

**Oral History**

**Captain  
Ralph Emerson Styles  
United States Navy  
(Retired)**

**Oral History  
Conducted by  
VAdm. Earl Fowler, USN (Ret.)  
Col. Lucian L. Vestal, USMC (Ret.)**

**25 September 2001  
23 October 2001  
30 October 2001**



**Naval Historical Foundation  
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## Introduction

Numerous accounts of America's undersea war against Japan from authors ranging from Clay Blair, Ned Beach and Eugene Fluckey have inspired many subsequent generations of submariners with their stories of heroism in the face of tremendous dangers. Yet despite these excellent accounts, additional recollections of the undersea war in Japan are always welcomed so as to provide materials to future historians of the subject. With the World War II generation passing on, the Naval Historical Foundation program has benefited from the recent additions of interviews with such veterans as Vice Admiral Marmaduke Bayne, Captain Bing Gillette, and Rear Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Jr. Now the collection welcomes the addition of Captain Ralph Styles recollection to its growing inventory. In addition, Captain Styles was kind enough to donate a monograph he published in 1997 titled *Elizabeth*, written as a tribute to his wife, the former Elizabeth Caroline Walton of Caro, Michigan. Although the book has much material on their strong marriage, it also provides additional autobiographical material on his distinguished naval career.

He chose submarines for the extra pay after Elizabeth talked him out of being a naval aviator. Serving on the Narwhal, he found himself at Pearl Harbor on the morning of 7 December. After two war patrols, he returned to the East Coast to assume command of the S-20, an old 1920s vintage boat that was used for research and development. He then returned to the Pacific to command Sea Devil. During three war patrols he earned two Navy Crosses.

After the war he assumed positions of greater responsibility within the submarine force during a period of transition to nuclear propulsion. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the naval service was his public relations campaign to convince the leaders of San Diego that it was vital they embrace these new ships to allow the construction of extensive support facilities.

The Naval Historical Foundation is grateful to Vice Admiral Earl Fowler and Marine veteran Lucian L. Vestal for conducting the three interviews. The perseverance of Vice Admiral Fowler is especially appreciated given recent problems caused by mail irradiation. Once again the Foundation appreciates the fine work of Frank Arre to transcribe the recorded interviews.

David F. Winkler, Ph.D.  
Naval Historical Foundation  
May 2002



## CAPTAIN RALPH EMERSON STYLES USN (RET)

Ralph Emerson Styles was born February 27, 1910 at home in Asheville, North Carolina. Ralph's father was a descendent of John Stiles who was awarded a homestead of property in Western North Carolina near Cherokee after the Revolutionary War. J. Scroop Styles, his father, was the fifth generation to have been born in Western North Carolina. He was named for a distant relative, Scroop Enloe, the purported half-brother of Abraham Lincoln.

His mother, Eloise Frisbee Styles, was a descendent of the Snelson family from Leicester, North Carolina. Marion Frisbee, his grandfather, had married Rachel Snelson. Eloise Frisbee, his mother, was the fifth generation also to have lived in Western North Carolina. The Reverend John Thomas Snelson, a Revolutionary veteran and an ordained Baptist minister, was the first pastor of the New Found Baptist Church in Leicester, North Carolina in 1803.

Captain Styles graduated from Asheville High School in 1927, attended Weaver College one year and the University of Tennessee for a year before entering the U. S. Naval Academy in 1929, graduating in 1933. He graduated in the upper half of the class and was commissioned Ensign and ordered to USS Lexington. The lower half of the class were told to go home, not even required to remain in the Naval Reserve. However, one year later the lower half was offered commissions one day ahead of the class of 1934.

### Career Chronology

1933-1935: USS Lexington

1935-1937: Staff, ComAirBatFor. There were no qualified aviators at the time to command carriers or ComAirBatFor, they were Naval Observers.

1937: Submarine School

January 1938 – 1942: USS Narwhal home ported in Pearl Harbor and was in port serving as engineer officer on December 7, 1941. Two war patrols and battle of Midway.

1942-1943: Commanding Officer S-20, based in New London, Connecticut.

December 1943: Ordered to Command USS Sea Devil, building in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and commissioned May 1944. After three war patrols in Pacific where he received two Navy Crosses, Legion of Merit and Navy Unit Citation.

May 1945–January 1946: Operations Officer, Staff, ComSubFlot ONE, San Diego.

1946–1949: Instructor, Naval Line School, Newport, RI in "Foundations of Naval Power".

July 1949–1951: Antisubmarine Warfare Planner, Caribbean Sea Frontier, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

1951–1952: ComSubDiv 72, Pearl Harbor, TH, also, ComSubGru Western Pacific.

1952–1953: Commanding Officer, USS Nereus, submarine tender, San Diego, California.

1953–1954: Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

1954–1955: ComSubRon 10, New London, Connecticut. All Guppy submarines and USS Nautilus (First nuclear powered) assigned. Attended commissioning of Nautilus and stoodby on rescue ship for first underway trials of Nautilus.

1955–1958: Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence during Soviet submarine build-up, first U-2 flights. Responsible for daily CNO briefing and all Naval Attachés.

1958–1960: Commander Submarine Flotilla ONE, all submarine activity on West Coast of U.S. Included four submarine reserve units; Seattle, San Francisco, Long Beach, San Diego, 30 submarines, 2 submarine tenders, and two rescue ships. Did ground work to provide a nuclear submarine base in San Diego.

1960–1962: Staff, JCS, Planning for the establishment of Defense, Military Intelligence. Planning first preemptive attack on USSR.

**Retired from U. S. Navy as CAPTAIN** 31 January 1962.

1963–1970: Planning Director of New College, Sarasota, Florida, a private liberal arts tutorial school patterned after Oxford. Later taken over by State of Florida and became all honors college as part of the State University system. I. M. Pei was first architect of college.

1970–1990: Owner and Broker in Ralph Styles Realty Office, established in Sarasota, Florida.

1977: Built summer house in Maggie Valley, North Carolina and began spending summers there.

1990–2002: Retired

Ralph Styles has two daughters: Anne Styles Overbeck, born 1939, of Hingham, Massachusetts and Linda Styles, born 1946, of Sarasota, Florida.

# Subjects Covered

25 September 2001

Born in Ashville—attended Weaver College  
Father as a lawyer—Older brother at University of North Carolina  
Financial difficulties due to the depression ended college support  
Congressional appointment to USNA—hopes of becoming a Navy lawyer

Growing up—cattle ranch in Montana—four children  
Influenza epidemic in 1918 killed mother—father remarried 1920

Arriving at the Naval Academy—plebe hazing—comparing to college fraternity  
Plebe summer on the battleship Arkansas—European cruise—liberty in Paris  
Golf at St. Andrews

Reina Mercedes—“Frenching Out”—Washington D.C. adventure  
Demerits for sunbathing—buying a car  
Junior cruise to Nova Scotia  
1932 announcement that only half of the class would be commissioned  
Unsat in French—Going home to look for jobs  
President Roosevelt brought back bottom of class  
Others came back later—Draper Kaufman

Orders to Lexington—Air Ops  
Roommate Carl Drescher  
1934 presidential pass and review in NYC—transit of Panama Canal

Duty in 1935 with ComAirBatFor—North Island, San Diego  
Marriage to Elizabeth Walton  
Vice Admiral Home—Admiral H.W. Butler  
Chief of Staff Aubrey Fitch—Ops Officer Arthur Radford  
Saratoga under Captain Halsey—Captain Towers  
Hernia operation

Submarine School—24 in class—pay and early command opportunities  
Orders to USS Narwhal—operations out of Pearl  
Sleeping on deck—movies  
Air Conditioning installed in 1940  
Life in Hawaii—birth of first daughter  
Skipper Norm Ives—Momson escape lung  
Duties on Narwhal  
Ballasting—detaching after Midway  
Riding back with CO/XO of Yorktown

7 December—Conditions in Hawaii prior

Admiral Richardson argued to keep fleet on West Coast  
Torpedo exercises—June 41 simulated war patrol  
October deployment to Wake

The Japanese attack—Getting to the base  
Narwhal load with AVGAS  
Failure of the Japanese to hit the subs, fuel and repair depots  
Shooting down a plane with a machine gun  
Discussion of Narwhal armament

Two war patrols prior to Midway  
Skipper was “Weary” Wilkins—Some success  
No action at Midway

Command of S-20  
Reporting to Casco Bay, Maine  
Experimental submarine—Depth charge indicator  
New sonar equipment—torpedo tube R & D  
Torpedo difficulties

23 October 2001

Reflections of Annapolis  
Grading and marching—dances—returning the girls  
Pay—debt problems

Summary of S-20 R&D—JT listening gear

Orders to Sea Devil—PCO School  
Classmate with Gene Flucky—discussing war patrol reports  
Flucky tale—Medal of Honor  
Sea Devil built in 204 days—sea trials  
First kill was Japanese submarine  
Sea Devil capabilities—greater test depth—welded versus riveted hulls

Young crew—COB was 24  
Captain’s Mast—Going through the Canal  
Fired on by cargo ship—Torpedo alcohol—liberty at Majuro—USO show  
Chicken thief

First war patrol—riding out the December 44 typhoon  
Promotion to Commander—Shore games  
Second patrol—Yellow Sea—Rouge Wave—Cook saves boat  
Hit ammo ship—attack on Junyo—Navy Cross

Liberty in Hawaii



Sea Devil capabilities—FM diesels—Required less training to run  
Third war patrol—Yellow Sea—Attack on convoy  
Picking up survivors—four prisoners—Recovery of Marine pilots  
Kudos from HQ  
Handling the POWs—slot machine story—Marine pilots grateful

Relieved by C.F. McGivern—fourth patrol  
Hospitalized—2<sup>nd</sup> Navy Cross  
Duty as Ops officer in San Diego  
Orders to be XO of Everglades—Second child  
On the General Line School in Newport for Instructor Duty  
House rental difficulties  
Taught “Foundations of National Power”  
Social life in Newport—Dancing lessons

Orders to the Caribbean—on to Hawaii—cross country travel  
Submarine Division Commander—Duty in Yokosuka—Observation of destruction  
Taking cartoonist Bill Mauldin on a submarine

Orders to Nereus in San Diego  
Set up a ship's band—Sailor Bill Pearl wins Mr. Universe title

Orders to the Naval War College  
New London to command SubRon TEN  
Nautilus sea trials

On to Naval Intelligence—Evaluator of Soviet Sub Force  
Admiral Burke briefer—discussion of murder board sessions  
U-2 intelligence—400 Soviet subs  
Assignment to visit Latin American Naval Attachés

Duty as Commander Submarine Flotilla ONE in San Diego  
Selling San Diego on nuclear submarines—Base at Ballast Point

30 October 2001

Reestablished a dance band—Problems with homeporting nuclear submarines  
Supporting the movies “Up Periscope” and “Operation Petticoat”  
Halloween Party with Cary Grant  
Helping Disney with their submarine ride

Grayback and Regulus II missile system  
Rickover interview process disruptive  
Visits by the British—Lord Montbatten  
Efforts to get support facilities built for nuke subs

The Trieste—Lt. Don Walsh—Picard  
Test Dives—decompression challenges

Return to Naval Intelligence  
Looking at U-2 pictures  
Studying Polaris Submarine targeting  
Vietnam discussions  
Norstad brief on nuclear strike plan  
Passed over for Flag  
Discussion of McNamara and LeMay  
Cuban missile crisis  
Observations on the Air Force

Retirement to Sarasota  
Administrative job at New College  
Building a new campus—I.M. Pei  
History of the college origins  
Fundraising

Sea Devil reunions  
Sea Devil II trip—recollections  
Highlights of career.

Appendices

25 September 2001

**FOWLER:** This interview is of Captain Ralph Styles, United States Navy, retired - former skipper of the submarine Sea Devil. The interviewers are Lucian L. Vestal; a decorated Marine from World War II and Korea, a holder of the Navy Cross and of the Purple Heart among other combat decorations; and Vice Admiral Earl Fowler, United States Navy, retired.

**Ralph, let's start back in the beginning and tell us when and where you were born and what was life like in your youth?**

**STYLES:** Well I was one of the most unlikely naval officers, having been born in Asheville, North Carolina in 1910 up in the mountains. I never saw anything bigger than a rowboat. I never saw the oceans. I didn't know where the Naval Academy was. But I did make a trip once to Montana when my father owned a ranch out there.

My first year of college, I went to a small college near Asheville called Weaver College. I went there a year. I was sent there because my mother, my father and my stepmother had all graduated from it and they thought, if it's good enough for them it's good enough for me. Room, board and tuition at that college at that time was two hundred fifty two dollars a year! Two hundred and fifty two dollars a year. My father was a fairly successful lawyer in Asheville, so he sent me there and gave me a car.

My older brother had gone to this University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for two years, but he stayed out that year because my father was having some financial problems. All the banks were closing down in that area and we were right in the middle of a depression, or just getting into it.

So at the end of that year Father decided he couldn't send us to college, either one of us; so we both went over to Knoxville, Tennessee. Because jobs were more plentiful over there and we got different jobs. We had a basement apartment in this apartment house if we'd fire the furnace, and then my brother was a proofreader for the newspaper there and I had a job with a company so that I paid all my expenses for college. Of course, at the University of Tennessee then it cost forty-five dollars a quarter just for the classes and that didn't include anything. Well, during the year before my older brother was not going to college, he'd gone to our congressman, Zebulan Weaver, who had gone to Weaver College also at the same time my mother and father had, and my brother asked him for an appointment to West Point. At that time, one could be older, about two years older or more, and go to West Point over the age limit for going to the Naval Academy. So along in the spring, just before he left his office on March the 3<sup>rd</sup> - the Congress use to change offices in March instead of in January, the President and everybody - Congressman Weaver had this vacancy for Annapolis. And so he appointed me. I'd never asked for it. And my brother said no that's for him because he'd asked Congressman Weaver. He called Father and my father said you're too old to go. Here's a copy of the letter from the Congressman at the time.

I had heard that you didn't have to pay to go the Naval Academy, so I said, well I'll try it. I thought I could probably enter as a Junior - having had two years of college. Well of course I had to take a preliminary exam, which I passed. I was going to college really to be a lawyer. And they said oh, the Navy will send you to college free and you can be in the Judge Advocate's Office. Well I found out that that was true later on. On your second tour of shore duty they'd send you to law school. But unfortunately I had orders to my first tour of shore duty that came in on December the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1941, and I was in Pearl Harbor, and the orders were cancelled on 8 December 1941. So I didn't get my first tour of shore duty until I'd spent 13 years at sea. And by the time my second tour of shore duty came along I was too senior to shift to Judge Advocate's Office.

**FOWLER: So your legal career never materialized?**

**STYLES:** No, but my older and younger brothers both followed my father into law.

**FOWLER: Before you get into the Naval Academy, how about telling us a little bit of what life was like during the Depression and those throughout the country, so then what was your recollection of that time?**

**STYLES:** Well no lawyers were paid a whole lot in those days, but my father was fairly successful.

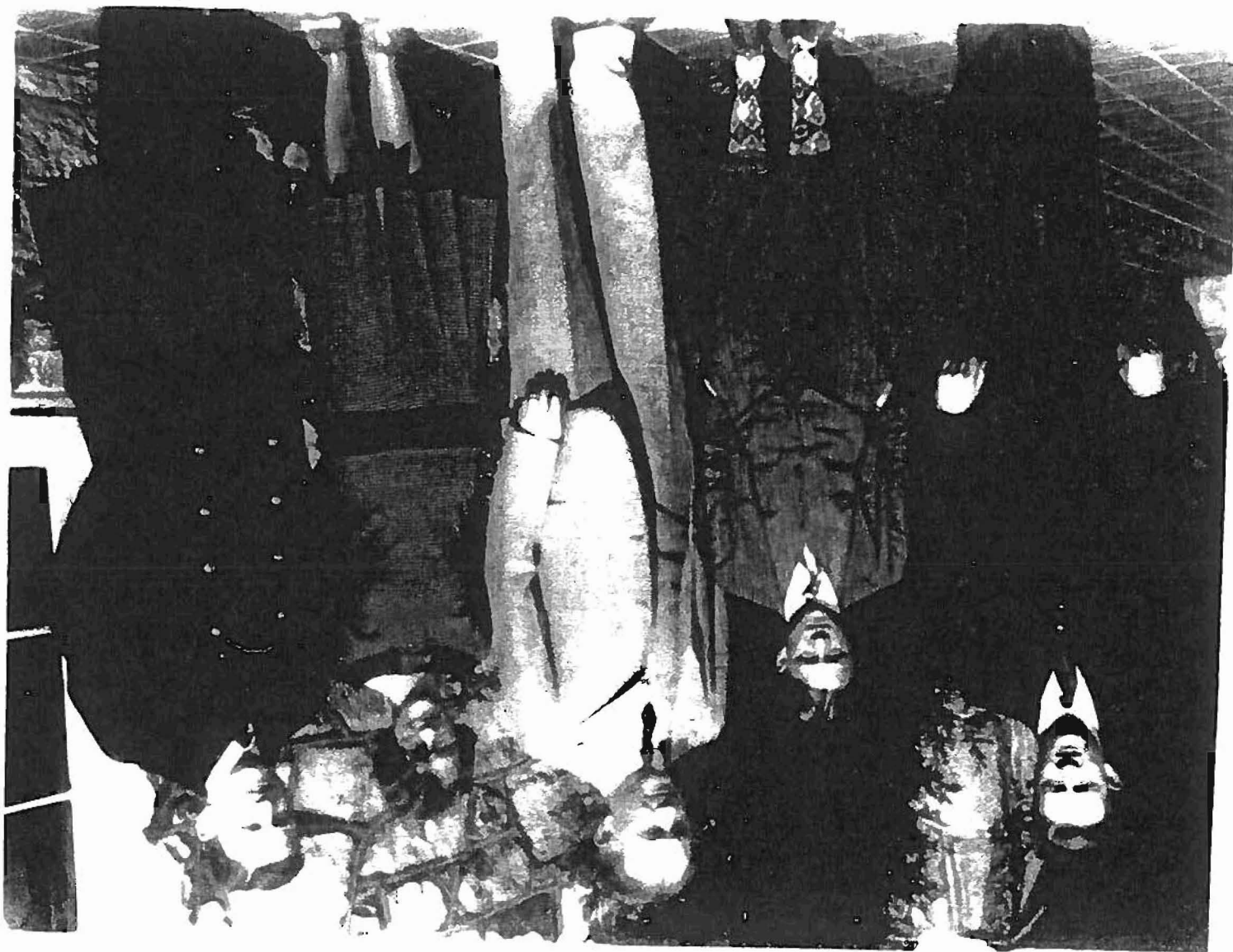
He had a cattle ranch in Montana and in 1918 he decided he would retire and take the whole family out there, all four children. And we got out there and my mother didn't like it at all. We were something like four miles from our closest neighbor. We got off the train in a little town called Floweree, Montana. So we started back and on the way back my mother became ill and stopped and had a doctor come down to the train in Knoxville and he said you have Influenza. This was in 1918, Influenza that killed so many, many people. It was the first...

**FOWLER: It was known as the flu epidemic, wasn't it?**

**STYLES:** Flu epidemic, yea. And so Mother stayed in bed until we got home - the ambulance met her. We went right home and she died two weeks later leaving my father with four children. At that time she had to wait for seven days to be buried because there were so many people dying in Ashville.

Of course we lived about a mile from the center of town where Dad had his office and he'd walk to and from his office every day and home for lunch.

And there weren't many automobiles in town. In fact, they didn't even require a driver's license. I started driving when I was 14 years old and I didn't have a driver's license until after I graduated from the Naval Academy and was stationed in California. They were a little ahead of us out there and made me get a driver's license.





