

## Al Stremel Oral History Interview

MICHAEL FRANKLIN: This is Michael Franklin and today is the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 2011. And I'm interviewing Mr. Al Stremel in Austin, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies, Archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, and for the preservation of historical information related to this site. So, to start out with, where and when were you born?

AL STREMEL: August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1922. Born at [Loretta?], Kansas.

MF: And you said you grew up on a farm. Did you have siblings?

AS: Oh, we had all kinds of animals and come from a little family of 13.

MF: (laughs) So you had a lot of siblings?

AS: Yeah. So, I was the last boy and then I got three sisters younger than me.

MF: And what were your parents' names?

AS: My dad was [Antoine?] Stremel and my mother was [Anna Sauer?].

MF: And growing up during the Depression on a farm, did -- how did the Great Depression -- how did that affect your family?

AS: Well, we [ate?] a lot of dust because we had the dust storms come in from Oklahoma and Texas into Kansas and

Nebraska. Next day it blowed back again. [They?] just were feeling like -- just like snow drifts and there's times when you're driving you couldn't see the radiator cap on a car. That's how bad it was.

MF: So, you remember all the dust storms?

AS: Oh, yeah.

MF: That affected -- it affected you greatly then.

AS: I mean, it was rough, but [times?] just (inaudible). I guess I was maybe about seven, eight, nine years old.

MF: Did they -- you know -- those dust storms, did all of that get into the house? It would --

AS: Well, my mom would --

MF: -- permeate.

AS: -- put wet towels on the window sills and it just come in anyway. That was about a year that's pretty rough. And [there had?] -- WPA and the CC camps, I tried to get in it for about two different times, but they were all filled up. I was only about 15 years old, but --

MF: Were they taking anybody that was that young?

AS: I don't know. I tried. My brother was in them and one of my cousins was in the [C's?] for a long time and \$20 -- \$21 a month, you know? Most of it went to the folks and they got enough money for spending money, you know, out of -- it's the same way in boot camp. We got \$21 a month. They

give you a coupon book and payday come around they'd pay you and then you'd turn around and give it back to them -- pay off the coupon book. (laughs)

MF: So, did you finish high school in Kansas and --

AS: No, I never was much for school. In grade school, I was the only boy and -- there's three girls and one boy in the class and I just lost interest in school.

MF: And you were also having, I assume, probably having to work with -- for your father on the farm. Yeah.

AS: Oh, yeah. I was the first one up in the morning. [I just?] got the cows [home?], I gotta say, and milk them, separate the milk, feed the hogs, chickens and everything and get cleaned up. I always went to church every morning.

MF: Every morning?

AS: Just about every morning. Yeah. Then, we'd come home and eat breakfast and -- or go to school, have a cold sandwich -- egg sandwich -- for breakfast, you know? Then, school and -- got through grade school and I didn't want to go to high school. Everybody was gonna go to high school and just to get them off my neck I agreed to go, but I quit a few weeks before my first year was over so I wouldn't have to go back the next year.

MF: So, you said you joined -- when you joined the Navy then --

AS: No, I -- when I turned 16, my sister from Phoenix and her husband come home for a visit and my brother -- well, one time he was somewhere -- anyway, they [honored?] the dead body from California to railroad track and he volunteered to escort back to California. So, he'd come home with them and then we went -- - he got me to go back to Phoenix with them. So, we worked in the [lettuce sheds?] there in Tolleson, Arizona. And then, when that was over, went to El Centro, did there, and come back again to do the spring deal and then went home -- helped dad with the harvest. Then, we went to Colorado and worked in the same [outfit?] and come back, put the spring deal in, and spent time on the farm. Me and another guy went back to Phoenix and then come back and I had a time where I was on a farm and I had no reason to leave. So, my brother come by one time and he said, "What are you doing to do?" I used to tease a guy about joining the Navy and I knew he was against it. So, he decided he wanted to join the Navy. So, I told my brother I would be [out?] Sunday. And it rained Sunday -- Monday morning -- so, him and my brother and I went to Wichita. We all three signed up for the Navy -- all passed. And going back every now and then he's slap me on my leg, "Gonna join the Navy with me?" Nope. I'm going back to Colorado. Next night, his brother, another kid,

and I went to town and partied a little. When I left his brother off, I was driving too fast on a mud road. I hit the breaks and it speeded up -- take the ditch in the wheat field or turn the corner. I turned the corner and it was rolling over. I rolled it. Right then and there, I decided to join the Navy. So, we got together and joined the Navy. We went to Wichita and then to Kansas City and got sworn in. It was awful hard to raise my hand and say I do, (laughs) but I finally did. So, I went to Great Lakes the next day.

MF: So, what were -- what was it that was -- now, your brother and you said a friend of yours wanted --

AS: Yeah, well --

MF: -- you join, but --

AS: He [rounded up?] my brother's brother-in-law.

MF: Yeah, OK.

AS: And then, I went through boot camp, got a nine-days boot leave, you know? And that guy from Kansas, you know, his brother lives out there and borrowed his car. So, we gotta chip in and pay for a trip, you know? First day, drove it till it run out of gas and it was snowy and rainy real bad. So, about a mile out of town, we run out of gas. So, gas truck come on and push us into the station and I told him, "Be dang sure you gas up every so often." And he was in

the backseat and at about five in the morning -- I don't know what happened. He must have gone to sleep at the wheel and he lost control of the car and ended up in the ditch and I got a piece of glass hit me from right here down. I thought I had a nose bleed. I blacked out and, couple of guys going home from an [all-night?] drunk, they didn't want to take us, but they said a couple got hurt. So, they took us to town and looked at me. I had a cut way down. A little bit more and I would have lost my eye. So, went to the doctor and patched it up and we caught the train that's right at the Missouri-Kansas -- Missouri and Illinois line and he -- we took the first train out to Kansas City and left at eight o'clock. I guess it had (inaudible) just got to steam up [and?] stop. And we got to Kansas City -- 200 miles -- ten o'clock at night and the one that left at noon followed us in. So, we -- I don't know. I guess we took a bus or something home to [Dodge?] and, then, we had nine days and went back and we decided to [do?] the *Enterprise* -- both went aboard ship with a bunch of guys we met in boot camp. And they gives us choice where we wanted to go and I decided I'd -- mentioned engineers, so I picked that. And [each?] was a top side and, after a number of years, we went to San Diego and then to Pearl and back -- back to Pearl -- back to San Diego.

In the meantime, he didn't like the Navy. So, when he was a kid, he fell off a horse and broke his leg and they put a silver plate in there and he complained his leg bothered him. So, when we got to San Diego, he went to the hospital. He always told me, "I'm not gonna spend six years in there." They operated on him, took the plate out, and the doctor -- he wrote to and told me doctor told him, pack his sea bag. He's going back to ship. He said [while?] he's doing so -- come by and said he changed his mind. He gave him a [survey?]. So, he went home and I (inaudible). (laughs)

MF: So, now you're -- it was your friend that you had --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- had been with who was now out and --

AS: He's out. He got out. He had almost a year in there.

MF: Now, you joined and you said it was December 28<sup>th</sup> of 1940.

AS: No, I joined the ar-- Navy in October six -- fif--

MF: Yeah, OK.

AS: -- sixteenth, 1940.

MF: OK.

AS: And I went aboard ship December the eight in '40.

MF: OK. So, you were interested in engineering. So, did you have to get any additional training?

AS: No. I was just in the fire room. You know? That's where I was assigned to -- in the number eight fire room. That's where I -- my station was all the time I was in there.

MF: So, what was your job then in the number eight fire -- fire room.

AS: Well, [flunky?]. All [jobs?] were ours. Like one guy I mentioned that would -- worked in the same fire room. You know, when we went aboard, we did all the dirty work. And if they needed to do it, they always had us do it, you know?

MF: So, what was the propulsion of the ship? Was it -- did you have -- you didn't have coal-fed boilers or --

AS: Oh, no, it was all burners.

MF: Oil burning. OK.

AS: Yeah. Like I had to light them all, bring up the steam presser, you know, and underway, you know, we had nine boilers aboard there -- had three super-heaters and the rest were super-heaters and I don't remember now -- saturated. So, for each one of them, you know, there was a super-heater we used and, then, when necessary, all there super-heater boilers were in use and a lot of time just one depending on the steam and everything. And that's about what we did. Every 2,000 miles you had to clean the -- go



inside the boiler and clean the tubes, all -- scrape the carbon off there and --

MF: So, real dirty jobs.

AS: It was. You ate a lot of carbon. Oh, and whiskey sure tasted good to wash that down afterwards. (laughs)

MF: So, then, you're on the ship for pretty much a year before Pearl Harbor.

AS: Yeah. Over a year.

MF: Almost a year to -- almost to the day.

AS: Over a year.

MF: And in the time before the attack on Pearl Harbor, what was the *Enterprise* doing? What do you remember about that period?

AS: We went out for target practice, operations, you know, gunner practice, in and out. And then, it got to where we had battle drills just like war conditions. Sometimes, you just get off of watch and get to bed and almost asleep -- general quarters -- running down the back wherever your station was, sat there maybe -- conditions just like under attack, you know? Maybe a few minutes. Sometimes an hour or two, you know? Everything -- all the ventilation shut off, air tight [all around?], you know? And in the fire room, you took care -- we had a blower, it had a canvas coming down where we got a little area, you know? Right

above where it -- fire rooms -- no air whatever. And we'd be there and then get up, go to bed. Next watch you went on watch. And when (inaudible) was just after the war had started, we were busy scraping the bulkheads, get the paint off.

MF: So, when you would have general quarters, they'd seal everything up. You're in --

AS: Yeah. Every --

MF: You're in that fire room.

AS: All the air went off and ventilation and everything was air tight in case you get hit, you know?

MF: Right.

AS: Just hit one compartment and it [doesn't?] get the other one.

MF: So, how did that change the temperature, operating conditions? Did a lot of that change when you went to general quarters?

AS: Oh, yeah. It got hotter and especially when you wasn't in the fire room. Not much stayed the same, you know? It was always hot -- over 150 or so sometimes.

MF: Whew. So, when they're sealing up the bottom of a ship like that, did they go over anything? Like did you have any kind of escape drills? You know, if you're compartment is hit or --

AS: Well, no. Don't recall that. Just battle stations.  
Everybody had a station to go to. Mine was sometimes in  
the fire room or just above, you know?

MF: Mm-hmm.

AS: Stand-by. In case something happens down there, we take  
over, you know? And that had the head and the washroom in  
between there and the hatch is [thrown down?] to three fire  
rooms.

