

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

THE NIMITZ MUSEUM

PRESENTS

AN ORAL HISTORY BY

JAMES W. FISHER

INTERVIEWER - ED METZLER

TAPE NUMBER 1113

TODAY IS APRIL 28, 2004. I AM INTERVIEWING MR. JIM FISHER. THIS INTERVIEW IS TAKING PLACE IN FREDERICKSBURG TEXAS AT THE NIMITZ MUSEUM, THIS INTERVIEW IS IN SUPPORT OF THE T CENTER FOR PACIFIC WAR STUDIES, ARCHIVES FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR, TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE INFORMATION RELATING TO THIS SITE.

ED.

JIM, LET ME START BY THANKING YOU FOR SPENDING TIME AWAY FROM YOUR GROUP TO GIVE US THIS INSIGHT INTO YOUR EXPERIENCES. LET ME ASK YOU TO START BY STATING AGAIN WHO YOU ARE, WHERE YOU WERE BORN, SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR FAMILY AND THEN WE WILL GET TO WHAT YOUR EXPERIENCES WERE DURING THE CONFLICT.

JIM

MY NAME IS JAMES W. FISHER AS I STATED. I WAS BORN IN WITT COUNTY VIRGINIA. MY MOTHER PASSED AWAY SHORTLY AFTER MY BIRTH AND I WAS RAISED BY FOSTER PARENTS. I WENT INTO THE NAVY IN ROANOKE, VIRGINIA. I SIGNED UP IN '38 BUT THERE WAS A WAITING LIST IN THOSE DAYS.

ED

HAD YOU GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL AT THAT POINT?

JIM

NO. I GRADUATED AT THAT TIME.

ED

HOW OLD WERE YOU?

JIM

THAT'S BEEN A MYSTERY DISCUSSED OVER THE YEARS. SOME REASON, I USED TO----- YOU ASKED WHERE I WAS AT. THERE WAS A STREAM RAN THROUGH THAT PLACE. I USED TO WALK THAT THING AND I KNEW IT CAME OUT IN THE GULF SOMEPLACE. I JUST WANTED TO BE IN THE NAVY, THAT'S ALL. ALL OF MY FRIENDS AT THE TIME THAT I KNEW OF HAD BEEN NAVY. SOMETHING INBRED IN ME.

ED

THEY FINALLY LET YOU IN. THAT RIGHT?

JIM

YES, AS I SAID, THERE WAS A WAITING LIST. I WENT TO ROANOKE AND THEY STILL HAD A BIG WAITING LIST. THEY WERE TAKING ONLY ONE OR TWO A MONTH IN THOSE DAYS AND WAS OUT OF 4 OR

5 STATE AREA AND COUNTIES WITHIN THOSE AREAS. FINALLY, WHEN THEY WOULDN'T CALL ME , I WENT DOWN AND TOLD THEM I WANTED TO GET IN. IF THEY WEREN'T GOING TO TAKE ME---- THIS IS BOASTFUL TO SAY THE LEAST, I TOLD THEM I HAD A POSITION WHICH HAD BEEN TENDERED ME IN CALIFORNIA, I WAS GOING TO TAKE THAT. OF COURSE, THAT WAS FALSEHOOD. I WANTED TO GET IN THE NAVY, BUT IT WORKED.

THEY GAVE ME A TEN DAY NOTICE. I WAS SENT FROM ROANOKE TO RICHMOND AND WAS SWORN IN ON THE 7TH OF FEBRUARY, 1939. I WENT THROUGH MY TRAINING IN NORFOLK. JUST SO HAPPENED THAT WE WERE GUINEA PIGS; THE COMPANY THAT I WAS IN, THEY OBVIOUSLY KNEW THE WAR WAS COMING OR SUSPECTED IT WAS. THEY KNOCKED OUT A NUMBER OF COURSES THAT THEY WERE TEACHING AT THAT TIME. OURS WAS ACCELERATED. I GOT OUT IN 2 OR 3 WEEKS EARLIER THAT I NORMALLY WOULD HAVE. THEN I WENT ABOARD THE *PHILLIPS*. I WANTED TO GO TO SEA. I DIDN'T TRY TO GET INTO A SERVICE SCHOOL.

ED

WHAT KIND OF SHIP WAS THE *PHILLIPS*?

JIM

THE *PHILLIPS* WAS DESTROYER. MY SHIP WAS THE *USS SHAW* AND SHE WAS THE ONE THAT WAS SUNK AT PEARL HARBOR. SHE IS THE ONE WHERE YOU SEE THIS BIG PLUME OF SMOKE AND FIRE. MOST PEOPLE THINK THAT IS THE *ARIZONA*. THAT'S NOT TRUE. THAT WAS THE *SHAW*. WE WILL GET TO THAT LATER.

I WENT ABOARD THE *PHILLIPS* AND THEY WERE ON WHAT THEY CALLED A "PROBLEM 21". THE NAVY HAD A TRAINING EXERCISE EVERY YEAR AND THEY WERE NUMBERED. I WAS ABOARD THE *PHILLIPS* AND WENT DOWN TO THE PANAMA AND HAITI AND SPENT A FEW DAYS THERE. TO TOOK US SO LONG TO GET THROUGH THE CANAL. I RODE THE *PHILLIPS* ON TO SAN DIEGO WHERE I PICKED UP THE SHIP THAT I WAS ASSIGNED TO, THE *USS SHAW* THE 373. DD 373, CORRECT.

WE OPERATED OUT OF SAN DIEGO , THE ????? ROADS WHERE WE USED TO PARK FOR THE WEEKENDS.

ED

WHAT WAS YOUR POSITION ON THE *SHAW* WHEN YOU WENT ABOARD HER?

JIM

WHEN I WENT ABOARD THE *SHAW* I WENT ABOARD AS A DECKHAND. YOU KNOW, AS LOW AS YOU CAN GET, APPRENTICE SEAMAN. THEN I PROGRESSED OF COURSE TO SEAMAN 2ND, THEN SEAMAN 1ST. I WAS CHOSEN BY THE CHIEF MASTER OF ARMS TO BE THE CHIEF'S COMPARTMENT CLEANER. IN OTHER WORDS, WHERE THEY SLEPT. HE HAD THE AUTHORITY TO PICK WHO HE WANTED. INSTEAD OF BEING

MESS COOK OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. I WAS UP THERE WITH THEM FOR THREE MONTHS. IT WAS HARD TO GET OFF. TO GET A GUNNERS MATE OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YOU HAD TO WAIT UNTIL THEY HAD A OPENING, YOU UNDERSTAND. SINCE THIS CHIEF MASTER OF ARMS HAPPENED GO BE A CHIEF TORPEDOMAN. I PAINTED THAT PLACE FOR THEM AND SHINED IT UP PRETTY GOOD. HE SELECTED ME AS TO BE TRAINED FOR A TORPEDOMAN. THAT IS HOW I ENDED UP IN THE TORPEDO---

AS A SEAMAN, I ENJOYED THAT REAL MUCH. I WAS A COXSWAIN FOR THE SKIPPER ON THE LARGER BOAT, YOU KNOW, THE REGULAR BOAT. THEN WE WERE CHOSEN TO GO OVERSEAS FOR SIX MONTHS. IN THE MEANTIME----

ED

YOU WERE STILL IN SAN DIEGO?

JIM

WE WERE STILL IN SAN DIEGO AT THIS TIME. NOW, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT--- THIS WAS ABOUT DECEMBER WHILE WE WERE CHOSEN, DECEMBER, '39 TO GO TO HONOLULU, PEARL HARBOR. THEY WERE STARTING A NEW, IT WAS NEW AT THAT TIME, THEY WERE GOING TO ROTATE SHIPS. OF COURSE, THEY DO THAT ALL THE TIME NOW BUT THIS WAS A FORE RUNNER OF THAT. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GO OVER THERE AND BE THERE FOR SIX MONTHS. AS IT TURNED OUT, THERE WAS ANOTHER FLEET EXERCISE THE FOLLOWING YEAR FROM WHAT I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT WHEN I WENT TO NORFOLK.

WE WENT OUT ON THAT PROGRAM AND WE WERE UP IN LONG BEACH, A STORM CAME UP AND SOME OF US WERE ASHORE AND THEY HAD TO SEND THE SHIPS TO SEA. MY SHIP, THE *SHAW*, LOST IT'S ANCHOR AND GOT BANGED UP JUST A BIT. INSTEAD OF OPERATING WITH THE FLEET FOR THIS PROGRAM, WE WERE SENT ON TO HONOLULU TO GET PATCHED UP.

SOMETHING THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTING, ON THE WAY OVER, I WAS A LOOKOUT. IN THE DAYTIME, THEY RAISED THE CROW'S NEST. ONE MAN WENT TO CRAWL UP IN THE CROW'S NEST UP ON THE MAST. IN THE NIGHT, THEY BROUGHT YOU DOWN AND PUT ONE ON THE PORT AND ONE ON THE STARBOARD SIDE OF THE BRIDGE. I WAS ON THE PORT SIDE. IT WAS DARK OBVIOUSLY. ALL OF A SUDDEN, I SAW WHAT I THINK IS A FLASH OF LIGHT. WATCHED IT FOR A WHILE AND I WAS DETERMINED THAT IT WAS , BUT IT WAS VERY, VERY DIM. YOU UNDERSTAND? FINALLY, I GAVE THE OFFICER OF THE DECK A LIGHT HOLE, THAT WAS TO TELL THEM WHAT YOU SPOTTED. HE LOOKED AND LOOKED WITH HIS BINOCULARS OUT OF THE BRIDGE. YOU COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING AND HE FINALLY CAME OUT TO WHERE I WAS AND HE COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING THEN. HE FINALLY ASKED ME, "WELL, GIVE ME A MARK WHEN YOU SEE IT AND A MARK WHEN YOUSEE ITS OUT." I DID THAT FOR A WHILE AND HE SAID, "OK." HE CAME BACK AND A FEW MINUTES LATER, HE SAID, "I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU ARE DOING IT BUT YOU'RE SEEING BOUY SO AND SO." HE HAD THE NUMBER OF THE BOUY IN PEARL HARBOR."AND WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE THERE UNTIL THE NEXT DAY." AS A RESULT OF THAT, I ENDED UP BEING---THEY CHOSE ME AS BEING A RANGE FINDING OOPERATOR.

ED

THEY DECIDED YOUR EYES WERE REALLY GOOD.

JIM

THEY SENT ME TO THE ISLAND TO TEST ME. I ENDED UP GETTING FIVE DOLLARS A MONTH EXTRA FOR THAT.