And I worked each summer. My father married my stepmother in 1920 and she had gone to Weaver College also. In fact, my own mother had boarded at her house while she went to college. In those days they didn't have too many women's dormitories in the colleges and really supervised, so she had boarded at my stepmother's home.

**FOWLER: Were there a lot of people out of work in those days?**

**STYLES:** After 1930, it was a terrible, terrible situation. There weren't jobs for anybody, and I ran into that when I graduated from the Naval Academy. I'll get into that in a minute.

Well I expected to enter the Naval Academy as a Junior. I packed up my best suit of clothes and my tuxedo and invited two or three girls that I knew in town to come up for some of the dances. I also had to have proof of my age. Unfortunately, when I was born in 1910, Buncombe County didn't have birth registrations or certificates; so I had to get the old doctor who had delivered me to sign a statement as to when he delivered me.

**FOWLER: In other words you did all the important things to get ready, huh?**

**STYLES:** Yea, all these preparations!

Well I really didn't have any problem with the entrance examination because I'd been in college for two years.

But anyhow, I got up there and the first thing they made me do was send all of my civilian clothes home. I walked down into a place called Smoke Hall at lunchtime that day and a Second Classman told me to get the hell out of there.

Well anyhow, being a plebe there was very easy and there was quite a little bit of hazing but it wasn't near as severe hazing as like that in a fraternity at college. But the main difference was that in the fraternity, when one of your fraternity brothers cracked you with a broom, he was smiling. At the Naval Academy they were very stern when they swung the broom.

**FOWLER: What fraternity did you belong to?**

**STYLES:** Sigma Phi Epsilon. I don't know whether you remember Roy Regals, the guy that ran the wrong way?

**FOWLER: I'm a Georgia Tech graduate. All Georgia Tech graduates know Roy Regals. (LAUGHTER)**

**STYLES:** He was a fraternity brother of mine.

**FOWLER: Is that right?**

**STYLES:** Yea. But I'd never met him.

But anyhow, when I went to the University of Tennessee, Bobby Dodd was one of my classmates and played on the football team. Herman Hickman was an All-American at Tennessee at the time. And we had a terrific football team. I think they only lost one game that year, which was quite different from the Naval Academy because when I got up there they lost nearly all of them.

**FOWLER: Bobby Dodd was the Assistant Head Coach when I got to Georgia Tech. And Bill Alexander was the Head Coach. Then while I was there Bobby Dodd became Head Coach, Bill Alexander retired. The Head Coach at Georgia Tech before that was Pop Heisman, John Heisman, that the Heisman Trophy is named after.**

**STYLES: Oh.**

**FOWLER: So there was 25 years of Heisman; 25 years of Alexander, and then 25 years of Bobby Dodd.**

**STYLES: Yea, they were kind of a powerhouse in those days.**

**FOWLER: Yea.**

**STYLES: Of course at the end of Plebe Year, we made a cruise on three battleships. I think we were on the Arkansas. The First Class and the Plebes went because they had just started what they called Aviation Summer for the Second Class and they kept all the Second Class at the Naval Academy and gave them flying lessons. They had actually six hours of flight time. And of course we had it the next year when we became Second Classmen.**

But we went first to Cherbourg, France for a couple of weeks and then we went from there to Kiel, Germany. And from Kiel – that of course is in the Baltic – from Kiel we went up to Oslo, Norway for four or five days. Then we went over to Scotland and anchored in the Firth of Fourth. We had two weeks there to travel around. Well I didn't have a lot of money, but I couldn't afford the tours. When we were in Cherbourg a group of us that didn't go on the tour took the train to Paris, which was about 200 miles, and we took a carton or two of cigarettes. A taxi driver would drive you anywhere in Paris for a package of American cigarettes, and we went to all the nightclubs and I bought a few presents for people. When I came back to the ship I found that I had spent around eighteen dollars for my trip to Paris, including the hotel bill which was sixty cents a night, including a continental breakfast.

**FOWLER: That was 1930?**

**STYLES: 1930. When we were in the Firth of Fourth - that's just below Edinburgh – Bruce Wiggin, a friend of mine, classmate, decided we'd go out and play Saint Andrews. We went up there one day on the train. We had taken about four days leave and we played the course. It cost sixty cents green fees at that time and I shot 110 because most of the time I was in the rough up to my knees. But it's a beautiful course right on the ocean.**



The Academy had an old Spanish ship, the "Reina Mercedes", moored at the docks. It had been acquired at the end of the Spanish-American War; and it was used to quarter the Philippine Mess Attendants who served in the Midshipmen Dining Hall, and also for Midshipmen who were punished for certain offenses too serious for punishment by extra drills. For instance, smoking before breakfast resulted in a week on the ship, or "Frenching Out" was a month.

I "Frenched Out" two or three times. I don't remember every time, but I well remember the last. "French Out" means slipping out after taps at night, climbing over the wall, and going someplace. On this memorable occasion, my roommate, Carl Drescher, from Washington, D.C. had a girlfriend who arranged dates for us. We used Dick English's old automobile, which had a West Virginia license plate on it. We wore clothes and sweaters and after taps inspection, we slipped out, climbed over the wall, got in the old car and drove to Washington. It was about 11 o'clock, and we thought before we went over to Carl's girlfriend's house we would stop and have a cup of coffee. While we were in having coffee the police came over and wanted to know who belonged to the car with the West Virginia license plate. We, of course, said it was ours. The police apparently were looking for someone who was wanted in West Virginia. We didn't want to tell them we were Midshipmen, so we didn't. They took us to the police station, and kept us there until about 3 a.m. Carl finally called his brother who worked for the Secret Service as a guard for President Hoover. He came over and vouched for us; so they let us go. We hopped back into the car and drove back to Annapolis, climbed over the wall and ran around the track with the trackmen who were having an early workout. It was just beginning to get daylight, and when we came to Bancroft Hall, we broke off and ran in. And that was the last time I "Frenched Out."

I didn't accumulate too many demerits except in the second class year where I almost went over the limit. I was twice discovered sunbathing on the roof of Bancroft Hall in the Second Class summer.

I ran cross-country and wrestled on the Plebe team and Varsity in the 119-pound class until I dislocated my elbow.

We were prohibited from riding in cars all four years.

Then at the start of our First Class year – well I might put in another thought there, that at the end of First Class year, they didn't have enough money to send the midshipmen on a three-months cruise, so they sent us on a two months cruise and gave us an extra month's leave. So I went home then for two months and I thought, gee, it'd be nice to have a car. So my father said okay, I'll get one for you. So he talked to the Sheriff and they had just confiscated a car that had been used for Rum-running that had a souped-up Ford Model T. And he said, well now don't tell anybody, but I'll be on the steps of the courthouse at noon tomorrow to sell this car to the highest bidder. So you bring your son and have him there. Well, when they opened the bidding I bid a dollar, but some man passing by overheard what was going on, stopped and came over and bid two dollars. I bid two-fifty and he bid three. I guess I bid the three and he bid four and I said four twenty-five and that got me the car, which I drove the rest of the summer.

It amazes me how some things start out in our minds. I still remember the exact words of an old chief who was in charge of our practical work in steam engineering at the Academy: "Don't Nobody, at No time, Never start No turbine without first seeing that there's plenty of lube oil in the bearing." I never forgot his words.

But anyhow, when I went back to the Academy in 1932 we took just a two-month's cruise up to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and I guess that's the only place we went. But we had leave there and a good number of us went camping and fishing up into the woods in Nova Scotia.

**FOWLER: What ship did you go on that year?**

**STYLES:** I don't know. Here's the Youngster Year Cruise.

**FOWLER: When's Arkansas?**

**STYLES:** It was a battleship, but I don't remember which one.

**FOWLER: But it was a battleship the second time.**

**STYLES:** As we started First Class Year they told us that they were only going to commission half the graduates. The Navy had been cut to eighty thousand men total. A lot of the ships didn't even have money enough to buy fuel. They would sit alongside the dock.

**FOWLER: And that was 1932?**

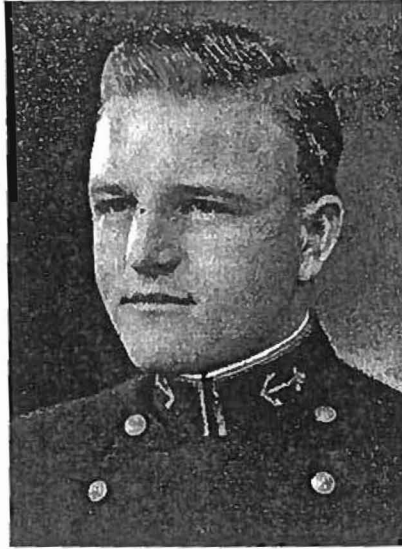
**STYLES:** 1932. Well I graduated in '33 but they told us in '32 that they wouldn't need but half the class. So everybody started studying hard because it was tough on the outside. Most of those that did not get a commission were doing things like pumping gas or something of that nature.

Well, come Christmas time I was unsat in French. I'd taken French for a year or two in college before I ever went to USNA. But they would show a French movie every Saturday morning to the First Class and then you would have a class during the next week and you had to tell what was going on in the French movie. I think I was on the tree about every week. Although when we had gone to France I'd practiced French a little bit.

The beauty about touring Europe in 1930 was that there weren't too many people over there because one couldn't fly over. People that went had to have quite a little bit of money and go by ship. And everything was very inexpensive. But now, of course, it's crowded, crowded, crowded.

But anyhow I was unsat that Christmas of my First Class year in French.

But the Superintendent had decided that if you'd send in a statement saying you were going to look for a job, even though you were unsat, the First Class could go home on leave and look for jobs. So I went home on leave, but I didn't look real hard for a job.



CARL GEORGE DRESCHER

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

"Dutch" "Count"

GOING to town tonight" is generally his cheery greeting to those who join him in many midnight escapades. Plebe Year was a succession of broken femmes' hearts and letters from the Superintendent. Youngster cruise found him an old salt with a strong line and a girl in every port. It was also on this cruise that he gained quite a reputation and almost his dismissal by throwing a bucket of water on an officer. Youngster Christmas proved his downfall as he has broken no more hearts but deemed it necessary to be non-reg, to remain true and see as much as possible the O.A.O. whose picture graces his locker door. Always prepared with some good story and a ready smile he has an uncanny way of getting out of scrapes, for which he has earned the name of "Dutch." "Count" is short for no-account.

His success in crew during Second Class Year gained him the reputation as being the smoothest oarsman on the river. His name is always in print, either on the pap sheet or on the trees. However, his only worry is when the next letter from the babe is coming. His travel conquests consist of a hobo trip via airplane to California and back the summer the good old "Arky" broke down.

I believe the future will be kind to him. Besides the long desired sheepskin in June '33 a little play for two will be enacted in the "Little Church Around The Corner" and he'll be one of the leading characters.

Lacrosse 43 Crew 21 2 P.O.

RALPH EMERSON STYLES

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

"Grits" "Ralphy"

I'M a tar heel born, I'm a tar heel bred, and when I die there'll be a tar heel dead." They chased him out of North Carolina; so Ralph was exposed to studies for two years at Tennessee. The girls down there must have been pretty good because this little rebel sure did show a few good tricks in wrestling to win a varsity berth and the sobriquet "Grits," which incidentally is not related in any way to a breakfast food.

When his O.A.O. sent him her marriage announcement Youngster Year, he turned "Red Mike." It didn't last long, though, because he's been borrowing quarters to go to Carvel for some time now. Ralphy is a discriminate smoker, that is he only smokes for effect. When with the girls, he flashes cork tipped skags, and they all wonder how he does it on a midshipman's pay. Here's the secret, he collects them at the Superintendent's receptions. Every night the lovelorn gather in his room seeking advice upon inatter most dear to the heart. Whenever anyone goes around with a shotgun looking for Rudy Vallee, somebody has to tell him that it is only Styles exercising his vocal chords.

If the Navy doesn't know how to tell a good officer when they have one, the legal profession will add another "liaryer" to their already starving midst. After spending four years in intimate contact with midshipmen from all sections of the country, "Grits" still claims indisputable supremacy for the South as regards to fast horses and beautiful women.

Cross Country 43 Wrestling 43 2  
Track 43 21 Log 21 2 P.O.



But anyhow, come the end of the year I found out that I was going to get commissioned and everybody at that time wanted to be in aviation. That was the real thing and it paid 50 percent extra pay. But no one could go to flight training or submarine training until they had spent two years aboard a ship. So half of us got commissions. The other half were given a year's Midshipman's pay and told, we're through with you, no Reserves. Do whatever you want to do. Fortunately, a year later President Roosevelt was building up the Navy. The lower half of the class were offered commissions in the Navy. Most of them as I said were out pumping gas or not the greatest jobs, so most all of them immediately came into the Navy as '33B and they were commissioned one day ahead of the Class of '34.

**FOWLER: This is when the war started, they came back in?**

**STYLES:** No, the war hadn't started until 1941.

**FOWLER: Yea, I know that. Did they come back in . . .**

**STYLES:** Right then, in 1934.

**FOWLER: Right then.**

**STYLES:** A day ahead of '34. I guess there were about eight or ten that had gone to Randolph Field in Texas to qualify and to get into Army flying. They were just finishing up their flight training so they sent them to Pensacola for Brush Up and carrier landings, and sent them out to the Fleet as Aviators. We still couldn't go to Pensacola for a year, for a year, those that had been fortunate enough to be commissioned on graduation, couldn't go for another year to Pensacola.

Also, those who had gotten out and gotten married were accepted back into the Navy and given Housing Subsistence and all that, whereas those that had been commissioned on graduation still had to wait a year before they could get married.

So, as I said, most of the class came back in as '33B.

Well, my roommate for instance, couldn't pass the eye exam to come back in. So a year later they lowered the requirements so that they could come back in if they'd go into the Supply Corps. So my roommate came in as '33C. And other people returned at intervals, one classmate particularly, named Draper Kaufman – I don't know whether you've heard of him . . .

**FOWLER: I know him.**

**STYLES:** But he didn't come in until 1940. When the war broke out in Europe he joined the French Army and was driving an ambulance and was captured. Then when he escaped from prison, France had been overrun so he went over to England and got a commission in the British Navy and was in mine disposal, a DoD Disposal Officer. So they brought him in 1940, and when Pearl Harbor came he immediately flew out there and opened one or two Japanese torpedoes that he worked on, he saved them and we could analyze them. But anyhow, he was the last one to

come in. One classmate went over with him and fought in Spain during the War in 1937; he eventually came in, but it was a very unusual class.

**FOWLER: What was your first duty after you graduated from the Naval Academy?**

**STYLES:** I was assigned to the Lexington. At that time we had three carriers; the Langley, which was a converted collier; the Saratoga and Lexington, which were started as battle cruisers in World War I and Congress decided to convert them into aircraft carriers ten years later. So those were the three carriers. They operated under Commander Aircraft Battleforce.

When the Saratoga and Lexington were commissioned there weren't any aviators senior enough to command them, so they took a few Captains that volunteered and sent them for an indoctrination course at Pensacola to let them see what an airplane was and see it fly. And they made them observers.

My first skipper, Captain Blakely was not a flying aviator.

I spent two years on the Lexington and anytime that the planes were aboard, one could go topside and see somebody hit the barrier or wreck or miss the ship all together, particularly the old torpedo planes. They couldn't fly fast enough to come up to catch the ship when they were coming in to land.

So of my ten classmates that went to the Lexington on graduation, three of them ended up in aviation. We all wanted to be aviators when we got there. Three ended up in aviation and four in submarines eventually. And I think one in the Supply Corps and the other Black Shoe Navy.

**FOWLER: Did you go to submarine school right from the Lex or did you . . . ?**

**STYLES:** No, after two years on the Lexington I got married and I was transferred to the Staff of Commander Aircraft Battleforce as a communications officer. That's my roommate, Carl Drescher, at the Naval Academy that was in '33C . . .

**FOWLER: Supply Corps.**

**STYLES:** And he ended up, he got out at the end of 20 years. He was the President of Sinclair Oil eventually. Then when British Petroleum bought them out they retired him. He has since passed away, but he lived over on the East Coast.

**FOWLER: His name was Drescher?**

**STYLES: D R E S C H E R.**

**(SIDE B, TAPE D)**

**FOWLER: Okay, you'd just gone to the . . .**

**STYLES:** I want to refer back to the cruise the Fleet made in 1934. President Roosevelt decided that he wanted all the Navy to Pass in Review in New York Harbor. So all of the West Coast fleet came down to Panama to exercise together and no other ships, except fleet units, were allowed to go through. They wanted to see how fast they could transfer the whole group through the Panama Canal. So they shot them through without any merchant ships or anything else going through. I think it took something like 72 hours. I don't remember the figure.

But anyhow we went on and stopped in Haiti and then went on up to New York for the Pass in Review. The President was on a cruiser there and he had all the ambassadors from Washington as guests on another cruiser and all the fleet Passed in Review.

On the carrier we all had to wear Frock coats and Aft hats, swords and man the rails as we passed in review. Then after the review was over the President led the whole fleet into New York City and we all stayed there for two weeks.

I've never seen such entertainment in my life. No officer was permitted to go on leave or be transferred. They all had to stay and go to parties. One particularly good party, I remember, was a long luncheon given out on Long Island with butlers serving us the noon meal. Mrs. Whitney put it on – but the whole wardroom of the Lexington went and afterwards they took us to a polo game on Long Island and then bused us back to the ship. But on the Lexington they built stairs alongside the ship, so I think about eighteen to twenty thousand a day came up, walked down the flight deck, went down below to the hanger deck and then on down and out the normal entrance to the ship. But it was quite an unusual event.

**FOWLER:** Now I gather that the Lexington was in the Pacific Fleet during your tour?

**STYLES:** Well, they didn't have any carriers in the Atlantic Fleet.

**FOWLER:** Oh, none at all.

**STYLES:** All the carriers were in the Pacific.

Then in '35 I was transferred to the Staff of ComAirBatFor, which was down at North Island, San Diego. If one was on the second floor of the Administration building where all the staff were, it was considered sea duty. People on the first floor were on shore duty. I don't know how they figured that out.

But anyhow, I lived in the Officer's Mess there, which was a very beautiful layout for officers that were not married. Lieutenant Commander Felix Stump was the President of the Mess at that time.

In August 1935, having completed two years since graduation, I went back to Saginaw, Michigan and married Elizabeth Walton, whom I met in California in 1934. Back in California Vice Admiral Horne was the new ComCruBatFor and there was a little more social activity. The Horne's were strict Christian Scientists and I remember a cocktail party the Towers gave. The

Hornes made an appearance early as they usually did; only soft drinks were served, but when the Hornes departed, Captain Towers announced in a loud voice that the bar was now open.

The Hornes had been stationed in Japan in the early Twenties and were close friends of the Fontaine's; and they were there when the Fontaine's daughter Olivia De Hanibaud was born. Olivia had just started making movies co-starring Errol Flynn. Several weekends during the year Olivia and her mother came from Hollywood to visit the Hornes. We would usually be included in dinner parties, because we were closer to Olivia's age than anyone else on the staff.

Anyhow, on the first staff, Admiral H. W. Butler was in command. It was customary then whenever the senior officer was detached, he'd give the most junior person on his staff an autographed picture. And that's how I happened to get that. I wasn't that close to Admiral Butler. But you see he has Observer Wings. His Chief of Staff was Captain Aubrey Fitch. The Operations Officer was Commander Radford (Arthur Radford). A lot of you may have heard of him. Also Lieutenant Arty Doyle was the Gunnery Officer. The whole staff was changed for the second year I was there and the next one had Captain Towers, who was the Number Three graduate of Pensacola, as the Chief of Staff. Dixie Keefer, who commanded the Yorktown at Midway, was a lieutenant commander and Assistant Material Officer. They were all aviators mostly. Towers, of course, was the aviator. But Admiral Hornes, who was Commander Aircraft Battle Force, was an observer like Admiral Butler.

