

Billy Arthur
753 Old Mill Road, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
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Billy Arthur: There had been four or five things done along that line, I don't know what and I got the idea when I talked to the Chief of Staff first, what is his name?

Base PAO: Mr. [John F.] Charles? [Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Training and Operations]

Billy Arthur: Mr. Charles I believe it was.

Base PAO: He's the one that is actually in charge of putting this program together.

Billy Arthur: You said the General [L.H. Buehl] was a history buff.

Base PAO: Yeah.

Billy Arthur: Bull Lacey, Lynn Scott and his wife, oh yeah, everybody got a nickname. If it weren't for that, it wouldn't have been any fun.

Base PAO: Yeah, I guess that is one way to look at it. Your particular expertise and familiarity with the circumstances based on your experience with your publishing activities right?

Billy Arthur: Well, let's say this. Yes, but I mean, I was here when the base was first started. I was here when Camp Davis began. In other words, I came to Onslow County as a publisher to make an easy living and to live easily. Then they put in Camp Davis and a lot of folks don't even know anything about Camp Davis you see. Neither God nor man rested after that. Then about four months after they started Camp Davis, they started Camp Lejeune. I was in from the so-called ground floor which was easy for me because I was built as low to the ground as I am (laughing).

Base PAO: Another way of looking at it.

Billy Arthur: But I was very close to people of Onslow County because I newspapered in New Bern for 7 years before moving over here in 1940, so I have been all over this area and around and so when the Marines came, I was very close to every one of the first outfits that was in here. Even enlisted personnel and officers and everything and fact is that they looked out to me and my printer and me and my two printers I should say and we were kind of a real estate agency and everything else until the population influxed and began to come in and settle. You see, with Camp Davis and the first part of the base, there wasn't that much growth in the community because it was transient workers being brought in daily to build and

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then they would take them out at the end of the day, but then gradually, the people started coming in and so I have been very close to the Marine Corps and they were very good to me.

Base PAO: Did you ever have a contract for the base newspaper?

Billy Arthur: Yeah, had that.

Base PAO: You saw all of the history as written by the PIO [Public Information Office] Shop then that came through on galleys.

Billy Arthur: Well, actually we put our independent paper first for the base and took the revenue out of sales. Then the base wanted its own newspaper so we began printing it and we printed up to about, oh about, we were still printing that thing when we got married weren't we? (Asking wife). Yeah, because I remember that they wanted to move the paper out to Wilmington and I didn't want Wilmington to get it and we battled and I thought it would be the ruination if we ever lost the revenue, but that was a god send to me when they took it away from me because I had a chance to concentrate on my own for the first time.

Base PAO: Was that when the local newspaper started getting larger?

Billy Arthur: No, we went from a weekly to a semi-weekly and then we went to a five-day daily, I have forgotten exactly when.

Base PAO: Late 40's? Early 50's?

Billy Arthur: Early 50's we went to a daily because I was set on the idea that putting out a damn good semi-weekly or tri-weekly was better than a lousy daily.

Base PAO: Sure.

Billy Arthur: But, we were forced into it when the war was over, that is, in the early 50's when the Korean conflict began and there was more business here coming in all the time. You see, Jacksonville had grown tremendously during the decade of 1940 to 1950, population wise, but as far as business and industry. . .

Base PAO: So immediately after the war people came back to Lejeune and got out. They stayed and worked jobs that they had gotten accustomed to.

Billy Arthur: Yeah. Are you taping this?

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Base PAO: Yes I am.

Billy Arthur: Oh that's all right. I didn't know if I was holding you up or not.

Base PAO: No, no, we are already well into it.

Billy Arthur: Well, okay, I just didn't know how you wanted me to reminisce because I can go onto a lot of angles. At my age I'm given to digressions.

Base PAO: I think that we would probably be able to extract more from your digressions than anything in the way of prepared remarks because. . .

Billy Arthur: I don't have any prepared remarks.

Base PAO: Oh well, then I don't either.

Billy Arthur: I did bring a folder of some things that maybe I'd better share this with you right away. The one thing that I wanted to do is thank Major [Dale] Baird for coming over here and sorry I didn't meet him, but I had intended and I want to say that this is a good idea. Now I don't know if it was his idea or not to have this reunion that is coming up soon of the people who were displaced off the base, on March 31st and I got an invitation to come through this guy Marshburn at the bank. I wanted to go by and thank him yesterday for remembering me but I can't get around on the dirt. I used to be able to but now I can't lift my feet and can't take on any risers. So I mostly step on carpeted surfaces on account of arthritis. I said that I might want to go down there and be at the shoving off place at Verona, but I wanted to say that was a damn good idea to have these people back. It's a great thing to get those folks back. They have a lot of ties here and many are offspring's of the families who were displaced from their homes. This created some ill will, to have their heritage taken away by not the Marine Corps, but the Navy. I got another thing that I wanted to. . . . The person who was responsible for all of this thing down here, and for Fort Bragg as well, was a native of Marines in Onslow County who wanted to retire there. Marines was the post office at the foot of the Marine side of the Snead's Ferry Bridge you might say now. The old Snead's Ferry Bridge, which is virtually where the new one is now and it was Marines, called Marines, and it was on Courthouse Bay and this fellow named Gillette and he was in charge of the Army Corps Engineers and he made a map of this area, I forget now. In this area way back there called the unguarded coastline. He made this map primarily was to lead the Federal Government into bettering the life of fishermen and landowners along the coast. That is, it makes the inlets more accessible. Making the Inland Waterway more

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navigable and to develop the fishing and commercial fishing industry. This letter, now I have got an extra copy, but if you want this copy of this letter that he wrote me in 1967 which tells about it, or I can read it into the microphone here.

Base PAO: You might just want to read it into the microphone.

Billy Arthur: Well, I think the best way to get into it is just to say it.

This letter comes from Colonel George Gillette and says . . . let's just read the whole story [*The State* magazine, Nov. 1981]: Colonel George Gillette's deep concern for his people and responsibility of his country "shattered" his lifelong desire not once, but twice. First, from the time he left the Marines, a small fishing community on New River and Onslow County in 1902 at the age of 14, George Gillette never forgot the oyster beds, wild geese and the overall peace and stability of the home place. To retire there was a dream. He would graduate from 1911 from NC State as a Cadet, serve with the US Army Corps of Engineer in the Mexican border trouble and WWI and WWII, and post tours of duty at four Army Forts in 9 district offices, including twice at Wilmington. His last assignment was in Atlanta where he was in charge of rivers and harbors, flood control and all military construction in the 7 southern states plus the Caribbean and Panama.

Upon retirement from the army, Colonel Gillette became the first executive director of the North Carolina State Ports Authority in 1947 and directed the post war expansion of the Wilmington and Morehead City Ports until his resignation in 1953. But this little known story begins in the 1939 when Col. Gillette, then in charge of the Army Engineer Corps in Wilmington, surveyed the North Carolina coast with a two-fold purpose. One was to point up its vulnerability to attack by an enemy in wartime. The other was to provide the basis for developing the economy of the coastal area and "my people" by deeper navigable waters and improved conservation measures. A map followed. Some 25 years later, Col. Gillette wrote in a letter to me, "The map I prepared was captioned the Unguarded Coastline. It covered all of North Carolina in general, projecting deeply westward. . . . Coast defenses were shown in the northern end Fortress Monroe, Virginia, on the North and Fort Sumter, South Carolina, on the South." "There was nothing in-between other than squirrel rifles. The inspiration for this effort may interest you. First, as you stated, it was my intense interest in the coastal people especially fishermen, and it had been my intention of retiring around Marines at my grandfathers' place, which surrounded Courthouse Bay, site of the first Courthouse. In Onslow County WWII and my map shattered all

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that except my continuing love of the country and its people. I have never lost that love to this day.

