

**Admiral Nimitz Historic Site
National Museum of the Pacific War**

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Frederickburg, Texas

Interview with

**Mr. Roy Goedeke
United States Navy**

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Mr. Rabalais: This Larry Rabalais. Today is October 23, 2007. I'm interviewing Mr. Roy Goedeke and this interview is taking place in San Antonio, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies Archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information, related to this site.

With that, I'm going to let Mr. Roy continue with the story of his life and into World War II. Go ahead Mr. Goedeke.

Mr. Goedeke: My name is Roy Goedeke, and I was born in 1919 in Spring, Texas. I was raised in Spring, Texas and went to school there.

Mr. Rabalais: What size family did you have?

Mr. Goedeke: I had two brothers and one sister. I had one brother older than I am, and one sister older than I am, and one brother younger than I am.

Mr. Rabalais: What did your father do?

Mr. Goedeke: My father was a railroad man. He worked for the railroad in Houston going back and forth from Spring to Houston every day to work.

Mr. Rabalais: So you went to school there in Spring?

Mr. Goedeke: Went to school in Spring. I had to quit school when my Daddy got disabled to work. He couldn't work no more. It was during the depression and things were hard. He didn't have enough money coming in for us to really to live on. We never had to go on relief or anything, never got anything from the Government. I had to quit school to go to

work to help the family. I quit school in the 9th grade and went to work. I had several different jobs doing different things, from the time I quit school, until I joined the Navy. I tried to get into the Navy.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you try to get in the Navy before Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Goedeke: I was in the Navy before Pearl Harbor. I tried to get in the Navy when I was 18 years old. But they wouldn't take me because I didn't have a high school education. I had to have a high school education to get in the Navy and I didn't have one. So I went back to work. But in the meantime, they started the draft. I registered for the draft and my number was coming up within a year or so.

Mr. Rabalais: So this would be in 1940?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, 1940s. Anyhow, while I was working on the job in Palacios, Texas, we finished the job. It was an Army barracks place. And we finished that up and I came back to Houston and tried to get another job. But you couldn't hardly buy a job because men were standing in line and I said well, I'll see if I can get in the Navy again. So I went down to the Post office in Houston, and asked them if I could join the Navy. They asked me how old I was and I told them. Yes, but you will have to take an examination. If you pass that then you can go. They gave me a written examination and I passed that. They gave me a physical examination and I passed that. About a week later I was on my way to San Diego, California to boot camp. So when I got to boot camp they gave me another physical examination, and a bunch of shots and I was assigned to Company 59 in boot camp.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you go in with a buddy or something like that?

Mr. Goedeke: No, I just went in by myself.

Mr. Rabalais: Now why did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Goedeke: Well, I always wanted to get in the Navy. I was going to make a career of the Navy. But when the war came, I didn't.

Mr. Rabalais: Then you were sent to boot camp at San Diego.

Mr. Goedeke: San Diego. And I worked through boot camp, and after boot camp, they asked us what kind of ship we wanted to be on. I told them I wanted to be on a destroyer or a light cruiser. Of course, I didn't get that. They sent me from San Diego, to San Francisco and assigned me to a submarine tender. And it was being built, but it wasn't finished yet. I waited until three months when it got finished, and then we put it in commission in Vallejo, California. The name of the ship was the USS Fulton, AS11.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you have a certain school or rating you had gone to or you were a seaman?

Mr. Goedeke: No specialized. I went in as a Apprentice Seaman, \$21 a month. Of course, they assigned me to that ship and I was assigned to the deck force.

Mr. Rabalais: Now in boot camp, that was a pretty short boot camp.

Mr. Goedeke: No, it was eight weeks of boot camp. I thought it was all unnecessary but I can see now that it was mostly to teach you discipline.

Mr. Rabalais: Did y'all train with any weapons at all?

Mr. Goedeke: We had rifles but no ammunition. There was no ammunition, they were World War I rifles.

Mr. Rabalais: Did y'all have to learn how to swim?

Mr. Goedeke: I knew how to swim.

Mr. Rabalais: Some guys didn't.

Mr. Goedeke: Some guys didn't so they sent them to swimming school but some of them never did learn how to swim. Anyways, when we got to San Francisco, they put us all on a barge and took us down toIsland where the ship was being built in Vallejo, and put us in some barracks. They had just finished the barracks. In fact, we had to sweep the sawdust out of them before we could get in there. Then every day, they would send us down to a warehouse where they had all the gear stored for the Fulton and teaching us how to tie different knots, Navy knots. And we had a guy down there, Coxswain, a Boson mate third class, and nobody liked him. We hated his guts because he would show you how to tie a knot one time and if you couldn't tie it, he would jump all over you because you couldn't

tie that knot the first time. Of course, we got used to that but anyhow when I came out of there, I could tie any knot they had in the Navy and tie it right.

We went aboard ship and put the ship in commission, and I went aboard ship in September of 1941.

Mr. Rabalais: That was right before Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Goedeke: They took it out for trial runs for several days. Then after that we were going on a shakedown cruise. We went to the Panama Canal. Then three days out of Panama, I was up at watch, the eight to twelve watch, and my watch station was up in the crows nest.

Mr. Rabalais: Now this was a pretty good sized ship?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, it's a big ship. So, I was in the crows nest and I didn't know what was going on. All I knew was that I had binoculars and every thing I saw I was to report to the bridge. When I came down at twelve o'clock when I got relieved, the guy who relieved me said Pearl Harbor was bombed this morning.

Mr. Rabalais: You hadn't any clue where Pearl Harbor was.

Mr. Goedeke: Well, I knew where it was, but I didn't have any idea it was a big Navy base. And that's all he told me. Then when I got down there was more over the PA System about it and over the radio. We have a radio down in the mess hall. And there was a lot more coming over the radio.

Mr. Rabalais: Did they tell you it was the Japanese?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, Japanese sneak attack.