In 1936 the staff rode the Saratoga down to Panama Canal, the exercise was to the canal and back. The Saratoga at that time was commanded by Halsey, Captain Halsey. So I really rubbed elbows with all the early aviators of that time.

**FOWLER: Was Halsey an NFO also, an observer?**

**STYLES:** Oh no, he was one of the first . . .

**FOWLER: Real aviators.**

**STYLES:** Real aviators to command. I've got a list of the first 50 graduates of Pensacola and Towers was number three.

The second year when the cruise was out to Honolulu, and when the carriers – I was on the Saratoga that year too, it was the flagship – and when we got to Midway we stopped off for a couple of days before continuing the exercises. And during that time I had to have a Hernia operation. Well at that time Hernia operations, required one to stay in bed in Sick Bay for 16 days, flat on one's back. Then when you got out of Sick Bay, of course our cabins for a junior grade lieutenant were way down below and double deck bunks and you had to forward on the ship a ways to find the head and showers. So Captain Towers had two staterooms. He had a stateroom down below and one up on the bridge. So he let me use his sea-cabin down below, which had a regular bed and a bathroom attached to it, while I recuperated, until we got back to the states. So I always had a fond spot for Captain Towers.



I went to Submarine School in the summer of 1937. My wife didn't want me to be an aviator. She thought it was too dangerous, and we did need extra money because it was a struggle to get by on Lieutenant Junior Grade's pay. So they had submarines in San Diego then, so I came home one night and said, I think I'll apply for Sub School, which I did, and was ordered there in 1937. I graduated in December of that year. This is a picture of the sub class. There were 24 that graduated and of them, two were disqualified after a year and six were lost and one was captured during World War II. They all had commands. See, the thing about our seniority -- and this was another reason I wanted to get into submarines -- because I had a command of a submarine when I was 9 years out of the Naval Academy and still a lieutenant.

After watching the aviators onboard the carriers, they didn't know the first thing about shiphandling or anything like that. They did know how to play poker, and that's what we did a lot of the time.

But anyhow I went to Sub School. We wanted to go to China when we graduated from Sub School, but they'd had the Panay incident over there in the Fall of '37, so they said no married officers would be sent to China. So the two bachelors who got to go were Harlfinger and, let's see, Fitz Harlfinger and John Wallig, both Ensigns, but the two bachelors in the class got to go to China. I was ordered to the Narwhal, which was in San Diego at the time and it had already been ordered to Pearl Harbor but it had to have its battery cables renewed. So about two days after I reported, we moved up to Mare Island to replace the cables which took a couple of months. So it was about March before we got out to Pearl.

**FOWLER: It was '38 then?**

**STYLES:** March of '38. The Hawaiian Defense Force consisted at that time of a squadron of World War I S-boats, four four-stack destroyers from World War I and a ship called the USS Ogklowa (phonetic), which had been a passenger ship on the West Coast before World War I and was called a submarine tender. That was the Hawaiian Defense Force in 1938.

Our operations were, we usually get underway at seven in the morning and came back in at one o'clock. Once a year we took a ten-day war patrol.

The submarine didn't have air-conditioning and after three days submerged it would be so damp at 100 percent humidity it would be raining actually from the overhead. On the Narwhal, which was a big submarine, a lot of the crew would sleep up on deck at night, just carry their bedrolls up there and . . .

**FOWLER: That was inport, not underway?**

**STYLES:** No, underway.

**FOWLER: Underway as well?**

**STYLES:** We had movies underway up on topside at night.

Our Division Commander wrote after a simulated war patrol that without air conditioning, the maximum time we could remain on station in wartime would be three days; so on our first yard overhaul in Pearl Harbor, air conditioning was installed in 1940. We kept 20-gallon trashcans under the air conditioners to catch the condensate, which was used for bathing, clothes washing, etc. This was before the Kleinschmidt Still and we could only make water if we were on the surface and rigged a facility that wouldn't permit diving. Our fresh water for drinking and cooking was carried in tanks.

**FOWLER: How many in the crew in Narwhal?**

**STYLES:** As I remember, about 80.

**FOWLER: About 80. What was her number?**

**STYLES:** 167.

**FOWLER: One Sixty-Seven.**

**STYLES:** I commanded the S-20, which was hull number 125, and I also commanded number 400, the Sea Devil. Now the first submarine that we commissioned was hull number 1 in 1900. Now they're up to 776, 773 not counting the last three, the Sea Wolfe, Jimmy Carter and Connecticut that have just been built, makes 776.

The Germans lost 779 submarines in World War II alone. Eighty percent of all the submariners were lost. We lost twenty two percent, which was the highest of any combatant group that the Navy had in World War II.

**FOWLER: What was life like in Honolulu in 1938? Did you have children at that time?**

**STYLES:** My first daughter was born in 1939. We lost a child in '36 I guess. When I came back from the cruise to Panama my wife had arrived on the West Coast the day before and had a miscarriage that night.

**FOWLER: Where did you live in Honolulu?**

**STYLES:** In Honolulu we lived in Aieva Heights near the Oahu Country Club. When I got back to take command of the S-20 in 1942, the skipper was Sam Dely, he asked me where I lived and about the attack on Pearl Harbor. When I told him where I lived he said, I lived in that house myself when I was out there. He said when I left – he'd been in S-boats out there – when he left Red Ramage took it over. When I moved in Red Ramage sold me the refrigerator and the stove. So I lived there. But it overlooked Pearl Harbor. We could see the entrance and we could see Hickam. We couldn't see the battleships. They were around the corner a little.

But life was extremely pleasant.

Our second skipper was Norm Ives, who had a wonderful sense of humor. He and Momson had developed the "Momson Escape Lung" for which both had been awarded the Navy Cross. Commander Ives still liked to dive. He had rigged up a system whereby when we were submerged; he would don a diving hardhat – go out on deck from the forward escape hatch and signal orders to the O.O.D. in the conning tower. The Narwhal had thick glass eye-parts through which the O.O.D. received the hand signals. When the submarine was ordered to surface, the O.O.D. would find the Captain seated in a pipe frame chair that he had fabricated for himself.

We would have weekly operations down at Lahaina Roads where we would anchor in the afternoon for the night. Ives would give his officers lessons in the use of the diving gear and we would all get a chance to dive. I guess this fostered my interest in Deep Sea Diving

Honolulu was a small town. It didn't even have a traffic light in the whole town. They put the first traffic light in while we were there, about 1938 or 9. They had a big article in the paper that said; red means stop, green means go, and yellow means everybody go!

**FOWLER: What was your duty on the Narwhal, your first duty?**

**STYLES:** Well, of course they moved you around to different jobs, you'd stay three months in one and then the other. I guess I was the Assistant Engineer. I guess after that I was, oh, and you were always the Commissary Officer. I wasn't the most junior one onboard because most people went to Sub School after two years and here it was the last chance that I could have gone to Sub School, that year. But I eventually moved up to Chief Engineer and Diving Officer. The same officer dived the boat every time it dived.

The Narwhal was very, very slow diving, it was so long. The test depth was 250 feet. If you got more than about three degrees down on the boat you immediately backed emergency tanks and prayed. So the bow would be down below crush depth if you didn't.

**FOWLER: What was crush depth in those days?**

**STYLES:** Two hundred and fifty feet.

**FOWLER: Oh, 250.**

**STYLES:** So on the war patrols my duty was to be ready to dive the boat at all times. While on the surface, I stayed up all night and stood by to dive the boat. Then during the daytime we'd usually dive. At the start of World War II no one knew what ASW the Japanese had, so you were going into the unknown to go out there to Japan. And our skipper, we had a fellow named Weary Wilkins, and he felt that if he was in air range of any Japanese base that he had to dive all day and stay down all day.

**FOWLER: How did you charge the batteries, at night?**

**STYLES:** At night, yea. But I had devised a way to flood the main ballast tank in the middle of the ship that was supposed to be a safety tank. I'd flood that when we were on the surface and

the minute the diving alarm sounded I'd start pumping it with the main pump. It would give us extra weight to help get us under.

But when we came in from the Battle of Midway, Captain Hayes, who was our Squadron Commander, was standing on the dock. He had been my skipper when I first reported to the Narwhal nearly five years before, and he'd been ashore and come back. So he called down to the Captain from the dock and said, we have orders here for Ralph and I guess we'll have to let him go this time. See I'd been ordered to the Deep Sea Diving School three days before the war started.

**FOWLER: Where was that then, in Washington?**

**STYLES: Washington, Anacostia.**

**FOWLER: Anacostia.**

**STYLES:** So the next morning I went in to see "Weary" the Skipper and I said when are you going to detach me, and he said, well, Captain Hayes said we have orders for Ralph but I guess we won't let him go this time. I said that's not the way I heard it. He said, well I'll go up and ask him. And I said I'd like to go with you if I may. So he took me up there and Captain Hayes said something about detaching me and Weary said there isn't anybody else on the ship that can dive it. That's what he said. So I said yes there is. I've been teaching Jim Flanagan. So he's perfectly capable to take my place. So he said detach him. So I was detached and pretty soon ordered back to the states on a ship going back.

Dixey Keefer, who had just broken his leg leaving the Yorktown, when it was sunk at Midway, was onboard with me. I'd been on ComCruBatFor staff with him back in San Diego. So we ate together. He and the Exec of the Yorktown rode back.

**FOWLER: Now what year was that? What time was that?**

**STYLES: 1942, June.**

**FOWLER: 1942. Let's go back to the Narwhal. How long were you on the Narwhal? You went aboard about March of '38?**

**STYLES: No, January '38.**

**FOWLER: January of '38, and how long were you on there?**

**STYLES: Until the summer of '42.**

**FOWLER: Four years. So you were aboard Narwhal in that famous day of 7 December 1941?**

**STYLES: Oh yea.**

**FOWLER:** Let me just ask this question. Were there any stories that we ought to get on record on the Narwhal prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor?

**STYLES:** Well, I can tell you, see, the Fleet came out there on an exercise from the West Coast and when it got ready to go back, I mean they came into Honolulu for rest and recreation, the President said leave them out there, the whole Pacific Fleet.

There weren't any accommodations. Most of the families were back in the states and there wasn't any room for them anywhere. Liberty was very restricted. They talk about people being ashore the night before the attack. Well there weren't very many because by the time very many of the Fleet got ashore and the Army that was stationed there, all over the place, why you couldn't get, most of the people stayed aboard unless, a few that were married and had their families there.

But Admiral Richardson, who was Commander of the Pacific Fleet, went back to Washington twice and argued with Roosevelt. He said "get the Fleet back to the West Coast". They were just a sitting duck out there. The second time he went back in about November, I guess of '40, they said you could hear him arguing so loud that you could hear it all up and down the corridor outside the Oval Office. Richardson came back thinking that he had made his point and in January he was relieved and Kimmel was sent out there.

When Kimmel got there we started operating like I've never operated before, not even during wartime. Half the Fleet would be out one time and when they came in the other half deployed and then went out.

Fortunately we had gotten air conditioning during an overhaul in 1940. The submarines didn't have air conditioning before and they didn't have what they called a Torpedo Data Computer for figuring how to make a torpedo attack, to tell you what angle to set on it. You had what they called an ISWAS (phonetic) the Attack Officer hung around his neck and you'd set the course and get the angle on the bow and that kind of stuff. Then you had a banjo that the Gunnery Officer worked that you'd set this information and the range and all that if you wanted to fire an angle shot. Of course we were always brought up to fire a straight shot if you can because the range doesn't come into the computation. I talked to a German submarine commander, I guess in the early fifties, and he said he fired straight torpedoes most of the time. If he were on the surface at night and saw a ship coming we'd aimed one finger down the bow of the submarine and the other finger at the target ship and when it got to that finger he fired, because most merchant ships only went 10 knots or nine knots. So you'd almost always hit it because range doesn't matter in a straight shot.

**FOWLER:** What was the rank of the CO on the submarine Narwhal?

**STYLES:** Well he was a full commander. Let's see, Hayes was, Norm Ivers and "Weary" Wilkins. There were three skippers during my four and a half years onboard. All about 15 years out of the Academy.

(SIDE A, TAPE 2)

**STYLES:** Well, as I said, after the Battle of Midway in which the submarines participated, the way they formed up at Midway was that submarines were out at 50 miles. They knew that the Japanese fleet was coming. But then they got a message saying that troop ships that departed from Guam I think it was, somewhere down in, wherever they had them, were on their way up to take the island. So they moved the submarines in to five miles to get the Japanese landing ships where they landed troops. So we never saw any action at all. I think Bill Brockman on the Nautilus claimed that they got either a carrier or a cruiser. They say it was leaving the area after the battle. But the submarines weren't in a position to attack the Japanese Fleet.

**FOWLER:** Let's go back to Narwhal just prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and tell us a little bit about what you were doing. Build up that day's events and what happened that day.

**STYLES:** Well as I say, Kimmel started really exercising the Fleet. We started full-scale war patrols in June of '41. Our first war patrol was out around Midway. They'd had submarines submerged during the day and loaded with live torpedoes and told to fire at anything that threatened.

Now actually this patrol on Midway, to keep it secret; they didn't give us any prior notice when we got to the ship, one morning we were told we weren't supposed to call home or anything. We were loaded and left that afternoon. They didn't want it circulated to anybody to know that that's what was going on. I know that when we went for Midway we had something like eight people coming to dinner that night and I couldn't call my wife to tell her I wouldn't be home. Nor could I get additional clothing.

But then when we went on patrol in October we were set to patrol Wake; the Dolphin and the Narwhal. Dolphin was south, we were north. So we had a two-month's patrol out there; submerged all day and surfaced at night to charge the batteries and such. We were told anything threatening the island, to attack it.

So we got back to Pearl on 4 December and of course the attack started on 7 December. But while we were there at Wake I got sick with something. I don't know what it was, but one night they sent a message to Major Deveruy, the Marine who had command of Wake, and asked him to bring a doctor out, which they did. The doctor looked me over and said, well he couldn't tell what was wrong with me but they would be happy to take me ashore and put me on the first plane that came to go back to Pearl.

**FOWLER:** This was at Wake?

**STYLES:** At Wake, yea. So we were going to go anyhow in about two or three days. I said no, I'll just stay on the boat and go back with the boat. Fortunately I did because there weren't any more planes that flew out of Wake.

We got into Pearl on 4 December and the attack took place on 7 December. Of course when we got in, everybody except the bare duty section was granted liberty over the weekend. Except that I was supposed to be back at 8:30 Sunday morning to take over the duty on the boat.

On Sunday morning, I was sitting on my porch there in Aleva Heights looking down at Pearl Harbor, eating breakfast. I had on my uniform and was about ready to head out and take over the watch about eight o'clock and I saw this plane come in toward Hickam and just collapse into the water and all these air bursts in the air. So we hopped in our car. My wife was going to come out that night. I was going to ride out, pick up Chick Clarey and go out and our wives were going to come in the other car and have dinner - that was the normal - and watch a movie. So we hopped in the car and when we got down to Kamayamaya Highway - guards made Elizabeth go home - and they stopped the first car coming along and put me in it and they let me out at the gate to the base and I ran down there to the submarine.

Japs were strafing all the roads. I fell to the ground a time or two. But we were already firing at them.

There were only four submarines in Pearl Harbor that day of the 96 ships. The Narwhal and Dolphin, which had gotten back from a war patrol to Wake on Thursday; the Taritog had gotten back from a war patrol to Midway on Friday and the fourth submarine was the Catchchet, which was in the Navy Yard for overhaul. I've seen some reports saying the Cuttlefish was in but they weren't. They were back in Mare Island for overhaul and were enroute to Pearl, but they weren't inport.

**FOWLER: That morning when you ran down to the ship, what was the situation on the ship? How many crew did you have and stuff like that when you arrived there?**

**STYLES:** Well most of the crew were aboard because they didn't go on liberty very much. They weren't married. Maybe one or two were married and they would sleep up in the barracks on the base, which was right up above the ship. So they were mostly onboard.

**FOWLER: How about the officers? Were most of them there?**

**STYLES:** They were either there or got there within a very short time.

**FOWLER: So you had a pretty full complement?**

**STYLES:** Oh yea, we had a pretty full complement.

We were one of two submarines that were configured to carry aviation gasoline and we had carried a full load of aviation gasoline when we went to Wake Island. We had had some exercises before where we would go out; we went out to French Frigate Shoals one time and fueled a squadron of seaplanes. So when we got in on Saturday . . .

**FOWLER: Excuse me Ralph, but that morning did you have a full load aboard of AVGAS?**

**STYLES:** Aviation Gasoline, the barge was alongside defueling it on Saturday and it was alongside Sunday morning. So we cast him off and made him go out. No one wanted him near. So they sat there in the middle of Pearl Harbor and didn't get touched.

But I tell people that when I went to the War College they made all of us read *The Influence of Sea Power on History*. You know, Mahan's book. He says in all his studying of the battles of history that he can only come to the conclusion that Divine Providence intervenes at critical moments. One of his main examples is the British over the last three centuries, you'll see that they, at the start of World War II, controlled every key spot throughout the world; Gibraltar, Suez Canal, South Africa, the approaches to the Panama Canal, Hong Kong. Just look around the world and see what the British controlled, Malay Peninsula. He said the British weren't smart enough to have accumulated all that, that it was the hand of God. Well, I feel that that's what happened at Pearl Harbor because nothing could have united the country like the attack did. The Japs didn't drop a single bomb on the submarine base. The submarines turned around with their shops and outfitting the submarines that sank two-thirds of all Japanese merchant ships. They didn't drop one bomb on the topside oil storage. They had a whole oil farm there. One bomb would have really wrecked havoc. They didn't drop a single bomb on the shops at Pearl Harbor. If they had why every ship would have had to come back to the states for overhaul or repair. So why didn't they do it? The Lord was watching over us I think.

**VESTAL:** So you weren't strafed at all?

**STYLES:** Oh no, except on the base. The planes that were carrying torpedoes came down right off our stern to about a hundred feet so they could drop their torpedoes aimed at the battleships. If the planes were higher, the drop to the water would damage the torpedoes.

The battleships were over there at Ford Island and we could shoot at the planes. You could have thrown a potato at them. Then they'd drop a torpedo and zoom off.

**FOWLER:** Actually that morning there were more battleships tied up there to the battleship moorings than there were submarines at the sub base, weren't there?

**STYLES:** Oh yea, definitely.

**FOWLER:** So that might be one reason why they could pick that kind of a target.

**STYLES:** Now here's the picture of Pearl that morning. It was taken about nine o'clock.

**FOWLER:** That's the Narwhal?

**STYLES:** Yea, and that's the Dolphin.

**VESTAL:** On the other side of the pier.

**STYLES:** The planes were about 100 feet off our stern. Here's a picture of the plane we shot down, pulled up off the end of the dock.



Also another thing, the two carriers weren't in port. They should have been in port but they ran into a storm at sea. You can't tell me that that wasn't an act of God.

**FOWLER: Yea, I think you're right.**

**STYLES: Then that night, of course . . .**

**FOWLER: Did you get underway right away?**

**STYLES: Oh no. We'd just been on a two-month's war patrol. We had to have a lot of repairs. We went up on the base and cut down some palm trees, brought them down and stood them up on deck.**

**FOWLER: Camouflaged the ship, huh. (LAUGHTER)**

**STYLES: Camouflaged the ship. Then that night about midnight, see, one carrier had launched their planes and they got there unarmed just in the middle of the whole fracas and of course all got shot down. Well, I've forgotten whether it's the Enterprise and the Lex, I'm not sure of the two carriers. But that night, about eleven o'clock, the planes from the other carrier came in and this is a picture taken showing every search light in the place was on them and our own Force started shooting at them. Finally they got word, cease fire, and she shot down most of the planes off the other carrier were destroyed.**

**VESTAL: What guns were on the Narwhal at the time?**

**STYLES: What?**

**VESTAL: What guns did you have on deck?**

**STYLES: We had two 6-inch guns. They fired 105 pound shell and you had to load the gun with a bag of gunpowder. We had these hoists that came up from below and delivered the shell and bag at each gun.**

**FOWLER: How many bags, one or two?**

**STYLES: One bag.**

**FOWLER: One bag. One projectile and one bag in a 6-inch gun, close the breech and fire.**

**STYLES: We didn't fire those. We were firing machine guns.**

**VESTAL: So that's what you shot the plane down with, machine guns?**

**STYLES: Yea.**

**FOWLER: Probably, what, 30 or 50 caliber?**

**STYLES: Fifty caliber as I remember.**

We couldn't contact our wives. No one could use the phones. I didn't know what had happened, whether my wife had gotten back home that morning.

