Richard Yarling Oral History Interview

This is Mike Zambrano (MZ) and today is November 16th 2016, and I am at the home of Linda Hamil. I will be interviewing her father Richard Warren Yarling (RY) and we are here in Round Rock, Texas. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

MZ: And as we started last time just, just for the tape, we're redoing this because the original was corrupted. Mr. Yardley can you tell me where, when you were born?

RY: I was born in Shelby County, Indiana on October 18 1921, which was hearsay because I don't remember that, but that's what it says on my birth certificate.

MZ: (Laughing) Can you tell me what your parents' names were?

RY: My father was George John Yarling and my mother was Mary Katherine Yarling, who was a… her maiden name was Woodmansee.

MZ: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

RY: I had one brother five and a half years younger than I am. His name is James Yarling and he's a retired college professor.

MZ: Where did he teach? Just curious.

RY: At the University of West Florida. When it was first formed in Pensacola, he was one of the original faculty and he's been there for 40 some years, but he's retired now as a professor emeritus.

MZ: Quite a status to obtain.

RY: Pardon me.

MZ: It's quite a status to be a professor emeritus, I believe.

RY: Yes, yes. Well they have uh, they read the poem about the Nautilus each year and they invited him to read the poem last year so (laughing), so he's still honored.

MZ: You know since you're born in 1921 you grew up during the Depression. Can you tell me a little bit what that's like for your family?

RY: Well my father was trying to start a dairy. He was a…. We were…. I was born on a farm and he was a dairy farmer. He didn't own the farm. He rented it but he tried to start it and of course it failed during the depression as everything else did. And he was unemployed for a time, but he found work in Indianapolis with a rubber company, a tire, tire company. And I… we were never hungry, but it was a bad time. I remember graphically that where I used to get toys for Christmas, that Christmas, the next Christmas after the depression in 1929, well yes. And I… they bought me, they bought… my present was a new pair of shoes, because as a growing boy you run out of shoes every so many months anyway. And so, they had to buy me the shoes whether it was Christmas or not. No toys, no and so I… that was the only privation that I recall (laughing) and then he did eventually be able to resume the dairy business and owned the dairy all through World War Two.

MZ: Did you go to school? Your education in junior high school and high school, did you spend it all there in Shelbyville?

RY: Yes, I graduated from Shelbyville High School in 1939.

MZ: And that would have made you about umm… would have made you about 18.

RY: On our graduation, yes.

MZ: So, what did you do when you graduated high school?

RY: I went to Indiana University the same year 1939 and was there as a junior in 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed which changed all our lives.

MZ: What did you want; what did you major in?

RY: I, I majored in uh…. I was in the College of Arts and Sciences and received my degree as a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences, but my major was government with a, with minors in economics and German, German language.

MZ: Why did you choose German?

RY: The war started in 1939, if you recall, in Europe and everybody was anticipating that we might be drawn into it, though we were making an effort not to be during those years but…. And a friend of mine, an older friend had been employed by the State Department and I thought that was an interesting

career to follow and so I…. He suggested that I take the arts and sciences with a major in government as a forerunner and a language minor as a forerunner to joining the State Department. He was an assistant consular secretary in one of the embassies somewhere and the travel involved and I thought that was a very interesting thing which I never did of course.

MZ: Now you graduated in 1942 from Indiana University, right?

RY: Well… by joining the Navy while I was still in school, I was able to complete my education in 1942. But my class was the class of 43 which had been four-years beginning in 39 and my normal, my class graduated in June of 1943, but by then I was already in the Navy. They never required an accelerated a… for instance, I went to school all year in 1942. They had three semesters instead of the usual two as a wartime footing, so I really finished my work in 1942 and then I reported for training in… naval training in April 1st of 1943.

MZ: Before that… I remember the last time we spoke you said that you had spent three years with the Indiana National Guard.

RY: Yes, the National Guard once the war started in Europe had a lot of problems in, in getting recruits, because (laughing) they weren't too interested in training for a war that we hoped we wouldn't be in at that time. And so, the director of the high school band recruited, who's also the officer in command in the National Guard band locally, recruited all of his older and taller musicians from high school into his band. And he urged me to join along with four or five of my companions in the band and so we joined the band as soon as we were old enough. And those were the three years that I spent in the National Guard and in the band section of 151st Infantry of the 38th division.

MZ: The 151st Infantry of the 38th Division.

RY: Yes, it was called the band section and...

MZ: You were in the Army National Guard. Why did you choose to go into the Navy for the war?

RY: Well my father was in the Navy in World War 1 and he tried to get me an appointment to the Naval Academy when I was in high school. And I went to a, a prep school in Annapolis, Maryland in an effort to try to pass the examination, but at that time you've got a nomination to take the exam through your local congressman and they always appointed three alternates to the one and I was an alternate. I didn't get to get to go to the Academy, but I was interested in the Navy and spent time that month in Annapolis and went to the Naval Academy ceremonies, so I was quite interested in the Navy.

MZ: You're were involved with the Navy during college that's the um… I think the last time you mentioned the V7 program.

RY: V7 program, yes. It permitted you, required in fact that you graduate. They just wanted college graduates, but they permitted you time to graduate. And of course, that took another year from Pearl Harbor.

MZ: Speaking of Peral Harbor, do you recall where you were when you had heard that the Japanese bombed it?

RY: Well I was in my fraternity at the Bloomington, Indiana campus of Indiana University and that afternoon we began to get radio reports of what had happened that what was in the morning in the Pearl Harbor. And the reports were quite sketchy as they came in, so we all sat around our big radio in our living room all that day and all that night listening to updates and what had happened and…. And of course, we were all vitally concerned about being drafted.

MZ: I can imagine. I mean how were the people? Were they scared, anxious?

RY: Well everybody was anxious because of… as the Japanese had done throughout the Pacific. Once they had bombed then they invaded, and everybody expected Hawaii to be invaded and the West Coast to be invaded. And they were concerned about the Japanese on the West Coast helping out. And it was just a time of uncertainty and of course everybody realized they were going to be either in the service or in preparation for aircraft carriers, aircraft manufacturers that sort of thing.

MZ: So, you recall when you actually… Oh no, no I'm sorry. So, after the V7 program you ended going to… um… let's see Midshipmen school in Columbia, right?

RY: Yes, at first it was a four-month course. The first month we were apprentice seaman to determine whether or not we had the mental and physical capacity to become officers in that Navy. And then after that one month we became midshipmen for three months and so it was a four-month program.

MZ: What do you recall you did during this period? I mean like the type of classes or what would they do to, to weed out the officers from the non-officers?

RY: Well of course they did some weeding out while we were apprentice seaman and not everybody from that class went on to become midshipmen, but most of the people that became midshipmen had already passed the preliminaries and so most of us graduated. There were very few that did not

graduate. The problem was that at that time they were preparing the Navy for invasions in both Europe and the Pacific areas. And we were told that 90 percent of our class would be assigned to Little Rock, Little Creek, I think it was called, Virginia where they were preparing invasion craft and be assigned to LSTs and that sort of thing. They told us only about ten percent of the class would go to what they called capital ships: destroyers and cruisers and submarines that sort of thing. So that was insulting for me at least. We worked very hard on our courses and to try to get into that 10%, which I was able to do. And so, I was assigned to a destroyer which was a brand-new, just constructed destroyer. And most of my class did go to Little Creek, Virginia.

MZ: You graduated in July. I got here July 27, 1943?

RY: Yes, I was commissioned as an ensign in the Naval Reserve at that time.

MZ: I guess you took some leave about that time too?

RY: I had two weeks leave and I married my high school sweetheart the next day and the two weeks were spent on our honeymoon. And she accompanied me to the New York City where I was ordered to report to the destroyer, which at that time had just finished its shakedown cruise and was in the Brooklyn Navy Yard for some tune-ups and changes in armament.

MZ: Just for the record, what was your wife's name again?

RY: My name?

MZ: Your wife's name.

RY: Oh, her maiden name was Helen Weyreter, W E Y R E T ER, which was a German name. Her mother in fact took the last liner from a visit to her relatives in Germany just before the war started in, in Germany. She was one of the last civilians to get out of there (laughing).