Mr. Rabalais: What were your feelings toward the Japanese as a result of that?

Mr. Goedeke: I didn't think much about it. I thought now why would they bomb us, because I thought we were friends. When I was a kid, we had a train running in front of our house, between the road and the house, and they hauled carloads and carloads of junk and my Daddy said that will be shot back at us some day. All of that junk, they are making shells and ammunition and it will shot back at us some day. And sure enough I

thought about that and found out it was true. Well, any ways, we went on into Panama and got there about a day and a half, and they started loading the ship with aviation gasoline, fifty-five gallon drums of that gasoline. And we had on every deck, we couldn't get any more. You couldn't walk down the decks it was so much gasoline.

Mr. Rabalais: That was dangerous, wasn't it?

Mr. Goedeke: We didn't know where we were going, didn't know what it was for. They didn't tell you anything then. Then we went to Nicaragua and we built a PBY base there. All it was they put up some tents, 4 or 5 tents there, and they had wooden floors and wood up the side and the top was tin. And some were used for radios. They had all kind of radio equipment and it was back in those banana trees where you couldn't see them from the air. Then all of us guessed they would lower it down with a crane off of the ship. They had two cranes and they would lower it down on both sides of the ship and load it to a launch and they would take it in so far with the motor launch (?) to where they couldn't get in, I'd say a hundred yards or two hundred yaeds from the beach, as far as they could get it in. Then we would roll it off and take it off and put it in the water. Then each man took a drum of that gasoline and we swam it in to the shore. We got to where we could walk and pushed it and it would float. Those sharks out there, I remember seeing those sharks out there all over. Of course, you had to watch out for them but that didn't seem to make any difference to the Navy because this gasoline had to get in there. So we got it in and then the beach was sandy and you had to sit this drum of gasoline up after you got it in there. And that was a hard job for a young man, to pick up a 55 gallon drum to pick it up and set it up. And then they would roll it to where they were staking it up.

Mr. Robalais: It was about 350 pounds.

Mr. Goedeke: Yes. Well we got that done. And I think we were there about 2 or 3 days. And after that we went back to Panama. We were there 2 or 3 days and we did the same thing. We loaded up again with gasoline. And that time

we went down to Ecuador, South America. We built the same kind of base and did the same thing there. From there we went back to Panama and stayed there for two days and got our orders. We went from Panama to San Diego and when we got to San Diego and refueled.

Mr. Rabalais: This was in early '42?

Mr. Goedeke: This was in '41. Still in '41. We were at sea for Christmas. We loaded up and from there we went to Pearl Harbor. When we went into Pearl Harbor, I had never seen anything so dreadful in my life. Everything was black, all of the ships laying on the bottom, masts sticking up and it was terrible. There was oil all over the water. We tied up at the submarine base right back around the corner from the main channel. Then we went right by the Arizona and all you could see was the mast sticking up. All you see was the mast and part of the bridge.

Mr. Rabalais: Was there still a lot of oil on the water?

Mr. Goedeke: Oh yes. There was a lot of oil on the water. We tied up to a dock there at the submarine base. About the third day we were there, they formed a working party. We went on those battleships and had to clean the debris out of those battleships that were sunk. We worked over there I guess about two or three weeks. They had asbestos and it was dirty and everything was dull and dirty.

Mr. Rabalais: Were these some that had been rolled over and righted again?

Mr. Goedeke: These had not been rolled over. They just sunk right down. And of course they were listed to one side. We had to get all of that asbestos and stuff out.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you ever run into any bodies?

Mr. Goedeke: No, we didn't run into any bodies or anything? We stayed in Pearl Harbor, I'm not sure how long it was but it was about June and we didn't have liberty at night. They wouldn't let you have liberty at night; you had to have it during the day time. We had liberty from 10:00 o'clock in the morning until 4:00 o'clock in the evening I believe it was. You had to be back before dark.

Anyhow, we stayed there until the battle of Midway. And I will never forget this. We were up on the boat deck showing a movie and it was a new John Wayne movie that had just come out. They hadn't even seen it in the states yet. It had been going on, and about 9:00 o'clock or a little later. We had to wait until it got dark to be able to see the moving. Word came over the PA System to get ready to get under way in 10 minutes. We figured the Japs were coming. We didn't know what had happened. They didn't tell us anything. About 15 minutes, we were going out the harbor. They didn't take us long to get under way.

Mr. Rabalais: Were there some people still on shore?

Mr. Goedeke: No, this was at night and everybody was on the ship. We left out of there with one four stacker can.

Mr. Rabalais: Now this was still the Sub Tender.

Mr. Goedeke: Yes the Sub Tender. And we didn't know where we were going. So the next morning, we got up and there were no ships in sight. We were all by ourselves.

Mr. Rabalais: Heading what direction?

Mr. Goedeke: We were going out to Midway to pick up survivors, but we didn't know it. We didn't know where we were going. We still thought the Japs were coming into Pearl Harbor to bomb it again. So they wanted us to get out of there. Anyhow, the next day word came over the PA System that if any man fell overboard he would be left, because they were not going to stop the ship to pick them up. So be very careful not to fall over the side, because if you do you will left in the water. I thought, oh my gosh, I hope I don't fall over the side.

Anyhow, we had general quarters about 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon and it was raining. My battle station was up on the fore deck and the Captains station. And another boy had a battle station and he was in a motor

Launch. He went to get in there and when he did, his foot slipped and he fell over the side. And course everybody hollered man over board. There were pretty high swells and you could see him and then you couldn't see him. They shot him a lifebuoy out there and he grabbed on to that. The old man stopped the ship with the man in the water. We lowered a boat and of course that boy was glad they stopped the ship. And they got him back on, and then we got on our way. Anyhow, we still didn't know where we were going. We didn't find out where we were going until we just got near and they told us we were going to pick up Midway survivors. We picked up 1,900 and some, survivors.

Mr. Rabalais: American or Japanese?

