

# **National Museum of the Pacific War**

*Nimitz Education and Research Center  
Fredericksburg, Texas*

*Interview with Richard Rowe  
U.S. Navy*

# Interview with Richard Rowe

## Interviewed by Ed Metzler

This is Ed Metzler and today is June 1, 2005. I am interviewing Mr. Richard Rowe. This interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies. Archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Parks and Wildlife for the preservation of historical information related to this site. Let me start out, Dick, by thanking you for spending the time today to share your experiences with us and coming all the way down here from Ohio to do that. That really makes us feel good that you were willing to do that.

**Mr. Rowe:** You're welcome.

**Mr. Metzler:** Let's start out by having you officially introduce your self with a little bit about your childhood, who your parents were and then we will take it from there.

**Mr. Rowe:** I'm Richard S. Rowe. My father was Ennis (?) Marion (?) Rowe and my mother was Cora Elizabeth Newton (?) -Rowe. I was born in Van Wert, Ohio on April 17, 1919.

**Mr. Metzler:** What was the name of the town?

**Mr. Rowe:** Van Wert, two words. V-A-N W-E-R-T. That was back before people went to the hospital for births. Folks were living in Finlay, Ohio, but mom wanted to, my grandparents, for the occasion. I finished the first two elementary grades in Finley. My parents then moved to Greensburg, Indiana where the tree grows on the courthouse tower. We lived there for eight years; moved to Frankfort, Indiana and started high school there in 1933; graduated in 1937. I went to Purdue University, General Engineering as an in-state student because my father was on the extension staff there and it cost me practically nothing to go to Purdue. It was only twenty-five miles away from home. Then I laid out a year because I wanted to go to the University of Illinois and that would have been out-of-state tuition and this was just, right after, the Great Depression and money wasn't too plentiful. I worked my way through the next three years taking ceramic engineering at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. (?) During my senior year, is when Pearl Harbor occurred. I finished my senior year.

**Mr. Metzler:** Tell me how you heard about Pearl Harbor and what the reaction was by everybody?

**Mr. Rowe:** I was at home that weekend. I was sitting with my girlfriend in the Roxie (?) theater in Frankfort, (?) Indiana and after the feature was over the manager came out and said the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor. Well, there was dead

silence. You didn't know what to think. Then you got to see the pictures, and so on, of the carnage that was caused by that sneak attack. I got married, let's see, in October of '42 and late, probably, in August of '43, I read somewhere where the Navy was looking for radar officers. So I volunteered for that.

**Mr. Metzler:** So what were you doing between Pearl Harbor and when you got married? Were you still in school?

**Mr. Rowe:** Well I graduated in June of '42. Then I went to work for a refractories (?) company in Templeton, Pennsylvania making bricks (?) that were necessary to make steel for the war effort. I was accepted as a volunteer for the Navy. About that time, I was called up by my draft board back in Indiana, I was living in Pennsylvania and I said, "Well, I just volunteered for the Navy and I've been accepted. I think I would do more good in radar than I would as a grunt in the Army." They said they would give me a couple of three weeks to get the permanent response from the Navy, which I received and I was commissioned an Ensign, as of October 1, 1943. I was sent to Cornell University, learning how to be a Navy officer. I'm not a ninety-day wonder; I'm a one hundred and twenty-day wonder. That's thirty days better. I finished that and was sent to the fleet gunnery school in Norfolk, Virginia. I think that was two months. Then sent to fire control school in San Diego, California. My wife was with me all three places. I shipped out on the *General U. N. Scott*, (?) with about three thousand Navy boots, headed for the Pacific.

**Mr. Metzler:** Now, this is what, a troop ship?

**Mr. Rowe:** A troop ship. We had, there were four of us that had went through these schools together and the wives were friends and one of them had a car, so they drove back to their respective homes, one in Chicago and one in Terre Haute, Indiana and, I forget where the other one was, but they were all close together there in the mid-west.

**Mr. Metzler:** Now when you shipped out, did you know where you were going, or what you were going to be doing?

**Mr. Rowe:** Negative. Had no idea. One of my buddies knew I got on the ship, but he didn't tell Pat, or the other wives. He was very secretive. We went to Pearl Harbor and then we went to Eniwetok where I joined the *Remey*. One interesting thing, you know, as you leave San Francisco, there is a ground swell. I ran into an enlisted man there and he said, "Sir, how do you feel when you start getting sea sick? You have, kind of, a spinning sensation?" I said, "Well, check with me in the morning." And we both were.

**Mr. Metzler:** So you both experienced it?

**Mr. Rowe:** When you're really seasick, you are afraid you're going to die and you're scared you won't. I did have one interesting.....on this ship. If you started below decks on the port side, you wind up in the head on the starboard side, down two or three, and vice versa. I was wearing one of these, just the life belts and you squeeze the prongs together, and I missed it, just wedged, just going in between the partition, two partitions to get to the stool. I hung up there about, maybe, about three seconds. That's how close I came to putting (unintelligible). But anyhow, at Eniwetok, we pulled in there.....

**Mr. Metzler:** So how long were you in Pearl? Just long enough to.....?

**Mr. Rowe:** Just a couple of days. Something like that.

**Mr. Metzler:** The same ship, or.....?

**Mr. Rowe:** Yes, yeah. No. I changed ships. I was assigned to another one and was put in with a commander; I'm an Ensign, and there was another higher ranked officer that thought he should have been in there to, and probably should have been. But this is where they told me to go and he accepted that. So I had pretty good quarters on the rest of the way to Eniwetok. We pulled in there and, it's kind of, a figure eight shaped atoll. One of the anchorages was all supply ships and the other were all combat ships and you look out through all those cruisers, all those battlewagons, all the carriers, the CVS, CVLs, the DDs and you wonder, "How do the Japs think they are going to beat this Navy?" It was fantastic to me to see what was there. It had been long enough for Henry Kaiser to be turning out his supply ships, one a day, or what ever they were.

**Mr. Metzler:** Liberty ships.

**Mr. Rowe:** Liberty ships. Anyway I boarded the *Remey*, climbed up the ladder; I don't know how my gear got on board, but when you climb the ladder, you're supposed to climb it on the side instead of, like you do, on a normal ladder. I had forgot that, but I made it.