MZ: You reported to the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

RY: Yes, that's where I joined the ship.

MZ: And the ship… you said the ship just come back from a shakedown cruise?

RY: Yes, so I had been told and you know it's like buying a new car, there are always a few things that need fixed and so they're bringing it up to snuff so it could join the Pacific Fleet. And they also were changing the armaments. The destroyers at that time had 50 caliber machine guns, which we discovered

were not really heavy enough for effective aircraft cover, so they changed them to 20-millimeter cannons and that's what they were doing in the Navy yard chiefly at the time, I was told.

MZ: Just to be clear the ship was the USS Chauncey?

RY: That's right. Yes.

MZ: DD 667?

RY: Exactly.

MZ: Umm… when you first saw the ship, did you have any initial reaction? What did you think when you knew you're going to a destroyer?

RY: Well I was just delighted, because as I said just 10 percent of our class was assigned to warships and nobody wanted an invasion assignment, because there was a lot of long preparation and a few moments of terror (laughing) on the beaches and nobody particularly wanted that kind of duty. So, I was really delighted to be assigned to a brand-new destroyer. One of my classmates was assigned to a light cruiser and another one went to a destroyer escort, all of us in the top 10% of the class. In fact, I was in the top 2%. I remember that especially because the New York City Yacht Club invited the top 2% to a dinner before the night before graduation and that was, that was a class of about a thousand so that was 20 people. And we were permitted to wear our brand-new ensign uniforms even though we hadn't been sworn in yet to go to that dinner, so I was permitted to wear my brand-new uniform to that dinner the night before graduation as one of the top 2%.

MZ: Well being an ensign you're just getting to the ship, what kind of duty were you assigned?

RY: Well you know first time I saw that ship the… my class at Midshipmen school was taken to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to tour it. And there was one destroyer there in drydock. It would turn out to be the Chauncey, just a coincidence, that was the ship to which I alone of that whole class was assigned. And so, I…I noticed the ship at that time and admired it and wondered what all those antennas were on the mast, because we weren't told about radar in Midshipmen school. It was still top secret, so I asked what those were and they said it was something to do with the radio. They lied in other words (laughing) and so eventually I became the radar officer. Which is a strange thing to happen. But when I first came to the ship, they had a full complement of 20 officers. I didn't even have a bunk in officers' country. I just sleep in the chief petty officers' dormitory. And I had no particular assignment and they didn't know why I was there, not knowing at the time that the radar officer was going to be transferred as soon as we hit Pearl

Harbor and that's what happened. So, I took his place even though I had no training whatsoever in radar or radio, but fortunately the Navy's run by Chief Petty Officers, who do know what they're doing (laughing) and then they'll admit that of course that officers were rather unnecessary (laughing). In any event I found out a lot about it in the interim afterwards.

MZ: Now you ended up leaving the Brooklyn Navy. I got here you go through the Panama Canal to Pearl Harbor, right?

RY: We first went to Norfolk, Virginia and up to that point we really didn't know where we were going, but we joined the rest of our squadron, Squadron 48 of nine ships in Norfolk. We assembled there and discovered that we were to escort a brand-new, small carrier called the USS Cowpens to Pearl Harbor. And so, we maneuvered there in Norfolk for a couple of weeks with that carrier and then we left for the Panama Canal with the carrier and went to Pearl Harbor.

MZ: Do you remember any of the other destroyers?

RY: Yes. Well we had annual reunions and every year until the last few years when there weren't enough people left to attend. And so yes, we knew them and their crew members very well after the war more than during the war. So, as I say there were nine of us divided into two divisions. The flagship was called the USS Erben, E R B E N, and the other eight ships. One of the ships is still in existence; the USS Kidd which was destroyer 661 is, is in the northern Mississippi River at Baton Rouge. It is part of a World War memorial and it's in its World War Two configuration and paint, and I visited several times. It's kept up and it's a very interesting exhibit.

MZ: You said that was destroyer Squadron 48?

RY: Yes.

MZ: Generally, your, your squadron what were its duties?

RY: Well in World War Two it was obvious at the beginning that they needed a brand-new destroyer that was fast enough to keep up with our aircraft carriers, because they're the ones that needed the destroyers' protection against submarines and surface warfare as well as aircraft, Japanese aircraft. And, and so they built 175 of the Fletcher class destroyers in World War Two and this was one of those. It was designed to be fast enough to keep up with the carriers, so mostly what we did was screen for carrier task forces. We also bombarded the islands preparing them for invasion, as we island hopped across the Pacific. And we bombard the Japanese mainland twice at the end of the war, close to the end of the war.

MZ: But you also did like uh… screening and picket duty things like that?

RY: Yes, yes. Well picket duty in itself was a part of our screening duty around an island instead of around a task force, but generally, we mostly just screened the cruisers and the battleships and the aircraft carriers in the center of formation, as we steamed along. And the destroyers made a circle all the way around, to guard against submarines and aircraft and a…. well we didn't have any surface action at that time.

MZ: Previously you mentioned that you went through the Panama Canal. Any thoughts about the canal?

RY: Well it's an amazing engineering feat to see and the lock system was fascinating but, but I think our thoughts were on what was waiting for us on the other side, not so much about the canal itself (laughing).

MZ: So, up till the point you get to Hawaii, it really sounds like you really don't have any duty.

RY: No, I'll tell you that I had various duties. First, they assigned me to be what they called the assistant navigation officer; a post that didn't even exist, but we were getting charts for… we didn't know where we were going at first. And we had charts provided to us for all over the world and those charts showed every, every buoy, every navigation aid and they were constantly changing because sandbars and shoals would change, you know, and change different kinds of navigational aids. And so, we'd get corrections every day, so I was in charge of seeing that those corrections were made on all these charts and that was my first duty. And then as we left for Pearl Harbor, they didn't know what to do with me.

I still didn't have any place to sleep (laughing), so they assigned me to the gunnery department temporarily and I stood watches as, as the officer on the five-inch cannon directory, which was a metal box on top of the bridge that controlled all five of our cannons, 5-inch, thirty-eight cannons. And I spent four hours up there not, not during General Quarters or combat, but in regular four-hour watches. Right on top of the bridge; it was a fascinating place to ride in the bright sun. And the only time we were ever called on to do anything… the commander of the squadron would like to keep us alert. Only one gun was kept on ready. I only had one gun to control and one gun was manned doing those regular watches, not on combat watches. And he would fire a gun from… have a gun fired from the flagship and every other destroyer was then required to shoot at that burst of shrapnel and, and you tried to get as close to it as you could and fire as quickly as you could, to be sure you were ready to operate. So, the one … it happened one time when I was on watch on the way to Pearl Harbor. And our gun was the first one to fire and it was close enough to receive a well done from the squadron commander, which was passed on

to me and onto my gun crew. So that was the only excitement (laughing) I ever had in that particular post. But then when I got to Pearl Harbor there was a directive to all arriving destroyers to send two officers for training as fighter directors, meaning that we were trying to control combat air patrol if assigned to our ship. And they picked the two most junior and the officers they thought they could get along without. And picked me as the most junior officer aboard with no assignment and also an assistant engineering officer, and they sent the two of us to a place called Camp Catlin, which was in the hills above Honolulu. And I was there for a month learning the radio language and the use of radar and directing combat air patrols. Then when I came back to the ship after that month, the radar officer had been, was being transferred and they just… I automatically took his place and his bunk.

MZ: Since you never did anything with radar before, how did your training proceed?

RY: I was also the radio officer which I didn't know anything about either. I knew how to turn the radio to listen to it but that was about it.

MZ: Did you have both those duties, radar officer and radio officer?

RY: Yes. Well my title was assistant communications officer. The communications department-controlled radio and radar and so since I took the radio and radar officer's place, they referred, kept referring to me. And I was in charge of their training and grading their tests, when they were striking to be raised and great. But all this was really done via a chief petty officer. I didn't really have to do anything. As time went on, I learned the Morse Code and the various semaphore signals and all those things that a signalman were part of our communication support also, so I just learned as I went along. Plus, plus I've had that month's training in radar at Camp Catlin.

MZ: Do you remember the, the names of some of the chief petty officers that were friends?

