

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR
(Nimitz Museum)

NIMITZ EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTER
Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with
HAROLD ANGEL
U. S. NAVY
USS SMITH

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

HAROLD ANGEL

This is Ed Metzler and today is the 22nd of May, 2004. I am interviewing Mr. Harold Angel. This interview is taking place in San Antonio, Texas, at the Menger Hotel. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. Let me start out, Mr. Angel, by thanking you for spending the time today to share your experiences with us and I thought I might get you started by asking you when and where you were born and a little bit about your childhood and your education and then we will take it from there.

MR. ANGEL: I was born in Allen, Texas, and went to school the first year in Allen, Texas.

MR. METZLER: Date of birth?

MR. ANGEL: Date of birth was 9-29-1918. I was born out on a farm in Allen, Texas. I moved to Plano, Texas, the following year after going to first grade in Allen and finished high school there. My dad ran a dairy. I worked in the dairy from the time I was six years old until he sold the dairy. I went to work for the ice company in Dallas in the summer and started to Texas A&M. I went to Texas A&M three years.

MR. METZLER: What year did you start Texas A&M?

MR. ANGEL: In 1936. I had a rough time going. I had eighty dollars and an extra pair of drawers and socks and the rest of it I had to make it whatever I could. I had no help from home at all because I was the oldest child and we just didn't have the money, the

depression and everything else on. I ran out of money and everything else and decided to try to go into the Army Air Corps.

MR. METZLER: So this was after how many years at A&M?

MR. ANGEL: Three years.

MR. METZLER: And what were you studying at A&M?

MR. ANGEL: Engineering, mechanical engineering. After that I tried to go into the flying cadets.

MR. METZLER: So you tried to get into the army and you did.

MR. ANGEL: I did, briefly. I washed out in a few days after I was in there. Then I went down to the navy and hit them up and they had a pretty good story but it never did materialize.

MR. METZLER: Didn't materialize?

MR. ANGEL: No, it did not. I went through boot camp at San Diego.

MR. METZLER: So where did you actually join the navy?

MR. ANGEL: In Dallas.

MR. METZLER: In Dallas, and then you said goodbye to the family and headed to San Diego.

MR. ANGEL: Headed to San Diego.

MR. METZLER: How did you get there, on a troop train or...

MR. ANGEL: We went on a train. There was a bunch of recruits, ten or fifteen of us from Dallas going, Dallas and surrounding area going to San Diego.

MR. METZLER: This is in 193?

MR. ANGEL: 1940. Of course, I joined the navy in I believe it was October 14th in '40. I finished boot camp there and tried to get into navy aviation which was my choice but they didn't see fit so I didn't get in. Then I was sent to the USS SMITH but we had to stay at the destroyer base for a month or so before they took us out there.

MR. METZLER: This is in San Diego?

MR. ANGEL: San Diego. In fact, I didn't get on the ship until January 4th, I believe it is.

MR. METZLER: Where was the USS SMITH assigned at the time?

MR. ANGEL: It was assigned at Pearl Harbor the whole outfit out there at Pearl Harbor.

Right before the war started we came back to Mare Island for an overhaul and just finished overhaul and had a shake down cruise when December the 7th came and the war started. Our first assignment was we took three Matson Liners with troops on it to Pearl Harbor. We turned around and came back and picked up nine freighters. They were coast freighters. None of them had radios or anything on them and it was kind of like herding sheep. We got them out to the, the fastest one was eleven knots so the rest of them were eight and nine knots. It was a chore to get them out to Pearl Harbor.

MR. METZLER: So you were running escort duty basically for these.

MR. ANGEL: We were running circles around, us and another destroyer were running circles around to keep the subs off. We hit one submarine. At the time we don't know if we sunk it or not, we dropped depth charges on it with the freighters.

MR. METZLER: What was your assignment on the SMITH at this time?

MR. ANGEL: Well, I first went on there as a recruit. I was assigned for about two weeks to the deck force. Then Chief Engineer, Mr. Halstead, saw my record that I had experiences in engineering and running ice plants, etc. He asked me to go into

engineering. So I went in there as a Fireman 3rd Class. He didn't really have anyone on the ship that was familiar with refrigeration equipment. He had a guy with sixteen years navy experience but he had them all messed up. I was able to get around and get them straightened up for him so it helped me on up the ladder on the deal.

MR. METZLER: So this was working on the refrigeration equipment?

MR. ANGEL: Yes.

MR. METZLER: What was that ammonia?

MR. ANGEL: No it was Freon 12. They had two one-ton compressors and then they had the scuttlebutts and refrigerators, a couple of those. Then we had a brine tank where we made ice. We made two fifteen pound blocks of ice. They hadn't worked in no telling how long. Well, I got those to going where we had ice, the crew had ice. It helped me to get promoted.

MR. METZLER: Good. When were you promoted?

MR. ANGEL: I don't remember but I went up as fast as they'd let me until I got first class.

MR. METZLER: So you're Fireman 1st Class at this point?

MR. ANGEL: I was fireman 1st class, let's see, I had to have three months in before I got fireman 1st class, I believe it was. Then I went to second class. I had gotten married when I went home on boot camp and I was anxious to get to be second class Machinist Mate because I could get an allotment. You had to be second class or above to get allotments so my wife could get an allotment.

MR. METZLER: An allotment meaning a payment of some sort.

MR. ANGEL: Yes, extra payment. I got in on the allotment deal. I tried to learn every piece of mechanical equipment they had on the ship. I didn't go ashore a whole lot. I had all the machinery manuals and everything like that to study. I went ahead and put in a correspondence course on my engineering. The navy helped me put that thing in to finish my degree. I got a paper but it would have been better to have gone back and finished A&M but it helped some. I think I made a mistake by trying to learn all the machinery because I didn't get transferred.

MR. METZLER: They needed you too much.

MR. ANGEL: Well, they had eighteen months rotation and that didn't apply to me. If the captain didn't want to let you go, you didn't go. I got in pretty well with the doctor on there that went to the marine aviation part of the marine. He tried to get me in the marines but the captain wouldn't sign it.

MR. METZLER: Why were you trying to get a transfer?

MR. ANGEL: I wanted to go in aviation in the Marines.

MR. METZLER: You still wanted to be a flyboy.

MR. ANGEL: I wanted to be a flyboy. I loved flying but it was all my fault that I didn't get to go but that's the way it was. I had some experience with it and I thought I could fly anything with wings and a stick in it. They didn't like that so well.

MR. METZLER: They didn't like that approach. Now the SMITH was doing convoy duty back and forth between the mainland and Pearl.

MR. ANGEL: We did that for awhile and then we convoyed the battleships for a little bit there. Then we got to convoying freighters out to different islands.

MR. METZLER: Tell me about convoying the battleships now. Where were they going and which ones were they?