ED

FIVE DOLLARS IS A LOT OF MONEY.

JIM

IT WAS THEN, WHEN YOU ARE MAKING TWENTY ONE, TWENTY ONE DOLLARS A MONTH. AT ANY RATE, I READ THIS BULLETIN. WE OPERATED WITH A SUBMARINE. I RECOVERED SOME OF THEIR TORPEDOES AFTER THEY FIRED THEM AND CARRIED THEM BACK TO THE----- . AGAIN, I WENT IN STRIKING FOR TORPEDOMAN AS I INDICATED EARLIER. OF COURSE, I HAD NOT BEEN TO TORPEDO SCHOOL SO, THE CHIEF THAT I ALLUDED TO EARLIER, SENT ME OVER TO THE *WHITNEY* TO GO TO A TORPEDO SQUAD. IT WAS A CHIEF TO CHIEF OPERATION. THEY DIDN'T REALLY HAVE A SCHOOL BUT THEY WORKED ON ALL THE TORPEDOES FOR ALL THE DESTROYERS. I WAS GETTING GOOD TRAINING. THEN THE CHIEF CAME BACK AND GOT ME IN A FEW WEEKS. HE SAID, 'WE HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE SHIP AND WE ARE TAKING OFF.' THAT'S WHEN THEY FIRST GOT US READY ON A WAR FOOTING. THIS WAS IN ABOUT THE MIDDLE PART OF 1940. WE GOT OUR TORPEDOES READY. WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY WAR HEADS ON AT THAT TIME. NOR DID WE HAVE ANY OF THE MECHANISMS THAT WOULD FIRE THE TORPEDOES. THEY WERE ALL STORED ON ONE TENDER, BELIEVE IT OR NOT. ONE IN THE PACIFIC AND ONE IN THE ATLANTIC.

ED

IF YOU SINK THAT ONE, YOU-----

JIM

WE WOULD HAVE BEEN---- IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF IT. THIS WAS BEFORE WE WENT TO SEA. WE GOT OURS READY AND OF COURSE, ROOSEVELT WAS THE PRESIDENT AT THE TIME AND WE WERE TRYING TO MAKE A LITTLE FORCE SHOWING. SOME PEOPLE SAID WE WERE NOT READY. SINCE THEN WE ACTUALLY WANTED THEM TO-----THE GERMANS TO START SOMETHING WITH US. WE KNEW THEY HAD SUBMARINES AROUND AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. WE WERE ON THE WAY OVER THERE. WE TURNED ON OUR LIGHTS AND ALL, YOU KNOW, NIGHTTIME; A PRETTY GOOD INDICATION THEY WANTED SOMETHING TO HAPPEN BUT THE IDEA WAS, THEY SAID IT WAS TO KEEP THE SUMARINES FROM SHOOTING US.

ED

OK, GO AHEAD WITH YOUR STORY JIM.

JIM

WHERE DID WE LEAVE OFF?

ED

WE WERE TALKING ABOUT YOUR SHIP WITH ALL OF ITS LIGHTS ON SO THAT YOU WOULDN'T BE HIT BY A FRIENDLY SUBMARINE.

JIM

NOTHING HAPPENED THERE AND -----

ED

WHERE WAS THIS HAPPENING?

JIM

AUKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.

ED

SO YOU ARE DOWN IN THE NEW ZEALAND AREA?

JIM

AUKLAND, NEW ZEALAND. ONE OTHER INTERESTING THING THAT HAPPENED ABOARD THE *SHAW* THAT, IN THIS TIME PERIOD, WE WERE NOTIFIED THAT THEY WERE SENDING BACK TO THE STATES SOME OLD FLYING BOATS THAT THEY HAD IN CHINA. THEY WERE STATIONED, SOME OF DESTROYERS VARIOUS DISTANCES. THEY SENT US THIS TO SAMOA AND THAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE PLACES I EVER WENT AT THAT TIME.

ED

THIS IS IN 1940. THE YEAR BEFORE THE WAR?

JIM

BEFORE----- I DON'T KNOW WHEN THE LAST SHIP HAD BEEN IN THERE. LIKE I TOLD YOU EARLIER, WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THERE SIX MONTHS; BUT THEY CALLED US, SENT US TO SEA AS A MATTER OF FACT THE DESTROYER FORCE, WAS INSTRUCTED TO THE CAPTAINS TO TELL US ON EASTER MORNING TO GET US ALL TOGETHER AND TO TELL US THAT THERE WERE NO MORE CHRISTMASSES,

THERE WERE NO MORE HOLIDAYS, THAT, THAT WAS IT.

ED

WAS THIS IN '40, OR WE IN '41?

JIM

THIS IS IN '41.

ED

THIS IS SPRING OF '41? EASTER?

JIM

YEAH. THAT WAS ABOUT IT. I MEAN, '45 CAME AROUND. I WAS ABOUT TO BELIEVE IT MEANT FOR EVER.

AT ANY RATE, I BELIEVE IT WAS OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER ('41), WE WERE SENT BACK TO THE STATES FOR WHAT THEY NOW CALL R & R, BECAUSE MOST OF THE PEOPLE , THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE WE MARRIED AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE IN THE STATES. WE WENT BACK AND SPENT TWO WEEKS. I BECAME ILL. THEY PUT ME IN A HOSPITAL. I GUESS, THE SHIP, THE *SHAW* THAT IS. THEN I WAS PUT ON A TANKER, WHICH WAS GOING OVER WITH OIL, AS I RECALL, WITH EIGHT MILLION GALLONS. OF AVIATION GASOLINE. WE WERE TOWING AN OLD WORLD WAR I FOUR STACKER.

ED

YOU WERE TOWING THE OLD DESTROYER?

JIM

TOWING HER.

ED

IT MUST HAVE BEEN A SLOW RIDE.

JIM

IT WAS. A SLOW RIDE. SHE COULD ONLY DO ABOUT 8 KNOTS AS I REMEMBER WITH A GOOD TAIL WIND. HERE WE ARE A DAY OUT OF PEARL HARBOR AND PEARL HARBOR WAS HIT.

ED

YOU WERE A DAY OUT OF PEARL HARBOR WHEN SHE WAS IT? THAT'S WHEN THE *SHAW* WAS HIT.

JIM

THAT'S WHEN THE *SHAW* WAS HIT. SHE WAS IN DRY DOCK. THEY TOLD US ABOUT DUSK TO SINK THE DESTROYER (IN TOW); THIS FOUR STACKER WE WERE TOWING. EVEN AS GREEN AS I WAS AT THIS TIME, I THOUGHT THAT WAS SORT OF IGNORANT TO WAIT UNTI DARK SO THEY COULD SEE ALL THE FLASH, YOU KNOW, OF THE SHIP ALL WE HAD ABOARD THAT TANKER WAS A THEE INCH: ALL WE COULD DO WAS BORE HOLES. ULTIMATELY, WE DID GET ENOUGH HOLES INTO THE WATER LINE, IT WENT DOWN. THEN, THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THEY SENT A COUPLE OF THE OLD FOUR STACKERS TOESCORT US IN TO PEARL.

ED

WHY, DO YOU FIGURE THEY DECIDED TO SEND THE OLD FOUR STACKERS?

JIM

I FOUND OUT LATER THERE WERE MINES. WE ALMOST HIT A MINE, FLOATING MINE. WE HAD ALL THIS DEBRIS THAT WAS IN THE HARBOR AT THIS TIME.

ED

YOU HAD TO MANEUVER AROUND IT?

JIM

THEY WERE TAKING IT AND WERE GOING TO USE IT (THE FOUR STACKER) .FOR TARGET PRACTICE. WE WERE GOING TO USE JAPS AFTER THAT.

ED

YOU HAD TARGETS THEN.

JIM

WE HAD LIVE ONES THEN. WE DIDN'T HAVE TO USE THE FOUR STACKER. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED THERE. THEN WE CAME INTO PEARL AND YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW WE FELT. OF COURSE, THE BATTLESHIPS SITTING THERE THAT TRIED TO GET OUT AND DIDN'T MAKE IT. WE WENT DOWN, THERE WAS MY SHIP SITTING IN THIS FLOATING DRYDOCK WHICH HAD BEEN SUNK. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE *SHAW* BUT AS I ALLUDED TO EARLIER, SHE IS THE ONE THAT YOU SEE THIS HUGE PLUME OF SMOKE.

ED

YOU SEE THIS BOILING BLACK SMOKE GOING UP LIKE A BOILER HAS BEEN HIT OR SOMETHING..

JIM

WELL, IT WAS A MAGAZINE. NORMALLY, IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN OUT THE AMMUNITION BEFORE YOU GO INTO DRY DOCK. FOR SOME REASON, THEY DIDN'T DO IT FOR THIS ONE BECAUSE, I GUESS, THE TYPE OF WORK THEY WERE GOING TO DO ABOARD. IT BLEW UP. SHE WAS HIT WITH THREE BOMBS. FORTUNATELY, IN A WAY IT WAS FORTUNATE, THEY WERE ALL FORWARD. I FORGET THE EXACT FOOTAGE, ABOUT A THIRD OF IT ROUGHLY, WAS KNOCKED OFF, FROM THE BRIDGE FORWARD.

ED

JUST DESCRIBE IN GENERAL, WHAT THINGS LOOKED LIKE IN PEARL HARBOR AS YOU REMEMBER.

JIM

IT WAS ---- WHEN I SEE THIS SHIP OF MINE, THE *SHAW*, AT THIS TIME, HER STERN WAS UP BECAUSE IT HAD A PROBLEM. NORMALLY, YOU COULD SINK THE FLOATING DRYDOCK RIGHT. THAT'S WHAT THEY WERE TRYING TO DO TO PUT THE FIRE OUT BECAUSE IT LOST POWER FOR WATER FROM THE SHORE. THEY HAD TO ABANDON SHIP. HERE SHE WAS, SITTING LIKE THIS. THERE WAS ANOTHER SMALLER SHIP THAT WAS FORWARD OF HER. YOU COULDN'T SEE HER. SHE HAD SUNK. AS WE WERE GOING AROUND THERE, IT IS ALMOST INDESCRIBABLE. THERE WAS THE *UTAH* TURNED OVER. THERE WAS THIS TOTAL DEBRIS IN WHAT YOU COULD SEE OF THE FORD ISLAND AND WHAT HAVE YOU, WHERE THE PLANES AND ALL OF IT HIT. MOSTLY, I WAS INTERESTED IN THE SHIPS. I WASN'T LOOKING TOO MUCH AT THAT.