**Mr. Metzler:** So what was the designation of the *USS Remey*? That is R-E-M-Y?

**Mr. Rowe:** R-E-M-E-Y.

**Mr. Metzler:** E-Y, ok, let's get it right. Was she DD?

**Mr. Rowe:** 688.

**Mr. Metzler:** 688.

- Mr. Rowe:** She was the squadron flagship of the Destroyer Squadron 54 under the command of Captain Jesse, J-E-S-S-E, Coward, which he was not. He was a Commodore. They had just come back from Saipan-Tinian. When I joined, the next thing, we left Saipan for Guadalcanal.....in September of '44 we were steaming with an amphibious group of the Third Fleet on route from Guadalcanal to Palau.
- Mr. Metzler:** How did you get to Guadalcanal from Eniwetok?
- Mr. Rowe:** I was on the ship. I didn't walk.
- Mr. Metzler:** That's right. But, that's where she went after you joined her?
- Mr. Rowe:** Yes. We bombarded Vabelthaupt, V-A-B-E-L-T-H-A-U-P, in the Palau Group. That was my first experience with hearing guns go off and I'm a gunnery officer. I'm wondering how I'm going to act. You hear those five inch crack.....
- Mr. Metzler:** Which guns, then, were you an officer of?
- Mr. Rowe:** Well, when I first joined the ship, I was assistant fire control officer. I was in the Combat Information Center where the computer was. It was about the size of this table, all mechanical, designed by a fellow named Ford, as I recall, who shortly thereafter, went crazy. True story. One of the fire control schools, I guess it was, in San Diego, the chief, who was instructing us, said, "Well now you don't want your fire control man to walk....you don't want to walk in and see him in the computer room with his arms up to the elbow into it's innards." But the next day, I walked into the computer room and here was the chief.....(laughs) .....
- Mr. Metzler:** With his hands in the innards?
- Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. But anyway, shortly after that we left and we assumed some screening stations in a unit landing troops on Angaur Island, A-N-G-A-U-R. Then we left Angaur for Manus and the Admiralty Group. From Manus, with a unit of the Seventh Fleet, on route to the Philippine Islands, the Seventh Fleet, we entered Leyte Gulf at 2200 on October 19. Then we were maneuvering to land, screen landing craft, landing in the D-Day assault. What sticks in my mind was the Jap Southern Fleet coming up through Surigao Straits. They were met by a group of PT boats, which didn't do too much damage. Captain Coward, who I said was not a coward, he volunteered our squadron to make a night torpedo attack in Surigao Straits, which we did at three o'clock in the morning. We fired our fish, laid a smoke screen as we were executing that classical Naval maneuver known as, "getting the hell out of here." But we laid the smoke screen for the other four ships in the squadron. We made more speed after firing our fish than she did under full speed trial when she was brand new. This was with barnacles

on her hull. Fortunately, the Japs did not use parallax correction. Their guns, the first time I saw the flash of black powder from our fish, they knew where they were then. They had been searching the strait and passed over us with their searchlights on the, while we were waiting for them. Those who were topside, said that the first salvo straddled us. If you know what parallax is, it should have been pulled in to the right and one to the left and vice versa, so that it hit the target. But they kept straddling us all the way out. We had a battlewagon; we got credit for a battlewagon and a cruiser, I think.

**Mr. Metzler:** Was it pretty close range?

**Mr. Rowe:** I was watching on the computer, below decks and seemed to me it was around 12,000 yards when they fired. So it was plenty close for their big guns, as far as that goes. We, immediately, after getting out of the danger zone, went to, had a submarine patrol off of Little Hibuson Island. I finally got permission to come topside just about dawn. In the meantime, Admiral Oldendorf had made a semi circle. The Japs were coming up. All his force had to do was pick a point out there in the water and wait for the Japs to steam into it. When I come topside here is stuff coming this way and, occasionally, one coming back.

**Mr. Metzler:** We talking about rounds?

**Mr. Rowe:** What looked like tracers. One of the crew teased, "You could drive a jeep across then tracers." You just about could. They weren't tracers.

**Mr. Metzler:** They were the real Mc Coy, Huh?

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah, they were the real Mc Coy. So then that was the beginning of the battle of Surigao Straits. Halsey, of course, was pulled off on a fake, going north, which was the famous.....

**Mr. Metzler:** The famous northern route that he took.

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah, and he left the one entrance to San Bernardino Straits unguarded. That's when the little escort carriers took a, *Gambier Bay*, took a whale of a whipping and the destroyers that were with it.

**Mr. Metzler:** How close was the *Remey* to all of that, when all of that when that was going on?

**Mr. Rowe:** Well, we were in the Leyte Gulf. I don't know, the attack on those jeep carriers was, maybe, five, or six, miles away from us. We couldn't see what was going on. We did pick up a crew of a TBF torpedo bomber, which had been shot down, and they were in their yellow life raft. We didn't have anything to do, and I didn't have anything to do, so we were assigned to pick the crew up. I'm leaning over the rail and there is this pilot, southern accent, looks up at us and

said, "Boy, shore am glad to see you all." (laughs) We got him, and his crew, on board.

**Mr. Metzler:** Old Alabama boy, or something like that.

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. And there was one thing about picking up a flyboy, as a destroyer we two flavors of ice cream, vanilla and chocolate. The carriers had several. So there was a great deal, a bunch of the crew to decide they had to give a quart of ice cream per man to get the pilot back to his carrier. Plus he lost his parachute, all his flight gear. One of my room mates wound up with a parachute and I don't now how many hours he spent stripping the threads on that bringing it into the individual panels. But anyhow, I don't remember what flavor they decided on, but we picked up several along the line that would come in for a landing and, just played guard duty. They would come in from the port quarter and on the starboard quarter; we'd be there in case there was any trouble. Somewhere along in there, we picked up, our combat patrol, picked up three Marine land based pilots who didn't have enough fuel to get back to their base. So, our boys said, "Follow us." And the word come along, well here's three corsairs that have never made a carrier landing, so everybody was on the alert. The first fellow, all he was just a dot on the horizon. He came in on a long, slow glide. He was about sixty feet above the deck and the landing officer was giving him the wave off. He cut the engine and just dropped down forcibly and the arresting gear held him.

**Mr. Metzler:** So he hooked something?

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah, for some reason he had a tail hook. The second fellow did a little better, but he still was thirty, or forty feet off the back when he cut it. But the third guy, whoever was in charge of flight operations, told one of ours, "You fly around and make the upwind approach and show him how to do it." And he came in and made a landing like he had been carrier trained.