MR. ANGEL: Well, they had what was left of the old battleships out there, the ones that weren't sunk, and they didn't go much anywhere really. We were out doing a few maneuvers with them and the first real action was Wake and a bunch of those places. We went with some cruisers and things out there and then we got in I believe it was called the 7th Fleet there. The destroyer would go wherever they needed him whether it was one freighter going somewhere or what so we were on the go all the time nearly.

MR. METZLER: Tell me about going with the cruisers to Wake Island.

MR. ANGEL: As they sunk one of the carriers over there. We didn't really didn't go to the island but it was off of Wake there, had that battle off of Wake there. The Japs had lots of planes then and we didn't have very many. We had a little bit of aircraft we shot at and got credit for a submarine out there one time.

MR. METZLER: So you mentioned cruisers that you were convoying.

MR. ANGEL: Cruisers, they're a lot larger ship than a destroyer. We were with the PORTMAN and three or four more out there the PENSACOLA I believe and I don't know various ones of them.

MR. METZLER: So there was some combat then off of Wake Island? Tell me about that or were you down below the whole time or what?

MR. ANGEL: Well, I wasn't down below. I kind of made another mistake before the war started. We had Captain McAnerny(sp?) and he was on there. He had the idea of moving people around to do other people's jobs in case they got hurt. I got on the sound gear. With the engineering and math stuff I was able to track a submarine before the war.

We were playing with our own subs I was able to track them pretty good on there and so I got that as a battle station. Then when the war broke out the radar had come out and we were the first destroyer in the navy to get a radar. Some of those battleships that had been sunk, the radar was supposed to go on it and they put it on the SMITH. I was sent to a week radar school there for that.

MR. METZLER: At Pearl?

MR. ANGEL: No, that was in San Francisco or we were out close to Mare Island. I went to a week of that and I stood that battle station then for a long time. So I hated the job. I hated the sound, it was boring. From then on I went into damage control because I could weld and I could repair equipment or whatever, you know, and I did that the rest of the war. The rest of the time I was on the SMITH. I was on damage control back aft when we took that plane on. The Japs kept thinking our depth charges would go off like theirs. They used gun ??? and we used TNT and our depth charges had to go through and make contact, straight through it or you couldn't explode them. Just shooting to them wouldn't explode them. They'd always try to strafe back there and the Japs would come over and strafe the rear departments a time or two...

MR. METZLER: Now this is at which battle now?

MR. ANGEL: That's in Santa Cruz.

MR. METZLER: Can we go back and you tell me how things happened going into Santa Cruz?

MR. ANGEL: Okay. We went into Guadalcanal before that.

MR. METZLER: Tell me about Guadalcanal.

MR. ANGEL: We went into, that was before we got hit, Guadalcanal and we escorted some freighters in there.

MR. METZLER: From Pearl?

MR. ANGEL: Well, we met them out there in the Pacific and brought them in there and we stayed in there as artillery support for awhile. Then we were in the battle of Salvo Island, where we lost three cruisers, four destroyers and two British ships. We were in that battle.

MR. METZLER: So this was after your visit to Guadalcanal?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, before we went to Santa Cruz.

MR. METZLER: Tell me what happened then at Salvo Island.

MR. ANGEL: They had a big hearing on that thing. I was still on radar at the time that happened. They knew that the Jap armada was coming in there but they didn't think it could be there until the next day. They had us out on lookout because we had a radar; we picked them up and we reported it to the fleet. I don't know what was said but what I got from the captain is they probably said we were nuts. They couldn't possibly be there or whatever but they were there. They weren't even at general quarters. At the battle of Salvo Island the Japs opened up on one side and the English opened up on the other side shooting.. The English always ten miles out of position shooting at the wrong target. We were kind of in the middle of that mess. They sunk a Jap battleship that night or put him out of commission but dive bomber had to put him down off of Guadalcanal. We saw that. We lost the PORTLAND, VINCENCE, ASTORIA cruisers at that battle.

MR. METZLER: Where was the SMITH while all this was going on?

MR. ANGEL: We were running circles around that thing just about. We were on the other side of Guadalcanal picked up those Japs. Then we come back around the British opened up on us.

MR. METZLER: How did we stop them from shooting at us?

MR. ANGEL: A couple of torpedo shots. They were sunk. They were light cruisers. They had a big hearing about it. I had to give a testimony about picking up the radar contact on them and that's all I had to do with it. It was a hush, hush deal.

MR. METZLER: When did all of this happen?

MR. ANGEL: That was early '42 I guess it was.

MR. METZLER: That was right after it happened then. It was an inquiry. Did they come onboard to interview you?

MR. ANGEL: No, we went into Pearl. They had that in Pearl Harbor and all I did was go before it and they questioned me and out the door. So what happened inside I don't know.

MR. METZLER: But you know what you saw on the radar screen.

MR. ANGEL: I know what I saw. I saw the images of these ships, the blimp on there that was coming in and that's all I testified to. What took place between our captain and the admiral and all that, I don't know. I wasn't interested in knowing, really.

MR. METZLER: So a lot of damage done to the cruisers there.

MR. ANGEL: Three of them sunk, four destroyers.

MR. METZLER: And all done by aircraft or by?

MR. ANGEL: No, it was a night gun battle. Like being in a honky tonk and everybody shooting I guess.

MR. METZLER: Tell me what that was like.

MR. ANGEL: It was kind of hard to know what was going on really. You didn't know who was shooting at who.

MR. METZLER: Were you on damage control or were you still down in the...

MR. ANGEL: I was still on sound. My battle station was sound. I didn't get off of sound machine until Captain Mac Inherney left the ship.

MR. METZLER: So your captain was Captain Mac Inherney. Do you know how to spell that?

MR. ANGEL: I don't remember. He took a liking to me when I went on shore and we had it in the navy yard in Mare Island there. We bought an old ship's service car because I could work on automobiles I had to go everywhere that old car went. I think we gave eighty dollars for it.

MR. METZLER: What kind of car was this?

MR. ANGEL: It was a big old Nash, had a twin ignition, had a distributor about so big, mechanical brakes. It had jump seats come out, big old limousine-type car. It gave so much trouble I had to chauffeur it most of the time, carry a few tools.

MR. METZLER: That was back when you could work on cars.

MR. ANGEL: Yes it was back when you could work on cars. That was before the war started we had that. That's where I kind of got it in with Mac Inherney who took a liking to me.

MR. METZLER: So during the battle of Savo Island you were down on the sound gear.

MR. ANGEL: Up behind the bridge on the sound gear.

MR. METZLER: Were people wanting to know what you saw on the sound gear?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, the bridge was right in front of me just bulk in between us. Oh, yeh, we kept them, even the captain came back there and I showed him the pick up.

MR. METZLER: So you felt like you were right in the middle of the action.

