

## **Oral History Interview Synopsis, and Glossary**

Commander Loren Masuoka, D.M.D., DC, USN  
Head, Dental Department, Naval Branch Health Clinic  
Port Hueneme, California

*Date and Location of Interview:* 3 June 2013, Port Hueneme,  
California

*Interviewer:* Colonel Richard Ginn, Ret., USA, Office of Medical  
History, BUMED

### **SYNOPSIS**

Commander Masuoka was born in Portland Oregon in 1962, the son of Matthew Masuoka, a dentist, and Nobiko Masuoka. He has two sisters, Connie, and Neva (who is also a dentist). He grew up in Portland, graduating high school there in 1980. He completed a B.S. in biology at Lewis and Clark College in 1984, a D.M.D. at the Oregon University School of Dentistry in 1988, and was commissioned in the U.S. Navy Dental Corps that year. He married Lorraine Masuoka in 1997, and they have two sons, Sawyer and Camden.

CDR Masuoka's career has been centered on clinical assignments in a variety of field and fixed facility positions. These include branch health clinics and dental centers in Norfolk, Virginia, the Marine Corps Depot at San Diego, California, and the Naval Recruit Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois; two tours aboard the aircraft carrier USS America (CV-66); and a wide variety of overseas assignments and deployments with naval hospitals and Marine units that have taken him to Japan, Bahrain, England, the Philippines, Somalia, Guinea, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. At the time of this interview he was Head of the Dental Department at the Branch Health Clinic, Port Hueneme, California.

Prior to his current assignment CDR Masuoka was deployed twice to OEF/OIF. In 2006 he was a dental officer at the Navy's Expeditionary Medical Facility in Kuwait, and in 2012 was assigned as a trainer with the NATO Training mission in Kabul, Afghanistan. In this latter assignment he was part of a health care validation team that endeavored to assist the Afghan National Army and Police Force improve their healthcare system for both medical and dental programs, including the introduction of training for both men and women in dentistry.

### **KEY FIGURES**

Bigelow, Gilbert U., D.D.S., CAPT, DC. USN, Ret.; in 1970 during

the Vietnam War, AlC Bigelow, USAF, was assigned to the Combat Control Team, 8<sup>th</sup> Aerial Port Squadron, Tan Son Nhut, RVN; see Ware, below

Leal, Francisco R., D.D.S., CAPT, DC, USN: in 2012, Commanding Officer, 2d Dental Battalion, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Wahab, Zaher, Ph.D., Professor of Education, Lewis and Clark College, Portland, and Visiting Professor at Kabul University and Kabul Education University OR. B.A., American University of Beirut; M.A., Columbia University; Ph.D., Stanford University. An outspoken critic of U.S. operations in Afghanistan, he retired from Lewis and Clark College in 2012 and returned to Afghanistan as a professor at Kabul University.

Ware, James J., CAPT, DC, USN, Ret. In 1983, then Lieutenant James Ware was one of three medical officers who deployed with the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Amphibious Unit from Camp LeJeune, North Carolina to the Beirut International Airport, Lebanon. On October 23d, a suicide bomber blew up their headquarters and barracks building killing 241 service members, including one of the medical officers, LT John R. Hudson, MC. The force of the explosion lifted the entire four story building off its foundation. It was described as the largest non-nuclear explosion ever recorded. Ware and his fellow dental officer, LT Gil Bigelow, DC, faced an extraordinary challenge as they orchestrated the medical response to this disaster, for which they were awarded the Bronze Star.

#### **KEY WORDS**

Dental support of the Marines  
Dental support aboard ship  
NATO Training Mission Afghanistan  
Navy Dental Corps  
Navy dental practice and training  
Navy Medicine  
OEF - military advisor duty

#### **GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS**

Alawite: minority Shiite sect, followers of the Twelver Shia; is centered in Syria.

DENTCAP: Dental Civic Action Program

Hazara: 3d largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, many of which are in central Afghanistan; a Persian-speaking people who are overwhelmingly Twelver Shia Muslim;

LCAC: Landing Craft Air Cushioned

Newport News Shipbuilding: builder of U.S. Navy vessels since 1889; the nuclear aircraft carrier *Gerald R. Ford* was christened 9 November 2013.

MEU: 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. Formerly called a MAU (Marine amphibious unit).

MEDCAP: Medical Civic Action Program

NIACT: Navy Individual Augmentee Combat Training, a course conducted at Fort Dix, New Jersey, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Fort Polk, and other Army posts.

Pashtun: also called ethnic Afghan, the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan; its culture is based on Islam and Pashtunwala, an ancient way of life.

Surface Warfare Medical Department Officer: designation awarded upon completion of qualifications as set forth in Chief of Naval Operations instruction OPNAV 1412.8B. The SWMDO pin is awarded with a distinctive insignia for Medical Corps, Nurse Corps, Dental Corps, and Medical Service Corps officers.

Twelver Shia: largest branch of Shia Islam, "Twelver" is derived from their belief in twelve divinely ordained leaders.

R. Ginn 1/9/14