RY: I don't remember any of them. I think I probably (laughing) suppressed them, because they knew so much more about it than I did. I think they just tolerated the officers, especially junior officers right out of college and Midshipmen school (laughing). I think they thought they could get along without us and it did sort of alarm me that these grizzled seamen would have to salute me and I was what by that time 21 years old and looked younger than that. So, no, I was I was quite worried (laughing) about the chief petty officers. I remember all our officers, because we were quite close during the war, but after the war our reunions of our ship of the nine ships had always had more officer attendance than any other ship. Some of the ships never had their officers attend the reunions and we had all twenty of us. The original

twenty came in the early days. Of course, they started dying after a while and I'm the last survivor of the first original twenty

MZ: How many, how many men were on the ship altogether?

RY: There were twenty officers and three hundred and something just slightly over three hundred crew members, enlisted members. So, there were probably three hundred thirty, forty people there all together on a ship that was about that long. It's about one person per foot (laughing).

MZ: Well it's a lot of men on a small ship. Just as a side note as far as eating food, how was it?

RY: Well it was quite good. I…. Although I had to sleep in the chiefs' quarters at first, I ate in the officer's wardroom. And the officers had to contribute an amount each month toward the officers' mess, so we ate the same food as the crew ate, except we supplemented that with our own money and our own supplies. And the food was excellent. It was served on tablecloths with napkins and napkin rings and china. You know it wasn't, it wasn't like the troops in the mud in the foxholes (laughing) and the food was… I mean everything was artificial of course. We didn't have fresh milk; it was powdered. We didn't have fresh eggs; they were powdered, and we didn't have the.… We had the meat of the area we were in. For instance, once we got near Australia, we ate nothing but mutton. That's all we could get, so we looked forward to a beef steak as time went on. But no, the food was… I had no complaint about the food. In fact, later my second tour of duty during the war I was as an officer of the deck. Underway I was in charge of the ship for my four-hour watch in that second year. And one of the things I did was, if there was a meal served during my watch, I'd have it delivered to me right from the crews' mess to the bridge. And I would judge the food and if there was some criticism, I would make it. And the food was quite good. I ate the crew's food every time I was on watch. Most of the officers of the deck did that but not all.

MZ: Is there any time you didn't think it was up to par?

RY: No. I made a point of spying on the quartermaster just to get in line and get it and not telling him it was for the officer of the deck, in fear that they might give me a special plate (laughing). And once in a while I would think that it wasn't seasoned just to my taste and I might make a comment but rarely. Usually it was quite good. I don't think… there were very few complaints about the food before or after the war.

MZ: Being recently married. I imagine you probably did a lot of writing.

RY: I did yes. I wrote what we called email then if you may recall… and we sent letters. And one of the collateral duties of all junior officers aboard… we spent part of everyday sitting at the wardroom table censoring mail. Mail could not go out of the ship unless it was censored by an officer and a stamp and his initials put on the envelope, so I spent… people were writing letters. The crew of course was 300 plus people with sweethearts, wives and parents at home, who wrote prodigious amounts of letters *unintelligible* that couldn't. We were chiefly guarding against their telling where the ship was or where it was going. You know anything that might give comfort to the enemy. And the endearments and that sort of thing were okay. We tried not to read those too carefully but, but that was one of our daily duties. I spent hours and hours on censoring mail and each officers' mail had to be censored by another officer.

MZ: And the captain? The same standard for him?

RY: We were never given the captain's correspondence. The executive officer probably signed off on that or his yeoman probably did it (laughing). No, I don't recall it. He had to worry about that (laughing).

MZ: Do you remember your captains' names?

RY: There were three of them as we started the war. The first one was a full commander. I hardly knew him. He didn't know who I was. He looked at me passing on the passageways and looked puzzled like who's that. Is that a… because I had no assignment. He didn't know who I was or why I was there and neither did I. And he was a full commander, where the other two were lieutenant commanders. And he was in retirement age and they just put him in there to take new destroyers out on their shakes down cruisers and get them ready for combat and then he'd go back to another ship, so I didn't really know him very well. The next one was a lieutenant commander named Conwell and the final, final one was another lieutenant commander, who was an admiral son and so those three were the captains I served under.

MZ: Which one was the longest? Was it Lieutenant Commander Conwell?

RY: I would think so, yes. He was from Pearl Harbor on all through 1943 and 1944 and the captain… the last captain came beginning of 1945.

MZ: What, what kind of officer was Lieutenant Commander Conwell?

RY: I didn't know him that well. At that time my, my combat station was in the Combat Information Center, while the captains were always on the bridge in combat, so we ate with him in the wardroom,

but I didn't have a whole lot of contact with him. But he… the crew liked him and the officers thought he was fair and I, everybody admired him. There was no conflict at all. Preston Bret Haines, the last captain, however, was a sort of…, I don't know. He was apparently wanting to become an admiral himself since his father was one and he, he was more of a marionette than captain Conwell was. And I don't know if the officers liked him as much, but the crew liked him. He'd stop and talk to crew members where some captains didn't bother and he'd ask him about their families and they liked that, naturally. And I saw some of the things they wrote, you know, in their letters and they were very pleased with their captain, Haines. Where the officers… if any officer did anything he didn't like while they were on watch, the officers of the deck, which I was by the time, he took over, a… he would in-effect put them under arrest. He'd send them to their staterooms, their cabins and relieve them of duty and…. It had happened to every office of the deck except me in the beginning. And I got along well, okay for a long time until one day we got off station a little bit and the commander of the squadron happened to notice, and he called on the radio and instructed that we resume our exact position. And I was sent to my room (laughing) finally, so that happened. And no other captain…; Captain Conwell never did that.

MZ: So, part of the duties of an officer of the deck is to make sure the ship is on station?

RY: Yes, well the officer of the deck is under the captain, of course; always under the captain. And is in total charge of the ship, everything that happens on it during his watch including the meals and the changes in the watch and a…, keeping the ship on station and responding to any notices, any flag signals from the flagship. And keeping the captain informed of course of any changes and writing the log for that four hours. And of course, the ship kept a history of everything it did for four hours at a time and signed by officer the deck.

MZ: After Pearl Harbor after where did the Chauncey go?

RY: Well you mean… of course it didn't exist at the time of Pearl…. (*Talking over each other*) Oh, you mean after we arrived at Pearl Harbor. Oh, they went to Wake Island. Wake Island had been taken by the Japanese and it was the island closest to the Hawaiian Islands and they sent a carrier task force up there to a…. We had not yet tried to take Wake Island back, but we did eventually. But then we were just bombing their installations and some of their… some airfields and other islands and that's what they did while I was in training.

MZ: So, umm… did the Chauncey also bombard the island?

RY: No, we didn't. I don't think they bombarded Wake Island. I think they just escorted the carrier formation. I don't recall. I know… well I wasn't there of course, but I don't think they bombarded Wake Island on that occasion.

MZ: Oh, so you didn't go with them?

RY: No, I was at Camp Catlin during that month.

MZ: Oh, so let's see um… I know you mentioned Tarawa the last time we spoke?

RY: That was our next operation. The Gilbert Islands after, after Wake Island. Tarawa and the Gilbert Islands, the Marshalls and Maduro before we went on to the Marianas. We did bombard Tarawa.

MZ: What was that like?

RY: Well we were… our guns… of course we're talking about using our five cannons, the anti-aircraft guns were not involved, and they would shoot far enough that we'd be well offshore, but we'd still be in the range of Japanese artillery, so we had to be careful of that. And we were directed as to where to fire by spotters on the ground. And later when we got air superiority over these islands, we'd have spotter planes that would tell us where we were shooting and where to shoot and whether we're over or under or one side or the other and correct our firing. It was loud; we didn't wear ear protectors in those days laughing). They do today because those aircraft carriers because the jets make so much noise. They have to wear those or they would lose their hearing quickly. Back then we didn't do that. I've always been convinced that the fact that I don't hear well today besides my age is because of all those guns going off, but I'm not sure that's true.

MZ: That's a lot of loud noise for you to take.

RY: And in those days also I was in the Combat Information Center which is a location below deck and was somewhat protected from the sound.

MZ: The Combat Information Center was your general quarter station is that correct?