MF: And whereabouts at the ship was fire room eight located?

AS: Just about mid-ship.

MF: Sort of under --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- where the super structure would be?

AS: It was about two decks below the water-line.

MF: OK.

AS: So, it was pretty safe unless we got a torpedo that way.  
Then, it might have gotten us.

MF: But, overall, you weren't too concerned with the safety --

AS: No.

MF: -- of that position of the ship.

AS: No, we got hit. I forget just where it was -- water canal  
or somewhere. And it hit the chief's quarters and the mess  
hall. And then, the next time, while we was -- when that  
happened, it [stripped ship to?] go back, you know? And we

thought we was going -- coming back to states, you know?  
And it just [got everything?] and ammunition -- just kept  
enough to keep us going if something happened, you know?  
And we got (inaudible) drilling for a -- [right?] down  
Market Street. And then, they got across the date line  
whose over in the Pearl Harbor. That stopped the drilling.  
They fixed the ship up and we got under way, went flank  
speed up, center cruise battle there. We got into [that?]  
when we got there, got bombed in the (inaudible) quarters.  
Took about three bombs each time we got hit. And then we  
went to Noumea Caledonia to patch up and sometimes the crew  
patching up went out to sea with us when we had to go.

MF: Right.

AS: And got her fixed and -- oh, after so many years, you know,  
we finally went to Pearl and each time they said something  
about coming back to states. And then, we got a new  
captain about every other week or so there for a while.  
The last one there said, "I'm gonna take you boys back to  
the States in not too distant future." Yeah, we heard it  
before. We'd just go back to Pearl and then they started  
repairing the ship and they'd give us 48 hours just to  
[roam?] Hawaii and everything like that. And then, if you  
had some money on the beach, you knew were you could stay,  
where (inaudible) another one, and all the recreation they

could, you know? Beer parties and everything. Then, all of a sudden, they decided the States, you know? And that was in '43. And then, they just waited for the morning to come up and they'd come up, but not [up right with her?], breaking her in, and they finally got us to break out the blues. You know, we had them for forever and I was on the first leave [party?]. So, we got into (inaudible) and I bought -- (inaudible) and we caught the first leave party -- caught the last ferry going to Seattle. We went to Seattle and I hadn't seen lights at night or anything for all that time, you know? All we did was walk around and look around, see the guys out in the street making out with their girlfriends. (laughter) And we ended up in an all-night movie and then daylight and we got up the bus depot when it opened and got a ticket and headed home.

MF: And went back. So, now, do you recall -- do you remember the moment that Pearl Harbor was attacked?

AS: Yeah. I was on my battle station (inaudible) at the number eight fire room -- my battle station. And they had a guy from Arkansas. He had supposed to had a discharge a year before and they quit discharging. And all he did was sing the blues all day about not getting discharged. And when they passed the word about Pearl Harbor being bombed, what the hell he gonna think -- oh, next [they'll?] get me to

[ship over?], you know? All day long. And then, when we were (inaudible) from battle station around 4:00 in the afternoon, we went up topside and they had a radio there by the soda fountain and they heard it on there. And he went up and read the list and never said another word.

(laughter) When we come back to States, he must have gotten transferred. I don't remember seeing him after that.

MF: Do you remember what his name was?

AS: [Jimmy Strong?].

MF: So, he was very eager to get off the ship until that attack.

AS: Yeah. Another guy had the same deal, but he kind of worked his way out somehow or at least off the ship.

MF: So, you were in -- you went to Pearl Harbor then. It was the day after the attack.

AS: Yeah. Well, we were scheduled to go in Saturday morning at 8:00. We took twelve bombers to Wake Island. Come back, we were in a storm and had to refuel a destroyer. That delayed us. So, we were scheduled to go in Sunday noon. And then, they hit us about 8:00. And then, we went in Monday night about dark and we got in and went -- took our provisions and fuel and 4:00 we was back at sea. I don't know just how long to sea, but quite a while and come in maybe a day or so and went back out.

MF: When you would -- OK. So, after the attack on Pearl Harbor  
--

AS: Yeah. And it was just like a ghost town, you know? All those ships laying in there and at night time when we was fueling you'd hear them mowing the laws and somebody hollering. And if they didn't answer, they started shooting.

MF: So, everybody was -- there was a lot of tension. People --

AS: Oh, yeah.

MF: -- on high alert.

AS: It was something new, you know? And they'd give you a reason for being there.

MF: Did a change a lot of -- well, like you were talking about the man who re-enlisted. So, did it change a lot of --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- people's viewpoints?

AS: Yeah it did. Made a different. (coughs) They had reason to stay, you know? (coughs)

MF: And in the time after that, do you remember a lot of the operations that the ship was doing at the time?

AS: Well, after that, I don't think we had much. I don't know. But --

MF: There were a lot of island landing supports.

AS: Yeah, we went to different places. We used to -- first (inaudible) we had was [Marshall Gilbert?]. Went in early in the morning and bombed the heck out of them and headed for Pearl. Then, about noon, they slowed down and the plane come up -- Jap plane -- and they said a guy in a plane on the flight deck was reading a comic book or something and he saw it come in and they opened up on her and shot her down. And we were -- a bunch of us were laying on the hanger that could -- trying to take -- get some sleep -- and the alarm went off. Every alarm on the ship went off at the same time. So, we got up and started to go down to the fire room. Guys coming up the hatch and us going down two at a time. The passage is only about that big. Nobody knew what happened. We went down to our battle station and we secured. Then, we found out that that's what had happened. I guess the guy got in the plane and captain called him up to bridge and gave him a [rate?] for doing that, you know? (laughs)

MF: Do you remember what kind of a plane it was?

AS: No. I wasn't familiar with any of them.

MF: OK. But, now, was this before Doolittle's Raid?

AS: Oh, yeah. This was just when the war started.

MF: OK. Very early on.



AS: Yeah. We hit the islands and bombed [them?] and [leave?] and we never got shots fired at us from what I heard. But I don't know if it's true or not, but I don't think it did.

MF: I think -- yeah. I think that's probably -- the *Enterprise* seemed to have -- I mean, this is why it got its nickname, right? It was called the "Grey Ghost" or --

AS: "Gallopig Ghost off the Oahu Coast". Yeah. I know one time they shot on the pilot -- Jap pilot -- and we was in Pearl. They brought him aboard ship. He's all dressed real neat and everything. They showed him. He thought he had sunk the *Enterprise*. And they brought him aboard, showed him how much afloat it was. (laughter) And they claimed they sunk the ship about six or seven different times, you know? But they never did. (laughs)

MF: So, do you remember anything like about Doolittle's Raid? I mean, being that you were in --

AS: Yeah, we --

MF: -- the bowels of the ship.

AS: Yeah. We escorted the Hornet where they took off, you know? And they found a -- spotted a fishing boat and they were afraid that he had a radio or something. So, they took off earlier and then they -- some got shot down, some of them got through in China, you know? Everybody went -- everything went smooth there, you know? So, come back to

Pearl and -- I never did end up in the Navy yard. Sun would come, we'd head back out for it, and I guess the only thing -- one we missed was the Coral Sea Battle. We was on the way out there and was not within reach. That's the only battle we missed and that's the only time when we got to Pearl not to mention anything where we were, what we did.

MF: So, while any of these battles are happening and you're at your battle station, how much -- how aware of anything is everybody that's stationed in the engineering compartments?

AS: Well, in the fire room, you had a job to do. You had to watch the steam pressure and the water pressure -- the [lining?], you know, (inaudible) the water in the boiler. And when they speeded up or slowed down, to cut in and out the burners, you know? And other than that, we'd just sit there, you know, or stand. You wasn't supposed to sit down, but we always did.

MF: So --

AS: It was hard to stand up for four hours straight, you know?

MF: Or eight hours straight as --

AS: Yeah.

MF: Do you remember there -- was there an intercom system or anything that kind of kept you up to speed?

AS: Yeah. Whatever went on, we heard it, you know? And if you wasn't in the fire room, we was -- wherever you station was, all you did is sit there and wait, you know?

MF: So, if a battle was going on for hours --

AS: Yeah.

MF: You know? And now you're starting to miss meal times.

AS: Well, they'd have them bring lunch down for you.

MF: So, it was a -- somebody's specific role would be to --

AS: Yeah, the cooks were in --

MF: -- kind of like bring every body --

AS: -- they were stationed there and they always made sure you got something to eat and everything.

MF: Now, I think it was in Midway, the ship wasn't hit at all, right? Do you remember anything about Midway?

AS: Midway. Yeah, we was in on that.

MF: Mm-hmm.

AS: That's where the Yorktown got sunk there. That got sunk -- I forget where. But anyway, it got damaged and they brought her into Pearl and was going to Midway and they patched her up as much as they could so she could go with us or meet us, you know? And she got hit and then actually got sunk. And we were lucky we didn't. We were -- lost a bunch of pilots, you know, like they usually do. And they got Tokyo by surprise just like they got us, you know?

Only we didn't have 12 bombers or what -- no -- I forget how many bombers they had. Where Japs had a -- seemed like a million of them. (laughs)

MF: So, you said -- so, it was pretty regular then to even -- to lose members of the air crew --

AS: Oh, yeah.

MF: -- on the *Enterprise*.

AS: Yeah. That's bound to happen when they're out there getting shot down. Everybody hoped nobody would, but it did happen. But the Japs always got the worst of it.

MF: And it was Midway -- it was three Japanese carriers that were sunk? Is that right?

AS: I think something like that. Yeah.

MF: Does that sound about right?

AS: And a lot of them were damaged and everything.

MF: And after Midway I think, from my --

AS: Oh, in '42 we had -- after we got hit the first time in '42, we went -- [sent our crews?] back. We got hit that time. It was a bunch of us in the -- at the boiler where our battle station was. I worked the phones and I had a protective suit on -- had big phones, had on a big helmet. I could hear whatever was going on up top-side. A guy up in the smokestack telling us whether it's smoking or not. And he and I just did [not?] -- an announcer of the

ballgame. "Here they come", you know? And you could tell when he ducking down for something and all that. And the guys try to work the phones for me and I wouldn't give them up. We was in there for about -- oh, from about five I guess -- somewhere in there -- until about four o'clock when they finally secured and everybody in there with me said, "Another five or 10 minutes at the most, wouldn't have got (inaudible)." That's had far (inaudible) we were. Because we were, I guess, starting to get up and I fell right flat on my face.

MF: When you got hit?

AS: No, we didn't get hit.