MR. ANGEL: I was right in the middle of that. When Captain Mac left Hunter Woods came on there as captain. They had an ensign that didn't have any use for me, I guess, and I didn't have any use for him either. He came up with a pair of barn yard boots on, had his gun and his can of sardines like he was going to abandon ship, you know, in battle. When we got hit he did, he went right over the side of the ship.

MR. METZLER: So this was at Santa Cruz?

MR. ANGEL: Santa Cruz, yeh.

MR. METZLER: So what happened in between Savo Island and Santa Cruz? Where was the...

MR. ANGEL: Well, we escorted the carriers and we made several runs up and down there a bunch of freighters and whatever, mostly escort duty.

MR. METZLER: Come under fire?

MR. ANGEL: Well, yeh, we'd come under at night those Japs, we pulled in there one time they were dropping one bomb every hour. They were up so high you couldn't reach them with five inch guns. They weren't doing any damage but it was aggravating.

MR. METZLER: This was while you were where?

MR. ANGEL: Yes.

MR. METZLER: Where was the ship when this was happening?

MR. ANGEL: It was after we had this battle of Salvo Island around Guadalcanal between Guadalcanal and Tulagi and out in there. We carried merchant ships in there.

MR. METZLER: So after that, then, came upon the battle of Santa Cruz? Is that correct?

MR. ANGEL: Yep.

MR. METZLER: Tell me what happened going into that.

MR. ANGEL: Our planes off the ENTERPRISE and the other carrier was, we were with the WASP, don't know whether it was the WASP or the HORNET, but we weren't with them. We had to kind of split two task forces. They were over quite a ways from us and our planes went in and hit the Japanese fleet. The Japanese fleet planes came in and hit us and they sunk either the HORNET or the WASP. They sunk that other carrier with them. The day before they hit us, the PORTER was a big division destroyer and it had eight destroyers under it, the paymaster and everybody was on it. The water was full of submarines so a submarine I torpedoed it and it went down. A little later on the next day...

MR. METZLER: Did you see that happen?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh.

MR. METZLER: Tell me what happened.

MR. ANGEL: Well, we saw this explosion. They were coming up quite a ways behind us there. We saw this explosion and it was sunk pretty quick. We didn't send any rescue deals but some of the other destroyers sent in there and they rescued the people. About the next day when we got hit, first let me go back a little more. Our planes came in that night to the ENTERPRISE. As they flew over in moonlight you could see holes in some of their wings, they were landing there. We picked up a few pilots that didn't make it in out of the water, we rescued them. Then the next day they had those planes fixed up and went back out after the Japs and the Japs came back after us. The air was full of torpedo

planes, dive bombers and Zeros strafing. We shot up a bunch of them. Anyhow, the next day a submarine for what reason a Japanese submarine whole conning tower and all came out of the water on our starboard side.

MR. METZLER: About how far away?

MR. ANGEL: I'd say he was maybe a quarter of a mile out there, he wasn't very far.

Our five-inch gun knocked the conning tower off that thing in nothing flat. We sunk that submarine, I'm sure. Then all those planes come in there, they were dive bombing, strafing every thing else. That's when I had to go down and plug those holes in the after living compartment. I was on damage control at this time. I'd gotten off that radar thing. I'd plugged those holes up as fast as I could and I started back out the hatch and as I come up somebody rattled the lockers again, somebody else had come by and shot a bunch more holes in us back there. I plugged them. It was awful dark down there and I wanted out of that hole.

MR. METZLER: Tell me about plugging these holes up. Tell me what you plugged them with and where they were.

MR. ANGEL: Well, what they were they were machine gun holes and we had sacks of hardwood tapered plugs and a hammer and that's what we plugged them up with.

MR. METZLER: So these above the water line, below the water line?

MR. ANGEL: Well, some of them were right at the water line, some could go below or whatever. Most of them were above the water line that we had to plug but some of them the water was coming in. You plug them all because that can is half under water half the time back and forth. I plugged them and as I started out the hatch they kind of machine gunned it again and I went back and plugged them. I started up starboard side of the ship

and I saw this torpedo plane water mark 20 mm guns were stripping him apart, he was on fire. He dove right in front of the bridge there by the guns and all hell broke loose with that stuff going off. That's where we lost so many people.

MR. METZLER: So that torpedo bomber was coming in for the SMITH you figure.

MR. ANGEL: No, no, he was coming in for the ENTERPRISE. We were on the starboard side of the ENTERPRISE. We were running escort duty. In case you put a torpedo in the water, our duty was to take that, either blow it up or take it, not let it get to the ENTERPRISE. He went in there on that gun and I guess I was one of the first ones up to the fire there.

MR. METZLER: So where were you when it hit?

MR. ANGEL: I was about halfway up starboard side of the ship going forward. We had been passing some ammunition forward. We had more ammunition back aft than they did and I was on the back going to help with the ammunition up there when we got hit. So I went up there, Ensign Lord, the engineering officer there, and I was the first ones up there and that stuff was still blowing. Went down and flooded the magazines, the forward magazine. Two men in the magazine came out and they had sense enough to dog the hatch down behind them so the water wouldn't come up in the mess hall.

MR. METZLER: Let me see if I understand you. You're intentionally flooding the magazine so it won't explode.

MR. ANGEL: It was blowing out the top of it there, the shells coming up that magazine. It was on fire and so when I saw that they had a remote control deal, a rod that run down through there to flood that thing, so I went down and flooded the magazine.

MR. METZLER: When they capped it off at the top it closed the hatches

MR. ANGEL: It closed the hatch behind (both were talking at the same time.

Transcriber could not understand either of them)

MR. METZLER: So then what?

MR. ANGEL: Well, everybody was trying to do what they could. The old captain did say abandon ship 'cause I heard him say that.

MR. METZLER: So he thought she was going down?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh.

MR. METZLER: What was the captain's name?

MR. ANGEL: Hunter Woods.

MR. METZLER: Hunter Woods. He was the new captain after captain Mac.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, he was the new captain.

MR. METZLER: So tell me what happened then. You were talking to me about this earlier.

MR. ANGEL: We got it patched up and went down to New Caledonia there and worked a couple of days fixing it up so we could get back to Pearl.

MR. METZLER: Tell me more about when the captain said to abandon ship.

MR. ANGEL: Oh, a bunch of them was jumping and I looked over the side and there wasn't any way this country boy was going to jump over and get them screws eat you up, you know.

MR. METZLER: I'd rather stay on board.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh. Myself and some more boys we put the fire out plus the help with that wake that came over from SOUTH DAKOTA.

MR. METZLER: The wake from the SOUTH DAKOTA. She was close by?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, see they were running a zig zag course. They zigged and we didn't zag or anything else. We were going straight because nobody was steering. That destroyer being as small as it was and the SOUTH DAKOTA being a battleship, the wake was pretty high. So we run the bow right through that and a whole lot of that water came over the bow helped right up front.

MR. METZLER: Helped put the fires out.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh.

MR. METZLER: Okay, so then what happened? Some of the men have jumped over board and you chose not to and the fire was put out, so now what?