THEN, YOU CAME AROUND WHERE THE BATTLESHIP ROW WAS, ROUGHLY WHERE THE *ARIZONA* I NOW, A LITTLE BIT FORWARD OF HER, BUT THAT WAS SOMETHING TO BEHOLD. ONE THING THAT I REMEMBER SO VIVIDLY, WAS THAT THEY HAD THE *OKLAHOMA* I GUESS IT WAS, WHICH HAD TURNED TURTLE ALL THE WAY JUST ABOUT. THEY HAD SOME GUYS UP THERE WITH TORCHES THAT HEARD PEOPLE IN THERE POUNDING ON IT. THEY HAD THIS HOLE DRILLED AS WE WERE GOING BY. I DIDN'T SEE HOW MANY THEY GOT OUT OF IT. THIS WAS THE FOLLOWING DAY. IT WAS JUST SOMETHING THAT ALMOST INDESCRIBABLE TO BELIEVE THAT THOSE BATTLESHIPS----- THEY WERE THE KING OF THE ROOST IN THOSE DAYS, EVEN THOUGH THE CARRIERS WERE THE-----TURNED OUT TO BE THE FLEET. THEY WERE BATTLESHIP ORIENTED. THAT'S WHERE THE POWER WAS. THAT'S WHERE THE LEADERS WERE.

ED

IT WAS THE END OF THE BATTLESHIP ERA.

JIM

IT WAS THE END OF THE BATTLESHIP ERA. SOMETHING I NEVER DREAMED OF ON THAT PARTICULAR DAY, DECEMBER 8TH THAT I WOULD EVER SEE THOSE SHIPS IN COMBAT. WE WERE, AND I

DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YEAR THIS WAS, WE PULLED INTO TAHITI ONE DAY AND THERE SAT SOME OF THESE SHIPS. I HAVE FORGOTTEN THE NAME OF THEM, TWO OR THREE OF THOSE OLD BATTLESHIPS. THIS MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT '43 AT THIS TIME.

ED

IT'S AMAZING WHAT THEY DID.

JIM

I WAS SENT OVER TO THE *WHITNEY* AS I SAID EARLIER, WHICH WAS A DESTROYER TENDER AND SINCE I WAS A TORPEDOMAN, THEY SENT ME OVER THERE. THEY, IN TURN, SENT ME OVER AN ISLAND ON THE BEACH. I DON'T KNOW WHAT NAME PIER TO WORK ON AN OLD WORLD WAR I TORPEDO WITH RED RUST. I KNOW THEY NEVER USED THAT SUCKER.

ED

YOU SAID WORK ON. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

JIM

I WAS TRYING TO GET THE RUST OFF THIS ONE. I CAN'T BELIEVE THE NAVY WOULD LET ONE SIT OUT THERE LIKE THAT. I WAS OUT THERE SANDING ON IT. THEN, IN THE EVENING I WAS TAKEN BACK TO THE *WHITNEY* AND IT WOULD BE DARK. EVERY LITTLE AREA TOO THEY WOULD BE SHOOTING AT YOU WITH RIFLES OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT MOVED.

ED

EVERYBODY WAS JUMPY?

JIM

THEY WERE AFRAID THOSE MIDGET SUBMARINES OR WHAT HAVE YOU. I WAS ONLY THERE A FEW DAYS AND EITHER THE 12TH OR THE 14TH, I WAS ASSIGNED TO THE *MAURY* THE DD 401, THE 14TH OF DECEMBER. AT THAT TIME, I WAS TORPEDO MAN 2ND CLASS. THE *MAURY* HAD BEEN AT SEA WITH THE *ENTERPRISE* THE DAY OF PEARL HARBOR, FORTUNATELY. THEY CAME IN ON MONDAY AND THEN THEY WENT BACK OUT AGAIN. I WAS ACTUALLY CAUGHT HER A WEEK LATER WHEN SHE CAME BACK IN.

LIKE I SAY, THE REST OF IT IS HISTORY. I WAS THERE AT THERE THE REST OF THE WAR.

ED

WAS SHE A GOOD SHIP?

JIM

THE BEST

ED

SHE WAS LAUNCHED IN '38.

JIM

YEP, AND SHE WAS SCRAPPED IN.----- THAT'S QUITE AN INTERESTING STORY TOO. WHEN WE WERE TOLD TO COME BACK TO THE STATES, THIS IS OUT OF SEQUENCE. WHEN WE WAS TOLD TO COME BACK TO THE STATES, WE STOPPED IN SAN DIEGO AND THEY TOOK OFF TWO OF MY AFTER TORPEDO TUBES. WE WERE ABOUT THE ONLY SHIP THAT HAD FOUR OF THEM, SIXTEEN TORPEDOES.

ED

SHE HAD SIXTEEN TORPEDOES AND HOW MANY TUBES?

JIM

FOUR TUBES WITH FOUR TORPEDOES IN EACH ONE. THERE WERE 15 TORPEDOES. WE WERE BY THE WAY OF SAN DIEGO BECAUSE SOME OF THE FOLKS STILL HAD THEIR FAMILIES THERE. WE STAYED THERE A COUPLE OF WEEKS AND THEY SENT US THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL WHERE WE LOST OUR FIRST MAN.

ED

IN THE CANAL?

JIM

JUST OUTSIDE. WE WERE WAITING TO GET IN, TO GET SPACE TO GET IN. WHERE THEY HAD TAKEN OFF THESE TWO AFT TORPEDO TUBES, THEY PUT UP NEW GUY WIRE WITH LITTLE STANCHIONS ABOUT 2 TO 4 INCHES IN DIAMETER. THEY WERE PLAYING ACEY-DUCEY, WHICH IS AN OLD NAVY GAME. THIS ONE FELLOW, IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONLY MAN ABOARD SHIP THAT NEVER DRANK. HE WAS A REAL TROOPER. HE WAS SITTING ON THAT, LEANING UP AGAINST ONE OF THOSE RAILS AND A STANCHION GAVE WAY AND KEPT OVER BACKWARDS.

ED

OVERBOARD?

JIM

OVERBOARD WE WERE ONLY DOING A KNOTOR TWO, JUST TO KEEP HEADWAY TO WAIT UNTIL

WE COULD GET IN THE CANAL. I RAN BACK BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE MY TORPEDO TUBES WERE AND RIGHT AFTER THERE WAS LIFE BOUY. I THREW HIM THAT ONE AND HE COULDN'T GET TO IT. I THREW ANOTHER ONE AND IT WAS TIED. I ACTUALLY THREW THREE BUT HE COULDN'T GET TO THEM. BY THE TIME WE COULD GET WORD TO THE BRIDGE, THEY SPREAD STORIES THAT WE SPUN IT AROUND BUT YOU CAN'T SPIN IF YOU ARE NOT MAKING ANY SPEED. IF DON'T GET THE WORD TO THE BRIDGE. WE FINALLY GOT TURNED AROUND. WE WASN'T ALL THAT LONG. YOU COULD SEE HIM FOR A WHILE DOWN THERE WAVING. HE SANK.

WE GOT INTO THE CANAL IN A DAY OR TWO, JUST BEFORE YOU ENTERED INTO THE LOCKS. THEN WE WERE IN THE LOCK OF ALL THINGS; BEFORE YOU GET INTO ???) LAKE, I THINK IT WAS, THERE WERE JUST CLIFFS ON EITHER SIDE AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, WE HEARD THIS WHISTLE BLOWING AND WORD CAME ACROSS THE INTERCOM THAT A CARRIER WAS BEARING DOWN ON US. WE HAD TO TURN AROUND AND TO THAT A WAY, FROM WHERE WE COME.

ED

NOT MUCH ROOM THERE.

JIM

THERE WERE SHEER CLIFFS ON EITHER SIDE. THAT'S BEFORE YOU GET INTO THE LAKE WHERE IT IS OPEN.

ED

THAT'S PROBABLY WHERE THEY HAVE THAT CUT THERE. I CAN'T THINK OF THE NAME. THEY HAD TO CUT THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN.

JIM

THAT IS CORRECT. RIGHT THROUGH THE SHEER ROCK. THIS MAN THAT WE HAD ABOARD THERE-- --WHAT DO THEY CALL THEM? A PILOT. HE WAS GOOD. HE BACKED THAT THING UP FOR A FEW FEET, AND FINALLY WE GOT GOING BACK THE WAY WE CAME AND THIS CARRIER BACK THERE WAS REALLY WHOMPING DOWN ON THAT WHISTLE.

ED

WHAT CARRIER WAS IT? DO YOU KNOW?

JIM

I DON'T KNOW THAT. HERE WE GO BACK AND GOT OUT OF HER WAY. THEN, WE THOUGHT EVERY THING WAS LOVELY, RIGHT? THERE'S NO MORE GERMAN SUBMARINES OVER HERE BECAUSE THE WAR IS OVER NOT IN THE ATLANTIC, RIGHT? BUT IT IS STILL GOING ON IN THE PACIFIC. SO NOW, WE CAN TURN

ON THE LIGHTS AND EVERY THING IS LOVELY. THAT IS WHAT WE THOUGHT. (PASSAGE ABOUT TYPHOONS WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD) WE WOULD SEE THEM FOR A WEEK OR TWO. FOUR SHIPS WERE SUNK IN AND LOST HUNDREDS OF PLANES. YOU'VE READ ABOUT THAT, OFF THE CARRIERS. YOU KNOW HOW HIGH THEY ARE.

AFTER WE GOT THROUGH THE CANAL, WE RAN INTO A STORM, THE MOTHER OF STORMS. IF YOU HAD NEVER SEEN IT, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW, APPRECIATE, WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT. AFTER WHERE THOSE TORPEDO TUBES WERE, THERE IS A BIG BULKHEAD THERE AND THEY HAD FOUR LARGE CLEAVES WHAT WERE SUPPOSED TO COME DOWN TO HOLD A CONVEYANCE THAT I USED TO MOVE TORPEDOES WITH. IT RIPPED THEM RIGHT OUT OF THE BULKHEAD. THIS IS SOMETHING WE NEVER HAD HAPPEN EVEN IN A TYPHOON. THAT PASSED LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE.

THEN, WE MADE IT UP TO NEW YORK, WHICH WAS LOVELY. WE WERE HAVING A GOOD TIME AND WE PUT IN ALL THESE WORK ORDERS TO GET THE SHIP REPAIRED TO BRING IT UP TO STANDARDS.

ED

THIS IS IN '45?

JIM

THIS IS '45.