MF: [You would?] --

AS: We didn't -- we was just in there. It's too hot in there. A hundred and fifty some degrees (inaudible) and we spent about eight hours in there like that and it just got -- I [suppose?]

MF: You would have to spend eight hours in a 150-degree --

AS: Yeah, about five in the morning or four or whatever until about four o'clock.

MF: Now, what happens if you -- if everybody in that room is reaching their breaking point. You can't spend too much time --

AS: Everybody said, another five minutes or --

MF: And that would have been it.

AS: -- ten at the most, I wouldn't be here. Then, we just went to Noumea and patched up between battles, you know? And, finally, in '43 we got to come to the States.

MF: So, do you remember what was it like when the ship would be hit? How would that -- what was the sensation of it from being in the middle not being able to see anything that's going on --

AS: No, we didn't see nothing. I was lucky I had the phones to hear what was going on, but the rest of them they just -- well, I'd repeat what I could, you know? But I wasn't going to give up the phones. I want to know what's going on. (laughs)

MF: So, in that room then there was only -- it would be only you that was hearing --

AS: No, there was --

MF: -- the information and then everybody else had to --

AS: Yeah. I forget how many of us -- about three, four of us, something like that, in the compartment, you know?

MF: And it was a radio from somebody who was stationed inside the actual smokestack.

AS: Well, they had loudspeaker in there and everything.

MF: Yeah.

AS: Something was said over it you know.

MF: Now, it was after the Battle of Santa Cruz, the *Enterprise* ends up as the only functioning carrier, where I think the Hornet was sunk then.

AS: Let's see. I forget whether it's -- whether the Midway -- I think Midway was after that, wasn't it? I don't know.

MF: I think Midway -- Midway was before Santa Cruz.

AS: Was before?

MF: They were close together.

AS: Oh, OK. Mm-hmm.

MF: Close together. But do you remember the role of the ship changing once --

AS: What do you mean?

MF: -- once the other, you know, the rest of the carriers -- well, the Hornet sunk.

AS: Oh, the Hornet escorted the bombers to Doolittle Raid.

MF: Yeah.

AS: I forget when that was. I think it was after the Midway Battle where she got stuck --

MF: Yeah.

AS: Because Yorktown was the only one that sunk -- the carrier that was sunk then.

MF: During Midway?

AS: Yeah.

MF: Yeah. I think Hornet was in the Battle of Santa Cruz Islands, but so it was, for a little while though -- and do you remember that at all, that the *Enterprise* functioned as one of the sole carriers that was left?

AS: Well, we was the only one as far as I remember there when they bombed Pearl Harbor. But they later said that the Lexington was in the Aleutian Islands somewhere. But I didn't know about that. I didn't realize it anyway.

MF: And, so, in '43 you're -- the ship gets overhauled. Do you remember how long were you in Seattle for that overhaul?

AS: We got there, I think -- that must have been close to the middle of August -- or, no, July. My leave -- we got a 30-day leave and we pulled into Seattle or (inaudible) and somehow we got delayed. We was there early and then we didn't get in and tied up until way after late at night. I know first leave already left the ship around midnight -- caught the last ferry to go into Seattle. That's when we walked around and looked Seattle over (laughter) and seen all the lights -- something you hadn't seen for years, you know?

MF: And Seattle was all lit-up still?

AS: Oh, yeah.

MF: OK. So, they weren't doing blackouts on --

AS: No.



MF: -- in that part of the coast.

AS: But Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, everything was pitch dark.

MF: Yeah. And it was like that in California, too.

AS: They might have at first. Yeah. But this was a year or two later.

MF: So, what did you do on your 30-day leave?

AS: Well, I got as far as Denver and all my plans were changed. My brother had gone to the seminary there in Denver and I - - we had a layover in Billings, Montana, and I wired him to meet me there so I could see him. So, I had my leave planned for three years, you know, what I was going to do and where (laughter) and I was going to go to [Nott?] City and, when we pulled into Denver, he had his suitcase. He's going home with me. And he wanted to go home. In my plan I wanted to go to [Notts?] and I was walking in on everybody. Nobody knew I was coming. So, we went around for a while and then finally flipped a coin where we was going and I had to go to his way. That's changed everything. So, we called -- he called the folks and I told him, "Don't tell them I'm with you." "No, no." I was just home last week and people listening in and wondering what the heck he was doing home again, you know? So, I went home and then Sunday we notified my brothers and [Dodge?] there, you know, so that they'd come over and I

wanted to go to my uncle's because before I went in the Navy I went there with my folks and we had a heck of a good time -- got acquainted with some relatives I didn't know. So, I was gonna make sure I had (inaudible). So, first thing Monday morning [at?] -- every time I was about to get my work done, somebody interfered. So, I told my brother, "Get your overalls on." We went out and finished the plowing for him. (inaudible) Made a couple rounds and my brother decided to go home -- left me by myself on the tractor. And I was ready to shut it off and go home too. So, when he finally come out and brought me a sandwich and a beer, we went around and then I said, "I think I'll go home. I'll be sure to come back. [I owe ya?]." So, I went home, took a bath and everything, and the heck I might even (inaudible). So, after that, we all got in the cars - - two cars -- went where my uncle lived about a hundred miles from there and I guess my brother must have gotten jealous or something. I have one cousin when I first come home the first Sunday -- I was -- his wife and I were taking a walk together, you know, and my cousin come by and, "Oh, I just come down here to see what you look like," you know? And the first thing when he got to the house and he asked my brother, "You know where your wife's at?" (laughs) I guess that didn't set too good with my brother.

When we got to St. Peter's, we [sat?] and she asked me to take her down to look at the church there, you know? And I guess that didn't set -- but, anyway, today we was leaving to go. My brother had to go home on the weekend, you know, and catch the -- go back to Denver to school. And anyway, they were looking for us, didn't find us. Finally, I said goodbye to everybody and got in the car and got started -- my brother started in on me and he had me --

MF: You got in the fight with him?

AS: Well, I -- I mean, I was 20 miles from -- I couldn't say a word. I was so mad. And then, I got there -- diarrhea of the mouth I guess -- and I let loose. (inaudible), you know? And my brother going to school, "That's OK. I have to catch the train." And I -- "Don't worry about it. I'll get there on time." After that, (inaudible) so I talk about going to the [Dodge?], but by next morning come around -- nothing [said?]. When I finally brought it up, finally we did go. But it just ruined my whole leave.

MF: Yeah.

AS: If I had to do it over, I'd have just gotten --

MF: You wouldn't have visited your brother first?

AS: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) life in Seattle. (laughs)

MF: But you got to see your folks.

AS: Yeah.

MF: Were they surprised?

AS: Well, yeah. They said when he called and he mentioned my -  
- my name was mentioned -- my sister was upstairs and said  
just like a flash of lightning she was by the phone.

(laughs)

MF: And so, did you get to keep -- you had, you know -- with  
you having a large family, how much contact did you have  
through letters or anything?

AS: Oh, I'd get a letter from them once in a while. Like my  
brother would write to me once in a while -- always too  
busy. And then, they'd tell me all the fun they were  
having. And one time it hit me the wrong way and I wrote  
him a letter, you know, and I even put the paper in the  
envelope with the stamp on it and everything so he'd get  
time to write. It wasn't a few weeks later or months later  
I was home on leave, but he never brought it up. (laughs)

MF: So, it sounds like there might have been a little bit of  
tension with you --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- and your brother. Were you guys close in age?

AS: We were six years apart.

MF: OK.

AS: No, two, four -- year, six years.

MF: And this is the brother that was in Denver and --

AS: No, he was two years from --

MF: OK.

AS: Four -- well, I had a sister between me and him.

MF: Yeah.

AS: And then there was two. Like I only had 13 --

MF: Just 13. (laughs)

AS: -- 13 of us in the family.

MF: Right.

AS: Now, there's only four of us left.

MF: But -- so, when did you end up -- you ended up back on the  
*Enterprise* --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- after your leave. But what do you rem-- what did they -  
- what did they do to the ship or what did you --

AS: Well, they -- everything that needed -- repaired everything  
and replaced everything they had to, you know? And we  
lived in barracks while they were repairing it, you know?  
Once in a while, I had to stand and watch out on the dock.  
They had a dummy boiler you know. And my sister and my  
step-niece come out to see me and spend time with me and  
one of the guys went home on leave and he met some  
(inaudible), you know, and married here and he was eligible  
for naval housing (inaudible). So, we got together on it.  
So, one weekend I come home on Monday and I did the dishes

and everything and my sister and them went downtown looking for a job you know. Nobody was there when this -- two kids come in there, you know, and he asked where his wife was and I said, "I don't know." I said, "Heck, (inaudible) nobody here." You know? So, when my sister and niece come home and he asked them and she told them -- my niece told him, "I don't know. You saw her last and she took off." And they sat down and they were drinking and after he'd had so many drinks he started in on me -- only [rented?] the place because of me and we got into it. I said, "Let's sit down and talk like sensible people." And we talked a little bit and he said something and I said something and he jumped up and that made me see red and I let him have it. I knocked him down three times and picked him up -- last -- just let him have -- till I cooled down. And we got him up, got him cleaned up, put him to bed. And the other guy wanted to fight me. If I didn't, well, I was chicken. I said, "I'll be chicken." So, we went to bed. Then, about midnight guy beat up -- happened to wake up, got up, the other one was -- got drunk and sitting at the table to sleep and they put him to bed. When they first -- we first got into it my sister [wrapped?] a couple of bottles and [knocked?] that out the window. (laughs)

MF: Just smashed them together?

AS: Yeah. And the other guy took a --

MF: Just like in the movies?

AS: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) threw me out and then we had to fight.

MF: You had -- who were -- so were these two guys that you --

AS: Yeah. They were in the same --

MF: They were friends of yours from the ship.

AS: Yeah. Well, they were in the same fire room with me or used to be anyway. So, after that, that guy I beat up -- we don't talk now. In the past, when I'd be going this way, he was going that way, he'd see me go up a ladder somewhere. Then, later, you had to stand watches on (inaudible) in another fire room. (laughs) And didn't have nothing to say.

MF: So, that kind of ended your relationship.

AS: Yeah.

MF: Who -- do you -- what was his name?

