

National Museum of the Pacific War

Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas

**Interview with
Edward M Hary Jr.
Submariner, Sea of Japan**

Interview with Ed Hary

My name is Preston Holcomb we are located in the visitor's center in Fredericksburg, Texas. The interview will encompass the requirements and the support of the Center of the Pacific War Studies Archives of the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Parks and Wildlife for the preservation of historical information.

Mr. Holcomb: Ed where you born?

Ed Hary: I was born in Breckenridge, Texas.

Mr. Holcomb: And what year was that?

Mr. Hary: July 16, 1922

Mr. Holcomb: What were your parent's names?

Mr. Hary: Edward M Hary Sr. and Maud Hary.

Mr. Holcomb: I am serious about Breckenridge because I have some kin-folks there. Were your parents farmers?

Mr. Hary: No, my dad worked in the oil fields.

Mr. Holcomb: What school did you attend in High School?

Mr. Hary: I went to school in Monahans, Texas.

Mr. Holcomb: Where and when did you enter the service?

Mr. Hary: I entered in March 12, 1942 in Big Springs, Texas.

Mr. Holcomb: You chose the Navy or did the Navy choose you?

Mr. Hary: I chose the Navy.

Mr. Holcomb: Why did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Hary: Well, I was going to Texas A&M University at the time and my brothers were in the Field Artillery and serving at Camp Ord in California, my dad had been in the Infantry in World War I and I decided that I did not want the Army so I said I wanted the Navy. They wouldn't get part of me they would get all of me.

Mr. Holcomb: Part of the reason that I got into the Navy was because I was pretty well assured of three hot meals a day and a hot shower at night.
When you entered the Navy were you married?
Where did you meet your wife?

Mr. Hary: No, I wasn't married. I met her while I was going to A&M. I heard Delano Roosevelt say his little speech on December the seventh and I said, I'm getting out of this and I went to City Hall and joined the Navy. My mother got sick so it was March before I got in the Navy.

Mr. Holcomb: Where was your wife, who was your girlfriend at that time?

Mr. Hary: She lived in Bryan.

Mr. Holcomb? Was she attending the University?

Mr. Hary: No, she was working. She was sick for a while.

Mr. Holcomb: You joined the Navy and where did you go to Boot Camp?

Mr. Hary: San Diego, California. I was there long enough to get my shots. They had cut the time into days instead of weeks. They had this big group coming from Houston after the Cruiser Houston was sunk. There was a big bunch of volunteers, about ten thousand of them and they were rushing us out of the main training station there at San Diego and sent us to Balboa Park. The Chief Petty Officer told twenty of us to report to a certain room at a certain time and we were asked if we wanted to go to Torpedo School. No one wanted to volunteer for Torpedo School. He told us that it was too bad. You get your sea-bags and your duffle bags packed because you are going to Key Port, Washington at six o'clock in the morning. So we went to Key Port, Washington. After I graduated from Torpedo School I was made Seaman Third Class. I was a Seaman Second when I went up there.

Mr. Holcomb: Ed, in Torpedo School what was your primary schooling regarding? Was it how to make a torpedo?

Mr. Hary: We learned everything there was to learn about a torpedo. How to overhaul it and also the way to handle the head of the torpedo.

Mr. Holcomb: I know that you are aware that at the beginning of World War II our torpedoes failed to go off when they hit the target or they ran in circles.

Mr. Hary: These were the Mark 14 torpedoes on aircraft carrying torpedoes, torpedo bombers, submarines. There was trouble with the firing pin. They finally solved it by dropping the thing off a tower and finally getting the right kind of pin and fixing it right so it would explode. When we made our first patrol run, we had Mark 10 torpedoes. The last time that they were

fired as exercise torpedoes was in 1915. They came off the Battle Ship Texas in 1915. That was the last time. The torpedo shop at Pearl was supposed to have all of them ready to fire when we got them aboard ship. Our Gunnery Officer decided that we had better check our pins. We started checking on them and there was not enough alcohol, not enough water and not enough oil in them. When we would take the inspection plates off the side we would find whiskey bottles and trash and everything else. We had to go through those things. We went to Dutch Harbor and picked up supplies like alcohol, distilled water and oil and whatever else we needed to fix those torpedoes up where they would be in A-1 shape. We only fired two torpedoes at a Troop Transport and the Troop Transport fired two torpedoes at us. It all happened _____ and a little lookout reported that a Captain _____ And the Captain asked one of the other lookouts what he said. He said, "There is a little boat coming up the stern, Sir". When the Captain looked back we had two torpedoes coming at us. We had already fired two torpedoes at the Troop Transport and he was afraid to dive under it because he was afraid that the Troop Transport might sink on him because he was pretty close to us. He fired it anyhow. We went down two hundred feet to get under it. He turned away from it and got free of it. One torpedo missed us by ten feet and one missed by a hundred feet but we heard four explosions when we got down and we couldn't ascertain if we had sunk that ship but with four loud explosions we assumed that we sunk it.