ED

THE EUROPEAN THEATER IS OVER BUT IT IS STILL-----

JIM

STILL ON IN THE PACIFIC. WE ARE AT OKINAWA NOW. IN FACT, THAT IS WHY THEY HELD US AT HONOLULU. WE STAYED THERE, OUR OTHER SHIPS IN OUR DIVISION WERE GONE AHEAD. THEY KEPT US THERE BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THEY MIGHT HAVE TO SEND US BACK. THEY WERE LOSING SO MANY SHIPS BECAUSE THERE WERE KAMIKASES YOU RECALL.

WE GET THERE TO BROOKLYN. WE WERE TO GO TO NORWEGIAN COUNTRIES ON A GOOD WILL TOUR. YOU COULDN'T HAVE ASKED FOR ANYTHING BETTER.

ED

SOUNDS GOOD AFTER GETTING OUT OF THE PACIFIC WAR.

JIM

ISN'T THAT THE TRUTH? NOW WE ARE GOING OVER THERE WHERE THERE IS NOTHING BUT GOOD TIMES. WE PUT IN ALL THESE WORK ORDERS AND THE HARBOR MAN TOOK CHARGE OF IT. YOU SAW THEM ALL AND HE THOUGHT WE WERE TRYING TO BEAT THE WAR EFFORT. HE SENT ABOARD A BOARD

OF INQUIRY. THE BOARD OF INQUIRY CAME ABOARD AND THEY SAID, "YOU DIDN'T PUT IN ENOUGH. WE HAVE TO SCRAP IT BECAUSE THE KEEL WAS BROKEN." HE HAD THIS HUGE GASH ACROSS THE ----- I DON'T KNOW IF I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS OR NOT.

ED.

NO. WE ARE GOING TO GO BACK AND CATCH SOME OF THAT. THIS IS KIND OF THE END OF THE *MAURY* THEN?

JIM

YEAH, THIS WAS THE END. FROM THERE WE GO ----- THEY SENT US TO PHILADELPHIA TO START THE DECOMMISSIONING.

ED

WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO DO JIM, IS TO GO BACK THEN TO THE ACTION IN THE PACIFIC, KIND OF IN BETWEEN PEARL HARBOR, WHEN YOU JOINED THE *MAURY* AND I KNOW SHE WAS IN A LOT OF BATTLES. COULD YOU KIND OF JUST TAKE US THROUGH WHAT YOUR EXPERIENCES WERE AS YOU FOUGHT YOUR WAY THROUGH THE HEART OF THE CONFLICT?

JIM

IF YOU SEEN THIS PLAQUE THAT WE HAD MADE AND YOU HAVE. IT SHOWS THAT WE HAD SEVENTEEN BATTLE STARS. ONLY ONE SHIP HAD MORE, WAS THE *ENTERPRISE*. SHE DESERVED EVERY THING SHE GOT.

AFTER I GOT ON HER-----

ED

WHICH FLEET WAS SHE ASSIGNED TO?

JIM

THEY KEPT CHANGING THE NAME OF THE FLEETS. WE ONLY HAD ONE. I CALLED IT TASK FORCE 58.2, TASK FORCE 70 SOMETHING. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR, FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS, THEY WOULD TAKE OUT A FEW SHIPS AND MAYBE PUT ANOTHER CRUISER IN. IT WAS THE SAME SHIPS BY AND LARGE. THEY WERE DIFFERENT NUMBERED. WE WENT TO, AS YOU KNOW, AND EVERYONE KNOWS, WE WENT TO GUADALCANAL IS WHERE WE STARTED OUR RECOVERY. WE WERE ESCORTING THE *ENTERPRISE* AT THAT TIME. THEIR AIRCRAFT WERE ATTACKING. I DON'T RECALL IF WE WERE ATTACKED THE FIRST DAY OR TWO. I DON'T RECALL. WE WERE ATTACKED MANY TIMES LATER ON AROUND PEARL HARBOR. IT WAS ALMOST A DAILY ROUTINE. IT WAS A DAILY ROUTINE TO BE ATTACKED DAY OR NIGHT.

ED

IS THIS FROM THE AIR?

JIM

AIR. THE AIR ----- YOU WERE ANCHORED AND YOU WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THOSE THINGS. YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE CARRIER. ACTUALLY WE WERE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CARRIER THAN WE WERE OURSELVES. IF YOU LOSE THOSE CARRIERS IN THOSE DAYS, WE HAD NOTHING. ALL WE HAD WAS FOUR CARRIERS TO SPEAK OF. IF YOU LOSE THOSE, WE LOST THE WAR; AT LEAST FOR 2 OR 3 YEARS. WE WOULDN'T HAVE LOST IT COMPLETELY. WE WOULD HAVE BEEN FINISHED AND WE WOULD HAVE LOST A LOT OF OUR BASES LIKE MIDWAY AND PLACES LIKE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN GONE.

I WANT TO MAKE IT PLAIN THAT I'M ALL FOR THE CARRIERS NOW. WE STARTED SENDING THE SURFACE SHIPS UP THE "SLOT" AS KNOW IT WAS CALLED. OF COURSE, THEY KEPT GETTING SUNK. FINALLY, THEY TOOK US OFF IN ESCORT WITH THE CARRIERS AND PUT US TO MAKE THE RUNS UP THE SLOT.

ED

YOU WERE ESCORTING THE TROOPSHIPS AND THIS TYPE OF THING?

JIM

WE DID OFFER----- YES TO TAKE OTHER ISLANDS ON UP FROM GUADALCANAL. WHAT WE WERE DOING AFTER WE LEFT THE CARRIERS INITIALLY, WAS TO FIGHT SURFACE ENGAGEMENTS AT NIGHT, SHIP AGAINST SHIP. WE TIED UP BESIDE THIS SHIP, THIS DESTROYER IN THE AFTERNOON AND WE WERE GOING UP THAT EVENING AND LO AND BEHOLD, THERE WAS A TORPEDOMAN ABOARD, WHICH I HAD KNOWN ON PREVIOUS SHIP AND HE SAID, "WE'VE BEEN HERE LONGER THAN ANYONE. WE'VE BEEN UP THAT SLOT." THAT WAS THEIR LAST NIGHT. THEY GOT IT THAT NIGHT.

ED

DID THEY REALLY?

JIM

YEAH, THEY DID. I NEVER SAW THEM AGAIN. WE WENT UP THE SLOT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT AFTER NIGHT. ONE NIGHT I RECALL, I DON'T REMEMBER WHICH ONE IT WAS. THERE WAS A SURFACE BATTLE AND I'M TELLING THIS ON MYSELF. I WAS ON THE BRIDGE AT THE TIME AT THE DIRECTORY. WE WERE IN A SURFACE ENGAGEMENT, SHIP TO SHIP WITH SHELLFIRE. A SALVO OF SHELLS HIT THE PORT AND THE NEXT SALVO HIT TO THE STARBOARD AND WHEN IT DID, I KNELT DOWN. THIS IS DARK, AT NIGHT, AND THEN I SAID TO MYSELF, YOU MIGHT AS WELL STAND UP AND DIE LIKE A MAN. THIS IS WITH NOTHING THERE BUT A SHEET OF MILD STEEL AN EIGHTH OF AN INCH THICK FOR PROTECTION. THE THIRD SHELL

NEVER CAME, THE THIRD SALVO. NORMALLY, IF THEY JUST SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE, THEY GOT YOU.

ED

YOU FIGURE THIS WAS FIRE FROM WHAT, CRUISERS, WHAT?

JIM

I WOULD SAY AT LEAST A CRUISER, FROM THE LOOKS. AS I SAY, I HAD SEEN SOME OF THIS IN PEACETIME SO I HAD A FAIRLY GOOD IDEA OF WHAT IF.

ED

YOU WEREN'T ACTUALLY FIRING. YOU WERE A TORPEDO MAN AT THIS POINT OR WERE YOU?

JIM

I WAS. I WAS UP AT THE TORPEDO DIRECTORY AT THAT TIME.. WHAT THEY HAD WHEN I WENT ABOARD, BEFORE I WAS SENT SOME PLACE ELSE BEFORE I WENT TO GUADALCANAL, WE WENT OVER THERE, WE SANK A SMALL SHIP THERE WITH SHELLS. WE GO OVER TO WAKE ISLAND AND WERE ATTACKED BY PLANES. WE WERE WITH THE *CHESTER*, CRUISER AND ANOTHER DESTROYER. THIS OTHER DESTROYER WAS, I THINK THEY CALLED THEM AN 1820 OR SOMETHING. THEY HAD TWINS, BUT THEY WERE SURFACE GUNS. THEY WEREN'T ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS. WE WERE DIVE BOMBED, THEN THEY HIT US AND THEN SENT A V FORMATION OF BETTYS AFTER THE *CHESTER* I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED ABOUT THAT HOW STUPID IT WAS; THE *CHESTER* STAYED RIGHT ON THAT STRIGHT PATH. WE LEARNED LATER ON YOU DON'T STAY STRIGHT IF YOU ARE BEING BOMBED. THAT'S EITHER DIVE BOMBED OR HORIZONTAL. SHE SAILED STRAIGHT AND SHE GO HIT. FORTUNATELY, IT WAS NOT A HUGE BOMB. SHE DID LOSE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE. SEEMED TO ME LIKE 16 OR 17-----NINETEEN I THINK IT WAS. IT HIT AND EXPLODED ABOVE. IT DIDN'T GO DOWN WHERE SHE WAS IN DANGER OF SINKING.

WE WENT AND MADE A COUPLE OF SHASH-SHYS BACK THERE IN THE MARSHALLS, THEN WE GO TO GUADALCANAL WE WAS TALKING ABOUT. I WAS TALKING ABOUT WHAT WE WERE DOING, PRIMARILY SHELL OR GUNFIRE TO GUNFIRE. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THIS BUT, WHEN I WAS TAUGHT AS A TORPEDO MAN, WE WERE TAUGHT THAT WE WOULD MAKE THE CHARGE, THE DESTROYERS, WE WOULD FIRE OUR TORPEDOES, WE GET THE HECK OUT OF THERE, AND LET THE TORPEDOES DO THEIR WORK. WE DIDN'T DO THIS AT GUADALCANAL. IT WAS RANK -A- DAY TO MY WAY OF THINKING. IT WAS HAVE SOME DESTROYERS FORWARD AND SOME DESTROYERS AFT BUT, YOU KNOW THE CRUISERS PRIMARILY AND THE FIRST THING THAT WOULD HAPPEN, THAT THE CRUISERS WOULD START BLOWING UP AND WE'RE SITTING THERE WITH RADAR, AT LEAST SOME OF OUR SHIPS HAD RADAR, EVEN IN '42. OUR SHIPS WOULD START BLOWING UP BEFORE WE HAD SEEN NOBODY.