My duties as District Engineer obviously required me to study the land, waters and the people of my district. Things were rapidly shaping up to another world war. I worked in my office most of the weekdays and traveled my district by land and water on weekends, frequently alone. Early in June 1939 was beautiful weather-wise. I decided to have a fresh look at some of the land and water that been in my dreams from childhood. I would see the unguarded coastline. The small 38-foot survey boat Hatteras was ordered to Beaufort where it picked me up Saturday afternoon. While we cruised Core Sound that afternoon, I studied my coastal maps from Virginia to South Carolina, inclusive. Sunday broke beautiful with a slightly westerly wind. What a beautiful day to be out on the ocean. The Captain Early Allen was summoned. Ethram Swain already had the coffee and eggs in the galley "Early, we are going to make the trip today that could in turn make history, we are going to cruise down the coastline and enjoy this beautiful day." That little Hatteras crossed the bar of Beaufort Inlet at 8:00 a.m. I looked at the maps--only down to Onslow Bay a mile off shore from the most beautiful beach I had ever seen--and I have seen them all- we came in Masonboro Inlet and left at 4:00 p.m. thus ending a beautiful day. Monday, Carl Josenhans one of the ablest engineers in my able engineer in Wilmington District Corps of Engineers, talked, sketched and put out thoughts on the drawing board. The rest is history.

As to the credit for the establishment of the Marine Corps in North Carolina, I lay no claim, other than for drawing attention to the area that in my opinion had been neglected. However, I abide attention to the statement by the late Herbert H. Bonner, Congressman of the First North Carolin District and at a public hearing held in Bellhaven North Carolina by the then District Engineer in April 1947. Congressman Bonner stated in substance that a Marine Corps Colonel whom he knew at headquarters in Washington came to his office in Washington, North Carolina, in 1940 and showed him a map of the North Carolina coastal area. The map was called the unguarded coastline. The Colonel asked of Congressman Bonner the directions of how he and his party could locate the area in Onslow described in this map for the purpose of making a preliminary recognizance. Congressman Bonner made a statement before the assembled group at that time "Colonel Gillette who prepared this map is here with us today." To him goes the credit for having called attention to the Marine Corps to the potential of the North Carolina coast for the establishment of what is today, the largest amphibious training center in the world. Blah, Blah, Blah. . . The

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irony was that my little community of Marines where he had dreamed of living in retirement became government property and no longer exists today.

Now the second part of that was that he married a gal from Virginia and when he couldn't retire down here, he moved up to her home and retired and part of his wife's property was taken for what is "now the Buggs Island hydroelectric and flood control dam." So when Kerr Lake was filled in the early 50's, the water that covered the property of Mrs. Gillette in the likely place of them spending their last days. That is the irony of this map, which was a delightful and interesting story.

Now, about this Colonel that went into Bonners' office, I don't know who the Colonel might have been, but the General Julian Smith told me that he and some other officers visited Onslow County way back there and stayed in the old Riverview Hotel which is no longer existent. Now I know that they must have come in civilian clothes and they probably came hunting because Julian Smith was a great sportsman and a hunter and I would imagine that he was among the group, cause he was a two star General after he got back from the first campaign and he was one star the first time I knew him. So, he could have been that Colonel that came down. There is also a possibility that it could have been Colonel Hill, W.P.T. Hill. Which is pure speculation.

Base PAO: Yes, but we are going to get the chance to talk to Mrs. Smith here in a couple of weeks.

Billy Arthur: Who, Happy [Smith]?

Base PAO: Yes sir.

Billy Arthur: Is that right? Well please give her my love.

Base PAO: Will do that.

Billy Arthur: I didn't know that she was, well I don't know how to phrase this nicely but I didn't know that she was still living now.

Base PAO: Yes she is and is doing quite well. As a matter of fact, she was down February 14 or 15 as part of the Second Marine Division Association Reunion/Anniversary and she was good.

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Billy Arthur: That is great. That is wonderful because I always had a deep affection for the General and always will remember. They sent me two ducks one time and I appreciate. . . . Incidentally, in the first part of his career, Colonel Gillette made a map that also brought on the expansion of Fort Bragg.

Base PAO: Now how does that work?

Billy Arthur: I don't know, since I was more interested and did not question him about that. I have known the Colonel since the early 30's.

Base PAO: Is Colonel Gillette still alive?

Billy Arthur: No, he is deceased. But I had known him and so when I got ready to do this story that I put on the tape was taken from the State Magazine in 11/81 and the basis was a letter from Colonel Gillette to me on 11/8/67. Now if you want to take this and make a copy of this letter and send it back to me, you may have it.

Base PAO: That would be good. We can do that.

Billy Arthur: I don't think, in other words, the letter will support what is on the tape and . . .

Base PAO: I think this is the right kind of documentation to support and the fact that it is detailed as I it is. . .

Billy Arthur: Well, he was a detailed man.

Base PAO: I would think that you would have to be being an engineer.

Billy Arthur: Oh that's for sure.

Base PAO: I think that is an important parcel of the MOS [Military Occupational Specialty].

Billy Arthur: Yes, and the detail and the strictly abiding by the letter of the law was one of the things that made him a good States Port Director down in Wilmington but it didn't endear him in the lives of the politicians by any means.

Base PAO: That is a point that I would like to cover if possible about the politicians at the time.

Billy Arthur: Well the fellow that most interested in this base was Hap Barden. Congressman Graham A. Barden of New Bern. He was a Third District Congressman. I know

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that he took a very active interest and don't know anyone that took an interest comparable to his. He used to tell a story that. . . I was Congressman Bardens' friend for years and in fact helped defeat his predecessor by a series of stories that the newspaper in which I worked in New Bern did and supported him rather avidly throughout his career. He used to tell a story that when they put Camp Davis down there, I wrote and thanked him about it and thanked him for it and then Camp Lejeune went in, I wrote him and thanked him for that to and then they were going to expand and develop the over at. . . see they moved everything from Tent Camp down to Hadnot Point and then they went back later on and developed Camp Geiger over there you see at Tent Camp. Then they kept putting more things in like the installation at Courthouse Bay, Montford Point, and put the dog detachment in, so I wrote him a letter and said "For Gods' sakes Hap, stop!" but it was getting pretty hectic. I had to come down here to Onslow County to make an easy living and live easily. First week, I don't know if it will interest you, but any way it may be interesting for the book, when I came to Onslow County one week, I would make \$15 and the next week I would lose \$25, the next week I would make \$10, the next week I would lose \$30, the next week I would make \$60 and that was the way you lived down there. I mean, they didn't lock the doors, kept my fishing tackle in the box right by the front door in my office and anybody come along and say lets go fishing, I would just pull the door shut and let's go, you know. So that was the way it was and it was a great existence but as I say, the Marine Corps was good to me and made me what I am today. I thank them for it too.