Mr. Goedeke: Americans from Midway, the midway battle. Their ship had been sunk. They weren't in the water, some of them were on the cans and some were on the Cruiser Portland. Most of them were on the Portland.

Mr. Rabalais: Now these were the survivors of the Yorktown?

Mr. Goedeke: Survivors from the Yorktown, and some of the other ships that were sunk, also. Anyhow, we picked them up and brought them over from the other ships on a boswains chair. It took all day to get them all on there. That ship was loaded. A lot of them didn't have clothes, so we gave them some of our clothes and our bunks. We slept in hammocks. Some were wounded and we had a sick bay with about 10 or 12 beds in there. The ones that were worse wounded went there, then the rest of them slept in our bunks. I don't know how long it took us to get back to Pearl.

We got back into Pearl and unloaded them. We were there a few days, took on supplies and refueled, then went to Midway. We went to Midway and anchored out.

Mr. Rabalais: Midway had been damaged.

Mr. Goedeke: There wasn't much there. They had a hangar, and a Pan American base where they stopped going to China. That place was just bombed. There was nothing left there, just part of a hangar. And it had millions of gooney

birds on it. That's all that was on it. You couldn't even walk for the goony birds. We stayed there about, well...it was in June. We stayed there about three or four months. But from there we went back to Pearl and stayed there a couple of days, then went to Brisbane, Australia. That's a long way. And we didn't have an escort. Of course, we zigzagged all the way and went to Brisbane.

Mr. Rabalais: To support some subs?

Mr. Goedeke: Ten subs were going out to the South Pacific. We crossed the International Date Line, and also the Equator. We had the initiation of the polly wogs. I hadn't been across at that time. And they beat the hell out of us. Oh, yeah. What they did was, they had a big tank, and they filled it up with water and all the garbage from the galley. Then they had a line that you had to run through. And they made these that they called a shalleley. They made it out of canvas, like a sock and filled it up with sawdust from the carpenter shop. And they filled them and soaked them in salt water over night. And they beat the hell out of you. You go through a line and they are on each side of you. And when you go through that line as fast as you can run, you get the hell beat out of you. They hit you everywhere except the head. That's the only place they don't hit you. They weren't allowed to hit you in the head. Then from there you had to jump in this filthy tank and then they had the biggest fattest guy on the ship they had him sitting there with just a pair of dungarees on and you had to kiss his navel. It was quite a deal to be initiated, and I had to do that twice.

Mr. Rabalais: So y'all headed for Brisbane. Did you get shore leave at Brisbane?

Mr. Goedeke: Oh yes. We were in Brisbane about a year. That was good duty. We got liberty every other night.

Mr. Rabalais: Were y'all able to associate with the locals any?

Mr. Goedeke: Oh yes. We wore our uniforms and go to the beach. Brisbane is a pretty nice city. I guess it was about 300,000 at that time.

Before the ship pulled out, I didn't even know the ship was going to pull out of there, everybody wanted to go back to the states. In fact, I had put in to go back to new construction three or four times, but was turned down. They were calling for men to go back all the time and every week they were calling for men to go back to the states for new construction. But they never did call my rate. At the time I was ship fitter second class. In fact, I had already go up for ship fitter first class and I made it and I was going to get it the first of the month. A bid came in and they wanted one ship fitter second class and two for the third class and some electricians and radiomen. It must have been 15 altogether in the draft.

Mr. Rabalais: So this would have been in '43?

Mr. Goedeke: This was in '43, in about August. July or August, somewhere along there. There were about seven of us eligible to go. We were to be transferred, but everybody wanted to go. So the guy that was in charge of it was a mustang and an officer. He called us all up there and he said which one of y'all wants to go back to the states for new construction. Well, everybody said I do, I do. Well we can't send all of you back, but I'll tell you what I will do. I'm not going to pick out one to send back. He said I could pick out one of you to send you back. I don't want to do that. I'm going to be fair to you. We're going to draw a card and whoever draws the highest card is going to go. Now some of you guys in here that has gone up for first class. You will be first class the first of the month. But you are not going back as first class you're going back as second class. If you draw the high card, you are going back to the states. I don't want you to come crying to me when later on you change your mind, you are going whether you want to or not. So we all agreed to it. Well, everybody is wanting to go. So, everybody drew their cards, and I was the last one. And when they drew it, they laid it down on the table. One guy had a Queen of diamonds, another had the Queen of Jacks, and the rest of us had low cards. Some had 10, 9, anyhow, I was the last one. Hell, there isn't any chance I can beat the Queen of diamonds. I picked a card and turned it

over and it was the King of Hearts. I was the high card. So he said Goedeke, you're going back to the states tomorrow. I don't want to hear you coming up here crying that you don't want to go. Your ass is going whether you want to or not. I want to go.

Mr. Rabalais: How did you get back to the states?

Mr. Goedeke: By ship. We got back by ship. They sent us all to a receiving station and we had to stay there about five days. So about the second day we were there, I told a couple of the guys, let's go to Fulton and see what's going on over there. We didn't have anything to do. It wasn't very far. It was about seven or eight blocks so we walked over there. Darn if the Fulton was pulling out. Well I'll be damn. They are going to beat us back to the states. I thought it was going back to the states. It was due for the dry dock. Well, we are going back too, just not as soon as they will. We were at a receiving station for about five days then we caught a liberty ship out of there. It took us eleven day to go from Bisbane to San Francisco. Eleven days. On the ship we had Artie Shaw and his band, and we had Jerry Lewis, and Dean Martin. The first day we were out the Captain called me because I was shipped there. He called me up to the bridge and said Goedeke, you think you could do a little job for me? Yes Sir, what is it? He said I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I want you to build me a better seat up on the bridge. I've got a chair and I want you to take this chair and take the legs off of it, it was swivel chair. I want you to take a piece of pipe about five feet long and weld onto this chair and then I want you to take it up on the bridge and weld it to the deck. I'm going to give you another man to help you. So he gave me another guy. We did that and it took us about two days to do that. He said you won't to stand any watch. You don't have to anything. You just do what you want to on the ship. I said, that sounds good to me.

The rest of them had to stand watch. They had to stand eight off and four on. And he asked Artie Shaw and he said no, my men aren't going to stand watch.

Mr. Rabalais: You mean Artie Shaw's band? He expected them to stand watch?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes sir. He said y'all are going to have to stand watch. You've got a choice. You can either stand watch or put on a performance for these guys. We had a lot of other guys on there. Soldiers from different places. Put on a show for these guys. And Artie Shaw said no, I'm going back to the states. I'm not going to put on any show. Sure enough, they didn't and Dean Martin said the same thing. The old man put them on watch. He had one about every ten feet around the main deck.

Mr. Rabalais: They were civilians. How could he make them do that?

Mr. Goedeke: The Navy can do anything. The military can do when they've got you out to sea. They were under a Navy contract to put on these USO shows. All they had on were dungarees and of course they were going to get a sun tan. Some of them, no shirt at all. I hadn't seen any body sunburned like they were sunburns and blisters, big blisters all over their backs and all over their arms. They were pitiful looking. Their face and lips in that one day. Then Artie Shaw went to him and said Captain, if you will take the men off watch we'll put on a show. Dean Martins men were the same way, so they put on a show. I had already seen their shows. Jerry Lewis, he was so silly, I never did like him.

Mr. Rabalais: He was just so silly to the point of ridiculous.

Especially, early in his career. But that was a long trip home for them. But when you got to San Francisco, were you assigned immediately?

Mr. Goedeke: No. When we got to San Francisco, they put us on a boat and took us down the channel to Mare Island from there we went to San Francisco and they put us in a receiving station. We stayed there a couple of days and we were on Treasure Island and I hated that place. There were millions of sailors. I've never seen so many. You had to stay in the chow line an hour and a half to get to eat.

We stayed there two or three days and they moved us over to Goat Island. It was pretty good there. Goat Island wasn't too bad. We stayed there about a week. Then they sent us down to San Diego. I was supposed to catch a ship in San Diego. We stayed in three different receiving stations. Then one day they called my name and they said you are going to Norfolk, and there is a ship waiting for you.

Mr. Rabalais: Norfolk, Virginia? On the other side of the country?

Mr. Goedeke: Norfolk, Virginia. On the other side of the country.

Mr. Rabalais: How did you get there, by train?

Mr. Goedeke: By train. We went as far as St. Louis. We had a private place, I'm not sure what you call it. We had our own compartment. There were six of us. We had all the privacy and just had a ball. We got to St. Louis and then they put us on a troop train. I've never seen so many drunks and stuff on it. We got the train about twelve o'clock at night and it was loaded with drunks. There was vomit on the floor. I found a seat and sat down and went to sleep. We got into Norfolk the next day. We stayed there and I hated it there. It rained every day we were there. We stayed there about three days and they called me one day to report to such and such place. I went there and they said you have to go to Houston. So I asked why I was going to Houston. They said you have to catch a ship in Houston. I told this guy, they don't build ships in Houston. They are building them now. That's why I went to Houston, to the Brown Shipyard. When I got to Brown Shipyard, I had 30 days leave from being overseas, coming, but I didn't get but 21 days. I took that from San Francisco and reported back to San Diego and I had to be back in 21 days. Well I had 9 more days leave coming. So when I got to Houston the first thing I did was find out where the Captains office was. I found out that he was in a little old building on the second floor. I went down there and told him who I was and what had happened. I said I've been overseas for two years and I just got back to the states to do construction. I have 9 days leave coming and I

live here in Houston. Can I get my nine days now. He said you sure can. You go down and get the Yeoman to type up the papers and I'll sign them. So I ran down there and got the papers and came back, gave it to him, he signed them and I got my sea bag, got a few clothes and I was on my way.

Nine days later, I came back and everybody told me you are in a lot of trouble. I said what do you mean I'm in a lot of trouble. He said you went on leave and you weren't supposed to go. Well, the Captain signed the papers. I don't know, but the Captain wants to see you. He is really mad, because you were supposed to report to him. I said, nobody told me to report to him. He said he wants to see you anyways. So I went up there to him and told him who I am. He said, what I want to know is who gave you permission to go on leave. I said the Captain. He said you weren't supposed to go see the Captain. You are supposed to come see me. I said sir nobody told me I was supposed to see you. I didn't know who I was supposed to see. I just went to see the Captain. He told me I could go on leave as I had leave coming so I took it. He said I want you to become familiar with this ship. He didn't know that I had been over seas before. He said I want you to get acquainted with this ship. I said sir, I know something about a ship. I just came off of one. I've been on one for two years. I know a little about a ship. He said we will just see how smart you are. I said yes sir. I said what time would you like to go. He said meet me down there on the quarterdeck at 1:00 o'clock. I said alright. So I went down there about 12:30 I guess, and looked around. I found out where all of the frames were on it.

Mr. Rabalais: Was this a DE?

Mr. Goedeke: It was a DE. That was the Dennis.

Mr. Rabalais: So it was a new ship?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes. It was a new ship being fitted out. And I found out where the valves were on the water line and power lines. So I went back on top side to wait for him. And here he comes. He said, where do you want to start? It

doesn't make any difference to me; wherever you want to start. Well, let's just start right here on the main deck. So we walked a little ways. He said what frame is this? I told him. He acted surprised. I could tell by the way he looked. We walked a little bit further and asked ships don't go by feet they go by frames. What frame is this? And I told him. We walked around a few other places and he would ask questions. And I answered every one of them. He said let's go below deck and see what you know down there. He never said a word about how I was doing or nothing. So we went down and he asked me about water lines, and said what goes through this line?. I told him cold water. He said, what goes through this one? I told him hot water. And what's this line here? I said that's the Power line. He said if we were to get a hit back here back aft, where would you cut the power line to keep the water. Well, I knew where the valve was because I had already traced it out. He asked me a few more questions. He said what compartment is this, and anybody could tell it was a sleeping compartment as it had bunks in there. He said OK. You're doing alright I guess. From now on, you report to me if you want to know anything or you are going anywhere. I said yes sir. Well, after that me and him never had another cross word.

Mr. Rabalais: So it was fitted out and you went out on trials?

Mr. Goedeke: We went on trial runs for a couple of days and gun practice.

Mr. Rabalais: What kind of guns are on a DE?

Mr. Goedeke: We had 5 inch 38s, single turret, we had two of those. And we had one Quad-40 and one twin 40 I don't know how many 20s we had on there. We must have had 10 or 15.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you have 5 inch and a stern also? We had three torpedo tubes and then we had 6 K guns and we had hedgehogs and then we had roll racks on the stern.

Mr. Rabalais: Where was your first assignment after your sea trials?

Mr. Goedeke: We went to Bermuda on a shakedown cruise. After Bermuda we went to Boston Navy yard to get them to fix whatever we need to fit it out. And then from there we went to San Diego.

Mr. Rabalais: That's a long way too. Do you go through the Panama Canal?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, the Panama Canal and then San Diego, and from San Diego we went to Pearl. Then from Pearl we got assigned to an invasion. It is one of those small island in the Pacific. I forgot the name of the first one we invaded. We got over there about 2 days before the invasion as we were escorting planes. One day about noon we were on one side of the convoy and we got orders to move.

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Mr. Goedeke:escort ship didn't do it. One of our escort ships sunk the submarine. And come to find out it was one of our own submarines. One of our own submarines sunk one of our ships, and one of our ships sunk a one of our submarines. And my cousin was on the submarine that was sunk. We didn't do it but one of the ships in our convoy. That kinda made me feel bad, but I didn't know anything about it at the time. It was after the war was over before I found out about it. I didn't much like it at the time. But it's just one of those things. Me and him were pretty close in fact. We had gone on liberty a couple of times in Australia, because we used to tend the submarine that he was on.

Mr. Rabalais: After that little invasion was there any enemy activity on that island? It might have been???

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, it was??

Mr. Rabalais: The reason I say that is, I just interviewed a gentlemen that was on the St. Lo and thatMoriti (?)

Mr. Goedeke: Yes it was Right after that we just escorted ships different places. Then the next one was Leyte Gulf. We got into Leyte about the 20th of October when we got there. We were there five days before the invasion.

Mr. Rabalais: Were there any kamikazes yet?

Mr. Goedeke: No, no kamikazes whatsoever. So we would send planes in every morning just before daylight. They would go over and bomb the island and come back. On October 25th, when we had sent planes over at the regular time, we had just secured from general quarters. In fact, I had well before that, I had the twelve to four watch. And my watch was a sounding watch. I had to go around and take soundings of all the compartments, and the balancing tanks to see whether they were taking on any water. Then I had to go up on the bridge and tell them what was going on. I had to make out a chart and just give them that to see how much water we were taking on any water. Of course we never did take on any water, maybe an inch or so. When I went up there that night at twelve o'clock, I asked one of my friends, a signalman, his name was Litsey, and I said Litsey, what's going on tonight. He said, well about the same old thing. Not much. We picked up a fleet 25 miles to the rear but it's Admiral Halsey. So we don't have anything to worry about. But the day before we met Admiral Halsey, and he was going north. He had about forty ships in his convoy. He had four or five big carriers and all the big battleships and all of the fast ships and a lot of cans. I thought to myself and said to the guys, we don't have worry about the Japs out here. We are well protected out here. So he was going north looking for the Japs. He went on north and the next morning we sent our planes in as usual and secured from general quarters.

Mr. Rabalais: So you watched them take off from the CVEs and around y'all?

Mr. Goedeke: A lot of time some of them would hit the water, and we'd have to pick them up.

Mr. Rabalais: Were y'all doing anti submarine patrolling also?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes. Submarine patrol, we did that. Anyhow, we would have to pick them up if they hit the water. We were just secured from General Quarters, and the day before we had gone along side one of the carriers and they gave us a case of eggs. We had to refuel every third day as we

had to keep two thirds full all the time. We went along side and they gave us the eggs, so the next morning we had sunny side eggs up, bacon and toast, and just had a good breakfast. We had been eating that crap because we ran out of eggs about the second day we were out. We had been eating those powdered eggs and boy I can see them now. They looked so good. I got mine and got to the table and I had just set them down on the table and I was going to sit down on the bench and General Quarters went off. I said oh hell, another one of those pilots hit the water and we are going to have to pick him up and my eggs will get cold. So we went to General Quarters, and I was damage control. We had three damage control parties on there, one aft, one midship and one forward. So I had to stay in the back until all the guys got out from below and the guys that were going down there had to get down. I had to be sure all the hatches were dogged down before I went down. So I dogged the hatches down, and when I was standing there I had my back leaning back against the life line. All of a sudden I got wet. Water splashed on me and I was wringing wet. I thought maybe a bomb, and I looked down and that water was red. I went on down and I dogged down the hatches. I had the boys on phones so I had three men beside myself and one of them with the phones. I was supposed to tell them what to do. And he told me on the phone what was going on. Find out what we are being attacked by. So the lines were pretty full with everybody talking on the phone. Finally he told me Goedeke, we are being attacked by the Japanese fleet. You are crazy as hell. Don't tell me we are being attacked by the Japanese fleet. Admiral Halsey was just here. If there was a Japanese fleet he would get them. He said I'm telling you the truth. I said let me have the phone. I thought he was kidding. So I took the phone and called the bridge and I asked them what are we being attacked by? They said we are being attacked by Japanese fleet. So I gave it back to him. I'm sorry I didn't believe you. So we were just waiting for something to happen. He was telling me what was going on.

Mr. Rabalais: Could you hear a shell hit?

Mr. Goedeke: Oh Yeah. Anyway, he tells me what's going on. He said it was decided that the big boys going in for torpedo runs and small boys stand by to go in. That's it. This is it for us. We will never come out of that. So we were making smoke and had smoke bombs going too. The cans went in, and the first can went in and got hit. He told me such and such ship just got hit.

Mr. Rabalais: Probably it was the Johnson.

Mr Goedeke: It was the Johnson. He said it got hit and it's in bad shape. The next one that was going was the Hoel, she went in and she got hit real bad. Then the Hardaman? went in and got hit. But the Johnson and the Hoel sunk. Then the escorts went in, but I forget the name of it. It was a 413, Samuel B. Roberts. It got hit pretty bad. The other came out and he said we are going in now on a torpedo run. He was telling me every ship that went in. We are fixing to go in now on the torpedo run. And I said this is it.

Mr. Rabalais: So you are below decks.

Mr. Goedeke: We are below decks. So we went in, he said they have fired the torpedos and about that time, something hit the side of the ship. It sounded like a freight train hit it. There is a compartment next to us and an 8" shell came in there. When it did, it set some of the bunks on fire. They weren't blazing, just smoldering. These bunks mattresses are made out of horsehair, not the hair off the horse, but the mains and the tails.

Mr. Rabalais: I bet that smelled good.

Mr. Goedeke: That's it. So there were about three and I got them out with the CO2. When I came back and sat down. Me and another guy got them out and he said they want you up forward right away. Well, in the meantime the old man announced over the PA System to stand by to make preparations to abandon ship. We have been hit up forward and taking on water bad. The boy told me that they want you and want you to bring another guy with you. So we went up forward and in the meantime I had to go through the machine shop, and there was my buddy laying on the deck. I asked him,

Davis, what are you laying on the deck for? It didn't look like anything was wrong with him. He said, Oh I've got a little place on my back where I got hit. The pharmacist Mate said it's nothing but a scratch. He can lay here a little while and probably be all right. I said let me see it. He rolled over, he was laying on his stomach, and showed it to me. And it was a little place about the end of your finger nail. I said it doesn't look bad to me. But he was as white as a sheet so I knew it was something wrong with him. I thought he was just scared, and didn't think much about it. But it was a piece of shrapnel went in. What it did, it went in there and cut the main artery and he bled to death.

Mr. Rabalais: So he did die. You went forward then?

Mr. Goedeke: I asked him if there was anything I can do for you. He said there's nothing you can do. So I said I better get up stairs because they are taking on water real bad and I've got to get up there and help them out.

So I got up and the First Lieutenant was there and he didn't know what to do. He had one submersible pump and I said we need to get some more pumps in there. So we got two more submersible pumps and started pumping out. Well, we were hit in the dry storage room, where they store all the canned goods and these pasteboard boxes. And all the canned goods were gallon cans and all of the boxes disintegrated and they were getting around these strainers and the pumps couldn't put the water. Now what are we going to do. I said there was only one damn thing we can do Lieutenant. Somebody has got to get down there and get those pasteboard off those strainers. I'll get down there, but I need a couple more men and so I got one of the men I brought with me, Thomishek (?). So I said will you go down there with me? And another guy volunteered and we went down there and the water was up to my chest. And we would stand on all these cans, and they were wallowing around under our feet. We would dive down and get a handful of those pasteboard boxes and put it on the deck. So it got where we were keeping up pretty up with the water

coming in. It wasn't on the water line but it was up on the bow. And when you are going through the water at 15, or 16, 17 knots, well it flows up on the bow since we were down in the water. And it was coming in there pretty fast.

Mr. Rabalais: Was that the only hit you had taken?

Mr. Goedeke: No, we had four hits. It was coming in but we finally got it slowed down. I got out of there. I just had to get out. But we got it slowed down. By that time they secured General Quarters. The battle was just about over with. Then I went up on deck. They called me up on deck on top side for something. I went up on the foc'sle and the San Lo was just right ahead of us or a little bit on the side of us. Then all of a sudden I heard a plane coming and I looked up and there came the first kamikaze that ever was. And it came down and it dove on the St. Mo and hit it on the aft elevator.

Mr. Rabalais: That's where it hit.

Mr. Goedeke: And when it did it went on down to the hangar deck and they had a lot of ammunition stored there and it just blew up. I'd say two explosions and chunks of metal as big as automobiles went up in the air..

Mr. Rabalais: I'm showing Roy a picture of that exact thing he is talking about right now. And it shows the St. Mo and this huge cloud of smoke.

Mr. Goedeke: It blew stuff up 200 feet in the air. I thought then, that's it. It's gonna go down. Well, no more than that and the men started getting off the ship. Some of them came down on lines and some of them just jumped off. It went down stern first and those men were just rolling off of it falling in the water. It was the darndest thing I ever saw. They started swimming over to us. We stopped.

Mr. Rabalais: You were fairly close?

Mr. Goedeke: Oh we were within 200 yards.

Mr. Rabalais: That's exactly the number that the survivor told me and he was on the St. Lo. He said he was only about 200 yards away. That's interesting.

Mr. Goedeke: They started swimming to our ship. We lowered the life boat and picked up some of the survivors.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you lower some climbing nets?

Mr. Goedeke: We lower some climbing nets and then some lines and we reached down and got the ones that we could.

Mr. Rabalais: Some of them were too weak to climb the nets.

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, some were and we had to climb down and get them. We had to climb down to get them as some of them were too weak or wounded. I gave one guy two suits of dungarees and shirts. I gave one guy my bunk and I met one of the guys at the last reunion, He said I remember you. How do you remember me? He said you gave me a suit of dungarees. I said how did you know it was me? He said I know it was you. You gave me a set of dungarees and your bunk to sleep in. I sure do appreciate that. I never did thank you before and I appreciate it. Well, I just did what anyone else would do. Everybody was giving them things because they were all oily and wet. And some of them didn't have any clothes on at all. It blew the clothes off of them. What made it bad you would see some of them get half way over and then they would go down. Some didn't have life vests on and they couldn't swim that far. Around the ship there were dead bodies just floating around the ship. It was bad. Of course we finally got them picked up.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you watch the boat sink?

Mr. Goedeke: I saw it when it went down.

Mr. Rabalais: Now what did it look like when it sunk. Did the stern come up or the bow come up?

Mr. Goedeke: No, the stern went down first. It kind of rolled over to the side and the stern went down first. The men were falling off there like dead flies. They were falling off. It could be that some were dead or wounded so bad. And I imagine the sharks got them. It didn't take long for the sharks to get there. I don't know how long it took to pick them up. It seemed to me two or three hours. I know it took that long because the battle lasted about two and one half to three hours. It was about three o'clock in the

afternoon, then. All the other ships were hauling ass, and left us there by ourselves.

Mr. Rabalais: Where did you go with the survivors then?

Mr. Goedeke: I don't know where we went, to Guam, or some island, whether it was Guan, or one of the other islands. The closest island there was around and we unloaded them to a hospital ship. Some of them went ashore to a hospital they had set up there. We stayed in there and patched up two holes. The one below the water line we put a temporary on it.

Mr. Rabalais: Did they weld a patch on it?

Mr. Goedeke: We welded it from the inside. There was another one we welded on the outside. We were above the water line about four foot. We dropped a couple of boatswain chairs over the side.

Mr. Rabalais: Those were probably cruiser shells.

Mr. Goedeke: They were eight inch cruiser shells.

Mr. Rabalais: Now did you go somewhere to get permanent repairs?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, we went on in to Pearl Harbor, but they couldn't take us in Pearl. They were over loaded. So they sent us back to the states. They sent us to Oakland, California to a Navy yard. We were in there I not sure how long we were there, time passes so fast.

Anyhow, they gave everybody three days leave. Well you couldn't go anywhere in three days, unless you lived close. But one of these guys in my department, the one that went down in the water with me; he told me, Roy, there's no way I can home. And besides, I don't have the money to go. Do you want my three days? I'll give it to you. I said I don't want to take your three days Thomas. You go on home. You got a family of four kids at home. He said I just don't have the money and I can't go. He said I'd like to go, but I just can't. I said, OK, I'll take them. So he gave me his three days leave and I that made me six days. So I went home. I flew. I caught a plane, and took leave. It took me a day to get home. I left San

Francisco about six o'clock in the evening and I got home the next day about one o'clock in the afternoon. I had to change planes three times.

Mr. Rabalais: Was that on military planes.

Mr. Goedeke: No, they were civilian. We got to Los Angeles I couldn't get on that plane because they were full. So they put me up in a USO place there at the airport. I slept there and they next morning I caught a plane to Dallas. I had a two hour lay over in Dallas, and then caught one to Houston. I got in the next day. Going back I had a straight flight.

Mr. Rabalais: Who was paying. Were you paying for it?

Mr. Goedeke: I paid for it myself. It didn't cost so much to fly then. Of course, you didn't make piles of money then either. Money was scarce. I was first class at that time. I was making pretty good. I had overseas pay and some other combat pay. I'm not sure what all kind of pay I was getting.

Mr. Rabalais: Did you get reassigned when you got back?

Mr. Goedeke: I went back to the states. And the night before, on the 22nd or 23rd, we had liberty and we had about eighteen or twenty men to go over the hill. They went home absent without leave. They left and the rumor got out and the next night there were about fifty guys that left. A lot of them told me they weren't coming back. We had port and starboard liberty.

Mr. Rabalais: Were you still on the Dennis?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes.

Mr. Rabalais: Why were these men not coming back? Were they sick and tired of it all, or scared?

Mr. Goedeke: No. I don't think they were scared after what they went through. You can't imagine what they went through.

Mr. Rabalais: It was pretty nasty. Pretty bad and it just shook them up.

Mr. Goedeke: They just couldn't go through it again. You can just take so much. Some guys committed suicide. I knew five guys that committed suicide. I know two committed suicide while I was in the Navy. They just couldn't take it any more. They didn't care what they did to them. They asked me if I was going. I said no I'm not going. I've got too much to lose. I know

what they would do to me. I don't want to spend the rest of my life in Leavenworth. I'm not going.

Anyhow, we pulled out of Mare Island, we went to load up with ammunition. We pulled into San Francisco and we were supposed to leave out the day after Christmas. The night before was the 23rd. The 50 men I knew, were going over the hill, and I know we wouldn't have enough crew to go out. Well the old man got the word and he cancelled all liberty. They had Marine guards out with loaded rifles and he had some out on the boat, and once we were tied up to the dock, he had a boat out there with some in that. And then they had two walking up and down the dock. One would be walking one way and one would be walking the other way. They had loaded rifles with order to kill, if any man went over that ship. A lot of them had crawled out the life line and got off. They couldn't do that, so nobody went over. The next day, the Marine guards stayed there all day long. That evening just at sunset, we got on the way. We went under that Golden Gate Bridge the sun was going down, and that was the most horrible feeling I ever had. Going out under that bridge, I knew we were going back out to sea.

We went on and they lined us up to go to the next invasion. We went to Iwo Jima. We got there about two or three days before the actual invasion. We were sending planes in. There were so many planes in there bombing that island there is no way there could be any Japs on that island as many bombs as were dropped. When they invaded it, the first day they killed about 5,000 Marines. That was a bloody battle.

Mr. Rabalais: Were there any kamikaze against y'all at Iwo?

Mr. Goedeke: No. No kamikazes there. I didn't see any. But every night there would be about ten planes coming over. You could have thrown a rock up and it would have hit them. But we had orders not to fire. They would go on the other side of the island...

Mr. Rabalais: These were Japanese plans?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes, Japanese planes. None of the ships fired on them. They went on the other side of the island and dropped their bombs, and then went back. And they would do that every night. We had orders not to fire on them. We didn't want to draw their fire. We had a lot of ships out there at Iwo Jima. I guess they must have had 200 ships or more. There would be dead marine bodies all over the place. And it was sometimes two or three days before they could get the bodies out, with all the firing going on.

Mr. Rabalais: From Iwo Jima were did you go?

Mr. Goedeke: We went to Okinawa. Okinawa was a bad one

Mr. Rabalais: Now y'all had Kamikaze there.

Mr. Goedeke: Oh yes. We had Kamikaze. We went on picket line duty there.

Mr. Rabalais: Were you with other ships?

Mr. Goedeke: We were by ourselves. The first time we went out there, we had other ships with us. We had been out there by ourselves.

Mr. Rabalais: Did y'all have radar?

Mr. Goedeke: Oh yes. We had radar. There were several Kamikazes came in but missed us. They would dive on us and miss us. We were never hit by one. I've seen them ships and cans grt hit I guess they scrapped those ships. I don't know what they did with them. They had four or five of them like that. At the end of the war, the Kamikazes were sinking five and six of our ships a day.

Mr. Rabalais: So Okinawa was a bad deal.

Mr. Goedeke: Oh it was real bad. Then we had invasions there and then in thirty days we were going into Japan. We were already making preparations to go into Japan.

Mr. Rabalais: A lot of people were.

Mr. Goedeke: We were making preparations to go into Japan and then the bomb was dropped. We left Okinawa and we got into a typhoon. Nobody could eat. They would throw up. We started out with a bunch of LSTs, I think they

were LSTs. We must have ten or twelve of them, but the next morning there wasn't a one left. They all got sunk. We had a bunch of ships sunk. I thought that we were going to sink. We came out of that water, and you had to look up to see the sky. Water was as high as you could see. Water was 75 feet up in the air. And we were down in a hole. You got on top of one of those swells and it would go down and the bottom of the ship would sound like the bottom was coming out of the ship, because there was no water under it.

Mr. Rabalais: You just slap the waves.

Mr. Goedeke: It would just slap down and shake. It was scary. We went through that for three days. The only thing we had to eat was sandwiches that you made yourself.

Mr. Rabalais: Were y'all able to pick up any survivors from other ships?

Mr. Goedeke: No, we never picked up any survivors. The only survivors we ever picked up were ones we picked up from the Midway battle. Then we picked up a lot of pilots. They would come in and miss the runway and ditch in the water. We had to pick them up. Then a lot of them would take off with so many bombs they couldn't gain altitude. And they would just flop down in the water and we would pick them up.

Mr. Rabalais: Then after the storm y'all headed towards Japan?

Mr. Goedeke: I don't know where we were going. We went to some island, I know that. I think we went to Guam. I've forgotten which one it was. We were expecting preparations to go to Japan, and then they dropped the bomb. Scuttlebutt on the ship was that the war wasn't going to last much longer. And I made a remark, I said how do you know? He said the United States had got a new bomb. I got a letter from home and my mother told me that the United States has a new bomb. And as they get this new bomb developed, it was going to end the war. That was about two weeks before they dropped it. I said, I don't believe that.

Anyhow, when they dropped that first bomb, we were about a hundred fifty or two hundred miles from it. Then when they dropped the second one I don't know how far we were from that. Two weeks time not over three weeks, we got orders to come home.

Mr. Rabalais: Were your orders to go back to San Francisco?

Mr. Goedeke: Yes. We had been over there so long, We didn't go to San Francisco, we went to San Diego, and we had the homeward bound and the stern had so of them. So we had been over seas so many months, there were so many points for each man.

So many points to get home. We'd been over seas so long and as soon as the war was over, we came home, before the signing. We came home and got pulled into San Diego at the foot of Broadway. The Navy band was there to meet us, and a lot of people. They gave us a real homecoming.

Mr. Rabalais: Did they discharge you pretty soon after that?

Mr. Goedeke: No. See I was in the regular Navy. I joined in 1941, I wasn't discharged until 1947. So I still had two years to go.

Mr. Rabalais: It was a six year enlistment?

Mr. Goedeke: Yep. So we pulled into the foot of Broadway and we stayed there two or three hours and then pulled down to the Navy repair base further down. That's where we anchored. We stayed there for a couple of weeks then they decided they would start decommissioning these ships. I stayed there. We had four ships left and we six ships in our division but we had four left. Two of them were sunk. So I put all four ships out of commission.

Mr. Rabalais: Well, that sort of ends the war time period.

Mr. Goedeke: The war was over with.

Mr. Rabalais: But you weren't actually discharged until your term was over.

Mr. Goedeke: Oh no. I was married at the time. My wife came out there and we had a little apartment that we lived in. I got every night liberty. Then I got subsistence for living off the ship. I had a good friend of mine that got me a Navy chow pass so I could eat lunch.

Mr. Rabalais: But you didn't make a career of the Navy?

Mr. Goedeke: No. I had 90 days leave coming. So they told me that they would let me out 90 days ahead of time. I had to take that leave. I could have gotten out, if I would ship over. But in the meantime I had taken an examination for chief, but I never did get it. They told me they would give me chief if I would ship over. I told them no, I don't believe I want to ship over. I had enough of war. And I was glad I didn't in a way because I would have been in the other two wars.

Mr. Rabalais: The Korean and the Vietnam. Well that's a different story so that ends the World War II portion. We are about at the end of our tape. We will again thank you very much Roy, for sharing all of this personal detail with us. This adds to the academic history that the Nimitz Museum compiles for use of historians to research. And it's very important to our records. Two copies of this will be drafted for you and sent to you for you and your family to use. You are free to make copies of that. The tape and the original copy will be put in our archives here at the Nimitz Museum. Again, thank you very much Mr. Roy Goedeke and I appreciate very much you sharing that.