

**THE ADMIRAL NIMITZ HISTORIC SITE -
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***Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas***

***Interview with Robert Allender
U.S. Navy, YMS and PC***

Interview With Robert Allender

My name is Jerry Mannering, I'm a member of the Oral History Team of the National Museum of the Pacific War. We are at Fredericksburg High School in Fredericksburg, Texas, on the 23rd of September 2001. I am interviewing Mr. Robert Allender, who is from Oskaloosa, Iowa, and served in the Pacific in World War II aboard submarine chasers. He has some interesting stories to relate to us.

Mr. Mannering: Mr. Allender, when and where were you born?

Mr. Allender: I was born in Oskaloosa, Iowa on November 21, 1925.

Mr. Mannering: And your parents were?

Mr. Allender: My parents were Earl E. and Lula VanderLinden Allender.

Mr. Mannering: Names and ages of your siblings, if any.

Mr. Allender: I had a brother, he's slightly over six years younger than I am. His name is Edwin Lee Allender, and he spent 24 years in the Navy.

Mr. Mannering: Being from Iowa, you were kind of landlocked, but you've got some sailors in the family.

Mr. Allender: It seems the midwest quite often chose the sea. In larger numbers than a lot of coastal people, for some reason.

Mr. Mannering: Admiral Nimitz was kind of landlocked, too. Where did you go to school, sir?

Mr. Allender: I went through the Oskaloosa school system. I graduated from Oskaloosa High School.

Mr. Mannering: When and where did you enlist in the Navy?

Mr. Allender: I enlisted in the Navy after graduation in 1943 at the age of 17.

Mr. Mannering: Any particular reason for you choosing the Navy?

Mr. Allender: I had an interest in that and there were three of us passed the test for the Naval Air Corps. It was right after I went for the physical. I had a slight problem with convergence, and didn't make it, and I just went ahead and said, "Let's go." The standards were very strict yet. If it had gone six months later what my slight problem was would not have been a problem and I would have been taken.

Mr. Mannering: To what do you contribute the standards being slightly lower--lack of manpower?

Mr. Allender: Probably need. Need, and coming across the fact that 22 centimeters from your nose as opposed to the 20 they wanted isn't any big deal. That is so minor that it is probably not significant. But the other reason, probably, that I leaned that way too is that my father was in World War I. He fought in many of the battles in France, he was buried alive in the Argonne Forest from a shell. He had some disabilities up until I was probably 10 years old. They were nerve problems, damaged nerves. He always said, "Don't choose to lay in a shell hole eating moldy bread and maybe drinking rain water. At least in the Navy you're in a confined area. If anything happens, it's going to happen in a major way." But I always was interested in the Navy anyway.

Mr. Mannering: It sounds somewhat typical of Army veterans. At least in the Navy, if all goes well you've got a warm bunk and hot meals.

Mr. Allender: That wasn't always true. It would be more frequent than what you'd have in actual combat.

Mr. Mannering: When and where did you train?

Mr. Allender: I arrived in Athol, Idaho, a tiny little wide spot on a railhead, in Northern Idaho, and what we called a cattle car truck took us out to the boot camp, which was Farragut Naval Training Station. They had six separate boot camps there, and a hospital with 2300 beds, and a commissary supply area where eight railheads came to it. I was assigned to Camp Waldron, which of course was named for--I think he got the medal of honor at Wake, or Midway. He was the flight leader. During our training, and these camps were self-contained. Each one of the six camps trained 5000 at a time. Each camp had its own mess hall, a ship's store, ship's service, but you didn't get there very often. They had a huge drill hall, one I've never seen on any other naval base. Its design was new, with a full-size Olympic pool at one end of it.

Mr. Mannering: You said a drill hall. Can you elaborate a little bit a drill hall? If the weather was inclement . . .

Mr. Allender: The drill hall would allow you to drill seven companies of about 140 men in under a roof, at one time. At one end was the pool, and you had to pass the swimming test which, some guy asked the Chief if we could use the Australian crawl, and the Chief said, well, he used strong language, but he said "I don't care, as long as you can stay afloat, 75 yards and I don't care how you get there." So a lot of guys did not swim at all, a larger number than you'd ever expect could not swim.

Mr. Mannering: These were all volunteers?

Mr. Allender: Oh yes. And I learned to stay afloat before I went in, and I could do side stroke and a little of the crawl, but I wasn't very good because I couldn't breathe. You know how

you stroke and turn your head, I didn't know how to do that, so I liked the side stroke better because you always had one side out. But I had no trouble passing. Of course, that was one of the conditions--you got one liberty out of boot camp of 12 hours if you had passed.

Mr. Mannering: For those who didn't swim, were there instructions?

Mr. Allender: Oh yes. Every evening after about 8 o'clock, you were usually doing things until then anyway, they could go over and they tried to help--if nothing else, they tried to get them to at least be able to float. If you could float, you usually could figure out some way to get a little distance. I asked the Chief, "Why only 75 yards?" He said, "If you don't get something that floats in 75 yards if the ship goes down, you're not going to make it anyway."

Mr. Mannering: That's kind of brutal . . .

Mr. Allender: It's the truth.

Mr. Mannering: . . . but that's the way it was. Do you recall the time you were in boot camp?

Mr. Allender: It was from late August 1943 until October. It was eight weeks, I think. I got out. In the interim I'd taken a whole bunch of tests for any school that came up. They loaded most of our company, of course you lashed up all your gear, your sea bag, your hammock, your mattress, the whole works, at the end, and most of the company was shipped out immediately. They went to ships on the West Coast that needed personnel. Six of us did not get shipped out. They asked if we wanted leave to go home. Well, sure we did. I got 10 days and travel time and I took the train back to Iowa, and came back. Then I was in an outgoing unit. They kept listing these lists all the time. I looked at these lists, and they went almost two weeks, and I was getting concerned, I wondered, did they forget I'm around here? And this barracks officer they called him, he was a petty officer, he said, "You got a school someplace. You evidently did well on one of those to get a school, and until they get a new class they're not going to ship you out of here." About two days it was listed, I was going to sonar school in San Diego, California.

I left there, and we got to San Diego on Thanksgiving night, it was about eight o'clock when I got in the station. There was a fellow there with a truck, transport to take us out there. He asked if we'd had anything to eat, all they had was a soup and sandwich thing, and they took that off because this was the end of the line down there, there hadn't been anything on there since noon. So he called the base, and we went out, we figured, well, we'd get some sandwiches or something. Those cooks came and gave us a complete Thanksgiving dinner, about 8:30 Thanksgiving night, and that was not required of them. I would make one comment: that was the best institutional food I've ever eaten. I also gained 35 pounds.