**Mr. Metzler:** Is that right?

**Mr. Rowe:** He got a, "Well done," from the, whoever the commanding officer was of the group of ships.  
There was another interesting.....

**Mr. Metzler:** So the *Remey*, excuse me, was close by the aircraft carrier then, when all this was going on?

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. We had, we took our turn at plane guard.

**Mr. Metzler:** And which carrier were you linked up with there? Or was it a variety?

**Mr. Rowe:** It was a variety. We'd have, maybe, four Essex class, two CVLs. At one time, when I got to be with the thirty-eighth point five, they had the night fighters on board. Flush landing lights around the outline of the deck. Somewhere along the line they needed an extra strike. A group from one of these carriers, who had never made a night landing, volunteered. They took off. The regularly trained night fighters could get as high as five, or six, wave offs before they make a landing. But these fellows, there were five of them in this flight; there were five approaches and five landings. Perfect! They got a well deserved, "Well done," from the task group commander. There, that's a little bit ahead of chronology...

**Mr. Metzler:** That's all right.

**Mr. Rowe:** I'm just calling up things as they come to mind. Part of being a destroyer and being on the screen was, as a submarine patrol, and I know we were on a couple of those. I don't know which of the several destroyers who dropped their depth bombs on this Jap sub, but there were parts of human beings that came to the surface as a guaranteed kill. A little bit of Navy humor, the word came a long that part of these remains was of a human rectum, possibly the skipper. (laughs).

**Mr. Metzler:** So that one was definitely a kill.

**Mr. Rowe:** That was definitely a kill.

**Mr. Metzler:** So how many kills do you remember for submarine, anti-submarine, just that one, or more.....

**Mr. Rowe:** That's the one that sticks out in my mind. When we were with the Seventh Fleet, they were slow. The speed of advance was maybe, maximum, fifteen knots. You patrolled a station in the screen; you maybe did twenty knots and just went back and forth, maintaining your position on the guide. But you were at a faster speed than the group behind you. Maybe you had a hundred, various types of amphibious classes standing ten rows across and ten deep. One night I had to, I was JO, pouring rain, well, what you had last night, I understand. The OD said, "Why are you standing out here with your binoculars, because one of these LSTs was right on our fantail." Whether his radar was out, I don't know. But I stood out there for four hours to see that he didn't run into us. One other time, the landing craft lost a screw. So, we slowed down a little bit and installed a new screw, while they were underway.

**Mr. Metzler:** I didn't know you could do that.

**Mr. Rowe:** Well, I didn't know either, but they did. Again, I'm getting a little out of sequence, we were crossing the equator and the old man said, "Attention all hands. We are crossing the equator. So when the condition watch on the



fantail of that bridge. (?) The darn thing is caught in the screw and we're just stretching it all out of shape." (laughs)

- Mr. Metzler:** Wasn't there some sort of a special ceremony, or something, when you cross the equator, or at least, the first time you cross the equator. What was that all about?
- Mr. Rowe:** I don't remember what they are, but when you cross the International Date Line and when you cross the Equator, I've got the certificates for both of them here.
- Mr. Metzler:** OK. They issue you a certificate.
- Mr. Rowe:** They go through a whole lot of initiation like. On a larger ship they might have done. But, I am a polliwog and I forget what the other one was. We crossed the equator several times.
- Mr. Metzler:** Now when you mentioned this LST was right on your fantail, you as a fleet were headed for a landing of some sorts?
- Mr. Rowe:** We were headed to the Philippines.
- Mr. Metzler:** Ok then. So this is coming up on the landing of the Philippines?
- Mr. Rowe:** The landing at Leyte Gulf. Bringing General Mac Back.
- Mr. Metzler:** I was going to say, the Corncob King.
- Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. "I have returned."
- Mr. Metzler:** So tell me about that experience. What went on there?
- Mr. Rowe:** Well, we were laying back far enough that, I can't say that, I actually saw him wade ashore; all I had was the radio reports. I think he did it once and then he went back for the cameras.
- Mr. Metzler:** I have heard that, yes.
- Mr. Rowe:** Anyway, he got back on shore. He kept his word.
- Mr. Metzler:** Was there much enemy resistance on that landing?
- Mr. Rowe:** When you're out on the ship, you can't tell what's going on the shore. But, from what you read and so on, there had to be.
- Mr. Metzler:** Had the Kamikaze become a factor by that point in the war?

- Mr. Rowe:** Not at that point, but shortly thereafter. When we left Leyte and steamed toward Mindoro, Tokyo Rose called the names of our ships and said, "You're not going to make it where you're going."
- Mr. Metzler:** Including the *Remey*? Did she mention the *Remey*?
- Mr. Rowe:** Oh yeah. This was the whole group of us. Fifteen, or whoever there were of us, but our whole squadron, at least. So I went down and opened up the package. That dang ship wasn't good as....(unintelligible) as something you see in that picture.
- Mr. Metzler:** You received your Christmas package early that year, huh?
- Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. But as we got into see Mindoro, I saw the first Kamikaze and he hit the can and that's when the war became personal. But, it was Iwo where they were terribly effective. We suffered more loss in the Iwo campaign, from the picket ships, that, I think, all the rest of the Naval engagements of the entire war.
- Mr. Metzler:** Let's pick up the chronology here then. After the landing at Leyte and we got General Mac back into the Philippines, then where did the *Remey* go?
- Mr. Rowe:** Well, we were.....let's see.....we returned to Hollandia, New Guinea in the last of October, in the middle of November, we returned to Leyte Island and then departed then for arrival for Manus Island. Then we were on our way from, in December, from Palau with a carrier task group of the Seventh Fleet to provide air cover for the landing on Mindoro. We were alerted, repeatedly, for air attacks. The attack on the Sulu Sea by suicide planes and splashed two of these. Then we departed Mindoro and went back to Palau.
- Mr. Metzler:** So, tell me about the Kamikaze attacks on the *Remey*, if there were any, and how that got personal?
- Mr. Rowe:** There wasn't an attack on the, Kamikaze attack on the *Remey*, per se. We were, the closest we came, I don't remember what this formation was and we were in charge of the screen on Task Force 38 and 58 and we were steaming on hull (?) square, a nautical mile on the side. They were headed north and on the southeast corner, would have been the *Missouri*; and just recently there was a story, at least in our Columbus paper, about her taking a Kamikaze off of Okinawa. Her bow was practically overhanging our stern. I would be a capital ship, a destroyer, a carrier, another destroyer, then either a BB, or a CB. We had the *Guam* and the *Alaska* and the *Wisconsin* and the *Missouri*, at all times. When we changed from the Third to the Fifth Fleet, we got an Iowa. The other fleet, we had an extra Essex Class carrier.
- Mr. Metzler:** I'm trying to keep up here. I've got Seventh Fleet, Third Fleet and Fifth Fleet. Is that right?