Base PAO: What were the biggest changes socially in the area that you noticed as a result of the base coming here. I guess culturally is what I am looking at, the cultural impact on a number of people.

Billy Arthur: Culture, yeah. Well, Onslow County was an intelligent people. There were no, I don't know of any illiteracy that was in the area. Now there may have been people that come down and would go down to Morehead City and imitate the folks talking in the Elizabethan brogue like they do but it set those folks up as a little lower than the average Piedmont North Carolinian who maybe still has a southern drawl but does not have a distinct Elizabethan brogue like they do. I wouldn't say that for educationally, I would say that it was comparable to any other area. Now, socially, this was a proud area down here because most all of the area that is taken in by the base practically the whole coastline came from the original land grants and the land had been in the families for years and years and they were proud of their heritage. The family lines were clearly drawn and there were certain big places like Montford Point was named after an old family. Hadnot Point the same old family for years and years. Now Town Point

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happened to be the site of the courthouse at one time but the man that owned that property was an old grantor . . . grantee . . . I forget. The family lines were distinctly drawn and there was some rivalry but still and all it was a great existence. People got along together because the land that they lived on this side of the New River was good farming land. Now, on the other side was mostly swamp land down in that area. But everybody lived off of the land or what they could get around it, that is, there was abundant game, abundant fishing and they could grow enough vegetables and raise stock. It was easy to subsist. They came into some money on a good year.

Momma, get me a glass of water please. (Asking wife.)

Wife: I'm on my way to get it because I hear you.

Billy Arthur: I'm getting over a cold and I am still taking that antihistamine.

Base PAO: Right and it dries you up.

Billy Arthur: Yeah it dries me out, you see.

Wife: Would you like some water too? (Asking the PAO rep.)

Base PAO: No thank you.

Billy Arthur: As far as amusements and the social thing, they had their usual amusements. We went fishing every week, they had their card parties and dances, and brawls. Saturday night was the party night. When the base came, the people who were planned on came in, well let's just say that before the base got here, it was just a common, everyday county in North Carolina at that time of the century. When the base came, the people who were landowners said that the people that were in the area who were threatened with the loss of their property were disappointed . . . disgruntled. Most of them were willing to sacrifice to some extent but the thing was that the Navy would appraise their land, maybe at what it's valued at. [Tape One, Side Two] But it was certainly of more, that is, dollar-wise. But it was of certainly more value to a person living on it because he could subsist, exist and live on it for years and years, you see. So they were paying him a price and he was going out into the open market and he would have to get another home at twice the price that he was getting for his. . .

Base PAO: Was it due to the fact that there were so many of them that were being displaced at the time so that it pushed the market value up?

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Billy Arthur: Yes it pushed the market values up.

Base PAO: So the assessed value of their property was being held to the bare minimum.

Billy Arthur: That's right. That's right. Then too, even in this area whether they wanted to stay, at the same time there wasn't that much land that was suitable for tobacco, which was the money crop, that was left. There were allotments on tobacco property and you couldn't move tobacco allotments and they were having to learn to get along with new people, new creditors and new surroundings. So, that changed the lives greatly. As far as the business that started coming in, the first group that came in and lots of people may disagree with what I am going to say here, but, I think that the old residents of Onslow County who had the property outside the base and who were able to say capitalize on this thing were too conservative. They were afraid to take a chance. They knew that Holly Ridge was going to be temporary and it took two or three years for them to see that Camp Lejeune was going to be a permanent base. As I said, people may disagree with me on that, but I think it did because the old-line folks that had property around Jacksonville didn't capitalize on it. They didn't sell it at a big profit, in fact, they chose to take a less amount. What they did was issue options on it. So these speculators from all over came in and optioned everything and that's the reason you see developments such as today stringing from Jacksonville down to the foot of the bridge at Hadnot Creek on the left hand side which is a disgrace and an eyesore. They just optioned that stuff out and then these folks with the options would either exercise them or

Base PAO: That's all along Lejeune Blvd.

Billy Arthur: Yes, all along Lejeune Blvd. on the right hand side. Now they, these old liners, did go in and put up some residential developments which is like . . . New River was one of the first, North Woods, and down in the Bay Shore area, but they did do that. But as far as doing anything business-wise and making a killing like some of these folks that have come in here since 1945 and I don't criticize them, they were opportunists and I was on the planning board for a while and tried to have some orderly planning in this thing and tried to get something started. As a matter of fact, I was on the original planning board but it was just tough to control because we only had 873 people living in Jacksonville living in 1940 when I came here and then it grew to about 2,000-3,000 residents that is permanent residents by 1950 and we gained 140% in population. But then we started getting so many residents that came in as qualified voters, property owners, that they could just out vote anybody that wanted orderly development. They may crucify me for saying that but it was really true. Just take a look at

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downtown Jacksonville, and at this area out there, I am not saying the Marines did it, I am saying that opportunists did it.

Base PAO: Oh yeah, it was a direct result of payroll.

Billy Arthur: Yes it was a result of payroll that's right. But as far as what the Marine Corps has done, it provided a payroll down in this part of the state that had never been provided by the people living down here on the land, no. Never would have. So it was bad in one respect and good in another respect too.

Base PAO: Now, environmentally, the person who worked up the original map, Col. Gillespie, he was. . .

Billy Arthur: That was Gillette.

Base PAO: Gillette that's right, I'm sorry.

Billy Arthur: G-I-L-L-E-T-T-E, that's alright.

Base PAO: He was an engineer who was attuned to the environment because of his affinity for his birth place but did he get his way in the final outcome as a result of the installation of all the facilities that have ruined the area and changed it so very much.

Billy Arthur: Well, it took away the best strand of sand on the Eastern Seaboard, Onslow Beach. There was no prettier strand anywhere on the Eastern Seaboard in my way of thinking as far as recreation was concerned. What was the question again?

Base PAO: What would have been the environmental alterations as a result of this?

Billy Arthur: Well, you now have a very cosmopolitan and heterogeneous population for one thing. Now . . . compared to let's say strictly landowners with a long heritage back in the land and then the coast, I think, of course I am a conservative but I used to be accused of being a radical by the old timers in Jacksonville. I ran for mayor twice and got beat twice. I was in the legislature and served in the General Assembly twice without opposition. The only time I ran they beat me because they said I was too liberal.

Base PAO: A radical reactionary.

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Billy Arthur: But now I think I am a conservative and always have been. Now I lost my train of thought, which is easy at my age.

Base PAO: We were talking about the changes in the population.

Billy Arthur: Oh yeah. I don't know that this worked out too much for the bad of the state. I think it has been good for the state on account of the payroll and what it has meant. As far as the changes in the environment, yes. Take New Bern, the whole area has changed. When I went to New Bern in 1933 it was a sleepy place too. But now everything is all hustle and bustle and I never did work as fast as somebody would expect me to work today and as fast as I would expect somebody to be going. I can say that because when I left here I went back to Chapel Hill where I went to school and did public relations work, ran a clipping service, freelance writing, worked on the newspaper until 1962 and Edith and I opened a hobby shop. We had a hobby shop with 9,000 sq. ft. in it. So we employed as many as 18 full-time people and then about 10-12 part-timers. So we expected them to really beat their brains out working. I mean we drove them. We had to, we were paying mall rents. When you pay rents in a mall, you have to get production and so that is why.