Mr. Mannering: I hope you did that in stages, not all on Thanksgiving.

Mr. Allender: No, it wasn't all at once. I went through the operator's school first . . .

Mr. Mannering: Sonar operators?

Mr. Allender: Yes. After I completed that, then four of us, the barracks officer said "You guys are not going out, you're going to move to a different barracks." I went through what they called material school. What it was, was maintenance. the ability to maintain and service the equipment. And that almost assured me small ships, because on a small ship they don't have anybody to do that. On a big ship they have more technicians that can handle that stuff. So I knew pretty well I was going to get a small ship. And that was another almost four months, and I would like to commend the Navy for the best training of almost any school I've ever gone to. Fifty percent of that was working on the equipment.

Mr. Mannering: Speaking of smaller ships, did you have a preference? Would you rather have been on a battleship or carrier?

Mr. Allender: I was not a "by-the-book" sailor. I was not a maverick, but I wasn't one of these guys who wanted to wear dress uniforms and all of that protocol you had to deal with, and if you were on a bigger ship you had to do that. It was going to be that way. So no, I wouldn't say that I did. I wanted to be able to--and I'm glad I didn't, because the camaraderie and the closeness that you had with the other crew members was better on those other ships.

Mr. Mannering: What was your compliment?

Mr. Allender: On the mine sweeper it was about 45, and on the patrol craft it was 65 men and five officers. Of course, when you were at GQ everybody was assigned something. Even the cooks had to come up and help somehow, most of the time. But still, we didn't have all of this caste system. The officers on our ship ate the same food the crew ate. They had mess cooks who came down and picked it out, they might get a better piece, or a bigger piece, or whatever, but they picked out the food and took it back up, and they ate it in the warrant office in the officers' quarters. The skipper we had on the patrol craft in particular was an Annapolis graduate. He was a lieutenant, and as far as I'm concerned I couldn't have asked for a better commander. He was not a "by-the-book" person. He wanted a crew that worked well together, and he always said, "If we don't work together on a ship this size, we won't survive." So everybody had to be able to do what they were supposed to do, and do it well, and help the other guy out that needed it, and he said that then we would do well. I think we all felt that if we got into a tight situation and there was any way out, he'd get us out of it. Because he just seemed to have the skills, and he had the crews' backing. They were with him. Now, that doesn't mean that he wouldn't discipline people who needed it. We all had

several assignments.

When I was in Farragut, the boot camp, we had to go through fire fighter school. My father was on the fire department, and I evidentially did too well, because I found out that in fire and rescue that was my job, the asbestos suit. Some ships drilled all the time. Our skipper wanted us to drill until we were competent, then he thought it was a bunch of hogwash, he didn't go beyond that. When we did this one drill, oh, it might have lasted ten minutes, and when I took that suit off I was as red as a beet. Oh, man, those things were hot! The South Pacific, of course, was hot anyway, and humid. He looked at me and he said, "Next time, bring the suit up here but don't put it on. Unless you really need the thing, don't put it on." Of course, the suit allowed you to go into a fire, they gave you coverage from the line, but when you tried to get personnel out, that was the purpose of it.

When we had general quarters, then I was the operator of the gear, and the PC had engines, fuel, and armament, and the crew got what was left over, which wasn't much.

Mr. Mannering: As far as quarters, space . . .

Mr. Allender: Yes. We had a room that was probably here, well at the most, to where the middle of that screen is--it wouldn't be more than a fourth the size of this, the whole room, if it was that big. It was long enough for two bunks end to end with six inches in-between, and it was kind of the width of a beam, but we only had a 23 foot beam, so you can see it couldn't have been too big, and we were down to where the curvature was coming, because we were on the second deck down. We had four bunks high, and I took the top one, and if I wanted to turn on my side, I had to slide down about four inches because my shoulders wouldn't go between the I-beams.

Mr. Mannering: Would you say the space in width would be 10 feet wide?

Mr. Allender: I would say it was wider than it was long, it was probably about 12 or 14 feet--well it was a little more than 12, it was probably 14 feet long and about, well, basically 18 feet wide. And there were four bunks, they were on the bulkhead, and the same on the other, on the starboard side. And in the middle they had some footlockers, and then they also had a mounting for four bunks, and four bunks in there.

Mr. Mannering: You'd say 16 men to that space?

Mr. Allender: I'm saying about 22. Because they only had three crews' quarters, and they put up 65 men. There were some of them assigned to the galley for their sleep quarters, and those had to use hammocks and they'd take them down when the galley was in use. So those had to be people whose watches didn't require them to sleep sometime other than at night, primarily.

Mr. Mannering: Did you rotate?

Mr. Allender: No, you got an assignment, and that was it. When we'd have general quarters and everybody's occupied, of course then you were there until that was released. One instance that I thought was--well, we had two. They put teardrop depth charges on us ...

Mr. Mannering: Would you elaborate a little on what that would be?

Mr. Allender: OK. We were commissioned in Portland, Oregon, we came down the coast, did what they called "shakedown." The teardrop depth charge, instead looking like a barrel, had this big rounded charge and a metal ring, and it was teardrop. And the object was they dropped much faster than the ordinary barrel depth charge, with the idea that the sub didn't have the chance to maneuver that much.

Mr. Mannering: Was this kind of a later war thing?

Mr. Allender: Yes, this was probably very late 1943 or very early 1944. It must have been towards the late spring of '44. They developed them because they wanted them to drop faster. When you passed over a submarine you're putting out a sound beam that's like a flashlight beam. About 600 yards out the sub goes under it, you don't have any contact. The subs in those days, they couldn't make big speed, but they'd try to maneuver somehow. With these other charges, they'd drop a lot faster, so they didn't take as much time after you fired the pattern for them to get down to where the sub was. We also had rockets, we called them "mouse traps," and they were two sets of racks up on the bow and we had a great big rounded charge with a long pipe on the end of it and fins on the back. That went into a slot and it was fired electronically. That big pipe had a powder charge in it. You pulled the pin and the propeller on the front, when the charge hit the water the propeller turned and armed it. And while you had contact with the sub yet, that was the advantage, you still had contact. They were the same thing that the destroyers used, but they fired them off pins. They called them "hedgehogs." It was the same device.

Mr. Mannering: What was the pattern? How many to a pattern?

Mr. Allender: Let's see, this one fired I would say 20, in two rows, spaced about 15 yards apart when they landed, and they would fire one row like this, then back this way about 30 yards we'd fire the other row.

Mr. Mannering: Same depth?

Mr. Allender: You didn't worry about the depth on those, because the propeller armed them and when it touched it, they went off. They were contact explosives.

Mr. Mannering: Can you give us any idea of the detonating power?

