food and Drug Administration; previously Senior Program Analyst, DHEW.

Papalski, Wayne HM1 as a 29-year old Corpsman from Secaucus, NJ, rescued a civilian hiker and the crew sent to rescue her after they became stranded while attempting to reach her on a precarious mountain top 9,000 feet above sea level. He was recognized at the Angels of the Battlefield Gala at the Four Seasons, Washington, D.C., on 22 November 2015.

Trump, Jeremy, Senior Chief, USN SEAL, the grandson of USCG Chief Machinist's Mate William Trump, who was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on Omaha Beach in WWII; and the USCGC Trump is named for him.

Weldon, Mark R., Force Master Chief, Navy Medical Department,
retired, 22 April 2002.

KEY TERMS:

Aeromedical Search and Rescue
Hospital Corpsman, USN
Hurricane Floyd
Marine Corps Medical Support
Military Medicine
Navy Medicine
Operation Iraqi Freedom II
Second Battle of Fallujah

GLOSSARY:

III MEF is stationed at Camp Courtney, Okinawa, Japan. A Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) is the largest Marine combined arms force: consists of a division plus, an aircraft wing, an aviation combat element, and a logistics group; totaling about 50,000 Marines, commanded by a lieutenant general.

Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV), called AMTRAC from its original designation as Amphibious Tractor; is currently designated as Landing Vehicle, Tracked, Personnel-7 (LVTP-7) that was introduced in 1972. It is the amphibious troop transport of the Marine Corps for landing the surface assault elements of a landing force. The AAVP-A1 (Personnel) is the most common AAV variant. It carries 25 combat-equipped Marines plus a crew of 4.

AN-M28, Aircraft Emergency Identification Signal, is an aircraft parachute flare developed in 1943 for night anti-submarine warfare. It produces a light intensity of approximately 500 thousand candlepower.

B-52 Boeing Stratofortress, USAF strategic bomber placed in service in 1955, considered "the most combat capable bomb in the inventory."

Beirut Barracks Bombing: On October 23, 1983; two truck bombs struck buildings housing American and French military in Lebanon as part of a multinational peacekeeping force. The attack killed 241 American military (including 220 Marines), 58 French military and six civilians. It was the largest single day KIA of Marines since Iwo Jima in WW II.

Balad AFB, largest air base in Iraq; located near Balad in the Sunni triangle about 40 miles north of Baghdad.

BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL); mandatory course for SEAL certification.

Camp Hansen is part of Marine Corps Base Okinawa; is named for PVT Dale M. Hansen, USMC, posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in the Battle of Okinawa.

Camp Dawson, West Virginia National Guard; a military training facility located in Preston County, north central West Virginia.

C-17 Boeing Globemaster III, a large military transport delivered to the Air Force beginning in 1993; manufactured by McDonnell Douglas/Boeing; replaced the C-141 Starlifter.

CH-46 Sea Knight "Phrog 46," USMC primary assault tandem rotor helicopter; the Army's version is the much larger model CH 47 Chinook. Built by Boeing-Vertol, the CH-46's first flight was in 1962, and it was placed in service in 1964. The D model featured larger engines and modified rotor blades; delivery began in 1966. The Navy retired the CH-46 in 2004, and the USMC retired it in 2015. It was replaced by the V-22 Osprey.

Cobra: Bell AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter that used the engine, transmission and rotor system of the Bell UH-1 Iroquois (Huey). First flight was in 1965; placed in service 1997. The Navy version is the AH-1 Sea Cobra.

Consolidated B-24 Liberator was an American heavy bomber produced from 1940 to 1942. It was used by U.S. Army Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy as well as by Allied Forces in World War II. It holds the distinction as being the most produced heavy bomber in history.

Delayed Entry or Enlistment Program (DEP)—called the Future Soldiers Program in the Army, is a program whereby individuals going into active duty in the Armed Forces enlist first in the DEP before they ship out to Basic Training, or "boot camp." While those who join the DEP have signed an enlistment agreement to report on a certain date for training, they are not yet a member of the Armed Forces until they enlist in the regular component of their selected branch on their ship date.

Emergency Medical Technician; national standards for certification are set by the National Registry of Emergency Technicians, e.g. Emergency Medical Treatment-Basic (EMT-B).

Emigrant Wilderness: a wilderness area in the Stanislaus National Forest of the Sierra Nevada in Tuolumne County, California, approximately 140 miles east of San Francisco and fifty miles south of Lake Tahoe.

Fast Rope Insertion Extraction System (FRIES) is a method for descending from a helicopter by rope in which several troops can be sliding simultaneously down a thick rope, or can be extracted by specially equipped rope plus fasteners worn by the individuals, and provides a rapid, safe extraction of ground forces by helicopter without landing the aircraft.

First Battle of Bull Run, 20 July 1861, was the first major engagement in the U.S. Civil War, and was fought in Prince William County, Virginia near the city of Manassas not far from Washington, D.C. It was a defeat for the Union Army.

Field Medical Service School (FMSS)— seven week "C" school conducted at Camp Lejeune, NC, and Camp Pendleton, CA to prepare Navy Corpsmen for assignment to Marine Corps units; awards NEC 8404, Field Medical Service Technician.

Friday Night Lights is a 2004 movie-turned TV show that told the story of a high school football coach and his family in a small Texas town.

Granite Dome is located in the Emigrant Wilderness of Stanislaus National Forest, California, on the upper western slope of the Central Sierra Nevada Mountain Range.