AS: [Trimbull?]. Used to call him [Shakey?]. (laughter) Then, we had a guy in number seven fire room. His name was [Saul?]. Don't remember his first name. His routine was the same day in day out. He'd walk around like he was lost and one pant leg was always down to here and the other one he had to roll up a ways. Never combed his hair and he'd get ready to take a shower and pull off his shoe and smell

them -- smell his socks and as he undressed he had to smell everything. Then, he'd get his gear to go in and had a big trough there to shave and everything. He'd just be -- get his way in there and start scraping his face, you know? And that went on day in day out. One of the guys tried to get him to comb his hair, said, "Why don't you put some [loop?] oil on them and comb them." "You put loop oil on yours." You know? But in the fire room if that steam when up or down a pound he was there ready to cut in or out the burner. And one time, I don't know what happened. Something exploded -- the fire -- [boy?] was laying on the deck just like lighting. Other than that, he dragged around and, "Don't make it today, I'll do it tomorrow." And after -- I guess he's on about a year and they decided to give him a discharge -- inaptitude discharge -- and he was going around crying didn't want to go home and about a month or two later after he left a guy got a letter from him. He was a foreman there in a shipyard in [Pedro?]. So, he must have been putting on an act. (inaudible) He's the best darn actor I ever saw. (laughter) But he got out and --

MF: That was his routine to get out of --

AS: Yup.

MF: -- the service.



AS: It must have been. I mean -- and if you can test for a fireman test, you know? He was the only one that passed it out of 12 guys. So, he had -- knew what he was doing I think.

MF: But you think he was just putting everybody on for --

AS: That must have been. (laughter) I don't know. He was really something.

MF: So, you -- now, in general, how many people did you -- were working in each of these fire rooms?

AS: Oh, let's see there's first-classman in charge, there's two second-classmen that -- about four years in -- a bunch of us were -- some were firemen first. Some of us was firemen second. Well, I'd say about a dozen at the most.

MF: And are these the people that you would have had the most contact with?

AS: That were that -- that I worked with. Yeah.

MF: Would you -- would all of those crew members bunk in the same area then?

AS: Yeah. We all had different compartments you know. And some were in one, one in another, you know?

MF: OK.

AS: And sometimes they'd move us around into another one and...

MF: So, you'd have -- but, you know, because of how many people were on the ship, did you have contact with a lot of people who had -- who would maybe --

AS: No. [We?] --

MF: -- have been like your flight crews or --

AS: We just more or less hang around (inaudible), you know, area. Now, whenever we go up top-side, go up walk the planes take off or land, and sometimes you'd go up and get cooled off, get rid of the heat rash or get (inaudible). Go up and get cooled up and then go down to the fire room and had a million pins and needles sticking in you it felt like. Used to get in front of the boiler when I get there and get sweaty. They'd it would quit itching. Or I'd go up to flight deck and lay in the sun for about five minutes, get sunburned, and I'd peel and lose the heat rash. (laughs)

MF: How often did you get heat rash?

AS: Oh, quite regularly. I mean, there's just, like, needles sticking in you and it itch and itch and itch --

MF: Would it -- were the conditions similar in the -- in the actual engine room or the engineering compartment?

AS: Yeah, the engine room and the fire room. They were much the same.

MF: Pretty much the same.

AS: And they were --

MF: Very high temperature?

AS: I never went to the fire room unless -- not too often, you know? I just had one time -- they had a new recruit in the boiler room, they gave him a bucket, send him down to engine room to get a bucket of steam and bring it down.

(laughs)

MF: Did you ever fall for that trick?

AS: No, they never pulled it on me. (laughs)

MF: Oh, OK. So, did you have certain things that you would do -- if a new person came onto the ship, would there --

AS: Oh, when -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MF: -- be pranks or things like that they you would call it?

AS: [Bremmen?] they call it -- after we was back, you know, we had some new guys. We'd be on the watch. We'd be sitting on a bucket or something and they'd we'd -- if you paid attention, you'd tell the ship was rolling a little bit. And so, we'd roll with it, you know, back and forth and pretty soon somebody -- [oop?!]! And the guy would take for the head, you know? And after we laughed a while, started all over and the next thing you know another one -- one of them couldn't make it. He got the trash bucket and [you'd?] see it and we just had fun with them, you know?

(laughter) Seasickness is something mighty bad, but I never had it so --

MF: You never got it? How common was it?

AS: I don't know -- just too [mean?] or something.

MF: Now, with a ship that big did it --

AS: Well, the one ship I was on every time they'd pull the hook up, you know, he was hanging over the side somewhere throwing up. I was on another ship when we went to [Bermuda?] (inaudible). Got back to Boston and they transferred him.

MF: It was because he was seasick all the time?

AS: Yeah. I had some back sickness a [few?] -- I was lucky enough on that same ship we went to Pearl -- had a bunch of passengers going there. They were all up on the deck, had a bucket next to them, you know? (laughter) And we'd sit and [chow?] -- like talking about greasy food and stuff like that and get them sick and -- (laughter)

MF: Who were the passengers?

AS: Oh, new guys that were transferred all over --

MF: OK.

AS: -- you know?

MF: So, where -- after you shipped back out from Seattle -- from Puget Sound -- where did the ship go then?

AS: Just mostly out for operations. Whoops!

MF: No, that's OK.

AS: And I guess they was waiting for the Hornet -- a new Hornet to come out. And they went out on operations with her you know. And then, after that, we -- or that was before we went to Pearl -- Seattle -- after we got back, I guess we had operations in (inaudible). I was -- went up for second class and I was told I'd be rated the first of the month and then they changed the firemen rate to a petty officer rate. And somehow, one of the division officers decided not to raise me. So, that made me senior third-class. So, when we come in one time, Chief got up and told me I was being transferred. Good, you know? So, I headed up to the locker room and the division officer was ahead of me and he stopped and he apologized all over the place. I said, "Oh, that's OK." And he said, "I" -- he didn't know I was promised a rate, you know? And I told him, "Heck, it's OK." I was happy it happened because I got transferred, you know? And he said, "I don't think you'll have any problem making second wherever you're going." And I went to Philadelphia for oil burning school for six weeks. And then, I was assigned to a destroyer, the *Swanson*.

MF: OK. So, when did this -- when was this -- this was '44?

AS: This was in -- I got transferred off the *Enterprise* January the eight, 1944.

MF: OK. So, it was after the Battle of Leyte Gulf?

AS: Yeah. All of that -- yeah. [I was at?] some of them.  
Yeah.

MF: So, you were in -- in that --

AS: Everything that happened before we went to the States -- Santa Cruz Battle was the last one I was in on there. We went to [Auburn?] and school and it was just recreation-like. We had one guy who'd sit in the front row like this, slept through the whole class. We'd have tests -- always write it down word for word. Rest of us in the back looking at each other's papers. And I'd copied off of one guy and he copied off of me -- some of it -- I guess. And then, when the tests come back, you know, I passed it and he flunked it. (laughter) He never figured out what happened, you know?

MF: That's -- yeah -- that seems kind of strange. So, you spent six weeks in Philadelphia?

AS: Yeah. A little bit over that. Yeah.

MF: And that you ended up on the *Swanson*?

AS: Yeah. On the *Swanson* we went to Norfolk and we stayed in a Quonset hut for about a month I guess before went to Boston, put it in commission. And we just ended doing nothing. Me and another guys used to -- I met a gal in [Bremmen?] -- me and that -- New Jersey there. And we'd

catch the bus. He was from there you know. And we'd catch a bus to go -- and I was only allowed 50 miles out of -- to [so and?] you know. Well, the shuttle patrol would be there when the bus loaded you know. We'd walk down the block and catch it at the stop sign and we'd go over there and get there about six or so in the morning and we had to leave about that time that night to get back in time for (inaudible) Monday morning, you know? And one time, one of the guys looking out the hut, you know, he hollered, "Hey, fellas, come look there's a soldier walking by." (laughs) And they didn't feel like it -- I don't know what, but -- (laughter) it's a whole bunch of crazy guys. And then, made a sec-- and we went to Boston and went aboard ship and put it in commission -- made a [second?] in '44. Then, a week later, we went to Bermuda for the [shake?] down. And every time my section come up for liberty I got my section changed. I never did get to go ashore there. Made me mad, but --

MF: You never got to go onshore in Bermuda?

AS: No. And then, before that I put in for a transfer off the *Swanson* to another destroyer that was gonna be in commission some months later. And (inaudible) him and his assistant come and talk to me and they said I was the only one they had aboard that had been out to war, you know, in

the division. And they said if they have say-so I won't go, but they put it through, you know? And I stayed. So, we went to Bermuda. I made second-class then. Used to have to take a test for it. I didn't have to then. And then --

MF: Did they made an exception for you?

AS: I don't know. I got away with a lot of stuff, you know?  
(laughs)

MF: Just by luck?

AS: By luck. I jumped ship a lot. Oh, man, I got two ID cards when we got to Norfolk there in Philadelphia -- the oil burning school. We slept in one Sunday morning and they took our ID away from me -- just like losing your best friend, you know? So, they made us go clean out the fire room and everything and got done. I went in to get my ID card. "You're not going to shore, are you?" "Oh, no. Just want my card. It's my best friend." So, I had taken a shower and everything and got my ID card, put my jumper on, and off I went. (laughs)

MF: But you never got caught?

AS: No, I got away with it. Then, after two ID cards, when we got to Norfolk [I asked him?] -- he was all lined up outside and, "Any of you guys don't have ID cards stepped



forward." And I (inaudible) good time to get a second one.

So, I --

MF: So, that's how you got your second card?

AS: I got the second one. And what happened -- so, they took it away from sleeping in and didn't get it back. I lied a little, but just a little. So, I got that one, go to Boston. I got married after the shake down, which I shouldn't have, I guess, but I did. And another guy had his wife there and they'd become good friends, you know? And, anyway, we was leaving you know and he had to do it -- and he tried to get to go ashore and he couldn't swing it. So, I gave him my ID card and he went ashore. (laughter)

MF: You gave -- (laughs) So, it was two people going onshore with the same name --

AS: With the same card. Yeah.

MF: The same card. Did it have your photo on it?

AS: Oh, yeah. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MF: So, they didn't check it very --

AS: Well, they just [glad?] --

MF: -- very thorough.

AS: -- so you just wave it, you know?

MF: Yeah.

AS: But anyway, the [gentlemen?] and I were good friends. Every time I used it, he'd bring me to one of them and they'd [yell at them?] (inaudible), you know?

MF: Yeah.