Mr. Allender: Oh, it had the same explosive power as a regular depth charge. If you were touching the ship with those, they'd blow a hole in it. There wouldn't be any doubt about that. We had a three-inch 50, whose purpose was to keep the submarines--in other words, one of the things we always drilled on, don't let that submarine get too far away from us. Because if they surfaced, a lot of those Japanese submarines had five-inch guns on them. So we never wanted them to get out of range. That gun was used mostly for that type of thing. If they surfaced, we didn't wait, we'd start shooting at them.

Mr. Mannering: Did you go for the conning tower, or . . .

Mr. Allender: Whatever we could hit. The conning tower would be one of the first things, but we still wanted to sink it, make sure we could do that. Fortunately we never had the problem of it getting far enough away from us, that was always a concern. We had five 20-millimeters mainly for air defense, and we had a 40-millimeter which was for--well you could use 40s for strafing, too, I guess, if you wanted to. Well, the 20s, I guess, to some extent. So you see, there was a lot of armament on it for a ship that was 173 feet long and a beam of about 23 to 25 feet, and a draft of about seven and a half. And the main deck was only six or seven feet above the water. So you didn't have a real high distance. And then of course there was superstructure on it.

Mr. Mannering: Was part of that height thing that you didn't want to be silhouetted, be seen?

Mr. Allender: It gave you a better sleekness, and also we just didn't need that much. We had all of the battle control devices we needed within that space. Of course we had a crow's nest which we used occasionally. The PC had two huge diesel engines. They were the same, some of them were the same engines they used in the 300 and some foot submarines, and they were quite large. We had two screws, two propellers. Convoying in a slow convoy there was no way we could get down without cutting off one engine, throttling the other one down, and zigzagging. Because we couldn't get under seven knots that much, with one engine.

Mr. Mannering: The fuel for those size engines, you had enough to last you for . . .

Mr. Allender: Three thousand miles was supposed to be the range. But not too often--because we did a lot of convoys from Pearl--well, not really, because we never got back into Pearl, but just outside of Pearl, all over the Pacific out there. Enniwetok, Saipan, Guam--we didn't take them to Guam, but we'd go by Guam. And we used to refuel at Guam once in a while. And then we'd go on down and end up usually around Ulithe where we'd drop off the rest, and of course a lot of them, that was a staging area anyway. Then those would be picked up and taken somewhere else. We never had too much of a fuel problem. I remember we did refuel from a destroyer one time at sea. The destroyer was always considered as a rough ship. Here we are flopping around out there. One of

those guys looked at the other one on that destroyer and said, "Hell, they're rougher than we are."

Mr. Mannering: Did you have any trouble getting those lines aboard?

Mr. Allender: They'd fire them over, and they used the booms to keep them up out of the water. And you had to keep your--it was how far apart you were that was critical. They were always on the helm watching that. We took on food supplies, occasionally, from a refrigeration ship at sea. Some of them were not particularly big ships, but they were there.

I was getting back to San Diego--I guess I got off of that. We took these depth charges out, these new teardrops. And we were off the coast, and we were doing some experimental runs, and we fired the rocket charges in the nose, they were what we called a "potato masher," they just had those big wooden heads rather than those big rocket explosive charges. We'd hit our own subs, it would make a noise and they'd say "You got a hit." Finally, it wasn't too long after we made a couple of runs, one of the subs radioed "Get out of the way, I'm coming up. We got a leak." Boy, we made sure we were out of the way, and man, he surfaced in a hurry! It wasn't one of these slow jobs, he just popped out like a cork. He'd sprung a leak which I guess would have been serious enough to sink him. Some of those subs were the older ones.

Mr. Mannering: The S boats?

Mr. Allender: I think they could have used in these in World War I. We still had some more training we needed, so they decided we'd make a couple of depth charge runs with these new ones. They wanted them tested anyway. We fired--well, if you know anything about the pattern, you dropped one or two off the stern, you fire these to the side, K-guns, and then you go a little further and you drop astern, and then another K-gun, and then one more off the stern, and that forms almost like a figure eight pattern. We fired the first part of that, we got into the second one, and this K-gun fired out and the charge didn't any more than hit the water and it exploded. And it's not supposed to go off like that. Then we found out we couldn't get the sonar gear up. The gear had a big dome that lowered down below the hull, and here it wouldn't raise. I went down there and it was sprung. It was bad, it was even leaking a little bit.

Mr. Mannering: From that explosion?

Mr. Allender: Yes. So I tightened the packing part down, but we couldn't raise it. We had to go back into San Diego, and they took us into dry-dock, and we were there three days while they cut a hole--they took it down off the bow, cut a hole, went down through a hatch, down into the bilge, they said they had to take it out through the ship, they couldn't take it out through the keel. And it just sprung, it just bent it. They were going to court martial the gunner's mate who set the depth on those charges, because they

said nothing should be under 80 feet on them, and they said he must have set it for 50 or something. The skipper didn't think that was the problem, because he thought it went off even faster than that. Finally this striker came up, he was going for gunner's mate, he said "I was standing there with him. I saw him set it for 80 feet. He didn't misadjust it." So then they went over to where they were going to court martial him, and our skipper went over. He said "You can't accuse him of that. This man was right with him, and he said he set it for 80 feet. I think it went off before it even got to 50. It hadn't been in the water very long when it went off." We found out later they were having trouble with the firing mechanism on those. They were still using the mechanism out of the old ash can and for some reason it didn't work. Maybe something was more sensitive in this one. So the guy got off, he didn't get court martialled. Our skipper really stood up to it, and they had to admit that it probably could have been a malfunction.

Mr. Mannering: I guess it was better to find out then, in training, than . . .

Mr. Allender: That was the point. They needed--it's just like when they'd had those early torpedoes, subs fired those and half of them would never go off. They'd hit the target and wouldn't even go off.

Then we went to sea, and we were . . .

Mr. Mannering: I'd like to interrupt you just a second. We're sort of scripted. When did you ship out?

Mr. Allender: The first time, the YMS, I shipped out in May of 1944. That was after I finished the sonar training.

Mr. Mannering: Which brings up another particular specialty in sonar, in fire fighting I guess. The next thing we'd like to ask you about is clothing, equipment that you were issued. But did you have something else before I interrupted you that you wanted to talk about?

Mr. Allender: One thing I wanted to mention was that we went to general quarters at 4:10 AM west of Hawaii a ways. We had contact with what we identified to be a submarine, and I took the gear over and it was one of the best echoes I'd ever heard. It was clear--sonar then was all your ear, there wasn't a lot of the devices nowadays.

Mr. Mannering: Just your ping? What did you get?

Mr. Allender: You'd ping, send out a signal, you'd strike it, the sound would come back, and you'd hear an echo.