Mr. Holcomb: There were four explosions and you fired two torpedoes. What were the other explosions from?

Mr. Hary: There were other ships. They fired two and we fired two. Those two that missed us went ahead and ripped their ship. We know we did damage but we didn't know what it was. On a submarine you are supposed to have two officers to verify that such and such a thing happened: whether you sunk a ship or missed or what ever happened.

Mr. Holcomb: I didn't know you had to have two.

Mr. Hary: Oh, yeah, one couldn't say, "I sunk that ship". You had to have a Duty Officers to verify that he had done it. Usually it was the Executive Officer and the Skipper that did that. They would take photographs through the periscope. But I don't think we had that facility at that time. We may have but I don't think we did.

Mr. Holcomb: That is real interesting, Ed. Could we back up just a little bit? When did you marry your sweetheart?

Mr. Hary: When the _____ boat was assigned to New London as a school boat, I tried to get aboard a new boat. They never did need me, I guess, so I

called my girlfriend and asked her if she wanted to come up there and get married because it looked like I was going to be there the rest of the War. She came up and we married in 1943. In 1944 we had a five month old daughter and they had sent me to Electrical Torpedo School in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. When I reported to our ship, the _____, I had been on; they told me that I was transferred to the USS Toro. I go to report to the Toro and they tell me to have everything ready because in forty eight hours you are going to ship out. I have my wife, I have my household full of furniture, a car and a five month old baby and I've got to make arrangements for her to get home and get everything shipped home in forty eight hours. But I made it. I just barely made it. When they were taking the gang planks off, I got aboard.

Mr. Holcomb: Congratulations! Part of your Navy career sounds like mine. Your wife got back and got settled and you were on the Toro. What were your tour duties on the Toro?

Mr. Hary: On the Toro we left New London and went to Key West for two weeks, practiced in firing torpedoes and then we went through the Panama Canal to Pearl and then on out to Saipan and did some more practice work there. Then we went to between Honshu and Shikoku. This was February 1945. We made the first patrol run there without incident. We didn't see a plane or a ship all we did was pick up some aviators. We picked up nine aviators on both runs. I can't remember which ones we picked up but I do know that picked up three Australians and six American flyers.

Mr. Holcomb: You weren't looking for them necessarily, were you?

Mr. Hary: No, we were close to Japan until the war was over but we did not see any ships. We did see some commercial planes, I guess, with running lights on over the island but no combatants or anything like that.

Mr. Holcomb: When you picked the aviators up out of the water, did you just happen up on them?

Mr. Hary: No, no when they had an air raid over the islands, they sent a B-29 up with about three fighter escorts. They would notify a certain Submarine in certain areas where they were going to make a strike and we would be alerted to stay down day time or in the night time, it didn't matter when it was. The B-29 would fly a Box- Kite. Those Japs wouldn't fire a cap as long as that B-29 was up there. We could get close enough that we could see their coastal guns training on us but they wouldn't fire. We could see them walking around on the beach and watch the guns. They were desperate, I mean, they knew that that B-29 would give them all kinds of trouble. We usually transferred the aviators that we picked up to another boat at night that was coming back to one of our ports or going to

Australia. The officers that we picked up who were going back to Australia so we transferred them to Australia. Some of them were stationed at Perch. Some of the aviators were stationed at the south end of Guam.

Mr. Holcomb: I can imagine that those aviators were certainly appreciative of being picked up.

Mr. Hary: Oh, Man!!!! I have been corresponding with a fellow in Indianapolis, Indiana and he sent me some literature that he had picked up from a Lieutenant that was on our boat. He interviewed these guys and stayed in contact with them. They said that they had the best food and the best living conditions that they ever had while overseas. They did appreciate.

I'll tell you a sad story, though. The Captain notified a guy who was in a rubber raft that it would be awhile before we could pick him up. He was a Texas Aggie, or at least he said he was. When we approached him, he would fire star shells and he had his 45 out. Now this was in the day time and he had his shark repellent out and he was taking care of all the his stuff and plotting his location and eating K-rations. He said," What are you doing? Those Japs can sit out and hunt for a hundred miles. I ought to shoot you off of that dang thing. If I have to use this stuff, I want to make dang sure it works".

Mr. Holcomb: I wonder what the Captain was thinking.