AS: But it was -- worked out pretty good. We never got caught so. I got -- it was close one time. I was coming back off of liberty and Officer [Deck?] started [watching?] mid-ship and they had -- go aboard ship on the [fan tail?]. So, I went around the building and watched him. When he's [fish?] the other way, I made a beeline to go aboard, changed my clothes, and went up for muster. Another time, I was a few minutes late and I got a little speech about it -- got away with it. (laughter) Same way in China. I had to (inaudible) watches on the ship I was coming back on and I didn't [rate liberty?], so a guy got me a ship ID card. It had -- I thought it had the guy's name on it, but I think it my name, but different initials. I went ashore and me and a couple other guys were together and, somehow, I got stranded from the two guys. And then, I heard somebody talking, you know, and I thought it was them and we was in a restricted area. And the shore patrol they took me down to [fleet landing?] and my ex-division-officer had the duty there and I asked him what (inaudible) and he said he didn't know, but I found out -- he couldn't find

out nothing. Pretty soon, they come and sent him and take me down to fleet landing and send me back. So, got down there, jumped out, "See you later!" I went the other way and I caught the last boat going back to ship and I had a false ID card -- Officer Deck right there. I hesitated. He said, "You're [Passner?]?" "Yes, Sir." "ID goes over there." And I turned around and I was down in the bunks sound asleep. Nobody come after me, so I got up, got undressed. (laughs)

MF: So, you've had a lot of narrow escapes. What would have -- now, what would have happened if you would have been caught while they had --

AS: Oh, well, they got to put it on the report. And this is on the way home.

MF: Yeah.

AS: I might have got detained from getting out a lot longer than I did.

MF: Oh, so this could have potentially delayed your --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- your discharge?

AS: No, not that. But I went on transport one day in (inaudible) while I was watching the movie. There's a new carrier that just come in there and a Jap plane come in and it hit the carrier and the next morning the fleet went out

-- the *Enterprise*, the *Swanson*, and all the other ships. It was nice to stand up and watch them. They were going out to battle and I was getting ready to come home, you know? We went to -- from Guam to Japan, two stops in China, Okinawa, I think Wake Island, Pearl Harbor, San Diego, Frisco -- 23 days.

MF: And that was your return?

AS: Coming home. And every time -- all 23 days, every time we went to [chow?] -- when my compartment went to chow, they were out of what they had fished. We got spam -- 23 days of it. I hated the stuff to start with and I never -- I still kind of [queer?] a little when I see a can of it.

(laughter)

MF: It gives you an involuntary reaction? So, why weren't they -- why were they feeding spam?

AS: I don't know. That's all they had.

MF: That's all they had left?

AS: Somebody not long ago said that they made the spam just for the Navy. (laughs) I don't know.

MF: Because --

AS: Some people liked it. I didn't. I never did like it.

MF: How did you -- in general, how did you like most of the food that you were served?

AS: It was OK. I'm a real finicky --

MF: OK.

AS: You had something that don't look to you, don't try to get me to eat it. I can't do it. And I bought I -- thought I had some plain potato chips, one of those Frito's, and they were barbeque and I stuck one in my mouth and I couldn't spit it out fast enough. (laughter) I spit for about an hour.

MF: Did it make it -- did --

AS: I just can't --

MF: -- that make it difficult in the military --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- in the Navy at any point?

AS: I can't handle it. I don't know. I just never could. I was always that way from --

MF: Because you don't get to choose what you're going to eat.

AS: Well, yeah, you pretty much. They had it lined up there. If you didn't want something, you just didn't [take?] it.

MF: Oh, really? OK. So, you had a little bit more of a variety.

AS: You just took what you wanted and --

MF: Did you have that same kind of -- did you have choices at boot camp?

AS: Sort of. Yeah. You just walk in, you know, throw it on there, you know?

MF: Yeah.

AS: And they we went out to San Diego. There's another one. I -- transfer I was on, we got there. And they had us come up shore and eat breakfast and, God, they'd pile it on there enough for three, four guys. But why we went to San Diego and then to Frisco I don't know, but then we was in Frisco. I went to [Gold Island?] for a discharge. Ended up taking us out to [airfield?] for muster in the morning. And then, [this one's?] go clean this place, that one there it's time to assign that I move back one (laughing; inaudible). And then, instead of going (inaudible) ship [service?] until they (inaudible). (laughter)

MF: So, it sounds like you were a kind of a -- you're slightly mischievous.

AS: I was going home. I (inaudible) --

MF: Yeah. Now, when were you discharged? Do you remember what the -- date that was?

AS: Should have gotten out the October the 15, 1946. And all of that coming back -- three days at sea I should have had the discharge. Then, I finally got it. I had to take two months leave or lose it. So, I got my discharge the December the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

MF: Nineteen-forty-four?

AS: Mm-hmm.

MF: OK --

AS: Oh, '46.

MF: -- '46 -- OK.

AS: Yeah, '46.

MF: OK. So, it was after the war?

AS: Yeah.

MF: Now, this -- you were on the *Swanson* then for --

AS: Ten months. I went aboard April the 2<sup>nd</sup> and I got transferred the 13<sup>th</sup> of August.

MF: And this is a destroyer?

AS: Yeah.

MF: Is the -- the kind of role you had on that ship, was it similar to what you were doing on the *Enterprise*? Were the facilities --

AS: No, my job was the same in the fire room. Yeah.

MF: But the difference between the two -- what was your impression between -- were there any differences that really stuck in your mind?

AS: Oh, duty-wise I like the destroyer because I got away and it wasn't as regulation as the *Enterprise*. There everything was by-the-book, you know? There it was -- after I deal with the not getting that transfer, things were [really rough?], so it made me feel kind of good since

all you had -- at times the only one out there and everything.

MF: The only one with actual, like, combat experience.

AS: Yeah. Experience, yeah. I took advantage of it. And then, I [drove?] (inaudible). I think I told you that.

MF: I don't know.

AS: No?

MF: I don't know.

AS: No, we -- there was five second-class boiler [tenders?] and one kid he thought he had to transfer in his head, you know? And one of the chief's told him he was about to transfer. He said, "If you're interested, might apply for it." So, anyway, I had watch in the fire room when they passed [order?] first to come up to [locker room?]. So, I went up there and this guy already had his clothes ready and his suitcase and everything. So, I went up to locker room. You know, I walked in there, I said, "I'm sorry, fellas, but I just got to have this transfer." So, he asked anybody needed to go home -- family problems or something before the other one. Seniority I would have had it. Nobody did, so he said, "Well, we'll pull a [card trick?]." So, we drew cards. One guy drew. He drew a two. The other one drew a five. Another one had an eight and I drew -- and I waited for the guy. He drew and laid a



ten on there and I put a queen on top. (laughs) I yee-haw and walked out. So, I got down to the fire room. I called a guy, you know, "How much you want for your suitcase?" "Oh, hell, you can have it. I'll never get to use it anyway." (laughs)

MF: In which ship? This was on --

AS: On the *Swanson*. Yeah. (laughs)

MF: On the *Swanson*. So, you got certain benefits while you were on there --

AS: No, I took advantage of everything.

MF: Yes. But operationally they're both pretty --

AS: Yeah, it was the same.

MF: From your standpoint?

AS: One is just big enough to hold a couple of destroyers, you know? (laughter)

MF: Was there a large speed difference between the two?

AS: Well, we run into a couple of typhoons in the China Sea. We was doing submarine duty there for a few days. There you had to hang on for dear life while that was going on. I used to be in the fire room. I had two [blower?] (inaudible). I'd sit on a [rack?] can and when it rolled it'd take the rack can out from under me. I got those two blowers that -- when it rolled back, I'd sit back down. (laughs) And you'd go to bed at night, put your arm around

the pole of the bunkers welded onto it and around the chain that held -- hold onto the bunk, put your feet up against the bulk head and brace yourself. Sometimes, they'd roll and sometimes feel like mid-ship was coming up and the rest were going down. And we had a barber, he was in the fire room, but he was a barber and some people [didn't like?] and he had a little cubby hole that he used for a barber shop. In there, the bulk head was split, [like?] just take (inaudible) and pull it apart. That's all --

MF: The typhoon split it?

AS: Yeah. And then, that typhoon we lost three destroyers that sunk. When its' -- run into it, we were (inaudible) and it broke the oil hose. So, they secured it and then the other ship -- some of them had enough fuel to go, you keep moving, and some were just down out to about nothing. So, they said anyway. So, anyway, after three days, we were running out [of oil?] and the ocean looked just like tabletop -- that smooth, you know? Like a piece of glass and we was looking for survivors and nobody -- we found a life raft or two, but that was about it.

MF: Anybody in the life rafts?

AS: Nobody inside.

MF: Just --

AS: And it was -- I been in two, three of those and they're pretty rough.

MF: Were these the -- one of the two big ones that were -- was it towards the end of 1945 or right before the bomb was dropped? Do you remember when it happened, that typhoon?

AS: That typhoon was after the war.

MF: It was after. OK.

AS: No, no. It wasn't after the war. It was during the war, but it was in '45.

MF: So, you said -- you mentioned that the *Swanson* is part of the same group as the *Enterprise*, right? So, you were in the same --

AS: Well, we operated with the *Enterprise*. One time, we fueled and [chief?] -- see, after that typhoon, we lost those destroyers, then refueled everyday -- refueled all the -- destroyers were refueled everyday. That was it wouldn't happen again. And one time we refilled off the *Enterprise*. I saw the division officer. If I had thought of it earlier one of the guys that was up for chief and he had a chief's hat -- if I'd have thought of it, I'd have borrowed it and put it on and make believe I'd made chief while I was there, (laughter) but I didn't think of it until after I let him know I was second -- no -- yeah, I was second.

MF: It was a guy you knew?

AS: Yeah. But I would have -- I was sorry afterwards. I would have borrowed that and put it on and went up there, let him think I was -- made chief -- (laughter) went to -- three-year race up, you know?

MF: Yeah.

AS: I would have gotten a kick out of that. I saw the guy in Denver one time at a reunion. We got to talking and I said, "Yeah" -- I told him that the other division officer cheated me out of second and he come up to me like this, "You sure it wasn't me?" And after a little thinking I said, "Yeah, it was, wasn't it?" And I let it go after. Nothing I could do about it years afterwards. (laughs)

MF: He was the guy that cheated you out of --

AS: Yeah.

MF: -- out of second while you were --

AS: Well, it was the first time an officer ever apologized to me. (laughs) And that warrant officer we had on that destroyer, he was [quirky?], you know? He didn't like the reserve officers. Go to a movie, he'd stand back with us guys or sit back with us instead of sitting with the officers.

MF: Did he --

AS: Well, no --

MF: -- worked his way up from the ranks?

AS: This wasn't on the destroyer. It was on the [AKA officer?]  
(inaudible). I got my ships mixed up.

MF: How many different ships were you on?

AS: Four.

MF: OK. *Enterprise, Swanson...*

AS: *Swanson -- you know, Enterprise, Swanson, Turandot, Topeka.*

MF: *Topeka* is -- and that is a --

AS: That was a cruiser.