Mr. Mannering: So you'd hear a ping echo?

Mr. Allender: "Ping, ping." Now, if it was "ping PING" then it's coming toward you. That's doppler.

If it was "PING ping" it was going away from you. What we got in this contact was no doppler.

Mr. Mannering: This was your first war cruise?

Mr. Allender: On the PC it was. So we started our run. We had the rockets loaded, and we had all our charges ready, and I hadn't heard any echo from a submarine like that, even our own. We got about 700 yards from firing the rockets and the target took off. It was doing a speed more than we were--we were probably 12 knots at that time--and went deep, and just left us. So we woke up a whale. Because whales would give excellent echoes. And I'm sure some of them were shot at. So I wouldn't doubt but that we just plain woke this one up. We got close enough that he felt us, and he thought Oh oh. There was no way we were going to get a shot at him, he took off.

Mr. Mannering: So the ping doesn't have to be metal.

Mr. Allender: Any solid object. Oh no, you get echo off a school of fish, you get an echo off a reef, you get an echo off a ship's wake. Anything that forms a front. You can get what we call a thermal echo. If you have a layer of water down here a few degrees cooler it just forms a surface, and it'll bounce off of that.

Mr. Mannering: Were you able to tell sometimes?

Mr. Allender: That's what you tried to do, develop training enough to know. Most of those you could identify. A ship's wake would give a certain kind of sound, a reef usually was a little bit more solid, it would reverberate because it wasn't all solid, flat surface. Schools of fish would give you kind of a garbled sound. And you could hear propeller sounds, too, if they were close enough.

Mr. Mannering: You enlisted at 17, it was a lot of responsibility because you were what, 18 at this point?

Mr. Allender: Yes, I was probably getting about that. I was third class sonar about a month after I became 18. This might have been when I was 19, because I was on the other ship first, I was on the mine sweeper first.

That was one occasion. I have one other I could relate, but I can wait a little on that.

Mr. Mannering: All right, we'll save it. Clothing and equipment issued, personal gear . . .

Mr. Allender: I got the usual issue when I went to boot camp, a couple of uniforms. We were issued one pair of shoes, which was bad, because you wore out a pair of shoes in about three weeks when you were on that kind of training. And then they'd have to take them in and resole and re-heel them and we'd have to wear sneakers, and that was a disaster.

Because if anybody stepped on your heel they'd take your shoe off. I got a pretty complete issue of everything except, I think, one pair of shoes. Then when we got ready to leave San Diego on the PC they actually issued us foul weather gear. Heavy sweaters, face masks, the pullover kind, great big jackets, and somebody said "I'll bet we're going to the Aleutians," and I said "No, with this stuff I think we aren't going to the Aleutians." The unfortunate part of that was, instead of after going to Pearl Harbor taking it off, that stuff deteriorated and had to be thrown away, because the climate out there just destroyed it.

Mr. Mannerling: Any particular friends that went through training with you?

Mr. Allender: In boot camp, no, because we had fellows from all over the country in the company, and there wasn't enough time because we were in training classes. Oh, there a couple you'd talk with, the bunk next to you, but nobody there. When I got to sonar school I made a buddy, his name was Herbert C. Rocco. I corresponded with him for several years. He and my mother used to communicate, too. But I lost him after about 10 years. He was from San Antonio. He was a good friend. We'd do liberty together.

Mr. Mannerling: We're close to San Antonio, you could grab a phone book . . .

Mr. Allender: Oh, I've already done that, several years ago. I even called one Rocco that was down there, but they're not related to his family at all. I've got a sneaking suspicion that the family moved away and probably he did, too, because the Post Office even lost where they could forward. Maybe he's dead, I don't know.

Mr. Mannerling: Any feelings or emotions from that time period?

Mr. Allender: I have feelings. I grew up. Naturally, when you're that age you're probably in that stage anyway. I was away from home. I didn't have too much homesickness, but you didn't have that much time to think about it anyway. We always had associations, within our groups, and people, and the closeness of the ship's crew, so you didn't really feel that alone. But I learned an awful lot about the world, I learned an awful lot about even different parts of the United States that I'd never been to. I think it was good for me, because then I used the G.I. Bill to go to college, and I was mature enough to handle it. I'm not sure I could have been before that. I wouldn't have had the money anyway, before that.

Mr. Mannerling: Where did you go to school?

Mr. Allender: I started at Iowa State University in electrical engineering, then I got interested in becoming a teacher. I'd have to transfer from engineering to science and I'd of lost about--I'd been there six quarters--I'd have lost about a quarter's credit. They had a very rigid curriculum. We had at that time--it was called Iowa State Teachers' College. It's now the University of Northern Iowa. It was an educational institution,

that's what it was for, to train educational people. So I went over there, and they evaluated and said I'd lose only one hour. So I transferred, and I'm glad I did, primarily because the emphasis in the engineering--this is the mathematics, this is the physics, this is how you use it. Over there, this is the mathematics, this is the physics, and this is why it's that way. You went more into structure which I'm sure made me a better teacher, really. And I think I understood it a lot better, too. It was better for me. Then I taught 40 years after that.

Mr. Mannering: What level?

Mr. Allender: High school, I taught some junior high, and I taught 12 years at the end of my career at junior college, teaching technicians for laser robots, electronics, and computers. And I loved that job.

Mr. Mannering: Any humorous incidents or recollections.

Mr. Allender: There were several, but one of them was we went to Mog-Mog. Mog-Mog was a recreational island for Ulithe. On a small ship you didn't have any pop, you didn't have any beer, you didn't have any recreational facilities, you couldn't even show movies when we were at sea. You had to be anchored somewhere to show a film. So they had this recreational island, they took the ship over there and docked. I can't drink beer because it bloats me, so I had a couple of Cokes and that's all I can handle of that even though I had a lot more coming. And several of these guys tried to drink their beer allotment, which is no way they're going to consume, because we hadn't been in there for about eight months, and you get a can a month or every two weeks or whatever. So some of them came back to the ship literally almost, just barely able to ambulate, and this one was bound and determined he was going to bring this tree lizard on board with him. He had it on his shoulder. The executive officer was bound and determined he wasn't going to bring it on. It was getting to be a pretty good altercation, and it looked like he was going to get at least a captain's mast or discipline, so one of the other guys that was with him, he just knocked the lizard off into the water. That took care of it. So that ended it. But he didn't much more than get on board before he passed out, anyway.

The recreational island had baseball diamond, and tennis, and volleyball. You could do a lot of other things. But a lot of the guys, since they hadn't had a beer in so long, that's about all they did.

Mr. Mannering: Did he miss his lizard the next morning?

Mr. Allender: I don't know if he even knew he had a lizard, if he hadn't been told about it.