- Mr. Rowe:** Well after the Philippines, we were assigned to the Third and Fifth Fleet. The only difference was they changed a battlewagon for a carrier. The rest of us stayed out there. But the newspapers would say, "The Third Fleet has gone back to port and the Fifth Fleet is out there in the Pacific. They changed Admirals and Flagships. So, Third and Fifth Fleets are practically synonymous. Anyway, by this time, I'm a machine gun office and I'm standing on the flying bridge, the same level as the Director and I'm looking down the mast and the two stacks and right into this Kamikaze, who had gotten inside the square and was coming along the starboard side of the *Missouri* when he peeled over, just forward of the bridge. His bomb, fortunately, did not go off. The Squadron, Task Force, commander, the TVS said, "*Missouri*, are you hurt?" "No. We put that one in our hip pocket. Sweepers, man your brooms. Clean sweep down, fore and aft." Anyhow, if he had peeled into the *Missouri*, because she was there, I am here. Because there was nothing, I couldn't give the order to commence firing my after guns. The captain was saying, "Cease firing. Cease firing." I hadn't given the order to.....I couldn't stand there and order firing into the *Missouri*.
- Mr. Metzler:** No, that wouldn't be good.
- Mr. Rowe:** I might have been court martialed.
- Mr. Metzler:** That would make for interesting headlines.
- Mr. Rowe:** Yes. So I took the coward's way out and didn't order any. But, I figured that my gunner's mate, in charge of those after guns, they got a clear shot, they would fire.
- Mr. Metzler:** So the Kamikaze aircraft went in the drink then, close by, or?
- Mr. Rowe:** Yes. He just crumpled when he hit something as big as that *Missouri*. Those Jap aircraft were not as sturdy as ours and ours wouldn't withstand that kind of....
- Mr. Metzler:** So where did he hit the *Missouri* again?
- Mr. Rowe:** One of her forward five inch mounts, just forward of the bridge. Just peeled into her about main deck, deck level.
- Mr. Metzler:** But she didn't explode?
- Mr. Rowe:** No. Bomb didn't go off. There was one other time when they could have been a Kamikaze and he flew across, oh, about over our two stacks. I'm stationed, at this time, this was earlier in the chronology, I'm on a director's station, on the

second stack, and he cut across there and he grins as he goes by and I can see his gold tooth.

**Mr. Metzler:** You're kidding?

**Mr. Rowe:** And he just passes along on our port side. Our forward forty was the only gun shooting at him; downed him. Three other ships claimed him before he hit the water. You had to have a fast radio. (laughs)

**Mr. Metzler:** You gotta be fast. (laughs) So tell me about this gold tooth that you saw.

**Mr. Rowe:** Well, he just was grinning and it was one of his front teeth.

**Mr. Metzler:** Now that's getting personal. So, theoretically, if you saw his teeth, he could see yours?

**Mr. Rowe:** Yes. But he wasn't firing at us. I don't recall now.....seeing that tooth just wiped the rest of it...(laughs).....out of my memory. That's about the closest to a Kamikaze attack that we underwent.

**Mr. Metzler:** I'd say that's close enough.

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah.

**Mr. Metzler:** So tell me about the *USS Remey* herself. Was she a new ship when you went on? Was she old, an old-timer?

**Mr. Rowe:** She was a Fletcher Class so it had to be relatively new. After the four stackers of the World War One, I don't know if there was another class in between the Fletcher, or not. She was a good ship. A proud ship.

**Mr. Metzler:** Who was the commander?

**Mr. Rowe:** The first skipper was Commander Reed, R-E-E-D, Fiala, F-I-A-L-A. He was relieved by Commander Balch, but I don't remember his first name. It was B-A-L-C-H. That was getting along, pretty close to the end of the Pacific Campaign. My wife had an interesting experience there when we, after we were in, turned around for an overhaul. The ship went down to San Diego, to the destroyer base down there.

**Mr. Metzler:** This was after the war?

**Mr. Rowe:** This was after VJ Day. The captain's wife was a passenger in our car. At Bakersfield, she had a miscarriage. That's beside the point of what we are talking about here.

- Mr. Metzler:** So, I've always heard that the crew on a destroyer, because they are so close together, physically, at a, relatively small group, that they really become family. Is that the way it felt on that ship? Tell me how it felt on there.
- Mr. Rowe:** Well, the crew and brass is a different thing. You have about three hundred crewman on board and maybe twenty-five, in the normal complement of officers, maybe twenty-five, but having the squadron flag on board, you had his flag staff of ...he, probably, had, about three officers. Although he had a communications officer, I don't remember the other two, or three. But he bounced the captain out of the captain's quarters and the captain had to be in sea cabin. It was an honor to serve on a squadron flagship.
- Mr. Metzler:** So you were in with the, more with the brass, than you were with the crew then?
- Mr. Rowe:** I was commissioned an Ensign and they outlived them and got to be a JG. My, some paperwork here said that as soon as I made the rank of full Lieutenant, I'd be qualified as an Executive Officer on a destroyer. Made better than an average grades at one of the schools I attended. But, given the choice, I, when my points were up, I plowed. (?)
- Mr. Metzler:** So did you get to know some of the other folks on the ship, fairly well during his period you were on it?
- Mr. Rowe:** There were three of us in the same stateroom. I got to know them pretty well, of course. One of them was the communications officer. He opened up a locked cabinet and showed me the three notebooks, this size, but about that thick, for the op orders for Japan. Didn't take them out.....(Tape A, Side One ends.)