The Japanese came on our radios in English, good English, and said paratroopers were landing at Diamond Head and paratroopers were landing over near Kamayamaya (phonetic) School and we lived just below Kamayamaya (phonetic) School.

As I remember it was about two days before I could get Elizabeth on the telephone.

A piece of shrapnel came through the window of our house. I have it in there.

Of course everything was blacked out and they threatened to shoot out any lights anywhere. We even had to turn off the pilot light on the gas stove.

After about three days, why they let the wives come on the base and after about ten days they let the married people go ashore during the daytime. They had to be back before dark. Eventually they let us stay home overnight. But when Christmas came, everybody had to stay aboard. No liberty.

**VESTAL: Now the two six-inch guns were forward of the conning tower?**

**STYLES: No, one forward and one aft.**

**VESTAL: Oh, I see.**

**STYLES: I've got a picture in there of the Narwhal. It was something to do a Battle Surface.**

**FOWLER: And the forward hatch and the after hatch were right by the guns so you could bring up the crew and the ammunition.**

**STYLES: You had the crew up in the forward hatch.**

**FOWLER: From the time you surfaced until you could actually fire the first round, how long did it take you?**

**STYLES: Probably a minute anyhow because you had to unscrew the plug off the barrel and take a big cover off the breach of the gun.**

**VESTAL: They were waterproofed?**

**STYLES:** They're waterproofed, yea. I wasn't a believer in firing our guns during the war. If the target wasn't worth a torpedo it wasn't worth getting the gun crew up there and getting shot, or a stray bullet puncturing some vent line or do some damage that would prevent diving.

**FOWLER:** Might cripple the ship, yea.

**STYLES:** I almost did a battle surface once, but then I thought better of it. I thought it was fool-hearty.

**VESTAL:** Well was the Sea Devil equipped with a big deck gun?

**STYLES:** We had a five-inch gun.

**VESTAL:** Five-inch, one?

**STYLES:** But one shell contained both powder and projectile, you just loaded and fired.

**FOWLER:** It was like a cartridge, you know, like you put in a rifle. It had the shell and the brass and the range of the five-inch gun by then was probably better than in the six-inch gun in the old days, wasn't it?

**STYLES:** I don't remember.

**FOWLER:** I'm fairly certain it was, but I'm not sure either.

**STYLES:** The six-inch guns were . . .

**FOWLER:** Almost like a blunder-bust weren't they?

**STYLES:** Yea.

**FOWLER:** When did you first get underway after December the 7<sup>th</sup> on Narwhal?

**STYLES:** I think probably we had oil leaks because the old submarines then used rivets instead of welding the joints. I mean, you'd get a depth charge and a rivet might pop. And a lot of them leaked. So it was probably a month before we got all our voyage repairs. See, we'd been at sea for two months. We were over in the Navy Yard before we got underway. So we made two war patrols by the time the Battle of Midway came along. Actually we were in the Navy Yard again when the Battle of Midway was coming up and they told us; we had both engines down. They were completely overhauling the engines. They said get them put together and get out of here. So we left on one engine while they worked on the other one on the way out to Midway and on the way out the good one failed, but by then they had the other one working.

**FOWLER:** Which was not an uncommon experience in the old S-boat days. Were the two first war patrols pretty uneventful?

**STYLES:** No, we sank, the skipper got a Navy Cross. The second one, I guess it was, we sank about two ships, two pretty good-sized ships. Let me see if I have that recorded. I guess I don't have that. The skipper . . .

**FOWLER:** Who was the skipper then?

**STYLES:** "Weary" Wilkins.

I was supposed to have been recommended for a Silver Star because the Skipper received a Navy Cross. Later on in the war I would have been. I got a Letter of Commendation.

**FOWLER:** Let's go then to the Battle of Midway. You started telling us about that. Why don't you start out when you got underway on the Narwhal just to participate in the Battle of Midway.

**STYLES:** All we did was go out there and sit and then come home because we could hear a lot of stuff on – we were on the surface all the time. After the first patrol or two, the first patrol we ran submerged practically all the way out to station off Okinawa. We just barely got out there when we had to start home.

**VESTAL:** Were any of the Japanese ships visible to you at Midway?

**STYLES:** Nope. It was just a beautiful sunny day and we never saw anything.

Ensign Gay, you know, in the torpedo plane was shot down and sat in a rubber boat and watched the whole Battle of Midway. He was the only survivor from his patrol squadron. I've got his book in here. He used to live down towards Naples.

**FOWLER:** When you left the Narwhal, then where did you go?

**STYLES:** I went to command the S-20, which was, when I finally got to it, well I was ordered to report to the Commandant of the Twelve Naval District and so . . .

**FOWLER:** Which was in San Diego? Was that in . . .?

**STYLES:** San Francisco.

**FOWLER:** San Francisco, that's what I was thinking.

**STYLES:** And I was supposed to wait there until I got orders. Well I waited several days and I hadn't had any orders. So I told them whatever orders I got to send them down to a cousin of my wife that lived down in San Pedro.

So I got on a plane or train, train I guess, and went back to Michigan.

So when the orders finally came to me, I drove down to North Carolina to visit my family and then up to New London. I got to New London and housing was very, very sparse. You couldn't get anything to rent. So, my wife stayed with a friend then and I went up to Maine, Casco Bay where the S-20 was operating to relieve Sam Dealy (phonetic) and he came down and got a new boat, Harder and took out to the Pacific. So then I took the S-20 back to New London.

The S-20 was an experimental submarine. Everything on it, they had saddle tanks they called them, to put extra fuel in. They were developing these fuel tanks so that after the fuel was used you could flood them with water and use them as ballast tanks. On one shaft, there was a high-speed diesel engine that ran a generator that produced electricity that ran the motor to run that propeller. On the other shaft was a slow speed diesel with a motor that ran idle unless you dived or were charging batteries and hooked up to the propeller so that the propeller turned as fast as the engine was turning. When you dived you just disconnected the engine and ran the screw on the motor, which was in between the propeller and the diesel engine.

Then we developed the depth charge indicator. We worked with a group of scientists around New London and Woods Hole. They developed an indicator that would show whether a depth charge was ahead or astern, on either bow, or above or below you - this indicator eventually was put on all submarines. The scientists said, will you just go out there and we'll drop a bomb and we won't come any closer than five feet. I said, no that's not the way we're going to do it. You get a half a mile away because if you came that close to the S-20, built in 1923, why that would have been the end of it. But we developed that.

We developed a new long sonar listening equipment (the JT Sonar), that when I came through on the Sea Devil I had them put one on in New London, put one on the Sea Devil and we picked up a convoy that was between 60 and 80,000 yards away out in the Yellow Sea. We wouldn't have done it if we hadn't had that. Then every torpedo tube fired differently. They were developing a torpedo tube that would catch the bubble on firing and different air pressures for firing on all of them. So I'd go out and test those.

We always fired a torpedo when we test fired the tubes at the target ships, so I got very experienced in making attacks. If I were ahead of any target that was coming through the area I don't think it could have gotten away from me. But it was a wonderful attack training experience to have had that boat.

**FOWLER:** There was a lot of talk in the early part of the war about our torpedoes being ineffective. Did you have direct experience with that?

**STYLES:** Oh yea. The first patrol I made on the Sea Devil I think I fired 16 torpedoes and two hit. Then I made about three attacks on convoys during daytime and they were all Mark 14 Torpedoes that left a wake. I started out firing them at six feet depth, then four feet, then 0 and they kept running under the target. The escort would come right back and start dropping depth charges because they could see exactly where it came from.

**FOWLER:** See it going by.

**VESTAL: When did they resolve that problem with torpedoes?**

**STYLES:** Well, they had figured it out in '43 but they hadn't gotten, these torpedoes I had – the Mark 14's – they still hadn't worked it all out, that it got all the way around. But then after that, why my torpedoes, I didn't have any trouble with them on the next patrol and on the third patrol I carried all-electric torpedoes that did not leave any wake.

**(SIDE B, TAPE 2)**

**FOWLER:** Side A of this cassette ends the first session with Captain Ralph Styles, which will be continued in a second session at a later date. This interview was done on September the 25<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Thank you.

## 23 October 2001

**FOWLER:** This is a continuation of the Oral History Interview of Captain Ralph Styles. This is the second session. This is October the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. The interviewers are the same as the first session: Lou Vestal and Earl Fowler.

Ralph, we left off last time when you were on the S-20 and we'll pick it up there. Except I know in the intervening time you've thought of a few things that are worthwhile mentioning and why don't you just go ahead and fill in some of the gaps that we left out the last time.

**STYLES:** Well, I just wanted to make some remarks about life at the Naval Academy and the first year or two in the Fleet that might be of interest to people today.

When I was at the Naval Academy, at the end of every month, why the grades would come out in each subject and they would be posted on the bulletin board. Then the next month we all marched - all the Battalion Plebes, Youngsters and so forth - marched to class in order and they would rearrange your classes so that the ones that made the highest grade were in Section One and those that made the lowest grade were in the Tail Section. Well of course I usually pushed along in the Tail Section. But every month you could see a group marching to class and you knew who had done well the month before by seeing where they were marching. Also they made us, when a class was over, form up and march back to Bancroft Hall. Not as a whole battalion but as, your class would march back across - no one sauntered back and forth across the campus. Of course no Midshipmen could ride in a car regardless of rank, even First Class.

At the dances - of course the Plebes couldn't go to any of the dances -but if you invited a date to go, usually a chaperone would come down with her and take the Midshipman and the girl to dinner at Carvek Hall or wherever there in Annapolis and then the Midshipman would walk the girl to the Naval Academy and to the dance. When the dance was over the First Class – no one of course could leave the dance until it was over unless you're signed off and put down what time you left to take the girl home – and then a First Classman would have to be back within an

hour of that time or the end of the dance if he stayed that long. Second Classmen had 45 minutes to take the girl home and get back and Youngsters had 30 minutes after the dance to take their girls home and get back. About at the end of 30 minutes or 45 minutes or an hour you'd hear running foot steps all through the streets of Annapolis. These were the Midshipmen that had stayed a little extra long with their girl and had to get back before their time ran out. A record was kept of that.

I was married in 1935, and of course the pay of an Ensign was a hundred and twenty five dollars a month and we had the 15 percent pay cut that Roosevelt had instituted for all branches of the government. So we got a hundred and twenty five dollars a month less 15 percent. Of course I graduated in '33 and the two years before I married I had saved up enough money somehow to make a down payment on a new car and the rest of the money I got from the lending agent there. Admiral Molly Stark's son-in-law had the lending agency there for the Fleet. You could go to him to get a loan on most anything. Well at the end of the first year of my married life my wife had a miscarriage and she was in quite poor health for a while and the doctor said we had to have a full time maid for the next year. So we did, we made out pretty well but I had to increase the loan on my car. I had paid seven hundred dollars for this new Pontiac and, at one time the lending officer lent me up to twelve hundred dollars on this car that I paid seven hundred for. When I'd go in to get more money he'd say, well I'll make it, not on your car, but on whatever furniture you have in the house. Well I had very little, meager amount of furniture in the house, but anyhow he eventually let me go up to twelve hundred bucks and it was the middle of the war before I was out of debt completely.

Well I think I was just leaving the S-20 to go . . .

**FOWLER:** Let me kind of set the stage here. When we left off last time you were C.O. of the S-20 in New London and you'd mentioned working on some torpedoes and some attack procedures. It sounded like, to me, that the work the S-20 was doing was what we later on starting calling the Submarine Development Group in New London that worked on new equipment and new procedures for submarines. So was there specific new things you were working on that we didn't mention last time that you'd like to tell s about?

**STYLES:** Well we had four torpedo tubes. They were all forward of course. We had installed different firing mechanisms on each torpedo tube. This was in an effort to get rid of the bubble when a submarine fired a torpedo. Now one of them would do that. One pushed it out by very high compressed air. But all four of them were different.

We also had developed what they called a Depth Charge Indicator and the scientists put that onboard. It would tell when depth charged, whether the depth charge was ahead or astern, above or below. This was a big help later on patrols when I got to see that when we had one on. If one were depth charged one could tell where that charge exploded and try to evade the next depth charge by going in a different direction or changing depth.

We also developed new JT listening equipment that was a much longer base for the listening gear. It was installed so that the operator was in the Forward Torpedo Room, but you could detect anything, much, much further. As I came down through New London on the Sea

Devil - we hadn't gotten one yet - so the scientists put one on the Sea Devil and we were the first to have it out in the Pacific. On my third patrol I picked up screws of a convoy at about 60 to 80,000 yards with it, which one couldn't possibly have done with any other kind of gear. This was the first, as I've told you, one shaft was direct drive with a low-speed diesel engine on it that was just disengaged, unclutched, when the submarine dived and the motor on the same shaft took over. On the other side was a high-speed diesel with a generator that generated electricity into the battery and that screw ran on a motor with electricity from the battery, even on the surface or submerged. It had a small high-speed screw and the starboard side had a slow-speed screw and it was something unusual to maneuver.

We also had the first extra fuel tanks outboard on each side and so the poor old S-20 was nicknamed the "Pregnant Whale" because she looked like she was a pregnant ship.

**FOWLER: I would think that your experience on the S-20 was great training in preparation for taking over a new submarine like the Sea Devil and going right into what was the heart of the war.**

**How did you learn that you were going to leave the S-20 and go to Portsmouth?**

**STYLES:** Well I had orders. It so happened that Eweary Wilkins who was my skipper onboard the Narwhal when the war started; and cancelled my orders to go to shore duty that had come in four days before the attack on Pearl Harbor. He said, "Someday Ralph I'm going to make it up to you". So here, three years later he was the Detail Officer at the Submarine desk in the Bureau of Personnel and he sent me a letter and he said, "Ralph, I've picked out a submarine for you, new construction. It's called the Sea Devil and its hull number is 400." Well in the Navy 4.0 was about the tops at that time. You couldn't do better than 4.0. So he had made up for canceling my orders to shore duty back in December 1941.

Actually the training, with all the torpedo firings, I must have fired between a hundred and two hundred-torpedo exercises . . .

**FOWLER: On the S-20?**

**STYLES:** . . . with these experimental tubes and I had learned to fire a straight shot if you can. Try not to angle torpedoes because that brings a whole other element into the solution of the problem. I think I reached a point that I felt sure if I was ahead of a target coming through the area, that it couldn't get away from me. I could maneuver so as to get it.

So then, when I left the S-20 I went to the Sub School, what they called the PCO . . .

**FOWLER: PCO Course.**

**STYLES:** . . . Prospective Commanding Officer School and there were seven candidates in the class. One of them was Gene Flucky who had not been on a War patrol. He had come from a boat in Panama and I think that's where he'd spent the early part of the war.



**FOWLER:** Later awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor as I recall.

**STYLES:** Yes he was. We all thought, gee, he's either going to be killed or – in the way he would make his attacks and such – or else he's going to be a real hero. But it turned out he was a real hero. But anyhow, that was a month's course and we spent it making attacks and reading old war patrol reports of all the submarines and discussing them. Then I went on off to Portsmouth to take the Sea Devil.

**FOWLER:** Let me just digress for a minute and ask you a question. I've heard a story and I don't remember where I heard about Flucky. I think he was SubPac and for some reason or other they were going out to inspect, he and a small part of his staff were going out to inspect a submarine at sea. They got out there and the seas were pretty rough and it was too dangerous to bring the boat alongside the submarine in the seaway, so Flucky turned to his staff and he says, "Well gentlemen, let's go" and he dived into the water and swam to the submarine. Did you ever hear that story? Was that a true story?

**STYLES:** No, I don't know. But I think I told you before that I had, in Honolulu when Red Ramage left - he was in the S-boats there - I moved into the house that he had lived in and then when I relieved Sam Deeley on the S-20 up in Casco Bay in 1942 he asked me where I lived in Honolulu and so I told him the house in the Alea Heights that I'd gotten from Red Ramage and he said, "That's the house I lived in". So Red Ramage, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, had taken over from Sam Deeley, also a Congressional Medal of Honor winner.

But the line of getting congressional medals was broken then. Joe Grenfeld (Assistant Operations Officer for SUBPAC in 1945) told me that my third patrol on Sea Devil and the first patrol of Trepang were sent forward for one to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor. Mine did not but I received a second Navy Cross and the ship got the Navy Unit Commendation.

**FOWLER:** When was it you actually reported to Portsmouth as the PCO of Sea Devil?

**STYLES:** The end of January 1944.

**STYLES:** Chick Clarey who had been my friend from Naval Academy days was due to take the Pintado out. He had commissioned the Pintado and was about ready to leave and he was going to let me have his apartment. Well the Pintado was delayed a little bit so I had to wait around about a couple of weeks before I could get the apartment, so we went up to a ski lodge up in New Hampshire. We didn't ski but we had a beautiful, beautiful time up there and, of course, stayed at the old Rockingham Hotel in Portsmouth when we came back and then we moved to the apartment after the Pintado left.

But there were a total of about ten people who had been ordered to the Sea Devil that were there. These were hard core submariners. Most of them had been on War patrol. Some of them, were enlisted men and others officers. The ten of us rode the submarine down the waves on February the 28<sup>th</sup> of 1944.

I'll just digress a minute because the keel of the submarine was laid in October 1943. A hundred and two days later it was launched. Another 102 days later the ship was completed, the tests were made and it was accepted and we were ready to leave the Navy Yard 204 days after the keel was laid.

**FOWLER: So in about seven months from keel-laying to sailing away?**

**STYLES: Yea. Then . . .**

**FOWLER: It's more like three to five years nowadays.**

**STYLES: Yea. It costs quite a bit more. It cost under 5 million dollars to build the Sea Devil. At that time it was completed, it was built in the shortest time of any submarine in Portsmouth from keel laying to acceptance.**

**FOWLER: My recollection, in my day, of the attack submarine budget was about 400 million dollars to build.**

**STYLES: Then?**

**FOWLER: Now, in the Eighties.**

**STYLES: One ballistic missile submarine today costs more than all the submarines we used in World War II.**

**FOWLER: They're about over a billion dollars today I think.**

**STYLES: About 1.2 billion. These WWII submarines were built for five million dollars.**

Well anyhow, the next 98 days after it was accepted and the trials had been made, we started training the crew. We went down to Newport, Rhode Island and test-fired the torpedoes; went to New London and had about two to three weeks training; down and through the Panama Canal; out to Pearl Harbor and had two or three weeks training there. Then we went to Midway to top off fuel and supplies and onto our patrol area, which was at the mouth of Tokyo Bay. The first day we were just getting to station and along came a submarine. It was coming out of Tokyo Bay and we fired four torpedoes and sank it. That's 302 days after the keel was laid in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, we sank our first ship.