RY: The first half of… my first year of service that was my regular watch and my general quarters station was the Combat Information Center, yeah. In the latter part of the war I was on the bridge during general quarters and during my regular watch.

MZ: You mentioned last time that you were going to shore on Tarawa one day.

RY: Yes, which to my dismay because first there was a sniper. They had a long breakwater and there was a sniper, a Japanese sniper in that breakwater that kept shooting at our boats, as we came in from… our small boats. Well we couldn't take a destroyer into the shore. We had to come in by small boats, so that was the first interesting thing. And then when we were there the, the bodies of American deceased were intense and there were graves registration people taking care of them, treated with great respect. And… but the Japanese bodies were just stacked up like cordwood on the beach, about 4 feet high. Limbs and sometimes body parts but the whole body frequently, still in uniform mostly and it was just a horrendous sight. As I understand it, there was that many deaths occurring every day and that we were causing some of them by our bombardment. I assume we were; we never knew. You know navy warfare is sort of antiseptic. You don't really see the, the blood or hear the screams because you're far away… and so it's… so it's kind of like bombing from an aircraft you don't really know what's happening on the ground.

MZ: Do you recall going ashore at Tarawa back then?

RY: Yes. I did. I'll tell you I went ashore more often than any other officer, because as the junior officer in the communications department they needed an officer to sign off on classified mail. They couldn't give it to an enlisted man, so an officer had to go in and sign for it. And so, as the junior officer, you know, they dumped all the things they didn't want to do and so I'd go ashore. I went to shore almost everywhere we went; that's the very first thing, in the very first boat to pick up the mail. And so, I went ashore frequently everywhere we arrived. I remember when we invaded the Philippines, I was ashore in a town called Tacloban in Leyte Gulf. I was the very first person on our ship to go ashore.

MZ: You mentioned Kwajalein I think at some point. Kwajalein Atoll?

RY: Yes.

MZ: I'm guessing your ship just must have stopped there for re-supply, or….

RY: Well that was one of the ships in the islands that we were recovering from the Japanese. I don't recall that one especially. Who was it? I can't remember which grounding group that Kwajalein was in.

MZ: The Marshals?

RY: It could have been the Marshals, yes.

MZ: You go to a… I guess New Guinea. Then like you just said you were retrieving classified mail.

RY: Yes, I went ashore there to get the mail and the ship left me. They were called away as an emergency. And I saw the communication that says left an officer and the boat crew. All of us were there. And please return by air to, I think, where they were headed, Manus Island, I think. So, I was there for two or three days until we could get a plane to where they were. And that was interesting also because on New Guinea was where my old unit from the band section *unintelligible* and the commanding officer, who now where I was a bird first class in his organization, I was his superior as an ensign. He was a chief warrant officer in charge of the band, so he had to salute me. He thought that was funny. I did too (laughing).

MZ: What a coincidence.

RY: (laughing) I know. So, I invited them out to the ship to get some Navy food. They liked that better than what they were eating.

MZ: Do you remember his name?

RY: Yeah, Martin Schultz was director of the band and also the chief warrant officer in charge of the National Guard band. He was the head of the music department at Shelbyville High School.

MZ: Wow just to run into somebody from Shelbyville all the way out there.

RY: Well the whole band was mostly from that area and I invited not just him, but his sergeants also came out that I knew, who were also my superiors at one time, ha, ha, so we had a great, great reunion. On the ship we had steak that day. They said they haven't had beef for a long time. I don't know where we got it either, but that was early though in the war.

MZ: I guess I didn't ask you before, but if you were in the band, what instrument did you play?

RY: It's a baritone horn. I like to call it a euphonium, because it has a better ring to it, to me. But anyway, euphonium or baritone horn. I played it in the National Guard band, the high school band, my university band and a 4-h club band. So, I was in four bands in those days.

MZ: Euphonium. What does that look like?

RY: Well in… *The Music Man,* the seventy-six trombones, the theme song, in the lyrics to that they referred to a double bell euphonium and that's one of the instruments that's passing by in the parade. And it had literally a large bell and a small bell and a valve that would transfer from one bell to the other. One was more muted than the other. And it… it looked like a tuba, a small upright bass but much

smaller. It is the same shape but much smaller, but it did have… my particular instrument, which I still own does have two bells.

MZ: Umm, I'm just curious but, I mean most of these soldiers, umm, do they make it back after the war? I mean the band members that you knew?

RY: Uh… as far as I know. I don't really know what their history was the…. The 38th division was a part of the troop formation that, that invaded the Philippines. And in fact, they took the name of the Avengers of Bataan after the war. And I'm sure there were casualties with that. The band section people were not usually on the front line, sometimes they were but as runners or messages. But I don't know were there any casualties. If there were, I didn't hear about them.

MZ: Was it in New Guinea or was it at Manus that the ship left you behind?

RY: It went from New Guinea to Manus and that's where I had to fly to pick it up again. And whenever I could get the flight and my boat crew also had to come with me.

MZ: Oh, I'm sorry you mentioned another story last time about at Manus. I guess you go ashore again and get lost.

RY: Well Manus was this huge Lagoon with reefs all around it and there were almost like a hundred ships there. There was no limit to how many ships could be anchored in that lagoon, so it was a long way to get the mail and it was difficult to…. If we didn't remember exactly where your ship was or it started to get dark, it was hard to find the ship and I know one time we got totally lost. I relied on the bosun's mate that operated the boat to know where we were, but of course it was my responsibility as the only officer aboard and I… we had to stop two different places on the way to ask directions (laughing), which was kind of embarrassing.

MZ: (Laughing) Did you get some curious looks for asking?

RY: (Laughing) Well they thought that was funny. You know, you don't know where you are, but it was getting dark. We couldn't tell. And then one ship looked like a whole other, another one when you were down on the surface looking up these high prows.

MZ: Ah, you eventually got back?

RY: Oh, yes. We got back.

MZ: Um… let's see about your… a…. Marianas operations. Oh, okay we talked a little bit about the, the aviators. They were flying back when it was dark.

RY: Um-hmm.

MZ: I'm thinking it's about a floating sea. They're coming back and Admiral Mitscher turns on the lights?

RY: First time. We, we made a point of never showing any kind of light. You can never smoke on deck or light a match for instance, in case the submarine had it in its telescope during darkness. And of course, our night vision was, was protected. All the passageways had red lights; no white lights, so when you walked out on deck you could see and there were no lights ever shown. Until that one night the planes were coming back. It was a… it was dark. And they didn't… they were instructed to land on any carrier they could find; they didn't have to go back to their own carrier. And to be sure that they could find the task force because they were all low on fuel, a lot of them didn't make it, and so that was the order given. It's the first time I ever saw our lights turned on during the whole war. And all those lights and searchlights also, we put them in the sky, so they could see the formation from very miles, many miles away. We didn't even know whether our searchlights worked or not (laughing). There was no occasion to ever use them.

MZ: Did you see any planes ditch or did you….?

RY: Oh yes, and the stars that picked up the pilots, picked up a number of pilots during the war. The Japanese well they wouldn't permit themselves to be picked up. They either killed themselves or, or invited us to kill them by shooting at us with their handguns. I know… we never took a live Japanese air crewman aboard, but our pilots we picked up a number of them.

MZ: Um… so I guess you must have seen some Japanese fliers in the waters sometimes?

RY: We did, yes, a number of times. Some… often they were dead and we just picked them up and searched them for any documentation we wanted to send over to intelligence headquarters. And they often had pictures of their family just like our airmen would do. And, and we would more or less summarily bury them by dumping them overboard. I think the captain said a few words each time one was burned at sea.

MZ: So that would, I think, would have been the invasion of Saipan, right? The same time.

RY: It's part of the Marianas. We were in Guam, Tinian and Saipan those three and we bombarded Saipan as I recalled. I think although it was Tinian. I don't remember, because I was still in the Combat Information Center. I don't know who we were shooting at down there.

MZ: And being in there you just, you just hear the roar of the guns and that's it. Never actually…

RY: Well they were muted below deck, because they weren't loud at all. You could… when a whole battery fired all five cannons you could feel the vibration, but we were pretty well protected from the sights and sounds of warfare in the Combat Information Center.