### Tape One, Side Two

- Mr. Rowe:** .....in that invasion, so.....
- Mr. Metzler:** Now when did he show you those? Towards the end of the war?
- Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. Towards the end of the war. It would have been after Iwo, before he got that information. But, after Iwo, I was detached to go back to gunnery school to Pearl and I went down and talked to the Exec and I said, "I know what the next step is and that's what I'm out here for. I don't want to go back to Pearl Harbor." "Well the order says one from every ship in the squadron and you're it from this ship." So, I go back.  
Did I tell you about Captain Coward becoming ComDesPac? (?)
- Mr. Metzler:** No.
- Mr. Rowe:** During the time, the three months that I am back in Pearl, going to school, he became Commander of all Destroyers in the Pacific. Quite an honor. I struck

up an acquaintance with a fellow from another one of the ships in the squadron from BOQ, taking the same course, and when we finished our assigned schooling, we went down to Com 14, in Pearl, and they were going to detach us and send us to Guam. I figured that if Captain Coward, or ComDesPac, ever found out that their were five members of his squadron and one from his Flagship, that were there from school and nobody come to say, "Hi," there was going to be some skippers that were in deep do-do. I went into his office and this friend of mine came along with me. He had a friend in the COM shack. The Lieutenant Commanders said, "What can I do for you?" and I said, "Well, I'd like to see Captain Coward; I was on his Flagship and would like to pay my respects." So he disappeared into the ComDesPac's office and back out and, "Come on in Ralph. What are you doing here?" "Well, we just finished up fleet gunnery school and we were flying out this afternoon for Guam." "Oh, No. You can't do that. Can't do that." He called his aide in and, "Bring me a message, time, date group so and so. He said, "The squadron is going back to the States, but they are not coming through Pearl. So you get yourself detached from Com 14, which was Pearl, and attached to ComDesPac. We'll get you back to the States to join your ships there.

**Mr. Metzler:** ComDesPac?

**Mr. Rowe:** Commander Destroyers Pacific.

**Mr. Metzler:** OK. Just trying to make sure I know the acronyms here.

**Mr. Rowe:** OK...so my buddy looks his buddy up in the COM shack and he saw the message. The squadron was going to bombard the Kuriles' and then come on down, for overhaul at Mar Island; take the long way around. Anyway, we got the transfer. We had, I think, about a weeks R&R. I got a call to come in to ComDesPac; (unintelligible) got a phone call. The voice said, "Come in and be detached. You're going to the States today." I said, "Say again." "Come in and be detached. You're going to the States today." I told my buddies there, "Aw, you're kidding me." They said, "I don't care what you guys are doing. I'm going to pack and get on this bus that leaves here in the next half hour." We got down to where we were supposed to board a transport, of some sort or other, and we were on the bus getting ready to go aboard the ship and someone said, "Lieutenant Rowe. Lieutenant Rowe." "Yes." "The ship you're supposed to be on just blew two tubes of her boiler.".....(tape pauses)...

**Mr. Metzler:** OK...go ahead.

**Mr. Rowe:** So we got on the boat and were in the Gypsy Pullman. If you know Navy, you know where the anchors are, up in the bow, right in there, there is a compartment known as the Gypsy Pullman. So you get the full benefit of he pitch. We, there were some flyboys on there and, I tried get one of them to, "Come on, let's eat. Let's eat." I finally got him into the ward room and, about

the time the first dish got to him, "Oh, I'm going top side and get some air." He wasn't used to that. Being a destroyer, I was.

So we get back to the States. My wife is on the way out. I don't know. I think I.....oh, I made a long distance phone call to her and said, "Why don't you come out and visit your Uncle Jim and Aunt Lucille?" They lived in Los Angeles. So she quit her job, got a train and came out to San Francisco. Her folks were, "You're not going out to San Francisco." "Yep. I'm going." So, anyhow, she had the word of VJ Day when she was in Utah. I was in a BOQ. I had reservations for the following night in a hotel, downtown San Francisco.....

**Mr. Metzler:** BOQ?

**Mr. Rowe:** Bachelor Officer's Quarters.

**Mr. Metzler:** Thank you. I need help here and you're helping me. Go ahead.

**Mr. Rowe:** OK. I wanted to get from the BOQ to my hotel, because San Francisco was just crazy. You've seen the videos.

**Mr. Metzler:** How was it crazy?

**Mr. Rowe:** People were throwing full bottles of water out of fifth, and sixth floor hotel windows, down on the street, regardless of how many people were there. I was in more danger there, than in the war.

**Mr. Metzler:** So this was all a celebration of VJ?

**Mr. Rowe:** All celebration of VJ Day. I had my gear packed and there was four, or five, of us out in the street trying to flag down taxis. Finally, one of them stopped and a lieutenant commander just got right out in front of him and made him stop. He said, "Listen fellows. I'm going right down the street, for about four blocks, to my garage. If that helps any of you, I'll pile in. I am not going left, or right, off of this street and I'm going to get this thing off."

So I spent the rest of the night in my hotel room, because I had to walk about two blocks to get there.

My wife ate something on the train the night of VJ Day and she got food poisoning. She got seasick coming across the San Francisco Bay. She could hardly stand up when she got off the ferry.

A couple of days after that, I got word from one of the advance representatives from the squadron, that they were turning around and going back to Japan. I went down to headquarters there in San Francisco and gave them a time, date group of the message, and well, that just applies to the advance representative. My orders say, "First available air transportation back to my ship." "Sorry." "This message don't....." "OK." So what do you do?

**Mr. Metzler:** Now, where was your ship at this time?

**Mr. Rowe:** She had gotten to the Aleutians and when the war was over she turned around and went back and she lead the invasion forces into Honshu Bay. I didn't see this happen, but we had a little Scotty on board, called, "Sampan." I don't know whether it was on board when I got there. The Jap pilot came in to take us through the minefields. The minute he stepped on board, Saipan bit him.  
(laughs) Excellent taste!

A couple of days later, they detached me and sent me out to Pearl Harbor. My kid brother was stationed there as a radioman and he was in a radio station out in the middle of a pineapple field on Oahu. I found out what barracks he was in, and so on and so forth and he had just stood the mid-watch and I said, "Hal. Hal." No answer. I said, "Rowe, hit the deck." He woke up. His commanding officer was kind enough to give him a couple of days off, so we had a weekend on the beach at Waikiki. That was very nice.

Then my ship came in. I joined the ship. Kicked a passenger officer out of my bunk and went right back to the States. This is off the record, but a week ago, yesterday, I just buried my brother and a military cemetery in Fort Logan, south of Denver, Colorado. He got called back to the Korean War. That's the reason for the little white dove. Sort of (?) his spirit going up. I can't, just look in here and.....