I GUESS IT WOULD BE AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO TELL YOU; WE WERE IN THIS ONE, AND IT IS VERY SIMILAR TO WHAT I AM TALKING ABOUT, THE ACTION. THEY SANK ONE CRUISER, TORPEDOED

THREE MORE. OUR SKIPPER WAS ONE OF THE MOST BRAVE MEN THERE EVER WAS. WE WERE ASKED TO LOOK FOR AN AUSTRALIAN (?????) BUT WE COULDN'T FIND THAT, TO ASSIST IT AND WE FOUND THE *NEW ORLEANS*.

ED

IS THIS STILL AT GUADALCANAL?

JIM

GUADALCANAL. WE WERE THERE A LONG TIME. WE WERE THERE OVER A YEAR, OFF AND ON. WE FOUGHT THERE FOR OVER A YEAR. IN FACT, WE'LL GET THERE LATER, WE WERE ABOUT THE LAST ONES--- THE BATTLE THAT THEY HAD.

END SIDE ONE OF TAPE

ED

YOU MENTIONED THE *NEW ORLEANS*.

JIM

OH YES. THERE WERE FOUR OF THOSE CRUISERS, ONE WAS SUNK OUTRIGHT AND THE *NEW ORLEANS*, WE GOT ALONGSIDE OF HER. HER FORWARD TURRET WAS GONE.

ED

WAS THIS BY AIR ATTACK?

JIM

TORPEDOES. JAPAN HAD THE BEST TORPEDOES ON EARTH.

ED

I KNOW THEY DID. WHICH IS SOMETHING I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT.

JIM

IT'S A GOOD STORY IN ITSELF. THE FORWARD TURRET, THE FORWARD PART OF THE SHIP UP TO THE SECOND TURRET WAS GONE. A PRETTY GOOD CUT, PRETTY CLEAN. A LITTLE JAGGED. A FEW PEOPLE FLOATING AROUND DOWN THERE. YOU KNOW YOU'RE GOING SLOW GETTING (?????) IT KILLED EVERYONE IN NO. 2 TURRET. THEY WERE JUST LIKE THEY WERE COOKED. WE BROUGHT THAT DUDE BACK IN, OUR SKIPPER DID. WE BROUGHT HER BACK INTO GUADALCANAL. IT WAS ACROSS FROM GUALDALCANAL. WE TOOK HER DOWN TO A LITTLE COVE AND CLEARED A BANK DOWN THERE AND COVERED HER UP DOWN

THERE WITH WHAT EVER WE COULD GET HOLD OF. WE BURIED HER LOSSES. I HAD TROUBLE THINKING ABOUT TULAGI.

ED

. HOW DO YOU SPELL THAT?

JIM

T U L A L G I. THAT'S WHERE THE MARINES AT THAT TIME WERE FIGHTING FOR THE AIRSTRIP OVER THERE. WE TOOK HER OVER THERE. WE LEFT THE HARBOR FROM THERE AND HEADED OUT TO BURY HER PEOPLE AND GAVE HER POWER FOR 2 OR 3 DAYS.

THEN WE TOOK OFF AND THE OTHER TWO THAT WERE TORPEDOED WERE THERE. THEY MADE IT IN TOO, EXCEPT THE ONE THAT WAS SUNK.THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE SUNK. ONE OF THEM HAD BEEN HIT WITH TWO TORPEDOES AND THE OTHER ONE WAS HIT WITH ONE. MIRACULOUSLY, THEY SURVIVED. THEN, WE WE WERE IN OTHER ONES THERE WHERE THE ONES WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WERE THE *VINCENNES*, *QUIINCY* THE *ASTORIA* . THAT WAS ANOTHER BATTLE THAT WAS SUNK UP THERE.

WE WERE USED TO FERRY TROOPS ABOARD OUR SHIP AND WE PULLED A LOT OF LITTLE LANDING CRAFTS WHEN THEY BROKE DOWN. ONE OF THEM HAD I RECALL, TO INVADE ANOTHER ISLAND UP THERE. WE DID THAT A FEW TIMES. FINALLY, THERE WAS ONE BATTLE WE WEREN'T IN. WE WERE NOT IN THIS ONE BATTLE, BUT I READ ABOUT IT MORE THAN I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT WHERE HALSEY FINALLY SENT SOME OF THE BATTLESHIPS, THESE NEW BATTLESHIPS. THEY DID REAL WELL AS I UNDERSTAND. I .THINK THEY DID SINK THEIR BATTLESHIP THAT NIGHT TOO. WE WERE NO IN THE ENGAGEMENT THERE.

ED

MY RECOLLECTION IS THAT THE *MAURY* WAS INVOLVED IN THE BATTLE OF THE LEYTE GULF. IS THAT CORRECT?

JIM

OH YES.

ED

WAS THAT NEXT AFTER GUADALCANAL?

JIM

OH, NO, NO.

ED

PLENTY IN BETWEEN?

JIM

THERE WERE MANY ISLANDS IN BETWEEN. SEE, AT ONE TIME WE THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO TRY TO TAKE ALL OF THEM STUPID ISLANDS. THANK GOD FOR HALSEY AND SOME OF HIS PEOPLE'S

OPINION. WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE TO THE PHILLIPINES. HALSY DIDN'T WANT TO GO TO THE PHILLIPINES AS I UNDERSTAND IT. I THINK HE WAS RIGHT.

ED

THAT WAS MACARTHUR, BUT YOU KNOW THAT STORY.

JIM

WE DO ALL SORTS OF BOMBARDMENT OF HENDERSON FIELD, BOMBARDMENT OF OTHER ISLANDS AND RESCUED THE *HONOLULU*, YOU HAVE HEARD OF IT BEING SUNK. WE RESCUED SURVIVORS OFF OF IT.

ED

WAS IT TORPEDOED OR BOMBED OR DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW?

JIM

TORPEDOED, IT THINK. THEM TORPEDOES ARE VICIOUS. YOU KNOW THE STORY OF HOW THEY GOT THE TORPEDOES, DON'T YOU?

ED

I WISH YOU WOULD TELL ME THE TORPEDO STORY. I KNOW WHAT I HAVE SEEN

JIM

I DON'T KNOW IT ALL.

ED

TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.

JIM

WHAT I DO KNOW IS, WE HAD BEEN WORKING ON THIS TORPEDO. THE BRITISH HAD BEEN WORKING ON THIS TORPEDO. THEY GAVE UP AND WE GAVE UP. THE JAPS THROUGH THEIR SPIES AND EMBASSY, THEY FOUND OUT ABOUT IT AND THEY PURSUED IT. WHILE WE HAD A 21 INCH TORPEDO, THEIRS WERE 24 INCES AND MUCH, MUCH FASTER, MORE POWERFUL THAN OURS EVER WERE. WHEN WE STARTED THE WAR, WITH ABOUT A 450 POUND WARHEAD. THEN WE INCREASED IT. THEY BUILT ANOTHER SECTION THAT WOULD SCREW ON TO THAT ONE. YOU KNOW, THEY GOT BOLTS ALL THE WAY AROUND, WHICH MADE IT 900 AND SOME POUNDS. NOW, IT IS A GOOD SIZE TORPEDO. SOMETHING WE SHOULDN'T OMIT HERE IS WHEN THE WAR STARTED, WE HAD MAGNETIC TORPEDO HEADS. WE WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO HIT A SHIP, WE WERE SUPPOSED TO GO UNDERNEATH IT. LIKE IF YOU WERE FIRING AT

A BATTLESHIP, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO SET THAT SUCKER ON AS I RECALL, 35 OR 37 FEET. WE FIRED EIGHT TORPEDOES ONE TIME TO STARBOARD AND I GOT CREDIT FOR A HIT. I DON'T BELIEVE TO THIS DAY THAT I GOT ONE BECAUSE I THINK IT WENT UNDERNEATH.

ED

THIS WAS AT GUADALCANAL?

JIM

THIS WAS GUADALCANAL. TO FOLLOW THAT TORPEDO STORY WAS, AFTER THIS BATTLESHIP'S ENGAGEMENT I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT, THEY WEREN'T SENDING THE REAL BIG SHIPS DOWN AND WE WERE DOING ALL THE FIGHTING IN THIS ONE AREA. NOW, WE HAD FOUGHT AND THE ONLY ONE THAT WAS LEFT AT ONE TIME WAS THE *HONOLULU*. THAT WAS THE ONLY CAPITAL SHIP WE HAD LEFT. THEY SENT HER A-RUNNING. THAT LEFT US THERE WITH NOTHING ELSE BUT DESTROYERS. WE COULD DO WHAT WE WERE TRAINED TO DO. WE, I SAY WE, OF COURSE, THE POWERS TO BE, GOT INSTRUCTIONS. THROUGH THOSE WATCHERS, THE AUSTRALIAN COAST WATCHERS. WE OWE THEM A DEBT OF GRATITUDE BECAUSE THEY WOULD TELL US WHEN THESE SHIPS WERE COMING, HOW MANY AS BEST THEY COULD AND WHAT CONFIGURATIONS THEY WERE IN.

ED

AND WHERE WERE THEY LOCATED?

JIM

THEY WERE LOCATED ON THEM ISLANDS WHERE THE JAPS WERE. THEY HAD MADE THEMSELVES LITTLE CUBBY HOLES. OF COURSE THEY WERE FRIENDLY WITH THE NATIVES OR ELSE THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN CAPTURED. SOME OF THEM OF COURSE, GOT SQUEALED ON, I'M SURE OF THAT.

AFTER WE HAD GOTTEN TO WHERE WE FOUGHT OUR KIND OF A BATTLE, WHY WE WERE TOLD THERE WERE FOUR SHIPS ON THE WAY DOWN. INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR THEM TO COME DOWN WHERE THEY ALWAYS EXPECTED US TO BE, WE WENT TO MEET THEM. WE MET THEM AROUND ELEVEN OR SO AT NIGHT. I BELIEVE CMDR. MOOSBURGER (SP???) WAS IN CHARGE OF THAT TASK FORCE AND THERE WERE SIX OF US DESTROYERS. WHAT HE DID WAS, HE TOOK THREE OF US, HE TOOK THE *MAURY* AND TWO OTHERS AND PUT US IN THIS ECHELON AND THR OTHER THREE, PUT THEM TO PORT BUT WAY AFTER WHERE WE WERE. I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY HUNDRED YARDS OR THOUSANDS OF YARDS. HE SENT US UP AND THIS IS WHAT WE ARE TRAINED TO DO IN '39 AND '40 THAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT EARLIER.