**FOWLER: Ralph, would you cover a couple of things I think. One is what it was like as a - this was right at the height of the war. We were just starting to turn around the axis powers and so forth - what was it like to take over a brand new submarine? And two; talk a little bit about the Sea Devil's capabilities with respect to the submarines you'd had previously. It must have had a lot of new equipment; new features; a totally new design; and give us a feel for the ship itself plus your experiences.**

**STYLES:** One of the best things was that the submarine test depth was 412 feet. The old Narwhal was 250 feet and the S-20 was 150. When I was checking out the Depth Charge Indicator with the S-20, the scientist said, "Well now you just dive and we'll drop some depth charges and we won't drop any closer than six feet. I mean any nearer to you." Well I said, no, you won't drop them any closer than a half a mile because every time they did drop one - the hull was riveted back then - the rivets would start leaking.

**FOWLER: Leaking?**

**STYLES:** And we would get dust out of the overhead and everything else.

But anyhow, submarines built during WWII had welded hulls.

I'd never been on a submarine, or served on one that had a Torpedo Data Computer (TDC), which was really essential to most of the attacks. When you fire a straight shot it's not that important, but if you fire an angle shot you'd better have a TDC. We had to make our attacks on the Narwhal with a, what they called an ISWAS, which was a thing the Attack Officer wore around his neck. He'd put down what the course of the target was and the angle on the bow and then the Assistant Attack Officer had what was called a Banjo, with which the angle to set on the torpedo was determined. Each angle on the torpedo had to be done by hand.

But the thing that amazed me about getting to the Sea Devil was that, as I said, there were ten really old-time submariners, but the rest of the crew; 75 percent of the crew were teenage kids; 17/18 years old. The Chief of the Boat was 24 years old and I had one man in the crew that was 28 and they called him "Pappy". But I was 32, 33 I guess by that time. But these were kids! They'd been through what they called a Submarine School and that was that they'd go to New London and they'd walk them down on the waterfront and say, "That's a submarine there. Now you're ready." I mean, "You have had your basic training. Go up and join the crew of the Sea Devil." Well, as I said, they were like kids and I realized that I'd have to treat them a lot like kids. But I did find out when the chips were really down they produced and they produced well. But the first thing that happened that made me realize they were really kids, was we were about ready to leave Portsmouth, so they sent this kid; George Lane up to draw the torpedo alcohol. Well he had loved motorcycles. He was about 17 years old. He saw the Ship Superintendent's little motorbike there as he was coming back from drawing the torpedo alcohol. He'd already drunk some of it, think. So he got Commander Spiller's motorbike and the first thing I knew about it the Marines brought him to the ship and had me sign for him. So I had Mast and I gave him 30 days restriction to the submarine to start the day we left on our first patrol. I asked him at Mast, George, you're not going to do this again are you? "No Captain, I'll never do that again." So it just happened that about two or three days later I ran into Admiral Withers on the Yard - he was commander of the Naval Yard there - and he said, "What did you ever do about that kid that stole Commander Spiller's motorbike? I said, Admiral, I gave him 30 days restriction to the boat. I didn't tell him when it was to start.

But when we got down to New London and we started our three weeks of intensive training. We stayed out overnight a couple of nights, anchored, out over near Long Island and then be ready to start early in the morning for our training. At about 2 o'clock one night we had

lookouts on the Bridge - and the Officer of the Deck, I guess, he was down in the Conning Tower - but anyhow I was asleep and the Collision Alarm rang. So I rushed up to the Bridge and this one lookout, who was about 17 I guess, had drifted off to sleep and had fallen over and hit the Collision Alarm. So I said, Bob, we don't do things like that on this boat. You've got to stay awake. So, he turned out to be one of my better Torpedomen.

Then we got to Panama, and of course went through the Canal and stayed four days over on the Pacific side. We anchored in Lake Gatun. About half way through, we all had a swim off the sub. It is a fresh water lake and the longer we stayed there, more of the barnacles would die. That was my excuse.

As we left Panama we got out about two or three hours and I was down in the Wardroom and the Officer of the Deck called me and said, "Captain, there's somebody up here signaling us. That's a merchant ship up here signaling us." Well this was an officer who'd graduated recently from the University of California, a football player and a big fraternity man and he thought he knew everything. This was the first and only submarine he served on. Anyhow, I rushed up to the Bridge just in time to see a shell fall short of us and one over. We were bracketed and the next round would probably be right on. So I said, he's firing at us, dive! So dive we did and when we got submerged I heard this terrible rattling in the superstructure. So when we surfaced I sent somebody down to see what was happening in the superstructure and they found a bicycle down there that had been taken apart that was swiped in Panama and I don't know what they were going to do with it. But I never could pin that on any particular crew member.

But once we got on station, by the time we got out there they knew their jobs and fortunately.

**STYLES:** Well, I'll tell you these stories about the kids first and then I'll get into telling about patrols.

When we finished our first patrol we went into Majuro for overhaul. This is in the Marshal Islands, an atoll in the Pacific, that by that time the US had two tenders there that did the overhaul on submarines and they didn't have too far to go to get back on station.

So the first thing when we got in there, I understood, had been told that the enlisted men could only have beer. The officers of course at the Officer's Club had whatever they wanted. So I told the Chief of the Boat, "Take a five gallon can of torpedo alcohol ashore with you for rest and recreation." He did, and so the next morning the Chiefs and Officers were going to play the enlisted men in a softball game. Well we got out there and the crew could hardly stand up. It had been raining and there were puddles all over the place out in the outfield and an officer would hit a ball out towards the outfield and a sailor would run to catch it and he'd fall down in a mud puddle and wouldn't get up - just lie there and laugh. Well the Officers and Chiefs beat the enlisted men but I learned a very good lesson and I never did pass out torpedo alcohol again.

One night while we were in Majuro, word was circulating that there would be a show that the USO was putting on with Betty Hutton in it. It would be on another island in the atoll where Army and Marines were stationed, but boats would be sent over to take submariners. Of course

most of my crew went over, but when they arrived they could not get within range to see it. It was out in the open, but there was an old shack in the rear with a sign on it that read "Danger-Keep Off". Well of course, my gang climbed up on top of the building so they could see the show. About half way through the building collapsed and our yeoman broke his leg and had to remain in Majuro. He later told us at a reunion that he had served on over twenty submarines and this was the best and the happiest. Also, the second day with his leg up in a trust, Betty Hutton stopped by and hopped in his bed. But what could he do?

But then when we got ready to leave Majuro we decided – there was good fishing there within the atoll – and we decided to have a cookout, catch fish and have a cookout and then we were going to leave the next morning. So at the cookout the fish tasted pretty good. But I will tell you, the officers that were there on the tenders, the two squadron commanders of the two tenders, kept chickens ashore so they'd have fresh eggs for breakfast from time to time. So at our cookout, besides the fish we had some chicken. It tasted mighty good; real fresh live chickens – I didn't know it at the time – but then after we left I found out that the laying hens had all disappeared from Majuro. At one reunion, about 1994, everybody thought somebody else had stolen the chickens. One kid from Arizona had one of these key rings for everybody. A key ring with a plastic chicken hanging by its feet and a sign that said: "I'm innocent Majuro Island October 1944 Robbie". I am very thankful that we never went back to Majuro.

**FOWLER: (chuckle) That's good.**

**When you went into Majuro you'd just completed your first war patrol. Other than the first submarine you sank in Tokyo . . .**

**STYLES:** It was a submarine. That was the only thing we sank and that was the first day on arriving on station. During that patrol we ran into three separate convoys going up and down the coast and we would make attacks on them. I could see the torpedoes running - we had steam torpedoes – and nothing would happen. The Jap escort would just come back along the torpedo wake and start depth charging. So the first attack we made after the sub I set the torpedo depth at six feet and then I set it at four feet and then at zero feet. They apparently must have just run deep under the ships. But we did have three small convoys to shoot at.

We ran into this terrible typhoon that turned over 3 destroyers in Admiral McCain's group under Halsey. He had a carrier task force at sea and I think three destroyers were rolled over by the typhoon. It was terrible. We went down to two or three hundred feet and just stayed there 18 hours - as long as we possibly could - by bleeding oxygen into the boat. And we could still tell there were big waves up there because the Depth Charge Indicator would show 250 feet and then it'd be 200 after a wave would roll over which indicated the wave was at least 50 feet. Of course the real problem was surfacing in that kind of weather because if the tanks are partially full and you have the fluid in them that will roll . . .

**FOWLER: Like a free-surface effect.**

**STYLES:** Yea. So that constituted the end of the first patrol, just that one submarine.

**FOWLER: How long was the first patrol, how many days?**

**STYLES:** It was, from the time we left until the time we came in, it was close to 60 days. I didn't have any shortened patrols due to not firing all of my torpedoes. I think we fired 14 or 16 torpedoes on that patrol.

So we went in to Majuro and I was promoted to full Commander and was thrown over the side by the crew. We had our cookout and everybody was glad to get out for another patrol. The officers particularly because; and the men too, but the officers would stay at the Officer's Clubhouse and play Liar's Dice - I've guess you've played that - and would rack up, after every round you had another drink and sometimes you've have three or four stacked up there. Then the bar would close up. They had an hour to close that but you had plenty there to finish off. On the way home - we all were ashore there in Quonset huts - and coconuts grew on the island and the big pastime was to get a few coconuts and throw them on the roof of the Quonset huts and yell "Depth Charge"!

Well it wasn't all fun and games, believe me, but these kids, when the chips were down, would really come through. They were mostly patriotic teenagers that were in for the duration. They wanted to get on with the war, get it over, go home and get on with their lives. Most of them went on to college and did very well in their careers.

So then this second patrol we were sent over into the Yellow Sea. By then, I had a seasoned crew.

The first big action we had on the second patrol, there was no indication, I mean we didn't have any Ultra messages or anything. We just were on the surface one night charging the batteries and we picked up this very large convoy on the way to the Philippines. No early warning about it or anything. So we ran along with it on the same course they did until we got up to where we wanted to start the attack. I had planned to go in on the surface and I could get more shots off. So just about midnight I thought we were in position. I wanted to come in on the bow of the ones that we were ahead at about a 35 degree angle so that I could keep a very low silhouette and not broadside. So we turned to go in and just then a tremendous wave hit us, came over the Bridge, washed one of the crew from the Crow's Nest down. Fortunately he hit the railing down on the lower deck or he would have gone overboard. He wasn't able to make anymore runs with us because he had broken ribs or something. But anyhow water came in through the Main Induction and got into the Mess Hall, which is above the After Battery and it was almost knee-deep in there before the Ship's Cook could close the Main Induction. He fortunately opened his freezer, which is in the same compartment, and let this excess water run down into his freezer and storeroom . . .

**FOWLER: Instead of into the Batteries.**

**STYLES:** . . . rather than get in the batteries. For that we gave him a Silver Star because we felt he had really . . .

**FOWLER: Saved the ship.**

**STYLES:** . . . practically saved the ship. Water came down through the Conning Tower hatch. It was a tremendous wave. Well that grounded out everything, so we all turned to and removed all the grounds.

So meanwhile we turned back and ran along with them and about 5 o'clock, just as it was getting daybreak, we submerged and went in. That's when we sank an ammunition ship, a large ammunition ship and a troop ship. They were headed for the Philippines. When we hit the ammunition ship the explosion pushed us down five feet by the Depth Gauge. The ship was 500 to 1,000 yards away but it really shook us up. So we had to stay down until they all got passed and when we surfaced we weren't able to catch them again.

So we stayed there in the area and about a week later we had an ULTRA saying that a task force was headed from the Philippines to Japan. It didn't say what the composition was but it's a large task force. When I surfaced that night there were about five other submarines that I could communicate with on the radar close by and so we sort of spread out. Along about 7:30 PM we picked up this group of ships coming through our area. They were making 28 knots and I was on the end of the line and the whole task force was zigzagging frantically and had evaded all the other subs. But I got in close enough so I could fire my four after-torpedo tubes at them. I had come up enough so that my radar was exposed to track the group, just with the decks awash. I had them on radar. So I fired the four after torpedoes at the largest ship and two of them hit the carrier and the third one hit a cruiser. Apparently the carrier slowed to 12 knots and according to the record that I got, the Redfish was able and fired torpedoes at her. There were quite a few explosions going on, on the carrier. So they gave the Redfish and the Sea Devil credit for the carrier. John Alden has just written a book "Submarine Attacks During WWII". He has interviewed Japanese aboard the carrier JUNYO and they were only hit by two torpedoes from the Sea Devil. The Redfish torpedoes didn't hit her. Although they got the carrier back to Japan, she was considered a total loss. When we came back into port I didn't claim hitting anything but the carrier, but SUBPAC had decoded a message saying that a carrier and a cruiser were hit in the attack. So at the end of my patrol, when Admiral Lockwood endorsed the Patrol Report, he put credit on it for hitting an unknown of 4,000 tons, which I didn't even realize I'd hit except I heard three explosions. So anyhow, apparently we hit something that in addition to the carrier . . . well two torpedoes into it would do a hell of a lot of damage.

So at the end of that patrol they brought us back to Pearl and gave me the Navy Cross, my first Navy Cross with the ship and my crew and also put my name and picture in the submarine base Roll of Honor. Anybody that got a Navy Cross is in the Rouges' Gallery on the Pearl Harbor Sub Base with a picture.

**FOWLER:** Now that carrier wasn't sunk. It was just disabled?

**STYLES:** No, but it was still in the Navy Yard being repaired when the war ended.

**FOWLER:** Yea, I remember that.

**STYLES:** This was December and when the war ended in August, why it was still in the Navy Yard. It never got back out.

**FOWLER:** Was that a large carrier?

**STYLES:** Yea. It was one of the larger carriers, the JUNYO.

But we came back to Honolulu and the crew stayed in the Royal Hawaiian and had a wonderful time.

They let me fly home to California. My wife had - after I left New London - had gone home because her father wasn't too well and he had died meanwhile and she decided to go out to San Diego to be close to where one could find something out about what the submarine Navy was doing. They had a submarine base there and they'd tell the wives a lot of what was going on and when their husband's ship came in, which she couldn't get back in Michigan. So she'd gone out there with our daughter and had an apartment that she sublet but apparently she was going to loose it. So I flew back to the states and stayed ten days and in that time we bought a little house out in East San Diego on the Canyon and sent for our furniture, which was still in Portsmouth, N.H. and got it started out.

So then I flew back out in time to take the submarine on the next patrol.

**FOWLER:** Did you have sonar on all these submarines?

**STYLES:** What?

**FOWLER:** Did you have sonar on the Narwhal and the . . . ?

**STYLES:** Yes we had, as I remember, we had sonar on them, but submarines didn't use active sonar much then. Usually it got to be in an attack that the Skipper would make one ping just before he fired to check the range and crank that in. We had good underwater listening equipment.

**FOWLER:** So does the second 60-day patrol count as two war patrols or is that one war patrol?

**STYLES:** No, that's one War patrol.

**FOWLER:** Is it 60 days at sea and a couple of weeks inport in the forward area for maintenance and then another 60 days at sea?

**STYLES:** It was usually 2 weeks maintenance and 10 days retraining because when we came into Majuro, or elsewhere, we probably left ten or so of the crew ashore and took new recruits or reserve crew people out to train them. I had a good Chief of the Boat that would usually get them qualified on patrol.



**FOWLER: We were talking a little earlier about the equipment. Tell us about the machinery on the Sea Devil and how it differed from the Narwhal and the S-20.**

**STYLES:** Well, Fairbanks-Morris engines were very reliable, very. The engine generated electricity that went through the battery and ran the . . . the engine was directly connected to the screw when you run on the surface and charging batteries too. But then when you dive they just unclutched it and then the motor . . .

**FOWLER: Took over.**

**STYLES:** . . .took over and ran it. That was the same that we had on the Narwhal but there were several explosions in the earlier days on, I think, the Nautilus had a pretty bad explosion. Somebody was killed because the air compressors on the front of the engines had to be very, very accurately adjusted.

When I got to the Narwhal we had a Graduate Engineer as the Chief Engineer, Adam Jordan, I think out of a class of about 28 that had been to Post-Graduate School in Engineering. Also the Chief Engineer on the Nautilus was Jack Pierce who later commanded the Argonaut when it was lost and they were both Graduate Engineers. I was the Assistant Engineer on the Narwhal and then after a couple of years when Adam Jordan was transferred to shore, why I became the Chief Engineer for about my last two years on it.

On the Sea Devil my Engineering Officer was Bryan Picket out of the Class of '43 at the Naval Academy and he hadn't had any extra engineering training. He just had a Naval Academy education. He hadn't made any War patrols but he was a very fine officer. It so happened that he'd had a brother who was a classmate of mine at the Naval Academy that had been an Aviator and was killed in a carrier when I was still on them.

**FOWLER: Repeat what you were telling Lou and me earlier about the Narwhal's machinery.**

**STYLES:** Well, the Narwhal, Nautilus and the Argonaut all had M A N engines. These were engines that were found in Germany at the end of World War I and brought over here. So they decided to build the submarines in 1928/29 and '30 to accommodate the engines and all the instructions were in German. They didn't have instructions in English.

All the early Engineers on these submarines had been to Post-Graduate School in Engineering.

Of course the Nautilus had one bad explosion. The air compressors were on the front of the engine, and they had to be very precise in the measurements in them.

**FOWLER: Let's go back. Now you've got back from the first War patrol in Pearl. How long were you in Pearl at that . . . ?**

**STYLES:** Well that's the second War patrol.

**FOWLER:** Oh, okay.

**STYLES:** The first War patrol we came to Majuro for about three weeks.

**FOWLER:** Yes, and then . . .

**STYLES:** The next one we came back to Pearl and the crew was up at the Royal Hawaiian for a couple of weeks then they came back to the submarine and trained. Of course we lost about ten more of the crew to New Construction or relief crew. We had replacements and trained them there. Then we were off for our third patrol, which we topped-off fuel and supplies at Midway and also Saipan. We stopped in Saipan on the way out. Then we went on to the patrol area, which was up in the Yellow Sea, up in the area between Korea and Japan. We were told to try to pick up any survivors off anything we sank because they might know something about the minefield in Tsushima Straits, you know, the strait between Japan and Korea.

So they were outfitting these other submarines with mine detectors and after we got back from patrol seven submarines were sent into the Japan Sea. We hadn't had any in there for about two years since "Mush Mouth Morton" was lost on the Wahoo. We quit sending submarines because they had gone in through Lapanu Straits. But now we were going to send them in through the Tsushima Straits in the south and the Perais Straits in the north. They were quite successful. Seven submarines entered and only one was lost on patrol.

Well we got out there and mostly all we saw was Spit-Kits, you know, these fishing boats. Usually they were probably Korean or Chinese. But I didn't believe in Battle-surfacing on these Junks because I felt if the target wasn't worth a torpedo, forget it, because if we surfaced and they started shooting back at us it wasn't worth losing one of our men or getting vent lines shoot up.

I had a very good friend and classmate, Reggie Raymond, who was killed by counter fire. They had Battle-surfaced and when they got ready to secure he was dead on deck. A bullet had gone right through his forehead.

Also being out in that area they might shoot up your vent lines and make it almost impossible to dive or get back up on the surface again. So I didn't feel like jeopardizing a well-trained crew of 88 people and a five million-dollar boat trying to get a Spit-Kit or so, so I didn't try to shoot it out with any of these. Most of them turned out to be poor old Chinese or Korean people who were also fighting the Japanese.