MR. ANGEL: Well, one man took over on the fan tail back there and was hollering orders down to the steering engine how to steer it. As soon as we kind of got the fire out they got the bridge to working again, got all the power back to the bridge so we could get it to working. We steered it on down to New Caledonia down there.

MR. METZLER: Did the guys that went overboard get rescued?

MR. ANGEL: No.

MR. METZLER: Why?

MR. ANGEL: Well, the only thing I know about that some of my best friends was on the deal but the ^{Cushing?} cushion, when I went to work for International there was a man who worked for me was on the cushion. He was on gun one on the cushion which was a sister ship to us, and they were right behind us. He said that they steered through all these people in the water on these life rafts and everything and asked the admiral for permission to pick them up and so many submarines out there they wouldn't let him stop. We were in the middle of submarine and aircraft at the same time.

MR. METZLER: Which admiral are we talking about?

MR. ANGEL: I don't remember the admiral's name. I did know it but I've forgotten it.

MR. METZLER: So nobody could pick the guys up because of the fear of taking torpedoes from submarines.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, the PORTER has already been sunk on torpedo. I don't know what happened to them. When the war was over I contacted all I could in the navy intelligence trying to find out if any of them was picked up. So far they said no. There were islands out there but a long ways off from them. How they made out or what I don't know.

There was twenty-eight men, I wish I had brought that book. I've got names of all of them in it. My wife said you don't need that thing so I didn't bring it.

MR. METZLER: So now you've got the bridge operating again, what happened then?

MR. ANGEL: We went on down to Noumea. There was a beachy French island and they surrendered as we came in. There was a Jap ship in there taking on nickel and they sunk it, they scuttled it when they saw us coming. They surrendered. There wasn't anything to going in there, they didn't want to fight at all. So we worked in there a few days. Some other ships came in there and we transferred. We had a bunch of people that were burned bad and wounded and we didn't have much facilities to take care of them. We had one doctor on there. He had never served his internship and one pharmacist mate. We did the best we could. We had four or five people that died a day or two later after the deal.

MR. METZLER: Still aboard ship?

MR. ANGEL: Still aboard ship. We had a proper burial for them. We didn't have proper burial for the ones that were, just had to clear the deck on that. It's terrible.

MR. METZLER: So, then what?

MR. ANGEL: Well, we went back to Pearl. They had cut the deck and two guns off of a destroyer that was sunk during Pearl Harbor and fixed them and had them all in red lead and had two cranes up there with them hanging up here. So they cut the deck and the guns off of us and welded that on there and we hooked up.

MR. METZLER: Just like getting a new hip, huh, they just put a new part on.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh. We were promised to go back to the States. My oldest daughter was eighteen months old before I ever saw her. She was born right after the battle of Santa Cruz and I thought I was going to get to see her. There was a new destroyer that came into Pearl Harbor there with a messed up ice machine. So our engineering officer bragged to the guy on that can that he had a man that could fix them things. So they sent me over there and I worked two days on that. This captain come down and said, I was first class then, "I'll make you chief tomorrow if you'll transfer over here." I said, "No, sir, I'm going back to the States. We're going back for leave and recreation. I appreciate it but rank don't mean that much to me." Well, they run out and ran aground and they couldn't fix that at Pearl Harbor so they went back to the States and we went back in their place.

MR. METZLER: So that plan didn't work out so well, did it? So you never made it back to the States to see your daughter then, is that right?

MR. ANGEL: She was eighteen months old before I did. From there after we got fixed up there, we made some more runs more escort duty and first one thing and another and then we went to New Guinea. We run up and down the coast of New Guinea seemed like forever.

MR. METZLER: What was your assignment at this point? You were still damage control?

MR. ANGEL: I was damage control and I was first class in charge of the A Division on the ship. That took care of machine shop, refrigeration, anything anybody else didn't want to handle.

MR. METZLER: You guys got it.

MR. ANGEL: I stood my duty in the engine room. I knew the engines real well. In fact on my watch I was chief of the engine room.

MR. METZLER: So what kind of engines did the SMITH have?

MR. ANGEL: They were made by Dealer Valve and they had forty-eight thousand horsepower. We had three turbines on each engine, had a high pressure turbine, a low pressure turbine and intermediate turbine. Each set was on a different shaft, had two shafts coming out. You could steam about fifteen knots running parallel, in other words putting steam into the high pressure into the intermediate pressure and then into the other one. You ??? the steam down, we had about 650 pounds of steam rushing in there, super heated steam, but you could run fifteen knots there and you got pretty good fuel economy. When you got into wide open you run the high pressure steam through the big turbine and through these other two together so you had steam going in and that would use about three times as much fuel.

MR. METZLER: But she was good for how many knots, do you know?

MR. ANGEL: We could make about thirty-two or thirty-three knots depending on which crew you had in the fire room the engine take a little more. We had four boilers, two fire rooms.

MR. METZLER: Tell me what it was like being on a destroyer. Destroyer is a small light weight ship.

MR. ANGEL: Crowded, too.

MR. METZLER: Crowded. Did you always feel crowded, did you get to know everybody well? How did it work?

MR. ANGEL: Well, you knew people pretty well maybe didn't know their names. About the most we very had on there was two hundred people. At the beginning of the war we had a hundred and ten. That ship was three hundred and forty some odd feet long and about thirty feet wide and it was crowded conditions. When I first went on it I thought it would take forever to learn it, how to get around that, but I could have gotten those engines going blindfolded.

MR. METZLER: So what did you have, a hammock to sleep in or a cot?

MR. ANGEL: No, we had bunks on top of each other. I slept in the machine shop most of the time.

MR. METZLER: A little more comfortable down there, huh?

MR. ANGEL: Well, the machine shop was right up above the engine room there. In the machine shop we had a lot of tools and had the lathe and we had a millerette(?) and grinder and a bunch of that stuff that we did repair work with and had a big work bench that was just about real good to sleep on.

MR. METZLER: Kind of firm, I bet.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, it was kind of firm but, you know, a pretty tough ole boy then.

MR. METZLER: That's right. That was it. What was the food on board when you weren't right in the middle of a battle or something?

MR. ANGEL: Well, at times the food was pretty good. We got down in New Guinea and it got terrible. We didn't have a tender down there and the army couldn't transfer us anything, the Australians couldn't,. We got down to eating beans and rice twice a day for awhile down there and liked to starve to death. We even raided the Australian camp one night to steal some of their groceries and we got nearly a boat load of pie juice, couldn't see what you were getting.

MR. METZLER: Tell me a little bit more about that going down there and swiping things from the Aussies.

MR. ANGEL: Well, it was a way of life. When we were out there in New Guinea we got our mail in Doba Dora(sp?) which was twenty-nine miles from Buna and we didn't have a vehicle. Some of them people wouldn't loan you a vehicle but a seven key and a coil wire and a rotor you could steal anybody's jeep in the country. Borrow that jeep and go down there and get what you're gonna loot bring it back don't put it back in the same place but leave it there. You did what you had to do.