MF: A cruiser. OK. How long were you on those other two vessels? On the *Turandot* I was six months. I was up to see the captain twice on that -- the only time I got into any trouble. I screwed a boiler one time and there was no (inaudible). I couldn't -- I think I set that [forward?]. It was on the *Turandot* not the *Swanson*. Anyway, I couldn't and I got -- screwed the boiler and the division officer had me (inaudible) and I to secure it because he said it was dry. And I got a summary court-martial. He put me on a report. I got a summary court-martial. Captain says, "No reason to secure a boiler on the high -- kind of high or low water." And I was always told it only takes a few minutes to burn it up and we had 600 pounds of steam there. Anyway, he got a summary court-martial out of it and, then, Chief in there tried to get me out of that and it didn't work. So, a lawyer we had on there took over and he got it

where cut (inaudible) the division I [was in it?] -- engineering trouble so that when the captain got a wind of it I wouldn't see him. And he said, if I agreed to it, he'd give me six-months probation and nothing in my record. So, I agreed to it. I went up to see the captain -- six-months restriction -- nothing said about that going in my record. And I come downstairs, I told the warrant officer, "Get me off of this deal," you know? Then, after a while, they put me in charge of the fire room and I was a second-class then. And I told the chief, "If I'm gonna do it -- be in charge -- I wanted to get the pay for it." So, he recommend me first-class and the division officer saw my name on the list and he scratched it. Chow time came, the yeoman come through and told me what happened. He said they was gonna scratch my name. So, I went back down to fire room and chief was down there and the warrant officer. And then, they went to the chief engineer and he said, "I wanted him rated anyway." So, he put my name back on. First of the month I was rated first-class. I was on six-months restriction. That don't usually happen. That's the only time I ever heard anybody making a rate while he was restricted.

MF: So, what does restriction mean? Just --

AS: Well, I was restricted. I wasn't allowed to go ashore and --

MF: Oh.

AS: So, they -- they day the war ended, we pulled into Pearl on that -- on the *Turandot*. Next day, the warrant officer come up to me, "Officer, you'd like to go ashore today?" I said, "I can't. I'm restricted." He said, "Well, I'm gonna send you over for a boiler fitting. If anything comes up, that's what you're over there for." And I said, "OK." Then, he started to walk away and he come back and said, "Do you have any money?" "No." Helping the (inaudible) he happened to have two dollars. He gave it to me. I went ashore just to walk around doing nothing, you know? Just to get off, you know?

MF: And this was --

AS: He was a regular guy. The day the war ended, he had the four to eight watch in the morning and he got drunk. He told me that, said he got drunk and he went in, told the captain what he thought of him, then he went and told the exec what he thought of him, went in the [ward?] room and told the officers -- the reserves ones in there -- you know -- told him what he thought of them and what they can do, you know? When to bed and they couldn't get him up to go on watch and they told him it was time to be relieved when

he finally made it. I went up and talked to him and he was telling me all this. And he didn't like the reserve officers. (laughs)

MF: This was the chief engineer you said?

AS: No, he [wasn't?] one of the engineering officers. He was a warrant officer, but he was a regular guy. I mean, you could --

MF: [Is he?].

AS: -- kid with me and talk with him like you and me are now.

MF: So, he helped you out quite a bit?

AS: Yeah. But a regular officer it's always "yes sir", "no sir" or something. And I was never for much on the yes or no sir [scope?]. I went up to an admiral -- I think it was in Boston one time. There was a sidewalk about this wide, you know? He was over here; I was over here. I didn't even see him. Next thing, he stopped me. "Don't you no you're supposed to salute an officer when you see him?" I went, "Oh!" And I went like that and walked away from him. (laughter)

MF: So, now, what -- with the -- you said it was a -- the court-martial, you said it's a certain kind of court-martial?

AS: Yeah. Summary is one of the worst.

MF: Summary.



AS: Yeah.

MF: A s-- oh, OK. So --

AS: It's like -- it is about the worst.

MF: Now, did they drop that? Did anything ever become of that?

AS: No, it's still the same as far as I know. Like we had three guys off the *Enterprise*, they were -- well, that's when I -- that just was three guys off the *Enterprise*. Yeah. But when I had the apartment with -- they come home one week and my sister and my cousin has my clothes and blankets all washed up, you know, and then a suitcase. They threw a hell of a party. The apartment looked like a cyclone hit it. And they went over the hill. They were going 48 some days and hours when they come back. All they got out of it, a \$20 fine, 20 days in the brig. Then, me, they lined me up and shot me down -- the way I felt. But they got away with it.

MF: And you said it was for securing the boiler.

AS: Huh?

MF: You said it was for securing the boiler.

AS: Yeah, that was another. This was on another ship now. We're from the *Enterprise* to a third ship. But those on the *Enterprise*, they went over the hill and that's all they got out. And that's when I got transferred and they were still in the brig at the time. Whatever happened to any of

them I don't know. One of them had to (inaudible) if you ever [knew?] his funny papers.

MF: I've heard the name little (inaudible).

AS: Yeah. [His?] big husky -- just certain shape you know --

MF: Yeah.

AS: -- and muscle bound. He had to -- he used to play that part in plays or something when he was a kid I guess.

MF: So, the first ship you were on was the *Enterprise*. The second was --

AS: *Swanson*.

MF: Third?

AS: *Turandot*.

MF: And -- so, you weren't on the *Swanson* when the war ended. You were transferred to the *Swanson* to the *Turandot*.

AS: Yeah. I was on the *Turandot* the day the war ended.

MF: And then after the war is when you ended up on the *Topeka*.

AS: Yeah. Like I lived in -- we were standing by for the [field ship?] on the *Turandot*. So, it was Christmastime. First, it was gonna fuel day before Christmas. Then, they cancelled till after Christmas and we'd all be drinking. So, I had to -- yeah, I had the 12:00 watch and I had a [fueling?] to [take?] somewhere else. So, (inaudible) and I got the guys to take me [to town?]. Next thing you know me and another guy were sitting on a bunk playing rummy and

drinking whiskey. And the last tank to fill up at the time was in my compartment and the guy take [it sounding?]. You run it over. At the time, we had 300 soldiers we was taking out to the island. I got them all to wipe up oil, you know? (laughter) And I went back down on watch.

MF: You were able to get them to.

AS: Yeah. Well, didn't have enough guys. So, I made them come and do it. You know? And then, I [lifted?] safety -- said it was on, but they were automatic too. But it wasn't set right, so steam went up a little higher than it should have. It lifted the safeties. And this one officer come a steaming down there, you know, "What happened?" I said, "Nothing. Just lift the safeties." And he asked, "Have you been drinking?" "Oh, no." (laughs) So, "Well, your breath smells like hell. I'm gonna put you on the report in the morning." (laughs) So, I was gonna -- I had intended to go to San Diego -- Christmas dinner with one of the guys off the *Enterprise*. Instead, I decided to not go and stay aboard and when he got up go talk to him and try to talk him out of it and he wouldn't listen to me. Because every time he hollered at me about something always more-or-less let him know I knew more than he did. (laughs) And he got even with me. I got even with him on the initiation we had.

MF: And what was that?

AS: Well, we had initiation. First -- when we first found out we was going to cross the equator.

MF: Ok. So, this was the Pollywog Ceremony?

AS: Yeah.

MF: OK.

AS: So, anyway, they brought a case of eggs down to the fire room -- had them beyond in the boiler room. It was hottest to get them rotten. (coughs) And the day we crossed the equator, well, then they got -- some of the top guys -- got a couple of officers in the [spud?] locker and they turned the fire hose over and everything went. And then, in the morning, sometimes they passed a word for all Shellbacks to come to a certain compartment, you know? Then, they'd [order?] down and wouldn't let us out. All the engines out was topside and they were standing by with the fire hose. So, finally, we got a hold of the fire room and had them shut off the pump. So, when they turned the hose off nothing come up or it'll dribble. So, we did that -- opened the hatch and turned it on just that -- and all the way through that way. And it was a lot of fun. Then, the day of initiation, they had a big tank there full of water, you know? And everybody had a shillelagh about this long, you know, stuffed with wet rags and all the rags and packed

solid just like a piece of iron just about. And this officer, they fed him some garbage. They use all that egg and every time he asked you whether you were a shellback or a pollywog, opened their mouth they had a fistful of garbage in their mouth. And they'd take ten steps and cut their hairs and then go to the next and had a water tank there and they got him in there and they'd ask him and at the same time they'd duck him down and try to drown him. Then, he didn't want to get out and everybody was laying on him, you know? And he come around the tank and I made him get down on his hands and knees and when he come by, me I let him have it with both hands as hard as I could. His [rearing?] and pulling and boom another one and all the other guys come by would hit him if we could as they run by, you know? But that one we took out -- everyone had something against him took it out. (laughter)

MF: Now, he -- was he -- he's a higher-ranking officer?

AS: Yeah, he was an ensign, but he couldn't do nothing about it. And the only one that didn't go for initiation was the captain because he was too chicken or something. I don't know.

MF: He had never crossed the equator before?

AS: No. I believe it's only about 12 of us that had been across the equator. The guys on the *Enterprise*, when we

went across, we didn't have initiation because of the war. So, it wasn't in my record, but all the battles I was in, you know, it took me across there. So, I --

MF: Yeah.

AS: -- got out of that. But it was fun. [Landed?] in (inaudible) when you wanted to --

MF: How many of those ceremonies have you done?

AS: That was the only one.

MF: That was it.

AS: Mm-hmm.

MF: So, you never got initiated?

AS: Uhn-uh.

MF: So you kind of lucked out it sounds like.

AS: Yeah, I know. (laughter)

MF: Man, I hated it too. (laughs) But everything goes on that. I don't know. Whatever you did, they couldn't do you no -- go against you about it. Just like your officers -- take your spite out on them. They had to take it.

AS: So, some people had it lot worse than others.

MF: Yeah.

AS: Like they said, on the *Enterprise*, first time it crossed the equator they put a guy in a coffin and lowered him over the side and it killed him. I got a book where that's, you know, in there.

MF: In 19-- was that the 1938 crossing?

AS: Yeah. Don't hear much about that, but that happened.

MF: They put him in a -- the coffin and --

AS: Coffin and lowered it.

MF: -- and lowered it in.

AS: I guess just scared him to death.

MF: [Oof?].

AS: But it [all?] -- nobody got punished for it. I mean, it just -- deal that -- legal at the time I guess. I don't know if it still is or not.