Base PAO: The question about the politicians that we asked earlier and you mentioned a Representative Brandon?

Billy Arthur: Barden. Graham A. Barden. He was in Congress from 1934 until he retired.

Base PAO: He was on the State Representative level right?

Billy Arthur: He was a state representative before he went to Congress. He was in the National Congress.

Base PAO: Oh, he was a US Representative.

Billy Arthur: Yes that's right. US Representative about 1934 or 1936 to 1950? I don't remember exactly the dates now.

Base PAO: Was there anybody on the local or the immediate level who assisted or obstructed?

Billy Arthur: No efforts to obstruct politically. Now there was an effort on the part of some folks that lived in the area. Let me digress here. I would refer you to some people in Jacksonville, principally Frank Smith who was a former postmaster. I

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think you probably have him down in your list someplace. That is the big name that comes to me right now. I may have another later. He could tell you about that because his brother Ed B. Smith who was down there, they were both in the general merchandise business in Marines, North Carolina.

Base PAO: He was Post Master at the. . .

Billy Arthur: That's right. He could fill you in on that. Ed Smith did try to stop the whole thing and he also, failing in that, he also tried to get greater compensation for these people. Now that was political because Ed Smith was a politician in this area down here. I don't know of any others that did. I know that folks like Marion Cowell in Jacksonville and Sabistans, and the Amans who were in business there. They did not want to see this happen but they knew it had to come. They did encourage by not doing anything to oppose it.

Base PAO: Benign neglect.

Billy Arthur: That's right and we were all for it. I was in favor of it coming on in. Really, I could see it coming and we had had the experience of 4-5 months of Camp Davis, which was without a doubt the damndest operation that I had ever seen. I mean, it did it's job, a good job down there. But people came in and the way they got that job done was that they were working three 8 hour shifts a day and they built little cubby holes down there and people would get out of one and rid it up for somebody else to sleep in and it was just big enough to crawl in, like a cocoon. I read about it later a couple of decades back where the Japanese had hotels and it was like that. I said "what the hell?" Holly Ridge beat them to that! And those people made no contribution to anything. They just came in here, made their money and spent it like anything. First it was down there in old Town Jacksonville which is downtown Jacksonville now. On payday there were people standing there with big handfuls of money cashing checks for a percentage and the change on the checks. Of course they had bodyguards with them too, but they were just taking their money in the barbershop on Main Street. He had 2-3 showers, they put in shower baths in there and they would go across the street to Margolis' department store and buy a complete outfit from underpants, undershirt, slacks, shirt and maybe a suit. Take it to the barbershop, take a shower and walk out leave the towel and old clothes there. It was just something different to see money being thrown away. They would go out and get drunk, there were drunks all over the place, really it was something. We had experienced that and there wasn't anymore of that. When the Marine Base contractors came, they seemed to have a better class of personnel working on the base. There were more places that were fixed up here in town at that time that

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were spread out more in the area, living here rather than being trucked in. You see at Holly Ridge they were bussed in everyday. They were camp followers. Back in those days they were building camps all over and there were camp followers that would finish one base and then these workers would move in on Holly Ridge and Jacksonville got the crud of that crop of people because Wilmington was the bigger, better town and it went that a way. When the Marines got here, Wilmington was full so they went this a way. We didn't get that and didn't sense that at that time.

Base PAO: Kind of a gold rush era.

Billy Arthur: Gold rush era, yeah.

Base PAO: Like a sourdough mentality in the town during the initial stage of construction for Camp Davis where as later on it was more methodical and more socially viable.

Billy Arthur: That's right. I never will forget when I went down there soliciting an order that the contractors wanted. They were throwing money away like it was nothing. At that time as long as you were throwing something my way it was all right. But I will never forget the time that I went down there after getting an order for 50,000 scratch pads. Well I thought oh my goodness. Well that is 50,000 5x8 sheets, about 1,000 pads. The guy said "No, 50,000 pads." Well I'll tell you we almost never delivered those 50,000 scratch pads.

Base PAO: Where did you get them from?

Billy Arthur: Well, we printed them up you see and we were printing them up here in Jacksonville.

Base PAO: Did they say Memorandum on them or something like that?

Billy Arthur: No, it said something like Memorandum and had the contractors name and number. I forget what it was. No it was a happier existence even with the construction phase was on. It sounds like it was a long period of time, but you see they started Camp Davis in 12/40 and four months later they started Camp Lejeune. In September they had the Tent Camp ready and they had started some stuff down Hadnot Point. But after they got the Tent Camp in, which was where the First Marine Division was, things kind of leveled off. Another thing they did, the contractors down here build a dormitory on the base for laborers and rented it out. I am not familiar where it was or how successful it was because I don't think they kept it going long but they did that for a while.

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Base PAO: And then plenty of places became available.

Billy Arthur: Yeah. I bought a house in 1943 I think it was and others had been built in the meantime there. That's right because I bought it from a fellow who was leaving. In 1942 they were putting up structures again, Onslow Terrace. That is that area before you get to New River along Marine Blvd. there. What they call Lejeune Blvd. from the railroad tracks in Jacksonville all the way out to, or is that Western Blvd.?

Base PAO: Western Blvd. connects Marine Blvd., 17, to Lejeune Blvd., which is 24.

Billy Arthur: Okay, well then that's Western Blvd. Well, all that area along in there was under construction in 1942. They were moving along pretty fast with construction

Base PAO: I grew up in the early 1950's around Camp Pendleton, in California, and I saw it go from a tent camp to concrete buildings that they have now, look like hotels. Oceanside itself has gone from 30,000 to probably in the neighborhood of 75,000 to 80,000 and it is amazing to have seen the construction and development of that area. But I sometimes get the feeling that Jacksonville was slightly behind that and I think its because that North Carolina is the way it is as opposed to the way California is.

Billy Arthur: Oh yeah.

Base PAO: But the population groups that I noticed around the base are more stationary and more fixed than they are in California.

Billy Arthur: You mean here?

Base PAO: Yeah.

Billy Arthur: Yeah, I think so. We noticed that after the war that they were coming back here and retiring and it helped out greatly in the community. The fact is that the community took to the Marines and I can attest to that because I was on the USO Board, I mean, I published the damn newspaper so I was on everything, you know.

Base PAO: Can you elaborate on that USO later on or whenever you feel like it.