MR. METZLER: So you went down there .

MR. ANGEL: I didn't like it to start with but we never did run out of beans and rice.

MR. METZLER: Well, at least you never got down to K rations.

MR. ANGEL: K rations would have been welcome.

MR. METZLER: Is that right?

MR. ANGEL: That's right, K rations or C rations either one. Once in awhile you would get a batch of that. That was welcome over that beans and rice, I guarantee you that. I thought K rations was like eating really up town.

MR. METZLER: That's goodies.

MR. ANGEL: I got down real thin and everybody else did, too.

MR. METZLER: What did you think about the officers and leadership that you were given?

MR. ANGEL: I was under four different captains and Captain Mac was a good one and Capt. Theobald was a good one, and Hunter Woods was the sorriest. Well, we had another guy by the name of Huff, he was dumb as all get out. We had some good officers on there, some real good officers but we had some bad ones. I guess you got that anywhere you go.

MR. METZLER: That's the way it is almost everywhere.

MR. ANGEL: It is. Well, I'm not going to tell it, I pulled a trick on Hunter Woods but I don't want to talk about that. Some of his relatives might hear about it.

MR. METZLER: Okay, it's up to you. So let's go back then to, I'm trying to remember where we left off on the story of the SMITH. She was down in New Guinea. Did you mention New Caledonia?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, New Caledonia is out there, it was a Vichy French Island. That's where we went from Santa Cruz battle. We went in there to make repairs. Espirito Santos and all that was in there. We got the presidential unit citation in McKay, Australia.

MR. METZLER: Tell me about that.

MR. ANGEL: Well, after the battle of Santa Cruz somebody wrote up a pretty good story on that thing and they had us come to Brisbane. We went to McKay one time for four or five day leave and recreation. We went down to Brisbane and the admiral came aboard there and presented a Presidential Unit Citation.

MR. METZLER: And this is a citation for bravery during...

MR. ANGEL: It was a citation for keeping our positions. We shot down several planes while the rear guns kept going. People on the rear guns kept blazing away and they gave a Presidential Unit Citation; everybody that was on it at that time got a copy of the citation. Frank Knox wrote me a letter on the deal and I also got the Silver Star on the battle of Santa Cruz.

MR. METZLER: So at the presentation all hands were up on deck and listened to the speeches.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, and they pulled that at Brisbane.

MR. METZLER: How did you feel about that?

MR. ANGEL: I thought it was nice. It didn't buy any groceries but it was a nice deal to have. We had a pretty big write up on everything in the deal and they had it in the newspapers back in the States and all that. We went into McKay, Australia, one time for leave and recreation for four or five days.

MR. METZLER: What was that like?

MR. ANGEL: It was a pretty nice little ole place.

MR. METZLER: Is this near Brisbane?

MR. ANGEL: It's between Brisbane and a round to Sydney on down south around the coast there. Got that stern put on our ship down there.

MR. METZLER: What were the Aussies like?

MR. ANGEL: Aussies pretty good people. We took a bunch of those Aussies and made some landings with a bunch of them up and down the coast.

MR. METZLER: Just practicing, you mean?

MR. ANGEL: No, not practicing.

MR. METZLER: Oh, you're talking about the real thing.

MR. ANGEL: I'm talking about the real thing. Those Aussies are good fighters. They cussed like they weren't going to fight when they got there but they were anxious to get off as soon as the Japs opened up. They were all up and down the coast of New Guinea. Several times we took Aussies in to make landings with them. We'd go in and escort them in and the boats off some of those green hornets would carry them in to the beaches. They were alright. Aussie people were tough fighters. I had no use for the English but the Aussies were good people.

MR. METZLER: Why no use for the English?

MR. ANGEL: I think they're dull, they're stupid. Their ships were filthy, go down in the bilges on them and it stinks like everything.

MR. METZLER: When were you on British ships?

MR. ANGEL: Right before the war started we were in Mare Island there and the German pocket battleship down off the coast of South America there got in a fight with those two cruisers. They came around into Mare Island and they fixed them up there in Mare Island Navy yard. That was before the war started. Those people came in. They had not buried those people at sea; they just closed them up in a compartment. The admiral of the yard made them take them out to sea and bury them and clean it up before they would even start to work on it. Those ships were so filthy. A time or two I got a chance to go on one. I went on a French ship, too. One time out of, I've forgotten where we were, but we came across a couple of cruisers, French cruisers. See French surrendered to Germany and these cruisers came around. They gave us about a month old signal; they weren't up

on the signals. So the admiral had us send a boarding party aboard those cruisers and they were filthy ships, too. They even had their cattle and chickens and stuff on that thing. It was terrible.

MR. METZLER: I guess they had fresh meat and eggs.

MR. ANGEL: They had fresh meat and eggs, yeh, but they didn't clean up after them very good. I went on a British ship and I went on a French ship and compared to the American navy, it was terrible. That was one thing I was proud of in the navy, you kept stuff clean or your butt was trouble.

MR. METZLER: So after you leave in McKay and your citation presentation in Brisbane, then what?

MR. ANGEL: After that we went back to New Guinea. We went up and down the coast of New Guinea and made a landing on New Britain; we made a landing on Admiralty Islands and on in. I left the ship at Saipan.

MR. METZLER: So the SMITH's duty there was picket duty to protect the big ships and support the landing, or what?

MR. ANGEL: We'd take those LSTs in, run those LSTs up on the beach when high tide. We stayed out there and patrolled until high tide comes back and they could get them unloaded and float them again and get them on out of there.

MR. METZLER: So you were just off shore then.

MR. ANGEL: Just off shore, up and down the shore.

MR. METZLER: Any firing into the shore positions of the Japanese?

MR. ANGEL: Well, a time or two but most of the time it was the Japs coming over the mountain strafing and bombing and first one thing and another like that.

MR. METZLER: So the SMITH was strafed and bombed several times?

MR. ANGEL: One time we made, I thought everybody was crazy on that, we went in from Buna up to Lea, New Guinea. At that time it was all under Jap, so the air force was supposed to have knocked out their planes. We pulled in that bay up there, it was all lit up and planes were coming in landing. We were sitting out there in their bay right amongst them. They waited until all the planes got landed, we turned our guns loose on them. We had that whole thing burning, their ammunition, their oil supply, the planes and everything else over there. Then we made a run for it. The cruisers, Japanese cruisers, come in from up above and they had us cut off and the planes from Finchhaven was bombing us that night. A squall line come in, we went out under that squall line and slipped out. I said I'd never gripe about the weather anymore.

MR. METZLER: You were never gonna complain about the weather again.

MR. ANGEL: No, and I haven't.

MR. METZLER: How come they didn't notice the SMITH earlier until you'd done the bombing and everything?