Mr. Mannering: Combat recollections.

Mr. Allender: We had a submarine contact when we were in a convoy, and we detached to go further out of line in order to make a challenge on this one. We detached from the major convoy and we made a couple of runs with depth charges, and we think we got the submarine. It was never credited because we couldn't prove it, but at least we couldn't get it back on sonar, we couldn't find it anymore, and the other ships said they had lost it, but we didn't get any usual indications, when they talk about oil slicks and all this stuff. There never seemed to be any indications of that. So maybe it just got a good hole in it and it went real deep and that stuff disbursed so bad that you wouldn't see it anyway. But we can't prove that we ever got a sub.

Then another time our skipper was a senior officer, and we had 22 PCs as escort ships for this convoy.

Mr. Mannering: PCs were . . .

Mr. Allender: Patrol craft. We were headed--it was somewhere close to the Mariannas, I'm not sure we were that far yet. It was before we got out to Guam, I know that. We got a radar contact, there was a lone ship on a course immediately across the convoy, which was absolutely a no-no. You don't cross over a convoy path. So we detached because our skipper was the convoy commander, he was the senior escort officer, and we were on the starboard front of this convoy, and we left the rest of the convoy there and we went to see, if nothing else, what this was. We finally got in signal light range and challenged and we got the wrong recognition back. So we challenged two or three more times, and still got the wrong recognition signal, so we went to general quarters. It was the configuration of a tanker, and it could have been a Japanese tanker, it was possible, it could have been one of those little ones. The tanker also turned stern to, so that didn't give you a whole lot to look at.

Mr. Mannering: May I interrupt again--I'm sorry, I keep interrupting you, but it brings up another question. Did our allies use the same recognition system? Could it have been Australian or . . .

Mr. Allender: No, they had some way that the recognition signals were the same. We got into, we still kept signaling it, challenging it every once in awhile. The skipper had ordered the three-inch to load, so it was loaded and ready to fire. We got almost within 1500 yards and he gave the order to fire. On a three-inch you have a pointer and trainer, one is this way, one is this way. When whatever his responsibility is, is lined up, he presses his thumb trigger. But they both have to be depressed to go off.

Mr. Mannering: Mr. Allender was making a motion, horizontal and vertical.

Mr. Allender: Yes. And then they hadn't both lined up yet, and all of a sudden here came the light from that tanker with the right recognition signal, so we suspended fire. But if they'd have gotten lined up, we'd have already fired. We had a good three-inch gun

crew, they were a good one. So then we proceeded up to this tanker, it was a Navy tanker traveling unescorted with aviation gas on it.

Mr. Mannering: Is that unusual?

Mr. Allender: A little bit. They used to do it on what they considered smaller trips--well, I don't know what you'd call smaller, but at least not long distances. If they really had a critical need--and I don't remember now where they were going with it.

Mr. Mannering: Did they zigzag?

Mr. Allender: No, because they turned stern to to give us a small target. When we finally got up there and challenged it--and of course he really read them off. Our skipper had that kind of authority when he was the escort commander. He said "What are you traveling a collision course with a convoy for?" That's a no-no, regardless of what the circumstances are. I don't know that they ever answered that, but they finally came through with there had been a screw-up in the recognition signal. Every four hours it was changed, I'm talking about time now, and somehow they were in the wrong time zone as far as their recognition was concerned. By almost two time zones. There was a real foul-up somewhere. The only ones who do that are the signal officer and the chief, if they have one, and the first class. Below that they just do what they're told. He really read them off pretty hard about that. He said, "We'd already given the order to fire." We were in close enough by the time they turned, they couldn't hit us with a five-inch, they couldn't come down too low. They might have shot off the radar from the top of the mast, and that's about all they could hit, because they couldn't get low enough to get us. The skipper said, "We certainly had range on you, and we'd been ordered to fire. You were just lucky you got it in in time. One shell in that high octane and you'd have seen one of the darndest explosions you ever saw." He used some pretty harsh words--there was no profanity, I don't mean that. First of all, they should never have been on a course that would cross over in front of a convoy.

Mr. Mannering: Did he explain that?

Mr. Allender: He didn't to my knowledge. I never heard it verbally, and they were using these speakers across the water. We went around and back to the convoy and kept going. They changed some course and I saw their skipper, that was a four-striper I think, he was reading off officers, he was really mad.

Mr. Mannering: He could have killed . . .

Mr. Allender: Of course. The blame for the recognition signals belongs to the signal officer. The blame for crossing a convoy is the skipper's responsibility. They admitted their radar was operating. They had seen us. I think the idea was--they were doing fair speed, they weren't poking along--they were going to cross in front in time. Well,

that's not the point, you still don't do that.

Mr. Mannering: A fully loaded tanker, what kind of speed were you talking about?

Mr. Allender: I think they could do 10 knots, maybe 12 extreme. This was a Navy tanker now, it wasn't a commercial tanker.

Mr. Mannering: Feelings, tastes, smells, others.

Mr. Allender: One smell I never particularly cared for was when we'd anchor--the minesweeper was always anchored at Terminal Island, between Long Beach and San Pedro. There were oil fields on that Terminal Island, and the smell of petroleum, that close, I didn't care for. It was a very strong petroleum smell. When you get into those Pacific islands, they definitely have different smells. I don't know whether I could explain it because we were really on the islands occasionally, not very much.

Mr. Mannering: Was it a vegetation kind of smell?

Mr. Allender: It's a different kind of vegetation, kind of soil. The climate I'm sure has something to do with it. Coconuts all over the place, not that it's a coconut smell, but it's probably a lot of the vegetation that's there. Being a petty officer with the responsibility of--I'd service the gear, I'd check my parts, be sure I had all the replacements I needed, but I didn't have to go out on the deck and do all this other stuff that they always did.

Mr. Mannering: Your rank was petty officer?

Mr. Allender: Yes, I was third class.

Mr. Mannering: Where did you achieve that?

Mr. Allender: At the completion of operator school, sonar. Then I became postman, because we didn't have anybody with that rank. And I'd go over and get the mail.

Mr. Mannering: Where would you go to get the mail?

Mr. Allender: Wherever the post office was. In Ulithe it was on this far western island, I can't remember the name of it now, it was the one that had the airfield on it.

Mr. Mannering: What did you take, a jeep?