Billy Arthur: Well I used to do regular entertainment at the USO and now going back in my history a little bit, see, I had a damn good singing voice and I was on the stage

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about 18 months but way back then when I was in high school, I did monologues, entertained conventions and civic clubs and things like that. I had an hour singing radio program and I was just a high school kid. I went to New York and went on stage and I was just singing. I sang Carolina Moon three times a day for eighteen months and four times on Saturday and Sunday. Before the USO came, the National Youth Administration [NYA] had the Pine Lodge in Jacksonville and the first Marine outfit that came here came up with Col. Challacombe's outfit, firefighters from Parris Island, because there were some suspicious fires on the base area. They were suspicious. Maybe they were mad at the Navy or the Marine Corps, but there has always been a feeling among some farmers that you have to burn off the woods so that it gives the wildlife more chance to roam and it is better for them. Then there was that theory you see. So we had dances for Challacombe's Marines and invite them in and we'd get some girls from around here, in the community. Then a group came in who weren't with Hills liaison, or the First Marine Division. Col. [W.P.T.] Hill had a Marine outfit and he was in charge of the liaison between the Navy and the contractors for construction. So this small unit came up, they were in Tent Camp. So we decided that we would invite them over for a dance. Mary Blake, who was head of the NYA, said "Lt. you cannot permit any of the Marines leaving once they get in here leaving the confines of the place and leaving out of the building. The Lt. said to Ms. Blake, "We appreciate the invitation." He said "I'm going to have to leave that up to you. "We just got back from Guantanamo and some of our men haven't seen a white woman in six months. I ain't going to be telling you what they are going to be wanting to do and that is up to you to supervise." Then the USO came in and in those days there were radio quiz shows that were popular so I would go over there once a week and do a quiz show and some songs. All informal. [Tape Two, Side One.] The Veterans of Foreign Wars made me a member of the Royal Order of the Cootie. That's right and I carried a VFW membership card and a Cootie membership card. I used to go out there and entertain the VFW parties and then I would go with them over to the Veterans Hospital and entertain there. One thing that I enjoyed doing mostly was every . . . Naval Hospital. What's the date, you want the date?

Base PAO: No I was looking at the zip code on that. . .

Billy Arthur: 27514

Base PAO: Yes I got it.

Billy Arthur: One thing I was proud of was that I had a friend who grew up on my block in Charlotte, my hometown. He was Commander Alan Cristman, a submarine

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surgeon stationed at the hospital and he and Captain Reardon at that time invited me to go out there and do shows for ambulatory patients, especially during holidays. Everybody would ship out and these folks were left here. I would go out on Thanksgiving and Christmas all the time. They would wheel those folks or they would walk into the auditorium and I always took someone with me and I would tell them the raunchiest damn stories that I could think of and that is what they wanted. They just delighted in that and we would just see how soon we could run the nurses out into the halls.

Base PAO: Now days that would be hard.

Billy Arthur: That's right but back then you could see the balcony doors open but you didn't see any faces but the doors were cracked open.

Base PAO: They were listening.

Billy Arthur: That's right. I really enjoyed and am proud of having done that. I did participate in the USO and I was Chairman of the Red Cross, and gosh knows what all.

Base PAO: Did you ever have any dealings with the Montford Point Association, the young black Marines that were brought into the area?

Billy Arthur: No, see that was the dog detachment up until I left. Blacks were brought in. There were some blacks there but there was just one here and one there. I mean, there was no big deal and I frankly don't remember much being said about bringing blacks as bringing women in. Now the women stirred up the folks that I knew, the old-timers.

Base PAO: What were their objections or considerations?

Billy Arthur: I think giving up some of their privacy more than anything else. There were some folks that I knew that were hot after the gals as anybody else would have been. Of course this is off the record, but when I had my house there was a line officer that dated an enlisted woman in my residence and he married her in the end but they were human beings but just didn't want to give up the privacy. I don't think they felt that women can do the job, and some still feel that way today. But I am all for the women. In fact, I used to have a line that I would use "I am with the women, in fact I am with them every chance I get." But I don't remember any racial thing.

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Base PAO: What was the impact of the war have on the local population. You know we talked about the social changes but what about the war itself, the wounded coming back?

Billy Arthur: Wounded, do you mean wounded natives, is that what you are talking about?

Base PAO: Yeah, the wounded Marines and so forth.

Billy Arthur: We didn't see many of the wounded Marines. We didn't see them carrying the wounded around, not to my knowledge. There were natives in all lines of service that lost their lives.

Base PAO: They didn't have some who were natives at the Naval Hospital here so that they could be close to their families?

Billy Arthur: I don't remember. There's bound to have been.

Base PAO: Do you think that's why they worked. . . ?

Billy Arthur: Bound to have been but I don't remember. Now I know there were some Marines who were wounded. There were some Marines who went over and came back. They had been wounded in the interim. They retired in Jacksonville because I know they belonged to the Jacksonville Mens Club. Upstairs over one of the places in old town Jacksonville. It was just a club where they kept a locker of liquor and a poker table and so forth. You could go relax during the day and weekends. I don't remember too much about that but I do remember that, and this is an aside, the Marines have always been good PR folks. I mean they really have and then the First Division came up from Parris Island and they brought the Washington Reserves down to join them here as a part of the First Division. They brought a guy in named Leon Brusiloff who at one time had been the Master of Ceremonies and Orchestra Director at the old Washington Capital Theater and he was in charge of the Washington Police Band at that time and he was the Band Officer and the Recreation Officer. When a Marine would die over at tent camp, they would have services, they didn't have a chapel and so they had the service in Jacksonville and so they would assemble just beyond the old bridge. When I say the old bridge, I mean the old bridge in Jacksonville and they would march to the church with a slow beat, the band followed by the caisson and his unit. When they would leave the church, they would go right down through the town and around the courthouse. The funeral home was down New Bridge Street almost at the foot of the hill on the river. Of course in those days everybody in Jacksonville would stop and come out to view and so what they

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would do is put the bodies in the Funeral Home. They would fire a volley and that band would come out playing Semper Fidelis and going double time and I will tell you that everybody, it just sends chills right up my spine there. Boy, I am telling you that Brusiloff endeared himself. He was a great help and we had lots of fun in those days. Colonel Harvey L. Miller whose nickname was Hiney was Executive Secretary of the National Boxing Association at that time. He was the Division Recreation Officer and one of his assistants along with Brusiloff was Harry Volkman who was a professional boxing referee in Washington. Of course they had a boxing team and all these people were in Jacksonville and they would have their relatives down and they would put them up in the Inns around Jacksonville and they would eat out, they didn't want to go on the base, you know what I mean. So they began to mingle and have fun together. I would have men and we would go to various places, the Old Legion had a dining room upstairs. It was a public dining room and they were making a little money. Anyway, we got the Civilian and the Military got to associating together and it was really fun. We knew the General. I was on the base mostly every afternoon at 4:30 for tent liquor. I learned to drink tent liquor down there. They had a head for so many tents and so forth. No cokes or chasers. Just a canteen of water that had been sitting out in the tent. That was called tent liquor and we would join in. We had lots of fun. I was a ring announcer at all the boxing matches and then they had the division-boxing match. They had Jack Dempsey down to referee. He and Hiney Miller were good friends so he came down to referee. They had an old circus tent. Somebody, I think it was Brusiloff or somebody in Washington had wrangled from one of the old circus companies an old circus tent. They tried to get that old thing up. Well they got it up finally but that circus tent stayed down as much as it stayed up. It was a standing joke. That is where they had all the USO shows that played there if they could get the tent up. They would have the boxing matches there too. They spent more time trying to get that tent up. It would seat 4,000 to 5,000 people. I did a story for the *Leatherneck* on this [November 1982].

Base PAO: I am not exactly familiar with exactly what was in it but I heard.

Billy Arthur: Well, I did that and I tell a story in there about, well I don't want to repeat it again but.

Base PAO: What edition was that in by the way?

Billy Arthur: It was in the Fall of 1982. It doesn't say here but he got the finished product and I think it appeared in October in the birthday issue. I believe it did. This is a big

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story that I did, a clipping way back from 1940-1950, the life changes and a few of the ...