**Mr. Metzler:** Let me ask you some questions. There's a couple of things related to your story that I'm a little confused about still. You mentioned several times Iwo, and was the *Remey* actually in the Iwo effort?

**Mr. Rowe:** We were offshore, far enough, we were in, I don't even think we were around the preliminary bombardment, because, as were leaving that area, they brought us in close enough that we could see Mount Suribachi.

**Mr. Metzler:** So the *Remey* was on picket duty? Anti-submarine....?

**Mr. Rowe:** No. We were not on picket duty. Probably a screen over the Third and Fifth Fleet after they quit the shore bombardment, or something. I really don't remember what our duty was at that time.

**Mr. Metzler:** Did you hear how things were going on Iwo Jima? I mean did the word get back to officers and crew on destroyers that were out?

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. Had a ship's newspaper. We heard about Ernie Pyle at Ie Jima, getting killed there. We had a pretty good idea of how things were going on the various islands. There was Marines, Army. I think all of them had it rougher than the Navy personnel with the exception of Iwo when we took such horrible losses in the Kamikaze attacks on all those destroyers.



**Mr. Metzler:** Tell me a little it about the food on this tin can. Did you have a gourmet cook down in the mess, or what?

**Mr. Rowe:** Well, we had a visiting Army man who came on board one time and he was complementing our captain on the food that we had in the wardroom. The captain said, "Well, in the Navy, we try to assign someone as close to their civilian occupation as we can." "Well, I'd like to speak to your baker. That's just wonderful stuff." Called him up and said, "What did you do in civilian life?" "I was a banker." (laughs)

**Mr. Metzler:** Baker, banker. That's close. (laughs)

**Mr. Rowe:** Yes. We had, as a general rule, pretty good chow. It seemed to be standard procedure, whenever you hit rough weather, that you had beans and hot dogs. They had them at noon and by the time, for evening chow, I would go down to the head, use a finger and they would come up, not the least bit digested. One other time we had a .....

**Mr. Metzler:** Who knows what was in those things?

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. They just didn't like rough weather. We had, the lowest ranking junior officer was known as "George." Well, I was only George for about two weeks. We got a trade school boy on board; I think his father, said it was an Admiral. We were having fat, greasy pork chops in the evening. This tray, silver tray, just swimming in grease. Come along to this fellow and he pushed his chair back and grabbed his handkerchief and let out the biggest sneeze you ever heard and looked around and says, "Uh-huh. Fooled you, didn't I." (laughs) But, as a general rule,.....there was a time, before we joined the Third and Fifth Fleets, when we got down to where we were eating canned, Vienna Sausages and, what else was it? Three meals a day for, I guess it was off Hollandia. Well, anyway, I haven't eaten any canned, Vienna Sausages since.

**Mr. Metzler:** You took that off your list of acceptable foods. (laughs)

**Mr. Rowe:** I figured I did my part.

**Mr. Metzler:** So were you able to stay in reasonably close contact with your wife during your assignment over there? I mean, were you getting mail somewhere?

**Mr. Rowe:** It's fantastic. I would get mail from her, in Indiana, in seven days. Wherever we were. It was amazing. But brow buildy. (?)

**Mr. Metzler:** And you wrote back?

- Mr., Rowe:** Oh, absolutely. Everyday. There was one time when I stuck my neck out; I couldn't find anybody. Officers didn't censor each other's mail. We just initialed it. I could find another officer on board ship. The commander and the, let's see, the Exec, Captain Coward and Captain Fiala were in the ward room and I said, "I can't find another officer on board. Would one of you censor my letter?" Here's a one and a half stripper going in and all that stuff and asking for....what they did. It was important to get the mail back and forth. One other thing, I mentioned a Christmas package. They were delivering them in Leyte Gulf, in October. Rough weather, on a destroyer escort, hauling sea bags on the bow of the destroyer escort. She was bouncing up and down so her sound dome would come out of the water. Then she would go back down and all that seawater would come in on all those fruitcakes. I don't think there was anything edible come on board ship trying to deliver in such weather.
- Mr. Metzler:** They say it's the thought that counts.
- Mr. Rowe:** Yeah.
- Mr. Metzler:** So what else comes to mind when you think back on all of your adventures on the Pacific?
- Mr. Rowe:** Well I am totally indebt to the Navy Air Force. I'm fully convinced that I'm alive today because of their skill and devotion.
- Mr.Metzler5:** Tell me about that.
- Mr. Rowe:** They were supposed to, if they were following a Kamikaze, they were supposed to break off at 10,000 yards. I saw three of them go passed that point and all they of them got shot down by our shells. When you see those F4Us flying along and they're propeller tips are hitting the wave tops, you can't suppress your guns enough, the Japs couldn't suppress guns enough or they would be firing into their own ships. There's a stop that keeps you from going so low. When you're in combat, half of the guardrail goes down so you can rest farther for attacks like that. To see the landings and take offs, well I'll go out and walked in the mud and let the Naval aviator have sidewalk; any day of the week. In your two inches of rain, last night. You can't say enough when they saved your life. Not on an individual occasion, but ok, those little jeep carriers, off San Bernardino Straits, they held off that force, long enough, that we could regroup and saved an awful lot of lives.
- Mr. Metzler:** What do you think was the most inspiring moment of our period there in the Pacific War? What inspired you the most? Made you feel the best? What was the biggest high that you had? Anything come to mind? The high point for you.