Mr. Allender: Oh, you just took a boat over and the island wasn't really a very large island, unless you had an awful lot to carry. You went into the post office--if you needed transportation, you had to requisition it--and you'd take it back to your ship, whatever you came over on, you'd take it back. I went once in late November and

asked for the mail, we'd just come in. I signed the sheet you had to sign, and they started dragging these bags out and I said "Hey, what's going on?" And they said, "The Christmas packages are all here." I said, "I can't take this stuff. We have a dingy out there with one man and me and about four bags, and if we put any more in it, it's going to sink it." We had five or six first class bags, and as I was trying to figure out what to do, I knew I'd have to come back for the rest, somebody tapped me on the shoulder. I turned around and here was this young man who'd lived one block from me when I was young, he was sonar, he was on a bigger ship, they had a whale boat, he said "Bring it. We'll take you out." So I didn't have a dilemma. We took it all with us.

Mr. Mannering: That's pretty bizarre.

Mr. Allender: You know, you just don't think those things are going to happen. But it did. And then we were still there another three or four days, and the skipper said--I told him about it--he said "If they'll come pick you up, go over and visit him awhile." So they picked me up with their whale boat and I went over and we had a couple hours' visit, then I came back. He was a tad younger than I was, not much. Very unusual that that would happen, especially in a helpful way.

Mr. Mannering: Several times, one of the things we've discussed is the recollection of your C.O. and other officers' strengths and weaknesses, that's another example of really the thoughtfulness of your skipper. Any other officers that you recall?

Mr. Allender: The others I didn't have as much dealing with. Because the sonar is in the starboard of the wheelhouse, and the quartermaster at the wheel, that's where the skipper or the officer of the deck is going to be, the watch officer, and sometimes he was one of the watch officers. If the weather allowed, then they'd usually be on the next deck, the open deck, a little higher, too. We rotated positions, too, because the sonar would have driven you up the wall if you had to be on it all the time. We did four hour watches, and usually rotated every 30 minutes.

Mr. Mannering: You're on this thing, someone is operating . . .

Mr. Allender: All the time, at sea. When you're at home, or in port, coming into port, you're not wanting to have it. We rotated, the quartermaster and myself and the radar and the lookout on the bridge, we'd each take half an hour and then we'd have to do a second one in a four hour watch. Because that pinging sound, you have an earphone on anyway--well, that may be the reason I'm wearing hearing aids. It isn't all of it, but it's some of it.

Mr. Mannering: And these others, they were trained in . . .

Mr. Allender: Oh, they could operate the gear. The only thing is, if they got anything, then I was

called, and I'd come up and identify if they had anything. On four occasions we sent the challenge by code through the sonar, because we had a submarine and they were our own submarines. And they'd come back with the recognition. About the next message they'd send was what films they would have. We'd exchange that, if we thought they'd be valuable to exchange, they'd surface and we'd put a line across and exchange films, and they'd submerge and go on their way and we'd go on our way.

Mr. Mannering: It's quite an interesting story.

Mr. Allender: Well, you see, once you got a film you had it until you got someplace you could get rid of it, and normally you didn't want to do it unless you could trade it for something.

Mr. Mannering: You watched the same one over and over?

Mr. Allender: Yes. Heavens, sometimes the guys got so they wouldn't go because they'd seen them ten times. You only showed them in port, though.

Mr. Mannering: Do you have any recollections of the films?

Mr. Allender: We saw "State Fair," and we saw several of the westerns, and we saw one or two of those John Wayne films, and it was just whatever you could get your hands on.

Mr. Mannering: Those World War II . . .

Mr. Allender: One or two of those John Wayne films were about World War II.

Mr. Mannering: "Sands of Iwo Jima" or something?

Mr. Allender: Yes--although I don't think the Iwo Jima one was one we actually saw there. He was a fighter pilot in one; he was in construction, a Seabee, he was an officer in that one. I think we might have seen that one.

Mr. Mannering: We might have lost that war, if it wasn't for John Wayne.

Mr. Allender: There was a lot of camaraderie, there was a lot of interaction between the services. There just was. We didn't have much contact with Army personnel per se, Marines sometimes, but they never were aboard our ship. There was a lot of closeness, and I guess that's one thing that I love as a person, which a lot of people who--well, younger people who've never been involved in this don't seem to have that camaraderie with people. I'm not saying they're aloof, but they've just never done it. And of course when you're in service, you depend on the other guy to do his job, too.

Mr. Mannering: How was the food? The morale was good, and . . .

Mr. Allender: The food wasn't bad, it's just that we had such a limited space to store it. We had no butcher, no baker, just a cook. We got some steak, and he cut it the wrong way, and I could have sworn it was shoe sole. There was no way anybody could have eaten it. It was just so tough because it was cross grain, cut lengthwise . . .

Mr. Mannering: Was it rare?

Mr. Allender: No, it wasn't rare, you just couldn't chew it. Of course, you had to cut across the grain, not with it.

Mr. Mannering: How often were you able to get steak?

Mr. Allender: Not extremely common, but we could get it. At sea, if they had it, you could get it. Well, most times. That's another thing I wanted to mention. Because of my position of not doing deck duty, when the ship was in port, I was also the commissary petty officer. So when we needed food supplies, we had to go over to the island in Ulithe, and I'd take about three or four seamen with me, and they'd load up a wheeled cart. They had one person there that was in charge of that commissary, that would go along with one of these clipboards, he'd check the stuff off. So we always got coffee, we always got a lot of staples. Usually the cook gave me some things that we definitely needed. We came along, and there were bananas. He said, "You can't have bananas." I said, "What do you mean, we can't have bananas?" He said, "Ships smaller than DEs can't have bananas." And we said, "What kind of a deal is that? What difference should it make?" Well, we always had bananas, because when he'd get busy, someone would throw them on and cover them up with coffee.

We also got a case of sardines one time we weren't supposed to have, and got back to the ship and a couple of officers up there, so we were really afraid of how we were going to get rid of them. We passed them up and one guy shoved them in the radar shack under the counter, and about an hour after that, we hadn't had a chance to get them out of there yet, we couldn't put them in the regular commissary, and the skipper came and he said "You took that group over for the commissary, didn't you?" and I said "Yes." "What are those sardines doing in the radar shack?" I said, "Well, they told us we couldn't have them, and we don't like being considered second class citizens, so we appropriated a case." He kind of smiled, and said "Get them out of there." I said, "Do you like sardines?" and he said "Yes." So I gave him half a dozen cans, and we took them back into the crew's quarters and they divided them up and ate them when they wanted.

I think he had a full understanding of the problem, he didn't agree with it, but there was nothing he could do about it. And there were a few foodstuffs that we never got. A lot of the regular crews on the bigger ships didn't. They had such a different level of mess in some of those big ships.

Mr. Mannering: Do you recall what you did get?

Mr. Allender: I know we couldn't get things like sardines, bananas, shrimp--I can't think now offhand, but I know there were a half a dozen at least.

Mr. Mannering: It's really curious that the rationale that you had to be a destroyer escort or bigger to get sardines, or whatever . . .

