

Glenn Reynolds Oral History Interview

CORK MORRIS: This is Cork Morris. Today is December 5th, 2009. I'm interviewing Mr. Glenn Reynolds, and this interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to this site. Thank you much for taking a little time out and coming in to talk with us.

GLENN REYNOLDS: You're most welcome.

CM: As I said, if you would, if we could just start with where and when you were born, and how things were then.

GR: Well, I had rather a tough life. I was born 21st of February, 1921. And I was born on the farm, so far back in the woods, really, just (inaudible). And my mother died right after I was born, so I never knew my mother. That's the beginning. First hard luck I had. And then the Depression came along a little bit later on in life. I went to school at Pine Level, Alabama at the age of six, and of course at that time we were living on a farm. And I did very well, I graduated from that, it was just to the ninth grade school, I had to go to another one. But the

Ramer School for a little more higher training in high school, the tenth through the eleventh grade. I quit school to go into the Navy, joined the Navy November the 5th, 1939. Went to basic training at Norfolk, Virginia, and from there I was transferred to the Naval receiving station in San Diego, California, where subsequently I was assigned to the USS *Maryland* in March, 1940.

CM: That was your first ship?

GR: That was my first ship. And of course, the ship was located at Long Beach, California. And I'll tell you what happened, right there is where I went to sea, that's at this base, they went to Long Beach. They'd have such terrific ground swells that I got seasick anchored right there at the anchorage place. So it goes to show you how big the swells were. The ship that I was assigned to, *Maryland*, USS *Maryland*, weighed 36,000 tons, it was commissioned in 1921. And at that time we had 16 -- we had eight 16-inch guns, eight 5-inch .25 guns, and we had 10, I think it was, of 5-inch .51 caliber guns. And then later on we got four machine gun mounts, which were four guns, 1.1-inch in diameter, and they were water-cooled. And this proved to be a pretty good weapon during the Pearl Harbor thing, but that was later on in life, actually. At any

rate, I enjoyed every day that I spent on the *Maryland*, except for, like I said, I had the ship painted, do menial tasks. But it was a good ship, it really was. And of course the crew was an excellent crew. And they would assist one another -- just (inaudible), you know, they helped all of us recruits.

CM: How many crew did it take to run that ship?

GR: I think the top load was around 2,200 enlisted people, and quite frankly, I forgot how many officers. I was in enlisted men. And of course as I say, I forgot how many officers, it seemed to me like it was 100, or not a whole lot anyway. But any rate, it was a well-run ship. And from there, of course, we went on maneuvers oftentimes going to Hawaii, staying two or three weeks and then coming back to the States, staying two or three weeks and then go back out and go to maneuvers someplace else, come back. This went on all during a period from 1940 to 1941. And just before the attack in 1941, we went to Bremerton Navy Yard, and that's where they installed the one point weapons. And my division, which was the 6th Division on the *Maryland*, was split into a 6A and 6B. I was in 6A, transferred to 6A, which was on the starboard side of the main deck, and the 6B was on the port side. And of course

our missions were basically the same thing, antiaircraft events. But ours was the machine gun, as opposed to the other section that had the 5-inch .25s. I hope that's clear. And it's very unusual for someone not to picture that, you know, because they can't visualize a big ship, and they don't visualize those components. That's where they're located on the ship. Well, the 5-inch .25s were located on the boat deck; four mounts on the starboard, four mounts on the port. Likewise, on the 1.1s, there was two mounts on the port side and two mounts on the starboard side. The two mounts forward were located right under the bridge, which this is one of the innovations that they had put on there prior to Pearl Harbor, and two that had been placed on the quarter deck. Then in comes Pearl Harbor day.

Well, let me back up for just a moment there. We had a visit with a fleet Admiral of the *Maryland* a couple of weeks before Pearl Harbor. And when he was touring the ship, he asked his officer who was escorting him if we had fired those 1.1s, he told them about the new weapons. And said no we haven't, all we've done is just test fired them. He said, he expected him to fire them at the target very

soon. Very soon. And of course he didn't say why, but he just wanted to be ready for action. And then of course Pearl Harbor rolled around a few weeks later, happening at, I think the official time around 7:55 in the morning, just before raising the flag. And of course you had the Marines raising the flags and a band out. And before they could get it raised, the Japanese came by with machine guns and rattled the decks. And of course they got away without any accidents, fortunately, which was good. And then they sounded general quarters, which is everybody takes their battle stations. Some of us was in bed, some of us was writing letters, some of us was eating and some of us going to church, and some of them just laying around on the decks.

CM: What were you doing?

GR: I was writing a letter to my girlfriend in Seattle, Washington. And of course when this general quarter sounds, you have to drop what you're doing and go running immediately, double time, to your battle station. My battle station was up from the main deck to the boat deck, from the boat deck up to the bridge, just under the bridge, on the forward mast. And that's where we had the gun. And of course, we, our gun turrets, our gun mounts, we didn't

keep any ammunition up there, as opposed to the five inch guns. They had lockers they could keep theirs in, but due to regulations, all the ammunition was stored down below in the ammunition locker. So needless to say it took a few minutes to get ammunition up to both of them. The only difference in the processes of getting the ammunition, the had an electric hoist for the 5-inch, and we had a well and water tackling lock, or whatever you call it --

CM: Like a dumbwaiter?

GR: Yeah, absolutely. That had to be pulled up. They were in cans of 36 rounds each, and clips, and of course all of it did come out, and they come out and load them in the gun and (inaudible). But at any rate, it took some time to get the weapons. And during the absence of the ammunition on our guns, our gun officer told me and a seaman shipmate of mine by name of Whalen to go down to the ammunition locker and find out what the holdup was. So we went down there, and before we got back, the 5-inch guns had been firing something terrible. And the boat deck was solid glass. And since the uniform of the day was barefoot if you wanted, like shorts and t-shirts, well, both of us had no shoes on, and had to walk across that glass, and neither of us got even a little pricking of the glass, which was I

guess a miracle from God that we didn't, but at any rate --
And then we finally get the ammunition, and just before --
I should have mentioned this long before that -- another
shipmate had already shot down the first plane in the
water. And his name was Leslie Short, because he was on
the machine gun mast, on the forward mast. And one of the
jet planes came in and dropped a bomb on the floating dry
dock, which had the destroyer show in it, and it completely
damaged both, I guess, to beyond repair. I didn't stay
there that long to find out, but they were rather heavily
damaged. And then --

CM: Where, exactly, were you? Now were you docked at, like,
Ford Island?

GR: Yes. We were. We were adjacent to Ford Island, the
Oklahoma was tied up to us, and then behind us was the
Tennessee and Nevada, West Virginia and I forget the other
ship, and then the Arizona was behind this ship. I guess
it was a supply ship of some sort. I did know the name of
it, but I forgot some of them. But we were tied up by the
Oklahoma, and they were outside, and we were inboard. And
of course, the battleship *Oklahoma*, to my knowledge, took
seven torpedoes before it rolled over and sunk (inaudible).
They were attached to us, or tied up to us with 10-inch

howitzers, both on front and the rear of the ship. And it broke those howitzers just like it was sewing thread or something relatively easy, you know, when it rolled over. And at that time I noticed that it had a lot of the sailors and Marines hand walking those ropes, trying to get to the *Maryland*, because they knew it was going to sink. And about halfway through that, those ropes broke, and all of those soldiers, Marines and sailors fell down in between the *Oklahoma* and the *Maryland*. And of course, the suction was so terrific, it just pulled them all right under, and I'm sure every one of them drowned, although I couldn't verify that. But we had found -- we had seen bodies and recovered bodies for a week or more, after Pearl Harbor (inaudible). All those ships, there were some -- just about every one of them was hit, just about, except this hospital ship. They didn't touch it. But at any rate, that began the regular firing of all batteries from all ships. Of course most of the damage had already been done, and dry dock was the battleship *Pennsylvania*, two destroyers, the *Cassin* and the *Downes*, and then the *California* was sitting on the right hand side of the Ford Island, tied up to a pier. And the *Utah* was sitting on the opposite side again, it sunk in place. And the planes kept

coming in, the bombers kept coming in at this rate, or at this time. And of course it just demolished everything on Ford Island, including the building. And we were sitting about 25 or 30 feet right adjacent to it. And we had a tanker, I have a tank, I have a gas tanker, which was tied up or anchored between us and Ford Island, not between us and Ford Island, but just in front of us about 20 feet. And later on, when the fire started coming up, we'd all cringe because we just knew it was going to hit that tanker and blow up. And we got out our fire hose, and so did the gas ship, and then they forced the fire to go the other way. And I think that's all that saved everybody there, especially on the *Maryland* and the tanker.

Now overall, this is just a basic scene. You cannot really rationalize the turmoil, the amount of disaster that was placed on the fleet that was out there, unless you saw it when it happened. And of course, it was even hard for us to realize it being there, and just seeing it all around us. But it's a memory that will never, ever leave, I don't think any person that was out there.

CM: I'm sure.

GR: And of course, I'm almost 90 years old now, and I still remember it almost as if it was there today, you know? And it was really terrible, and of course the most horrendous part of it was seeing so many from our shipmates from different ships that had been hit and killed, and all their bodies were floating around for such a long period of time, you know? That's gets so to you where you can't sleep, where you have all sorts of nightmares and sleeping habits, bad sleeping habits. And after that, shortly after everything cleared, the *Maryland* received three bombs and suffered five casualties. We suffered the first casualty in the World War II, or in the Pacific anyway, and we also shot down the first aircraft. The first aircraft was shot down by a guy by the name of Leslie Short, which was my shipmate. And of course we suffered official first casualty, who was also a machine gunner in the rear mast of the ship. And I forget his name, but I've got a book with that in it, so if you need that I can call you and give it to you. That was really an event, I thought, an outstanding event, although it cost him his life. And the poor guy never got recognized as being killed until after the war, can you imagine that?

CM: Well, there were a lot of things going on.

GR: Yeah. Absolutely. There's a lot of things that happened that I don't know of, and still don't know of, simply because they haven't been recorded. But I talk to other people and they tell me what went on in their area, and it seems to match pretty much what happened in our area.

CM: And that was actually a question I had is at what point after the battle did you and your mates realize the scale of this attack?

GR: Well, the bombing itself and the shooting actually stopped around 10:30 in the morning. We seem to have gotten, without notice, a cease fire, just one of them silent things that happens. And everybody sort of laid back at their gun positions, or their positions at the general quarters or battle station, and they just sort of looked over and seeing what damage was done to the Tennessee, what damage was done to the West Virginia, and of course we saw the Arizona when it was blowing up, knew what happened there. And then we could see that the *California* was down also in the water. And there was a ship behind it, which I do not know what was behind it. And we also saw the smoke from the bombs of the *Cassin* and *Downes*, and the *Pennsylvania*. But we didn't know how much it was damaged because it was in dry dock, and we were quite a ways from

there. But we could see when the bomb hit the floating dry dock, and the Shaw, which was also down there. But mostly our ship got either some shrapnel, some machine gun, bombs or torpedoes. The torpedoes plane came in from the direction of the submarine base, and just dropped them in, had nothing to block them. No weapons were flying in. And everything that had dropped hit their target. And the first one to go, to receive a torpedo was the *California*. And then while we went to our battle stations, the *Oklahoma* took at least two to three torpedoes, because you could feel the jar as a result of the compression that came with it. And as I said, we didn't have any ammunition, and all we could do was just pray that we could make it through until we did.

And when these guys started coming from the *Oklahoma*, everybody's heart sort of low down, you know, morale decreased considerably, seeing what was happening to that ship, and fear of it happening to our ship as well, which we were ever grateful that it didn't. But anyway, you asked about the *Maryland*, and knowing what happened to it from that point on. As I said, all the firing the weapons and what have you, and everything literally seems to have

stopped around 10:30 in the morning. And we hadn't had any bathroom activities or any water or anything during that time, so we took a break by numbers, you know, from each station they got so that a station could still be manned; you could go to the bathroom if you had to or get water, or whatever you needed to do. And then we were served lunch on our stations, we didn't go to lunch. They fixed us some sandwiches. And we stayed up there all day until about 4:00 in the afternoon, and then the planning officer made up the -- or determined that we had to have both a day and a night watch. So they divided us up into two teams. We had teams for each mount, every mount was manned 24 hours a day, so to speak. And I was lucky, I did get off and sleep for the first night, of course they woke us up at 4:00 in the morning and we had to relieve the other crews. But at any rate, it worked out very well. And at night we took off, or divided up. We had three of our own planes come over from one of the carriers, I think it was the Hornet, or maybe Enterprise, I'm not sure. But any rate, they came over the harbor, and as you know, they had this exhaust where you could see the fire coming out, they were running in the air. And somebody with a quick finger thought they were firing a machine when they saw this fire. So he

opened fire, and when he did, the whole harbor opened up. And we shot down one of the planes that we know of, and we thought we had shot down two. But only one was reported, at any rate, the pilot was saved. Plane was lost. And apparently I guess they must be right to say that three planes, the other three planes got back. So we counted three, and they said it was four. That's the way things go the more you hit.

Okay, and after that, everything seemed to return to semi-normal, day activities. We had the crews daily and nightly on the weapons, at ready. And we had the radars, they were intact with us, and intact on most of the ships that were left, except for the Tennessee, the West Virginia, the Arizona, and of course the *Utah* didn't have much on it anyway, they were just used as this (inaudible) ship. And I know the *Carolina* -- I mean the *California* was damaged considerably, so I don't know if they resumed to the normal service after that or not.

CM: Was the *Maryland* still seaworthy after this?

GR: Well, it wasn't until we got temporary repairs on the hull. We had temporary underwater repair on the bow, and then pumped out all the water on the ship. And then they moved

us, we just barely could squeeze between the pier and the *Oklahoma*, a bunch of tugs brought us over there. I mean, it was -- I'm talking about inches. You know. At any rate, they moved us over to the docks, where they could do a complete job of the welding. And they welded -- they fixed us up where we could go to the Navy yard in Bremerton, Washington, where we underwent a lot of refurbishing, the changing of the design of the ships, and putting in bunks instead of cots for beds, and so forth, and done numerous changes on the ship. And then we got out of there for our test runs, and it proved okay. And we got orders to go to the Aleutian Islands where we were sent to back up the Army, in the approach of the Japanese to the Aleutian Islands. Didn't encounter any of the enemy. And then from there we got orders to receive to the Philippines, Manila, or Midway. I'm sorry, Midway. And we were in a supporting role there. And I guess the reason he had us as a supporting role, we could launch shells, 16-inch shells 21 miles. And we didn't have to be right in the thick of it, as opposed to some of the smaller ships. And the aircraft carriers took care of most damage, anyway. But at any rate, we was a supporting force for that battle. And then later on, I was transferred -- well, backtrack.

Coming from the Aleutians, we stopped in San Francisco for about three or four days. And then we got orders to go to Midway. And while at Midway, I pulled a no-no, and as a result of my punishment, I got transferred from the *Maryland* when it reached Pearl Harbor again. So at any rate, I reached Pearl Harbor, and I was transferred to the *Pyro*, which was an ammunition ship.

CM: Good name.

GR: (laughs) And of course there was nothing but a receiving station. And from the *Pyro*, I was assigned to a tanker, oil tanker. And it was a wonderful ship.

CM: I guess you're not going to tell me what your no-no was on the *Maryland*, huh?

GR: Well, I'd rather not, unless you want to hear it.

CM: I'd love to hear it.

GR: Well, I went on liberty when we were tied up at Pier 29 in San Francisco, and our liberty consisted of overnight. And having come from the Pearl Harbor attack and all the rigmarole we faced in the Bremerton Navy Yard, and the total lack of complete liberty, I took advantage of it and got inebriated, highly inebriated. Well, I was the chief of one of the gun mounts, I had to prepare it for Saturday morning inspection, this was Friday night. And I left my

assistant to prepare the gun for the inspection. Well, he didn't get the gun prepared for inspection. So for all intents and purposes, I was absent without leave, although I was on permitted liberty. But at any rate, I came back in highly inebriated, and my division officer, a non-com, he sent me down below, he told me, "Get your blanket-blank down below deck, and don't let me see or hear of you for the rest of the day." Okay. So I went down there, and needless to say, I fell asleep. And I heard later on that afternoon about 3:00, someone called me over the PA. I heard, "Glenn Reynolds, you're wanted in 6A division immediately." Of course I acted like I didn't hear it, but I heard it. But any rate, I went back up there, and (inaudible), the one in charge, he said, "Well, young fella," he says, "I hate to inform you, but you're going to be court-martialed." I said, "Well, what can I say?" He says, "Not a hell of a lot." He says, "I don't think you'd dare say anything, period." I said, "Okay." Well, then I had to go see my division officer, and he asked me for an explanation. I said, "Sir, I don't have one explanation. I was not physically able to do, or stand the inspection." I says, "I think you know the reason already." He said, "Yes, I do." And I said, "Well, that's it." He said,

"Well, I'll tell you what your punishment is going to be later." So he found out in about two weeks, and he says, "Well, we're going to transfer you." I said, "Okay, (inaudible)."

So I went from the *Maryland* to the *Pyro*, and I stayed there three days. Then from the *Pyro* to an oil tanker by the name *Halawa*, H-A-L-A-W-A, which was a small tanker for delivering oil to islands in the South Pacific. That was our mission, to deliver oil to all the islands that was under our control in the South Pacific. And before we could get away from there, they wanted to steam clean the tanks on this tanker, because they had heavy shale, you know, from the oil being there so long. And they sandblasted it, and they were so darned old and so thin, when they sandblasted it, we almost sunk, sitting right beside the dock.

CM: Blew holes right through it?

GR: Right through it, yeah. (laughs) It had diesel engines that was older than I was, must have been, had to be. I went aboard then as a third class gunner's mate. So we had one 3-inch .50 gun, 3-inch .50 caliber gun, two .50 caliber portable machine gun, three .30 caliber water cooler

machine gun and two 20 millimeter antiaircraft guns. That was the only weapons we had. And of course later on, I'll tell you what happened. But anyway, after we got this tanker fixed, we loaded it up and we head out to sea for Palmira and Johnson Island. And the first day out, the engines conked out, and we sat there and drifted about 8, 12 hours possibly. And then we finally got underway again, and one of the PVYs came over that were doing the patrolling, and of course they had the blinkers, you know, signals, and they spotted a submarine, say longitude 5, and whatever it was, longitude and latitude. Gave us that, and told us to be on the watch, sat at the ready. And of course we had never fired a 3-inch .50 caliber gun. That was the only one that we had that we could fire, it wasn't bigger than a drum. So anyway, the next morning the gunnery officer had us prepare weapons for fire just in case. He said, "But I think we'd better do some target practice before." And I said, "Well, that's a good idea. I know darned well that they're not going to do anything," but I said, "I could certainly do it. And I know you had a drum already painted for target practice," red with black stripes on it, you know. I mean, white with black stripes. And we dropped it at one point and we moved on down. And

of course within range of the 350, we had him fire five shots, and didn't hit it. Didn't even come close, it was a (inaudible). Because the ship was like this, you know? And they couldn't control their guns and time it with the swell up or down, see. So at any rate, the gunner officer wasn't very pleased with that. And I said, "No, sir." I said, "I agree you should not be," I said, "Because they haven't had the practice." I said, "So you can't do the impossible when you haven't tried it." So he said, "Well, you get with them and train them, and train daily until they get pretty good at it." "Okay." So we trained them.

Any rate, we get going again, and another day before we got down there, the ship broke down again, and again come along and told us about this. And I think I would radio him or signal him and send a message back to him, well, we can't submarine, so we'll just watch out for it and let you know. But any rate, we didn't ever see any. We never saw a submarine, thank God. And we done this for the rest of my time in the Pacific. I got over there in '42, now. And I think it was August of '42, maybe -- it may have been July, somewhere in '42, early '42. And then I was promoted to second class, as I said, and three weeks there. Then I got

promoted properly for first class before I left the tanker. I applied for gunnery school and got accepted, and I left the tanker, went to the gunnery school, and there I screwed up again. I didn't get any punishment, but I screwed up again. I can actually tell you why this one was. I finished gunnery school and I had my orders to go to North Africa. From North Africa, we were supposed to go to India to set up --

CM: What year is this now?

GR: Nineteen forty-three. We landed at Casablanca, where the German -- I mean the French -- sunk all the ships to keep the Germans from capturing them. And we had a base there, and of course we stayed there for roughly two to three weeks or more. And then we got sent to Iran, where we were to pick up our unit, mark 86 west. I don't know if you can broadcast that out, because it was a secret at that time. But anyway, we picked it up and established a unit, and loaded our LSTs and got on the way from mark 86 west, which was in India. And after being out to sea in a day, we got another set of orders changing us from going to India, we were to go back to England because they were building a base there, which was an amphibious base on the Thames River. Well, we get back to England before the Thames

River project was finished, so we had to go to Scotland and unload all our equipment and everything, and just wait until they finished the buildings, and had all our maintenance quarters, and we sat at the -- on the Thames. And this took about two months to finish. So finally we got down to the Thames, and we set up a base. And we were trying to defend ourselves from the German V-2 buzz bombs, and of course any bombers that came over, and also the V-2 bombs that they had. Well, we didn't do too good a job defending them, because we stayed there about long enough to do repairs on the LSTs and the other ships that came in, grip them with new rifles and all the ammunition they could hold, and gas masks for D-Day. Now we had to work 24 hours around the clock, delivering those things to all the ships down in South London. And of course we eventually got this done, but just right after we got it down, we got two bombs, two buzz bombs. One of them hit right outside my quarters, right on the building which was about now, I guess, 50 feet from where I am. And we had an air raid shelter in between the two. Well, all -- everybody was there with me, and of course I was down in the pub enjoying life, you know, and I missed that one. When I came back to go to bed, one of those 12-inch BI beams had bent, my bed

was just a V on both ends. Come right square down on my bed.

CM: Really?

GR: So as I say, I was out talking to the girls and what have you, but that don't need -- you don't need -- you can edit that out. But at any rate, it hit outside and also hit a couple of LSTs that we had at the same time, and just the only way we could get the remains of the people on it was shovel out at least one head, if we could find the head and the corpse, and put it in baggage and, you know, turn it over to the authorities, that process. And of course it was terrible. And these things, you know, are just so vivid in your mind. I don't think you ever forget it. Well, moving on from that tragedy to another tragedy -- it wasn't a tragedy per se, but it was very unusual. I was transferred because the base was closed after these bombs hit, we had to close the base and move, and everybody was transferred either remaining in Europe, or went back to the States. And I was the one that didn't have the tour finished, so I had to stay until my time was up. And they assigned me to a unit at Grosvenor Square, which was our embassy. And I stayed there at least six or eight months. And I was assigned as a shore patrolman. If you don't know

what a shore patrolman would do, it's the same as an MP. Supposed to arrest drunks and put them in the [little?] pokey and all that. And my beat was on Piccadilly Square in London, heart of London. And shortly after I was assigned there, I guess it was -- when was it, in April that the embassy -- or, Germany surrendered?

CM: Yeah. Was it --

GR: I think it was in April, but anyway, whenever it was they surrendered, I was down there, and we had no idea that they had surrendered. We had to get on our beat at 6:00. Well, at 6:00 there's nobody down there soldiers-wise, you just sit there and wait until the crowd starts moving. So at any rate, we waited for about 8:00, and by this time there were so many people on Piccadilly Square that we couldn't open the door of our van or our ambulance to get out and patrol. I mean, it was about, I think, six avenues approaching that Piccadilly Square, streets. And they were all filled just as far as you could see with people. So we could not do any patrol. So consequently, we had to sit there and wait until they had done their performance, and everybody was getting drunk. Had a woman that climbed the Piccadilly Square where the -- I remember the statue -- but any rate, a woman climbed this statue in the nude, and of

course the crowd was disorderly, and they went from bad to worse. Instead of us getting off at midnight, we didn't get off until 4:00 in the morning. That's when the crowd ceased. And they didn't cease -- they didn't totally cease, you know. I know this is boring to you, but --

CM: No no, not at all.

GR: -- that's the way it went. Well, from there, I finally did my time, and I got my orders to go home. And I had to, in order to get home, I was transferred to Plymouth, England, and I had to drive a dump truck with a pickup in the back of it to a transportation unit in between where I was in London and down on the Southeastern Coast, [on the South of England?], of England. They had a receiving base down there, the Navy, U.S. Navy did. And that's where I went to get back home. Well, of course we had -- down there we had to do all kinds of duties, you know, regardless of your rank and what have you, you had to pitch in and help everybody out, help them either prepare -- help them prepare themselves because of the inability, or had been wounded or because they couldn't help themselves for another reason. And it was just a hard task to perform. And of course now, this is right across from France, you know, and they expected anytime for bombs to come over,

which they never did, thank God. They never touched that base at all.

Well, eventually my time to come home happened. Well, instead of coming directly home, they shipped me to New Orleans, where I was to be discharged by (inaudible). And this one, now this is what turned me against the Navy, and I shouldn't say it, but I'm going to say it just in case somebody wants to hear it. At this base in New Orleans, a Navy Base in New Orleans, they assigned us to patrol duty, shore patrol. You walk up and down the streets with an officer. And we had to give a DR to any person who we saw throw down a cigarette butt, or saw him walk past a cigarette butt and didn't pick it up. A DR is a Delinquency Report.

CM: Oh, okay.

GR: And of course they have to go before the commanding officer, and he can punish them either under Article 15 or court-martial. Well, I got so mad at this, they called me in two or three days before I was due home, and they said, well, we'll offer you chief, that's all we can do, chief gunner's made to stay in the Navy. And I told the officer, I said, "Sir, no disrespect to you or any other officer or

any other person at this station," I said, "But I would not reenlist in the Navy if you gave me Admiral." So he wanted to know why. I told him, simply because of your strict rigidity of giving people DR when there's no cause for it, that's all. If you just tell them all why you're stationed here -- oh, thank you, sir -- it's while you're stationed here, you are being expected to do that if you don't, we see you pass it up or see them throw them down, they're subject to a DR. And they said, "Well, you know, you're right." He said, "We are at fault there." I said, "You certainly are." And I said, "I am not going to reenlist, period." So with that, I got my discharge and went home to my wife, who was pregnant. She got pregnant in 1944, she left before I did. We had an apartment over there.

CM: She was in England?

GR: Oh yes, she's from England.

CM: Oh, she's from England.

GR: She was born in England, yes. She battered the damned bombs over there for all them years, dodge bombs. Her and her family both had a bomb come down, went right under her house.

CM: Wow.

GR: At any rate, she left in April of 1944, I was discharged in November of 1944. So I got there -- on the day I got to the house, on the day that our first child was born.

CM: This is in Alabama?

GR: In Alabama, right. She was stuck out there on the farm with all them (inaudible). I told her, I says, "You'd better prepare yourself for a real change in your lifestyle," I says, "because we got everything (inaudible) over there." I didn't tell her we didn't have indoor toilets or anything, or indoor showers.

CM: Going off to the frontier.

GR: Yeah. So anyway, she come to a rude awakening. And she's never let me forget I let her down, what she was getting into, as a woman expecting a child. Still, to this day, she puts it on my cup or on my plate.

CM: Well, I think until this day -- I think you've got to think about it, (inaudible).

GR: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And from there, I went to -- back to civil-- civilian life, I went back and lived with my family until I could find a place in the city of Montgomery. Eventually found a place to live, we moved into that apartment. I bought me a truck and I had a good trucking business for about five months, and then the

trucking business go to me, and I had to give it up. Then from there, I went to work for the State -- no, I went to work for the Alabama Power Company running up and down poles. And then from there I got a State job, so it was a government job in essence. And I had to join the National Guard to have the oldest job; in other words, it was a prerequisite, you must be a member of the service to get this job. I said, well, there's no problem. I'd done the National Guard before I went into the Navy, you know? At any rate, I signed up in the National Guard and I kept the job until January, 1951.

Now it's time for Korea, and of course the unit got called in 1951 to go to Korea. So I did 31 months in Korea, and then I decided all of a sudden I'm not going to have my life disturbed twice without some sort of results, retirement of some sort. So I stayed in the Army 20 years, and I had 6 years in the Navy, and at the end of 26 years, I got a retirement. I've been retired. So out of the total, I had 6 years Navy, 20 years Army. I was in Korea 31 months, and I was also still in during the battle of Vietnam.

CM: Really?

GR: I didn't go over there, but I was still in the Army?

CM: Did you catch the -- well, I guess not right now -- the Cuban missile crisis, all that stuff?

GR: Oh yes. I was in at that time, yeah. Yeah. I was in also during the shutdown of the Berlin, remember the Berlin operation?

CM: Oh, the airlift field?

GR: Yeah. I was in France at that time.

CM: Oh, really?

GR: Yeah. And I went to Germany, I stayed in Germany four years, and came back and went back to Germany and was in school, the ordinance school for weapons and automotive maintenance for another tour, and then I came back to the States, then went back to France. So I had two tours in France and two tours in Germany. But I was lucky.

(hiccup) Yeah, this water is giving me hiccups. Excuse me. Now do you have any questions? Anything about the drunk I can tell you about?

CM: No, I've been there myself.

GR: I did tell you in the thing to the Aleutians, all we did was as a backup support for the Army. And when we were there, they had already accomplished their mission. So we went back immediately for docking in San Francisco, and

that's why we was docked there, waiting for further orders. And of course as I said, within a week we had our orders to Midway, so proceed to Midway. Full steam.

CM: I guess everybody knew that fight was coming.

GR: Yeah. Yeah. Somebody did, yeah.

CM: How long did it take you, back to Pearl Harbor, before they got you actually out of the harbor and on the way back to Bremerton?

GR: Well, I'm not sure, now I can't -- this is one thing I'm not sure, because I just concentrated on everything else. We moved from where we were hid to the dry docks, and they performed -- what they had to do was in three or four days, and it was only -- it was less than a week there after Pearl Harbor. And so we got -- it usually took us about five days to get across the Pacific back to the States. So that would be, what, 14, 17 days. We go there very close to -- got back to the States very close to Christmas, I think it was.

CM: Really?

GR: Yeah. And we went in dry dock, we were in dry dock by Christmastime.

CM: You did that pretty quick.

GR: Yeah. We had to start working on that sucker right after Christmas day, which was about the 28th. We had to start scraping the barnacles off the back and repainting and everything. And of course they had jillions of workers coming in there, you know, as well. There's carpenters and ship builders, and they had to cut a lot of steel away, and had different things. As I said, they did give us stacked bunks, whereas before we each of us over a certain rank had folded cots. And you know, the funniest thing that ever happened to any recruit, including me, was, when you go on a ship, you're considered a recruit, and you are the lowest thing on the ship. You were even lower than the dirt. And they give you -- on the battleship, they assign you a hook space, two hooks. This is where your hammock goes at night. You hang this hammock up, and you're supposed to hang it high enough where nobody will bump their head on it. Well, if you get it low enough, you know you're sitting at a sort of a position like this, you know? Of course everybody that comes along is going to bump their head, they're going to turn you over, turn you out of your damned hammock. So about two times of that and you learn how to do your hammock. You have to draw your hammock up as tight as you can get it to be overhead, and tie it off

there so that they can't reach it and turn you over, unless they are very tall. So that, in doing that now, you have to get a little sticker saying this is your end of your hammock, where you have all of these ropes coming out here. You have to get a thing in there, put it in and spread it out like that so that you can get into the hammock, because if you draw it up, you can be closed like that and your hammock, if you can get in it, see, and you try to get in it. And every time you try to get in it, it's going to roll over. And you'd be surprised at how many recruits, how long it took them to learn how to get in that hammock. Some of them had to have help to get into it, honest to goodness, had to have help.

CM: I believe it.

GR: And everywhere you went, that hammock and that mattress went with you. You had to roll it up, put seven half hitches around it, put your sea bag with all of your clothing in it, every bit of it, include pillows, coats, shoes, all of it, you turn the mattress over the ends of your sea bag and lash them together, and you've got to carry that with you wherever you went. It didn't have no Army trucks and no Navy trucks coming out to take your bags like they did in the Army.

CM: And walking them.

GR: Yes sir, you had to go over to that sucker. And you had to carry that thing right up the gangway too, when you was signing the board, and you [lift?]. And nobody offers to help you. Nobody. That's what you have to learn yourself. That was funny. And we had another thing, I happened -- it happened to me. During the blackout, or after the attack of Pearl Harbor, as I said we had to sit up there every night, and of course you rotate from one time to another after so many watches. And they had this cook who was Filipino, officers cooked, that's all they did was cook for officers, clean their quarters and what have you. They weren't members of the Navy, but they were paid by the Navy. At any rate, they put out some fantastic food to the officers. So he was up there one night when he was on watch. He came up, you know, he was talking with the guys. And he sat there and was talking with me for a long, long time. And they called around some -- they're the same as Vienna sausage, but they're in cans about that long, you know? They were long ones. And brought some of those and crackers around for sort of a midnight snack, keep them from going awake at night -- I mean, going to sleep. Well, at any rate, this Filipino cook, he says, "Don't eat that,"

he says, "I'll go get you something good." I said, "Okay."
I says, "Make sure, because I'm going to have to have
something to eat, because I'm hungry." He said, "Okay,
I'll bring this, bring something, be right back." So he
went down to the officer's quarters and some that he had
left over, and he brought me a beautiful meal. To this day
I don't know what it was. But it was so darned good, I
would venture to say it would be in one of these
receptions, sort of like a White House reception, you know?
They eat mighty fine, in other words. And from that day
on, that guy would come up and see me every night until I
left that ship, and bring me something to eat. I didn't
ask him to. I just thanked him profusely, you know, in
every way I could, except kiss his hand. (laughs) And he
was -- of course he enjoyed it, you know, because the more
you brag on them or commend them in any way, they just k-
tow to you, kowtow to you any way they can. But he was --

CM: Was a pretty -- probably a pretty good living, I mean --

GR: Oh yeah, absolutely. Well, he was no young man. He was in
his forties, late forties or fifties. And I tell you, he
could cook. Wow! He had cooked (inaudible). So what else
do you need to know now?

CM: Well --

GR: After my life, I'll tell you after that. In my service I went to Saudi Arabia and worked for six years.

CM: (inaudible)?

GR: Oh no no, I went over there teaching the Arabs how to maintain their vehicles and supply them.

CM: Aha. I understand that's a problem.

GR: Same thing that I was doing in the Army, see. And they paid me twice the amount of anything I ever made in the United States. So it was good, because the wife and I went into a business, conned into taking over a franchise, taking over a franchise, and the SOB that had the franchise didn't hold up his end of the bargain. So at any rate, we went bankrupt. I didn't declare bankrupt, but we had to before we did. And we ran a hotel for all of the hiring, and people came in and we had high ranking merchandise, and we thought surely some of them would stop in and buy something, you know? One or two, that all. You can't live on one or two people just buying something, you go broke. So at any rate, we sold out, or we gave everything away. And along about that time, this (inaudible) people who work in Saudi Arabia. I went down and filled out an application, and in a few days I got called. I had to quit my job I had on my post, (inaudible) and go over there and

work for six years. I got to be a manager in one of the installations over there. And it was fantastic money. But you had to be very particular what you said and did over there. Of course I learned how to make beer and made beer and sold it while I was over there, on the Q-T. And you couldn't have any pornographic thing or any naked women on the walls. And one day that you come to work and everything would just be absolutely fine, "Oh, Mr. Reynolds, you're just number one, we're going to keep you over here forever." And the next day the same people come in and want your butt shipped home in 24 hours. So you had to walk a real, real short line, I mean, you had to be careful of what you said, and what you did, or what they saw you do at a distance. For example, they pray five days, and you're there to train them, we had one who is working with you as your equal. And in my case it was a Captain in the Navy -- in the Saudi Arabian Army. And I jumped on him one day, I said, "Captain," I said, "Do you have authority over your troops? Are your people working here?" He says, "I sure do." I said, "Well, why do they break so many times a day, and not here working?" I said, "What do they do?" He says, "I don't know, unless they're praying." He says, "They're authorized five prayers a

day." And in between they got a man that does nothing but come around and brings hot tea to them, and of course they've got to stop and chat with everybody when they drink their hot tea, until it cools down, (inaudible). And they had a good thing going. But any rate, I managed to stay over there six years. And I thanked them and all that. And when I got back, I got in a battle, they took Social Security out of my pay for Saudi Social Security. They don't owe me -- what the hell are they taking my money to pay the Saudis? So I, any rate, I sent letters back to the neighbor people and they said that they couldn't do it, so stubborn me, I send a letter back to the king. And shortly after I sent a letter to the king, I got \$2,200 in a check for my Social Security that I had over there.

CM: It pays to go to the top.

GR: Absolutely. But it was really something, it was really funny. And of course they've got women over there, you know, that go down to the souks at night, and women is a strict no-no. They'll chop your head off if you touch one of them. And they go down there, there's women go down there to souk at night to see how many Americans they can rub against, they reach over and grab and pull close to them. You know, grab your arm pretty close to them. And

you'd live in fear every minute you're down there. And some of them even know that, tell them to just -- (inaudible) just anxious to do whatever you want to do, you know? But you can't touch them. That's a hard choice. And yet they are supposed to be in the same rules as we are, they are not supposed to touch any woman in the market if you're married, because to them this is, you know, what do you call it? Not -- oh well, adulterer really is what it is. If you do anything of that sort, you have to go for a tribunal, normally you're found guilty and they put you in a pot or in a hole and throw stones at you until you're dead. Either that or on prayer day, which is Friday, they cut your head off when (inaudible). In other words, you don't survive. If you steal anything over there from the girl, they chop off the hand which you stole the item with. If it's the hand that you normally use for all your work, now you've got to learn how to use the left hand. If you got both hands, both hands cut off, you don't have any hands to work with at all. And I didn't see anybody with prosthetics over there.

CM: Yeah, that probably would sort of defeat the purpose.

GR: But it did -- I've seen a lot in life. I've been around the world, I've been in Japan, Korea, and then all over the

Muslim countries over there. Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Iran. No, I haven't been to Iran. I didn't go there, but I've been to Iraq. Jordan, Jordan, Iraq, Israel. What the hell is the other one? The Egyptian, the Egyptian -- I keep trying to say it's (inaudible), it's easy actually. And of course they are wishy-washy Muslim, though. They'll cut your head off for one thing and love you to death for something else. I tell you, it's [awful?]. Of course I've been to Ethiopia. I went to Ethiopia while what's his name was ruling over there, and the lady kicked him out and I think killed him, or maybe that's -- I don't know.

CM: (inaudible) his name.

GR: They had the -- it's while he was having a war in Ethiopia, and you took a chance going over there. We went over there to get some booze, because the American station was still over there, and we could go in -- the retirees could go in and buy as much booze as you could bring back. So we did that. And then bringing it back, we had to get some Saudi to take care of it (inaudible), or somebody, and they're always -- we couldn't take it in. They'd take it in, they'd ship us out of the (inaudible). Yeah, no no, immediately. Unless you'd (inaudible). What's he doing with that? Just bringing it back. Yeah? Bring it back

for what? What they usually do with it, drink it, I guess. They're afraid that you're going to give it to some Saudi and get him drunk, (inaudible). And that's about the story of my life, except for all the bad things I don't want to get into, because it might get into something else bad.

CM: You're not done yet. You know, you can do more bad things, I'm sure. Well I appreciate your taking the time. It's been real interesting. And I appreciate your service, and --

GR: Well, if you want anything to go back with, I have -- I had three children. One, I've got a child now who is a nurse, been a nurse for 35 years. And the next one, who was a boy, he was a very good business person. And he got drunk one night and wrecked his SUV, and was paralyzed for five months from the waist down, he couldn't move anything. And he finally recovered from that. But something happened between his bladder and the mechanism that trips your bladder, you know? He had to catheterize himself every time he had to urinate. And he done that for so long and he got so tired of it, I guess he -- and his wife was giving him a hard time too, I guess because he was having sexual problems, I don't know that for real. But she divorced him while he was in the hospital paralyzed from

the waist down. So this brought that on, and then he got out and he stayed with his children for two or three months. He had them down there, keeping them away from her, trying to indoctrinate them, I guess, to his feelings. But he didn't do it, and of course she called him and says, "I'm coming down and taking the kids," and said, "You can kiss them goodbye." She says, "You'll never see them again." And that's really what caused him to commit suicide. He worshipped those two boys, absolutely worshipped them. And of course his wife was a humdinger, you know, she had -- she was shacking up with other people even before she dismissed him. And she divorced --

END OF AUDIO FILE