Base PAO: I'll take a quick peak at it.

Billy Arthur: Well, I'll tell you what, if you want to I can get you a copy. See that came out of the Library at Chapel Hill and I would give you that one and make another one but I have marked that thing up for my purpose. One big thing that Jacksonville lacked was that . . . it wasn't a liberty town. It was a place to pass through.

Base PAO: That's what it has always been.

Billy Arthur: Yeah.

Base PAO: I mean since the very beginning, it hasn't really changed a whole lot.

Billy Arthur: Yeah.

Base PAO: People line up at Swoop Circle to go elsewhere. Even down to South Carolina.

Billy Arthur: But, well, it wasn't anything to begin with and I think it all goes back to when the opportunists came in and just made it what it is today. I don't know if the old timers would have done it or done it any better. I am not going to say that they would have done it any better given the same opportunities and same inclinations.

Base PAO: Did you want me to keep this?

Billy Arthur: If you want me to make a copy of that I will but you can keep that if you want to.

Base PAO: It won't be any inconvenience because I don't think a copy can be made of this.

Billy Arthur: No a copy can't be made but I can get a better copy for you of that.

Base PAO: Oh this is readable as it is but it wouldn't make a good copy.

Billy Arthur: I don't know how much you want on this thing but I don't want to be too forward or anything like that, but there are a lot of things like this clipping. Now that came out of the University of North Carolina Library, which has an extensive clipping file. They probably got about 60-75 clippings about the base. Now if you want me to put some research, I don't know whether you want to go into any

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money like that or not to get this stuff out of there and if you want to drop some guidelines, there are a hell of a lot of pictures up there. I don't know if you want any of that. I know they have almost all the published work that has ever been done about the base. I can get you a catalog of that stuff and you can see, in other words, the reason I am saying it is because that is what I am doing now is research and it is a full-time job for me. In fact, what I am doing these days is to write regularly for the State Magazine. I do two columns for the Chapel Hill newspaper and a column for the Research Triangle Park Leader and then I am a regular to Better Homes and Gardens, in the back pages. Those are sold with all rights. I get no quotes, just the money thank goodness. I don't want bylines these days. If you want we can get together and this stuff costs 5 cents a copy. Pictures are 10 cents a copy Xeroxed.

Base PAO: Well this tape here, and I will make a note about research.

Billy Arthur: In other words, you can draw some guidelines. I mean hell, I am not going to be hard to get along with.

Base PAO: Well I will make mention of this to Major Baird when we get back to the office and ask him to coordinate that with Mr. Charles who is in charge of the project and then he will directly fund it.

Billy Arthur: I would suggest to Major Baird or Col. Charles that maybe they want to send somebody up there, but it would take some doing to get the catalog references and titles of all the stuff that has been done. Get these clippings and get them out. There are a lot of duplicate clippings that you wouldn't want and to go through the index and things that have been done about the base and publications. I don't know if it would be worthwhile or not. In other words, I am available.

Base PAO: Fine, we'll make sure that Mr. Charles is made aware of that and that he responds in some way to that offer.

Billy Arthur: Well, frankly, I am not expecting anything, now don't misunderstand me.

Base PAO: Oh okay. Well, you are directly talking to Mr. Charles when you are talking to me because this tape goes directly to him so.

Billy Arthur: Well I am just sorry that I missed him. This is my file that I have got on the Camp at home in my files and this file I have got. The State Magazine is going to do something sometime.

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Base PAO: On the base itself?

Billy Arthur: On the county.

Base PAO: Do you think that you will need some photographs.

Billy Arthur: Huh?

Base PAO: Photographic support for your article?

Billy Arthur: No I don't think so. In fact I don't get with the photographs. The art work the publisher. Besides, I mean, it's a freelance job and I have had something in every issue for the past three years and what I did was the research for his 50th anniversary issue. Edith and I did it for his 50th Anniversary in 1984 and so that time I dug up a lot of stuff for myself that I wrote. Incidentally, I am making the collection of North Caroliniana, which is anecdotal. It is Folklore, anecdotes, jokes, poems, one-liners, all humorous by North Carolinians and for North Carolinians dating back from the first printing press in 1795 up to 1950. That is what I am trying. That was my original stopping point but I have been going on and picking up anything that I can find later on because I have kept a file of everything I have written in between 1933 to the present time. This is the file I have on Camp Lejeune. Uh, I forgot where I was going. That is my trouble now, it takes me a long time to even become undecided. I can't find out where I am.

Base PAO: I don't think you are alone in this world in that, I think we are all.

Billy Arthur: But it is taking me longer. I got a note here, . . . the first Taxi started in Jacksonville the day that the contractors arrived to build Camp Lejeune and that was to carry them and the salesmen in between the temporary offices in the Riverview Hotel and to the site of Tent Camp on US 17 South.

Base PAO: Is that the old Geiger area?

Billy Arthur: That is the old Geiger area.

Base PAO: Now the Riverview Hotel was located at the Old Bridge?

Billy Arthur: Right at the Old Bridge yes. They say it was at the corner of Old Bridge [Street] and the first street after you come off the bridge that turns to the right. I don't know.

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Base PAO: There is a chapel or a church down there isn't there?

Billy Arthur: A church, yes. But I am not sure what street that is but it stood in the town corner and it was an old frame structure about 18 rooms and I lived there when I first came down. It was constructed so that it would accommodate single rooms downstairs but upstairs were group rooms for hunting and fishing parties. The big rooms with bunks and stuff like that so that they could put 8 and 10 in a party up there.

Base PAO: Well, it used to be one of the best hunting recreational areas in the whole Southeast Coast, so for a recreational standpoint, a lot was given . . .

Billy Arthur: That's right yeah. One of the reasons that I came over here was that I always wanted to own my own weekly newspaper and so I came over and talked to the townsmen and told them that I would do a sales job for their hunting and fishing and the Onslow County hams which is very popular staple if they would support me in a weekly newspaper. Of course it was conditional and I didn't get no financial backing or anything like that.

Base PAO: Advertisement revenue . . .

Billy Arthur: Right and promising to do some advertising and so everybody encouraged me except for two of my best friends. They wanted to be more on the conservative side.

Base PAO: Isn't conservatism its own reward?

Billy Arthur: Yeah that's right. Another item I have here was about the power plant and to get power out in the old base, out to Hadnot Point. They wanted to generate their own power. So the REA, Rural Electrification Administration, went out some place out west and I don't know where they got it and bought some second hand generating equipment and put it on the present site of the building that is down there now and it was such junk, they had so many problems with it but they finally got it to work. I know they have replaced it all. They had a scrap metal drive during the war and the standing joke around was that the base ought to give that to the scrap metal drive.

Base PAO: Were there German POWs maintained in the area?

Billy Arthur: I don't remember. There were some in the state but I don't remember if there were any here. I do believe there were some down in Wilmington but I don't

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know. I can't tell you that but I do know that going back to that map thing, that map was also a guide for Cherry Point and there was another map that I forgot to mention and it was the map of Croatan National Forest that was made while I was in New Bern by A.M. Manchester, the forestry agent. They had aerial maps that they had taken of the Forest that showed all that area in there and that led to the establishment of temporary landing bases at Bogue, there was one up here at Maysville and there was one out at Paradise Point. When they started building the base, we always kidded Col. Hill about this, they made the nicest landing strip out in that area but no planes ever landed on it and the first thing they knew, they had tees and greens and everything else on it and that is the golf course now. We always kidded Colonel Hill about that not being a landing strip to begin with but he never did deny it but he laughed along with the joke.