MR. ANGEL: I don't know. I can't tell. You know you get pretty nervous pulling into the enemy port. You see them out there working and planes coming in landing.

MR. METZLER: Was the SMITH alone?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, we were up there alone with nothing else. I didn't think we'd get out of there. I didn't think it was possible. All we had was a bunch of shrapnel on deck. They were dropping those anti personnel bombs, bolts, nuts and junk. It was all over us the next day, but we got.

MR. METZLER: So those were being dropped by...

MR. ANGEL: Aircraft. Aircraft came in from Finchhaven, about a couple of hundred miles up the coast there.

MR. METZLER: Finchhaven?

MR. ANGEL: Finchhaven, New Guinea. We got rammed up there, I told you about that. We got the stern turned on the ship.

MR. METZLER: You didn't tell me about that, tell me.

MR. ANGEL: Well, we were up there bombarding the northern end of New Guinea there, the Japs. I guess it was pretty hazy everything but another destroyer rammed us up there.

MR. METZLER: American destroyer, by accident.

MR. ANGEL: American destroyer by accident. What it did, the starboard depth charges, two of them 600 pounders went down and then it blew and it shook everything a going and coming. Two more were laying over the side with a three-inch angle arm where they were welded to the deck. The rest of it was pulled loose and it was all twisted up in that thing. So took cutting torch and cut that three inch angle iron and let them go, too, so we lost all four starboard 600-pound depth charges on the ship. I know A Division our cutting torch was just maybe a hundred feet up the deck from where that happened and another guy and I ran that cutting torch back there and cut it off. About the time that we got it cut off the captain sent word down there to be sure to use a hacksaw to cut that thing off with a three-inch angle iron. He wanted to know why we didn't. I said the navy didn't own enough hack saw blades to cut that thing off, that thing twisted. About fourteen inches from where the depth charge was where we cut it off, it didn't hurt anything. It didn't take long either.

MR. METZLER: What destroyer clipped you on the side?

MR. ANGEL: I think it was the HENLEY but I'm not sure about that.

MR. METZLER: HENLEY?

MR. ANGEL: I think it was, I'm not sure now. I've got it down on paper somewhere. I've slept a few days since I got out of the navy.

MR. METZLER: So that's when you got the new stern repaired down in Sydney.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, down in Sydney.

MR. METZLER: So you've been to Sydney also.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, we were down there ten days when we getting that square stern put on there.

MR. METZLER: So the stern was different than the original one?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, it rounded out. We didn't even go into dry dock to get that. They did some under water welding, just cut it off even and just put that big 1/4 inch plate on there and welded it on there. We had a compartment in front of that where steering engines fit and that void space. About the only thing we had in there was all our gas masks and maybe a few life jackets and things like that. It was just kind of a storage area.

MR. METZLER: So after you got the new stern on then it was back up for action.

MR. ANGEL: Back up to new Guinea and the Admiralty Islands and New Britain and Saipan and on.

MR. METZLER: So Saipan was again supporting the landings.

MR. ANGEL: We were on several of those landing deals supporting gun fire. Saipan I guess was the worst one. That was the only place that I saw women and kids killed.

MR. METZLER: How did you happen to see that?

MR. ANGEL: After we had bombarded that thing for a long time we went over there on the beach and there they were.

MR. METZLER: So you were on the beach then?

MR. ANGEL: Well, we went on the beach over there. They'd put a man over there for fire control director, just tell you where to shoot. And we had gone over for that and the Marines had gone in there, too.

MR. METZLER: Saipan was tough.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, it was tough. You know there were a lot of innocent people killed in that war.

MR. METZLER: That's the truth.

MR. ANGEL: I don't think there were very many innocent Japs. I guess if Harry Truman and I had our way about it there wouldn't have been any seed left to build all this junk that they build. A man shouldn't feel that way about it but I saw some things that they did that was pretty bad.

MR. METZLER: Like what kind of things.

MR. ANGEL: I saw some forty mutilated Australian troops. I saw a nurse that came off of Bataan that was mutilated and pregnant. You see that and you want to...

MR. METZLER: You saw that when you were down in Australia.

MR. ANGEL: Not in Australia, up and down. We met Mac Arthur when he met the PT boats out there when they come in, but later than that we saw him down in Australia. I had no use for Mac Arthur. He had the biggest publicity thing of anybody.

MR. METZLER: When did you see Mac Arthur?

MR. ANGEL: When we were down in Brisbane getting our Presidential Citation he was down there. They were making a film of him leading troops aboard to make a landing. They had all kinds of movie cameras and everything else out there and people making splashes and these old hats up and a whole bunch behind him and all that going in. I got back to the States if I'd had a gun I'd have shot the screen down. They were showing all that junk.

MR. METZLER: So he was making movies while...

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, making publicity. He went to the Admiralty Islands up there but he made that movie showing said it was a movie of Admiralty Island, he wasn't up at the Admiralty Island, we made the thing up there. We went up there with four tin cans and three of the green hornets and five hundred troops to make the original landing on the Admiralty Island. They said there was five hundred Japs on that island. They killed two thousand the first two days. The air force come in and bombed it, battleships stood out there with those, only time I was ever in action with a battleship, stood way out there and you could see those shells coming over, hoping that gyrope was working alright, they didn't get down on you.

MR. METZLER: Tell me about those shells coming in.

MR. ANGEL: That battleship shell you could see that thing going through. We could get in close to the beach that destroyer, they're a way out here and they're shooting over us.

MR. METZLER: At least you hope over you anyhow. Can you hear them coming?

MR. ANGEL: Oh, yeh. You can hear them and you can see them. They're going pretty fast but you can see them.

MR. METZLER: You can see them at night but can you

MR. ANGEL: You can see them in daytime. In fact when we made the landing, we made that landing early in the morning and you could see them. There was one B-24 come in and he come over us. He opened his bomb bay and something malfunctioned because all his bombs and bomb racks all come out in one deal, just went tumbling. I thought sure it was going to hit us but it made the beach.

MR. METZLER: That must have been a good explosion.

MR. ANGEL: It was.

MR. METZLER: That was the whole load in one pop.

MR. ANGEL: Whole load in one pop.

MR. METZLER: You sure seen a lot of things.

MR. ANGEL: Even those PT boats would come up, they had torpedoes on them. They had no means of air pressuring them up. We'd air pressure those things up for them. We had on our ship twelve torpedoes; one in the center, and two sides and you put 4,000 pounds of air pressure in that thing and that air pressure starts that turbine until that turbine lights off and it burns that alcohol and goes off. We fired twelve of those one night.

MR. METZLER: Ever hit anything?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, we were too close to a Jap battleship for the one on the starboard side to go off. That was the battle of Salvo Island.

MR. METZLER: So you torpedoed the Japanese battleship?