We were out there on our third patrol in the Yellow Sea and we'd been there for 28 days and hadn't seen anything that we could catch up with or that was worth wasting a torpedo on. About 7:30 in the morning we had dived. We dived because we didn't want to take a chance that one of those boats out there might have a radio and warn other ships that we were out there. So the JT Sonar - this is the one that I helped with in New London to develop - picked up screws at about 60,000 yards. That's 30 miles away. We came up to periscope depth and couldn't see a thing. We came up to expose our radar and we picked up this convoy of four ships and three

escorts, but looking through the periscope we couldn't see the bow so I surfaced and it was very, very foggy. You could barely see the bow. I had a man up there to keep a lookout. So we started making our approach on this small convoy that was coming across towards Japan from Korea. We got in. We had everything figured out and we got in close enough to start, pretty near, to go in and start shooting, so we ran in on the surface until I could just see a very small outline of a ship and we'd started firing. We fired at two of the ships as I remember and then at one of the escorts with our stern tubes and ran back out. We heard quite a few explosions and saw two of the ships disappear. We reloaded and came back in again. Of course they were firing at random; they couldn't see anything. We could see flashes. We fired our torpedoes again, or some of them, ran back out and reloaded and came in the last time and fired another round. I think all total we fired about 20 torpedoes. By this time there was only one escort left and he took off as fast as he could go over the horizon and we circled back because we had instructions to pick up survivors. We were zooming along with top speed down through the fog and all of a sudden right in front of me was a raft with about 30 or 40 people in it and I couldn't back emergency and it scattered people all over the water. So we called the 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and other people up there to come topside so we could pick up some the survivors to take back and nobody wanted to come aboard. The water temperature was in the forties, very cold. I think one thing was that the Quartermaster was up there with a machine gun. But anyhow, the 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant got a heaving line and got it out around this guy's neck and pulled him up and pulled him aboard but it choked him to death so we had to throw him back in. Then they were beginning to get over-exposed I think because this one man in a uniform with binoculars still around his neck – I did have the binoculars – decided he'd come aboard. When he came aboard everybody wanted to come aboard. One guy had his ear gone and bleeding so we didn't take him. We got four of them. We took four and that was about all we could handle as prisoners with this supposed officer.

Meanwhile, this young graduate of California – the football player and fraternity man who had reported coming out of Panama that we were being fired on – I yelled back to him. He was on the stern and I yelled back, "Vern be careful!" About that time he fell overboard in among all the Japanese. So I said, "God damn it Vern! I told you to be careful." But anyhow, he was fresh and the crew pulled him back up without any trouble.

So we headed on out of the area and we had a picture book of Japanese ships, so the survivors identified the four ships and the two escorts. I think the officer was on the escort. But they were so scared, for two days they couldn't even eat. They thought sure we were going to kill them. One of them died though that afternoon from exposure in the cold water so we had to toss him over the side. So we were starting back then with three prisoners.

It was towards the end of our patrol, so as we were coming out of the Yellow Sea back into the Pacific, why it was about 8 or 9 o'clock at night. The Officer of the Deck, who was Vern Crosby, the guy that . . .

**FOWLER: Fell over the side.**

**STYLES:** . . . the gung-ho college boy said, "Captain, I saw something up here." He was the Officer of the Deck. So I rushed to the bridge and he said, "I saw some sort of a flash or flare or something." So I said, well circle back around and see what it is. So he circled around and got

the search light up and there were two men in individual rubber boats tied together. They thought at first we were Japanese but then when they heard English, they knew better. So they were Marine pilots and they'd been in the water 36 hours and very much dehydrated. We pulled them aboard and they said that there were four of them off the . . . these two aviators were off the carrier Essex and they had told us that they had been tracking a battleship that the Japanese had taken out of Yokosuka, was moving south to get it out of the Tokyo area and that they had run out of gas and ditched and that there had been four of them. So with that we started circling around and about an hour later we came across another boat with a guy in it asleep. So he was the third Marine. The fellows in the first boat were about half-delirious but they said that they'd run out of flares and they'd heard the roar of our diesel engines and saw a star and they thought it was a plane. They heard the roar of the engines of a plane so he fired his pistol at it with the tracers and that's what the Officer of the Deck had seen.

So then we stayed around all that night looking for the fourth aviator and didn't find him and we stayed all the next day, mostly on the surface when we could get there, but we were so close to Japan that we'd be driven down by planes. Once you're driven down the first time, why they know that you're out there. So at the end of the night, why . . . the second night we left and went on to Saipan.

This is the message that . . . "Commander Submarine Pacific Fleet had received the following message from Commander Task Force Fifty-Eight": "Maybe it is routine for you fellows, but your rescue of our Marines is considered quite extraordinary in this Force. Many thanks." We also got, for Sea Devil, one "Well Done from Commander Submarine Pacific Fleet to Styles and his eagle-eyed crew for rescuing the three Marine pilots during the night." We also got this message: "Rampaging Sea Devil gets Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet and Commander Submarine Force's heartiest congratulations on hitting the Nipponese Jackpot and scattering Maru's all over the bottom. You lead the hit parade this month Styles."

So then we came on back to Saipan and . . . well, as I've said, these Marines had been in the water for 36 hours and were very dehydrated and not in very good shape, so my Pharmacist's Mate and the Executive Officer, Ralph Pleatman, read instructions on how to give them . . .

**FOWLER: Intravenous . . .**

**STYLES:** . . . intravenous feeding and water, which they did and they pulled them through their ordeal.

Well there we had three Marines and three Japanese as prisoners . . .

**FOWLER: How'd you handle the prisoners onboard?**

**STYLES:** Well we let them work. They'd help clean up the place and at night, our crew would handcuff them to a bunk. We kept, as I remember, there were two forward and one in the After Torpedo Room.

They turned out to be pretty good workers, I mean.



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the LEGION OF MERIT to

COMMANDER RALPH EMERSON STYLES  
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. SEA DEVIL, during the First War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese-controlled waters of the Pacific, from September 3 to October 25, 1944. Skillfully maneuvering his ship into a favorable position to strike enemy shipping, Commander Styles launched a well-planned and brilliantly executed torpedo attack to sink a 1,900 ton hostile submarine. Although subsequent aggressive attacks were hampered by intense anti-submarine measures and extremely adverse weather conditions, he courageously and expertly directed this vessel in returning safe to port without damage. Commander Styles' inspiring leadership and superb ship-handling throughout this hazardous patrol reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

*James F. Forrestal*  
Secretary of the Navy

We showed movies every night, you know. We'd have these movies and one of the movies was *Wake Island* and it showed the Japanese coming in and speaking Japanese and when they took Wake Island back at the start of the war. They would never tell us what the Jap pilots said in Japanese.

But in the Forward Torpedo Room I had a little five-cent slot machine. When we got ready to leave Portsmouth, why the Chief of the Boat came to me and said, "Captain, we can buy a slot machine. The boat that's left wants to sell theirs" and said, "What do you think of buying it and we'll use the profits to pay for our ship's party because it's up there in the barracks." So we bought it and it did pay for that first ship's party. Every time ashore after that it generated enough money to buy the beer for Sea Devil even after patrols. Still, anybody could play with IOU's. They got 25 nickels for a dollar and if they hit the jackpot they got an extra five dollars in nickels and we still would make three or four hundred dollars on each patrol. But one morning I went up into the Forward Torpedo Room and one of the Japanese prisoners was so elated he didn't know what to do. One of the sailors had given him a nickel and he'd hit the jackpot!

Well anyhow, by the time we got to Saipan the prisoners - I know when the Marines in Saipan came down to take them - this one Japanese just fell flat on the deck and grabbed me by the legs. He didn't want to go with the Marines at all. But we got rid of them and the Essex pilots were put ashore there.

So I went up to the Squadron Doctor there and I said, "My Pharmacist's Mate, the Second Class Pharmacist's Mate did a great job in resurrecting these Aviators and I'd like for him to be promoted if it's possible. So he said, "Well send him up here and let me give him an exam." So he went up to take an exam. He'd been a Rigger in private live before he came into the Navy. So I went up to see the doctor on the tender. Afterwards I said, "How'd he do?" and he said, "That guy doesn't know enough to be Third Class! (Laughter) So I promoted him anyhow.

**VESTAL: Did the Japanese officer turn out to be of the Commander?**

**STYLES:** I don't know. I let him off at Saipan and that's the last I've ever seen of him.

**FOWLER: You never heard anything more about what happened to him, huh?**

**STYLES:** No, I tried to get in contact after the war was over. I had the address of each prisoner that had written in Japanese, around Tokyo, and when I was over there during the Korean War I went to Tokyo and had somebody show me where that address was and it was just flattened, ruined, been completely burned down.

But anyhow, we left the Marine Aviators off at Saipan too and continued on to Midway. That's where we were to have our refit after the third patrol. When we got into Midway they told us, there was an officer there that had just come from San Francisco and he said he'd been at the Top of the Mark the night before he left and he said there were three Marine Aviators in there buying drinks for anybody that had a submarine pin on. (Laughter) So I'm sure it was our three

Marine Aviators. They had been flown back to the States while we were transiting from Saipan to Midway.

**VESTAL: So they apparently regained full health and were back in service.**

**STYLES:** I still talk to one of the Marine Aviators. He's from up near Atlanta. He's been to two or three reunions. But every reunion he comes to, he practically cries. On the anniversary date of the night we rescued him, he still calls me on the phone to thank us for his life after 56 years.

So I was having some stomach problems. I was down to 110 pounds. This was into April, the first of May. So I went up and the doctor gave me a barium enema and I drank some barium and was X-rayed and he said, "Well it's time you quit." Actually three or four patrols were plenty for anybody. So he took me off and sent me back to Pearl. He said he thought I might have Cancer of the Stomach. So I was relieved by McGiven out of the Naval Academy Class of '38.

So he took the Sea Devil out on the next patrol and sank one ship and picked up 12 Aviators. With those Aviators, it gave the Sea Devil 15 Aviators picked up during the war and brought us up to Number Seven in the most Aviators picked up during the war and we'd only been out there about a year or so.

They came back in from that patrol and went in to Guam for refit and they had just started out for another patrol when the war ended. They never got to station.

On the fourth patrol Sea Devil had picked up an Army Aviator that had been in the water nine days in a one-man life raft and at the first reunion he got up and said that if anybody else would have come along to pick him up he'd have told them he was waiting for the Sea Devil. All he had eaten was a bird that he caught with his hands which he ate him raw.

**VESTAL: Good Lord!**

**STYLES:** So, and also there's a fellow named Barry McGrain that was picked up on the fourth patrol. When he came to our reunion in Baltimore, I guess it was. He said that he'd been there in this lifeboat and he had just said a prayer. He said, "Dear Lord, surely you're not going to let me die out here in this ocean. I'm 18 years old today and I'm still a virgin." He said just then the Sea Devil came up and picked him up. (Laughter)

**VESTAL: Answered his prayer.**

**STYLES:** So I went back to Pearl after I was relieved and they put me in the hospital. There they wanted me to swallow this weight when I first got up in the morning and they would get it down into my stomach and pump the acids out of my stomach and analyze them. Well I stayed in the hospital two weeks and I couldn't swallow the damn thing. I just couldn't. So then they decided to send me back to active duty, which they did.



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting  
the NAVY CROSS to

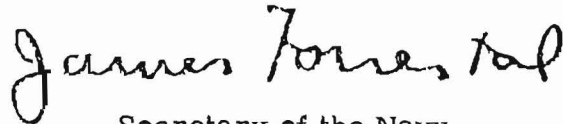
COMMANDER RALPH EMERSON STYLES  
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. SEA DEVIL, during her Second War Patrol in the Nansai Shoto, North China Sea and Yellow Sea Areas from November 19, 1944, to January 11, 1945. Penetrating strong enemy escort screens in heavy seas, Commander Styles launched torpedo attacks against a hostile convoy and succeeded in sinking two enemy vessels totalling 17,500 tons. Boldly striking a high-speed Japanese task force, he contributed materially to the success of his ship in crippling an aircraft carrier and, by evasive tactics, avoided enemy anti-submarine measures. By his inspiring leadership, courage and devotion to duty, Commander Styles upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,



Secretary of the Navy

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the GOLD STAR in lieu of the Second Navy Cross to

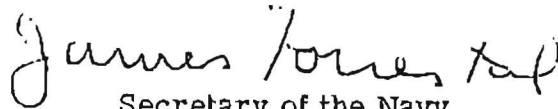
COMMANDER RALPH EMERSON STYLES  
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For extraordinary heroism as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. SEA DEVIL during the Third War Patrol of that vessel in enemy Japanese-controlled waters from February 7 to April 20, 1945. Skillfully evading all hostile anti-submarine countermeasures, Commander Styles launched five aggressive torpedo attacks on a seven ship enemy convoy to sink four freighters and two escort vessels for a total of 17,600 tons. In addition, while his ship was performing lifeguard duty, he effected the rescue of three Marine aviators. By his able leadership, gallant fighting spirit and devotion to duty, Commander Styles contributed greatly to the success of this patrol and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

  
Secretary of the Navy

When I got back to Pearl from that patrol, Joe Grenfeld (SUBPAC Operations Officer) met me and told me that, "That's a great patrol you had." and he said, "Your patrol and George Street's patrol have been set up to be evaluated for one to get the Congressional Medal of Honor. Well George Street had Ned Beach as his Exec on his patrol and I had Ralph Pleatman who was very matter of fact. But anyhow, I got a Navy Cross and the ship got a Navy Unit Commendation for the third patrol.

**FOWLER: And that was your second Navy Cross?**

**STYLES: Yea.**

Before going on, I would like to say a few words about the wonderful caliber of men I had on the Sea Devil. I had commented earlier about their youth and dedication. Mostly, they were teen aged boys who came to a job and in so doing they became men and went on to make great contributions to society.

Many of them had enlisted out of high school, commissioned the Sea Devil, made tours in the Pacific and were mustered out and in college before reaching the age of 21. I was more of a father figure to them because I was 35 years old before I left the boat.

At our first reunion in Chicago in 1964, we had each shipmate stand up and give a short review of their life since the Sea Devil. There were many inspiring stories and I have never felt more pride in Sea Devil and to think I had had some part in molding them having been shipmates with them for over a year.

But that was not the end of the Sea Devil in my career. When I had command of a submarine division in 1951, she was one of the four boats in the division and when I had the flotilla in San Diego in 1958 she was again one of my submarines. In fact, when I was relieved of the Flotilla in 1959, I had the Sea Devil brought close up in the nest and my relieving ceremony was aboard her – 14 years, 6 months and 22 days after I was relieved of command of the Sea Devil in Midway.

Just before they decommissioned the Sea Devil and took her out to sea to sink her in 1964, the Navy removed the bell from the Sea Devil and sent it to me in Florida where I am retired. It is now my front door bell.

Now to continue.

So then they sent me back to San Diego to be the Operations Officer there and pretty soon the war ended and they left me there during the Fall. I mean I didn't know what was going to happen because Fleet boats were beginning to come back and all they had there were old remnant S-Boats. So I got one set of orders to go report to the Dorothy Dix which was a troop transport in the Philippines and they were having some sort of a problem out there. I was to go out there as Executive Officer, but before I could get ready to go they changed the orders to something else and finally, about December, they ordered me to be the Executive Officer of the Everglades, which was a destroyer tender. It was being built up in Long Beach, California. So I

went up there and it wasn't that far along and they had slowed down on building it and I wrote the directives and organization book and made out the Watch, Quarters and Stations Bills and things like that.

Then they sent me back down to San Diego where my wife had remained. Incidentally, she was pregnant at the time so I got to spend a lot of time down there with her.

Our child was born in February and then they were going to send me to shore duty, my first tour of shore duty. So by that time they ordered me to the General Line School which they were going to set up in Newport, Rhode Island and take all the officers in the Navy who hadn't gone to the Naval Academy, send them back to Newport for a year in which time they would get the basic equivalent of what they would have gotten at the Naval Academy. They were going to take 600 officers a year that had requested that they be in the Permanent Navy. I was to go back there and teach Logistics, which I knew nothing whatever about.

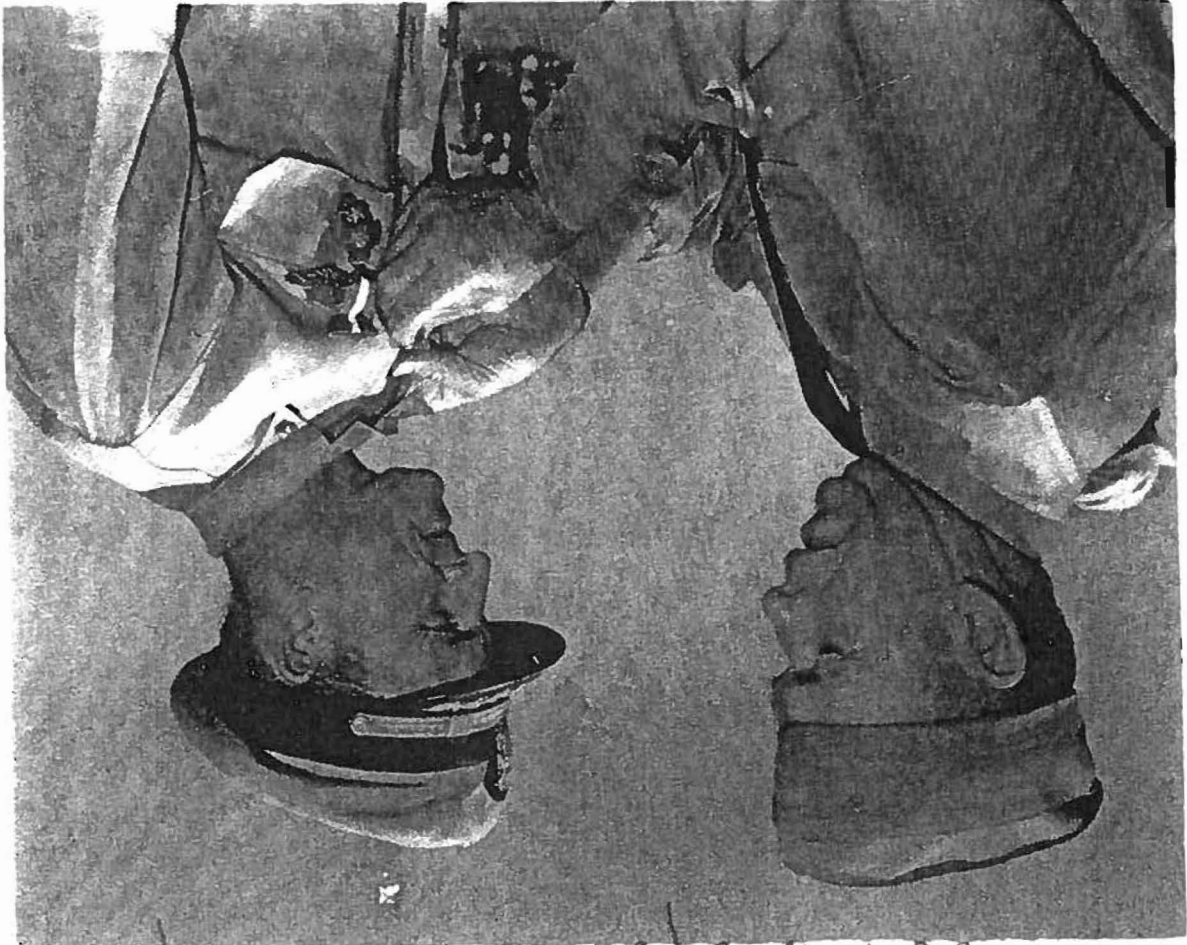
I was ordered to report to Washington, then to a Logistics School in Bayonne, N.J. We decided my family would go to Michigan and stay with my wife's family until time to meet me in Newport, R.I.

Well I'll tell you about leaving San Diego. It was very difficult to get a train back east because of all the service people coming back from the war. So I did finally out of Los Angeles and my wife had just had a baby, then five weeks old - and a friend drove down from Los Angeles and spent the night and took us up to catch the train and we got to Chicago and I put her on the train up to Saginaw, Michigan where she lived with the two children until we got settled.