MF: I think it's changed a little bit.

AS: Yeah. Kind of went a little far there I thought.

MF: Sounds like it. So, you -- so, you were on the *Topeka* then for --

AS: I was on there for --

MF: That was your post -- that was post-war?

AS: Yeah. Yeah. After that deal with the (inaudible) -- well, I had 20 hours of [active?] duty out of that. So, every night I had a guy write me out so many hours working for him, you know, and I had arranged to go ashore Sunday. (coughs) So, I turned that in and then Sunday morning I was all ready to go ashore and I had to wait on my ID card. And they got a transfer for second or third-class and they were all eligible for a discharge or on liberty and this

officer had to do it. And he come up there while I was standing there waiting for the ID card. I got transferred. I was first-class. So, instead of going to shore, I went and packed my sea bag, went on the *Topeka*, threw a baggage on the ladder there as I went aboard, went up got a liberty card, and went ashore. (laughter) And one of the guys found me a bunk to sleep in and that was it.

MF: So, it sounds like, of all four ships that you were on then, it was just the *Turandot* that was not -- who was the one that --

AS: I got away with a lot of things.

MF: You got away with things. (laughter)

AS: (inaudible) I talked to the chief engineer one time when I found out about the *Swanson* reunions and I got his name and I called him. We was talking and I told him I jumped ship a lot of times. (laughs) I don't think he liked the idea, but...

MF: Nothing he could do not.

AS: Yeah. Nothing. Then, he was at one of the reunions. That's the only time I ever saw him. I only went to three of those. One was in Tennessee and the other one in -- let's see -- that was the *Swanson*. Yeah. We had one in Reno, one in Nashville, and one in Missouri -- Springfield, Missouri.



MF: So, out of all the ships that you served on --

AS: On the *Swanson*. No, altogether I've been to about 25 different reunions.

MF: So, do you think you feel more connected to the *Enterprise* than any of the other ships?

AS: Yeah. That's still the main ship. That was my first one. And the *Swanson*, I liked it. So -- *Topeka* -- well, I always said I got shanghaied, but they had two or three chiefs in the fire room, you know, and usually they never come to the fire room. And then there's -- I don't know how many first-class. And on there we divided up. We had two guys, they decided they wanted to do the repair work. I decided I'll take the [turn to?] gang, you know? So, whatever, you know? So, those two guys would be up there repairing a blower or something. I'd put the guys to work, you, and I'd sit on the blower, a cup of coffee in my hand, and keep it nice and cool. And after one hour or so, they'd come down for a cup of coffee and all sweaty and greased up and dirty. And I was there and I worked up a sweat. (laughter)

MF: With your cup up coffee.

AS: Had one guy drinking his coffee, he looked at me and shook his head and set the cup down and went back to work.

(laughs) And I had one kid, every time he'd hang up till

last and get the easiest work and I usually put him in the [builders?] in between the tight places and that was it. And I did very little work. When I went on watch, I had a guy; he took care of the watch. I didn't even check out, see if I could know where the bows are to [light off?] with or anything. I'd sit there for four hours and then I'd sign the log and that's it. And he wrote in everything else. When he got transferred or getting transferred, I had him show me around to make sure I knew what to do. And last day aboard we sorted laundry at lunchtime. I was in the compartment. I had transferred to Guam, come home early and get a leave and everything. About a week later, one of the officers come over and made me come back to ship. Then, I just stayed in the compartment like (inaudible) down there. So, one day, we were -- me and a couple of guys were out sorting laundry and the place looked a mess and me and a couple guys were sitting there by a bunker playing rummy. And a guy come down and one of the [MA's?] come down there for some benches we had down there for some deal and he come back. He had the Chief Master-at-Arms and the Exec. And the Exec asked, "Who's the MA down here?" And I said, "I am." And I told the guys to get out so they wouldn't get in trouble and they told me to go get the Chief Engineer. So, I walked up to

him. "Did you say he was up in the wardroom?" "What's your name?" And I told him my name. Then, "What's your name?" I told him again and again. Then, I finally put a sir behind it. So, he let me go and then he went up. He was somewhere else. He was with the Captain. So, I come down and told him, go up and wait for him to come out of the Captain's office and bring him down. Meantime, they passed a word for him and when the Chief Engineer come down -- to me, he always looked like a sissy-fight guy -- pale-looking [guy?]. And when he come down, I was standing on a ladder ready to go up and the Chief Engi-- I mean, the Exec asked me what my rate was. I told him and he said, "You're striking for second-class." And I figured go ahead and strike because I'm leaving. And he laid into the Chief Engineer one side up the other and he just stood there, turned paler than he was, and then we all had a -- all the b-division had to come down to clean the compartment. There was about three guys who were on watch. All the rest were down there -- officers, chiefs, everybody. And I was working with the division officer and I asked him what the engineer asked -- had to say when he got to the locker room. He said he started a little bit and he said, "Who the hell is that guy anyway?" (laughs)

MF: And so what was all of this --

AS: And then, I had shore patrol with him in [Span?] one time for a day, which I didn't like, but --

MF: With the Chief Engineer?

AS: No -- yeah.

MF: Of the -- and this is of the *Topeka*, right?

AS: Yeah. So, anyway, that night I had an inspection. Wasn't quite satisfactory. Next morning had to do some more.

Next morning had another inspection. When he left, went up to the locker room, got my clearance card, got my baggage and went up -- waiting for the (inaudible) to come aboard alongside and I saluted the flag and crawled in and I was gone. (laughs) And it was 23 days coming home with nothing by spam all the way.

MF: And so, you were discharged in San Francisco?

AS: Yeah.

MF: And this was '46? Do you remember what --

AS: Forty-six -- December. Yeah.

MF: December of '46?

AS: Should have been out the 15<sup>th</sup> of October.

MF: And then, you went back to Kansas?

AS: No. I was married and she was from New Jersey -- Camden, New Jersey. I went back there and we took a trip to Kansas and then back. And then, everybody [job?] happy and so I took the first thing that come along. I was a shipping

clerk for American News and I was there for -- I guess I worked there about six months or something. Me and a guy on the *Swanson* used to talk about getting a place like [alum?] and having a -- or had a program on the radio, you know? They were sitting there playing cards and everything. One day, a customer come in, they [helped her sell?] and just shot it down, you know? And they'd leave, you know? And we was gonna fight and then he [run into?] something (inaudible). It was a place just out of Springfield, Missouri about 50 miles. It had a gas pump in front of a grocery store. It had a flour mill with -- fully-equipped, had a two-story house, it had a beer joint by the lack -- just a little shack -- and a nice place to spend a weekend, you know? And we could have had the place for \$5,000. I went to Kansas and I got talked out of it and we never got it. I went back to Jersey and I went up where I was working and I told [her?], "Oh, boss, I was going to be back (inaudible)." Said, "I kind of figured it would happen." But his (inaudible) -- what -- with the guys, you know? We four, when I worked there, we had a little [stooch?] in there, you know? Something that made a little noise on there, you know, in the warehouse. He'd [lock?] after us, you know, then I changed bosses and this guy would be having a contest and yacking, you know? He'd

come out, join in for a while, and said, "Oh, I have to go here and there," and he'd take off and we'd go to work. We used to work overtime once a week to get the job done. When he took over, Friday afternoon we'd come back from lunch, start back to work, he'd come back and, "You guys think you can get the work out by Monday one time?" "Oh, yeah." So, he said, "You can go home and I'll punch you out." So, we'd go home. And then you didn't mind doing something. We used to be six of us in the line, you know, sorting magazines and shipping them and it dwindled down to three of us. So, my dad-in-law died when -- after I had moved -- went back for the funeral and I looked him up. They had moved in a new building and I walked in there and he was still there, shook hands. "Hello, you want to come back to work?" I said, "Hello, no thank you." (laughter) But he was a nice guy. The other one, boy, (inaudible). They were after us. And we did -- three of us did the work six of us used to do. And we had to unload a truck one time and I got a backache. Oh, man, that lasted for a couple of years; I couldn't get rid of it. When I was at the funeral, we went to a -- some guys we knew. I went in the store and asked -- drug store -- asked if they anything good for that and they give me some Humphrey pills like babies take, you know? I don't know what number it was,

but they give me some of them. I took a couple and had a few beers that night and next morning I woke up -- no backache. Boy, that was a good feeling. Then, I hurt my back and been carrying it for 70 years now.

MF: So, what did you do after the job you quit in New Jersey?

AS: I went to Dodge and my wife went down and applied for unemployment and mentioned I wasn't working and there was a guy in that was from International Harvest when she was in there. And when he heard about it I talked to him and give him all the (inaudible), you know? And then, I was kind of -- over the weekend I could have had a choice of just about a dozen different jobs. In New Jersey, they claimed they had over 65,000 unemployed veterans not counting disabled ones -- unemployed. Went to Kansas, I could have had that many in a [weeks time?]. So, I was at Montgomery Wards and wife come down there and said, "International called." They wanted me to come to work. So, I went down there and I figured don't like it I'll go to Montgomery Ward. So, I start there for a year or so and then they moved to Wichita and closed that one down and my brother had the (inaudible) garage there -- and my cousin. And he talked me out of moving down there and I went to work for him. I worked there for about three years and then his brother-in-law and I went in the restaurant business together. And about a

year later, well, he was up for a draft. So, he went back to the farm. I [run it?] -- bad location, lousy landlord. Not making any money, so shut it down and auctioned off what I had. And my brother come home one time from Iowa. He asked me to come in there. He asked me if I had a [postcard?]. I said, "Yeah." I gave it to him and he wrote it out and he stopped in a place called Maid-Rite Sandwich. I don't know if you ever heard of it.

MF: I don't think so.