WE GO UP AND WE KNOW THEY ARE COMING BUT AS SOON AS WE SPOT THEM, WE OF COURSE START PLOTTING IT. WE GET WITHIN TORPEDO RANGE, THEY ARE COMING DOWN SOUTH AND WE ARE GOING IN THIS DIRECTION. I FIRED THE EIGHT TORPEDOES OF THE SIXTEEN TO PORT. THE OTHER TWO

SHIPS FIRED ALSO. THIS IS THE ONE THAT I WANTED THE *MAURY* TO GET CREDIT FOR, BECAUSE HISTORY HASN'T BEEN FAIR WITH HER.

ED

IS THAT RIGHT?

JIM

AS I TOLD YOU EARLIER, I KNEW THESE FISH WERE RUNNING DEEP. I KNEW THIS. THEY HAD PUT THIS BIG WARHEAD ON, THE EXTENSION ON, NINE HUNDRED POUNDS; YOU KNOW, WHERE IT WAS 400, AND THEY HAD ONE (?????) WHERE WE WRE INSTRUCTED TO DO THIS, THIS WAS STANDARD S O P . THIS ONES ON FIVE FOOT, YOU AUTOMATICALLY CRANK IT IN, THIS IS ON ZERO. SO, THEY ARE STAGGARED LIKE THAT. IF YOU CRANK IN TEN FEET, IT DOESN'T TAKE A SCIENTIST, ROCKET SCIENTIST, TO FIGURE OUT THIS SUCKER OVER HERE IS GOING TO BE ON FIFTNEEN, ISN'T IT" EVEN IF ITS NOT RUNNING DEEP, BECAUSE THIS BIG WARHEAD. THIS NIGHT WHEN WE WERE GOING UP THERE, I SAID, I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS. I TOOK MY GUYS AND PULLED EVERY OTHER TORPEDO, THE ONE THAT WAS SET ON ZERO, EVERY OTHER ONE WAS SET ON ZERO, RIGHT, BECAUSE THE OTHERS WERE SET ON 5. I MANUALLY PUT 5 FOOT ON IT AND TOLD THESE GUYS ON THE TORPEDO TUBES, WHEN YOU GET ORDERS FROM THE BRIDGE, FORGET IT. THESE ARE ON 5 FEET, UNLESS WE KNOW IT IS A BATTLESHIP.WE DIDN'T EXPECT THESE TO BE BATTLESHIPS.

AS A RESULT, ----- THERE IS A SIDELIGHT TO THAT, THE TORPEDO THAT MOOSBURGER WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON DOWN THERE. I TOLD THIS LIEUTENANT, I SAID, "WE'RE GOING TO GET US A SHIP TONIGHT. JUST TELL THEM WE ARE JUST ROUTINELY CHECKING THESE THINGS." HE WENT BACK UP AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE TOLD THEM. I DON'T THINK I EVEN TOLD HIM WHAT WE WERE DOING PER SE.

WE FIRED THEM ALL, EIGHT OF THEM AT 5 FOOT. CAPT. CHENEY ISN'T HERE NOW. HE WAS A LIEUTENTANT AT THAT TIME. HE WAS IN THE PLOT ROOM. HE PLOTTED WHERE THEY WERE, THE DISTANCES, THE ANGLES AND ALL THAT SET UP. AS SOON AS WE FIRED, HE STARTED THE COUNTDOWN UNTIL THESE TORPEDOES WERE SUPPOSED TO START HITTING. HE HIT IT RIGHT ALMOST TO -----JUST LIKE THAT.

HERE THESE SHIPS STARTED A-GOING. AS A RESULT WE FOUND OUT IT WAS ON US TALKING. WE WERE READING JAPANESE MAIL, WHAT WE WERE DOING, THE MESSAGES, YOU KNOW THAT.

ED

YEAH, CODE BREAKING.

JIM

THAT'S RIGHT. ONE TIME WE SUNK SOMETHING. HALSEY KNEW WE DIDN'T SINK IT. THAT IS A BIG STORY IN IT SELF. I RECALL READING ABOUT HIM TALKING TO ANOTHER ADMIRAL HOW HE HAD TO SHOW HIM.

THESE SHIPS STARTED GOING UP AND THEN OF COURSE, THESE OTHER THREE THAT I ALLUDED TO, THEY CAME UP AND STARTED FIRING THEIR GUNS. THE *DENTON* (???) HAD ALREADY BEEN HIT. WE FOUND OUT THAT ONE OF THEM WE THOUGHT AT THE TIME WAS A CRUISER AND IT WAS O BIG. THERE WAS A BIG, NEW JAPANESE DESTROYER. OF COURSE, THOSE THINGS WERE LOADED WITH GAS AND TROOPS AND ALL THAT FANCY. SO, WE GOT THREE OF THEM, THE OTHER ONE RAN. THAT IS WHAT I CALL OUR CROWNING GLORY. IT IS THE ONLY TIME WE GOT TO DO----- THIS IS JUST ABOUT THE END OF THAT BATTLE PERIOD. THAT IS ABOUT A YEAR AND SOMETHING AFTER IT STARTED. BEFORE WE DID EXACTLY WHAT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO DO AND IT WORKED.

ED

YOU HAD TO WAIT A YEAR TO REALLY GET TO USE YOUR TECHNIQUES.

JIM

YEAH. BETTER THAN A YEAR. WE WENT INTO ANY NUMBER OF ISLANDS OVER THERE. MY GOODNESS, I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY. WE PATROLED, WE-----ANOTHER I WILL MENTION BEFORE WE LEAVE THIS AREA. WE WERE ONE OF THE STATIONS UP THERE WHERE WE SUPPLIED GUADALCANAL AND THEY SENT US, THIS *CHESTER* I MENTIONED BEFORE; WE HAD OUR DESTROYER LEADER WITH US FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER IN THE WAR. WE WERE ESCORTING SOME TROOPSHIPS AND FUEL SHIP WITH GASOLINE TO GUADALCANAL. THEY HAD US AFT OF THIS CONVOY ABOUT PORT. THESE JAP PLANES STARTED DROPPING FLARES. WE ARE NOT ABOUT TO FOOL WITH A FLARE. LATER ON, THEY STARTED DROPPING IT FURTHER FORWARD UP THERE WHERE OUR LEADER WAS AND HAD NEVER BEEN IN COMBAT AS FAR AS I KNOW. THEY OPENED UP ON A FLARE. WHEN THEY DID, THE TORPEDO PLANES, HERE THEY CAME. SOME OF THEM FLEW RIGHT OVER US. I FORGER HOW MANY OF THOSE WE GO, 2 OR 3. ONE OF THEM HIT JUST OFF TO STARBOARD. THIS WAS WITH THEIR TORPEDOES WITH THEM. WE MANAGED TO GET THE CONVOY THROUGH WITHOUT ANY ONE OF THEM GETTING HIT.

I WAS TOLD, THIS I WOULDN'T VERIFY, I WAS TOLD THAT TANKER HAD BEEN HIT BUT IT WAS A DUD. NOW, THAT, I CAN'T VERIFY.

ED

DID YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH DUDS WHEN THE NEW TORPEDOES WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO YOU GUYS IN THE WAR?

JIM

WELL, YES. IT THINK THAT WE DID. AS MENTIONED BRIEFLY, WE HAD FIRED TORPEDOES. I FIRED TORPEDOES FROM THE *SHAW* . I HAD NUMBER ONE TUBE. IT HAD THREE TUBES IN NUMBER ONE SETUP HERE. I FIRED TORPEDOES AND I KNEW THEY WOULD RUN. THEY DO WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO DO AND I MENTIONED EARLIER ABOUT RETRIEVING TORPEDOES THAT SUMARINES HAD FIRED, SO I HAD SEEN RUN BY BUT THEY WERE JUST RUNNING TO ME, THEY WERE JUST RUNNING TOO DEEP. IF YOU GO OUT AND FIRE A SPREAD OF TORPEDOES, ONE OF THEM SHOULD HIT; IF YOU GOT THE RIGHT SPEED AND THE RIGHT DISTANCE.

ED

UNLESS THESE ALL WENT UNDER

JIM

YEAH. I WAS CONVINCED THEY WERE GOING UNDER. OF COURSE, THAT WAS VERIFIED LATER BY THE SUBMARINES. THEY KNOW FOR A FACT AND SOME OF THEIR MAGNETICS WERE COMING BACK AT THEM. WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THAT MAGNETIC STUFF, I WENT AND PULLED EVERY----THEY GOT A MECHANISM THAT GOES IN THERE. IT HAS SCREWS IN THERE. I HAVE FORGOTTEN HOW MANY, ABOUT 42 OR SO AND THAT'S WHERE YOUR MECHANISM GOES, HAS THE IMPELLER IN IT, THE WATER PRESSURE TURNS THE IMPELLER AND IT PUSHES YOUR DETONATOR UP INTO THE WARHEAD. IF THIS THING HAS A MAGNETIC THING ON IT. WHAT I DID, I PULLED THEM OFF AND DISCONNECTED THE MAGNETIC SO THAT THEY HAD A HIT.

ED

SO THEY HAD TO HAVE AN IMPACT.

JIM

IT HAD TO HAVE AN IMPACT. YES.

ED

TELL ME ABOUT THE LEYTE GULF. WHAT HAPPENED THERE WITH THE *MAURY*?

JIM

ALTHOUGH IT WAS ----- YOU ARE TALING ABOUT THE BIG BATTLES THEY HAD THERE?

ED

YES

JIM

WE MISSED THAT.

ED

OK

JIM

THE REASON WE MISSED IT. WE WERE WITH HALSEY AGAIN AND HE RECALLED NOW, ITS HISTORY. HE HAD THE NEW BATTLESHIPS WITH HIM.

ED

AND HE RAN NORTH?

JIM

WE WERE CHASING CARRIERS IS WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO. I UNDERSTAND WE EVENTUALLY WE GOT MOST OF THEM UP THERE TOO. WE WERE WITH HIM (HALSEY) AT THE TIME. ACTUALLY, WE HAD NO ACTION IN THERE.

ED

YOU DID A LOT OF TRAVELING BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE MUCH ACTION.

JIM

WE THINK THE SHIPS AND THE PLANES DID. THEY GOT THE CARRIERS AND I THINK THEY GOT SOME ESCORTS IN THIS TOO LATER. WE PERSONALLY, DESTROYERS DID NOT SEE THEM. THEN, WHEN THAT WAS OVER, THEY PUT US WITH THE-----YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THE LINGAYEN. THE FIRST LANDING WAS WHAT? IN THE PHILLIPINES?

ED

YOU HAVE TO HELP ME ON THAT.