Mr. Hary: He was having a ball out there. Anyhow, we put down a ladder and picked him up. The next one we picked up was an enlisted man. I think he was a Sergeant. I have his name written in a book but I left the book on the way home. He and that fellow had been in Grade School together, Junior High School together, High School together and two years of College and they were on that plane together. They had joined the Service and were on this B-29 together. They were shot up over the islands and had to ditch and they had a one-man rubber raft between them. I got my buddy in the rubber raft because he couldn't swim. I was down in the water. At that time it was pretty cold and the wind was blowing pretty good. It wasn't very favorable weather. My buddy said," You have been there a long time. You get up here and let me down there." He said, "OK". I got up there and had on my Mae West. I took my pistol off. And my buddy said, "Ill see you." And he was gone. He said that the reason he did that was because he had the horror that if the Japanese picked him up as a prisoner and they would kill him. He was scared to death that they would do that. He heard all kinds of tales that had been told about how the Japanese treated their prisoners. Also, he didn't believe that we had a submarine every sixty miles around the coast of Japan on the

Mr. Holcomb: My land, that is interesting. I didn't know that either.

Mr. Hary: Now another thing that was interesting about having a submarine in the Sea of Japan, it was one hundred twenty five feet and the water was clear. We heard that the aviators could see a submarine at one hundred twenty five feet down.

Mr. Holcomb: I feel bad for that young man.

Mr. Hary: He wouldn't talk to anybody for about two weeks. He just ate enough to keep him alive. Then he got to where he would talk and he finally told the story about his friend. There were a lot of things like that went on and people didn't believe half of it.

Mr. Holcomb: This is getting the time... Was this between February 1945 until August 1945?

Mr. Hary: After the war was over I remember that the Captain didn't say anything about it or anything. It was funny. We were floating around out there. I was the torpedo man. I wasn't supposed to be on look-out but I would relieve the look-outs at night and get some fresh air. I would spend two hours on look-out. I was up there and got my eyes accustomed to the darkness and reported to the Officer of the Deck that I had seen a glow on the horizon in a certain position. The Officer of the Deck said that no one else had reported it and he didn't seem to care. I said that I am supposed to report what I see. I think that I see a glow on the horizon in a certain position. This went on about thirty minutes. I would still report about every five or ten minutes that I could see a glow. He said that he thought I was crazy but we would find out. So he called down and got the Skipper. The Skipper said, "What is going on?" I told him the same thing that if I think I see a glow on the horizon, I'm supposed to report. He said, "Well, you are right". I said, "I do". He said, "We will find out". We went on this big jag and I would report and he said, "Well, I guess you do because you see it in the same place every time". He took off and in about ten or fifteen minutes the sky was lit up. It was after _____ it was one of the bombs, I'm sure. It was Hiroshima, I'm sure. And the next day it was announced over the radio that the bomb had been dropped and we didn't know what to do about it.

Mr. Holcomb: Similarly, aboard ship, we did not know anything about it, either. Only that they dropped the bomb.

Mr. Hary: It wasn't but a few days that we had the cease fire. After the cease fire we had to stay on station for about five days. Then they sent us to Saipan to get rid of the torpedoes and then they sent us to Guam where we stayed about three days waiting for boats to get through the Canal so we could get

back to the States. We got to the Pacific side of the Canal and we had to anchor out there two or three days before we get through and get in the line. Then inside the Canal, in the lake, we had to wait to get through the other locks. I had my discharge in my hand thirty miles off the coast of Japan when the war was over and I had to ride that submarine all the way to Pier 92 in New York City at eight knots.

Mr. Holcomb: Did your wife meet you there?

Mr. Hary: No, I was a couple of days getting passage home. There was so much movement going on that they wouldn't take you for a couple of days. You had to make reservations. I went to Camp Wallace, Texas. I was discharged in Camp Wallace, Texas down near Galveston. We went to Monahans for a while just to visit with the family. Then went back to Bryan and stayed with my wife's mother till we got us a house. Then I enrolled in A&M and started back to A&M.

Mr. Holcomb: Did you get your degree from A&M?

Mr. Hary: I graduated in 1949. I crowded the three year course into nine. (Lots of laughter)

Mr. Holcomb: Congratulations. That is wonderful. Then after you got your degree you went to work for whom?

Mr. Hary: I went to work for an air conditioning and refrigeration business so I went into business with a guy and that didn't turn out. After about a year, it went kaboot. Then I just started one job after the other and decided that after so many years I was ready to get a steady job somewhere. I went to work with an Engineering Experiment Station at A&M. I had a degree in Agriculture so finally I decided I'd go in the field of Agriculture and maybe I can do a little better. I did, and went to work for the Foundation Food Service a part of the Agriculture Experiment Station in San Antonio and retired in 1962.

Mr. Holcomb: Sounds like you had a very interesting life.

One of the questions we are required to ask is who your Commanding Officers and Executive Officers were.

Mr. Hary: I had Captain J.D. Brown. The Executive Officer was Mr. Bob Polk and as far as I know, he was from Waco. His dad was a congressman from Waco.

Mr. Holcomb: This will conclude the interview, Ed, for the Nimitz Museum.

Transcribed by:

Bill and Mary Brown

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