MZ: How did the crew work as a whole in unison during times like this?

RY: We had what I consider to be a very happy crew and it was borne out in our reunions later. They had very few complaints about anything. It was just a very close-knit crew unlike some of the other ships in the squadron. We really had no health problems that I recall. Once in a while I remember we found… homosexuality of course was not tolerated in the service in those days unlike today. And… we caught two crewmen under one of the gun-covers in intimate embrace and I know they were discharged or confined. I don't know what happened to them after they left the ship.

Once in a while a crewman would be late coming back from leave and when we left…. When we came back one time for overhaul after the typhoon damaged in December of 1944 we came back to Alameda near San Francisco. And left, I think I probably told you, I had the deck that morning as officer of the deck and the first thing I did was check the sentries early in the morning. I discovered one of our boats was missing, because three or four crewmen took that boat to escape going back to war (laughing). And I discovered the boat was missing and I had to wake the captain up which was unhappy. He was unhappy, so was I. And so, things like that happened, but generally speaking the crew was… and we had toward the end of the war we carried beer. *Unintelligible*. Ships did not have alcohol or permit the use of alcohol. No one used that is, but we kept beer locked up and we'd come to some coral atoll and they would have a beer party on a beach. We take the beer to a beach and everybody, everyman got two cans and, and some of them bartered their two cans for money and some people had a lot more than two cans, so it was a drunken kind of a thing after a while. So, we a… we did have alcohol to that extent, but we… the crew was entertained and things like that. There was no place to have a really liberty port, because we didn't go to any big cities once we were outside of Honolulu. There was no place to go, so we had to make our own parties on the beach, some sandbar somewhere with our beer and that was it.

MZ: These sailors that took one of the uh… took one of the what was it again, a lifeboat?

RY: Well they were called whaleboats, but yeah, they were small motor boats. The captain's gig was one of them and we had two of them. They were identical except the captain's gig was painted better and it had a little trim on it (laughing). They were the same boats and they took one of those. I don't remember whether it was the captain's or the other one but anyway they took it. They found the boat abandoned on shore. And by the time we left, we were on our way out that morning, and so we didn't wait to find out what happened to them. We were told they caught them and… but we had to replace the boat when we got to Pearl Harbor again. It wasn't the same boat.

MZ: So, they were trying to just get out of the war?

RY: And they did (laughing). They were successful. I don't know where they sent them, back to war, I'm sure. They probably went to the brig somewhere.

MZ: Let's see you mentioned the last time that you had gone through both of Halsey's typhoon.

RY: Well… the second typhoon I don't know whether we were under Halsey's command at that time or not. It was during the time we were preparing for the Okinawa invasion and we weren't with a task force at that time. We were in a port in one of those island ports on lagoons and we received a notice that a typhoon was coming our way. And ships tried to sail far away from land masses as possible during typhoons and away from each other, so we were all instructed to leave port and to go out to sea and meet the typhoon at sea. And we did, but we didn't go right through the center of it like Halsey took us. It wasn't as bad. The typhoon was just as strong, but we were just on the edge. We didn't go through the middle of it like Halsey had us do. So that was… but I don't recall it. He was in command of the force. In fact, I don't know that anyone…. we were with a task group, but then we were in our port waiting to be assigned. We were told to leave, to flee in other words.

MZ: So that was the second one. What about the first one?

RY: The first one was called Halsey's Typhoon, because he was covering the invasion of Luzon in the Philippines. And he didn't want to take his task force too far from the shore, because his planes were crucial to the protection of the troops on land. So rather than to flee the typhoon, he just went right through the middle of it. And he was court-martialed and he and his weather officer for that and they received not punishment but reprimands and he still retained commanded of the fleet even after that. But three destroyers capsized during that. One was our own class, Fletcher class, with major loss of life And of course in a typhoon they couldn't save the crew. It had waves, waves as high as 60 feet or so, you

know. They just tower above the ship and you go up and come back down the other side like a roller coaster. It was the only time in the war I felt frightened (laughing).

MZ: I was going to ask. Yeah, I can imagine. I mean you don't have any control of that point.

RY: Once you get up on top and you go over the top your screws are out of the water and the rudders. You have no steering control and you hope you come down straight and not sideways, because sideways you turn right over. And so, at that crucial point, we're going down the other side, it's just a moment of terror (laughing). And of course, nothing happened to us. Oh, we had damage in both typhoons but not a lot.

MZ: Where did you go for repair?

RY: Well after the second typhoon it was just… they had what they called destroyer tenders and ports that had repair facilities, Machinist's Mates and, and you'd go alongside a destroyer tender and they would take care of minor repairs. The first one we went clear back to San Francisco. We had a lot more damage then. The whole Task Force had damage of one sort or another.

MX: Yeah, I remember you mentioned going back to San Francisco. Uh, umm… was that New Year's Eve?

RY: New Year's Eve of 1945; the beginning of 1945. There was a deep fog. I didn't even see the bridge. We knew it was there because of my radar (laughing).

MZ: (Laughing).

RY: As soon as we got inside of San Francisco Bay we anchored, because you couldn't go on. It was just dense; you couldn't see at all and woke up the next morning it was worse. We were anchored right beside the island of Alcatraz (laughing) that we knew was there by the radar, but we didn't know what it was. But we could have told by looking at the chart but… and then we went on to Alameda the next day and we were there for a month. The first January; all of January 1945.

MZ: Did you get a chance to go to San Francisco?

RY: Oh yes. We a, we had two each, each half of the watch had two weeks leave, so I went home first. Conceived my firstborn child (laughing). And then I brought my wife back to San Francisco and we didn't, couldn't stay on the ship. It was in a dry dock and so we had accommodations that you rented, an apartment or in my case we stayed in a hotel in San Francisco. You could only stay in a hotel in those days for three nights. You had to move because they were so booked up. And so, every three nights we

go from one hotel to another in the two weeks she was there. So yeah, I'd gone to San Francisco every day from Alameda. I didn't stay in Alameda.

MZ: So, after January of 1945 the ship, the ship sails for a… back to the Pacific. Do you recall where you go?

RY: Uh… what was happening was they were preparing for Iwo Jima at the time we were in San Francisco. And when we came back, we were not part of that operation, because we had not trained for Iwo Jima. I think it was after we came back, but we weren't involved in it. So, our next preparation was for Okinawa. And a… we were training with a fast carrier task force after that, preparing for Okinawa. And I think it was during that period that the second typhoon…. We fled the second typhon.

MZ: Okay. So, at Okinawa a… do you, do you recall that the Chauncey bombards the island?

RY: No, I don't recall we did. I don't think we did; I can't remember. I don't believe we did, because we were with the fast carrier task force during that time. And, and I'm sure I told you, we were assigned to picket duty halfway between the task force and the Japanese mainland, to give early warning of approaching aircraft. And we did that every day.

MZ: Okay, right. It's picket duty off of Okinawa.

RY: Well it wasn't off Okinawa. Actually, it was between the air, carrier task force and the Japanese mainland. They had destroyer pickets all around Okinawa. We were not one of those and they had more casualties than they did on land in those days. A lot of those destroyers were damaged or sunk, but that was, that was called picket duty. Our squadron was sent out halfway to Japan on the mainland and because they were referred to pickets also. The idea being that the planes would fly over us on the way to Okinawa and we would count them and determine what kind they were and how high and how fast they were flying and let them know back what was what was coming. And of course, sometimes if they were low on fuel, they'd attack us instead of going on to Okinawa (laughing). So that was interesting duty for a long time and the Okinawa campaign lasted for almost three months. They started first of April and ended it toward the end of June after, after the middle of June.

MZ: You mentioned the last time that you had seen the USS Franklin get hit?

RY: Yes. That was also in that time between our coming back and the beginning of the Okinawa campaign. Yeah, we were with the Franklin when she was hit, bombed and burned all in one night. Just really bright, so that the destroyers just kept circling the area to keep submarines away, because you

could see the flames for miles and miles away. And the destroyers also were picking crewmen up out of the water and off the sides of the ship.

MZ: And the Chauncey took apart in that too?

RY: Yes, yes.

MZ: Well how many men do you figured you must of picked up?