MR. ANGEL: Didn't do any good though. The next morning they were just floating, they weren't shooting or anything. Of course that's when we lost all those carriers and

stuff up there. That water around between Tulagi and Guadalcanal is full of ships, Japs and ours.

MR. METZLER: That's iron bottom sound, isn't it?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, that's a terrible deal up there and what they wanted with Guadalcanal I don't know. I wouldn't have given fifty cents for the whole.

MR. METZLER: Yeh, Guadalcanal is not considered a tourist paradise.

MR. ANGEL: No, it's not.

MR. METZLER: So were you on Guadalcanal?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh.

MR. METZLER: You had some shore duty.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, we took some messages and things over there.

MR. METZLER: So after Saipan then, what happened?

MR. ANGEL: After Saipan I come home. I didn't come home I got a plane into Kwajalein. Then I had to take one of those Liberty ships into Pearl Harbor and I got from there into Treasure Island.

MR. METZLER: So did you have enough points or whatever it was?

MR. ANGEL: No, they sent me back to General Motors training center. I'd been trying to get off there for a long time. I made 1st class machinist mate and they didn't rate us a first class motor machinist mates, so I took the exam and changed over to first class motor machinist mate. That's the way I finally got off the ship.

MR. METZLER: So you were headed to GM training center. Tell me about that.

MR. ANGEL: Well, I got in up there before Christmas, I guess in November, and I think it was six weeks of it.

MR. METZLER: So which year are we talking about, '44?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, it was '44. I left there in February of '44 and went to Miami.

MR. METZLER: What took you to Miami?

MR. ANGEL: They sent me down there. I studied pretty hard and I thought I was going to get to be an instructor there. They said whoever made the highest grades would get to be an instructor. I had a little advantage over most of those people the fact that I had three years of college and I had gotten my other credits through correspondence. I made the highest grade but they sent me down there to Miami. They had those Chinese they brought in there to turn those destroyer escorts over to. So I taught them for awhile and that's where I wound up getting out.

MR. METZLER: I'm a little confused. So you never went to the GM school?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, I went to the GM school for six weeks.

MR. METZLER: And that was where?

MR. ANGEL: In Cleveland.

MR. METZLER: In Cleveland and they were teaching you about the big engines there. Is that correct?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh.

MR. METZLER: And then from there you were down in Miami.

MR. ANGEL: Went to Miami from there.

MR. METZLER: I see.

MR. ANGEL: That's where I had the Chinese down there.

MR. METZLER: So we were training the Chinese and giving them some destroyer escorts so they could help in the resistance against the Japanese.

MR. ANGEL: Either that or against their own people. I don't know who was going to get what in that deal. That destroyer escort had four of those sixteen cylinder 278A engines, they were diesel electric and you could run one, you could run two or you could run all four of them or whatever. The electricity went into the motor to run the electric motor to turn the screws. I don't know how many of them they turned over to them. They were going to turn over some. They had a deal that they were offering. They offered to make me a deal that would make me an ensign if I'd go to sea on one of them with a Chinese crew to teach them. I'd got paid by the Chinese and American navy, too.

MR. METZLER: Did you take them up on that?

MR. ANGEL: Heck no, I didn't take them up on that.

MR. METZLER: Why not?

MR. ANGEL: I didn't trust them people.

MR. METZLER: Why not?

MR. ANGEL: The only way I'd gone there was if they had flown the American flag. We had those Chinese down there when the war was over and they tied themselves in their bunks and all that stuff because lend lease money the Americans paying them and the Chinese paying them, too. I couldn't trust people like that.

MR. METZLER: Tied themselves in their own bunks?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, they had a big riot up there in Miami on that deal. That made up my mind. Of course, they offered to shoot some of them, sent some back to China and all that, but that kind of people I didn't want to go with them. Besides I had had enough of it.

MR. METZLER: I imagine by this time you're pretty much feeling like you've seen just about everything.

MR. ANGEL: Yep, I'd seen all I wanted to see. I was lucky. The only time I ever got any shot in me was when there was fighting in the forward Santa Cruz from that explosion. I didn't get enough in me kinda like getting shot with bird shot. All the hair off my eyebrows and my arms up here was blistered off and my eye was blistered pretty bad but I was not hurt. We had people that were in bad shape, had a doctor. My best buddy had to put him over the side. We went in the navy together. He lived in Garland, Texas, which was right close to me. We went in together and that was one of the hardest things I ever did was talk to his folks.

MR. METZLER: I bet. So you talked to his folks when you got back. That's not easy. So you were released when?

MR. ANGEL: I was released December the 14, '45.

MR. METZLER: Where were you when you knew the war was over?

MR. ANGEL: I was in Miami.

MR. METZLER: That's when you heard about V-J Day.

MR. ANGEL: Yep.

MR. METZLER: So was there a lot of celebrating going on?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, I wound up with a hat with some scrambled eggs on it. I don't know how. I'd been working that garage when it was over and I was trying to get back to a room in a hotel. The navy had taken over a bunch of hotels downtown there and used them as receiving ships, you know. I was getting back and I heard the war was over and

people just out there in the street hollering and everything else. Somebody grabbed my hat and stuck one with a scrambled egg on me. I don't know. It was a mess.

MR. METZLER: But at least it was the time to celebrate.

MR. ANGEL: Time to celebrate, yeh.

MR. METZLER: How did that make you feel?

MR. ANGEL: Oh, man, it was wonderful. I was glad to get home. I went in and they hollered to essential personnel. I had the Silver Star, Navy Cross, Congressional Medal of Honor. You were supposed to be able to demand a discharge and I had the Silver Star and, of course enough points to get anybody out. They hollered "essential personnel" and I wrote Sam Rayburn a letter and a little after they started discharging. I got nearly discharged the first go around but they stopped it. About six weeks later I got out. Sam Rayburn wrote a letter in.

MR. METZLER: So you wrote a letter to ole Sam Rayburn, huh?

MR. ANGEL: Yep.

MR. METZLER: Do you think that's what made the difference?

MR. ANGEL: I'm sure it was because he demanded. I told him everything I could think of about my time in the navy and the fact the way that thing read any person receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor, Navy Cross, or Silver Star could demand a discharge when the war was over. That was written in black and white. It didn't say anything about calling "essential personnel" or anything like that. The ole captain down there threw a fit. He said, "Did you go through Navy channels?" I said, "No, sir, I didn't go through Navy channels. I put it in the post office." He raised a big fuss. He said you can't get a job with all these GIs are going to work. I got a job before I got home.

MR. METZLER: Doing what?

MR. ANGEL: I come by a Ford garage down there and they said "Mechanics wanted." I stopped, went in there and got a job. My tools were still in Miami. I got a job before I got home.

MR. METZLER: This was a job?

MR. ANGEL: Mechanician.

MR. METZLER: Located where?

MR. ANGEL: In Dallas. I did it there for awhile and then I went to work for International.