I was supposed to report into Washington on 1 April and this was 1 April. So after I got her on the train to Saginaw I made a long-distance call to the Bureau of Personnel I guess it was - and told them at the time that I couldn't get a flight out of Chicago to get there on the 1<sup>st</sup> - that I was in Chicago - and so I said, I'm due to report in there on 1 April and he said, "Okay, I'll log you in and come in in the morning." He didn't give me a chance to say I'm still in Chicago. So I got an early plane out of Chicago and got in the next morning, 2 April, and went up to BuPers and reported in. That was fine because they were going to keep me there for a couple of weeks and then send me over to Bayonne, New Jersey and learn a little bit about Logistics before I went up there to teach.

So the Line School was going to be at Newport and I was to spend a week in Washington, then two or three weeks up in Bayonne, New Jersey, and then go to Newport.

So I called Newport and asked what the housing situation was up there. They said, "You can't find a house here to rent" and I couldn't afford to buy one. I still owned the one in San Diego. Housing anywhere was near impossible because no building was done during the war years. So the next day I went over to see Herm Kostler in the Submarine Detail who had the shore assignments and I said, is there any possibility that I can get a different job because there's no housing in Newport? He said, "Well I could send you to Recruiting Duty in Kentucky." I said, sign me up. But he said, "First you've got to find somebody that will take your place teaching Logistics." So I knew that Eddie Grimm out of my class who had been in Logistics and I knew



Logan of Meritt  
Receives (E. M. A. V. S. S. - M. A. V. S. S.) 1945

# Submarine Fleet



Be it known that  
Comdr R. E. Styles

United States Navy

while Commanding Officer of the U. S. S. Sea Devil has so

distinguished himself by his Courage, Aggressiveness

and Determination in action with the Enemy

that his name has been inscribed on the

Roll of Honor

of the

Submarine Base

E. R. Swinburne

Captain U. S. Navy  
Commander Submarine Base

Given this twenty-fifth  
day of April 1945  
at the Submarine Base  
Pearl Harbor, T. of H.

that he was down in Memphis and didn't like it very much. Actually he was living in a basement with his wife and two children. So I called him up and I said, would you be willing to take my place teaching Logistics at the General Line School? He said, "Boy, would I!" So I went over to Herm Kostler and told him and he said, "Okay, I'll send you to Kentucky to Recruiting Duty.

So that night I called Louisville. I think that's where it was and asked if I could rent a house there. No Way! They said, "It would be five years before you'll be able to rent a house here." So I went back to see Herm Kostler "Well, I'm sorry." I said, I want that Logistics job again. He said, "I'm sorry but we've already ordered Eddie Graham up there." But he said, "We have one more billet and it's to teach *Foundations of National Power*." I said, what's that? He said he didn't know. So I said, well let me call Newport again. In Newport I got this real estate agent there that said, "We've got one house to rent and it's down near the Lilly Pond" and it was in my price range. I said, I'll take it. So I went and told Herm to order me to Newport to teach *Foundations of National Power*. So he did and I went back to Michigan and picked up my wife and two kids and got to Newport on Easter Sunday and we went out and looked at the house.

It was a furnished house that wasn't the greatest but it was not too far . . . it was out near, well you went down Bellevue Avenue - that's a fancy street in Newport - and when you get to John Jacob Aster's house you turned right and go on out Ruggles Ave. to just before you get to the Vanderbilt Mansion and I'm across the street.

So anyhow, we got a taxi in Providence and it took us down there and the driver knew the town very well and he took us right to our house. So that was a start.

We got there in April. Students were coming to go to school, I guess about the 1<sup>st</sup> of August.

So they gave me the book *Foundations of National Power*. It was 3 inches thick and it basically covered what countries in the world have that it would need to become a national power. Such factors were population, proper location, natural resources, industrial development and such.

So it turned out to be a very interesting course for me.

It dawned on me; well we had 600 students and I was to teach them all during the course of the year. I've forgotten. I think there were four terms that I would get each group of students and about 15/16 hours a week I guess was what you taught. I'd read enough so that I could keep ahead of them, but it dawned on me that they would probably learn more if I would let them have a larger role in the course, so the first four or five classes I would give a lecture on the basis of National Power and different geopolitical theories and then I would assign questions for two students to cover during each class; one pro and one con. The questions were what should be done about Israel? Should India be given its Independence? Similar questions on the various trouble spots around the globe. Then one or two students assigned to the question would give a fifteen minute talk on the subject on what the capabilities of the region were for that country to get anywhere and become a power. Then the other student would talk on how these factors applied to the question of the day. After which the whole class would discuss the question. In

the four or five lectures to start the course, one would be on the various philosophies on International Control, like Haushofer and Meckinder, and Mahan, tell them what their theories were. Mahan, for instance, in his *Influence of Sea Power on History* maintained the theory that England had for 300 years controlled world affairs because she controlled the sea lines of communications. Whether by design or not, she controlled the key strategic locations along all sea lanes – such as Gibraltar, Egypt (Suez), India, Singapore, etc. Meckinder, an English geographer, concluded that control of the coastal area of Europe and key ports around the world had been sufficient for her to build up her Empire. Haushofer, a German political philosopher may have been the guide for the Kaiser in WWI and Hitler in WWII. His theory was that if one power controlled the Eurasian land mass; Coastal Europe, Germany and the Soviet Union that you could forget sea power; because within that vast area were all the factors that contributed to world dominance. It seemed to be Hitler's guide until he turned on the Soviet Union. Even Napoleon's fatal mistake was to turn on Russia.

These theories were proclaimed before the dominance of submarines, aircraft carriers and even ICBMs. Anyhow, this was a part of the course and it proved to be a very popular course. It was the only course that required naval officers to speak and it was amazing how some of them just couldn't speak. They could not organize a concise 15 minutes of material and present it convincingly. Many would even get stage fright. This was the only attempt at public speaking in the year of instruction. I allotted each officer 15 minutes each and then the rest of the time, 20 minutes, was class discussion. They had a meeting about a month after the school started and the students said that my class was the only one they really got anything out of. So I did that for three years.

I found the lack of public speaking ability also in the Pentagon so I started a weekly briefing class for my analysts in Naval Intelligence.

The second year the United Nations was just getting started at Lake Success on Long Island and so they sent me on temporary duty down there to incorporate what the United Nations was all about into my course. So I'd always give an hour's lecture on the United Nations during the course.

But we had a very relaxed three years there.

It started out that our wives had not been able to do anything for several years, during the war, and so they had a nice little club there with Jimmy Stewart's orchestra that would come down from Providence every Wednesday and Saturday to play for dinner.

So one of the student's wives had been an Arthur Murray instructor. So all of our wives signed up for a lesson a week and we would go to our lesson and then have a P-work on Saturday night. We'd go out and practice what we learned. Well the second year this young lady - I mean they were students and were transferred of course. At the end of the first year our dance teacher said, "Now next year the Karabarasses and the Styles will be the instructors and the class will continue. I hope you'll continue to come to the classes." So we instructed for the next two years and fortunately the second year we had a lot of South Americans to come to the Line School. We had them from Brazil, Argentina, Cuba and Peru, so we would invite them, a couple of them;



couples, to be guest instructors. So we had expert lessons on the Tango, on the Samba and the Rumba, authentic and up to date. We had a wonderful time there for three years. It was a nice relaxation.

So when we got ready to leave Newport I was ordered to be the Commanding Officer of the Submarine Base in Saint Thomas. We got on a Navy transport in New York and headed down that way, but while we were en route they decided to close the base in Saint Thomas. So instead I relieved Freddie D'Arelano out of the Class of '35. He had been in my sub class when I went to Sub School. They had moved him over to San Juan to be on the staff of Commander Caribbean Sea Frontier and he was supposed to be the Anti-Submarine Warfare Planner for the Caribbean area.

So the transport that we went down on went to Trinidad first before coming back to San Juan. We passed close enough to San Juan that one could see the lights.

But anyhow it was a nice trip. The only thing was, I was a Commander then and there were so many people on the transport that unless you were a Captain you didn't get a stateroom with your wife. My wife and children had to sleep in a compartment with all the females and I had to sleep in the compartment with the males. But we had fun and we sure felt sorry for the people that got off at Trinidad. It was a sad place there, I think its Macerae Beach. People talked about the snakes and all that kind of stuff.

But anyhow, we got up to San Juan, I think right around the time of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and we had a nice set of quarters there.

It turned out to be two very delightful years because about once a quarter the staff would go down and do Joint Planning with the Dutch. Of course at that time the Dutch owned Aruba and Curacao. That was a very, Aruba particularly because Standard Oil of New Jersey had a big processing plant there at that time there wasn't a processing plant in Venezuela and all of the oil from Lake Maracaibo had to be shipped out to Aruba and refined. They had a dock that was right out in the ocean - a very great place for a submarine to attack. We'd usually visit there once a quarter and then we'd visit Panama at least once a quarter because the protection for the Panama Canal was still mines controlled by the Army from ashore. I mean like they did in WWI.

Then we had plans for defense against submarines for St. Thomas, because Charlotte Amalie was a beautiful harbor. There would be a submarine net there. During WWII it was a transshipping port. A lot of aluminum ore (carnotite) was brought there in small ships and then transshipped to the states on larger carriers.

Trinidad was also a very important place in our anti-submarine plans. Our carriers on shake-down or special training could go into the Gulf of Paria and operate freely without fear of submarines if we mined the entrance at Serpent's Mouth except for a small channel. It was shallow enough to mine and then the Southern entrance was too shallow for submarines to get into the Gulf submerged.

So after we got situated down there, the word had been passed ahead of us that we were dance instructors, so we had..

**FOWLER: You had your jobs cut out for you.**

**STYLES:** . . . dance lessons on the roof of the club. The club down there had a roof and in the balmy weather it was right nice. We would eat at the club then go to the roof for dance lessons using phonograph records for music.

During the whole time there, my wife talked about what a great place Honolulu was. We lived there before the war and nothing could compare with Honolulu duty before WWII.

Chick Clarey, by this time, was the Submarine Detail Officer and he wrote me that looking over the records of submariners, that I should have had a Division instead of going to what was to be a commanding officer of the submarine base in Saint Thomas. So he ordered me from Puerto Rico to have a Division in Honolulu. Well of course that made my wife quite happy.

Incidentally, while we were down there, Admiral Barby was on the Selection Board for Admirals, to select the Admirals. He had been a Vice Admiral during World War II. But he went up to do the selecting and he didn't come home and he didn't come home. He was up there over a month because every time that they would make the list for the selectees and send it up to Truman, Rickover's name wasn't on it and Truman would send it back to the Board. He wouldn't let the Selection Board go home until Rickover was selected for Admiral.

But anyhow, we flew over to Guantanamo when we left Puerto Rico and then up to Norfolk on Navy planes. My car had already been shipped up to Norfolk.

My car was the Buick . . . that in San Diego . . . the day the war ended I had gone into the Buick garage to order a new Buick. Civilian cars were not built during WWII. At that time they were listed for about 800 dollars. So they put my name on the list and it was nearly a year later that they wrote me a letter and said they had my Buick. It was now 2,400 bucks and I'd have to take delivery of it in San Diego. So I called Jack Lee out of the Class of '30 who was still stationed there and he got a sailor that was being transferred out of the Navy on the East Coast and he got him to drive the car back to Newport, R.I. for me and it came back in pretty good shape. So that's the car I sent to Puerto Rico and then back to Norfolk.

When we landed in Norfolk, I got the car and we drove down to Asheville, stayed a while in North Carolina with my family, then up to Michigan with my wife's family.

Interestingly enough, the kids, had a special treat in the motels where we'd stay. We'd drive through a little town and if a motel had a television aerial that's where they wanted to stay because they'd never seen television. I happened to be on a trip up to Washington about a year after I was down in San Juan and it was a Saturday night in the Officer's Club there. They had a television and they had Imajean Coca and Sid Ceasar on and I couldn't believe it – it was wonderful – but the children had never seen any television.

So we drove on across country and caught a transport out of San Francisco. By that time we had acquired a little Cocker Spaniel in Puerto Rico and so we had to ship her . . . well we rode over to Guantanamo in the Admiral's plane but we had to ship the dog from Puerto Rico up to North Carolina, to my father's home in North Carolina. My father had him when we got there but they had charged something like 20 dollars extra for entertainment in Miami it said. Actually it was walking the dog. You know, taking him out and giving him a walk. But it said entertainment in Miami. I didn't know whether they took him to a nightclub (laughter) or what.

Then we took a transport out of San Francisco to Honolulu and I was actually there nine months because it was September almost and three of those 9 months I spent in Japan because at that time they kept a submarine officer – we kept four submarines out there during the Korean War – and one submarine officer who had a house on the base there at Yokosuka and the Command alternated between someone from Pearl or someone from San Diego. So I got the time from right after Christmas till Spring in Japan.

My friend, Don Irvine class of 34, had been there on Christmas and New Years; so he kindly told me to have New Years with my family and come the next day. Don met me in Tokyo and drove me to our headquarters in Yokosuka. He was assigned a jeep that he turned over to me when he left. We had a two bedroom house on the base, a Lieutenant engineer who was on permanent duty had one of the bedrooms and I had the other. A houseboy was assigned to fix our meals and do the housekeeping.

I was utterly amazed to see the destruction caused by our bombing. Although this was January 1952, the peace treaty had not been signed. Whole blocks in Tokyo were still utterly flattened, the only cars moving belonged to the occupation forces, and traffic was a minimum; how different when I was back in Tokyo in 1959. Food was scarce, and the Yokosuka women's club was permitted to come on the base and scavenge. They would go through the garbage for old tin cans, clothing and anything. Sometimes the ships cook on the boat would wrap the remnants of a roast with lots of remaining meat in tin foil and quite often, it was eaten on the spot.

The Ship's Service store had lots of wonderful Far East items. I bought a complete set of nice china, probably the last to come out of China. Many people bought Chinese mugs. In town, there were lots of flea markets where Japanese would bring family heirlooms to sell for money to buy food.

On weekends we would go up in the mountains to wonderful hot springs hotels, now run by the Army for recreational facilities.

Early on, I met Bill Mauldin (who drew the cartoon *Sad Joe* for WWII) and met other war correspondents in Tokyo. One day I took Bill Mauldin for a submarine ride and he drew a wonderful cartoon of a sailor complaining about water occasionally dropping on his bunk from around the listening gear shaft which pierced the hull, yet he completely disregarded the fact that there was 200 feet of water over his head in the submarine.

I invited Bill Mauldin and a lady from Colliers to stop by Pearl Harbor on their return to the states about a month after I left Japan. I wondered where we would take them for lunch on their stop over. She said, we should bring them to our quarters so they could see what we were paying our \$140 per month housing allowance for. Well, when they saw our quarters, they thought they were wonderful, to our surprise. Of course, they did not compare to quarters in Puerto Rico.

So we lived in government housing there in Little Makalapa.

If you had two children of the same sex you only got a two-bedroom condo, duplex. We paid something like 70 dollars rent. Well we were getting 140 dollars for housing allowance so we were ahead of the game. But about the middle of the time there they declared Little Makalapa as Government Quarters so they took our 140 bucks a month for them. It just doubled the rent for no good reason.

But anyhow, they had heard as soon as we got there, that we were dance instructors. So we met at the Club, the Submarine Officer's Club there one night a week and had lessons with the class. All my wife could talk about was what a wonderful place Puerto Rico was. Honolulu had no resemblance to the 1938-41 days.

At the end of our tour – I mean we were only there nine months – I had a Division of . . . they had just changed the mission of the Navy. The Navy was assigned Anti-Submarine Warfare and they were building submarines designed to fight other submarines. I had two new constructed submarines that had a lot of electronic gear, supposedly in a dome in the fore part of the ship. I have a picture of it in the den, but they never got the electronic gear fully installed in mine until after I left. But Admiral Momson, who was ComSubPac at the time, picked me to be the next Commanding Officer of the Nereus; a submarine tender in San Diego.

So at the end of nine months . . . one other thing that might be interesting is that in unloading our household effects from Puerto Rico, which arrived about four or five months after we got there, they dropped our washing machine on the dock and that was, of course, the end of it. But I had to send back to Puerto Rico and buy one there and have that shipped out. That was the way according to regulation.

**FOWLER: Replaced it.**

**STYLES: . . .** interpreted the rules then. So it got there just about the time we were leaving, so we sent it on to San Diego.

So I was sent back to relieve a man out of '30 who was the Commanding Officer of the Nereus. I was still a Commander but I'd been selected and so my Commission came through before long.

Joe Grenfeld was the Flotilla Commander and Elliott Lockland, class of 33, was the Operations Officer or Chief of Staff and Joe Williams, class of 33, and I both had command of tenders, there were two tenders. My boss was the Squadron Commander, was Pieczentkowski. I

remembered him from the Naval Academy because he was a First Classman when I was a Plebe and he offered, he told the Plebes that anybody that could spell his name that he would spoon-on, but I couldn't spell Pieczentkowski. A great guy. But anyhow, Joe Grenfeld, as I said was the Flotilla Commander and it was really a wonderful year.

While in San Diego we made quite a bit of money in the Ship's Service Store. Of course everything was done on the tender, laundry and dry-cleaning and all was free. But we made quite a bit of money in our ship store and so Joe Grenfeld would set up golf tournaments down in Tijuana at golf courses in Mexico.

So we had a few people on the Nereus – the crew was 1,000 – that would get out on deck with musical instruments and have a jam session. So I got to talking to some of the men and they said, this one officer, a Lieutenant, said, "Gee, we've got enough people for a good band." So we bought instruments for about ten or fifteen and they would play every day during the noon hour up on deck and people would wander up there and I'd have them play at inspections, you know, and they could play dance music. So I bought them all tuxedos and we contacted the Junior League there in San Diego and they were willing to send a couple hundred girls there - out in a boat on a Friday or Saturday night - and they could dance with the Sailors. Then they had a beautiful food layout down below in the mess hall, you know, sandwiches and other snacks and that was considered very popular.

Then another thing that happened was we had one kid named Bill Pearl who was a weightlifter. He was about 17 years old and he'd get up on deck every afternoon and lift weights and he went to the YMCA in town. The trainer at the YMCA said, "This guy's got a lot on the ball" and talked to me. So I took Ship's Service money and sent him up to San Francisco for the Mr. California tryouts and he won that. So then we took some more money and sent him to Chicago for the Mr. America contest and he won that. The next thing . . . Slade Cutter was back in Washington and the Mr. Universe contest was going to be in London so Slade said that he could get him a ride on a Navy plane to London if we could get him back to Washington. So we got a Navy plane going back there. We sent him to London and he won the Mr. Universe contest that year. But when he came back to the ship, every young sailor onboard would be up topside lifting weights all the time (laughter).

But anyhow, I correspond with Bill. When he got out of the Navy he started a chain of gymnasiums up around Sacramento and then he's written two or three books on fitness and he went over some years later and won the Mr. Universe contest again, he's the youngest and the oldest person who ever became Mr. Universe; Bill Pearl. A great young man.

Well from San Diego, when my tour was completed there, I was ordered back to Newport for the War College course. It so happened that when I left the Line School – 4 years earlier the course I taught was really right down the line of what the War College course was – I gave my lectures to an officer up in the War College and when I went back I heard my lecture delivered by a War College teacher. In fact when I was there teaching at the Line School I used to regularly go to their out of town lectures because they had Owen Latamore and other really great lecturers come there.

So I went back there for a year to take the course and nothing too eventful happened in that year, at the end of which I was ordered to New London to take Command of Submarine Squadron Ten, which was based there. I had - in my squadron - the only tender in New London. The other two squadrons that were there were stationed up at the submarine base and supported by the base. But I was down at the State Pier with the tender and my ten submarines. They were all Guppy submarines, had been converted to Guppies: Great Underwater Propulsion and all tied up at State Pier.

Also, supposedly to join my squadron when it was completed was the Nautilus. I went to the commissioning of the Nautilus and when Admiral Rickover would come up there the people would try to have parties and things for him but no way would he go to any of them. He had a cot and he'd sleep down at the Electric Boat Company where the boat was building.