RY: Well we didn't pick up any. One of the destroyers actually went in under the fantail of the burning carrier and the crewmen walked from the carrier onto the destroyer to climb down off the decks. I forget the name of that destroyer. Uh... other destroyers were nearby because the crew were jumping off the deck into the water; they were abandoning ship. They didn't abandon…. they came back though. The ship went on and even under its own power. Later they got, they got steam up. They were able to go on one engine. They were able to limp back to Pearl Harbor, but they were being towed by a carrier, by a cruiser from them. See they were bombing the first couple of days and the destroyers weren't with them to protect them from submarines. Submarines didn't get to them. These were bombs dropped from aircraft that did them in. The hangar deck and the flight deck were both just sheets of flames. The only places were in the bow and the stern that's where they jumped off the bow or jumped off the stern to get off the ship, because of it was burning from stem to stern it almost.

MZ: And did you, did you actually see the plane hit the ship?

RY: No, no. We weren't, we weren't close enough to be involved in that. But once it happened you could see that burning carrier from anywhere on the whole part of the ocean.

MZ: Yeah, I've seen pictures; it's pretty uh... drastic.

RY: Well aircraft carriers are just floating bombs anyway, you know; they carry all that gasoline and munitions and… and it's just a very vulnerable ship.

MZ: Uh, that is when the Kidd was hit. Isn't it?

RY: What? What?

MZ: The USS kids is hit about the same time the other destroyers.

RY: It was hit during Okinawa in April, I think, during the Okinawa campaign.

MZ: Yeah, April. Uh…

RY: Mid-April as I recall. It was right along… we were right alongside it when it was hit.

MZ: Did, did you see the plane?

RY: it was coming from the far side. One of the other destroyers in our squad, it was called the USS Black. It came over the Black and went into the side, the far side of the Kidd from where we were. We couldn't shoot at it because we'd be shooting right directly towards the Kidd. And the Black couldn't shoot at it once it crossed the Black, because it was between the Black and that plane was between the Black and the Kidd. And it was blazing. It was on fire and crashing when it hit the side of the ship into one, into one of the fire rooms that killed 38 men. Right beside us we could see the flames of the explosion and I was stationed on the bridge at that, during that part of the war, so I saw it myself. It was and twice that many were injured and a third of them were killed instantly.

MZ: You mentioned earlier that you bombarded the Japanese mainland at least a couple of times.

RY: Twice after… after Okinawa was… subdued, we were training for the Japanese invasion, which no one was looking forward to, because the Japanese just never surrendered, you know. There was going to be millions of people died on both sides, house-to-house. And… so, they started with… the Japanese fleet was of no danger by that time and so we a… sent our battleships to the Japanese mainland and we bombarded two steel producing cities. I think I told you one was Kamaishi and the second was Hamamatsu.

MZ: Hamamatsu, right. This was about July 1945, so the war is really coming to an end there.

RY: On the way back is when we were received… I think I told you that, we receive a notice from the British Admiral that was commanding our task force that the war had ended. And that was on the way back from that bombing Hamamatsu, our second bombardment.

MZ: What was the first bombardment?

RY: Kamaishi. These are both Japanese cities that had steel plants, steel producing plants. And the battleships and cruisers bombarded the plants and the destroyers bombarded port facilities; you know what that does to your sound system (laughing).

MZ: (Laughing) I think it'll be okay. You already mentioned a British Admiral. That was odd I thought that he was in charge of the destroyer squadron.

RY: By wars end, of course the war had ended in Europe and the British… whole British fleet, Australian and Canadian and British ships were assigned to the Pacific War. And they took turns in commanding the task forces. Half the time an American admiral would command and the next time a British admiral. This particular bombardment the British Admiral happened to be in command. And I told you, he gave the signal that they should issue their… an extra portion of grog to the British seamen, because they had this watered-down rum drink they drank, they were issued every day. And of course, American ships didn't carry alcohol. I mean they didn't issue alcohol. So, when he ordered that to be done, we had to change the flag hoist to explain that applied only to British ships (laughing). We were disappointed of course (laughing).

MZ: What about Truk. The ship never goes to Turk Island?

RY: You know we bombarded it. Truk was just a harbor I'm told, which is full of wrecked Japanese shipping and it was a major naval base. It was never invaded during the whole war, because it was, it was almost impregnable and nobody wanted to do it. Nobody really wanted it. We just wanted to keep it from, from being a staging point for air attacks.

MZ: Right.

RY: So, it was bombed frequently. It really was ineffective by the wars end. There was no reason to invade it.

MZ: It was probably one of those islands that just was by-passed, well I mean bombed but that was it.

RY: Yeah, uh huh.

MZ: Guadalcanal?

RY: That all had been subdued before I got out there, but we went there as one of our staging areas early in the war. It was the first officer's club outside of, of Pearl Harbor that I joined called the Iron Bottom Bank Club. And I think I told you back then that we were so irate at the Japanese Empire that in the urinals they had painted pictures of the emperor, the premier and some of the admirals and generals on the back of the urinals (laughing). I thought that was funny.

MZ: That's very clever.

RY: That was in Guadalcanal. We were just there briefly. We didn't really stay there. I didn't have anything to do with its liberation and it happened long before we got there.

MZ: Let's see I have Leyte Gulf here. Umm... did the Chauncey help in bombarding at Leyte Gulf?

RY: No, we… that was a one time in the war when rather than being assigned to the fast carrier task forces, we were assigned to the invasion fleet. We a… we screened not the aircraft carriers but the troop ships. So, we were in Leyte Gulf as the invasion took place. An invasion that really wasn't strongly opposed at the beginning and the opposition happened later. They tried to take the island back, but there were some air attack activity during that time, because the Japanese had air bases all through the Philippines. But other than that, it was a pretty quiet invasion as far as we were concerned. Having been present in Leyte Gulf when the invasion commenced, however, we were awarded the Philippine Liberation Medal by the Philippine government with one star on it. One star indicating we were there as part of the invasion fleet. If you're actually in combat you got two stars, but we weren't in combat.

MZ: What other decorations did you receive during the war?

RY: That's the only foreign decoration. The others, I told you I think, we had seven battle stars awarded and, and what was called the Marianas Turkey Shoot, which was a preface to invasion of the Mariana Islands. There was a three-day air war and they awarded four medals to our ship during that time. The captain, received a Silver Star; and the chief engineer, a Bronze Star; and the gunnery officer and the anti-aircraft gunnery officer, received Bronze Stars. But other than that, that's all the special medals in wartime.

MZ: Umm… we talked about the British admiral. Umm… do you recall where you were when you heard that…, well two questions: do you, do you recall where you were when you heard that the atomic bomb had been dropped?

RY: Well I'm trying to think of where that was. It was… it had to be not… we probably were close to the time we were bombarding Hamamatsu, because we dropped those bombs within just a few days of each other, didn't we? And that was immediately before the end of the war. They announced the end of the war as we were returning, so it had to be about the time we were bombarding Hamamatsu. I never thought about that, but it almost had to be. Well maybe we caused them to surrender not the bombs at all, you see (laughing). That was the second time Hamamatsu had been bombarded. They'd already knocked out most of the harbor facilities and the steel plant before we got there.

MZ: Do you remember where you were. Well it would have only been a few days difference but when you heard that the war was over?

RY: That was when the British admiral announced it, on the way, about halfway back from Hamamatsu to Okinawa.

MZ: Was it hard to believe?

RY: Well it was. I'm not sure we even knew about the atomic bomb at that point, about their dropping I mean. We didn't get newspapers or see television programs (laughing). It, you know, it was just a joyous occasion (laughing). I think I told you, when the officer that had the deck before I did appeared in his civilian clothes. He had on a slouch hat and a raincoat and no uniform. And there's this very strict captain I told you about that sent him right back to his stateroom to change into a uniform; he was out of uniform. (laughing) He thought that was funny. He was our torpedo officer. He happened to have the deck at that time. And he, he thought that was funny to appear in civilian clothes.

MZ: Ready to go home.

RY: (Laughing) He was ready to go home.

MZ: Uh…, but the ship doesn't go home right away?