[Tape Two, Side Two]

Before they started building they got approval of the money for it. But before they put anything into the telephone exchange they got approved plans for the officers club and put that underneath it and put the telephone exchange on the top floor. We accused him of that.

Base PAO: Of trying to hide it.

Billy Arthur: That's right. But none of my stuff that I remember is anecdotal you might say because that is where the mind runs but I am taking up too much of your tape and time but . . .

Base PAO: No, I am here for your purpose strictly.

Billy Arthur: Do you have anything else?

Base PAO: Well I am thinking mostly about railroads. That is what I wanted to ask you about. The impact of the railroad with the change in the track and the way the lines were set up. Do you got anything on that?

Billy Arthur: What do you mean. Gauge?

Base PAO: Well, the railroad was in place through the area and it used to be the #1 way of freight moving through this area and would go north and south. Was it Norfolk Southern or something like that?

Billy Arthur: Norfolk Southern, yeah. It ran from New Bern to Wilmington.

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Base PAO: Then a spur line came from that and goes off into the base for strategic mobility.

Billy Arthur: That's right and they built one to Cherry Point.

Base PAO: Yeah, which goes through Morehead City.

Billy Arthur: No it didn't go to Morehead City.

Base PAO: Did it branch off?

Billy Arthur: Yes, it branches off down there between the main gate and Swansboro.

Base PAO: Oh, okay, yeah.

Billy Arthur: Now to put those two in, I'll tell you a story about this thing. See, when they first fixed the base down here, it was fixed at New River.

Base PAO: That means the headquarters area was towards where the Air Station was or the Geiger Tent Camp was?

Billy Arthur: That was the headquarters. That was where the First Marine Division took off from, was from Tent Camp.

Base PAO: Then called Davis right?

Billy Arthur: No, now wait a minute. Davis is 22 miles down the road at Holly Ridge.

Base PAO: Oh, I never quite made that connection.

Billy Arthur: Camp Davis was 22 miles down the road at Holly Ridge. That was the Army only. It was a Barrage Balloon outfit.

Base PAO: High technology that, huh?

Billy Arthur: Yeah, and the first part of Camp Lejeune was called New River and was two miles south of Jacksonville on 17, in that area. Geiger I think they had named it but they had put Geiger on the river shore. I have never been to Geiger.

Base PAO: Well it is exactly between the Air Station and Lejeune Proper.

Billy Arthur: Well I have never been to the Air Station.

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Base PAO: It's on the East Side of 17 Southbound, north of Verona Loop.

Billy Arthur: I have never been in the Air Station there. The Air Station actually they had a landing field over there. I was there but I don't know about an Air Station per say. To me it means big buildings and so forth and big runways. But when I lived here and during the war, I used to man the Civil Defense Watch Towers from 4 to 8 in the morning and it was a farce. I mean, you would have to report planes taking off from you would see one coming out from the air and call him out and get his direction and so forth and so and actually the way you did it was by making a loop and then he would come back in over here and land over there. All you would do was drag it around in a circle and that was all that we were doing and it was awfully difficult to get people to go up there and just stand there and talk and pick up the phone and give the same damn thing. But that was the only that was going on then. The command headquarters, that house is still standing and is visible from the highway 2 miles south on the left-hand side of 17. It stands about maybe 200 yards off the road and that was the General's headquarters. Then about 50 yards away stretching all was the tented area. Wooden bases for tents. Then down in that area they did put up, where that guesthouse is now, I think there is a guesthouse down there now. It is a gray building visible from the highway. It used to be the guesthouse for the tent base. From that area down in there was all headquarters buildings for the First Division and that was an important thing. When the First Marine Division shoved off and went off to Guadalcanal, the next incoming they brought in some troops over in there and trained from there. But then they gradually started putting them into Hadnot Point as fast as could be accommodated and I don't know exactly when the Building #1 was completed out there. I forgot, but that would be about the time that things left over here. But that was all the Division headquarters and I forget now what the hell I was talking about.

Base PAO: We were talking about trains.

Billy Arthur: Oh trains. I was going to tell you this story. You see that was New River they designated but they didn't get the name Lejeune for quite some time. So the contractors were placing orders for everything in the world, ship to New River, North Carolina. Equipment wasn't arriving here. Nobody had taken the trouble to see that there is another railhead called New River, North Carolina, up in the Western part of the state. It's up on the old Norfolk and Western Railroad. Part is in Virginia and part in North Carolina and it was freight shipments blocked up in there for miles around. Then they kept it as New River but starting calling it Marine Barracks and New River North Carolina and Marine Barracks Camp Lejeune.

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Base PAO: This is very interesting.

Billy Arthur: Twice the Marines did not get the word in, the Navy did not get the word in. The other time was when [President] Roosevelt was visiting here and they spent all week tamping an area so his heavy card could go along so that he could review troops opposite Building #1. Now I don't know if it is the same parade ground that it used to be. Well anyway, the word was well kept all the way down the line but some places did not get it and it was Camp Maintenance. So they decided that morning that they were going to put in a new steamline to Building One. So they came in early that morning and starting digging up the area the had been tamped down. All hell broke loose after a while. The story is legend as it was told to me by Chief of Staff. No one did anything about it, they left you know to see the President. He sent someone over to chew him [the Maintenance Officer] out and said that he wanted to talk to somebody with a little authority and saw him and he said "You may as well talk to me because I have about as little authority as anybody around here." (laughing).

Base PAO: That field was called W.P.T. Hill Field.

Billy Arthur: Oh is that right. He was a great guy.

Base PAO: Did you know Col. [Herbert G.] Bozarth?

Billy Arthur: Yeah, Bozey. He was construction.

Base PAO: I think that he was the first one that I . . .

Billy Arthur: If you see him again give him my love. I talked to him, he came to Chapel Hill sometime about 2-3 years ago and gave me a buzz. Now he was here from the very word go. There was another guy, [Lt. A.E.] Dubber. I don't know if Dubber is still living or not. As far as line officers. The only line officer that I know definitely living in the area now is Col. Caputo. Col. Anthony Caputo. He is over at Burgaw and now Tony was the aide to General [Allen H.] Turnage who took over the command here when [General Alexander A.] Vandegrift left the First Division. The only reason that I am aware of that is that Tony married my reporter. See, when the Marines and took off with the First Division, they took every camera and everything, including the camera that I gave them. They were short cameras and everything when they left here. So I gave them an old Speedgraphic I had and then I went over to take a picture of Gen. Turnage with his wife pinning his star on him, an old Marine Corps stock picture you know

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and Tony was the aide there and Mary was driving me and of course I don't drive, she was driving so they met that day. I sang at their wedding.

Base PAO: Was he a young Lieutenant at the time?

Billy Arthur: Yeah, he was a young Lieutenant at the time, what they used to call a small Lieutenant.

Base PAO: Butter bar?