JIM

WE WENT AROUND THE LINGAYAN GULF. WE MADE TWO TRIPS UP THERE WHEN WE LANDED UP ON THE LINGAYEN. UP THERE, BY AND LARGE, WHAT WE WERE DOING WAS ESCORTING TROOP SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT SUPPORT, FIRING AT WHATEVER. I DON'T RECALL HOW MANY TIMES WE WERE ATTACKED UP THERE. WE DID NO BOMBARDMENT UP THERE.

ED

WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH KAMAKAZE ATTACKS? I KNOW THAT CAME ON LATER IN THE WAR AND I KNOW THAT THE DESTROYERS TOOK A BIG BRUNT OF THE KAMAKAZE ATTACKS. WHAT WAS THE EXTENT IN THE WAR THAT YOU HAD?

JIM

THE FORERUNNER OF THE KAMAIAKAZE WE WERE WITH SOME CARRIER. I DON'T RECALL WHICH ONE IT WAS. THIS SUCKER COME OUT OF THE CLOUD AND WE OPENED FIRE ON HIM. THEY TELL US AFTER A FASHION, THEY TOLD US QUIT FIRING, CEASE FIRE. WE WERE FIRING ON A CHICKEN, WHICH MEANT IT WAS ONE OF OURS. THIS SUCKER WOULD DO IT AND WE WOULD FIRE SOME SHELLS AT HIM AND FINALLY WE SAID,----- WE DIDN'T SAY THIS LETERALLY, BUT JUST LET HIM COME DOWN AND GET 'EM IF THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT. LO AND BEHOLD, HE DID. HE CAME DOWN AND FORTUNATELY ALL HE GOT WAS THE ANCHOR OR THE AIRCRAFT LIFT WHICH WAS ON THE PORT SIDE, THE ELEVATOR.

THAT WAS ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF IT. LATER ON, IT WAS SOMETHING TO BEHOLD TO SEE THOSE GUYS DO IT. IT AMAZES ME THAT PEOPLE CAN TEACH PEOPLE TO KILL THEMSELVES LIKE THAT, AND STILL NOT USE ANY STRATEGY. THERE WAS NO STRATEGY TO IT IN MY BOOK BECAUSE THEY CAME IN, IN A STRAIGHT LINE, ONE FOLLOWING THE OTHER ONE. HAD THEY ALL COME DOWN IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, FROM HIGH, AND DIVING RIGHT INTO THOSE CARRIERS, THEY COULD HAVE REALLY TORE THEM UP. I SAW, ONE DAY, I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY THERE WERE, THEY WAS QUITE A NUMBER OF PLANES, MANY NOT A DOZEN, MAYBE SIX, I DON'T KNOW. THEY WERE JUST FOLLOWING EACH OTHER AND SHIPS KEPT SHOOTING THEM DOWN.

ED

LIKE DUCKS IN A ROW.

JIM

FINALLY, ONE HIT. BUT IF THEY WOULD HAVE ALL BEEN COMING IN FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. THAT IS A HARROWING EXPERIENCE.

ED

WAS THE *MAURY* EVER ACTUALLY HIT EXCEPT THIS EXAMPLE OF IT HITTING THE AIRCRAFT LIFT?

JIM

YEAH. ONE I HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT. I DON'T REMEMBER WHICH BATTLE THIS WAS IN. THIS WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BEEN DURING THE EARLY PART OF THE WAR COME TO THINK ABOUT IT. I WAS ON THE BRIDGE. IT HAD TO HAVE BEEN THE EARLY FORTIES, EARLY '43 PROBABLY.

I WAS ON THE STARBOARD SIDE OF THE BRIDGE AND WE WERE BEING ATTACKED BY AIRCRAFT AND THE CARRIER WAS ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE FROM WHERE I WAS. I WAS ON THE STARBOARD. SHE IS

OVER ON THE PORT SIDE. ALL THIS FIRING IF GOING ON AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, HERE COMES DOWN FROM THE BOW, ON THE STARBOARD SIDE, A JAPANESE TORPEDO PLANE. THE GUY WITH THE MACHINE GUN, AFTER THE PILOT OF COURSE,----- I FIGURED I BETTER MAKE HER NOW. WE ARE JUST LIKE AT EYE LEVEL BUT, HE WASN'T AFTER US. WE WAS AFTER THAT CARRIER WHICH IS ON OUR PORT SIDE. THAT GUY NEVER FIRED A SHOT. HE TOOK THAT GUN AND FINALLY TURNED IT FORE AND AFT. THEY WENT ON AROUND THE STERN. FINALLY, WE GOT SOME GUNS BEARING ON HIM. YOU TALK TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND YOU GET DIFFERENT ANSWERS FROM HERE ON BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHICH PLANE, BUT, THE WAY I KNOW IT, I KNOW THIS PLANE WAS THERE. I KNOW HE WENT AROUND THE STERN. WHAT HE DID WAS, HE COULDN'T MAKE IT TO THE CARRIER. HE KNEW THAT. HE STARTED TO COME BACK TO KAMAIKAZE US AND HE BLEW UP. IN FACT, ALLCOT, THE MAN YOU SAW DOWN THERE, THE MAN WITH THE BEARD. HE STILL HAD A PIECE OF THAT PLANE IN HIS FOOT. HE GOT THE PURPLE HEART OUT OF IT.

ED

A LITTLE BIT OF JAPANESE STEEL STILL IN HIS FOOT.

JIM

I DON'T KNOW UNLESS YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS.

ED

YOU KNOW, WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT GUADALCANAL AND THEN THERE WAS WAKE ISLAND AND THEN GUADALCANAL AND THEN YOU HAD SEVERAL ISLAND HOPPING THINGS AND I GUESS YOU WERE IN THE PHILLIPINES.

JIM

OH YEAH, WE WERE IN THE PHILLIPINES

ED

AND THEN WE TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF WHICH YOU WERE WITH HALSEY DURING THAT AND THEN AFTER THAT, I KNOW THERE WAS A LOT MORE ISLAND HOPPING GOING ON. THERE WAS IWO.

JIM

NO, IWO WAS GONE THEN HADN'T IT?

ED

IT WAS TOWARDS THE END, RIGHT BEFORE OKINAWA IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY.

JIM

WELL, IF IT WAS, WE WERE OVER THERE ON ANOTHER ISLAND. I JUST DON'T REMEMBER WHICH ONE IT WAS. WE WERE MADE UP AT THE SAME TIME THAT IWO. MY WIFE HAD TWO BROTHERS ON IWO. ONE OF THEM GOT KILLED DURING IT. THE OTHER WAS NEVER THE SAME AGAIN.

YEAH, WE FINISHED THE ESCORTING IN THE PHILLIPINES WHEN WE WENT UP TO LUZON. THEN THEY SENT US BACK UP THERE AGAIN, I THINK I TOLD YOU THAT. WHAT WAS REALLY HAIRY WAS WHEN THESE KAMIKAZES WERE GOING, STARTED GOOD THEN.. THEY SENT US UP TOWARD THE JAPANESE AND WE WERE ON WHAT THEY CALLED PICKET DUTY. WE WERE UP THERE SEEMED TO ME LIKE AROUND TWO WEEKS.

ED

YOU BASICALLY WERE OBSERVERING THEM ON THE WAY DOWN TO ATTACK.

JIM

WELL,, YES, WE WERE A LOOKOUT FOR OVER THERE. FORTUNATELY WE DID NOT GET KAMIKAZIED THERE. THEY DIDN'T SEE US.

ED

WERE YOU UNDER THE SAME COMMANDER THE WHOLE TIME DURING THE WAR?

JIM

NO, THE SAD PART ABOUT IT, I JUST----- RIGHT AT THE END, WE TAKEN AWAY FROM THE CARRIERS, RIGHT AT THE BITTER END. THAT WAS A SAD DAY.

ED

WHAT WAS THAT. THAT WAS THE SUMMER OF '45 THEN?

JIM

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE SPRING OF '45.

ED

THAT'S WHEN YOU WENT BACK TO BE REFITTED OR SOMETHING. IS THAT RIGHT?

JIM

SHORTLY AFTER WE WENT TO THIS OTHER OUTFIT. WE ESCORTED, I FORGET, A BATTLESHIP FROM ONE OF THOSE ISLANDS BACK TO PEARL HARBOR. THEY HAD US OUT THERE TRAINING PEOPLE, BECAUSE THEY MIGHT HAVE TO SEND US BACK AFTER ALL THOSE KAMIKAZES. I JUST CAN'T REMEMBER ALL-----WE BOMBARDED SO MANY ISLANDS. WE BOMBARDED WAKE LONG BEFORE WE EVER TOOK IT.

WE BOMBARDED IWO JIMA.

ED

YOU GOT PULLED OFF THEN IN THE SPRING OF '45 AND YOU SAID THAT WAS REGRETABLE THAT HAD TO HAPPEN WHEN I ASKED YOU IF YOU WERE UNDER THE SAME CAPTAIN IN COMMAND. GO AHEAD AND FINISH THAT STORY, IF THERE IS A STORY.

JIM

THE ONLY SAD THING ABOUT (????? ALSTAIR) SIMS WHICH HAD TAKEN US THTHROUGH ALL THIS GUADALCANAL STUFF AND WE HAD TAKEN ON ANOTHER COMMANDER AND HE WAS ALL RIGHT.

ED

WHO WAS HE?

JIM

IT STARTS WITH A "W" BUT I DON'T RECALL. AFTER HE TOOK OVER, WE WENT BACK TO THE STATES IN '43. WE HAD WORK ORDERS THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE BEFORE THE WAR STARTED. SOME OF THEM WERE NEVER DONE WHEN WE GOT UP THERE----- I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT BROOKLYN. WE DID GET SOME SORT OF REPAIR JOB SUPPOSEDLY IN CALIFORNIA. I WENT ON A TEN DAY LEAVE IN VIRGINIA AND I CAME BACK, THEY HAD JUST WRECKED MY TORPEDO TUBES. I HADN'T PAINTED THE THINGS SINCE THE WAR STARTED. ALL WE WOULD DO WAS TO SPOT PAINT BECAUSE PAINT BURNS. THEY HAD JUST PUT A BUNCH OF PRINSONERS ON THERE AND THEY JUST SAT THERE AND PICKED FOR TWO WEEKS WHILE I WAS GONE. YOU NEVER SAW SUCH A MESS. I DON'T THINK I SHOULD PUT ON TAPE WHAT I DID.

ED

I'LL LEAVE THAT UP TO YOU.

JIM

I FINALLY GOT THE TUBES WHERE THEY WERE PRESENTABLE TO LOOK AT BUT THEY GAVE ME 16 MARK VIII WORLD WAR I TORPEDOES WHICH I HAD NEVER SEEN.