RY: No, we were sent to China. A lot of the fleet went to the Tokyo Bay for the surrender, but our task force went to the Yellow Sea, because the prisoner war camps had to have air cover while they rescued all those people there. There were many people imprisoned in Manchuria and the Chinese mainland. And then our carriers would fly sorties over the various prisoner of war camps to intimidate anybody trying to molest the prisoners and drop supplies for them, because they had no water even, or food or armaments. And we screened the task force that did that. There wasn't much screening then because there was nothing…, but there were a lot of mines floating in the water. It was the Yellow Sea China between Tsingtao, China where we were stationed and Manchuria.

MZ: Does your ship pick up any POWs?

RY: Any what?

MZ: Does your ship pick up any POWs?

RY: Oh, no. There were none at Tsingtao. If there had been, they'd already been liberated by the time we got there.

MZ: What was the mission at Tsingtao?

RY: There was a detachment of Marines there, because they… you know that the Chinese were fighting each other. The Nationalist Army understand Chang Kai-shek and the communist forces were, were fighting even in the suburbs of Tsingtao. We could hear that artillery from where we were moored, but they didn't attack the city because they didn't want to involve the United States in their battles, either side (laughing). And so… there was no threat to us, but war was going on all around us. And so, any prisoner of war activity would have been well beyond our ability to do anything about it.

MZ: Now I think you mentioned that at Tsingtao… let's see something about giving the Marines your beer.

RY: (laughing) Yeah, well the captain and the Marine Commandant had been in the Naval Academy at the same time. You know Marine officers and Naval officers came from the same school. And a… he thought there was no reason to take that beer back to the United States. We're going to go home and you're going to stay here, so he… they came to get picked up and discovered that every bottle was empty, capped and still in the box as if they were still full. When you picked them up, they were very light and there was not one bottle of it. Somehow, somebody got into this locked area and passed the beer out; it was all gone.

MZ: Clever.

RY: Probably after we heard the war was over, they had to celebrate, although nobody was aware of it. I didn't know it was happening. If there any drunk crew members I didn't see them.

MZ: They hid it very well. You told me the story last time about out uh… that there was an occasion that the task force thought that there was a Japanese submarine in the area and that all ships were ordered to a… I guess get into a tighter formation.

RY: Yes, it was the formation we'd never practiced. I didn't even know existed and we got this light signal to…. I know it was a light signal, because it was dark and we were instructed to bring the screen in right up against the fleet that was discrete many miles out all the way around it. And the destroyers were to contract and be just really close in, so that any torpedoes would hit us before it gets them (laughing). And uh… I had the deck and we'd been under air attacks. And the captain was… I think he'd taken a sleeping pill. I couldn't wake him up to tell him that we had this command, because we, the officers of the deck, were required to report to the captain any change in orders and I couldn't get him to wake up. I didn't want to… I even slapped his face once. That was a daring thing to do, but he wouldn't, he just couldn't, wouldn't wake up. So, I called the executive officer and, and he didn't want to

come up to the bridge and he said “oh just do whatever you think is necessary.” So, all I had… we were out in front of it and all I had to do was reduce speed and the task force caught up with me. I didn't have to catch up with them and when we got close to them, I'd started back up again. (Laughing) So, it was easy to do but, but it was the only time that ever happened, one time in the war.

MZ: You, you said something about you’re giving the order for the maneuver and soon found that the Chauncey was going in a circle?

RY: Yeah (laughing). They were just certain… you know you have the watch in the night from like midnight to 4:00 a.m. There's nothing, nothing to do and everybody is asleep except you and your watch and there’s one drill that we were permitted to call at any time and it was up to the discretion of the officer of the deck. It was the steering casualty drill. We would announce that we'd lost the steering power from the bridge and the steering would have to be done from, manually from the stern of the ship. There was an after steering compartment that was manned at all times. So, we would ring the bell and say “This is a drill. A disabled steering drill.” And take control from the after steering and the person back there, as I discovered later, was just subbing for the regular seaman that used to handle that job; he was playing poker somewhere.

This particular confessed to me he didn't know how to do that. How to guide, maneuver the ship from back there and so we started going in a circle. Went all the way around and all that time the task force is getting closer and closer to us. And I knew that if the squadron commander was awake, we'd get that fateful radio call that asked what was wrong. It didn't come fortunately. By the time when we got around in a circle, I'd sent a quartermaster back from the bridge, all the way back there to take over. He got back there and straighten the ship out and gave command back to the bridge (laughing). I finally found out at our reunion, I think, the seaman who had fouled that up and he confessed to me his friend had had a hot poker hand and he took over for him and he didn't have any instructions at all about what to do. So needless to say, I didn't call a steering drill anymore after that (laughing).

MZ: And this was the Quartermaster, right?

RY: The… on the bridge the assistant crewmen there were either helmsmen or quartermasters and the quartermaster was assistant to the officer of the deck.

MZ: The last time we spoke one of the two Captains who had an aquarium in his quarters?

RY: Yeah, the second one, Bert. I mean the third one; Bert Haines was his name and he; he did have an aquarium.

MZ: And you said… oh, I'm assuming men would volunteer to go catch fish?

RY: Well we'd go ashore and swim in the surf and on the beaches sometimes and uh…. In the Philippines we… the officers would go, they were not on watch, they'd go ashore and the captain sometimes went. When we were there, we would just voluntarily dive on that reef and all these beautiful colored, small fish would be swimming around. We would take a can or a net and gather them up and put them in a container and take them back and put them in captain's aquarium. It was all voluntary and he appreciated it, and it was something to do. And I think I probably told you, it was during one of those occasions when a jellyfish stung on my back and I had to go to the carrier's sickbay and spent the night while they treated the jellyfish stings.

MZ: And that's because you're…. On a destroyer does it have a doctor? Does it have a…

RY: We had a doctor assigned. There was a doctor on board the whole time. We had one doctor.

MZ: But he didn't know how to treat it?

RY: No, well he tried to treat it but he'd never treated a jellyfish sting and he wasn't… and he didn't have the proper drugs or ointments whatever was required; I don't remember. I had a shot of some kind and ointments and bandage. And he didn't have some of those things.

MZ: So that's why you got sent to the carrier.

RY: Uh huh. Their sick day was like a regular Hospital.

MZ: You don't remember what the carrier's name was do you?

RY: The who?

MZ: Do you remember what carrier it was?

RY: No, I don't have any recollection at all.

MZ: Well how was that for you? Were you in a lot of pain or…?

RY: Yes, I was. It's like a sting you know. It was painful and itched just abysmal; I couldn't scratch it. It was on my back; I couldn't reach it. And it was a long string of blisters all the way down across my back

and you know they have legs and they just…. It's like three different streaks of blisters. It was a major jellyfish sting.

MZ: After Tsingtao, I guess you end up going back to the States. Is that right?

RY: After Tsingtao, yeah. They call that something now, different now. It was called Tsingtao then. Yes, and we went back to… push to Pearl Harbor. And then at Pearl Harbor as I was going out my brother was coming in, as a fireman aboard the aircraft carrier, the USS Antietam. I didn't know he was on it at the time so I didn't wave, but they were coming into Pearl Harbor as we were leaving. And then we went back to San Pedro, I think It was, and I left the ship. In fact, I was detached at Pearl Harbor, but I stayed on the ship and we… continued my duties as an officer the deck until we hit California.

MZ: San Pedro is that, is that where you ended up leaving the ship, at San Pedro?

RY: Yes, I think it was San Pedro, somewhere just north of San Diego.

MZ: And uh…. what did you do?

RY: Well I had to be... we mustered out of the Great Lakes Naval Station in Chicago, north Chicago. And of course, my bride came up by train to meet me, uh to greet me when I came home. We agreed to meet at the railroad station where her train would come in. Not realizing that Chicago had three railroad stations, so I went to one and she went to another (laughing). There was a little comedy of errors there for a while, till we finally got together.

MZ: It's not like you could just text each other to say where you were either. When, when were you finally discharged from the Navy?

RY: My leave was over on January… I think it was 26th. Of course, I was at home by then; I didn't have any duties but, but I was released from active duty and in late January, 1946.

MZ: Umm… you didn't do any reservist duty or were you….?