"Huey": UH-1 Iroquois helicopter developed by Bell Helicopter in response to an Army requirement for a medical evacuation and utility helicopter. First flown in 1956, it was ordered into production in 1960, and was a workhorse during the Vietnam War. More than 16,000 have been built, and it remains in limited service. It was called "Huey" because the original designation was HU-1; which was later changed to UH-1.

Lemoore Naval Air Station, located in Kings County and Fresno

County, California; Strike Fighter Wing Pacific is home ported there.

Marine Air Group (MAG) is the equivalent of a regiment, and consists of two to ten fixed wing, rotary wing, tilt rotor, or aerial vehicle squadrons, a Marine logistics squadron and a Marine wing support squadron (MWSS). MAG 16 is currently stationed in Okinawa, Japan.

McDonnell Douglas F-18 Hornet, all weather carrier-capable multirole fighter; first flight 29 November 1995; in service U.S. Navy 1999; replaced the Grumman F-14 Tomcat.

Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), the smallest Marine combined arms force; consists of a reinforced infantry battalion, a composite helicopter squadron, and a logistics combat element (LCE); totals about 2,200 Marines, commanded by a colonel. It was formerly called a MAU (Marine amphibious unit).

Meyer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a widely used introspective self-report questionnaire designed to indicate psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions in terms of extrovert/introvert, sensing/intuition, thinking/feeling, and judging/perceiving; in short a personality inventory.

Mojo Panthers: Permian High School (2,654 students in 2013), Odessa, Texas, known for its "Mojo" football team.

Naval Hospital San Diego, the successor the of "War Dispensary," the Naval Hospital, San Diego was originally constructed in 1920-1921 and based on a Moorish architectural style. It was often called the "Pink Palace."

Naval Base San Diego, 1923-1997, was closed as a result of the 1993 BRAC Commission. Located at the north end of San Diego Bay, it is now the site of Liberty City, a mixed-use community being re-developed and re-purposed by the City of San Diego.

NICoE: National Intrepid Center of Excellence, Bethesda, Maryland; opened 24 June 2010 for the treatment of service members with traumatic brain injury and psychological health issues; it aims to be "the leader in advancing world class psychological health and traumatic brain injury treatment, education and research. The building was

constructed as a generous gift by the Zachary Fisher Foundation and its Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund.

OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001-31 December 2014, is the official name for the Global War on Terrorism, established in response to the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. OEF is the umbrella title for operations in Afghanistan, Philippines, Somalia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and the Sahara. OEF-Afghanistan (OEF-A), ended on 31 December 2014. It is now called Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

Second Battle of Fallujah, also known as Operation al Fajr or Operation Phantom Fury, 7 November-24 December 2004; estimated 12,000 US troops; 82 US KIA, 600 wound; 6 Iraqi forces KIA, 52 wounded. Estimated 3,500-4,000 enemy fighters in the city when the attack began; 2,000 insurgents KIA, 1,200 wounded.

Search and Rescue Model Manager-In 1979 the CNO established the Search and Rescue Model Manager (SARMM) department to establish effective SAR policies and to promote standardization of procedures, training and equipment for all rescue-capable units in the U.S. Navy. Responsibility for the SARMM program was initially assigned to Helicopter Combat Squadron Three (HC-3); it is currently assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC-3). There are seven SARMM schools: Aviation SAR Officer, Surface SAR Officer, SAR Petty Officer, Helicopter Control Officer, Landing Signalman Enlisted, SAR Swimmer CAT II, and Helicopter Aircrewman Rappel.

Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE)-most higher-level SERE students are military aircrew and special operations personnel considered to be at high risk of capture. Navy/Marine Corps locations are the U.S. Navy Remote Training Site, Warner Springs, CA; the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Center, Bridgeport, CA, and an annex of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.

Sheppard Air Force Base, located five miles north of the Wichita Falls, Nebraska central business district; is home of the 82d Training Wing and the 80th Flying Training Wing that produces pilots for the USAF and NATO.

Special Operations Training Group (SOTG)-provides specialized

training in twelve different course for the MEF; for example, I MEF SOTG has three branches: Special Training -- shooting and reconnaissance; Assault Climber and Helicopter Rope Suspension Training (HRST); and Amphibious Raider-- amphibious training for battalion landing teams and tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel

The Right Stuff is a 1983 movie adapted from the 1979 book of the same title by Thomas Wolfe, was the story of the original Mercury 7 astronauts that highlighted the character of BG Chuck Yeager, USAF (Sam Shephard), as the personification of the post-war test pilots and their "right stuff." The scene of the crashed pilot walking away from a crash was based on Yeager's experience. Interestingly, Yeager was not selected for the astronaut program due to a decision to select only college graduates.

UDP: Unit Deployment Program; a system of six-month deployments of units to replace the previous twelve month individual Permanent Change of Station (PCS) system, in order to improve unit continuity and to reduce the number of unaccompanied tours.

UH-60Q model of the UH-60 Blackhawk Sikorsky helicopter, introduced in 2004, was a UH-60 medevac variant based on the UH-60L airframe. It was a precursor to the medevac version of the HH-60 model that was delivered to the Army in early 2009.

U.S. Marine Corps Helicopter Squadron One (HMX-1), headquartered at the Marine Corps Air Facility, Quantico, VA, is responsible for transport of the President, Vice President, Cabinet members and other VIPs. It maintains a small number of CH-46 Sea Knights for utility purposes.

U.S. Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Pickel Meadows in the Toiyabe National Forest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains 21 miles northwest of Bridgeport, CA.

U.S. Naval Special Warfare Development Group, SEAL Team Six, of the U.S. Special Operations Command; on 2 May 2011 killed Osama Bin Laden, of Al Qaeda in a raid on his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan.