



**Center for Pacific War Studies
Oral History Program**

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

C. Richard Jenke

United States Navy

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**National Museum of the Pacific War
Fredericksburg, Texas**

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Mr. C. Richard Jenke**

Ms. McCabe: This is Debbie McCabe. Today is August 24, 2003. I am interviewing Navy veteran, Richard Jenke, and his wife, Irma. We are here to talk about his experiences in the Pacific during World War II. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

Thank you very much both of you for coming. We're going to start off with some basic information. Mr. Jenke, when and where were you born?

Mr. Jenke: I was born in Houston, Texas, February 25, 1927.

Ms. McCabe: Your parents' names?

Mr. Jenke: Alfred and Jeanette Jenke.

Ms. McCabe: Were they native Americans or did they come from somewhere else?

Mr. Jenke: They were native Americans. Both of them were born here. Both Texans, native-born Texans.

Ms. McCabe: Do you have sisters and brothers?

Mr. Jenke: Yes, I have two sisters, also born here, and a brother also born here. My baby brother later served in the Marine Corps during the Korean War in 1952.

Ms. McCabe: What were their names?

Mr. Jenke: Dorothy, Delores and Robert.

Ms. McCabe: Where did you go to school?

Mr. Jenke: Elementary school in Houston, Texas. Also St. Joseph Elementary School at St. Joseph Church. Then middle school and a junior high school that no longer exists but it did at the time. And John Reagan High School, which I did not graduate from until after World War II.

Ms. McCabe: You returned to high school after the war. When and where did you join? As I understand it, you tried first to join the Marines.

Mr. Jenke: Yes, I tried to join the Marines on December 8, 1941, the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor. They told me to go home and grow up. I said “well, I’ll join the Navy instead” and I made plans to do that.

Ms. McCabe: Now the Marines told you to go home and grow up because you were only how old?

Mr. Jenke: I was fourteen years old.

Ms. McCabe: Fourteen. Then how do you think the Navy accepted you when the Marines wouldn’t let you pass?

Mr. Jenke: Well, this is not quite a year later. In fact, it’s about a year later, I tried it again with the Navy and I skipped school that day to do that. That recruiter just would not believe I was seventeen. He kept asking me questions and questions to try to trip me up and I was like a stuck record. “I was seventeen. I was born November 25, 1925.” Of course, this being December, that would make me seventeen years old and I stuck to that. He couldn’t budge me, so after about two hours of that I threatened and said “Look, if you don’t want me, I’ll go to the Air Force down the street. They want me.” So he said, “All right, kid, fill out these papers” which were consent papers to be notarized by a notary and I thought to myself “oh boy, I’m going to have a terrible time talking Mother into signing my

papers.” Probably Dad would, but I had to get by Mother and that was another story there.

Ms. McCabe: Did she sign?

Mr. Jenke: Well, I finally decided on December 7, 1942 to enlist and when I came home with these papers I talked to Dad. Dad said, “Yeah, I’ll sign them whether your mother will.” My mother said “Sign what?” I said, “Oh my god, I’m up against it now.” I said, “Mother, I want to join the Navy.” She said, “You’re too young. They don’t want babies in there.” So it went. I kept arguing my point that so many of my friends had already gone and I wanted to go and fight the Japs because they did a terrible thing to us at Pearl Harbor. She said, “You’re too young. You’re too young.” About 11:00 I said, “Mother, if you won’t sign my papers, I’m going to go out that door and you’ll never see me again.” She looked at me and said “Do you mean that?” I said, “Yes ma’am!” Anyway, I looked her right straight in the eye and said I would go out the door and never return. She said “All right” and told my dad to get the car out of the garage. We got in the car and went to a notary that my parents knew that owned a hardware store close by and he come out in his robe and Mother apologized. It was getting close to midnight when this happened and he notarized my papers and my mother again apologized. He said “That’s all right. I have a son in the Navy too and I understand.” On the way home, my mother was sitting in the middle in the front seat. I looked at her and she was not a very happy camper. She was very angry and she came out with these words that to this day I have never forgotten. She said, “You’ve made your bed hard, son. You’ve got to live with it. If you decide that the training is too rough and you start hollering you’re not seventeen, they’re going to contact me.

What do you think I'm going to tell them?" "I'm seventeen." "That's right. You've made your bed hard, son. You've got to sleep in it now." And with that I was not smiling. I had a terrible time sleeping that night, but the next day I took my consent papers to the Navy recruiting office which was located on the second floor of the old post office building downtown and started processing. I took a physical and when the reports started coming in, the reports of my physical examination, the person writing the report up looked at my height and said I wasn't tall enough, only 5 foot 1 ½. He said, "We'll have to talk to the doctor. So we went into a big room and the person told the doctor that I wasn't tall enough. He looked at the rest of the physical tests that I took and he asked me "You really want in, son?" I said, "Yes, sir!" He said, "All right. When you get to your boot camp, and you're marching with your company, stretch all you can so you won't look so short." Of course, the room full of people, everybody laughed. Very funny. But I weighed a sum total of 116 pounds. First year in high school, I just thought I knew everything, but I was to soon find out that I didn't know very much. I remembered my mother's words and I said "There is no way that I will ever give up on this project." Boot camp, San Diego, California. We left on December 13 or 14, 1942. I was assigned to the barracks, but I didn't get in until about 3 or 4 days later. I slept in a tent in a big field. They finally got the barracks ready. We moved into the barracks and that began our training. I had picked naval air, aerial gunner and ordnance for school and then my second pick was submarine group. Well, on the day I was supposed to get a leave then go to school, they cancelled all leaves and schools. The next thing I knew I was hauling a big old 125 pound sea bag from one end of that space to the other of San Diego

Training Station to Gate 1 where they boarded us on trucks and took us to the railroad station. Two days later, I was in San Francisco. The next morning, I was at Oakland Naval Air Station boarding the ship USS MIZAR and headed for sea. That was within a five-week period that I had left Houston to go to boot camp. Before the transfer, I had to return money home that my mother sent me and tell her I was on a training mission and didn't know when I was going to get leave. It had been cancelled, but that I would be OK. So that trip we found out after we'd been out at sea a few days, I got seasick like everybody else did and lost some more weight. They put me on a gun crew, a pointer on a 3-inch 50. We had two of them on the stern of the ship and also a 5-inch 38 on the stern, fantail, the very stern of the ship. My job was to point the gun and had another guy in training just in case we had to fight. So that was exciting for me.

Ms. McCabe: Now that was on the MIZAR?

Mr. Jenke: Yes, this is a passenger freighter that was owned by the Dole Pineapple Company that used to run pineapples and passengers between San Francisco and Hawaii. So she was a fast ship. We had two escorts that had a terrible time keeping up with us because we could do 22 knots real easy. Very good ship. Terrific captain that really knew his business. And on that little trip, I got initiated into the "Ancient Order of the Deep" going across the equator. That was exciting and fun and I had a sore rear after I got hit by those shillelaghs when I crawled out of that tank. Oh man, I tell you it was quite an experience but I became what they call a shellback, accepted into the Ancient Order of the Deep. Very exciting. One day out of Australia, we already knew where we were headed for. Word was that we were going to go to Sydney, Australia and we were attacked by a Jap sub. I was

on watch, the 4:00 to 8:00 watch. I just knew that I could hit that torpedo, he fired a torpedo at us, and I was asking permission to fire. The gun captain asked permission to fire. We never got it but about that time, the skipper made a hard right rudder and that torpedo went that-a-way and missed us. Our escort started depth-charging that durn thing. That was the day before we pulled in and that was exciting, a little scary. The day we pulled in, that morning early, I was on that watch again from 4:00 to 8:00 in the morning. About daylight we got another general quarters sound and apparently what it was was a broom going up and down and it looked like a periscope but the captain said "I'd rather go to general quarters for that than ignore it and be the real thing." Very good captain. On the way over there, we had what we called a "smoker." That's an athletic time the Navy has boxing or wrestling, in this case it was boxing. I'd done some boxing at boot camp and a little bit before I got in the Navy, Golden Gloves, and they thought I was too young. We were about 5 or 6 days out of Sydney when this happened. It was on a Sunday. Kind of back up a little bit. We had something like 890 second lieutenants in the Air Force and one of them was designated "athletic officer." So he came along and asked me if I would box in the lightweight division. I said "OK." He said "Have you ever boxed?" I said, "Yeah, I've done a little bit." Well, it's just a little fun thing. Ship's company was supposed to box the passengers. That's what I was told. It turned out that I got matched up with the guy that was my pointer on my gun crew. He was from New Orleans, Louisiana, a little Louisiana boy and he proceeded to tell me that he had fought and he would take it easy on me and all that. That went on for several days and the next thing I know, I was getting a little mad at him. Word got

around the ship--grudge match-- and I said "You know what? We're going to find out. I think you've got a big mouth." He laughed. He called me Shorty but he wasn't much taller than I was. He was a chunky guy. I sized him up really good. So I had lost a little weight, you know, from throwing up so I really did feel I was up to it. On the day of the match, it was Sunday morning and ours was the first match. We went down to the chow hall to get something to eat. The cook asked me "what do you want to eat?" I said, "Tomato juice." It's all I had. This guy ordered a steak and the cook said "yeah, I'll cook you a steak." "OK. I like it well done." I sat there and looked that and said "Um-hum. Uh-huh. Shame on you, fellow, when I get you in that ring." So there was some humor in the whole match because right in the middle of the second round, I was already working that midsection. He began to look a little green and the ship made a hard roll to starboard. Boy, we lost our balance. I missed him and we both wound up on our seats. Everybody had a big laugh. So referee pulls us up, wipes off our gloves, and we're at it again. So I started working on that midsection. I got him over in the corner in the third round. I got him over in the corner and I put about 10 right in the breadbasket. Boy he just kind of pitched forward a little bit and I come up with an uppercut. I put everything I had on his chin, upward. I stepped back and down he went. Face down. Ref counted him out. Anyway the guy, I guess it embarrassed him, he made so many statements about what he was going to do to me in the ring and I said, "Well let's see what he's got" and he was a slugger. I worked on his breadbasket, worked on that steak as much as I could. So as I stepped out of the ring, guys would put money in my trunks. Sticking money in! I didn't know it but they had bets all over the ship on our fight. They did! Two

little guys. Anyway one of the fights I had was a kid from California. I had two of them and the second one, there was a kid from Pennsylvania and right in the middle of the second round, my string broke on my trunks and they fell off. Oh I was pleading and praying “Ref, pull ‘em up please!” Everybody’s laughing. I was trying to pull those trunks up but I was so darned embarrassed, I got red in the face and all that. I couldn’t face nobody, so he pulled them up. We went to the locker and got me some more trunks. I put them on and I came out and they were still laughing and that kid said this: “Watch it, Tex, I’ll knock ‘em off of ya again!” So I said, “You didn’t do it the first time, fellow.” I didn’t look at him. I kept my cool and knocked that rascal out at the first opportunity, third round. He shouldn’t have been bragging.

Ms. McCabe: That’s right. That’s not a smart thing to do!

Mr. Jenke: Well it’s not smart and you know what, you’d think that would have been the end of that story, but it wasn’t. Years later, I’m at a café in Galena Park. I was a naval recruiter and instructor at that time. This guy went through boot camp with me on that ship. No, no, I take it back, he didn’t go with me but he remembered that incident from boot camp (the Pennsylvania lad). He started off “Remember that time, Jenke, you lost your trunks?” Everybody in that café that I knew said “What happened?” I said “I don’t have any idea what he’s talking about.” Years later! Anyway that guy kidded me about the incident.

Ms. McCabe: Oh.

Mr. Jenke: So much for boxing.

Ms. McCabe: Galena Park is G-a-l-e-n-a.

Mrs. Jenke: I worked down there - war work.

Ms. McCabe: Did you really?

Mrs. Jenke: In a gun plant – Dixon.

Ms. McCabe: Let's talk to Irma a little bit because you just brought up an interesting point.

Mr. Jenke: War work.

Ms. McCabe: That's right. What was your maiden name?

Mrs. Jenke: Evans.

Ms. McCabe: You did work in a munitions plant, is that right?

Mrs. Jenke: I graduated from high school in '43 and I went to work right away because my father died that year. I was seventeen. So he put me to work in one of his plants. He was superintendent of three munitions plants.

Ms. McCabe: That was here in Houston?

Mrs. Jenke: Yes. The one in Galena Park. We were making ninety millimeters and cannons and we were also making hundred-pound balls.

Ms. McCabe: And you were just seventeen. How long did you do that?

Mrs. Jenke: They put me in, oh I don't know, a year-and-a-half. They shuffled me between one plant and another. The other plant was making seventy-five millimeter shells and hundred-and-fives. They had several government contracts. I worked a lot of different machinery. I worked at the Dixon plant, that was off of Clinton Drive, close to town, and it was for Long Reach Machine Works, that was the name of both of the places. It was Anderson Clayton Company. They were cotton compress people until the war started and then they went wartime work.

Ms. McCabe: Yes, big-time.

Mrs. Jenke: Since I was so young and didn't know a thing about machinery, they put me doing a lot of different jobs and in my spare time, I tried to get my hands on the

machinery, because I loved it. I just loved it. At the Brainhart Plant, they made me a company inspector. I put the tube with a fluorescent light on it down the gun barrels and looked at the rifling to be sure it was perfect. If it wasn't perfect, if it had a little black dot in it, it was up to me to reject it. If I didn't do that, there was a possibility of the thing blowing and losing men so I took my job real serious and I didn't mind rejecting things. After me, then another inspector would come along and check my work, so each barrel got inspected twice.

Ms. McCabe: This is one of those amazing stories that you come across where the husband served in the war and the wife or future wife was back home making munitions to keep those men...

Mrs. Jenke: We had to wear bandanas because girls were getting their long hair caught in the machinery and they were scalped. We had to go to work with bandanas.

Ms. McCabe: Almost all the pictures I see of women in the factories ...

Mrs. Jenke: That's the reason.

Ms. McCabe: It was the hair getting caught, not because of the heat or sweat.

Mrs. Jenke: We had several girls who got their hair caught in the machines.

Ms. McCabe: Oh!

Mrs. Jenke: There were years when I had married, I worked at the Pantex Ordnance Plant where they packed these thousand-pound bombs with TNT. The chemicals in the air from that would cause hair to turn very red. We had bandanas if it was exposed to the air. So all of the men and women had to dress totally in white and the hair had to be completely covered, anything that stuck out turned orange.

Ms. McCabe: Because of the chemicals.

Mrs. Jenke: Yes.

Ms. McCabe: Well back to Mr. Jenke. Where were we? Now you are in Sydney.

Mr. Jenke: Yes, Sydney, and I was there, we stayed at a racetrack about sixty miles from Sydney called Ascot Downs and once again, I slept in a pup tent. We were there for three weeks and I was able to go into the city on weekends. This is where I learned to jitterbug and won the dance contest. People were very friendly, very open, the Australians.

Mrs. Jenke: Questions to Jenke.

Ms. McCabe: Swing.

Mr. Jenke: Even today, they remember us. They have never forgotten us.

Ms. McCabe: I have heard nothing but good things about Australia from all the veterans.

Mr. Jenke: They served with us then and still are serving with us today. The two countries are still as brothers and sisters. They are so much like us, many Irish there.

Ms. McCabe: Very good allies. They have always been.

Mr. Jenke: Very good. I can expound a little bit on that. Because of the Japanese invasion fleet were coming in the Coral Sea, known as the Coral Sea battle, they intentionally went to the Bay of Australia. American naval units along with Australian units had stopped them. The battle itself, the Battle of Coral Sea, this is where the aircraft carrier SHOKAKU was damaged, by the way, by some of our ships. She was the one that was involved in the bombing of Pearl Harbor and later was sunk by the CAVALLA in 1944. So the Aussies have always been very grateful to the American forces for stopping the Japanese there from invading their country. I had the Australians tell me that the ruling English, who was King George at that time, they had what they called the Brisbane Line. The Aussies told me this. This is something I didn't know. They were going to let the

Japanese invade that part of Australia including the Brisbane area, the city itself. We stopped them so it didn't happen. They have always been grateful for that and not very happy with the monarchy for that.

Ms. McCabe: Well I don't blame them.

Mr. Jenke: The old timers remember that. They don't forget.

Ms. McCabe: My goodness.

Mr. Jenke: They don't forget who their friends were. They are still very high with Americans over there.

Ms. McCabe: That's wonderful.

Mr. Jenke: We have a really wonderful relationship with those people. They are very much like us and we like very much the same things. We introduced coffee to them and they, tea to us, hot tea that is. Note: My son, Clifford, serving on a guided missile destroyer, visited Brisbane and was shown a great time by the Aussies.

Ms. McCabe: Nice people.

Mr. Jenke: Those are the things you remember.

Ms. McCabe: OK. You told us about your training. Now you're in Australia. How did you end up in the submarine corps rather than like in the air force part of it that you wanted?

Mr. Jenke: Brisbane Submarine Squadron "8" and base and dry dock. Well, I stayed three weeks in Sydney and I was put on a train and 600 miles later, I was in Brisbane. I was taken by truck over to a base and there's where I saw the submarine tender USS FULTON. Out of curiosity, I spent the night on the FULTON. I slung my hammock between two stanchions on the port side. The port side was a beautiful sight. There was something like ten submarines in there next to the FULTON.

The sun just set. I said, "Boy look at that." The next day I went on base and I wanted to learn to be an electrician like I told somebody a year before that I would volunteer for submarine duty and be an electrician. I didn't realize that that was the hardest, toughest rate in the whole submarine navy but I tell you, I got a job to work on engines and generators. But onboard a submarine, you have to learn to do everything. That's the difference between a submarine sailor and a regular service guy, much more to learn. You learn the other guy's job. You learn to depend on each other to know that job. That's the difference. Anyway, shortly after arriving at Brisbane, I became captain's orderly. I questioned the commanding officer, Capt. Day, about submarine duty. He was an old submariner. So I had another friend of mine, that I went through boot camp with, a guy by the name of Robert McDonald. He was from Georgetown, Texas so we decided to volunteer for submarine duty. And on the FULTON was the young man that I hoped I would find, my boyhood friend, a guy by the name of Ray Cole. He had missed FULTON commissioning about three days in 1941. His mother and my mother were very close friends so when I wrote home and told her that I had seen him, she couldn't believe it. So we volunteered for submarine duty. After volunteering, of course we had to take a physical, put in a pressure tank on the FULTON, some 50 pounds under pressure, hold our breath and checked us physically. Couldn't find any problems so "OK, you're qualified physically." Asked you a bunch of questions to see how you reacted to them. Then they put us in what they called relief crew to be assigned to a submarine. We were in there about two weeks and got assigned to the USS SCAMP.

Ms. McCabe: The SCAMP is S-C-A-M-P and that was USS SCAMP SS-277.

Mr. Jenke: 277. That was the hull number.

Ms. McCabe: Now as I understood it, submarine service was totally voluntary.

Mr. Jenke: Totally voluntary.

Ms. McCabe: Just out of curiosity, did they even ask you guys if you could swim or did they train you to swim if you didn't know how to swim?

Mr. Jenke: We had swimming tests in boot camp. We passed.

Ms. McCabe: Oh you did.

Mr. Jenke: That was part of the training. I had been swimming since I was about seven years old anyway so I could swim.

Ms. McCabe: I was just curious. I had heard a couple of stories from Navy guys and they said they did not know how to swim when they were assigned to ships.

Mr. Jenke: I don't know how they got that because we got swimming tests in boot camp. I can't imagine today thinking about it how much they crammed in the five weeks I was there. They crammed a whole lot. Hooo! We marched to the Main Gate 1 which was a pretty good ways from where we were berthed to a little town of La Jolla. It's a little ways from San Diego. We marched over there. There's a big swimming pool there in that little town and we took our swimming test. We learned how to survive if we had been shipwrecked, to make a life preserver by taking our pants off, tying the other end and putting it over our head and catching air and making a float out of it. We learned how to swim underneath the water, when burning fuel or oil would be on the water. That's another part of our lesson. If you passed all that, you passed your swimming test.

Ms. McCabe: Oh.

Mr. Jenke: That's what I heard about our swimming test.

Ms. McCabe: That's good to know.

Mr. Jenke: I have had guys tell me too. I said "How did you get through boot camp with that swimming test?" They said "They passed me." So we didn't know how these guys did it, but they didn't know how to swim. I couldn't imagine anybody joining the Navy and not being able to swim.

Ms. McCabe: Or not saying something to somebody to learn because...

Mr. Jenke: Not trying to learn. That was some of the requirements. In fact they were saying when the brave crew got assigned to the SCAMP a buddy of mine named Robert McDonald from Georgetown...

Ms. McCabe: Is he the one that you said he was also underage?

Mr. Jenke: Yes, he was also fifteen years old. In fact my birthday is in February and his is in April so there was just that much difference in our age but he was a lot bigger than I was. Incidentally he did stay in the Navy and spent thirty years in the Navy, twenty years on submarines.

Ms. McCabe: What happened now that you're on the SCAMP?

Mr. Jenke: We got our assignment for our first war patrol. Ours was the Solomons and the Carolinas, seek and destroy any Japanese ships. On our first patrol, sank I-24 Jap submarine, 2800 tons, a big one. Any time you fire a torpedo, you can always expect some kind of action out of the Japanese. In this case they were destroyers and they tried to work you over real good and you paid a real price for what you did. That's the idea. "Seek out and destroy" was our mission. When we came back, for the first few days on that patrol and I finally learned the electric system. I knew sooner or later I was going to put engines online. Speaking about engines, those engines drove generators (4) and we had four. From this we energized our

main motors by a maneuvering board which had a bunch of, we called them sticks, which are actually like switches, transfer power of our batteries to the main motors. We had two motors on each shaft. We had one motor direct to shaft, ahead reduction gear, ahead main motor, another motor to turn that on both sides. 1650 horsepower each. I guess that I can say something in fact right now. We went from the magnificent speed of zero to nine knots submerged with those batteries. The thing about that is I had to tend those and make sure they would come up to full charge and would have to have what we called spiking each cell with distilled water -- put it in a cell to keep charging to make sure we could come up to specifications. That was a very hot job. There were 126 cells in each compartment. One cell weighed something like 1650 pounds. So you can figure 126 times that. The after battery was located underneath the crew's quarters. The other group of batteries, located forward in the officers' quarters, was the forward battery. One hundred twenty-six cells in each compartment -- 252 cells total. But those batteries had a lot of capacity so we could cruise that big baby something like 9 knots submerged. So it took some power to push it through carrying fuel, torpedoes and everything, but that's what it took. My other jobs that I was involved with besides batteries, the gyro compass, small motors, lighting motor generators. That was the dirtiest part of being an electrician on a submarine. It's all direct current -- went from 240 volt dc for our main power. We could make 24 knots on surface and decent sea.

Ms. McCabe: So here you were 15 years old trying to learn the electrical system of a submarine.

Mr. Jenke: That's correct.

Ms. McCabe: That is amazing.

Mr. Jenke: You do what you have to do. I had some very good teachers on that. In fact my boss and first-class electrician was a graduate of MIT. He had a double E. He had a master's degree in electrical engineering. He was my mentor, my teacher. He not only taught me theory, he also taught me how to be a better electrician.

Ms. McCabe: My word.

Mr. Jenke: I turned sixteen just about the time I got assigned to the SCAMP. I was sixteen years old. That guy looked at all that and said "We're robbing the cradle!" The first few days out, we piped in Tokyo Rose on the intercom system. That woman made me shiver and scared the living daylights out of me. I said, "My. How did she know we're here?" He said, "Don't pay attention to that. She plays good music." "Yeah, but she named the boat." "It's nothing. Don't let her bother you." She started playing all this latest music from the States. That didn't seem too good. Scared the hell out of me, thinking about old Tokyo Rose, but after a while you get used to it. Come to find out later, I think she went to the University of California in Berkeley.

Ms. McCabe: Oh.

Mr. Jenke: Perfect English. Boy she could put it on us. "Boys, what are you thinking about this? Those guys that are going with your girlfriends back home? Don't you wish you were home with her instead of this other guy?" maybe some soldier or some 4F or some guy. Boy she put it on thick.

Ms. McCabe: A lot of propaganda.

Mr. Jenke: That was Tokyo Rose and, you know, after listening to her for about two years, I got to thinking that I always had that deep feeling that she was telling us something, some of the things she'd say. To sum it up, I'll always believe that,

even today. When they brought her back to the States, they were supposed to try her in Chicago, last I heard, I always said she wasn't going to be tried. She disappeared from history.

Ms. McCabe: So you really think...

Mr. Jenke: They never tried to execute her or anything. They were supposed to try her and all that stuff, try her for treason and so forth. I don't know what ever happened to that. I don't think anything. She just went into oblivion and I thought to myself, "Thank you, Tokyo Rose. You never hurt me but you sure played a lot of good music."

Ms. McCabe: That's interesting. I've never heard that before.

Mr. Jenke: I always thought some things she was saying might have been helping us out.

Ms. McCabe: I never realized that.

Mr. Jenke: I had to think about that a pretty good while. Anyway I appreciated the music.

Ms. McCabe: Now I understand that your friend, you had a superior officer starting to question your age, and you and your friend were getting a little nervous about that.

Mr. Jenke: Yes, this is after our third patrol run out of Brisbane. It was kind of a bad one. We took a beating up in the Solomons. The forward torpedo room was flooding and one of our shipmates, "Dutch" Dalwitz, stopped the flooding, almost drowned, earned the Navy Cross. So anyway we made it back and my buddy was talking about "Let's get off the boat. Let's get off a while." I said "Man, it's a good boat. Besides we might go back to the States." So that went on for about two weeks. I said "OK." Now when we first got back, the skipper called us aside and says "If I had a couple of birth certificates, I bet I could send a couple of guys off the boat." I looked around and said "Who would that be?" (laughter) "Don't

give me that, Jenke. You know who I'm talking about." I said "Well is there anything wrong with my work, Captain?" He said, "No, don't give me that. I have to think about it. All right. Carry on." That friend of mine said "Let's get off." I said, "Is that the reason why you wanted to get off?" He said, "No, I have a feeling." So we both left. I found out later the SCAMP went back to the States. I was not a happy camper. My boyhood friend, Ray Cole, volunteered for sub duty, was assigned to the USS CISCO and went on patrol. I got a letter from home and my mother said his mother had not heard from him so I started checking. This guy here, radioman that went down on the SCAMP, Abad RM2C, I got him to check on the CISCO. He said they hadn't reported in, "presumed overdue." I couldn't say what was going on and I wouldn't. If you tried to say something, they'd censor you and chew you out. That happened to me already because I said a little bit too much and I got pulled in and chewed out. I said "Well Tokyo Rose..." "It doesn't matter what Tokyo Rose does, it's what you do, fellow." That's what it is. He said "Nobody you got a lot to learn to look like a swiss cheese" (laughter) So he said "Here, we got a complaint from the Red Cross that your mother hasn't heard from you in two months." I said "Oh my god." He said "You write some letters and give them to a friend on base. You write some letters ahead when we go out on runs and you get him to mail one about every four or five days" and that's all it took. So Mama would get a letter so she wouldn't contact the Red Cross. My buddy's mother had already contacted the Red Cross. Finally before we got off of the SCAMP I asked about the CISCO again. He stayed on the boat. He was our radioman. Abad was Armenian or something. He was kind of a quiet guy, but I liked him. He said, "Jenke, I can't

tell you anything. CISCO is overdue. The boat's gone." He said "What's this guy to you?" "He's my boyhood friend. His mother and my mother are close and I can't tell her anything because it's censored." So he said "That's all I can tell you." I said "Well, what am I going to tell Mama?" So the MIZAR comes in. In the meantime, I got one of the other guys asking and I said to a MIZAR crewman, "Do me a favor. When you get back to the States, call my mother collect and tell her I'm still training and I'm fine. I'm just fine." He looked at me and kind of laughed. "You know, you're green." I said "Well, I'm learning how to be a submariner, to be a better electrician." He said "OK." "Tell her about my friend, Ray Cole. I don't know, he could be captured. The boat is overdue and presumed lost at this point, but they could be captured. This could happen. We don't know and probably won't know until this thing is over with." But here's the irony of it all, I found out after the war that the boat was lost in the Sulu Sea and this is where we operated on. The Sulu Sea is part of the patrol of the DACE and the DARTER so we were probably in the same area where his boat was lost.

Ms. McCabe: Oh my goodness.

Mr. Jenke: Never knew it. That's one of those things. Anyway the SCAMP went back to the States. She came back down under a new skipper. My old skipper, Ebert, left the boat and she made two boat patrols and got beat up awful bad on the seventh, let's see, the seventh patrol, and she was on her eighth, November 9, 1944 when she was lost in the Sea of Japan with her crew, many of my friends and shipmates including my radio friend "Abad."

Mrs. Jenke: Tell her about these patrols.

Mr. Jenke: I helped get him under way. What was so strange about that parting, I had a real funny feeling that there was something around him as they pulled away. He was standing there waving until they got around the bend, there was a bend in the river where our base was at, made a turn about a mile or so down. I could see him waving as they got around the bend of the river out to the Coral Sea, further west of there for their patrol area. I had just the strangest feeling about that parting. I had no idea I was seeing my boyhood friend for the last time. Anyway, those are the things that happened and what's so bad about that situation, Ray Cole left here, I think in June 1941 with a fellow out of our neighborhood. We weren't even in the war. I never could figure out why he never got a boot leave. He got assigned to the FULTON AS-11 as it was commissioned at Mare Island, California because it was big and could handle a lot of the large equipment and do a lot of service on submarines or any ship as far as that goes. It was equipped with a machine shop, big cranes, and all kind of things, well-equipped. So they went to be part of the crew. When the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor, they were in the Panama Canal setting up a seaplane base. From there they were ordered to San Diego where they picked up a bunch of crewmen, replacement crewmen for ships and planes. Some of them were for the aircraft carrier, the LEXINGTON, and how I know that is, one of our VFW members was scheduled to go to the LEXINGTON and he got appendicitis at Pearl Harbor when he got off the FULTON and they kept him there. The bunch that went out on the LEXINGTON was lost at the Battle of the Coral Sea. How about that for luck? Anyway, we stayed around Brisbane for a while, then we were assigned to the DACE, USS DACE, and we stayed on her for the rest of the war.

Ms. McCabe: Her hull number is USS 247?

Mr. Jenke: USS 247, that's correct.

Ms. McCabe: So you were training as an electrician. What did you think of the clothing and the equipment? Do you think you had proper clothing? Do you think the weapons and the equipment you had to work with were "up to snuff"?

Mr. Jenke: Everything was with the exception of torpedoes. At the beginning of the war, our boys went to sea with World War I torpedoes. We had the very best. One would be amazed at how much is put inside a submarine to make it functional. The leadership we had, the leadership was above reproach. It made me real proud to be a part of that, a part of the Navy. We had such bad torpedoes, not working properly, the gyros would go crazy, so the complaints were coming in right and left throughout the fleet to the Bureau of Ordnance about the bad torpedoes. The submarine force, it's amazing that they were able to sink anything during the years '42 and '43. We did have some bad torpedoes on the SCAMP which deprived our skipper of some good targets on patrol runs, but at the outset of 1944, we got a new torpedo, called a Mark 18. This was battery driven which was a blessing because you couldn't see it coming through the water. The others were either steam driven or air driven and you could see the darn things coming, but these you couldn't. They were almost perfect. Sometimes the gyros went crazy there and they did a circular run. Shame on you if you were on the surface because you were gone. That happened, killed a lot of folks but that came later. The Mark 18 had a big warhead because we carried them on the DACE very successfully.

Ms. McCabe: The old torpedoes, was it just that they kept going off course or did they explode too soon?

Mr. Jenke: Well, they'd hit the target and the exploder mechanism was not working right so they solved that problem at Pearl Harbor. I don't know what boat or what crew but it was one of the boat's crews that stayed there at Pearl and tested until they figured out what was wrong. It was a pin in the exploder mechanism that wasn't working right. They got one that did work but still Washington, D.C. was blaming our skippers for miscalculations and everything, which was totally wrong. It didn't happen. We had some real good skippers so finally two of these guys went to Washington and got in their faces with evidence and that solved it. Once that was done, they came out with another one called "a cutie," Mark 27, propellers or screws, knock them out, finish them off with the big torpedoes. So that was experimental, but that seemed to work quite well for the guys that carried them.

Ms. McCabe: What campaigns were you in, in the Pacific?

Mr. Jenke: Well, the Solomons, the Carolinas, the Philippines. Those are the major battles that we were involved. Two in the Philippines, a total of eight battles in all. Night patrols, eight successful patrols. We lost 52 boats sunk. Some thirteen ships and about sixty-seven thousand tons altogether. Some of the other boats sunk more than that, a lot more than that. That was about it there.

Ms. McCabe: You also performed lifeguard duty for rescuing downed pilots, is that right?

Mr. Jenke: Yes, that's true. The DACE was never assigned any lifeguard duty. A bunch of them were, like the FINBACK, for instance, that rescued our future President, George Bush, who was shot down off an island called Chichi Jima off the

Japanese coast somewhere. The FINBACK picked him up. The TANG picked up a bunch of them when we were invading the Marianas. That was another campaign, the Marianas Islands. In fact, speaking about the Marianas, this is where the CAVALLA, sitting down in Galveston, sunk the aircraft carrier SHOKAKU, the one I mentioned earlier, one of those aircraft carriers whose planes bombed Pearl Harbor. She had planes on the deck ready to take off when she got hit. CAVALLA put six torpedoes in her and then another Japanese aircraft carrier in that task force, I forgot the name of the other boat, ALBACORE, and she got six torpedoes put into her so I don't think that they launched any airplanes off of those two carriers. So God knows how many lives were saved by sinking those two carriers.

Ms. McCabe: Oh absolutely.

Mr. Jenke: They'll never know. Like MacArthur will never know how he was saved at Leyte by sinking those two Jap cruisers. Never know. He got there ahead of everybody while we (DACE & DARTER) were chasing a large Jap task force heading for Leyte. We sank two Jap cruisers, the MAYA (DACE) and the ATAGO (DARTER). The ATAGO carried Kurita, the Jap commander. Kurita was saved and taken back to Japan. He was injured.

Ms. McCabe: Did you have any close calls during the war?

Mr. Jenke: Every time!

Ms. McCabe: Every time was a close call. I can imagine. That would be so scary.

Mr. Jenke: Some depth charges were worse than others, but they were all bad. I guess I could describe one for you. You see your whole past coming up in front of you within seconds. You just sit there, afraid to breathe. Your heart is pounding. Inside of

the boat is lined with cork, to take up the sweat, the moisture, and make it more comfortable. We had fluorescent lights. They would bust and put glass all over the place. Sometimes you'd take a deep breath. Like I was telling you, the SCAMP had forward rooms that started flooding. Dutch Dalwitz, he's a character. He's the guy that stopped the fire and flooding. One man! The skipper recommended him for the Navy Cross. It was unusual for an enlisted man to receive the Navy Cross, but he received it. He was fussing about it that day. Everybody knew him. Anyway when the A-bomb was dropped on the 6th we were looking for a freighter that was heading the coast of Japan. Word came down that a big bomb had been dropped--an "atomic bomb." I said, "What's an atomic bomb?" Then we got word that only the people were supposed to have been killed by the bomb. Over 100,000. Hiroshima. That was hard to believe. Then we got word of the second bomb. Nagasaki. This thing should be over with. Close to 200,000 killed. But they had to take the punch completely out of the Japanese. It did. Even then they had some diehards that wanted to continue on fighting, but they figured that if that hadn't been done, if we'd have had to fight on land, raid the Japanese homeland, that was going to be very costly. They thought we'd have lost a million men in that particular battle. They would have fought to the end. Over one million of our guys would be lost. The Japanese emperor stopped it. They had enough!

Ms. McCabe: I'm sure.

Mr. Jenke: On Okinawa, for instance, they fought for all they were worth. Close to 100,000. They lost a bunch of people at Okinawa, so that was a big turning point.

Ms. McCabe: What decorations did you earn during the war? Honors?

Mr. Jenke: I was a crewman, main power electrician, not a hero. There is one that's the biggest thing that any submarine sailor got, the Submarine Combat Award, first successful war patrol. Then after that when you made another one you received the Gold Stars in lieu of 1st award. That was my medal. The campaigns were American theater of war, Asiatic Pacific, eight stars. Some people came back with eight stars. Then there was the Philippine Liberation Campaign. Pacific World War II Victory Medal.

Mrs. Jenke: What do the stars indicate?

Mr. Jenke: Battles. They are battle stars. On the Combat Pin, these are successful war patrols. Silver stars for additional successful war patrols. When it was announced that it was over, and I thought "well, I hope it is, so now we can come home." It was hard to believe, we now could have the lights topside, without worrying about some plane coming in on us, but still we were very cautious, didn't throw caution to the winds. I finally took the DACE back to the States, got off, was at Mare Island and then was sent to Santa Fe, Texas. This was a Navy boot camp that was turned into a separation center and became a Navy separations office.

Ms. McCabe: This was in 1945.

Mr. Jenke: Yes, November 22, 1945. So that's World War II. I was one of the fortunate ones to be back. It took me a long time to figure out why when so many guys didn't. So I said "Well, there's another reason why not." It is very difficult to talk about any of this. It's been a lot of years. I had told myself "Somebody has to know something about the history at that time." So it's all about the experiences.

Ms. McCabe: That's true.

Mr. Jenke: The worst part of that was the death. I tell you there were some awful good men, and we had some good equipment. If it hadn't been for the American people putting out the good equipment, we couldn't have won that war. Once the American people got geared up to do the things that were needed, then it was just a matter of going out and doing them. I'd like to thank the American people for their time and sacrifices that they made to give us the best.

Ms. McCabe: That's a very nice comment to make and that's so true. That was from the grassroots on up to you guys in the field. It was a total effort.

Mr. Jenke: Did we answer all your questions?

Ms. McCabe: I think so. If there are any events or incidences that you want to add...

Mr. Jenke: I can say that I am proud to serve in the greatest Submarine Navy and Navy that the world has ever known. Even today, it's still the greatest and I'll sign off with that.

Ms. McCabe: Thank you, sir.

Ms. McCabe: OK. Talking about lifeguard duty of the rescue...

Mr. Jenke: The submarine force that was involved with lifeguard duty and rescuing downed flyers on missions amount to 550 rescues—550 flyers that were able to live another day because of the submarine force being on lifeguard duty, picking them up after their planes were disabled or had been shot down. Above all, besides doing this type of missions, the submarines were able to supply the guerillas in the

Philippines, rescue children, nuns, women, from those islands, did a lot of guerilla warfare, landed commandoes, rescued commandoes after they had completed their mission.

Mrs. Jenke: Tell about the train.

Mr. Jenke: Yes. A shipmate of mine, I was with after the war, was on the USS BARB and he volunteered to be part of the group that would put explosives on a bridge going over to an island that had radar off the Japanese coast. They put explosives on the railroad and when the train came over, blew the train into the water. This was at night and the BARB steamed by the area and fired her guns and knocked out the radar station. The Japanese started following and they started firing. They didn't realize that the submarine was so low, so instead of hitting the submarine, they hit each other. There were five men involved in this, and this guy was one of them and the skipper recommended them for a Silver Star for being crazy, I guess.

Mrs. Jenke: That's why it takes young people to do that.

Ms. McCabe: It does. It does.

Mr. Jenke: I guess the young don't know any better. "Oh, yeah, let's try it." I know that one of the patrols on the SCAMP, we picked up some "Fuzzy Wazzies" after their mission was complete and took them back to Brisbane. They were attached to the Australian army. They would go on special missions for us Allies. They were no more than about 5 feet tall, no more than about 125 pounds, but they were very strong, very durable. What they would do, they would land on different islands that the Japanese held and get information for us, what ships were coming in, how many, what they were carrying and pass that information on to especially the submarine force so our boys could be waiting for them and destroy them as they

came out of the harbor or went into it with a landing force. One particular incident was at Rabaul that I knew about. We had a job of picking up these little guys and bringing them back to Australia. They had already done their work, got information out to the submarine force. They wanted to prove that they were warriors back home, to bring something that was proof. This particular night, as I was told, I wasn't there, I was down below. One our young ensigns that supervised the bringing aboard the Fuzzy Wazzies and Australians, noticed that they were holding a bunch of sacks, kind of red looking. So this ensign, Brown I think was his name, it's been so long, asked the Australian captain, said "what do you have in those sacks?" So he said something to the Aborigine that spoke the language and the little guy said "Japanese head." About that time, Mr. Brown got sick. He was ordered to go down below and one of the chiefs took over the operation and brought these men aboard so they had to negotiate that everybody would swear up and down that these were warriors and they did all this and that and the other. So there was still more negotiating so they agreed just to bring one ear. This is for real. So I think somebody came up with a bunch of cotton and things like that, put it in cotton and maybe a pillbox or something. Took them down to the refrigerator room to keep them cold so they wouldn't deteriorate. So when they got back into port, they were able to get these things and take them to their friends and show them. That was payback to the Japanese. The Japanese were really cruel to their people and they wanted to show that they got back at the Japanese. They did. They were to go on patrol on their own, and they carried these, looked like a foot-long, razor sharp jungle knives with them. They'd wait for a Jap patrol to come and all of a sudden, that old Jap patrol would just sort of

disappear. Then they'd come on back. This was their payment and they had the biggest smile with a bunch of teeth. They couldn't say a word in English except maybe one thing but I won't elaborate on that. Anyway it was kind of sad to me that these men were never recognized for their work. They took a lot of chances for us. They were never recognized. I told people years later they were from New Guinea. I'll never forget these brave lads. I pray they had a good long life (1943-44).

Ms. McCabe: How nice.

Mr. Jenke: They were happy type people when they were away from us. When they were around us, they were just as happy to be around us because they knew how we treated them. We had a lot of respect and admiration for those men that took the chances. The Japs didn't have any idea, because they couldn't tell the difference when they were working down at the docks from anybody else. They all looked the same to them. It was a big plus for us. Another bunch of people that risked their lives were the coast watchers. They would observe Japanese movements. They had a radio. So these people did a whole lot, but they have been recognized, I think, here. I met a couple of them at a symposium we had in Fredericksburg a few years back. We had a couple of Japanese officers there telling about their part of the war. We had a lot of the bigwigs there attending that symposium and we had all four Medal of Honor skippers: Dick O'Kane was still alive, Pete Ramage, George Street, and Gene Fluckey, commanded boats, all the recipients. We had all of them and another guy that was real controversial, wrote several books, I can't think of his name right now. Run Silent, Run Deep was one of the books he wrote and they made a movie out of it. Skipper, USS GROWLER.

Ms. McCabe: Yes, I've seen that.

Mr. Jenke: He passed away not too long ago. He was asking those Japanese officers, especially one of them. He was in charge of a kaiten group which supposedly rode torpedoes to a target and he accused this group of sinking the INDIANAPOLIS, one of our cruisers which was sunk there in the early part of 1945. That's another story there. My mother always thought it was a big foul-up for the Navy, letting a ship like that in waters which were still enemy waters and with no escort. That's what they did with the INDIANAPOLIS. The Japanese sub sunk it and these two Japanese officers were there. One of them was a sub skipper and the other one wasn't. He was in charge of kaitens. He finally convinced him, said "The kaitens did not sink the INDIANAPOLIS." Captain Ed Beach was a retired captain. He was accusing them.

Ms. McCabe: Oh my goodness.

Mr. Jenke: Captain Ed Beach. Run Silent, Run Deep.

Ms. McCabe: That was a good one.

Mr. Jenke: Part of that was taken, you know when they rammed the ship, when the skipper was killed, that was supposed to have been the GROWLER. It didn't say so in the movie but it was the GROWLER. She was one of the Brisbane boats. In fact they tied her up next to us when they came in, her whole bow was turned to the port side. I got a picture of that. The Aussies put on a new bow, put the kangaroo up on the bow, painted on both sides. They were real proud of that boat. They put on a new bow and put that kangaroo back on the side. All three of the boats that we lost the 7th, 8th, and 9th of November. We lost the ALBACORE, the GROWLER, and the SCAMP, in '44, all three Brisbane boats. I think our boats

did a number on Japanese and German shipping. The submarine tender FULTON took care and services to the submarine service. We had a squadron in Scotland, too. They sank German and Italian shipping. So we were in a lot of places.

Ms. McCabe: That is amazing.

Mr. Jenke: Basically that really didn't give tribute to Fuzzy Wazzies and coast watchers who risked it all to help us.

Ms. McCabe: I've heard good things about that.

Mr. Jenke: I guess I'll conclude my story with that.

Mr. Jenke: This little incident when I was at the old age of 17 and we were on the base (Saipan). We had a little baseball game over there on an area that overlooked one of the harbors there. I noticed a bunch of little kids that apparently had never seen a bunch of guys playing baseball so I got the idea "wouldn't it be nice to give them some ice cream" so a couple of guys went to the FULTON and got a big can of ice cream with a bunch of bowls and spoons, came back there and gave the kids bowls and stuck a spoonful in their mouth. Oh man, he dove into it. I said "All right, I want you to line up." The first time the little children ever had any ice cream. They loved it. I was sitting there talking to someone and taught them to sing "The Eyes of Texas." One of them kept looking at me and smiling and he finally stood up and pointed at me and said "Baby - Baby." They said "Yeah, that's our baby." I said "Oh, knock it off." I was an old man of 17. That was a real remembrance, seeing that little kid's face. I can't imagine being 17.

Mrs. Jenke: A hundred years ago.

Mr. Jenke: Yeah, a hundred years ago.

Prologue: 10/22/08

Finished this life story of the time served US Navy 1942 – 1945.

It was an honor to have served with such special men and meet the great people of Australia.

I and many others of my age group were the “MinuteMen” of the 20th century.

A life-fulfilling time.

Clifford Richard Jenke

FINAL

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