Billy Arthur: One bar was a small Lieutenant and two bars was a big Lieutenant. The Railroad traffic through here was not that big except during harvest season you see? They used to have a passenger service and there was lots of passenger service on Sundays. People would come here from Wilmington to eat at the old Riverview Hotel, which had a celebrated dining hall at that time. They would eat dinner and go back on the train in the afternoon, you see. In fact, talking about the area, I am informed this but I never met the lady, but legend has it that she sent King George of England every year an Onslow County ham for his Christmas present. Now I don't know why but . . .

Base PAO: I suppose he came out here and hunted once.

Billy Arthur: You never can tell. The hunting was good in that area and in Hoffman Forest area, Gum Branch, and the pocosin area. Great hunting, deer hunting actually. Connie Mack used to come down here, Babe Ruth came down here and all kinds of people. They had a firearm expert, Thomas Samford, that knew about the firearms, lived down in Marines. Lots of well-known people had places along the river that is summer places. There was a hotel at Paradise Point too at that time.

Base PAO: What were the roads like?

Billy Arthur: The roads were sand clay. All sand clay. To get to the beach you had a ferry. You'd go down and blow your horn on this side, and the ferryman would bring the ferry over from the other side. He had a residence there. I went across that damn thing one time in a tank. One of those amphibious things. This was one of those things that looked like a bathtub. I thought I was going in that damn water. I took the first picture of the Higgins Boat in landing operations. It is a lead story in the *Leatherneck* there.

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Base PAO: I had somebody yesterday, they owned some land out, I'm trying to recall exactly where it was. I talk to so many people that it is kind of hard to keep it all separate. I am not sure of his last name. But they were telling me that they were on the beach for a picnic when the very first amphibious landing took place on Onslow Beach.

Billy Arthur: That's possible. It is possible because . . .

Base PAO: That's how they got here wasn't it, they started coming in.

Billy Arthur: Some of them did, most of them came in that way. I know several boatloads came in that way now. A lot of them also came in by truck, I mean Parris Island. I believe that the Washington Reserve Group came in on that thing, yeah, because they had been to Guantanamo. I think that is right.

Base PAO: They were fascinated because they had never seen anything quite like that before where there are ships on the horizon, they move in and come ashore.

Billy Arthur: The first one was only one ship and that was the old George Barnett and that was the one that my buddies down at Sneads Ferry called me up and said it was the biggest ship that they had ever seen and they told me to come down. I asked them to take me out to it. They said there are a lot of boats out there too. So, I went out to Sneads Ferry and we went out there and I must have got out there about 11 o'clock or something like that. It was in the morning and there were Higgins boats around and they were going ashore about where the old ferry used to be, the middle of the strand. I took some pictures out there and when we got back to shore we went back to Onslow Beach to see what was going on and they were coming ashore. The Marines piled over the sides, hit the sand and simulate under attack, move forward and this is a good story. The Navy used to run those Higgins Boats. They would beach them and take them back out. The Marines had not taken over Onslow Beach. The only part of the area that they actually controlled was this area up here in Tent Camp. So everybody was headed there. They came through the swamp, they marched all the way from the beach to Tent Camp and some of them stayed in the woods 2-3 days. It alarmed the people who had not been displaced, see not all of the people had been moved out and so there is still a concession stand on the beach, sold beer. Somebody found out about it and so every time one of those Higgins boats would beach in that area, we would see them come get some beers and run right by those Marines on their bellies. I got some pictures of that thing, sold it to the [Raleigh] News and Observer, and they printed it in the Sunday Edition. That Monday morning, you would have thought that I had started a war. That was the first picture ever

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published of the Higgins boat and they just assumed that nobody knew anything about it. I got calls from all over hell and gone telling me to cease and desist. Now, the Navy had already gotten in touch with General [Phillip H.] Torrey aboard ship and he wanted to know what the hell it was all about all the way down the line so he sent Col. Goettge, Frank Goettge who was the Intelligence Officer in, and he came ashore, got up here and came to see me. I told him that I didn't know anything about it. But the whole story backs up to this, that the Navy and the Marine Corps had plans to release all this stuff to the media. If the media should lay off now, they'd do a full scale landing operation down near Onslow Beach, which would be two weeks after this, for all the news media Life and all those folks were to come in here, which they did subsequently. But now I had scooped everybody on the blessed thing and so Col. Goettge later told us that they went back aboard ship and General Torrey asked who the hell took the damn picture. He said I told him that it was taken by a little man with a great big camera.

Base PAO: What did you shoot a 4x5?

Billy Arthur: 4x5-Speedgraphic.

Base PAO: Good picture.

Billy Arthur: I just shoot them and then process it. I used to use a film pack too. I used that camera to sit on too. That was a sturdy camera.

Base PAO: I work with video some myself. I'm the previous Radio-TV Chief up in the Public Affairs Office and have a weekly television release to the cable system here in Jacksonville. I get 15 minutes per week, a standard 15-minute newscast with video inserts, about 8-9 of them, you know, anchored.

Billy Arthur: Well good.

Base PAO: There are 5 stations that air something like 21 hours of programming per month based on what we got to give them.

Billy Arthur: I used to do the color, you know, when they staged these landings, WJNC would take the equipment on the beach and set up a tent down there and we would broadcast as if there was really a war going on. They had landing operations after the first ship came in, after the George Barnett came in, they had some other ships come in and they brought them in and the fact is that the Marines were accused of breaking into houses, stealing, etc. I imagine they were. They were

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human beings who needed to eat and ended up fighting in war games at the same time. So I would imagine that there was. There were all kinds of stories. I wish I had saved my newspapers. It was a semi weekly and weekly along that line. It would not have taken much to exhibit them. But I sold out. I had had the things on film and they are old films but I hate to read a damn piece of film. It wastes too much time. Getting a quarter page an image. But you can skim over a full page easily. I am doing some research now on 1925, 1927, 1928, and 1929 Chapel Hill Papers. I am seeing if there is anything that I am interested in. If I know where I am going, I can just put an order in at the Library and they can give me a finished product. I don't know what it costs now but when I had the pictures made before cost me about 4-6 dollars a print but they were 8x10 prints. I made the first picture of the first airplane that landed on the air base.

Base PAO: Do you remember what kind of plane that was?

Billy Arthur: It was a two-engine job. I don't know what it was. It could have been a DC 3.

Base PAO: That was the way people could get around.

Billy Arthur: It could have been, talking about people getting around and officers coming in. This is an aside, the question of who was the first commander of the base? Some of them say it was [Col. David L.S.] Brewster actually. I guess that he was the designated commander. He was a great guy. He was out at Montford Point. Actually Challacombe brought the first outfit out here. He was a fire-fighting Marine. He had them over at Montford Point and then Col. Hill arrived with his liaison group. And I guess Challacombe had 30, 40, 50, so, it was a cadre. Hill had about the same number and they were used for patrolling the area over here. So here they come in town. Col. Hill was the guy with a jungle hat on and Challacombe was one of these with an overseas cap and he was one of those guys that ordered everybody had to have their sleeves down and cuffs buttoned and [field] scarfs on. Col. Hill—no scarf, sleeves rolled up one to two times. On weekends, both had patrols in Jacksonville and they would get all involved. Who was out of uniform. That went all the way to topside in Washington and came back down, Col. Hill's orders would be the orders of the day so people thought that Col. Hill was the first boss, or Challacombe. I think it was Brewster.

Base PAO: Well what do you think, want to break it off here?

Billy Arthur: That's all right with me.