AS: It was a franchise deal. He said he sat down, had one. He said while he was eating it he wanted another one. I told him, "I think it's far fetched." [No one said?] that's what it was. And there a was a guy who worked at the creamery next to us there and I got talking to him and he was from Iowa and he told me the same thing about the sandwich. So, I was out of a job. I tried to get a building, didn't work out, so I was -- the guy was gonna build one for me. In the meantime, I worked for a plumber, which I always appreciated having. I learned a lot about plumbing. I did a lot on my own. So, anyway, after Christmas I took a fast trip to Muscatine, Iowa -- learned about the franchise, ate the sandwich, and while I was eating it tasted like I wanted a second one. (laughter) So, I got the franchise and tried to get a building, you know,



and the gal wouldn't give it up. So, I tried for another one and then -- and I almost had something lined up and then she finally decided to give up the building. I even offered her money to give it to me -- let me have it. Then, it ended up didn't have to pay her anything. So, I paid that up and put -- got the equipment and put it in and the day I opened up for business I had eight dollars in the [tilt?], you know? Everything to bought to like -- coffee and pop was free with the sandwich, you know? In the afternoon, one company -- meat company -- whatever milk company come in. I put, I think, 25 in the tilt and that's what I operated on. A year or so later, guys come in the from the paper. The guy asked me, "Where are you gonna move to?" I told him I didn't know I was gonna move. He said, "According to tonight's paper you are." They were going to tear down the apartment house next door and my building went with it. That's when I found out about -- so, I looked around. I found a filling station that was -- been closed for years about a block south. I found out who owned it and I went and talked to the landlady and she said I really would have to have at least -- I think it was \$70. And I was paying \$85 for the other one. This was bigger. And she said she'd do a [deal?], you know, like put a petition in between and this and that. And everything I

mentioned she went along with it. Some things she went half and half. And then, I told her I decided I would put tile on the floor. She sat there a minute. "OK. I'll go you half on that." She went along with everything. The colors were red and white. That's the way I painted. So, I got the franchise, got it going, opened up about April, and I was doing more business there than I was before. So, I did OK. And we took a vacation and went to Phoenix. She didn't like Kansas. I didn't like Jersey. I liked Phoenix because I'd been out here two [minutes?] before and she liked it. So, we went home and sold it and moved out there, give the house I had back to my dad. (laughs) Couldn't sell it, so... And --

MF: And so then?

AS: I bought the sandwich shop in Phoenix and didn't like the way it was arranged. So, I had a gal working for me. I had her run it and I put in another one and I got a block too far in the east, got the slums instead of -- and it wasn't doing much good and the landlord wasn't a very nice guy. He was black, but boy he'd look at you like he was going to stare you -- (laughter) I walked out of his place several place and slammed the door all I had. I was so mad at him. So, half-way -- sold it -- one of them to my help and the other one I almost give it away just to get out

from it. And he took over. It was long after some of the plumbing went bad in it and he had to foot the bill, you know, himself. So, I don't know whatever happened. Then, after so long a time, I went on vacation. We was gonna go to -- oh, we went to Iowa and we gone to Wyoming and I was gonna go to Canada and then drive up to Seattle through Canada. And I knew a guy in Burley, Idaho that had record -- juke boxes -- and they did -- changed the records every week. And I looked him up and late went on one night partying. And Sunday morning come around, I had a hangover and, instead of going through all of that, we was gonna go -- to go in Vermont. A week later, we headed for home.

(laughter)

MF: Changed your plans.

AS: And then, took a trip back to Kansas and then went to California. Then, I run out of money and -- so, I was looking for a job. Put in a few applications and never heard nothing and saw an ad in the paper they find a job for you for so much, you know? So, I went up and saw about that. So, I went down in McKesson Drug and put in the application and then they said, "Well, you want to talk to a couple of other guys." And he let me know. So, that night he called me to come in at such-and-such time in the morning. And they had -- working inside and I always had a

guy [quitting?] the truck driver. So, I said I'll take the truck. So, I went to work, but they made me work in pharmaceutical, you know, and I never knew -- I can't -- not good at pronouncing the words. And those things are that long some of the words. Every time they'd call out, "Do we have this?" You know, "How do you spell it?" And I'd write it down and then I'd go look it up. Then, the guy was gonna quit and then he waited till after New Year's. But then, when I got my run mate, I had to go do that -- always had some odd job to do afterwards. But I was there 29 years -- got cheated out of two weeks of vacation, eight days of funeral pay that I didn't get. I went on vacation when my mother died and I never got paid for it. So -- and my wife and I split up and she died in the meantime. I got married again and I mentioned one time about retiring. Said, "Go for it." Never said another word. Next thing, I was retired. (laughs)

MF: Just like that.

AS: And then, she worked for Motorola and she quit and went somewhere else and then she [enter?] another place. And she got to where it's a pain in the butt. Spent more time [galving?] around and everything. And I was in Kansas one time. When I got home, I had a pick-up. I went back in and had the carburetor rebuilt and it didn't work right. I

almost didn't make it up [Wolf St.?] passing Colorado. I had to drive in low-gear. And I mentioned taking it in and my sister said, "No you're not. You're not driving that back to Phoenix." She kept after me and finally she talked me into it and went up to Dodge and she bought me a Dodge Caravan. I traded in the pick-up. It cost me -- well, they [allowed?] me three-hundred -- three-thousand I think -- two or three-thousand -- twenty-five or three-thousand. I paid three-thousand for it. And then she paid for the license tags, taxes, and six month's insurance. And then, my other sister pitched in for 5,000 and I went home -- oh, I was feeling good. My daughter was parked in driveway. I saw it parked outside and I had to open the garage door and my wife was on the phone and she'd come out there steaming and then we got into it and she said she's moving out. I said, "The door's open. Go ahead." And then, the guy -- she was involved with the guy. He kept calling. I finally took the receiver and I said, "You want to talk? You come over here." And he come over there and then we had it out and everything he said, boy, I -- [they all?]. She was telling they were gonna get married and -- "Don't put that onto him." (laughs)

MF: This [CFO?], it is recorded.

AS: Huh?

MF: Do you want it to stop?

AS: Yeah.

MF: OK. Well --

AS: Yeah. That anyway -- about my wife and all.

MF: OK. I think we're probably at a point where we can probably start to wrap it up.

AS: Uh-huh.

MF: But from your time in World War II, do you think that shaped a lot of the person that you ended up becoming?

AS: I don't know. (clears throat) All I know is when I (coughs) drove my brother's car I wasn't gonna go in the farm. That was one thing -- once I got away from it, nothing. Because I was the youngest boy and, boy, I mean -- everything fell back on me. I spent more time off herding cows than I did at home. While I was doing that, I was plowing or raking feed or doing the men's work. I worked for my uncle one time -- [trashing bonwoods?]. The only rest I got -- driving from the field to the machine and back out the field. One day, it rained and I started sowing the bundles in faster than normal, you know, stopping up so I could rest a few minutes. Finally, it started getting a little dark and he said, "Well, after we get this unloaded, we're going home." Boy, the minute I threw the last bundle in the machine, dropped the pitchfork and grabbed the reins -

- giddy-up. I took off. Went around the field, decided to turn into our yard, the sun come back up. (laughs) And I could just see him, "Oh my God. I could have got another three, four hours of work out of him." And I was working over there for my dad. I never got paid for it.

MF: So, that was all free.

AS: I always did that. Same way when I worked in the lettuce sheds here. I shaved up 100 bucks and he owed my brother-in-law \$100. I paid the bill. Put -- when my brother come home from the seminary you know -- going to school -- for an hours or two. "Leaving? Need any money?" That did it. And after he left, I guess it showed on my face something was eating on me. My mother kept after me until she needled me for it and I told her. "How come I come home and help him with all the work all the time and he comes home for an hour or so he writes him a check?" I was driving my brother's car. So, he bought me two new tires for it. I got to Colorado and got a check -- the first one, I sent him money [and I?] paid for -- it wasn't even my car. I was driving my brother's. He had mine. He had a 29 Model A. It's four-door and it had a coupe. I guess what ended up his wife liked it better than mine -- his -- you know? And I rolled out and -- navy for me, boy.

MF: And that was it.

AS: Come out of the [mine?] one time and, hell, the tires were as slick as this. Drove out to Phoenix and back home again. I think I bought a -- I had one flat tire blow out [of the water?]. But the timing -- didn't make no difference. You had a flat tire, you stopped and took it up and patch the tube and pumped it up and went on.

(laughs)

MF: When they still had tubes in tires.

AS: Yeah.

MF: Yeah. Well --

AS: But I bought that Model A. I paid \$65 for it. And I brought it home and Dad took a look at it and it had two chrome horns under the lights. And [I see?] it already had a cap. "Oh, you just bought it for the (inaudible)."

(laughter) And I borrowed the money from him to pay for it.

So, when I left home, well, I had my cousin put a hitch on it so I could use a trailer I -- we had in Phoenix. And I took it, I went to Dodge, and I had a guy overhaul the engine for me -- complete overhaul. When he got done, he had to move out of the garage. So, I helped him move and, when we settled up, I owed him \$20. Can't do that nowadays. And we went [out?] and it -- I had a nice little car. I often wished I had it when I got out of the service. And my brother had it and -- oh, after he died,



you know, I -- we was at home, get together, and his wife went to Hawaii for a vacation -- met a guy. And eventually they got married. And she was home one time before that and go to talking and she mentioned that he rolled my -- but he never told me that.

MF: Really?

AS: But he might have had --

MF: So, that coupe that you had?

AS: Yeah. So, when I rolled his, you know, the generator wasn't working right on his and he had just -- or he had just put a generator on mine and it wasn't working and his wasn't working. So, I took them both to help him rebuild the one of them and put it on the one I rolled. And he took the other one back and got it exchanged. I took it home, drove to my dad. Kids saw me coming home. Walking home from school, they saw this beat-up, old car coming, you know, and one of them told me afterwards that he was hoping to get a ride when they saw that beat-up car coming. I hope it don't stop, you know? And I come up to a screeching halt, you know, mouths fell open. "What happened?" "Nothing. You want to go home? Get in?" And I -- then, Dad was roofing the wash house that burned down -- the roof off of it. And he was just about ready to put a nail and his mouth fell open looking, you know? The kids

run in and told Mom, "Come out!" "What happened?" I said, "Nothing. Just rolled it." So, I went in, had a bite to eat, and got cleaned up and I went back out and was getting ready to take the papers in to have another (inaudible) and send them in for the Navy. And I went out and I said, "Dad, do you mind if I use your car tonight?" And he kind of gave me a sheepish grin and, "Well, if you don't roll it, too." (laughs) So, later, I was saying, "I do." You know, it was --

MF: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

AS: It was a hard feeling when you raise your right hand. It was hard to raise it up and I wasn't sure.

MF: You were pretty -- you were hesitant about it.

AS: Yeah. I was -- I wasn't sure if I was gonna do it, but I finally --

MF: And how do you feel about your decision to do that?

AS: Oh, hell, should have had [sense?] and stayed longer -- six -- twenty years! But when I went in I said, "I'll put in the six years and that's it." But they made me stay two years -- months -- over, so...

MF: But on behalf of -- you know -- behalf of the museum and myself I really do want to thank you --

AS: Oh! (laughs)

MF: -- for taking the time to do --

AS: Oh, it was kind of nice.

MF: -- this interview, but --

AS: Something different.

END OF AUDIO FILE