MR. METZLER: International Harvester?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, I worked there thirty-five years and two tenths.

MR. METZLER: That's a long time.

MR. ANGEL: I took early retirement because they were sending me everywhere. I ran a shop for them. At one time International Harvester had two hundred and fifty-six company owned dealerships. They finally went away from that and sold them out to individual run dealerships. I worked in Dallas, Wichita Falls, and then the last eleven years I worked I traveled five states.

MR. METZLER: Lots of travel.

MR. ANGEL: Well, I only handled major accounts and I did work between the fleets and the factory. Those trucks were used for a lot of different things and a lot of engineering goes on. Everybody don't get the same kind of truck, you know, especially oil field deals. Most of my stuff was oil field. I had six hundred and forty trucks going to Halliburton at Duncan and I was doing all the engineering work on that and I had been

over to Saudi Arabia, been in Algiers twice, Iraq once, and Egypt once. And they told me I was going over there for three months and I said, Uh uh,

MR. METZLER: I'm out of here.

MR. ANGEL: I had my eighty-five points and my age plus my time served to draw full retirement.

MR. METZLER: That's good. Looking back on your experiences on the SMITH during World War II how do you feel like that changed you as a person?

MR. ANGEL: Well, I'm not sure. I guess I've always been a little bit high strung. I wound up hating the captain on there for some of the stuff. I just hated him for thirty years til I met him down in San Diego, and I saw on our first reunion what kind of wreck of a man he was thirty years after it happened. I really couldn't say. I got a lot of experience. I was real interested in the machinery on the thing and I actually knew every piece of machinery on that ship. I don't know that didn't hurt me none. I never was one to drink and run around so a lot of them did. A lot of them turned out to be dope heads and drunkards and first one thing and another and I always figured what little sense I had I had better take care of it.

MR. METZLER: Save what you've got, huh:

MR. ANGEL: Yeh.

MR. METZLER: When you think back on your experiences, can you pin point any humorous situations?

MR. ANGEL: Oh, yes, there was a lot of humor.

MR. METZLER: Give me a couple of examples, if you can think of any.

MR. ANGEL: Oh, we had a lot of them. One thing that was really humorous. I was running chief of the engine room and I had an oiler and we were not getting any groceries to amount to anything out there in New Guinea. I sent this oiler, the forward scuttlebutt on that ship the water was cooler than it was on aft. So I sent him up there after a pitcher of water for the engine room crew. Officers had gone over to a Dutch freighter and bummed a turkey off of them and this Filipino had fixed that turkey and dressing all up and had it on a platter. It was right at dusk and he came out of this thing of course lights go out when you're coming in and out of those places. He come out and the oiler grabbed that platter. It was hotter than the devil and he come running down the deck and I was up at the top of the hatch getting a little air. He said, "Take it, take it, sonofagun's hot." So I took it and put it in the reduction gear. A friend of mine that went to school at A&M was an officer on there. He and I were in the same company engineering going to school down at A&M. He didn't know nothing about that engine room crew but come down there and he went all around. I knew what he was looking for. I put that turkey down in the reduction gear where he couldn't find it.

MR. METZLER: You say reduction gear, this is kind of...

MR. ANGEL: Behind the engines they have a reduction gear and the shaft and there's a big void space down there. So that's where I put that thing. He came up and sat down and said, "Harold, morale on this ship's terrible." I said, "Yeh, I know it. If they don't get something to eat besides this beans and rice it's going to be worse than that." He said, "They don't want the officers to eat either." He told me about going and getting this turkey. He said, "Somebody got that and threw it over the side." I said, "Nobody would

be that stupid, throw that thing over the side.” Well, of course, as soon as he left we broke it out and then we ate and threw the platter over the side.”

MR. METZLER: Was that a good turkey?

MR. ANGEL: Yeh, it was a good turkey, dressing and everything was good.

MR. METZLER: That may have been the best meal you had.

MR. ANGEL: The best meal we’d had in a long time. We had some funny things happen with different deals. You get to talking to some of these ole boys at these reunions you think nothing was done but just stuff like that.

MR. METZLER: They remember all of those stories.

MR. ANGEL: All of those stories they remember, yeh.

MR. METZLER: While we are talking, are there any other experiences or things that you would like to take the opportunity to put down?

MR. ANGEL: Probably are but off hand I can’t. My wife says that’s all I talk about but it’s not. Well, we shot a deer down there in New Caledonia and the captain wanted to know if the season was open. We’d just taken that island under martial law. I said, “Yeh, I’m head of the game department.”

MR. METZLER: And it was in season, wasn’t it?

MR. ANGEL: I think it was in a park. I mean there was a whole bunch of them out there.

MR. METZLER: What kind of deer was this?

MR. ANGEL: It was a big ole deer. I don’t know what. We were in a whale boat.

MR. METZLER: Was it pretty good eating?

MR. ANGEL: It was good eating. We caught lots of fish. Every time we were anchored out there around those reefs around New Guinea and all those islands, somebody started throwing hooks over the side catching fish. We come out of New Caledonia there one time, that was after we had been up in New Guinea, we'd gone back down to New Caledonia. They had us out there on sub watch, had anchor down and didn't have a net around the ship, the fleet was in there, to keep a sub from coming in. Water was full of fish. Everybody that had a line was pulling fish in so chief commissary cook got all the mess cooks out and they were cleaning fish. I guess we had enough for a week or more. We really had the fish piled up out there. Everything was going fine until one of them mess cooks threw a tubful of those heads and guts over the side. Sharks and barracudas so thick you couldn't sink them.

MR. METZLER: Is that right?

MR. ANGEL: Yep.

MR. METZLER: Well, the fishing was over.

MR. ANGEL: Fishing was over. We used to catch those ole sharks. I found out how to handle them. We'd take a fifty-foot piece of quarter-inch wire liter and made a hook in the machine shop and a five gallon oil can and about three hundred foot of three eights line, three or four big sailors can handle any shark. That oil can wore them out, you know, bring them up to the top of the water and shoot them.

MR. METZLER: And do what with them?

MR. ANGEL: We did eat some of them. A lot of people at Guadalcanal were killed by sharks, lots of people. We'd come back to Pearl Harbor and went to a lecture up there a

guy said sharks wouldn't attack you. He told the wrong people. You'd see them swirling around there with an arm sticking out. It was terrible.

MR. METZLER: Okay.

MR. ANGEL: We pulled a lot of tricks. The main trick I pulled on the captain was doctoring his fuel.

MR. METZLER: Tell me about that.

MR. ANGEL: Maybe I ought not put it on there.

MR. METZLER: Okay, so you're ready to not be recorded anymore.

MR. ANGEL: Yeh.

MR. METZLER: Okay. First, let me thank you Harold for spending the time to share your experiences with us and this will be an excellent addition to our library. Thank you again.

MR. ANGEL: Okay.

Transcribed April 18, 2012, by Eunice Gary.