RY: Yes, I did. I stayed in the reserve for 17 years so that I could qualify with my 3 years of National Guard training for a pension. So, I stayed 17… and during that time, I went to law school on the GI Bill of Rights and I transferred from being a line officer, when I graduated from law school, to the Judge Advocate General's Division. And so, my continuing reserve service was as a Navy lawyer not as a line officer.

MZ: What's uh… what branch are you with at this point?

RY: (laughing) At the… before I was able to transfer to the lawyer division notice came down promoting everyone in my category from full lieutenant which I was by then to lieutenant commander. In the same mail I got a notice that I should prepare myself for being recalled for Korean duty. By that time the Korean War had started and some of my friends had already been called up with the destroyers to return to their ships, and the Chauncey went back into operation in the Korean War. And in the meantime, I got the notice that I'd been transferred. Well my promotion didn't occur because I was now a Navy Lawyer and that promotion didn't apply to Navy lawyers. But also, they noticed that I was being called up didn't apply either because they didn't want lawyers; they wanted fighters over in Korea, so I didn't have go to Korea, but I also didn't get the promotion (laughing), so I retired as a lieutenant, a senior lieutenant.

MZ: So, you went to a… back to the university. The University of Indiana.

RY: Yes, I did to law school.

MZ: And you graduated in 49?

RY: Yes, uh huh. I passed the bar exam and was admitted to practice in April of 1949; practiced for 66 years.

MZ: What city in Indiana?

RY: Well my office was in Indianapolis, but I practiced in all of central Indiana.

MZ: And you served as the deputy attorney general for the state at one point?

RY: Two terms, yeah, eight years.

MZ: So how, how did that come about?

RY: Oh I… a friend of mine in law school was in the Attorney General's Office soon after I graduated and it was a democratic administration using political appointments and one of his colleagues in the Attorney General's Office had an alcohol problem and the attorney general was going to have to let him go. And so, my friend put my name in to replace him and so then I took his place (laughing).

MZ: What year was this?

RY: Uh… well it must have been probably as early as 1950, I would guess. I don't recall exactly. And for those four years I was a deputy attorney general, assigned to the Department of Public Works and

Supply, attorney for that division. And then later on I had some success as a trial lawyer. And the new Attorney General had been an opponent of mine in a trial and I had defeated him in that federal court case. And he remembered that (laughing), so he asked me to be one of four trial lawyers in the Attorney General's Office, because he thought I was so good. If I could beat him, I could be anybody (laughing). And so, so for four years I tried cases involving highway land attainment and collateral damages involving the interstate system and expressway systems in Indiana.

MZ: So, you say two terms uh… fours year, so I guess each term was just two years?

RY: Four.

MZ: Oh, each term was four years.

RY: Uh huh. That's eight years all together.

MZ: And uh…, and let's see you're… because I remember reading a little bit about you afterwards, it was that you're the co-founder of… is it Smith and Yarling? Was that you?

RY: That that was my first employment by an older lawyer named Robert Smith, who didn't try cases and he hired me as a trial attorney. So, I did all the trial work for that firm for fifteen years and then I formed my own firm.

MZ: Yarling and Robinson?

RY: Well that's what it ended up being. It was Yarling… Yarling, Winter, Tunnel, Roberts and Lyon when I first formed it.

MZ: It's quite a long name (laughing).

RY: Well there were five of us.

MZ: A lot of ink on the letterhead.

RY: I was senior *unintelligible* and then later it became the custom for law firms to list themselves only under two names that saves a lot of space. Even the very big ones that had 50 or 100 lawyers would be one, two names and so we did the same thing. And it's still called Yarling and Robinson even though there's no Yarling in it anymore.

MZ: And Linda, your daughter, she became a lawyer too, didn't she?

RY: Yes, she did. She went to law school and was a partner in my law firm. She still is. She's not a partner, but she still does work on the computer for the law firm every day.

MZ: You must be very proud.

RY: Uh huh. Right from here.

MZ: Um… other than Linda did you have any other children?

RY: One daughter who died this year June 7th.

MZ: Very sorry to hear that.

RY: She had a heat stroke and complications from that and she died in June, our younger daughter.

MZ: I'm sorry. You said a little earlier that now you are retired, well…

RY: Well effectively; I don't practice anymore. I can't in fact. The inactive license doesn't permit me to practice.

MZ: Yeah, we talked about that before. You're inactive so you could if you wanted to make it active; it's easier?

RY: Yeah, I could come back.

MZ: All right. Well umm… we covered everything that I wrote down last time. Is there anything that you would like to share maybe that you remember about the war that's… *unintelligible.*

RY: I don't think so. I can't remember ever being frightened during the war except under, during those two typhoons. Some people were, I guess (laughing). I know we had one seaman and every time he saw a Japanese plane coming down toward our ship, he'd think it was coming right for him, so he'd run from the bow to the stern. And when he got to the stern, he looked up it was still coming toward him, so he ran back to the bow. He did that during General Quarters too every time; it was funny. We also had an officer. There were just four officers on the bridge during combat operations. The captain, the office of the deck, who was the communications officer and my senior. And I was the junior office of the deck during combat in charge of the signals, the signalman. But we also had a sonar equipment on the bridge which was… that sent-out radio wave-beams and detected submarines. And that sonar officer was an ensign from a… who, who was a schoolteacher in some Oklahoma school. And he was just deathly afraid you could tell under battles, during when the guns were going off. He was in the back of the

bridge in his own little compartment with his sonar gear, so he wasn't out where people could see him, but he literally turned pale and he trembled and he kind of get down behind the equipment (laughing); He had an operator that watched the screen but… And it was, you know, there were people who reacted that way. I never felt… you never felt like it was going to be you. It was going to be him. It was only during the typhoons when the ship was over this far that you begin to think it was going the rest of the way (laughing). And this happened constantly day after day for two or three days. And it's just a scary proposition, particularly when other ships are turning over. That's not what we saw that happened, but we knew it happened; we were told it happen.

No, I don't want recall anything especially. Gosh those days were the most interesting, interesting and also frightening time my life. I always meant… I failed to mention that my wife thought maybe our honeymoon was the most exciting time of my life. I mean I'd say that both two and a half years of war time were most exciting, it was sort of an offender. So, I tried not to say that in front of her but, but it was. It was the most interesting and of course the most travel. I've never been on salt water before. I knew that there was salt in the ocean; I'd read that somewhere, but I didn't know it until during Midshipmen school. We trained on Long Island Sound which is a saltwater body of water on gunboats and had hands-on training on small boats. And… so it was a whole new life for me, plus all these foreign shores and ports, seaports and peoples -- different kinds. It was fascinating. It was a fascinating two and a half years.

MZ: I Just have one more question: I'm curious why did you pick law as a profession to go into?

RY: Well my father…, I don't know whether this is a compliment or not. He was in the dairy business, as I told you. And he had named his dairy…, he brought out his partner, and called it Yarling and Sons, although his one son was a college teacher and I, I had no occupation. And he heard that two other young men in our community had already signed up at law school at the expense of the government. They had come back from war and he asked me if I would be interested in that. And he asked me because, my father did. I thought… I was surprised; I thought he wanted me in the dairy business. I was kind of offended, but anyway also our local state senator, William Yarling, was a cousin of my father. And my father talked to him about the practice of law and the profession of law and that interested my father who interested me. And so, I went to law school. I had no intention of going to law school at any time until I came back from the war and discovered the government was going to pay for my books and give me $25 a week. I mean, you know, how could you turn that down (laughing).

MZ: Sounds like a good deal.

RY: Pay for my books and my tuition, so I went to law school for three years.

MZ: Well uh… that's all I have to ask you today. Actually, we did ten more minutes than we did last time and we covered… you remembered everything pretty good.

RY: And it's even recorded (laughing).

MZ: I hope so.

RY: (laughing) You're not sure.

MZ: No, it should be. Looks like it's working fine. Well on behalf of the museum and myself, thank you for your service.

RY: Nice seeing you. I want to thank you and your organization, because I wore my little cap with the Pacific War Museum name on the cap with my seven battle stars. Actually, I didn't… I'm not entitled to that seventh stars because I didn't go to Wake Island, but I don't tell people that (laughing). I mean I was serving in Honolulu. I mean that was terrible, terribly dangerous duty (laughing).