I stood by the Nautilus in January 1955 when the Nautilus first got underway. I was on the rescue ship that stood by the Nautilus when it got underway and they sent the message over to us, "Underway on Nuclear Power". Years later I found out that the radio operator that sent the message had been my radioman on the Sea Devil, Radioman Chief Teller.

**FOWLER: For Heaven's sake.**

**STYLES . . .** and they received it on the tender. But anyhow I never got my hands on the Nautilus. Rickover controlled its every move for some time.

We, of course, had already started making these surveillance patrols up around Murmansk and up around the North Cape. I guess the Squadron doctor went on one of them, Joe Vogle.

But then a friend named Grimshaw Moore out of the Class of '32 had been at the War College with me and he was now down in Naval Intelligence. So he felt, with my background in submarines and Political Science and teaching, that they'd like to have me down at Naval Intelligence in Washington. So I went down there to work for him the first year and then I became Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence concentrating on trying to find out what the Soviet Submarine Force consisted of and what they were doing.

So there, I was there for three years. We bought a house.

Summarizing, during the previous six years, we had been moved from Newport, R.I to San Juan, P.R. (2 years), Pearl Harbor (9 months), San Diego (1 year), back to Newport (10 months), New London (1 year), then to Washington. This was a difficult time for the children, but now they say it was the best thing that ever happened to them

One of my duties was to have my briefers brief Admiral Burke each morning. I was responsible for his intelligence briefing every morning at around 8 o'clock. I had a Commander that would do the briefing and later I had a very eloquent Ensign that had a great background to

do it. All told I had about 600 people working for me there because we had around 300 in Nuclear and Scientific Intelligence.

Thanks to my experience with briefers back at the Line School in Newport, I started a briefing, public speaking, school for my analyst. It amazed me that as much as we used Naval Officers and civilians for briefing, the Navy did not have any training in public speaking. It was "On the job training" and I have seen a number fail completely in the effort.

Every Friday I would develop special briefings of ten minutes on some particular area that was a hot spot, like the Balkans, Mediterranean, Asia or some other place that was critical. So I thought, well I'll have some of my analysts, I'll hear what they're going to present on Friday to Admiral Burke or others and see what kind of speakers they are. How their material was put together, how it is presented, and then have a critique before letting them do the job. So some of them were right good and some of them weren't so good and I wouldn't use those. But I know there was one analyst - I've forgotten what his grade was - that was giving his ten-minute briefing, for a trial run, and he just keeled over in a dead faint, fell on the floor. It scared him so to do a briefing. But it's amazing how few naval officers are really good public speakers. There aren't too many of them. Most do not take the opportunity to practice.

But anyhow, we had quite a time checking out the Soviet Submarine Force. At one point we had just started the U-2 flights and then when Powers was shot down, they quit the flights for awhile unless they were approved. Every U-2 flight that went over the Soviet Union had to be approved by the President of the United States. So we dreamed up this program that we would have a U-2 flight over the Far East base, Black Sea, Balkan and Murmansk area, all on the same day. From the pictures we could tell what submarines were actually in port and then from COMINT we could tell which ones were at sea. So on that basis - and we got permission from Eisenhower to make the over flights to get the pictures, and we discovered that the Soviets had very close to 400 submarines at that time. So General Partridge who commanded the North American Air Defense out in Colorado Springs wrote to Admiral Burke and said he wanted a briefing on what the Soviet submarine capabilities were and what we had to combat them. So Admiral Freddie Warder was put in charge of a briefing team, which consisted of Jack McCain, the Senator's father, and he gave his talk which was a presentation on the importance of sea power that he knew by heart completely. He would start after Freddie Warder would introduce us and we would give them the complete briefing. We went around to all the Fleets first to try it out to see if they wanted to critique it before we went to General Partridge. We'd go in Admiral Burke's plane, which was quite nice. So Freddie Warder would introduce it and then Jack McCain would tell about the influence of sea power and then I would tell about the Soviet submarine threat and how many there were and what kind. Then Pete Gallatin, who was in Undersea Warfare in CNO, would come on and tell what we could do with submarines to combat Soviet submarines and then there was an Aviator and a Destroyerman who reviewed the capabilities against submarines of their branches. But anyhow, we'd put on this presentation and we got all sorts of mileage out of it going around presenting it. Then finally they sent us out to; we gave it to a couple of Committees in the Senate and Congress. Senator Jackson from Washington was on the one committee we gave it to. Then after we'd given it to General Partridge, Commander Air Defense of U.S., we disbanded. But it was a very interesting time and job.

Then the last year I was in Naval Intelligence they decided to send me down through Central/South America and around the Loop to inspect all our Naval Attaché offices. That was an interesting tour because our Naval Attaché in Mexico City where I went first, had gone to high school with me, in my class in high school; Francis Fletcher out of the Class of '34. He went to Georgia Tech for a year and then went to the Naval Academy. But I started there and he was accredited to each of the - his assistant was an Aviator - he was accredited to each of the Central American countries where I stopped briefly on the way down to Panama then I stayed in Panama.

From there the next place we had a Naval Attaché was in Peru. We had a submarine officer in Peru because Peru had some very good little submarines, built mostly by General Electric.

From there we went to Chile, and our Naval Attaché there was quite popular because he'd been, they'd invited him to go out to the Easter Islands with them on their annual cruise where they went out to replenish them.

From there I flew over to Argentina and they had an Aviator there, a Captain, who was accredited to Bolivia too. I didn't go there but of course Bolivia doesn't have any navy at all, except on the river. The attache had been one of my students at the Line School.

So from there I went to Uruguay. We had a Naval Attaché there who was a submariner. They had a little submarine force.

From there to Brazil and from there to Venezuela and from Venezuela I went over to the Dominican Republic. We had had a Naval Attaché there and he hadn't been very good. He'd been buying gas on his Embassy credit for friends. You know it was hard to get gas except through the Embassy.

I would call on the Ambassadors in each place and also the CIA - we had a CIA representative on each embassy staff - and see what kind of job the Naval Attache did. Most of them had done a pretty good job. In Cuba, we had a Naval Attaché in Cuba at that time, just before Fidel Castro had taken over. But it ended up we had to place some charges against the Naval Attaché in the Dominican Republic and we had to relieve the Naval Attaché in Cuba. As to the Naval Attaché in Cuba, the Ambassador complained that the Attache's wife spent all her time with the wife the Chief Petty Officer - and he wanted her to spend more time with his wife, you know, shopping and such. So we did relieve him. But that trip through South America was really one of the highlights of the tour and the briefing tours that I made with Admiral Warder were highlights of my time in Naval Intelligence.

**VESTAL:** Now what year was this, about?

**STYLES:** '55 to '58.

Then in '58 Joe Grenfeld was ComSubPac, so I was ordered to have the Flotilla in San Diego, which Joe had had when I had the Nereus. It was really a wonderful job. I relieved Jack



Dempsey out of '31 there. He's the submariner that took the nurses out of Corregidor during WWII. So that was my next assignment and that turned out to be a very pleasant tour.

I had to really get acquainted with the people in town and my top project there was to get a nuclear submarine facility in San Diego. We were just beginning – the Flotilla had been assigned two nuclear submarines built in Mare Island but San Diego was very much opposed to letting them enter the harbor. When they'd come to San Diego I'd have to send a tender down to the Point Loma area to tend them and so I made it a project to sell the idea to San Diego that they needed to keep the developing nuclear submarines their or they might lose most of the Navy. I sold my ideas to the newspapers, the Chamber of Commerce, Navy League and the Retired Officer's Association and they were a tremendous help. Now the Navy is able to bring nuclear carriers into North Island, also. When I arrived in San Diego the last item on the Shore Development Program, number 120, was to build a submarine base for nuclear submarines in San Diego. When I left, it was number 1. There's an old Army post that wasn't used at all down at the very end of Ballast Point. Did you go there?

**VESTAL: I'm going there tomorrow night.**

**FOWLER: Ballast Point?**

**VESTAL: Yea.**

**STYLES: Be sure and go.**

So I emphasized this in every speech I made and everything I did and I got the newspaper behind it and I got Admiral Lockwood, who had retired, you know, he was the Head of Submarines during World War II, to come down and say how important it was.

**VESTAL: Now that's directly across from the Naval Base, wasn't it, the Naval Air Station out there?**

**FOWLER: North Island.**

**STYLES: It's right across from North Island.**

**VESTAL: Yea.**

**FOWLER: Yea, they've got an old aircraft carrier tied up at North Island now, but kind of across from Ballast Point.**

I was out there sailing with an ex-shipmate. We sailed out of San Diego out to Catalina and back. We took a week sailing around. It was just a couple of years ago when I went by Ballast Point. The submarines are still there.

**VESTAL: Beautiful country down there, isn't it?**

**FOWLER: Yea.**

**VESTAL: That's the one you built, isn't it Ralph? That sub base there at Point Loma?**

**STYLES: Yea, I did not build it, but I had the idea and pushed it across. There's an article that appeared in the . . .**

**VESTAL: I think it's in the back of what Earl's got here.**

**STYLES: Oh that's the, article. (Newspaper clipping)**

**FOWLER: Yea.**

**STYLES: They put this editorial in the San Diego paper with this cartoon.**

**FOWLER: This is the end of the second session with Captain Ralph Styles on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. There are three tape cassettes with this session. The first two are on both sides and the third one is recorded on one side only. This is the end.**

## October 30, 2001

**FOWLER: This is a continuation of the oral history interview with Captain Ralph Styles. This is the third session on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001.**

**Ralph, you were telling us about just starting your tour of duty as Commander Submarine Flotilla ONE in San Diego when we left off.**

**STYLES: I had all the submarine activity on the West Coast. I was actually the Type Commander there for submarines.**

The minute I walked on deck to take command a Lieutenant met me at the gangway and said, "Captain, you remember when you had the Nerius here, you had that wonderful orchestra and band that played for the ship?" He said, "It kind of folded after you left. But we have kept most of the instruments and we can start it up again I'm sure, if you want to." So we did. We had a wonderful band that played during inspection, at parties, for concerts on the open deck during noon and any other occasion. We used profits from the ship service store to outfit them with tuxedos for special occasions.

I went over to the Surplus Center and picked out a barge for myself and fixed it up so it was the best looking barge in the harbor.

I relieved Jimmy Dempsey out of the Class of '31 and he had been selected for Admiral from the job, so he went back to Washington for duty. Mine was a most interesting job. Then I

found out that we were just beginning to get nuclear submarines assigned to Flotilla One. The first two that were built in Mare Island were assigned to me. But San Diego wouldn't let nuclear propelled ships come into the upper harbor. We had two tenders moored inside the harbor just off the Coast Guard station well inside the bay and all the submarines - there were 30 diesel submarines - were tied up to the two tenders and supported by the two tenders.

My two squadron commanders: one was a classmate of mine out of '33B, which meant he was commissioned the year after I was - Gordon Selby - and the other one was Jack Martin '34.

Well, our usual operations were services to the Fleet and we kept two submarines at all times deployed to WestPac to provide services to the Seventh Fleet.

Jack Dempsey - ahead of me - had purchased a car for the Flotilla Commander and had a driver so that anytime I went to an official function I would have a car and driver so I wouldn't have to drive around. It was a terrific job.

They were just finishing up with James Garner in a movie "Up Periscope". So when they finished - we had provided the submarine for filming and they'd taken a lot of pictures in the flotilla - so we went up to the lot for the final shooting of "Up Periscope". Then not long after that, Mr. Robert Arthur, the director, came down and wanted to make a movie with Cary Grant and Tony Curtis called "Operation Petticoat". So we provided the submarine and then when they made the movie, most of it was taken there in San Diego. When they got ready for the preview showing of it, Cary Grant and Robert Arthur came down to San Diego. It was Halloween night and we had cocktails at my house and all went out to the ship; the two squadron commanders and the commanding officer of the Sperry and had dinner there and then we went over into San Diego to watch the showing of the movie. It was customary for a new movie about the Navy to have a preview around the Navy base where it was filmed. And as the last movie . . . when you went to the movies you didn't know they were going to show a preview but as the last movie ended they invited people to stay and fill out comment sheets on the movie. So that's what was done.

It was a very interesting evening because over at my house when the kids would ring for trick or treating at the door, why Cary Grant insisted that he go to the door with the tricks. When they'd open the door, - the mother usually accompanied the kids - would think, "Gee, that's a wonderful costume that guy's got on. He looks just like Cary Grant." But anyhow, he was a very charming man.

Another relationship I had with the entertainment industry was when they made the submarine ride for Disneyland. Admiral Fowler, who had been a Navy Constructor and particularly worked with submarines . . .

**FOWLER: That was Joe Fowler. He was the Shipyard Commander in San Francisco at one time.**

**STYLES: About the Class of 1918, along in there. Well he actually put Disneyland together.**

**FOWLER: If you go to Disney World over here in Orlando now you'll see the Admiral Joe Fowler boat on the lake there going around.**

**STYLES: Well he practically put Disney World together before he . . .**

**FOWLER: He and Walt Disney were very good personal friends too.**

**STYLES: Yeah. Well anyhow . . .**

**FOWLER: No relation to me however.**

**STYLES: Yeah.**

They came down and spent a week, their crew from Disneyland, recording the noises on a submarine when it dives and surfaces and the commands that were given. And so when they finally got the ride in up at Disneyland they invited my family up for a behind-the-scenes tour of everything. The submarine ride was very realistic. It had the tapes of noises blowing the ballast tanks and routine orders for diving and surfacing and everything. Well anyhow, it was a most interesting job.

Vice Admiral Libby Commanded the First Fleet, Vice Admiral Pride was COMNAVAIRPAC. Vice Admiral Sylvester was Commander Amphibious Forces. An admiral commanded the Training Command, the Destroyer Forces, etc. Although they were all Admirals, except me, they treated me as a Type Commander. The Flotilla consisted of two Squadrons, each squadron had a submarine tender, a submarine rescue ship and three divisions of submarines with five submarines in each. I also was responsible for four submarine reserve units located in Seattle, San Francisco, Long Beach, and San Diego.

When the first submarines with a built-in missile carrier, the Grayback, was ready for test firing, she came to the Flotilla and I was aboard when the first Regulus II missile was fired from a submarine. On the nose cone was a letter addressed to me from Admiral Monroe which arrived from the Pacific Missile Range at Point Mugu where the missiles landed.

When Admiral Hopwood, CINCPACFLT, came to Los Angeles for the annual Naval Ball, I was invited and attended. Mrs. Styles and I sat at a table with Josie Wayne, the first wife of John Wayne and they became friends. She later came down to visit in San Diego.

When the USS King County, a converted LST to test prototype missile systems for nuclear submarines, came to operate under my command, Admiral Burke, CNO, with Jim Copley, publisher of the San Diego newspaper came for an inspection and tour.

When Admiral Russell, VCNO, came to the area to consult with the Type Commanders, Admiral Pride came with him to the Flotilla for breakfast and an inspection of a submarine. My biggest problem at the time was the requirement that every officer selected for the nuclear program had to go to Washington to be interviewed by Admiral Richover. I even had officers ordered back from submarines deployed to WESTPAC. The loss of an officer for that length of

time was hard on the submarine. Admiral Russell wrote me later that the Navy did not want to cross him because he was doing so much for the nuclear program with his pull on Capital Hill.

When Rear Admiral Bertram Taylor, Commander of British Submarine Force, and Commander NATO Submarine Operations Eastern Atlantic, stopped in San Diego on his tour of facilities he came to the Flotilla to confer with me. I had Admiral Taylor and all the Type Commanders for lunch and an inspection. The British lost 74 submarines in WWII. They started with 57 and had 130 when the war ended.

When Lord Louis Montbatten came through San Diego enroute from India to England he was royally entertained by military and civilians and being a Type Commander I was included. One particular party was given by Jim Copley, owner of the Copley Press. They had just built a new house on top of a mountain in La Jolla, the party was on the lawn with 400 guests, with leis flown in from Hawaii and a luau dinner. All of this was part of the job.

But I realized early on that my main objective should be to get facilities for nuclear submarines in San Diego, because in a few short years, the whole submarine force would be nuclear powered. I would need to let the Type Commanders see the possibilities of nuclear submarines, let the civilian leaders see the potential to the area, the economy and to the rest of the Navy. I had the full support of the Copley Press through the Administrative Assistant, Andy Anderson. I made early calls on the leaders in the Navy League, the Retired Officers Association, and the Chamber of Commerce. When the nuclear submarine SARGO stopped off in San Diego. (Originally she had been assigned to the Flotilla then changed to Pearl Harbor when San Diego objected to her coming up into the harbor to the tenders) I had to move all the submarines from along side one tender, unmoor her and move her down to the harbor entrance opposite the old Army Base that I hoped would be the future Sub-Base. I first invited the Mayor of San Diego, and Admiral Hartman, the District Commander down for lunch. After which I pointed out the area at the mouth of the Harbor for the submarine base; then sent them home in my barge the long trip up the Bay to the center of town. I next invited the directors of the Navy League, the senior Naval Officers, and Chamber of Commerce for rides on the USS Sargo. She took three groups out per day to the operating area for a dive which was only a twenty minute trip from the potential subbase whereas it was nearly an hour barge trip up to the center of the harbor. On one trip we had the local press and radio station representatives on board. Tapes were made in each compartment and aired the next few days on local radio. I invited retired Admiral Lockwood, Submarine Force Commander during WWII to come down to San Diego to address a combined luncheon meeting of the Navy League and the Retired Officers Association. This was much publicized.

I next invited the Southern California president of the Navy League to come down for a family cruise on the tender. They were given a tour of the ship on the way out, pointed out the potential subbase on the way out of the harbor and then I had 2 submarines simulate attacks on the tender, surface close aboard then dive again so all could witness the capabilities of the submarine. On every occasion, I tried to draw attention to the Flotilla's contributions to the area. We sponsored a little league baseball team. The whole Flotilla lined up to donate blood in the Red Cross drive, we gave as a unit to the United Appeal and every local group who asked, I would speak on the need for a nuclear submarine base, that if San Diego did not keep the

submarines there, other units of the fleet and support facilities would go with them. It all worked, for the building of the Point Loma Base was moved to number one on the shore development program and there is now a thriving base there. When I was relieved, I received the following message from COMSUBPAC.

*SEE INSERT A*

The San Diego Chamber of Commerce sent insert B to Admiral Burke, CNO and also a similar letter to the Secretary of the Navy.

*SEE INSERT B*

The San Diego Chapter of the Navy League also sent copies of their resolution to Admiral Burke and the Secretary of the Navy.

*SEE INSERT C*

Then at the annual meeting of the Navy League held the following spring, I was awarded a plaque signed by Thurston James, the National President of the Navy League.

*SEE INSERT D*

And finally in 1971, when the submarine base was completed, I received the following letter from Andy Anderson, the Administrative Assistant for Copley newspapers.

*SEE INSERT E*

**VESTAL: Ralph, what year was this in?**

**STYLES:** I took the Flotilla in 1958 and I was relieved just before 1960. I took it in the summer of '58 and left there in December of '59. So I had it about 18 months.

Well, the job was really a great one, besides operating the submarines - and of course I had a good staff - public relations was a very important aspect of it because to let people know the story of the submarines; what they were; what they could do and get the city of San Diego behind this submarine base building program and the maintenance of our submarines.

**VESTAL: Did you have to get any clearance for participating in these movies that were made there? Did you have to get approval from Washington?**

**STYLES:** Oh yeah. Sure, they would usually have that before they would come down to discuss the movie and our part in it. I also made a movie about Admiral Halsey. Jimmy Cagney played Admiral Halsey and there weren't any carriers in, the week that the cast came down to make the movie so they sent him over to my submarine tender. Most of the shots were taken around San Diego. It's a story about Guadalcanal. I've forgotten what the name of it is. "His Finest Hour" or something like that.