- Mr. Rowe:** My thing would have to be, right after I got out there, that Battle of Surigao Straits, when that was the last surface, major surface battle that will ever be fought. Because it's changed so now. It's all air and missiles and so on and so forth. But, there you are. You got two groups slugging it out, toe to toe. I say their parallax correction wasn't what it should be. You understand what I'm talking about, parallax? Here's your broadside, one, tow three, four, five guns. You fire at ninety degrees in that line, with no parallax, one, two, three, four, five.
- Mr. Metzler:** Yeah. They're not focusing in on.....
- Mr. Rowe:** Yeah. So these two have to be towed in...wait, these two have, this guy can fire right straight out. But that's all built in to the mechanism on the gun. As, also, is the rise and pitch and so on to keep the muzzle level. I'm proud to have been a gunnery officer. The rest of the ship was there to get the guns there.
- Mr. Metzler:** That was the Punch that had to be delivered. What about the low point? What was the most down tome? The most emotional time? When was it the worst for you?
- Mr. Rowe:** I'd say it would have been that time when Tokyo Rose said, "You ain't going to get to where you're going." I went down and opened up that picture of my wife, which, incidentally, is my favorite picture.
- Mr. Metzler:** So, in a lot of ways, old Tokyo Rose really worked, didn't it, for the Japanese? I mean it really impacted the guys on the ships?
- Mr. Rowe:** Well, it didn't stop us from where we were going. There was one other time; this would have been in the landing at Luzon. I'm on a 40 mm director station on the, let's see, it would have been the first stack, I guess. You're shell clips were 40 mm, were in clips of five and they were all around the enclosure of the gun tub, just canvas. (?) So, my gun captain called up and said, "Permission to go to sick bay?" Said, "I'm wounded." "Permission granted." A blind loaded, and plugged 20 mm slug, the canister for a 20 mm is about that big around an L70 shells and the first one was just plain, old lead. So you didn't have time enough to get the bullet cover off and it would go right through the muzzle cover and the rest of them could do through without detonating themselves from the plunger in the nose. (?) I dropped down to see hat had happened and one of those blind loaded and plugged shells had come in between the five shells in the slip and got between the second and third one, but half way between the detonator and the powder charge. So it didn't set anything off. But, he got a little scratch from a piece of shell casing. Wasn't anything serious, but if that thing had been an inch or two higher, or lower, that would have set the whole thing off and came right straight up where a couple of us were, me and my talker.

One other time, I don't; remember when this was. I was fire control. A Jap plane had been astern, port. He swung around and then he come at us broadside on the starboard side.....

**Mr. Metzler:** Now, was this a Kamikaze, or just an attacker?

**Mr. Rowe:** I don't know if it was a Kamikaze or not, but he was just getting too dang close. I got two rounds off. We had, what we called, proximity fuses. They got so close to the target they went off automatically. You didn't have to hit it, but then the shrapnel was supposed to take care of it. We are sitting down to chow at noon and the skipper said, "Did you have a solution on that Jap plane in that rowe?" and I said, "That first salvo we did, sir." And he said, "Well you got him on the second." (laughs).

**Mr. Metzler:** That's a sharpshooter.

**Mr. Rowe:** That's just good, clean living.

**Mr. Metzler:** That's what did it. (laughs) So, you were in San Francisco when VJ Day occurred. After VJ, what happened then? When were you, where did you go from there?

**Mr. Rowe:** Well I was sent back, I was flown back, to Pearl. This was on the day of Wainwright's parade, when he returned to the States after captivity. The wife and I got to see that. After the parade was over, she got on a train and went down to Los Angeles, her relatives. I got on a train and went up to Portland. I get in the Tom 13 up there and, "What are you doing here, sir? I was just reading a paper where your ships in Japan." Well, I said, "That's ComTrol (?) for you. I've been trying to get over there for three months" Not three months, but for some time. So they flew me right back to San Francisco. From San Francisco, flew me out to Pearl. I kicked the passenger officer out of my bunk and after I had the weekend with my kid brother, came right back to San Francisco. Then we went down to San Diego, put her in mothballs, covered everything up with webbing and so on and not too long after that, my points were up and so I executed that classical naval maneuver, known as, "getting the H out of here." I do hold, I'm sure, the all time speed record for finding an apartment in San Diego in the wartime. We got in there the first time, the gunnery school, fire control school and I that was on Friday evening. I went downtown to the housing bureau and took a number. I went along to one of the fellows, who motioned me over, and I said, "Well my number isn't up yet." "Well this says, "Specifies officer only and you're the only officer in here." I said, "OK, in that case, I sure don't want to step in ahead of, pull rank on anybody that has been sitting here for two, or three hours." So he said, "Specified officer only." We went out to, picked up my wife, went out to this lady and she had a nice room, private entrance, private bath. First thing she

wanted to see was our wedding license; marriage license, which Pat was carrying.

On Thursday of the next week, an apartment in a basement became available. We moved down there and then another couple we had gone to school with and who had a car, we got him into the room we vacated. So, OK. I had to ride out to the base everyday with Steve and the two gals hit it off pretty well. When we got back down there, after the war and going to put the ship in mothballs, I got in, oh, about one o'clock on Friday afternoon and my wife got in about three after her having a problem with the skipper's wife. We went out to where her landlady had lived. Well, she said, "I've got an apartment that I've go to move off the lot. I want to vacate the lot. I don't want anybody in there for a long period of time. I said, "Mrs. Peck, (?) my points are going to be up in ninety days. And if you think for one minute, I'm going to stay one more day after that, you're crazy." So when I went to the apartment, three rooms over a two-car garage, over a full laundry, move in on Saturday. That has to be an all-time record.

**Mr. Metzler:** Sounds like you were in the right spot at the right time.

**Mr. Rowe:**

Yeah. But I went Elko (?) Boulevard. Pat went out to the grocery two, or three days. Back. Butcher said, "Boy, I put something extra in there for her. Four quarter sticks of butter." (laughs) I think another time he gave her a half pound of bacon. We lived high on the hog. But that's about all I can think of.

CORRECTED AND  
DRAFT

**Mr. Metzler:** Do you ever have any contact with any of the old shipmates after the war was over?

**Mr. Rowe:** No. Either two, or three years ago, there was a reunion out here, it was in Austin and they were coming down to see the flag that the ship flew at the Battle of Surigao Straits, which now ain't here. That's the reason I came out here, but that was the first contact I had had, over all the years. I looked down the list, well somebody sent me a list of shipmates and there was only two names on there that I recall. One of them was a gunner's mate and forget what the other one was. But, she was reactivated for the Korean War. Taken out of mothballs. I was not aware of that until I got to digging onto things a little bit.

**Mr. Metzler:** So how did that experience, in World War Two change you as a person? Or did it?

**Mr. Rowe:** Well I don't think it did. It's just one of those things that came up. You were expected to do your duty, so you did it and you come home. I didn't get any flag waving, or anything like that. Didn't expect it. No parades. There were a lot of us that, well, this Iraqi mess is an entirely different, so I don't want to say anything about that. But we had a job to do and I think we did a darn good job of it and we're proud of it. But we didn't expect everybody to kowtow to us

and bow down and this, that and the other thing. It's all over. We came back alive. What more can you ask?

**Mr. Metzler:** Did you look at life differently after you came back? Did the world seem different to you? Look different to you? Or was it just the same old.....