Mr. Allender: I suppose because the supply wasn't as big as they wanted it, but that shouldn't make any difference, I would think. First come, first served.

Mr. Mannering: You were talking about the men in your group. You were in pretty close quarters. Any squabbles, any . . .

Mr. Allender: Not really. We had a thief aboard. I guess it's been an old Navy adage since the wooden ships, you don't steal from your shipmates. Well, this guy was not necessarily that way. If a footlocker or anything got left unlocked, sometimes just for almost no time at all, if there's nobody around, something gets taken. I know I lost \$10 because I left it unlocked, went up the ladder to scrub my teeth, went back down, and \$10 was gone. They were fairly sure who they thought it was, but they weren't positive. The story I heard later was that this guy got enough points that he got discharged before our ship got back. We didn't get back until the 18th of December, 1945, to the States. Shortly after he left we were missing a Colt .45. The skipper reported it right away, and this is hearsay, but I heard that when he came into San Francisco they got him. He didn't realize that they were running him through one of those scanners, one of those deals that would beep or something.

Mr. Mannering: They had those in those days?

Mr. Allender: They had some of them, and I imagine because of the possibility, they made him go through an area where it could be detected.

Mr. Mannering: Where would he have gotten the .45? Off of some officer?

Mr. Allender: No, we had half a dozen of them. When we were anchored, or tied up, we had gangway watch: one petty officer, a seaman, and a fireman. And the petty officer wore a sidearm. When I went to get mail, I wore a sidearm.

Mr. Mannering: Weren't these locked up, though?

Mr. Allender: Oh yes. Well, normally. But this guy was a good enough thief. He noticed sometime when he could get ahold of one of them when somebody wasn't looking. They had inventoried everything when we started back, and that's when they found this .45 was missing. so they reported it, and then the Navy automatically, everybody that

had gotten off the ship, I suppose they screened them. I can't verify that that happened, I only heard that part.

Mr. Mannering: That got him some brig time, I would think.

Mr. Allender: Oh, I'm sure it did. Yes.

Mr. Mannering: What were your feelings coming home? Let me back up, I'm sorry, I got ahead of our script. Were there particular periods or recollections that you've tried to put out of your mind?

Mr. Allender: Boredom. When you go to sea in the Pacific, you're going to see a lot of sea, and if you're not on watch or sleeping, and if you don't have duty, then you got a lot of time on your hands. You can read, but there's a limit to that. The typhoon we got into out there at the end of the war, we could have done without that.

Mr. Mannering: Was that in Okinawa?

Mr. Allender: It was the same basic time, we were a little further south than Okinawa. That was a pretty large storm anyway. We were in Ulithe, we pulled anchor and went around one of the islands on the lee side, we were out of the wind, almost drove the bow on the sand and dropped both the bow anchors. And in about three hours we hoisted the anchors and drove it up on the sand, because it still was pushing us away. We hadn't got any good rock formations, I guess. I'm telling you, it was rough right in that harbor. That harbor has about 100 square miles of water in it, so it's almost like open water in some ways.

Mr. Mannering: How do you think you'd have faired if you'd been at sea?

Mr. Allender: I think we'd have made it. You just had to head into it. You don't want to go across the bows, at all.

Mr. Mannering: Some did, though, isn't that correct?

Mr. Allender: That's because of the course they were trying to follow. We always said that we were like a toothpick on a lake. Destroyers sometimes got trapped on two separate waves. That storm did break two of them in half, because they ended up with the bow and the stern on the wave and no support in the middle. We couldn't be on two at one time, because we weren't big enough. We could be this way, and we could be that way, but there isn't any way that we would get hung up on two different swells.

Mr. Mannering: Speaking of that, how did you handle seasickness? Were you ever . . .

Mr. Allender: Yes. Not to the extent some people were. I guess you kind of get use to that rough,

riding a ship. Nobody wanted to eat a whole lot during that storm. The ability to cook was almost cut off. They had railings they could put up around the stove, and it was so rough that it would almost toss the stuff off over that, so they just quit.

Mr. Mannering: Did you have sandwiches?

Mr. Allender: Well, mostly we weren't interested in eating too much. I found out, what I would do was eat some crackers. Oh, there was coffee, usually I could tolerate some of that. But you didn't have much appetite. One time I really tried to sleep, I had to get my bunk and put the mattress straps, which were used to hold it when you folded it up, and I had to put those over me, because those waves would throw you out otherwise.

Mr. Mannering: How long?

Mr. Allender: I would say a couple of days.

Mr. Mannering: I've seen pictures of a carrier, I don't know which one, it seems the flight deck . . .

Mr. Allender: It would just rip it up. Because they took a dive into it, and it just tore the deck right up. The bigger ships are more likely to do that than we were. They always did say the PCs should draw 50 percent sub pay, because if you see them in a convoy, half the time you don't see them, because they're dipping into the next wave someplace, and they didn't have that high--they had a silhouette that looked like two cheese boxes on a raft, because they had a pretty flat silhouette, because they didn't have that much above the water line.

Mr. Mannering: You said you served on two types of ships. When did you transfer from one to the other?

Mr. Allender: I went on the mine sweeper, YMS 387, and I served on that and we did a lot of coastal sweeps, and then for about two months we worked as a training ship. We'd take crews on training and go out and let them do it with our supervision so that they were learning how. We had the vanes which we carried, would cut off the mine detonators. We trailed big electronic lines we unwound off a spool which set up a magnetic field, and they were supposed to blow up the magnetic mines. We had a big acoustical thing you lowered into the water that made the most ungodly noise you ever heard. It was supposed to set them off--those were the ones that were supposed to be set off by propellers. I think we had one other kind, I don't remember what it was, but supposedly we were supposed to be able to handle all kinds. This ship was a wooden ship, the YMS was a wooden ship, and that advantage was that you didn't have much degauzing because you didn't get the magnetism. There was some in the engines, but the hull didn't magnetize.

We had one training crew come on there that was a problem, our skipper said "Don't

put them on a mine sweeper," because they weren't very apt at what they were doing. Some of the things they did turned out to be pretty dangerous. The acoustical thing, when that was operating, had to shut the sonar down, because there was no way, because the noise you picked up through it was just deafening.

Mr. Mannering: You mentioned degauzing--the term has something to do with reversing the magnetic field . . .

Mr. Allender: Neutralizes it. That's what it's supposed to do.

And then of course I left that ship right near, just after Christmas. I went back into the small craft training center on Terminal Island . . .

Mr. Mannering: This is Christmas of '43?