ED

THIS IS IN '43 THEY ARE GIVING YOU THESE TORPEDOES?

JIM

WE HAD TO SERVICE THOSE SUCKERS. YOU HAVE TO PUT THE WATER IN, YOU HAVE TO PUT THE WARHEADS ON. YOU HAVE TO PUT THE ALCOHOL IN AND THE WHOLE NINE YARDS I SHOULD HAVE BEEN CHIEF LONG BEFORE THAT BUT MY BIG MOUTH GOT ME OUT OF THAT. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN A PRIVATE THERE IN THAT PORT.

ED

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR BIG MOUTH. TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THAT.

JIM

WHEN I CAME BACK ABOARD, I SAW THEY TORE UP MY SHIP. AS FAR AS I WAS CONCERED THAT WAS MY SHIP,. MY TORPEDO TUBES AND ALL. WE SIT DOWN THERE IN THIS DRYDOCK AND I HAD A JUG OUT THERE ----- THE LUMBER YARD THEY HAD ON THE BEACH. BETWEEN WHERE THE SHIPS ARE, YOU KNOW A PIER. THEY HAD A ROOT BEER STAND UP THERE. I HAD MY ALCOHOL STICKING IN THIS PILE OF LUMBER AND GETTING ROOT BEER TO MIX IT WITH. THE MAN ON THE GANG PLANK, A PETTY OFFICER, SAID, "FISHER, GET OFF THIS SHIP." THIS TORPEDO SHACK WHICH IS RIGHT THERE. FINALLY, HE TOLD ME, "WELL, YOU'VE DONE IT. HERE THEY COME. HERE COMES THE OFFICER." THERE WERE 4 OR 5 OF THEM. I HAD TWO PORTHOLES IN THIS TORPEDO SHACK. I SAYS, "LET 'EM COME. I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SEA ONE THIS PORT ON THIS TUB." I CALLED MY SHIP A TUB.

ED

THAT'S SOMETHING PERSONAL.

JIM

I SAID, 'I DON'T WANT TO GO SEE ON THIS TUB AGAIN ANYWAY.'" THEY TOOK AND THEY TOOK THESE PEOPLE THAT WERE BEATING ON MY TORPEDO TUBES, WHICH I SHOULD HAVE DONE THE DAY BEFORE AND RAN THEM OFF. THEY DIDN'T SAY A WORD TO ME. WE WENT TO WORK AND GOT IT SET UP. THE DAY BEFORE WE GOT INTO PEARL HARBOR, IT WAS THE THIRD TIME THEY CAME TO ME AND SAID, :A PERSON SAID, "MAKE HIM CHIEF AGAIN." ONE GUY GAVE ME A CAP AND ANOTHER GUY GAVE ME AN EMBLEM ANCHOR. THE NIGHT BEFORE AT DUSK, BEFORE WE ENTERED PEARL HARBOR, I WAS THERE WITH THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WHICH IS NOT HERE AT THIS TIME. HE CAME BY AND HE SAW ME WITH THAT HAT ON. HE STARTED TO WALK ON BY, BUT THEN HE CAME BACK AND CONGRAGULATED ME. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN CHIEF LONG WHILE BEFORE THAT.

I WAS SO DUMB. WE HAD KEPT THE TUBES IN GOOD SHAPE. IF WE GOT A PIECE OF RUST; WHAT WE DID WAS SAND IT DOWN AND JUST DO THAT BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO PAINT THE WHOLE NINE YARDS.

ED

YOU WOULD NEED AN AWFUL LOT OF PAINT.

JIM

THAT WASN'T THE WORST PART. I FOUND OUT THAT YOU COULDN'T TRAIN THE TORPEDO TUBES. THEY HAD FOOLED ON THE MECHANISMS AND I ONLY HAD ONE THAT YOU COULD MOVE AND THE OTHERS WERE WRONG. THE SKIPPER FOUND OUT ABOUT IT AFTER WE GOT BACK TO HONOLULU. WE WERE GOING OUT ON SOME ENGAGEMENT, I DON'T RECALL. HE AND A COUPLE OF OFFICERS CAME DOWN THERE. ANOTHER OF MY SMART MOUTH STUFF. THEY HAD SOME GOINGS, WHICH I HAD NEVER SEEN. THEY HAD THEM UP IN THE OFFICERS QUARTERS. THEY DIDN'T GET ALONG TOO GOOD WITH ME. THE SKIPPER CAME DOWN AT NOON. HE SAID, "ARE WE GOING TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THE----- I WAS STANDING THERE BY MYSELF; THE OFFICERS HAD GONE AT THIS POINT. I SAID, I DON'T THINK SO." HE SAID, "WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO" I SAID, "NO, YOU'VE GOT A COUPLE OF OFFICERS THAT'S TRIED TO RUN THIS PLACE AND THEY AIN'T DONE ANYTHING."

HE RESTRICTED THEM TO THEIR STATEROOMS AND TOLD ME SO. I TOOK ALL HE GUYS AND KEPT ONE. WE CALLED HIM "TEX" BECAUSE WE WAS FROM TEXAS, A TALL DRINK OF WATER. HE WAS ABOUT HALF SMART, IF HE COULD KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT LIKE MINE. HE AND I GOT THOSE THINGS WORKING. THE SKIPPER CAME DOWN. THE PEOPLE HAD ALREADY EATEN. HE SAID, "WE'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO?" I SAID, "OH YEAH. THE TUBES ARE ALL RIGHT." HE SAID, "HOW ABOUT NUMBER ONE?" "OK" I WAS WORKING ON THE LAST AND SAID, "THIS IS THE LAST ONE." WE GOT THEM FIXED UP. ITS NOT A VERY GOOD STORY.

ED

I CAN SEE WHY YOU WOULD BE UPSET.

JIM

YOU GET SOME OF THE NINETY DAY WONDERS OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL THEM. WE CALL THEM WET BEHIND THE EARS OR WHATEVER. AND THEY JUST TAKE OVER. THEY KNOW EVERYTHING ALL OF A SUDDEN. EASIEST TO (?????) I GUESS. AT LEAST, I DID, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY.

ED

WHAT OTHER EXPERIENCES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE WITH US WHILE WE'VE GOT THE TIME?

JIM

I HAD NO INTENTION OF EVER LEAVING THE NAVY. I LOVED THE NAVY. IT JUST CAME NATUARAL TO ME. I KNEW ALL THE SHIPS, SEA. YOU KNOW, SOME PEOPLE CANNOT APPRECIATE WATER. I SEEN GUYS THAT WATER JUST SEEMED TO HAUNT 'EM, THE WAVES AND STUFF. TO ME, THE SEA WAS LIKE MY (????) AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I CHIEF. MY ENLISTMENT EXPIRED IN '43. THEY DIDN'T ASK YOU IF YOU

WANTED TO REENLIST OR ANYTHING. YOU JUST KEEP GOING, YOU KNOW.

FINALLY, I WAS WITH A GUY AND WE WERE DECODING MESSAGES. HE WAS A CHIEF COOK. HE'S DEAD NOW OF COURSE. WE FOUND OUT WE WERE GOING BACK TO THE STATES. I EXTENDED MY ENLISTMENT. I WENT UP TO REENLIST SO I WOULD HAVE THIS MONEY TO SPEND. THE GUY SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU STAY IN TWO YEARS. SAME DEAL, SAME AMOUNT OF MONEY." I SAID, "OK." THE WAR ENDED, EXCEPT MY EXTENSION WENT OUT AND THEY DECOMMISSIONED THE SHIP AND MY OWN INTENTIONS WERE TO GO OUT FOR A LITTLE FUN, WHICH I DID. I WENT BACK UP TO ROANOKE WHERE I WENT IN, I WAS TALKING ABOUT EARLIER. I SAID, "HOW ABOUT IF I REENLIST?" REENLIST, THEY HAD NEVER HEARD NOTHING OF THAT WORD. THEY HAD BEEN THERE ALL DURING THE WAR. THEY DIDN'T KNOW. THEY WENT AND LOOKED AT THE REGULATIONS AND CAME BACK GRINNING FROM EAR TO EAR: "OH YEAH, YOU CAN REENLIST. DO YOU WANT TO DO IT RIGHT NOW?" THAT WAS A LITTLE SUDDEN. I SAID, "WELL, LET ME THINK ABOUT IT." I WENT ACROSS THE STREET TO ANOTHER BAR, STAYED THERE A WHILE AND DECIDED HUH! AND THEN I WOULD GO BACK TO-----YOU ASKED ME WHERE MY HOME TOWN WAS.

ED

RIGHT.

JIM

SPEND ANOTHER WEEK OR TWO. ANYWAY, I NEVER WENT BACK IN THE NAVY. I ENDED UP GOING IN THE AIR FORCE AS A TECH SERGEANT. I ONLY LOST ONE GRADE. AS AN ORDINANCE MAN. I NEVER KNEW WHAT THAT DETAILED. I HAD COMMUNICATIONS AND ULTIMATELY I ENDED UP IN THE LOGISTICS END OF IT. I RETIRED WITH THIRTY ONE YEARS SERVICE.

ED

IS THAT RIGHT? AND WITH THE LAST PART OF IT IN THE AIR FORCE?

JIM

YEP.

ED

ISN'T THAT SOMETHING?

JIM

AND I HAVE BEEN RETIRED THIRTY ONE YEARS. I MEAN RETIRED , RETIRED.

ED

I APPRECIATE YOUR TAKING THE TIME TO TALK WITH US. I SUSPECT IF WE HAD MORE TIME, WE COULD PROBABLY GET INTO MORE DETAILS.

JIM

I'M SURE I WOULD HAVE A LOT OF STUFF.

ED

MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU ARE HERE, M AYBE WE CAN SIT DOWN AND TALK SOME MORE.

JIM

WELL, MAYBE SOME DAY. I ENKJOYED IT. I WAS LOOKING REALLY. I WAS TRYING----- I HAD SOME DATA AND I THOUGHT I HAD BROUGHT IT WITH ME BUT I DIDN'T. IT WOULD HAVE TRIGGERED MY MEMORY IN A MORE CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE.

ED IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE CHRONOLOGICAL AS LONG AS WE GOT DOWN YOUR EXPERIENCES. AT LEAST, WE GOT A GOOD START. I APPRECIATE YOUR TAKING TIME TO SPEAK WITH US. WE'LL STOP IT AT THAT.

TRANSCRIBED BY FOREST J. REES
PROOFED BY MARJORIE J. REES
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS
MAY 2010