**Mr. Rowe:** Well, I can't say that it did. I applied for my old job back and I thought that I was just a small town. There was one vacant apartment there, a company apartment and I thought, "Well, maybe I rated, as a ceramic engineer, rated that apartment over a clerk in the office, but the boss didn't see it that way, so we parted company. Then I got into another job in Wellsville, (?) Ohio and probably earned more money than I was worth. So we just went right back into the old business, except a different company.

**Mr. Metzler:** Got back on with your life.

**Mr. Rowe:** Yeah.

**Mr. Metzler:** Well what else shall we talk about today as we think back over.....you want to flop through your book there and.....

**Mr. Rowe:** (flipping pages)...Well, you got the Philippine ribbon and two stars, which is all you can get there. Palau and....Okinawa and Iwo. We got eight battle stars anyhow, for whatever.

**Mr. Metzler:** I didn't hear much about Okinawa. Was that....?

**Mr. Rowe:** Well it was a case of where you went in and did your shore bombardment. I have a lot of stuff in here on that Leyte Gulf. Various. One of the books that I have on the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the author kept referring to Jesse Coward. So I just kind of assumed that they were trade school boys. I get a call from down South Carolina and I told them I had served on Captain Coward's flag ship, he said, "Well, he didn't really get to enjoy his retirement as he had a real bad case of rheumatism." But he said, "You're all right." I said, "Yeah. As far as I know." But we had a nice, little chat. He was nice enough. He probably was a four stripper to. Me still a one and half. Let's see, here's Western Carolina operation, that was the southern Palau Islands, Battle of Leyte Gulf, Battle of Surigao Strait, Mindoro, Lingayen Gulf landings.....Belonged to several officer's clubs out there on various islands. A chance to get off the ship.

**Mr. Metzler:** What were those officer's clubs like. Was that a nice break to get off the ship and.....

**Mr. Rowe:** Well, probably just a little bit of shade and if you liked to drink beer, you could drink beer, which I didn't. Here's some of the membership cards of the officer's clubs.

- Mr. Metzler:** Oh, yeah. They did fancy cards, some of them.
- Mr. Rowe:** Let's see, there are some here in my wallet that I run across. I run, sent that to Pat. She didn't approve of it.
- Mr. Metzler:** So who is that?
- Mr. Rowe:** That's me.
- Mr. Metzler:** That's you? A picture of you with a big, black, almost handlebar mustache.
- Mr. Rowe:** One of my fellow officers had the handlebar mustache that was so long that he got in his eyes when he slept.
- Mr. Metzler:** That is a long mustache.
- Mr.. Rowe:** I have a picture here of a fellow I went to Cornell with. Another ceramic engineer, we run into each other, Chuck Phillipi (?) and .....
- Mr. Metzler:** Looks like Ulithi.
- Mr. Rowe:** We could tell whether your navigator was doing a good job or not. There is no clouds over water. So if you head in the direction and then, all of a sudden, you see a little white cloud coming, you got an island underneath it. So you knew he was doing what he was supposed to. Another couple of friends of ours, this is after the war.
- Mr. Metzler:** The Fairmont Hotel. I know it well.....(Tape one, side two ends)
- Mr. Rowe:** .....Couldn't think of it at the time. You mentioned anytime there were if there were jitters on board ship. One that came to mind first was when we were at general quarters getting ready to make that early morning torpedo attack at the Jap's Southern Force coming up through Surigao Straits. About three in the morning, we were at general quarters. Word came over the ships radio that, "TBS Smith, chief torpedo man lay up to the bridge." About five minutes later, TBS, "Attention, all hands. This is the skipper. Good luck. Good shooting. God bless you." Then the jitters broke out. Later, the Iwo Jima campaign, near the close of that campaign, the main Jap Fleet started south from ports in the main Japanese islands. Daytime. We were designated to make a daylight torpedo attack against these battlewagons with their eighteen-inch rifles and so on. That was enough to give us jitters anyhow. The carrier planes took off. They were to try and stop the movement of the Jap planes coming south, the Jap Fleet coming south. Word was passed, "Chief, Smith, torpedo man, lay up to the bridge." Well then there were jitters. So, thinking of how our battlewagons with their sixteen-inch guns would stack up

against those eighteen inch. Then the word came that the air arm that caused the Japs to turn around and retreat towards Japan. It was a sign of relief that went through the ship. You could, it was almost audible all over. So I'll walk in the mud anytime to let a Navy pilot have the sidewalk. The other thing that I didn't have time to get jitters over, I guess; we were refueling. I don't remember when it was, from a fleet oilier. It was rough weather, pretty high swells. Ships were about twenty feet apart. I was on the fantail and had handed my wallet, whatever else I had on me, and I didn't want to get wet up to the crewman on the next deck up. I was getting spray and so on. I happened to look forward and see this big swell coming between the two ships, we were about twenty feet apart, I just had time to grab a hold of the railing around the spray shield of the three 20 mms on the fantail and that wave just took my feet out from under me and I was hanging on for dear life. Parallel to the deck and about four feet above it. Didn't have time to get jitters, I was just more interested in getting my feet back down on the ship. I guess that's, you can fit that into the narrative that we did the other day.

I would like information on how to get a hold of the audio and videotapes that the museum did a year ago on the Battle of Leyte Gulf. If you could get me the information, or Helen, on what they cost and where I could get them. I think they would be interesting to have.

Sorry I kind of messed this tape up. I'll try to mark it so that you know where to start. Again, thanks for all the courtesy down there and I appreciated the visit.....(Tape pauses).....

Well, there's one more thing that come to mind. I have a part-timer's (?) disease, I guess. Steaming out in the open ocean, long about noon, a lookout on the port side of the bridge finally woke up. He saw a mine inside our bow wave. The bow wave was supposed to keep mines, drifting mines, outside, away from the ship. He said, "MMMiisster BBBBoykin (?). A mine." (unintelligible) forever. The ship swung around a little. The mine passed along side the ship. Part of the crew that was waiting, along the port side, to go down for noon mess, saw the mine and, boy, did that line disappear. The mine just went under our propeller guard. The propeller guard stood out, maybe, two to three feet from the stern. The mine is about four feet in diameter, so that was a great piece of luck. At first the lookout finally saw it and that the OD knew what to do to keep from running into it. This is going to be the end. I'll stick the tape in the mail today. Thanks again for everything.....(Tape ends)

**Transcribed by:** Robert Grinslade  
7 August 2011  
Fredericksburg, Texas