Mr. Allender: '44. We would go over and do submarine simulations--they had simulators. I'd go on the equipment. We had another sonar, he'd run the recorder. This is a device that regulates the firing of the rockets. We'd have the helmsman, we'd have the gunnery officer, and we'd have the skipper, it seems like one other person. We'd have to find the sub, we'd have to make an attack on it, we'd have to find it again, and then we'd have to make other attacks on it. It was just practice, we'd do that about two or three hours in the morning for about three weeks. About the time I got out of service--the skipper, sometimes when I'd be on this rotating watch I'd be on the bridge, and he'd be up there. When the G.I. Bill was passed, he was the one who encouraged me to use it to go to college.

Mr. Mannering: Glad you listened to him.

Mr. Allender: I am too. I'd never thought about it, but he more or less convinced me, it's there, it should be exactly what you need, take it.

Mr. Mannering: What were your feelings coming home?

Mr. Allender: Well, before we go to the home, let me finish one thing I wanted to mention before. We had gone in to Ulithia shortly before they dropped the first bomb in Japan, the first nuclear bomb. We had refueled, resupplied, and they put us on picket duty outside the sub nets. We were out there during the actual Japanese surrender in Tokyo. And it wasn't long, we got a message out there to report to this one buoy--they didn't have too many piers, there wasn't much place to tie up a ship--and we tied up at this buoy and here came a commissary barge and a fuel barge and the skipper announced "We'll be at sea in 15 minutes." We wondered what's going on. He didn't say anything, and usually there had to be a reason, and I knew later what it was. But anyway, we left and it was almost dark. The direction was almost west, but that didn't mean anything in that open ocean yet. And then he came on the intercom, it

was probably about 6 AM, most everybody was out of the sack by then, and we could see the volcanic peaks, and he said, "We're going to Yap, we'll be taking on a Japanese pilot at the breakwater. Don't anybody get excited, I don't want any incidents out of this." So this pilot came aboard, we went in the harbor, and we did something like this and then we did something like that, and we anchored. We were sitting 600 hundred yards from any land, this was a big breakwatered area, and the skipper said, "We'll have some Japanese officers aboard shortly." Here came one that must have been the top man, he must have been a major. Another was I think mainly an interpreter, and then there was one other, I suppose an aide, I don't know. I wasn't exactly right in because I was doing some work on the sonar. They went in with the skipper, into the cabin back in there, and we took their surrender.

This was of course after Japan had really surrendered. And we found out that Yap was bypassed because it was too treacherous to try to land on. They had found that this harbor was just full of obstacles--it was shallow, it had coral snags. They said even a PBY might get the bottom ripped out of it if it tried to land in there. And they chose us because we didn't draw much water. They couldn't send anything very big in there. We stayed anchored and they came out and did whatever officially, I guess, the surrender, or capitulation, whatever the term is, I don't know what it is. And then they gave a list--well, they sent it out later--of names that they were asking us to communicate to Japan, because a lot of these people stationed there had relatives and they'd want to know if they were alive or whatever.

And another thing was, conditions required them to remove all that ammunition. We had no responsibility, none at all. So we got two small landing craft down there, and the coxswain trained them how to use. The Japanese wanted them to do it, but "Uh uh, we're not going to drive those things. It's your responsibility, we'll train you to use it, and we'll give you the fuel and so on, you get rid of those shells." There evidentially were eight-inch guns somewhere. They came across the mountain, strings of soldiers, with a sack on their back, and they had one of the shells in it. Of course they used powder bags, they didn't have powder containers. And they stacked these on the landing craft, and when they got a fair load, they'd close the ramp and they'd take it out to sea and dump them. That went on for days.

Another responsibility they had, they sent a much larger landing ship down there, I don't know what kind it was, it wasn't an LST, it wasn't that big, because a lot of their native population had terrible malnutrition. Sores, skin discoloration, I suppose scurvy, I don't know, but it was something like that. They took the worst ones of the population and loaded them on these landing craft and took them to Ulithia to treat them. I know about three weeks later most of those came back and they took the next group, and then right after that another PC came and relieved us, so we came back to Ulithia. By this time we're getting well into October, and they assigned some of the other PCs to stay out there and do it, and we got to start back to the States.

Mr. Mannering: In our visit before we got officially cranked up here on tape, you mentioned somebody from the Army that you thought had polio . . .

Mr. Allender: The medical personnel thought that he might have polio. They didn't know, they thought the symptoms were possible. And I can't even tell you where it was, because I don't know, I don't remember. I know we went there, we picked him up, they really thought it might be important because they thought there might be paralysis coming on. So we tried to rush him--I don't remember, I think we might of taken him to Ulithia. I'm pretty sure we did. And they were going to make sure they got him somewhere where there was an iron lung, in case it was needed. I think we found out later they found out it was something else. Any contagious disease was a problem. And that was one advantage I guess, being at sea, you at least were in your own closed group, you weren't around everything that was on the land.

Mr. Mannering: We've got just a few minutes of tape left. Feelings coming home?

Mr. Allender: Of course, they were joyous feelings. I was glad--we were all very glad when we realized--it was about the middle, just before Thanksgiving, that we started back. We weren't doing extensive speed, but we were traveling alone, we didn't have to travel with somebody else. And all of them were glad because it looked like we were going to make it to the States before Christmas. The 18th of December we came into San Diego. Everybody was glad about it, but as far as other feelings--of course, we had some concerns, too, because we got into the Pearl Harbor area, and we put in, and they'd had some minor problems with the gyrocompass. Evidentially it seemed to work all right after that.

We got back to San Diego, we got in for Christmas, we stayed into January and then they said "You're going to be decommissioned in Charleston, South Carolina." So we had to go through the Canal. We got through the Panama Canal and were coming up between Cuba and Mexico and we started having gyro problems again. It's a lot harder to steer by magnetic compass, than it is gyro, so we made a quick stop in Key West and they did a minor patchup job on it, I guess, and got us to Charleston. I supervised getting all the sonar off, and then I was sent home for discharge. I was sent home the last day or so of February, 1946, with a 30-day leave, to report to World Field in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and I received my discharge on April 4th, 1946.

Mr. Mannering: Anything you want to add? I want to thank you for a great interview, and thank you for what you did for us.

Mr. Allender: I feel that it made me a more full individual. I grew up, I learned to take responsibility. I had a lot of camaraderie, maybe not a lot of close friends, but camaraderie, and it was a service that I was glad to do. When you put yourself in harm's way, it didn't make a difference if you didn't leave the country, because you don't know what they're going to do with you. A lot of people, the first half a minute

they're in a situation, that's it, because they die right there if it's the wrong thing.
And in the Navy, fire was the worst thing you worried about.

As I look back at WWII and its happenings, I am convinced that God was our Supreme commander.

Transcribed by: Betty Paieda
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